THE DE VERDUN FAMILY IN ENGLAND, IRELAND AND WALES,
1066-1316: A STUDY

Mark Hagger

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THE DE VERDUN FAMILY IN ENGLAND, IRELAND AND WALES, 1066-1316: A STUDY.

Mark Hagger.

ST ANDREWS
UNIV.

This thesis was submitted for the degree of Ph.D. on 30th August 1998.
ABSTRACT.

This thesis is composed of an introduction and five chapters. The introduction examines the various sources which can be used in establishing the actions of the family (chronicles, charters, central government rolls and so on) and attempts to make some general remarks about them. From this discussion of the sources, chapters one and two move on to examine the careers of the ten members of the family who, over the course of nine generations, ruled over the lands which were acquired between 1066 and 1316. The composition of these estates and the ways in which they came into the family's possession is also considered here. Chapter three looks at the family's demesne manors, examining the various franchises which the family held, the revenues these estates produced - in so far as they can be recovered - and the location and economic structure of the demesne manors in England, Ireland and Wales. Chapter four examines the household officials employed by the family and identifies those who formed the most prominent members of the de Verduns' following. The chapter also discusses the tenantry, seeking to establish why individuals were granted lands by the family and identifying any relationships between the tenants of their English estates and those found living in their Irish lordships. Chapter five looks at the family as a unit. The various cadet lines are identified where possible, and the patronage and role of younger sons or siblings is discussed. The identities of the de Verduns' wives or husbands are examined and the treatment meted out to widows is explored. So too are the family's possible views of its own identity. This has been done by looking at, for example, naming patterns and the various marriages which were made.
DECLARATIONS.

(i) I, Mark Hagger, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date 25/9/98... signature of candidate

(ii) I was admitted as a research student in September 1995 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in September 1995; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1995 and 1998.

date 25/11/98... signature of candidate

(iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date .................. signature of supervisor ......................

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NOTE ON NAMES AND REFERENCES.

Place names have been given in Roman type where they can be identified and in italics when their identification is unknown. If the unidentified name forms a toponymic, Roman type is used anyway. Toponymics have also been treated differently according to whether an identification of the place to which the name relates can be made or not. When the toponymic relates to a place in Britain or Ireland, and this place has been identified, then the name has been rendered 'of' that place (e.g. Robert of Rhuddlan, Henry of Enfield). Where places are either not in Britain or Ireland or have not been identified, the original 'de' has been retained (e.g. Bertram de Verdun, Ralph de Sepeye). References to books and articles are given in full the first time that they are noted in a chapter. Afterwards, the name of the author is followed by an abbreviated form of the title. In all cases, this is clear enough for the reader either to refer back to the first note or on to the bibliography for the full details. It should also be noted that references to the various calendars and articles in the Journal of the William Salt Archaeological Society are given by volume and page number only, in the same way as references to the various chancery calendars. The individual articles have been listed in the bibliography at the end (chiefly under the entry for Wrottesley) although it should be noted that some of the later articles (from 1910 on) are not given authors and so have been listed there under the name of the journal itself.
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFM</td>
<td>Annála rioghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616, ed. J. O'Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin, 1851, repr. 1854).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library (London).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Calendar of Close Rolls (London, 1892-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Calendar of Fine Rolls (London, 1911-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPM</td>
<td>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem (London, 1904-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLR</td>
<td>Calendar of Liberate Rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJRI</td>
<td>Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls of Ireland, ed. J. Mills et al., 3 vols (Dublin, 1905-56).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Calendar of Patent Rolls (London, 1891-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRR</td>
<td>Curia Regis Rolls, (London, 1922-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal</td>
<td>Calendar...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croxden Chronicle</td>
<td>London, BL, Cotton MS Faustina B.vi.i. A partial translation of the chronicle can be found in C. Lynam, The Abbey of St Mary, Croxden, Staffordshire (London, 1911), appendix, 'Translation of the Chronicle as relating to the Abbey'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB</td>
<td>Domesday Book, ed. J. Morris, 35 vols in 40 (Chichester,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1975-86).

**EHD**

**EHR**
*English Historical Review* (1886-).

**EYC**

**Gormanston Reg.**

**IPR**
Irish Pipe Rolls, 13 Henry III-12 Edward II. Appendices to the 35th-39th and 42nd Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Records of Ireland (1903-1910). Quoted by report number and page.

**JRSAI**
*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (1892-).

**Leicestershire**

**Monasticon**

**NAI**
National Archives of Ireland (Dublin).

**NLI**
National Library of Ireland (Dublin).

**Ormond Deeds**

**PR**
Pipe roll (with regnal year) as published by the *Pipe Roll Society*.

**PRIA**
*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1836-).

**PRO**
Public Record Office (London).

**Proc**
*Proceedings...*

**RLC**

**Receuil**

**Regesta**

**Register**

**Rot'**
*Rotuli...*

**SRS**
*Staffordshire Record Society* (1936-). Previously published as the *Journal of the William Salt Archaeological Society*.

**TRHS**
*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1872-).

**VCH**
*The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (London,
1900-).

*WS*  
*Journal of the William Salt Archaeological Society* (1879-1935) From 1936 the society changed its name to the *Staffordshire Record Society*. All references are to volume and page number rather than to the individual articles.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due in the first place to my supervisor, Professor Robert Bartlett, for his encouragement and help throughout the last three years. Dr. John Hudson too has been quick to offer advice, while I have also benefited from information provided by Professor Chris Given-Wilson. Similar kindnesses have been shown to me by historians from outside of St Andrews. Dr. Philip Morgan presented me with a transcript of the Croxden abbey chronicle, which has proved most useful, while Dr. Katherine Keats-Rohan provided me with transcripts of charters from the Mont-St-Michel cartulary after my visit to Avranches met with failure at the hands of an exhibition. Professor Robin Frame steered me in the right direction as far as the Irish archives were concerned when we met at a conference on Britain and Ireland at Bristol in 1996 which had been organised by Dr. Brendan Smith, whose knowledge of things de Verdun also provided some useful ideas. The staffs of the various libraries and archives that I have visited deserve my thanks for the help they gave me when I was looking lost in their institutions, especially those at the National Archive of Ireland in Dublin whom I confused no end with my requests for outrageous documents. Finally, I must thank Sarah for living with the de Verduns for three long years, and my parents for their bottomless support and encouragement.
A Family Tree for the de Verdun Family, 1066-1316.
"In recent years the phenomenon of 'cross-border' landholding has attracted attention, as historians have tried to reconstruct the arenas aristocracies inhabited, instead of working within national or regional boundaries that properties and careers often ignored."¹ Here, then, is an attempt to reconstruct the arena that one particular aristocratic family, the de Verduns, played in. It was an arena that changed and grew over time, coming to incorporate the English midlands, the frontiers of Anglo-Norman Ireland and the march of Wales between 1086 and 1244.

One of aims of this thesis is to establish the effect that holding lands on both sides of the Irish sea had on the family's political actions. It also attempts to consider how far the English and Irish estates were integrated, whether the demesne manors were run on the same economic lines on both sides of the Irish Sea and whether the tenants who populated the de Verduns' English estates were also to be found on their Irish ones. Nor does a division exist only in terms of the de Verduns' lands. In 1247, Roesia de Verdun died. She was the only daughter of Nicholas de Verdun and her death brought the first de Verdun line to an end. She was succeeded by her son, John, whose father was Theobald II Butler. This second de Verdun family ruled its predecessor's estates until the death of Theobald II de Verdun in 1316, whose four daughters and co-heiresses succeeded to his lands in 1332. Something of the way in which this latter de Verdun family latched onto the traditions of its predecessor is discussed at the end of chapter five.

An abstract has already been laid out at the very beginning of the thesis, so that a further summarising of the areas that the various chapters cover is unnecessary. However, it is worth noting some of the parameters of this study. It has aimed to cover the four main areas that any family history should include - political actions, lands, tenants and followers, and the family as a whole. It should be noted, however, that the senior line takes centre stage throughout. The cadet branches have been briefly surveyed in chapter five, but even there they remain very much of incidental importance. This study of the de Verdun family is concerned almost exclusively with the trunk of the family tree, not the branches that grew out of it.

Equally, the thesis is concerned above all with the family in Britain and Ireland between 1066 and 1316. Some attempt has been made to uncover the location of the de Verduns' estates in Normandy and any evidence for their activities there, but the French archives have not received a thorough going over and it is quite possible that more material remains to be discovered.

There is no one overall source from which the activities of the family can be recovered. No equivalent to the *Histoire* of William Marshal exists, nor was any monastic chronicler inclined to give a full and revealing account of the de Verduns' actions. Like the vast majority of other members of the medieval aristocracy, then, the history of the de Verduns must be compiled from multifarious notes in a myriad of sources.

The most obvious place to begin a survey of these sources is with the records produced by the members of the senior line of the de Verdun family themselves. A total of sixty-four de Verdun acta survive in various forms from the period between 1155 and 1316, most of which date from before 1247. Ten of these survive as originals in a number of archives such as the Archives du Calvados in Caen, the British Library and the Staffordshire Record Office. Amongst them is Bertram III de Verdun's foundation charter for Croxden abbey, issued between 1179 and 1180, of which two original copies survive, the best of which is found in the Bodleian Library. This is an imposing document, measuring about nine inches by sixteen inches, written in a very clear and regular hand. The seal too remains attached and, although damaged, it clearly retains the fingerprints of the man who sealed the charter for Bertram. The Staffordshire Record Office holds three original de Verdun charters, two issued by Roesia de Verdun and one by Theobald I. All were grants to Croxden abbey and two retain almost perfect impressions of their grantors' seals, that of Theobald I even preserving the shape of the lugs which joined the two halves of the die together.

Other de Verdun acta are found in monastic cartularies from both England and Ireland. The Kenilworth and Combe abbey cartularies contain such acta, as do those of the Hospital of St John the Baptist Without the New Gate, Dublin, Breedon-on-the-Hill priory and Burton abbey, to which can also be added the register of St Thomas' abbey, Dublin. This latter source also provides some genealogical information about the family, as does the cartulary of Abbeydore abbey, which was located close to the de Verduns' lordship of Ewias Lacy. Other
acta can be found in reports of pleas. The text of one of Roesia de Verdun's charters, for example, survives in the Leicestershire assize roll of 1247, although it is usually the case that these pleas give only a reference to the existence of a charter and an approximation of what it contained. Other acta survive as copies in seventeenth-century and later books of seals, as does Bertram III's grant to Henry de Praers and also John, count of Mortain's, grant to Bertram III of lands in Louth and Uriel. It is often the case that when these charters were copied, or when they were recorded or mentioned in pleas, their witness lists were omitted. This has proved detrimental to establishing the identities of those who formed the inner circle of the de Verduns' following, as will be seen in chapter four below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>No. of surviving acta</th>
<th>Average per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bertram III</td>
<td>1155-1192</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>1194-1199</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>1199-1231</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roesia</td>
<td>1231-1247</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>1247-1274</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theobald I</td>
<td>1274-1309</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theobald II</td>
<td>1309-1316</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Int.1. Rates of survival of de Verdun acta, 1155-1316.

Apart from charters and agreements, documents produced by members of the family survive in the form of two letters and one will. The letters were both written by John de Verdun in the 1270's and both deal with his activities and estates in Ireland. One reports that his lands had been desolated by the Irish and deserted by his tenants during his absence on crusade with the Lord Edward, the other states that "some persons of the king's council in Ireland have injured both himself and his tenants of the manor of Coolock, the only land which he possesses within the land of peace" and reports that he had "spent much money in drawing to the king's

2 PRO, JUST 1/454, memb. 22v.
3 PRO, SC1/22/50.
peace diverse petty kings," including Aedh Buidhe O'Neill and Art O'Melaghlin. This latter letter was misdated by H. S. Sweetman when he included it in his Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland, the mistake being noticed by K. Simms in 1978. The will was written by Theobald I in 1295 and contains directions for his burial, the names of the various religious houses which were to be given money to pray for his soul (seventeen in all, almost all of them Franciscan or Dominican foundations) and instructions as to which of his eight named children where to receive which of his goods, the list including a jewelled cross and a number of jewelled rings, four suits of armour, tents and pavilions and a large sum in cash.5

That there are so few surviving de Verdun charters is a fact which can be largely attributed to the failure of cartularies from Croxden, Grace Dieu or any of the other de Verduns' religious foundations to have survived. Nonetheless, although the Croxden abbey cartulary, which would almost certainly have been a most valuable source of information on the de Verduns, is lost, the abbey chronicle has survived and does provide some details concerning the family, although it could hardly be described as a family chronicle. The Croxden chronicle survives in just one manuscript6 and was compiled from the end of the thirteenth century by William Shepshed, a member of a Leicestershire family which gave several monks to Croxden, including an abbot. William received the tonsure at the abbey in 1288 and wrote the chronicle until 1336, using the annals of Louth Park as a source of information for events before his own time.7 It begins to include fairly full notices about the births, deaths and marriages in the family, as well as some other incidental information, from about the time that William entered the abbey. De Verdun related entries in the annals for the years before the 1290's are both rare and extremely brief.

Occasionally members of the family are mentioned in chronicles produced elsewhere. Roger of Howden and the author of the Gesta Henrici Secundi et Ricardi Benedicti Abbatis, who may or may not have been the same man, mention some of Bertram III de Verdun's activities during the reigns of Henry II and Richard I, such as his being appointed an itinerant justice in 1176, sent on embassy

4 CDI, 1, no. 1840.  
5 BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97.  
6 BL, Cotton MS Faustina Bvi.i.  
to Spain in 1177 and appointed governor of Acre in 1191. Irish chronicles such as the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and the *Annals of Loch Ce* mention John de Verdun's activities in both England and Ireland and even Matthew Paris notices him in 1257 when he was appointed one of the leaders of the army sent to Wales in that year. It should be noted that these two men were the most prominent family players on the national stage. That they should receive attention from the chroniclers is thus not unexpected. Otherwise, chronicles generally have little if anything to say about any member of the family.

It is those sources compiled by the royal administration that provide the great bulk of the evidence for the de Verdun family's activities and lands, and it also often provides useful information about family relationships. For convenience these centrally produced sources can be split up into four main sections: royal acta such as charters, writs, close and patent rolls; surveys, such as the survey of knight's fees of 1242-3 and inquisitions *post mortem*; financial documents such as the pipe, fine and memoranda rolls; and judicial materials, as contained in curia regis rolls and assize rolls.

The various royal acta provide a considerable amount of information about the activities and comings and goings of members of the family. The charters of the four Norman kings have been calendared in the first three volumes of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, while some of those issued by Henry II can be found in R. W. Eyton's *Court Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* and L. Delisle's *Receuil des Actes de Henri II*. The witness lists of two of William I's charters suggest Bertram I de Verdun's involvement in the Domesday survey, or at least in judging the cases which arose from it. Equally, the address clauses of one of Rufus' charters and one of Henry I's reveal that Bertram I or II de Verdun held some official position in Yorkshire, possibly the shrievalty, in 1100. In the time of Henry II, Bertram III was a relatively frequent attender of the court and his movements with it can be traced through charter witness lists.

From the beginning of John's reign, records were kept systematically, probably as a result of reforms introduced by Hubert Walter. Charters were enrolled and so too were royal writs, which by this time had become specialised and had been divided into the categories of letters patent and letters close. These provide evidence of the de Verduns' activities and role in the king's administration, royal favour, or lack thereof, movements to and from Ireland and family affairs, such as marriages and
deaths. Thus, for example, it is through the patent rolls that we know of John de Verdun's appointment as keeper of Staffordshire and Shropshire in 1263 and his commission in 1266 to defend Worcestershire from the Baronial rebels besieged within Kenilworth castle. Protections recorded in these same rolls record John's going to Gascony, Ireland and on crusade. Equally, Theobald I de Verdun's attacks on Llanthony priory are recorded on the patent rolls, as is his forfeiture of Ewias Lacy and the licence for the marriage of his son to Matilda de Mortimer. The close rolls provide rather less information and deal mainly with the occasional gifts that the family received from the king and quitances of summonses in the various counties in which the family held lands. Sometimes, however, material of greater interest turns up, such as Edward I's letter to Theobald I demanding his son's service in 1297 and the dower agreement that the same Theobald made with his father's widow, Alianor, in 1275.

The various surveys carried out by the king's government provide the most important and complete evidence for the composition of the de Verduns' estates, their value and their economic structure. The Domesday survey of 1086 includes information on the solitary manor that Bertram I de Verdun held at that point, but also provides some background on the manors in Staffordshire and Leicestershire that were to be granted to the family by the end of the 1120's. Bertram III de Verdun's carta baronum of 1166 was by no means a detailed exposition of the lands that he held at that time so that it is the survey of 1242-3 that yields the first detailed evidence of the estates that had come to the family on Norman Verdun's marriage to Lecelina de Clinton, and that had been granted to Norman de Verdun by Ranulf II of Chester. More important are the five inquisitions post mortem taken between 1271 and 1327 which detail the family's estates in England and the march. The first inquisition, that of 1271, is concerned only with the lands in Shropshire and Herefordshire that had come to the family on John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy and with which he had enfeoffed his son, Nicholas. The remaining four inquisitions, taken in 1274, 1309, 1316 and 1327, are concerned with all the family's demesne manors, with that of 1316 also including a full survey of all the lands held of the de Verduns' for knight service. All these inquisitions, along with the partition of 1332 that supplies the only surviving evidence for the de Verduns' Irish estates, have been discussed more fully in chapter three where the statistics that can be gleaned from them have been used to provide an overview of the estates' economic structure. In the absence of ministers' accounts or valors, these afford all the evidence available about the revenues the de Verduns received.
and where they came from. They are, however, frequently suspect and the results of any analysis of them have to be treated with caution.

The financial records produced by the royal administration provide, on the whole, much less evidence for a study of the de Verduns. The pipe rolls, both English and Irish, contain evidence concerning the reliefs that the de Verduns owed for their lands and the debts they owed to the king, but otherwise do not yield much material on the family. The exception to this rule is found in the career of Bertram III de Verdun. He held the shrievalty of Warwick and Leicester between 1170 and 1185 and subsequently held the custody of the honour of Chester between 1185 and 1187. This, and his activities as an itinerant justice and ambassador, mean that the pipe rolls of Henry II's reign provide a considerable amount of interesting information about Bertram's activities. The fine rolls and memoranda rolls also supply some incidental information about various members of the family but, again, do not constitute a major source from which to compile a history of the de Verduns.

Lastly, then, come the judicial sources. The assize rolls and curia regis rolls occasionally mention the family's dealings with their neighbours and their officials - and sometimes even with the king's officials. It is, for example, such plea rolls that provide information about Theobald I de Verdun's alleged involvement in forcing the sheriff of Hereford out of Ewias Lacy. The justiciary rolls produced by the Irish administration, which survive in the form of transcripts and published calendars made before the shelling of the Four Courts in 1922, include a full narrative of the events of the Riot of Louth of 1312 and also illustrate the lawless career of Nicholas de Verdun at the beginning of the fourteenth century. More generally, the English and Irish judicial records can provide details of family relationships, an individual's character, the location of parts of the family's estates and the services for which their lands were held. They also contain the fullest evidence for the scale of the family's indebtedness from the end of the thirteenth century and the various ways in which they attempted to increase their income - by fair means or foul. It is often the case, however, that these rolls supply only the scantiest of information about family activities, announcing unhelpfully such things as "Nicholas de Verdun v. William de Rargston in a plea of mort d'ancestor."

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8 PRO, JUST 1/948, memb. 1v.
These, then, are the sources from which a history of the de Verduns can be written. Before moving on to expound this history, however, one final note on the sources should be made. The *Journal of the William Salt Archaeological Society* provides translated transcripts of, for example, pipe rolls, assize rolls, curia regis rolls, hundred rolls, cartularies and collections, both lay and ecclesiastical, relating to Staffordshire and Staffordshire families. The late-nineteenth-century work of the men who laboured in the Public Record Office and elsewhere to produce these volumes, outstanding amongst whom was General Sir George Wrottesley (himself descended from a cadet branch of the de Verduns), deserve a mention here, for the volumes of their journal have been heavily drawn upon during the writing of this thesis, as even a quick glance at the footnotes will reveal.
Highlighting the rich history of the de Verdun family, Chapter One of the book "Familiares Fortunes: The de Verduns in England and Ireland, 1066-1247" delves into the early years of Bertrams I and II de Verdun, specifically the period from 1066 to c. 1129.

Bertram I de Verdun, like the founders of many other Anglo-Norman families, is reputed to have fought at Hastings with William the Conqueror. Although such claims, encapsulated as they are in much later evidence, have to be treated with a degree of scepticism, there is at least evidence to show that Bertram I de Verdun was politically active at the time of the Conquest. This evidence comes in the form of an attestation of a local charter in the Mont-St-Michel cartulary which is dated to 1066. That Bertram de Verdun should have attested a charter relating to Mont-St-Michel is no great surprise as his family's known lands in Normandy were located well within the abbey's area of influence, being dispersed across the southwestern part of the Cotentin peninsula and including - at least in the twelfth century - lands held indirectly from the abbey itself. The caput of these estates was presumably at Verdun as this provided the family toponymic. According to Loyd, Verdun was located near to Vessey, close to the Norman border with Brittany. Although Loyd himself provided no evidence to support his theory, it can be borne out by the fact that the name survives as that of a farm found to the north-west of Vessey, off the Pontorson road. Presumably the farm stands on, or near to, the site of the village which has otherwise entirely disappeared.

Later sources reveal the location of other de Verdun estates in Normandy. The Mont-St-Michel cartulary records that a William de Verdun held lands and a mill at Tiseel in 1155 with further lands at Croem and a fee in Genets in the Cotentin in 1172, while the État d'Avranchin of c. 1170 states that William de Verdun held

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1 NLI, MS 8509, fos. 7, 10, 11v. This quotes Madame de la Roque in her Genealogie de la Maison d'Harcourt, Burke's Extinct Peerage and the Roll of Battle Abbey.
2 Avranches, Bibliotheque Municipale, MS 210, fos. 83v.-84. I would like to thank Dr. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan for providing me with a transcript of this and other charters from her forthcoming edition of the earlier part of the cartulary.
1.1 Map of the known de Verdun lands in Normandy.
two messuages in Avranches. This same survey also reveals that a Bertram de Verdun held Chavoy, north-east of the city, in chief of the king and it is likely that this was Bertram III as the 1172 return of the knight's fees of Mont-St-Michel notes that Bertram de Verdun, "son of Norman", also held half of Chavoy and Bouillon from Ralph de Fougeres (who held them from the abbey) along with a part of Oliv. A confirmation charter given to the abbey of Savigny by Henry II in c.1182 reveals that a Bertram de Verdun - probably Bertram III - held an unnamed piece of land next to the grange of the unidentified Campo Botri somewhere in the Avranchin. William de Verdun's relationship to Bertram III is impossible to establish with confidence, although it is perhaps most likely that he was Bertram's uncle. It is possible, therefore, that William's lands were part of an appanage carved out of the family patrimony. It is equally possible that he, and Bertram III as well, had only acquired these possessions in the second half of the twelfth century. The same is true for Carolles which first appears in de Verdun hands in an agreement made between Nicholas de Verdun and the abbey of Mont-St-Michel in 1199-1204. This being the case, only Verdun itself can be said with certainty to have been held by Bertram de Verdun around the time of the Conquest.

Although he might have been amongst Duke William's followers in 1066, Bertram de Verdun's first indisputable appearance in England is found in Domesday Book, which records that he held the manor of Farnham Royal in Buckinghamshire in 1086. This was one of only two manors held in Buckinghamshire by Countess Goda before 1066, the other, Twyford, being at the opposite end of the county and held by Ralph de Feugeres when Domesday was compiled. Bertram de Verdun's Domesday entry makes it clear that he was not a new arrival in the country as it contains a note revealing that he had been abroad on the king's business. This goes on to relate that during his absence Geoffrey de Mandeville had appropriated half a hide of Farnham into his manor of Amersham and Ralph Tailboys had built a mill on Bertram's land. That Bertram I's Domesday entry contains two of only seven

7 *Receuil*, 2, pp. 177-181. That Campo Botri was in the Avranchin is revealed by Adrian IV's Bull to the abbey of St Sever of 1158 which lists the abbey's possessions here under the section dealing with the Avranchin. (L. Musset, 'Les Origines et le Patrimoine de l'Abbaye de Saint-Sever' in *La Normandie Benedictine au Temps de Guillaume le Conquerant (xi siecle)* (Lille, 1967), p. 362.)
9 *DB*, Buckinghamshire, 38,1.
10 *ibid*, 37,1.
1.1. Bertram de Verdun's Domesday entry.
land pleas mentioned, or referred to, in the survey for Buckinghamshire is a sign of his vulnerability against his stronger neighbours, but probably also reflects his experience in such pleas - here used to good effect in recovering his lands. As such it complements two documents which both date to about this same period and which show Bertram I acting in an unspecified judicial capacity.

The first of these is an agreement made at Canterbury in 1087x8 between Gundulf, bishop of Rochester, and Gilbert of Tonbridge concerning the lands that Gilbert held from Rochester cathedral. If all those who appear in the agreement, only Bertram and William de St Calais, bishop of Durham, stand out as having no known connection with any of the parties involved or with the locality. Presumably, their presence was the result of some legal function. The second document reveals Bertram's role more clearly. In this writ-charter, Bertram I and William de St Calais are reported as having heard the testimony of Broughton hundred in Hampshire concerning the manor of Mottisfont, which manor was to be restored to Thomas, archbishop of York, on this evidence. The writ-charter is interesting in that it is related to an entry in Domesday, which suggests that the plea was a spin-off of the survey. In this it bears comparison with the case that David Bates examined concerning Isham in Northamptonshire, claimed by Aelfsige, abbot of Ramsey, which suggested to him that the writs and Domesday entry "were part-and-parcel of the same administrative process." These two cases also suggest that, if Pierre Chaplais was correct in identifying William de St Calais as the man behind the survey, Bertram de Verdun too was in some way connected with the making of Domesday Book, or at least with the legal cases that it generated.

No more is heard of Bertram de Verdun for about fourteen years until, in January 1100, William Rufus addressed a writ concerning the restoration of Ranulf Flambard to lands which had been in dispute with Alan Percy in Yorkshire to Thomas, archbishop of York, Bertram de Verdun and the barons of Yorkshire.

13 DB, Hampshire, 4.1.
with Bertram being ordered to give Flambard seisin.\textsuperscript{16} In September of the same year, Henry I addressed a charter to Gerard, archbishop of York, Bertram de Verdun and the barons of Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{17} The form of the address of these writs suggests that Bertram de Verdun acted as sheriff of Yorkshire in 1100 and this is the line taken by Frank Barlow and more recently by Judith Green.\textsuperscript{18} Given the inconclusive nature of the evidence, however, it might be best to emulate the view taken by Paul Dalton who has stated that "among the 'new men' employed by Henry I in the administration of Yorkshire were those appointed to the shrievalty. The first of their number may have been Bertram de Verdon, who held some form of administrative office (not necessarily the shrievalty) in Yorkshire during the course of 1100."\textsuperscript{19} Green thinks that Bertram owed his office in Yorkshire to an association with Hugh, earl of Chester, as he had no other links with the area.\textsuperscript{20} However, it is clear that local links were not a prerequisite for appointment as a sheriff under Rufus. Barlow could find another nine individuals who held little or no land of the king in the county of which they became sheriff, including Aiulf (Somerset), Peter (Oxfordshire) and Geoffrey Baynard (Yorkshire).\textsuperscript{21} It may simply be the case, then, that Bertram's previous service elsewhere recommended him for the post.

Given that thirty-four years had elapsed since the Conquest, it is doubtful whether the Bertram de Verdun mentioned in these writs was the same Bertram who had appeared in the Conqueror's reign. Certainly it must have been a second successive Bertram de Verdun who witnessed a charter issued by Ranulf I of Chester in 1124x9 before being succeeded by his son, Norman, by 1129-30. Whichever Bertram de Verdun was active in Yorkshire in 1100 it is clear that the family had three and a half decades of - probably intermittent - royal service behind it by the time Henry I became king, and it was undoubtedly this service that led to the expansion of the family's landed interests in England. Between 1087 and 1129 the single manor of Farnham Royal was supplemented by a grant, or grants, of lands in Staffordshire and Leicestershire. Whether Bertram de Verdun was granted these estates by William Rufus or Henry I or both is not at all clear. William Rufus is

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Monasticon, 1, p. 241; EYC, 2, pp. 296-7; Regesta, 1, no. 427.
\item[17] EYC, 1, p. 364; Regesta, 2, no. 495.
\item[21] F. Barlow, William Rufus, p. 189.
\end{footnotes}
known to have made substantial grants from the royal demesne in Staffordshire to Earl Hugh of Chester and so it is possible that Bertram de Verdun was granted his Staffordshire manors by William II too. If this were so, the grant could be seen as part of this redistribution of the royal demesne in the county and, more generally, as part of Rufus' attempts to consolidate the Norman conquest in the north. It would also explain why Earl Hugh failed to acquire these other royal manors from the king.

Whatever the case with these Staffordshire manors, it is clear that some of the Leicestershire estates could only have been given to Bertram de Verdun during the reign of Henry I. It is likely that some of the old de Grandmesnil lands in Leicestershire which appear in de Verdun hands in the mid-twelfth and thirteenth centuries were already in the family's possession by 1129, in which case they could not have been granted to Bertram de Verdun before Ivo de Grandmesnil's forfeiture in 1102. This should not come as a surprise. Bertram was active in the royal administration in September 1100 and although he fails to appear in royal witness lists thereafter, this does not mean that he was not at court. Nor was it at all unusual for Henry I to advance families who originated in the west of Normandy as the de Verduns did.

What lands, then, came to the de Verduns as a result of this grant or grants? The earliest evidence for the composition of that part of the de Verduns' honour which lay in Staffordshire dates to the second half of the twelfth century, during the rule of Bertram III de Verdun. His foundation charter for Croxden abbey, which dates to 1179-80, records de Verdun interests in Alton, Musden, Oaken, Bradley-in-the-Moors and Woodhouses as well as in Croxden itself, which was stated as being "in my patrimonial territory," while the fourteenth-century abbey chronicle records that Bertram III de Verdun held the manor of Cotton in 1176. Other of Bertram III's charters further reveal that he held two carucates in Newton, which he had granted to Hugh of Draycote by 1184, the manor of Sheen, which was granted to

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23 It should be noted in support of this point that Ivo Taillebois, one of Rufus' stewards, and Gerard the chancellor witness only three or four royal charters between them. (F. Barlow, *William Rufus*, p. 192.)
26 *Croxden Chronicle*, s.a. 1176, fo. 72.
Hugh of Okeover before 1190, and some interest in Stapenhill, which was exchanged with the abbot of Burton-upon-Trent for 20s. rent from Field in 1188x90. This evidence is supplemented by thirteenth-century charters which reveal Audley, Bucknall and Denstone to have been held by the family before 1231.

These twelfth- and thirteenth-century charters can be supplemented by the inquisitions post mortem taken in 1274, 1309, 1316 and 1327. While it can be shown that some of the manors included in these surveys were later acquisitions, such as Ellastone which was acquired by John de Verdun in the second half of the thirteenth century, it is likely that most were held by the end of Henry I's reign at latest. This is because the inquisitions all record that the de Verduns' held the barony of Alton from the king for one knight's fee, which is the same service that Bertram III stated was due from the old enfeoffment in his carta of 1166. It is consequently unlikely that the composition of the lands which the de Verduns' held in chief underwent much of a change in the interval between 1166 and the production of these inquisitions, and consequently they can be used to fill in the gaps left by the charter evidence. The results are illustrated in Map 1.2 below.

By the time Bertram de Verdun got his estates in Staffordshire, his Norman compatriots had been established in the area for over thirty years, and even by 1086 the state of the settlement had been well advanced. Bertram thus had to be fitted into an existing tenurial framework and it is consequently unlikely that the pre-Conquest pattern of land holding had much effect on the shape of his honour. Nonetheless, it is worth briefly examining the Domesday evidence for the composition of his estates. Before 1066, the twenty-one Domesday manors that made up most of what would become the de Verduns' barony of Alton were held by a minimum of sixteen thanes and king's thanes. Bertram de Verdun was to gain

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28 CChR, 1, p. 36; WS, 3/1, pp. 170-1, WS, 4/1, p. 66; WS, 6/1, p. 176.
29 PRO, C133/7/1 (1274); C134/14/19 (1309); C134/56/1 (1316); C135/7 (1327); CIPM, 2, no. 78; 5, no. 187; 6, no. 54; 7, no. 83. The relevant Staffordshire sections are published in WS, vol 1911, pp. 159-162, 301, 333-337, and WS, vol 1913, pp. 9-18. Note that the Staffordshire section of the 1309 inquisition was illegible before the advent of ultra-violet lights and so was not printed in either the CIPM or WS.
30 Although it should be pointed out that there are inconsistencies. In the 1274 inquisition, for example, it is stated that the barony of Alton was held for one and a half fees in the section dealing with the Staffordshire estates but for just the one fee in the Leicestershire section of the same inquisition (PRO, C133/7/1; CIPM, 2, no. 78). The Staffordshire inquisitions of 1309 and 1316 also state that Alton and its members were held for the service of one knight's fee.
the complete holdings of six of these men, although this is less remarkable when it is discovered that five of them had only held one manor each in the county while the sixth had held just two. By 1086, eleven out of these twenty-one manors had become part of the royal demesne while another five, which had been held by the surviving king's thanes at the time of Domesday, probably came into the king's hands before being passed on to Bertram de Verdun. Three of these five had already changed hands at least once between the Conquest and 1086. Balterley, Audley and Talke made up the whole of Gamel's Staffordshire holding in 1086, when part of Balterley was also held by Wulfwin. However, it is clear that Gamel and Wulfwin had not themselves held these lands before the Conquest, as Domesday reveals that they had then been in the hands of three thanes called Godwin, Godric and Wulfric. The last five manors had belonged to other Normans in 1086. Kingsley and Bradley-in-the-Moors had belonged to Ralph son of Hubert who had enfeoffed Robert de Bucy with them. Bradley was certainly in Bertram III de Verdun's possession in 1179-80 but how and when it and Kingsley came to the family is not clear. Perhaps they had escheated or been forfeited to the crown with the rest of de Bucy's possessions. In 1086, Caverswall and Oaken were held by Robert of Stafford, while the land in Stapenhill not held by Burton abbey was in the hands of Nigel of Stafford. Unfortunately there is no indication as to how any of these three manors came into de Verdun possession, or when they did so.

Most (thirteen) of these manors were located in Totmonslow hundred in the north-east of the county. This was a marginal moorland area, with poor soils lying on hills which rise above 800 feet. It is consequently no surprise that population levels at the time of the Domesday survey were low. There was less than one person per square mile - the lowest level in Staffordshire with the exception of Cannock Forest. Despite the disadvantages of the area, it was here in

32 These were Sheen, Musden, Rownall, Farley, Wootton, Alton, Newton, Denstone, Stanton, Biddulph, and Bucknall.
33 Fenton, Croxden, Audley, Balterley and Talke.
34 DB, Staffordshire, 17,12-14.
35 DB, Staffordshire, 15,1-2. Bradley is found in Bertram III's possession in his foundation charter for Croxden abbey. Kingsley first appears in de Verdun hands in the 1274 inquisition, but had presumably come into de Verdun ownership long before this.
36 De Bucy's honour of Weldon (Leicestershire) passed via Henry I to the Ridels and from them to the Bassets. (W. T. Reedy, Basset Charters, c.1120-1250, Pipe Roll Society new series, 50 (1995), pp. xi-xii.)
Totmonslow hundred that the de Verduns established their English caput, building, by c.1175 at latest, a castle in the manor of Alton. It may be that the strong defensive possibilities of the site recommended it for the job - the north wall of the castle stands on the edge of a precipitous fall to the Churnet valley - although the location of the manor at the centre of the most closely concentrated group of estates was probably of more consequence when Bertram de Verdun came to make his decision. "The location of the honorial castle or seat had far more to do with access to the component rights and manors than to any strategic considerations. If a baron had fairly important properties in a region, he wanted an administrative seat there and a fortress to watch over his interests."38

All these manors in Totmonslow hundred were listed as waste in 1086. However, as virtually all the surrounding manors were given values, this may be more an indication of their remoteness from the sphere of royal administration, with a consequent inefficiency in management, rather than a residual effect from the Harrying of the North. In this respect the grant to the de Verduns may be an example of the trend observed by Southern in 1962: "In some counties there is evidence of considerable alienation of royal demesne, and these alienations may well be connected with the unsatisfactory state of royal administration in the area, going back to a period before Domesday Book."39 Nor, in this case, can William Rufus or Henry I be accused of reducing the crown revenues since, on Domesday figures at least, the lands were virtually worthless.

The caput of the family's estates might have been located in Staffordshire but it is the Leicestershire survey of c.1129-30 which contains the earliest detailed, if incomplete, evidence for the composition of any part of the lordship. The survey names seven manors in which Norman de Verdun, Bertram II de Verdun's son and heir, held lands by that date. Nothing is known of the earlier history of four of these manors. Two, Belton and Long Whatton, are not recorded in Domesday Book at all.40 While Domesday does record that Hugh de Grandmesnil held two

40 *YCH, Leicestershire*, 1, pp. 349, 351. It should be stated here that there is no evidence whatsoever to show that Norman de Verdun's lands at Belton, Staunton Harold or Discworth were held of the Ferrers family as Peter Golob has asserted. (P. E. Golob, 'The Ferrers Earls of Derby: A Study of the Honour of Tutbury', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 1984), p. 122 and n. 62.)
carucates in his manor of Staunton Harold (a manor found in possession of Robert de Ferrers in 1129) it fails to provide any information about the existence, or previous owner, of the three carucates there that appear in the hands of Norman de Verdun in 1129.\textsuperscript{41} Equally, Diseworth is recorded in Domesday as being a manor of three carucates held by William Lovett. These three carucates were in the possession of "the earl" (probably the earl of Chester) in 1129, but there is no record in Domesday of the fourteen additional carucates which appear in the Leicestershire survey and which were then held between Norman and his powerful neighbours, the earl of Chester and Robert I de Ferrers.\textsuperscript{42} It is only in the case of the three remaining manors found in the survey that Domesday provides adequate information. These were Skeffington, divided in 1129 between Norman and Richard Basset, Tugby and Halstead. They had all been part of the royal demesne in 1086, when they formed outliers of the royal manor of Rothley.\textsuperscript{43}

Four other manors which are later found in de Verdun hands made up part of the Domesday holding of Hugh de Grandmesnil. The reason for the de Grandmesnils' forfeiture is well known. Henry I "accused Ivo [de Grandmesnil], who was unable to clear himself of waging war in England and burning the crops of his neighbours." Ivo asked Robert de Meulan for help in mitigating the king's wrath. Furthermore, he mortgaged his lands to the count in return for an advance of 500 marks so that he could go on a crusade. "Ivo set out on pilgrimage with his wife; he died on the journey and his inheritance passed into other hands."\textsuperscript{44} It has been assumed that by this Orderic meant that Robert de Meulan gained the de Grandmesnil estates in their entirety and this is the line followed by some later historians. Sanders stated that "Ivo's lands passed to Robert I de Beaumont, count of Meulan, Domesday lord of extensive lands in Warwickshire."\textsuperscript{45} Chibnall too follows the line laid down by Orderic, repeating that "[Ivo] and his wife died on the pilgrimage, and the inheritance passed, not to his young son Ivo, but to Robert [de] Meulan."\textsuperscript{46}

This, however, is an oversimplification. Robert de Ferrers held the de Grandmesnils' manor of Staunton Harold in 1129, as was mentioned above, and it

\textsuperscript{41} DB, Leicestershire, 13,67; VCH, Leicestershire, 1, p. 350 and ns. 118 and 119.
\textsuperscript{42} DB, Leicestershire, 27,1; VCH, Leicestershire, 1, p. 350 and n. 124.
\textsuperscript{43} DB, Leicestershire, 1,3; VCH, Leicestershire, 1, pp. 345-6.
may also be the case that the de Verduns shared in the division of Ivo de Grandmesnil's estates soon after his exile in 1102. Cotesbach, Newbold Verdon, Market Bosworth and Burton Overy were all held by de Grandmesnil in 1086 and all subsequently turn up as de Verdun manors between the mid-twelfth century and the later half of the thirteenth century. What is not entirely clear, however, is exactly when these manors came into de Verdun hands. The best evidence concerns Bosworth. The church - held by de Grandmesnil in 1086 - and two hides there had been granted to St Mary's abbey, York, by Bertram de Verdun before 1156-7 when Henry II confirmed the gift. As Bertram III de Verdun was still a minor at the time, this grant must have been made by either Bertram I or II, one of whom had the opportunity to become familiar with the abbey, and possibly make his donation, during his time in Yorkshire. Cotesbach too might have been acquired by the de Verduns soon after de Grandmesnil's forfeiture because the 1309 inquisition post mortem states that Alton was a member of that manor. Burton Overy, however, appears to have been a later gain. This manor, which is known to have been held by Bertram III in c.1179, was apparently held in its entirety by Robert de Meulan in 1129 and so must have been acquired by the de Verduns' later. The most likely time would have been after the end of the 'Great War' of 1173-4 at a time when the earl of Leicester was in disgrace and Bertram III was high in the king's favour. If this were the case it might also explain why the service Bertram owed for his lands was not increased at the same time. This leaves Newbold Verdon. In this case there is no evidence to determine whether the manor was held by Norman de Verdun by 1129 or whether it came to the family at some other point before 1274.

The lordship of Alton, then, formed a compact unit in the north of Staffordshire with a smaller and more scattered group of lands in Leicestershire. It might be that these lands were given to Bertram de Verdun as part of William II's attempts to strengthen the northern frontier. In this respect the compact Staffordshire element

47 Monasticon, 3, p. 548; EYC, 1, pp. 269-77 especially p. 274. Farrer dated the confirmation charter by its witness list. Although the address clause suggests a later date, the charter survives only as a cartulary copy so it is likely that this clause was altered when the charter was copied.
48 PRO, C134/14/19.
49 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47; BL, Cotton Charter xi.7; Monasticon, 5, p. 662; C. Lynam, St Mary's Abbey, Croxden, Staffordshire, appendix 1, pp. i-ii. The VCH notes the existence of Theobald II's holding in Burton Overy in 1316 but claims that nothing is known of its earlier history. (VCH, Leicestershire, v, pp. 68-76 and especially p. 72.)
50 DB, Leicestershire, 13,16; VCH, Leicestershire, 1, p. 345. Domesday records the manor as containing twelve carucates and this is the amount found in Meulan's hands in 1129. It may be, of course, that Domesday is not complete, but there is no way of being sure.
of the lordship of Alton reflects the consolidated lordships of the north and midlands, such as the neighbouring honour of Tutbury, Roger de Bully's lordship in Nottinghamshire and the compact holdings of Earl Hugh of Chester's major tenants in Cheshire. However, all these lordships were constructed before 1086 and reflect the insecurity that had prevailed in the area in the decade or so after the Conquest. The situation seems to have been much more secure during the reigns of Rufus and Henry I which saw the frontier pushed back to Yorkshire and Cumberland.

Consequently it seems unlikely that Alton was designed as a frontier lordship, despite the low level of service asked from it. Its compact form, in fact, need not imply a frontier position at all. The Clare estates in Kent, Surrey and Suffolk, for example, all formed separate, compact units of land. Indeed, it is likely that the form of the lands in Staffordshire and Leicestershire were more the result of accident than design as the de Verduns had to be fitted into areas which were already well-settled in 1086. An alternative suggestion can be put forward. It may be that Bertram de Verdun was established in the midlands to act as a counterpoint to the local interests of great magnates. A few examples can be used to illustrate the point. Following the baronial revolt of 1124 in which Roger, earl of Warwick, was implicated (if only through his cousin's involvement), Geoffrey de Clinton was established in Warwickshire. He was there as a counterpoise against Roger and a focus for the king's authority in a county with little royal demesne. Similarly, Richard Basset was established in Leicestershire at about the same time, thereby underpinning royal control and authority in the area. It may be, then, that de Verdun was established in Staffordshire by Rufus or Henry I for the same reason - to reinforce royal authority in the county at a time when much of the royal demesne was being given to the earl of Chester, or when the deaths of Hugh of Chester in 1101 and of his son, Richard, in the wreck of the White Ship in 1120, caused a degree of uncertainty in the area. From his castle at Alton, de Verdun could watch over the lands and aspirations of his neighbours, the earls of Chester and the de Ferrers family, while at the same time his lands formed something of a buffer between the interests of the two. Whether the result of accident or design,

53 In this way, the de Verdun estates can perhaps be compared in function, if not in size, with the Perche Gouet or Belleme, both established by the counts of Blois-Champagne against the ambitions of Count Routrou of Mortagne and the dukes of Normandy respectively. (K. Thompson, 'The Formation of the County of Perche: The Rise and Fall of the House of Gouet', Family Trees and the Roots of Politics, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 311.)
the strategic importance of the de Verdun lands in the struggle for supremacy in
the Midlands is revealed both by Ranulf II of Chester's attempt to acquire them in
the treaty of Devizes of 1153\(^{54}\) and by the marriage of Bertram III de Verdun to
Matilda de Ferrers which occurred between 1139 and 1159. This marriage bears
comparison with that of Geoffrey II de Clinton and Agnes, Earl Roger of
Warwick's daughter, and, indeed, if Bertram III's marriage to the earl's daughter
was not similarly due to local politics, it is difficult to account for such a socially
unequal match.

*Norman de Verdun c.1129-1153.*

By 1129-30, Bertram II de Verdun was dead and had been succeeded by his son,
Norman. It seems that Norman had already been married to a certain Agnes before
his father's death and that this marriage had brought Crakemarsh (Staffordshire) to
the de Verduns, suggesting a Ferrers connection. However, Agnes died before or
around the time of Norman's succession to his family's estates, apparently without
producing any children, and it may well be that Crakemarsh returned to her family
at that point.\(^{55}\) Norman's second wife was Lecelina de Clinton, the daughter of
Geoffrey I de Clinton, Henry I's chamberlain, who had been established in
Warwickshire by the king in 1124 with his caput at Kenilworth. The first surviving
record of a link between Norman de Verdun and Geoffrey de Clinton dates to
1129\(^{56}\), and takes the form of Norman de Verdun's appearance amongst the
witnesses of a charter granting St Ulfad's church in Stone (Staffordshire) to
Geoffrey de Clinton's foundation of Kenilworth priory.\(^{57}\) Norman also attested a
second charter given to the priory by Hugh fitzRichard before 1139.\(^{57}\) In all
probability this second attestation, and indeed Norman's marriage to Lecelina, date
from before Geoffrey I de Clinton's death in 1135, for relations between Norman

\(^{54}\) Regestia, 3, no. 180.

\(^{55}\) A charter of William I de Ferrers, dated 1159-89, confirmed Bertram III de Verdun in
possession of Crakemarsh as "Norman his father or Agnes his step-mother (noverca) best and
most completely held it." (BL, Additional Charter 71349). The very fact that William I was in a
position to confirm Bertram in possession of lands that Agnes had held suggests that she had
some kind of de Ferrers connection. As Lecelina, Bertram's mother, was still alive in 1179-80
there are considerable problems in making Agnes Bertram's step-mother in the modern sense.
Following discussions with Robert Bartlett and John Hudson, it seems most likely that the writer
of the charter used *noverca* to mean Norman's first wife simply because there was no other
convenient term available.

\(^{56}\) Monasticon, 6/1, p. 232.

\(^{57}\) BL, Harley MS 3650, fos. 15-15v. The charter must date to before 1139 as Siward of Arden,
who had died by that year, is another of the witnesses.
de Verdun and Geoffrey de Clinton's son, heir and namesake were not good, chiefly as a result of the composition of Lecelina's maritagium. Some supporting evidence for the date of the marriage is found in the fact that Norman's son and heir, Bertram III, achieved his majority between Michaelmas 1158 and 1159 as this implies that it must have taken place by - at latest - 1137-8.

Some idea of the lands and possessions that Norman de Verdun's marriage to Lecelina brought to his family can be obtained from later evidence. Arguably the single most important element of Lecelina's maritagium was the castle at Brandon (Warwickshire). Although there is no specific evidence that Norman acquired the castle at this time, it is certain that it was held by Bertram III de Verdun as he mentioned his park of Brandon in an agreement with Henry of Rugby of c.1180-90.\(^58\) The castle also appears in the pipe roll of 1194-5 when William fitzRichard made account of the lands of Bertram de Verdun which had been in his custody before Thomas de Verdun reached his majority late in 1194.\(^59\) This castle must have formed part of Lecelina's dowry for Bertram III to have held it, simply because relations between the families were not strong enough for Bertram III to have acquired it any other way. For the same reasons, it is almost certain that the marriage also brought the de Verduns other lands in Warwickshire and Oxfordshire.

This can be proven in the case of Hethe in Oxfordshire, as Lecelina herself referred to it as being "situated in my patrimony."\(^60\) Horley and Hornton in the same county both appear in the 1316 inquisition as being members of the honour of Brandon and probably formed a part of Lecelina's dowry too.\(^61\) Certainly, land in Hornton was held from Nicholas de Verdun by Hugh Bardolf before 1231 as Hugh sought a confirmatory charter for the "fifty-two acres in one field and twenty-four in the other field and five acres of meadow in his lordship, and one acre for making a messuage" in Hornton which he had granted to Stanley abbey.\(^62\) In Warwickshire, meadows at Barford and Ashow were granted to Kenilworth priory by Bertram III, while William of Bourton made a grant of the mill at Blackdown in

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\(^{58}\) BL, Cotton MS Vitellus A.i., fo. 165v.
\(^{59}\) PR, 7 Richard I, p. 198.
\(^{60}\) BL, Additional MS 47677, fo. 356.
\(^{61}\) PRO, C134/56/1; CIPM, 6, no. 54.
\(^{62}\) BL, Campbell Charter xiii, 22; W. de G. Birch. 'Collections Towards the History of the Cistercian Abbey of Stanley in Wiltshire', Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine, 15 (1875), p. 286. There is a different version of this same charter in BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 185.
1.2. The remains of Brandon castle
Lillington to Combe abbey with Bertram III's consent.\(^{63}\) The appearance of these lands in Bertram III's hands suggests that they too formed part of Lecelina's dowry. The survey of 1242-3 records all these estates as then being in the hands of Roesia de Verdun, Bertram III's granddaughter. It further reveals that Avon Dasset, Sheldon, Bourton and Thurlaston were likewise all held of the earl of Warwick by Roesia.\(^{64}\) It is likely, therefore, that these other Warwickshire manors also came to the de Verduns on Lecelina's marriage to Norman. This is the line taken by historians from Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* to the *Victoria County History*, and although general agreement is no substitute for proof there is no evidence to support any alternative theory.\(^{65}\)

Lecelina thus brought Norman de Verdun considerable estates in Warwickshire and this seems to have stirred the resentment of Geoffrey de Clinton's son and successor, Geoffrey II. Although Brandon made up part of Lecelina's dowry, "Geoffrey her brother had a hope to regain it; for having given lands in Bretford, near adjoyning, to found there a small cell for nuns....... [he] covenanted with the canons of Kenilworth, that, if he recovered Brandon, he would give them as much land in value as that in Bretford and have that again in exchange."\(^{66}\) This, it would seem, he had achieved by 1137-8. In a *conventio* made between Geoffrey II and Earl Roger of Warwick, de Clinton was granted along with the earl's daughter, Agnes, the service of ten out of the seventeen knights that Geoffrey owed the earl. These knights were to do castle-guard at Brandon - Brandon being mentioned without any reference to the de Verduns.\(^{67}\) Perhaps it was the recovery of Brandon from the de Verduns, along with that part of his land granted away by his father as Lecelina's dowry, that Geoffrey II celebrated in the charter by which he granted Ermenfrid de Ponte land in Milverton, which was dated by the recovery of his *castellum* and *honor*.\(^{68}\)

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\(^{63}\) BL, Additional MS 47677, fo. 356; BL, Cotton MS Vitellus A.i., fo. 60.

\(^{64}\) *BF*, p. 955.

\(^{65}\) Note that Ibstock in Leicestershire, held by Roesia de Verdun of the earl of Warwick in 1235-6, appears to have come to the family by a different route. (*BF*, p. 520; *Leicestershire*, 4/2, p. 749.) There is, however, no information as to how Bruntingthorp in Leicestershire came to be held from the same earl by Roesia de Verdun by 1235-6.


It remains to be considered how the deteriorating relations between Geoffrey II de Clinton and Norman de Verdun modify David Crouch's picture of events in Warwickshire at the beginning of Stephen's reign. Crouch believes that Roger of Warwick attacked Geoffrey II de Clinton in the years immediately following Henry I's death in 1135. The "most explicit" evidence for this is that same charter to Ermenfrid mentioned above because it refers to the recovery of Geoffrey's castle and honour, the castle being identified, albeit speculatively, as that at Brandon. "Supporting evidence that Geoffrey II did not get his lands back without a damaging fight is to be found in another charter, this time issued by William Giffard, Earl Roger's steward, who made heavy compensation for the ravages he carried out on the lands of Kenilworth priory."69 Crouch concludes that the struggle Geoffrey II put up was sufficiently fierce to embarrass Earl Roger into settling the matter peaceably by granting the generous marriage settlement mentioned above.

There are two obvious qualifications that need to be made to Crouch's argument. The first is that Geoffrey de Clinton could not have lost Brandon castle to Earl Roger of Warwick. This is illustrated not only by Norman de Verdun's tenure of the castle, but also by Geoffrey II's grant of land at Bretford to Kenilworth priory which mentions his intention to recover Brandon. If it were the hostile (under Crouch's argument) earl of Warwick who held Brandon, then any grant of lands in nearby Bretford would have been useless. Secondly, once it becomes clear that Geoffrey II recovered Brandon from the de Verduns, the "most explicit" evidence for Earl Roger's attacks on de Clinton becomes ambiguous. To a certain extent, this ambiguity pervades the rest of Crouch's argument. Giffard's charter could date from as late as 1144, as Crouch himself admits, which makes its relationship to the marriage conventio difficult to establish with certainty. Indeed, the only event that this conventio demonstrated had happened, with the exception of the marriage itself, was that Brandon had been lost by the de Verduns. Yet Crouch's picture of events remains attractive in some ways and does provide a reason for Giffard's ravaging. One further modification might perhaps be made, however. The manor of Milverton lies close to Warwick, itself only two miles distant from Kenilworth, while Giffard's charter makes reference only to ravaging in and around the de Clintons' capital manor. Thus, it is likely that if Geoffrey II did lose a castle to the earl, it was his caput at Kenilworth rather than that at Brandon. Indeed, it could

1. Rushton  
2. Longsdon  
3. Ipstones  
4. Sheldon  
5. Brandon  
6. Bourton  
7. Thurlaston  
8. Ashow  
9. Lillington  
10. Wolflampcote  
11. Flecknoe  
12. Barford  
13. Avon Dasset  
14. Horley (Oxon.)  
15. Hornton (Oxon.)

1.3 Lands acquired or probably acquired by Norman de Verdun in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, 1129-53
even be the case that this hypothesised loss of Kenilworth provided Geoffrey with a pressing incentive to recover his family's erstwhile castle at Brandon.

Norman de Verdun attested only one of King Stephen's extant charters, a confirmation of a grant to St Andrew's Northampton made by Earl Simon de Senlis which was made at York at some date between 1136 and 1153. Norman was not, therefore, a prominent figure at Stephen's court. Instead, his political activities appear from the surviving evidence to have centred on the court of Ranulf II of Chester. The earls of Chester were also hereditary viscounts of the Avranchin, in which the de Verduns' Norman lands were situated, and it is highly likely, therefore, that the family had come into contact with the earls previously - indeed, Bertram II attested a charter issued by Robert de Ducey to Mont-St-Michel in the presence of Earl Ranulf I in 1124x9. Relations between Norman de Verdun and Ranulf II were clearly cordial, for Norman appears frequently in the witness lists of Ranulf II's charters - in fact his eighteen appearances total more than any other member of the earl's entourage with the single exception of Richard, the earl's butler. Norman was also of some standing at the earl's court appearing at the head of the witness list in 31% of the charters he attested and second in 47%, being always found below the constable and Robert, the earl's steward, when they appear with him.

The place-dates of these charters reveal that Norman de Verdun travelled about with Earl Ranulf far from his own estates. He is found with the earl at Rhuddlan in c.1135, at Lincoln in 1144-6 and he accompanied the earl to Carlisle in 1149, witnessing a grant made by Ranulf to Lancaster priory on the return leg of the journey. However, although Norman witnessed Ranulf II's agreement with Robert Marmion in 1144, he does not attest any of the more famous conventiones between Ranulf and Robert of Leicester. A further illustration of the good relations between the two men can be found in Ranulf II's grants of land to Norman. The 1242-3 survey in the Book of Fees reveals that Rushton, the Longsdons and a moiety of Ipstones were held from the earl of Chester at that date and although

70 Regesta, 3, no. 612.
71 Avranches, Bibliotheque Municipale, MS 210, fos. 85v.-86.
72 G. Barraclough, The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c.1071-1237, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 126 (1988), nos. 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 36, 55, 62, 63, 66, 67, 71, 73, 74, 80, 81, 88, 93.
73 G. Barraclough, Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, nos. 36, 80, 88.
74 BF, p. 970.
only Rushton can be proven to have been granted to Norman by the earl, it is likely that these other places came to the de Verduns at the same time. Certainly Ipstones was held by Bertram III's time since he granted it to Herbert, his brother, whose family subsequently took the manor's name as their toponym. It would seem that Ranulf also gave Norman the manor of Marston St Laurence in Northamptonshire, which had been held from Hugh of Chester by Robert of Rhuddlan in 1086. In 1153, however, Norman's heir was forbidden to claim the manor in the future after Ranulf gave it to the bishop of Lincoln "in compensation for the damages which he had inflicted on the church of St Mary of Lincoln."76

Bertram III de Verdun, 1153-1192.

Bertram was a minor at the time of his father's death and it is likely that his wardship and the custody of his estates were given to Richard de Humez, Henry II's constable and a man who appears to have been almost constantly in attendance at the court in the first decade of Henry's rule. This is suggested by the foundation charter of Croxden abbey in which Bertram III refers to Richard as the one "qui me nutrivit."77 Nothing is known of Bertram III's movements at this time, however. Although a Bertram de Verdun witnesses William de Verdun's agreement with Mont-St-Michel over the mill at Tiseel in 1155, it is likely that this was the same Bertram who had witnessed one of Ranulf II of Chester's charters during Stephen's reign and who had also witnessed charters issued by Hugh and Henry of Arden to Kenilworth priory sometime between 1139 and 1147. This Bertram was perhaps Bertram III's uncle.

Although Bertram de Verdun himself was not in the news, his English estates were at the forefront of affairs in the midlands in the year following his father's death. In January 1153, at Devizes, Henry came to an agreement with Ranulf II of Chester by which Ranulf was to take possession of "the whole of the county of Stafford" with the exception of some named fees but including, amongst others,

75 WS, 4/1, p. 109.
76 G. Barraclough, Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, no. 106.
77 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47; BL, Cotton Charter xi.7; Monasticon, 5, p. 662; C. Lynam, St Mary's Abbey, Croxden, Staffordshire, appendix 1, pp. i-ii.
79 G. Barraclough, Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, no. 76; BL, Harley MS 3650, fos. 16v.-17, 31-31v. These latter charters are dated by the deaths of Siward of Arden in 1139 and that of Prior Bernard in 1147.
1.3 The Seal of Bertram III de Verdun (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47).
the fees of Alan of Lincoln, Ernisius de Burun, Robert of Stafford and "the whole fee of Norman de Verdun," along with Nottingham castle and "the whole fee of William Peverel." This is not to say that Norman's heirs were to be disinherited but merely that Ranulf would become lord of the honour, standing between the de Verduns and the king, instead of the de Verduns remaining as tenants-in-chief. As it turned out, Ranulf himself died in December 1153, leaving a six year old minor and the treaty was never implemented. That this was the turn events would take was, of course, unknown to Robert II de Ferrers, earl of Derby, in January and he must have spent 1153 in some anxiety as the treaty "amounted to the union of the two great blocks of Chester territory, those centring on Lincolnshire and Chester, leaving the Honour of Tutbury an almost totally isolated island in the middle."81

The result of the earl's concern, according to Peter Golob, was a frenzy of alliance building amongst his neighbours, all of which presumably took place in the months between the agreement at Devizes and Ranulf II's death. For a start, Robert II de Ferrers enfeoffed Walter de Somerville with a quarter of a knight's fee and Geoffrey Marmion with three knight's fees, so providing "evidence of Robert extending his relationship with men who were not only his neighbours but were also royalist and threatened by the Earl of Chester."82 Secondly, Robert married his daughter, Matilda, to Bertram de Verdun and in so doing "formed an alliance which strengthened his position in what was for him a sensitive part of Leicestershire, being on the border with major blocks of Chester and Leicester holdings."83 By this marriage, Golob asserts, "Bertram de Verdun gained the advantage of Robert II's protection at a time when it was extremely valuable,"84 his lands also being under threat from Ranulf II and his "protégé" William de Verdun, identified as Bertram III's younger brother.

There are several problems with Golob's interpretation of the marriage of Matilda de Ferrers to Bertram de Verdun and the events surrounding it. In the first place it should be pointed out that there is not the slightest evidence that William de Verdun was conniving with Ranulf II to take possession of his brother's inheritance. In fact William de Verdun was probably Bertram III's uncle and the same man who can be found in Normandy in 1155. It is likely, then, that he

80 Regesta, 3, no. 180.
82 ibid, p. 126.
83 ibid, p. 125.
84 ibid, p. 125.
attested the treaty of Devizes as the family's representative rather than as Ranulf II's protégé. Nor is there any evidence that the imposition of Ranulf of Chester as the de Verduns' lord in place of the king was objectionable to the family. Norman de Verdun had close links with the earl and had already become one of Ranulf's tenants. The treaty would simply have taken this process one stage further. In 1153, in the aftermath of Stephen's reign, the de Verduns may well have considered that they had more to gain from Ranulf's lordship than from the king's anyway. It need not be the case, then, that Bertram or his lands needed protecting from Ranulf II of Chester in 1153.

Secondly, the marriage does not have to have been a response to the treaty of Devizes. When talking of Bertram de Verdun's "scattered holdings" in Leicestershire, Golob fails to mention - and does not seem to know - that the de Verduns also held a considerable chunk of Totmonslow hundred in Staffordshire, centred on Alton, which neighboured the honour of Tutbury on the west. The lordship of Alton had a certain strategic value in local politics as it stood between the lands of de Ferrers and Chester, just as the de Verduns' estates in Leicestershire bordered the de Ferrers' lands and those of the earls of Leicester and Chester. There was good reason, then, for the earls of Derby to remain on good terms with the de Verduns and to be careful that the earls of Chester did not gain the upper hand in relations with the family. Norman de Verdun's close association and tenurial links with Ranulf II during Stephen's reign might have given the earl of Derby reason to examine ways in which he might bolster his own influence over the family, and a marriage would have been one of the more obvious ways to achieve this. It may well be the case, then, that Bertram de Verdun's marriage to Matilda de Ferrers occurred before 1153 and was the result of Robert de Ferrers' intention to prevent the de Verduns from becoming too closely tied to the earldom of Chester. It is even possible that Ranulf II's acquisition of the overlordship of the de Verdun lands in the treaty of Devizes was itself a response to this marriage.

Golob's belief that Bertram de Verdun needed the earl's protection in 1153 allowed him to explain away the marriage settlement which, he thought, gave him little more than his family already had - although it should be noted that the agreement Geoffrey II de Clinton made with Earl Roger of Warwick on his (comparable) marriage to the earl's daughter saw him given little more than the service of ten of the seventeen knights that de Clinton owed the earl. However, despite Golob's assertion to the contrary, the estates given to Bertram III on his
marriage do not seem to have been held by the de Verduns before. These estates are identified in a charter in the Breedon-on-the-Hill cartulary which states that Bertram III was given a fee and a half at Crakemarsh and Creighton (Staffordshire), half a fee at Foremark, half a fee at New Hall and Stanton, a third of a fee in Hartshorn (Derbyshire), half a fee in Newbold and Worthington, and a quarter of a fee in Staunton Harold (Leicestershire) the last of which supplemented the lands that the de Verduns had held in that manor since at least 1129-30.85 Although William I de Ferrers was later to confirm Bertram III in possession of lands in Crakemarsh formerly held by Norman de Verdun, there is no evidence that even these lands had been in Norman's hands at the time of his death in 1153 and, consequently, there is no proof that even this part of the marriage settlement was simply a confirmation of an existing tenure.

Despite the fact that Bertram's marriage to Matilda appears to have been childless, these lands continued to be held by later generations of the family, perhaps because the alliance between de Ferrers and de Verdun was still considered a useful one by the earls. Between 1194 and 1199, Thomas de Verdun confirmed "to Bertram de Verdun, my brother, and his heirs, the whole vill of Foremark, with all its appurtenances, which Bertram de Verdun, my father, gave to the same when he was setting out for the land of Jerusalem, and the fee of one knight in Hartshorn, and the fee of half a knight in Stanton and New Hall and the fee of a third part of a knight in Staunton Harold."86 Before 1231, Nicholas de Verdun confirmed a rent of 20s. from the mill at Crakemarsh to the earls of Ferrers.87 In addition, the survey of 1242-3 in the Book of Fees reveals that Roesia de Verdun held Staunton Harold and Worthington from the earl of Ferrers,88 while the survey of de Verdun knight's fees appended to the 1316 inquisition confirms that the family still held in Foremark, Hartshorn, New Hall, Crakemarsh, Creighton and Worthington at that date.89

85 Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 222, fo. 29v. The location of Newbold is not clear. In 1086, the only manor of that name held by Henry de Ferrers was Newbold Saucey in the far east of the county. However, it is possible that the de Ferrers family had later acquired possession of the second of Hugh de Grandmesnil's manors at Newbold Verdon and that this was here given to Bertram III. A third alternative is provided by that Newbold which neighbours Worthington and Osgathorpe but which does not appear in Domesday Book. As a result of this uncertainty, Newbold has not been plotted on map 1.4 below.
87 Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 222, fo. 35.
88 BF, p. 947.
89 CIPM, 6, no. 54, pp. 37-8.
Bertram III's minority was short-lived. He had achieved his majority and succeeded to his patrimony by 1158-9 when he appears in the pipe roll accounting for 40 marks, probably as part of his relief.\(^90\) The beginning of Bertram III's independent career, however, did not sever his connection with Richard de Humez. This was to last until de Humez's retirement in 1178 and is evidenced by a variety of material, the volume of which suggests that the relationship was a close one. Perhaps the first surviving charter that Bertram III attested, which can be dated to 1163-4, concerned a grant "in fee and heredity of Wrottesley and Loynton" made by the abbey of Evesham to Simon fitzWilliam of Coctun.\(^91\) The witness list of this charter is composed of men who divide neatly between persons associated with the abbey and persons, like Bertram III, associated with Richard de Humez.\(^92\) Between 1165 and 1176 (although probably more towards the later date) Bertram III made a grant of "the whole and undivided land of Wolfhampcote (Warwickshire) which was Ailwin de Suham's" to Walter Breton, Richard de Humez's seneschal and a substantial landowner in Dorset in his own right.\(^93\) More directly, Bertram witnessed a grant issued by de Humez to the abbey of St Michael at Stamford in 1170\(^94\) and he can also be found amongst the witnesses of those charters Richard de Humez gave to the abbey of Aunay-sur-Odon in Normandy before his retirement in 1178.\(^95\)

The association was further cemented by Richard de Humez's grants to Bertram III of half of Great Limber along with lands in Stamford and possibly a third of a fee in Kirkby (Lincolnshire). De Verdun was to use some of these lands to join in with de Humez's religious benefactions. At some point before Richard's retirement, Bertram granted "the church of Great Limber with all its appurtenances, lands, tithes and all other endowments" to the abbey of Aunay-sur-Odon jointly with Richard and at de Humez's request.\(^96\) Richard and Bertram III also made a joint gift to the Hospital of St John the Baptist in Stamford of a meadow to the north of

\(^{90}\) PR, 5 Henry II, p. 29.
\(^{91}\) Simon appears to have been a member of the de Verdun family, although his precise relationship to Bertram de Verdun is uncertain. (WS, 9/1, p. 62 and n. 3).
\(^{92}\) WS, 2/1, pp. 187-8.
\(^{94}\) *Monasticom*, 4, p. 261.
\(^{95}\) Caen, Archives du Calvados, H.667. I owe this reference to Dr D. Power.
the bridge there as a site for the hospital's church and cemetery. Most importantly of all, Bertram's own monastic foundation at Croxden highlights his links with Richard de Humez. Firstly, it was founded as a daughter house of the Cistercian abbey of Aunay-sur-Odon in Normandy - the abbey which had benefited so much from de Humez's patronage that Robert of Torigny describes him as having built it and to which Richard retired in 1178. Secondly, Bertram's foundation charter names Richard (or rather his soul) as being one of the intended beneficiaries of the new foundation. Although de Verdun's association with Richard de Humez was thus intended to continue after the latter's death, Bertram's links with his family effectively died with him. Bertram de Verdun does not appear to have attended the courts, or enjoyed the patronage, of any of de Humez's sons.

That Bertram III de Verdun did not turn out to be a baron closely associated with the earldom of Chester, as his father had been, but a frequenter of the court and eventually one of Henry II's familiares is a development which can be put down to Bertram's connections with Richard de Humez. Richard's closeness to Henry II not only led to Bertram III's introduction to the court, but provided Richard with the influence and patronage required to advance Bertram's career there. "The contemporaries of Henry II were well aware that advancement and material promotion in both church and state depended on a man's ability to find a powerful and influential patron at the royal court or to win the favour of the king himself." Nor are the names of others whose careers were promoted by an influential patron hard to find. Ralph Brito was able to use his connections with Richard de Lucy and Gilbert Foliot to further his career. A second example, Richard Barre, seems to have come to Henry II's employ via the household of Robert de Chesney, bishop of London, or Nicholas, archdeacon of Huntingdon.

It is likely that Bertram had frequented the court with de Humez from the time of his wardship onwards, although it was not until the mid 1160s that he had become prominent enough to appear in a royal charter's witness list. From this time

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97 Monasticon, 6/2, p. 638.
100 ibid, pp. 169-70.
101 R. Turner, Administrators and the Common Law in Angevin England (London, 1994), p. 185. Though Turner points out that the stages by which Richard came from the courts of these ecclesiastics to that of the king are unknown.
onwards, however, Bertram III attested royal charters with increasing frequency and although this does not necessarily suggest he attended the court more often, it does indicate a growing importance in court circles. That Bertram's career was on the rise is perhaps better illustrated by the fact that, following the Inquest of Sheriffs, he replaced William Basset as sheriff of Warwick and Leicester at Easter 1170, remaining in that office until Michaelmas 1185.103

Three years later Bertram was to find his shrievalty and, indeed, his estates in one of the centres of rebellion of the 'Great War'. That Bertram III supported the king during the war of 1173-4 is a striking illustration of his loyalty, both to the king and to Richard de Humez, as his estates in Staffordshire and Leicestershire were surrounded by those of the rebellious earls of Chester, Leicester and Ferrers which made such a stand precarious. Furthermore, his estates in Normandy were at risk too, as the earl of Chester was also vicomte of the Avranchin - an area in which he was active with Ralph de Fougeres until their capture at Dol in 1173. Such loyalty firmly established Bertram's place at the court and probably gave him a standing there independent of Richard de Humez's support.

Although some of the activity in England during the 'Great War' centred on the midlands in general, and on Bertram's county of Leicestershire in particular, Bertram III's role in the war is not known in any detail. In 1173, Richard de Lucy, the justiciar, was active at Leicester, capturing the town in July. The castle, however, remained in the hands of the rebel earl of Leicester's men, with whom de Lucy made a truce before heading north to fight the Scots. Bertram's role at Leicester with de Lucy - if any - is unknown, although the pipe roll for 1172-3 records that he hired 115 carpenters who were sent to join the royal army in Leicestershire for sixteen days, where it is tempting to see them making siege equipment with the unfinished timber, rope and wheels which Bertram sent with them. The same pipe roll also records Bertram's provisioning of the great Warwickshire strongholds of Warwick and Kenilworth with a total of 180 seams of wheat, 100 pigs, ninety cows (and the salt to preserve them), 116 cheeses and forty seams of malt,104 while the pipe roll of 1173-4 has his account for the payment of the garrisons of knights and sergeants that he had installed in these castles for terms of between twenty and 115 days.105

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103 PR, 16 Henry II, p. 86; PR, 31 Henry II, p. 95.
105 PR, 20 Henry II, pp. 139-40.
Bertram's own personal actions become clearer in the summer of 1174. After David of Huntingdon had joined the rebel garrison at Leicester, Huntingdon castle, the caput of David's English honour, was invested in an attempt to force him to leave the town. The attempt failed and David marched on Northampton instead. Jordan de Fantosme places Bertram at Northampton when David arrived. "Lord Bertram de Verdun was newly arrived there that day. He had splendid armour and a very swift charger: he was the very best of all who broke a lance. And there was no stopping Lord David of Scotland: he carried off so much booty that he was mightily pleased."¹⁰⁶

Clearly Bertram III was not successful in the face of Earl David's attack, although the passage does give some interesting incidental information concerning Bertram's skill in tournaments, always assuming that there is more to this description than the chivalric veneer with which Fantosme liked to season the characters in his chronicle. Fantosme had also stated that Bertram would be "mightily angered" if Leicester fell to the rebels,¹⁰⁷ so he may have gained some satisfaction from the demolition of the castle which he oversaw in 1175-6 in accordance with clause eight of the assize of Northampton.¹⁰⁸ His pleasure might have been further heightened because, since 1172, he had been involved in his own on-going quarrel with the earl of Leicester and his men over a breach of peace, the details of which are unknown.¹⁰⁹

Bertram III de Verdun seems also to have profited in a more material way from the earl of Leicester's disgrace. In c.1179, Bertram granted to his newly founded abbey at Croxden "the service of Ralph de Normanville and his heirs for the land which he held from me in the vill of Burton [Overy], namely seven shillings annually."¹¹⁰ Now, the Leicestershire survey of 1129-30 reveals Burton Overy to have been held by the earl of Leicester in its entirety - so far as that can be established from Domesday figures. Consequently, the de Verduns must have gained their part of that manor at some later date and there is no likelier time than

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¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, ll. 1113-4. Ch. 111, p. 83.
¹⁰⁸ PR, 22 Henry II, p.179; *EHD 1042-1189*, p. 413.
in the years immediately following the 'Great War' of 1173-4. Finally, it seems that Bertram de Verdun's tenure of Farnham Royal in Buckinghamshire was converted into a sergeanty as a result of his service during the war. It may even be the case that the manor was recovered at this time, having, perhaps, been lost during Stephen's reign.\[111\]

The end of the rebellion seems to have marked a new phase in Bertram's career, with him becoming further immersed in "the tricks of the court and.. the deceits of devils that have place there,"\[112\] allowing Roger of Howden to describe him as one of the king's *familiares* by 1177.\[113\] Following the suppression of the rebellions, Bertram III went to Normandy with the king where he attested several charters. The most important of these was the Peace of Falaise, by which William the Lion did homage for Scotland, which Bertram witnessed at Valognes on 8 December 1174.\[114\] From Normandy he returned with Henry II to England, where the pipe roll shows that he spent the whole of 1175-6 touring around the country with the court and acting as a royal justice - an office he had first performed at Oxford in 1172.\[115\] Charters place him at Rouen in 1177-8 when he witnessed a grant to Roger Barre\[116\] and at Tours sometime between 1180 and 1183, this being the furthest south he ever travelled with Henry II's court.\[117\] Charter evidence also reveals that Bertram was present at the well attended 1182-3 Christmas court at Caen where Henry attempted to restore family unity.\[118\]

The records of the Henry II Acta Project at Cambridge reveal that in total, Bertram III de Verdun witnessed forty-one of Henry II's charters throughout his

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111 That the manor was lost by the de Verduns at some point is suggested by the hundred rolls which state that the manor was "in the hand of the lord King Henry, father of King John. And the same Henry gave that manor to Bertram de Verdun for his service" (*Rot Hundredorum in Turri Londinensi*, Record Commission (London, 1812, 1818), 1, p. 46) - a statement which apparently contradicts the record found in Domesday. However, it may be that the compiler of the hundred rolls got confused with the creation of the sergeanty.


114 *Receuil*, 2, p. 23.

115 *EYC*, 1, p. 351.


117 *Receuil*, 2, pp. 165-6.

118 *ibid*, pp. 250-1.
reign, twenty-one of which could have been attested in the years 1179-89\textsuperscript{119} - the period for which Ralph Turner has drawn up a list of Henry II's ten leading witnesses. Turner's list is somewhat inaccurate, as he used only those charters found in Eyton's *Court, Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* to compile it.\textsuperscript{120} Nonetheless, the men Turner singled out can be used to provide a comparison with Bertram III de Verdun's appearances at court, especially after his statistics have been supplemented with the relevant figures from the Project database. The results of such an exercise are illustrated in Table 1.1, which reveals that de Verdun was by no means a particularly frequent attestor of the king's charters. This in turn seems to reinforce what we know of the responsibilities he was given by the king, for these often required him to be where the king was not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Turner's list of attestations</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Attestations in project database</th>
<th>New rank</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rannulf de Glanvill</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter de Coutances</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2=</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William de Humez</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2=</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh de Cressy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard of Ilchester</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Ridel</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William fitzRalph</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph fitzStephen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Belet</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh de Puiset</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4=</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertram de Verdun</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1. Attestations of Turner's ten leading *curiales* and Bertram de Verdun, 1179-89.

Bertram was granted the custody of Pontorson and its castle, just a few miles from his own lands at Verdun, at some point after 1172.\textsuperscript{121} In 1176 de Verdun was appointed as one of the new itinerant justices, being employed with William fitzStephen and Thurstan fitzSimon in hearing pleas in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire,\textsuperscript{122} while in March 1177 Henry II

\textsuperscript{119} I would like to thank Sir James Holt and Kate Dallingcr of the Henry II Acta Project for their help in providing these statistics.


\textsuperscript{121} Receuil, 2, p. 336.

\textsuperscript{122} Roger of Howden, *Gesta*, 1, p. 107.
"sent to Spain certain of his *familiares*, namely master John Cumin, Bertram de Verdun and Robert of Salisbury," to deliver letters concerning the Spanish award to the parties concerned - the kings of Castille and Navarre - and to prepare the way for an intended pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.\(^{123}\) Between 1185 and 1187 Bertram was given custody of the honour of Chester\(^{124}\) and, finally, in 1185 he was chosen to go with John to Ireland as his seneschal, where he seems to have remained until about 1188.

The variety of Bertram de Verdun's employment is typical of that of Henry II's administrators. Bertram's friend, Gilbert Pipard, was at various times sheriff of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Lancashire and was frequently employed as an itinerant justice. From 1176 he was a baron of the Norman exchequer and in 1179-80 was the keeper of Exmes. He preceded Bertram de Verdun as custodian of the honour of Chester, accounting for these lands in the pipe rolls of 1181-5.\(^{125}\) Ralph fitzStephen, likewise, can be found ferrying money across the Channel, taking charge of the baggage of the duke and duchess of Saxony, looking after the needs of the captive Queen Eleanor and supervising the construction of Henry II's Carthusian foundation at Witham in Somerset. He was sheriff of Gloucester between 1171 and 1175 and an itinerant justice, in which capacity he frequently acted with Bertram III. He was, furthermore, custodian of part of the honour of Richmond and the assessor of taxes on the forests of Sherwood and Chippenham.\(^{126}\)

Apart from his activities as justice and ambassador, de Verdun also continued to act as sheriff of Warwick and Leicester until 1185, although with the exception of the events of the 'Great War' in 1173-4 his shrievalty seems to have been largely uneventful. His office seems to have led to his attestation of a small number of extant charters, such as those three in the Garendon cartulary, issued by Geoffrey Haget, Hugh Malet and William fitzRichard,\(^{127}\) as well as a grant of two virgates of land in Stivichall (Warwickshire) given to Walter fitzRichard by Stephen of Nerbone "in return for his homage and service and for fighting a duel for the

\(^{123}\) *ibid*, p. 157.
\(^{124}\) PR, 31 Henry II, p. 2; PR, 32 Henry II, pp. 150-1; PR, 33 Henry II, pp. 20-1.
\(^{127}\) BL, Lansdowne MS 415, fos. 10v., 17, 23v.
donor. The pipe rolls reveal de Verdun collecting debts owed to the king, such as the fine Roger Trutantinus owed for a false claim or the money that Harold Lech had promised in order to speed up his claim against Gilbert fitzPicot. They also show Bertram employed in the routine tasks of sending timber for the king's works at Godstow and Woodstock in 1176-7, and repairing the castles at Montsorrel and Kenilworth in 1182-3 and 1183-4 respectively. His attendance at court and his various responsibilities elsewhere, however, seem to have led to Bertram's delegating many of his shrieval duties to his dapifer, Arnold of Barton, and his Staffordshire tenant, Adam of Audley, who singly or jointly appear in the pipe rolls between 1180 and 1185 rendering Bertram's account for Warwick and Leicester, and between 1185 and 1187 for the honour of Chester. It may be a further reflection of Bertram's prolonged absences that a charter of Richard fitzHubert's in the Kenilworth cartulary calls Adam of Audley "sheriff of Warwick" without any suggestion of his subordinate status.

Bertram III de Verdun, then, had reached a new high-point in his career by c.1175 and in time-honoured fashion he announced his 'arrival' to the world by either constructing, or more likely rebuilding, the castle at Alton - the family caput - and by founding a Cistercian abbey nearby. Unfortunately there is little of the de Verduns' castle left at Alton. Eighteenth-century illustrations reveal a wall and rectangular towers (possibly including a small keep) on the eastern face of the castle, but these were demolished, if they had not collapsed already, when Augustus Pugin built his new 'castle' on the site from 1847. All that is now left from Bertram III's time is a single rectangular mural tower with a large relieving arch and a piece of the adjoining wall, which Pevsner dated to c.1175. Under its annal for 1264, the Chester chronicle records that Robert III de Ferrers, earl of Derby, destroyed the castle during the Barons' War. Some of the surviving masonry probably dates from the subsequent rebuilding operations. The gatehouse,

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128 BL, Harley MS 7, fos. 165v.-166; P. Coss, The Langley Cartulary, Publications of the Dugdale Society. 32 (1980), no. 387, p. 91. That his office was the cause of his attestation is suggested by the fact that he had no other known connection with any of these individuals.
129 PR, 22 Henry II, p. 181.
131 PR, 23 Henry II, p. 26; PR, 29 Henry II, p. 34; PR, 30 Henry II, p. 43.
132 BL, Harley MS 3650, fo. 22v.
1.4 Alton castle.
which stands at the most vulnerable approach to the castle, is likely to have been built during the repairs made after this attack. Only the base of this building survives. It consists of two large 'D'-shaped towers flanking the gate passage - similar to the roughly contemporary structures at Tonbridge (Kent) or Harlech (Gwynedd). The bottom of the portcullis slot can still be seen about seven feet above the present ground level, so that it is clear that a ramp must have led up to the main entrance. Underneath, the remains of a narrow door suggest that there was a sallyport under the main entrance. A round tower at an angle of the south wall might have also been added to further strengthen the defences at about the same time.\footnote{136}{Apparenty, the castle has never been surveyed. However, Mr. K. W. Sheridan of the Staffs. Planning Department tells me that "some years ago" some records and drawings of the medieval masonry were made and that these are now with English Heritage.}

In 1176, Bertram de Verdun founded a Cistercian monastery, colonised by monks from Aunay-sur-Odon, at Cotton, a couple of miles north of Alton on the northern slope of the Churnet valley. However, "He who favourably disposes all things foreordained that they should elsewhere praise the name of the Lord,"\footnote{137}{Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1176, fo. 72.} so that in 1179 the monastery was moved to Croxden, where it remained and where its remains still stand - bisected by a modern road which cuts through the nave of the ruined church. Thomas, an Englishman, was made the first abbot in 1178. "He is believed to have undertaken many labours in the house of God during his presidency as abbot for fifty-one years and a half; who between the labours of erecting very many buildings, wrote with his own hand.... two beautiful volumes containing the greater part of the bible, to perpetuate the memory of his name."\footnote{138}{Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1229, fo. 73v.}

Indeed, before his death in 1229, Thomas had built much of the church and the east range of the cloister. The abbey church was to become something of a family mausoleum. Under the annal for 1334, the Croxden chronicle records that Norman de Verdun, who must have been removed from his initial resting place, was buried near the altar of the Holy Trinity, while Nicholas (d.1231), John (d.1274), Theobald I (d.1309) and Theobald II (d.1316) were also buried in the church. In the case of Theobald I, at least, it is not entirely clear that this is what he wanted. In the will that he made in 1295 Theobald had given instructions that he should be buried at Grace Dieu, an Augustinian nunnery established by 1241 near Belton,
Leicestershire, by his grandmother, Roesia de Verdun - instructions which either he had changed or were ignored.  

Generally speaking, "the chief consideration in choosing houses to benefit was proximity to the donor's estates... Closely connected with this is the concern for family, for donors were likely to favour convents and monasteries near the estate from which the family had sprung, or with which their family already had some ties." The rest of the limited ecclesiastical patronage that might be attributed to Bertram III de Verdun certainly follows this pattern. Before 1177 a Bertram de Verdun, who can be cautiously identified as Bertram III, had given the abbey of Savigny "a certain land next to the grange of Campo Botri" in the Avranchin. Savigny, it should be noted, also held land in Verdun itself. In c.1190 Bertram de Verdun granted a third of the manor of Pensby (Cheshire) to the Hospital of St John the Baptist in Chester and it may be that this too was Bertram III, although this is the first and only time that Pensby appears in connection with the senior line of the family. Of much more certain origin is Lecelina de Clinton's grant of "the church of Hethe..... and all the things that pertain to it in the parish" to Kenilworth priory, "for the improvement of the infirmary of the canons." Bertram III later confirmed this gift and added his own grant of "my meadow which I held in my lordship at Ashow and my meadow of Barford." 

These grants to Kenilworth also reveal that Lecelina and Bertram III de Verdun had recovered the lands in Warwickshire and Oxfordshire that comprised Lecelina's dowry, which had been lost in the later 1130's, from Henry de Clinton. That relations between de Clinton and de Verdun were improving after the death of Geoffrey II in c.1174 can be seen in Bertram's attestations of Henry de Clinton's 1174 agreement with Ralph of Coughton and the grants de Clinton made to Roger fitzWilliam and to Alexander fitzRoger. However, it is clear that the full recovery of Lecelina's dowry had still to be achieved by 1179-80, as under the account for Oxfordshire in the pipe roll of that year Lecelina can be found fining

139 BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11.
140 R. Turner, Judges, Administrators and the Common Law in Angevin England, p. 144
141 Recueil, 2, pp. 177-181.
143 BL, Additional MS 47677, fo. 356.
144 BL, Harley 3650, fos. 70-70v, 61, 70-70v., 85v. The agreement with Ralph of Coughton is dated by its reference to the fall of Leicester castle.
sixty marks for right of her *maritagium*. Restoration seems to have been achieved soon afterwards. The grants Lecelina and Bertram made to Kenilworth priory, mentioned above, can be dated to 1188 at the latest so that Lecelina's lands must have been recovered by that date. Although its date is unclear, part of the final settlement can probably be seen in the charter by which Henry de Clinton confirmed his father's grant to Kenilworth priory of "Bretford with all its appurtenances and its liberties... which they had in the year when he was alive and dead... as they are known to have had them then." This, by implication, gave up any attempt to reclaim Brandon. The suggestion that this charter was part of the end of the dispute is further reinforced by the fact that it was made before Bertram III, who gave his agreement, and because it was attested by various members of Bertram III's household including Arnold of Barton, his *dapifer*, and Robert the clerk of Alton.

It has already been noted that Bertram III's estates were augmented by the recovery of his mother's dowry, by his marriage to Matilda de Ferrers, his association with Richard de Humez and even, perhaps, by manors extracted from the earl of Leicester after the 'Great War' of 1173-4. In addition, other piecemeal gains were made in the midlands by Bertram III during the course of his career and it is as well to note these here before moving on to discuss his greatest acquisition - the lordship of Dundalk in Ireland. On 27 October 1176, Geoffrey Ridel made an agreement with Bertram III following a "dispute which [Bertram] had against Geoffrey in Madeley." By this agreement, Geoffrey gave Bertram in fee and heredity "the fee of one knight in Leicestershire" composed of small parcels of land at Swinford, Walcote, Ashby Parva and Fleckney adding up to a total of twelve carucates. In addition Bertram was given twelve bovates in Croxden "of the fee of Madeley" and "the service of Foxt and Onecote" in Staffordshire to be held for a yearly rent of 5s.

Lutterworth (Leicestershire) was acquired by Bertram III too, if it had not already been in his family's possession, a charter of Hamo son of Memsilin's stating that he had "returned and granted to Bertram de Verdun and his heirs Lutterworth, with all appurtenances by hereditary right, holding of me and my heirs for the fee

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145 PR, 26 Henry II, p. 29.
146 See the biography of Norman de Verdun above.
147 BL, Harley MS 3650, fo. 8.
of one knight."\textsuperscript{149} It is possible that the manors of Misterton and Catthorpe came to the de Verduns at the same time because all three were held from William fitzHamon by Roesia de Verdun in 1242-3.\textsuperscript{150} Finally, the Combe abbey cartulary contains an agreement made between Bertram de Verdun and Henry of Rugby concerning the land which Bertram held from Henry at Brandon.\textsuperscript{151} Presumably, this land was acquired at some point between the recovery of Brandon and Bertram's departure on crusade in 1190. Why Bertram wanted the land is unclear, especially as it was described as marsh. Possibly it was intended to help improve the defences of the castle there. These were certainly enlarged and upgraded by Nicholas de Verdun, his son.

Between 1185 and 1188 Bertram de Verdun's absences from his English estates became even more pronounced as a result of his activities in Ireland. The background to Angevin involvement in Ireland is well known and need only be briefly summarised here. In 1166, Diarmait MacMurchada was driven from his kingdom of Leinster and sought refuge in Bristol. From there he sought out Henry II in Aquitaine and received his permission to recruit Anglo-Norman mercenaries to help him reconquer his kingdom. Having returned to Bristol, he reached an agreement with Richard fitzGilbert of Clare, better known as Strongbow, whereby Richard would provide the necessary troops in return for his marriage to Diarmait's daughter, Aoife, and consequent recognition as Diarmait's heir. In May 1169, the first Norman troops arrived in Ireland led by Robert fitzStephen and Maurice de Prendergast, but it was not until August 1170 that Strongbow finally joined Diarmait, with two hundred knights and a thousand other soldiers. The subsequent successes of Diarmait and then Strongbow in Leinster aroused Henry II's suspicions to the extent that he intervened personally, leading an expedition to Ireland in October 1171 and asserting royal control over the whole enterprise.

The poem called the \textit{Song of Dermot and the Earl} lists Bertram III amongst those who went to Ireland with Henry II.\textsuperscript{152} The Rev. Dennis Murphy added that at this same time, "Bertram was made seneschal of Ireland, as we learn from the Charters in which Henry II conferred the barony of Naas, and endowed the abbey of

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Leicestershire}, 4/1, p. 280. Quoted "\textit{ex MS de domini Ferariis, penes Henricum comitem de Stamford}," p. 279. That the charter dates to the time of Bertram III is suggested by the presence of Ruelent de Verdun amongst the witnesses.
\textsuperscript{150} \textit{BF}, p. 950.
\textsuperscript{151} BL, Cotton MS Vitellus A.i., fo. 165v.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{The Song of Dermot and the Earl}, cd. G. H. Orpen (Oxford, 1892), II. 2609-2612.
It seems, however, that Murphy was here mistakenly referring to two charters issued, not by Henry II in 1171-2, but by John in 1185. Apart from the Song, then, there is no other evidence that Bertram III was in Ireland in 1171-2 and, indeed, the fact that he is recorded as paying scutage in the pipe roll of that year suggests that he did not take part in Henry's expedition at all. Ralph de Verdun, however, does appear in the witness list of Henry II's 1172 grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy and it is plausible that the later Song confused Ralph with his more famous brother.

After Henry II left Ireland in 1172, the country was governed by a series of justiciars, the first and most important of whom was Hugh de Lacy. In 1177, John Lackland was finally given a fief, being appointed lord of Ireland. Knighted at Oxford in 1185, John was sent to govern Ireland later that same year, being accompanied by men of both his own and his father's choosing. Amongst the latter was Bertram III de Verdun. Charters survive which reveal Bertram progressing with John from Waterford via Tibberaghny and Kildare to Dublin, and from there to Wexford. Furthermore, most, although not all, of these charters call Bertram 'seneschal', a position defined more clearly by Gerald of Wales who calls Bertram "seneschal of Ireland" in his De Rebus a se Gestis. In the same passage, Gerald records that "when [John], after spending the whole summer and part of the winter in Ireland all to no purpose, recrossed the sea and returned to Wales and England, Giraldus was left with Bertram de Verdun... to be his comrade and the witness of his deeds."

Unfortunately, although Gerald may have witnessed Bertram's deeds he failed to write them down, so that there is almost no information about Bertram III's activities during the time when he was, presumably, in charge of the Anglo-Norman colony in Ireland. What little evidence there is concerns Bertram's role in the administration of Hugh de Lacy's lordship of Meath following his death at Durrow in 1186 at the hands of an axe-wielding Irishman. "Although John did not

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153 D. Murphy, 'The de Verdons of Louth', JRSAI, 25 (1895), p. 318
154 Baltinglass; CPR, 1334-8, pp. 402-3; Monasticon 6/2, p. 1136. Barony of Naas; Gormanston Reg, pp. 145, 194.
155 PR, 18 Henry II, p. 105
personally return to Ireland in 1186 to seize Hugh de Lacy's estates, it is probable
that agents acting on his or his father's behalf did so." This supposition is supported
by a charter of May 1192 in which John confirmed the monks at Kells in
possession of all the lands, rents and possessions which Hugh de Lacy had given
them, as well as granting them Durrow which de Lacy had retained in demesne.159
Having taken the de Lacy estates into his own hands, John granted custody of the
bridge of Drogheda to Bertram III, and it is likely that this grant also included the
custody of Hugh de Lacy's castle there, which stands on the south bank of the
Boye over looking the bridge.160 That Bertram was involved in the administration
of Meath is further suggested by his appearance, with Gilbert Pipard, in the witness
lists of those charters by which Adam de Feipo granted the church and chapel of
Skreen to St Mary's abbey in Dublin, which can be dated to c.1186. Bertram de
Verdun's and Gilbert Pipard's presence in these witness lists, which appear to be
composed of members of the de Feipo household and tenantry, is otherwise
difficult to explain.161

More general indications of events in Ireland at this time can be retrieved from
Gerald of Wales' - probably exaggerated - criticism of the administration that John
left in the country. Gerald complained that, "men assumed control of the
administration and command of the troops who had the temperament of Mercury
rather than Mars, who had more experience of civil life than of soldiering, who
were more interested in spying on the citizens than in conquering the enemy."162
Interestingly, Gerald's complaints about the spying of these officials finds an echo
in the writings of Walter Map, where the justices and under-sheriffs sent from
Henry II's court were compared to those members of the infernal regions who were
"commissioned to go roundabout, to seek out diligently and to report accurately
what of good happens that may concern Jupiter, what of harm falls to be
condemned by Dis; though they place careful ambushes everywhere, their first
concern is to follow up the odour of carrion." 163 Gerald's comments suggest,
therefore, that some attempt to impose official and legal order on Ireland was
made at the time and that some of the original conquerors were tied up in legal
pleas concerning their acquisitions with rival claimants. Such action would be

282-3.
160 This can be seen from a mandate granted to Nicholas de Verdun. (CDI, 1, no. 185.)
161 Chartularies, 1, pp. 92, 95-6.
239.
expected of men used to the workings of Henry II's court, among which number could be counted both fitzAldelin and Bertram III de Verdun.

It may be that Bertram was not the target of Gerald's criticisms. As Warren has stated, "it is ridiculous to allege military inexperience against those in charge when John has as his seneschal Bertram de Verdun." Nonetheless, it does seem to be the case that he remained in charge of the administration in Ireland throughout the period in which Gerald was writing. Although Gerald has John de Courcy appointed justiciar immediately after John's departure in 1185 in the Expugnatio Hibernica, this sequence of events is contradicted by the statement found in Gerald's autobiography, mentioned earlier, which makes it clear that Bertram III remained behind in Ireland as seneschal after John's departure. Marie Therese Flanagan, having noticed this contradiction, has convincingly argued that John de Courcy was appointed as justiciar only in 1194, at a time when Richard I had taken Ireland into his own hand following John's rebellion. This argument is supported by Gerald's use of the phrase 'summus princeps' to describe the figure who made the appointment, which Flanagan believed would be "a more apposite designation of Richard in his capacity as the head of the Angevin dominions, than John in 1185, especially following immediately as it does upon Gerald's criticisms of John 'filius regis'." Gerald also states that immediately upon his appointment, John de Courcy embarked on punitive expeditions into Munster and Connacht. This he can be found doing in the Annals of Loch Cé under the entry for 1195, which further supports the argument that John de Courcy was made justiciar only in 1194. An additional piece of evidence survives in the form of a mid-fourteenth-century copy of a charter issued by John as count of Mortain - which can therefore be dated to 1189-90 - that is attested by Bertram de Verdun as seneschal. It would seem, then, that Bertram III remained in his office - even if he was not always resident in Ireland - from 1185 until 1189-90 when he went on crusade.

Despite Gerald of Wales' complaints over the indolence of the members of John's administration and the soldiers under their command, it is clear that the processes of conquest and settlement continued in Ireland. During his visit in 1185, John made a grant of five and a half cantreds in Limerick, including the borough of Killaloe and land now in counties Clare, Offaly, Tipperary and Limerick to

166 CChR, 5, pp. 155-6.
Theobald Butler. Philip of Worcester was given part of the barony of Middlethird in county Tipperary, while William de Burgh was granted estates in the baronies of Clanwilliam and Iffa and Offa, county Tipperary.167 At about the same time, Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard began to establish themselves in the present county Louth, based around Dundalk and Ardee respectively - something which may explain the lack of evidence for Bertram III's activities as seneschal.

Louth had already been subjected to Norman raids before the advent of de Verdun and Pipard. In 1178 John de Courcy had raided from Ulster into Uriel, although he was repulsed, while in the same year Milo de Cogan and the Galls of Dublin had attacked Louth and Magh Conaille.168 These were just raids, but further south Hugh de Lacy seems to have been successful in gaining a foothold in Ferrard, across the Boyne from Drogheda, as he is described as "king of Midhe, Breifny and Airghiall" in the Annals of Loch Ce169 and "lord of the English of Meath, Breifny and Uriel" in the later Annals of the Four Masters.170 It is possible that in de Lacy's case this expansion into Uriel was undertaken with the consent of Murchadh O'Cerbhaill, king of Uriel, as in 1184 the "foreigners of Meath" assisted Murchadh in his attack on Triocha Cead Oiridh.171 Otway-Ruthven thought that Bertram de Verdun and Gilbert Pipard might also have gained O'Cerbhaill's consent to their penetration of mid and northern county Louth, although, as Paul Gosling has pointed out, it may be that O'Cerbhaill simply lost control of the southern part of his kingdom in the face of Anglo-Norman incursions.172

Whatever the case, it is clear that Gilbert Pipard and Bertram de Verdun had already been establishing themselves in the area before Murchadh O'Cerbhaill's death in 1188-9. As O'Cerbhaill remained the nominal overlord of the area, John was unable to confirm Bertram de Verdun and Peter Pipard in their new lordships until after the king of Uriel's death, but when he did, Pipard's charter could already

168 P. Gosling, From Dun Delca to Dundalk: The Topography and Archaeology of a Medieval Frontier Town, A.D. c.1187-1700 (Monaghan, 1993), p. 249. (Quoting from 'MacCarthaigh's Book'.)
169 ALC, 1, p. 173.
170 AFM, 3, p. 71.
172 P. Gosling, From Dun Delca to Dundalk, p. 251.
mention the castle at Ardee and the "land of his conquest". 173 The charter that John gave to Bertram III, which survives only as a copy in a manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin, is unfortunately rather more superficial. It states only that Bertram III was granted "four cantreds in Uriel and half a cantred in Louth, namely that nearest the sea, to be held for the service of twenty knights.... with sake and soke, toll and team and infangentheof; and justice of iron, pit and gallows." 174 As was the case with Hugh de Lacy, it is almost certain that Bertram's grant was "not the result of any direct frontier links but a consequence of royal favour, a reward for past service." 175

John's charter may not have specifically identified Bertram III de Verdun's lands, but the fact that it differentiated between his half-cantred in Louth and his four cantreds in Uriel suggests that most of de Verdun's land lay north of the Fane river. This is certainly suggested by those lands Bertram is known to have held or claimed. All the contemporary evidence concerns what a charter of Nicholas de Verdun's called the cantred of 'Machwercunvilla', a Normanization of the Irish Magh-Conaille (although the cantred was also known as Magh-Muirtheimhne). Magh-Conaille was composed of the low lying coastal plain which runs from a few miles north of Dundalk as far south as Dromiskin, mentioned as being in the cantred in the *Annals of Ulster* under 878. Something of its character can be recovered from various reports in the Irish annals. In 1083, a raid on Magh-Conaille "took away great cattle-spoil," 176 while in 1104 "an army was led by Muircheartach Ua Briain to Magh-Muirtheimhne, and they destroyed the tillage and corn of the plain." 177 Thus there was clearly both arable and pastoral farming in the area before the Anglo-Normans arrived, suggesting that at least part of the cantred had been cleared. This picture is reinforced by references to the churches of the plain and by reports of men and cattle being swept into the sea during a great storm in 1137. 178 Archaeological evidence further supports this view, and suggests that clearance and cultivation of the plain had, in fact, been underway since around 2500 B.C. 179 It was thus a land which settlers would find attractive, and one relatively easy to conquer and hold.

173 *Ormond Deeds*, no. 863(1).
174 Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 579/1, fo. 199.
176 *AU*, 2, p. 37.
177 *AFM*, 2, p. 979.
179 P. Gosling, *From Dun Delca to Dundalk*, p. 239.
Bertram established his caput towards the northern extremity of the plain at Dun Dealgan, from which derives the modern name of Dundalk, although the castle is now on the western edge of the town which was itself relocated in the thirteenth century. The remains of this motte-and-bailey castle, almost certainly erected by Bertram III, crown an isolated hill. The bailey itself is now the site of a waterworks and has been largely demolished, but the motte, 68 metres in diameter at its base and between 8.5-10.4 metres high, remains. From a distance, the impact of this earthwork - closely comparable in size to the motte at Cardiff - is reduced by the screen of beech trees which stand around the site. The views from its summit, however, remain impressive, taking in the hills of counties Armagh and Down, Carlingford Mountain, and the low, undulating landscape of Magh-Conaille to the south.

The fact that the site controlled this wide landscape, including the ford over the Castletown river at Toberona which carried the main route into Ulster via the Moyry Pass, probably formed one of the chief reasons for Bertram's decision to establish his Irish caput there. From his castle, de Verdun could command the traffic between Ulster and Louth, while his custody of the bridge at Drogheda allowed him to control movements between Louth and Meath. Furthermore, Dundalk itself is "very advantageously situated for a most extensive inland Trade (sic), and the port is very safe for shipping." That these economic factors were important to the de Verduns is shown by Thomas de Verdun's agreement with Hugh de Lacy in which he retained not just Dundalk itself but also the water of Athlone, which provides the most likely site for the original harbour. Additionally, the dun- prefix of Dun Dealgan reveals the presence of a native fort - in existence from at least 1001 - and it would seem that this was the basis of Bertram's motte-and-bailey castle. This is suggested by the presence of a souterrain in the south face of the mound as these features are "often found in association with ring forts and other enclosed settlements of the pre-Norman period." That it should be found about half way up the mound also suggests that relatively little work had to be done on the dun to convert it into the motte of the castle.

181 T. Wright, Louthiana (London, 1748), preface.
182 Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3.
1.5 The Motte at Dundalk (Castletown).
It seems likely that on top of these physical advantages, Dundalk suggested itself because of its associations with the Irish hero Cuchulainn and the events of the Ulster Cycle stories. In the *Mesca Ulad*, of which a number of twelfth century copies survive, Dun Dealgan was one of the chief places of assembly in Ulster at the feast of *Samhain*, and second only to *Emain Macha* (the capital of Ulster) in importance. The best known of the Ulster Cycle tales, the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*, which was copied by abbot Aed of Terryglass around the end of the twelfth century, also featured Dun Dealgan, "and it appears to have been one of the chief places from which Cuchulainn and Laeg, his charioteer, harassed the armies of Connacht on their way to Cooley." Establishing himself at Dundalk thus associated Bertram de Verdun with the legendary hero. In much the same way, the Norman advance along the north coast of Wales in the late eleventh century was marked by castles constructed on sites previously associated with Welsh dynasties such as Rhuddlan, Deganwy and Aber and, in the case of Caernarfon, on a site associated with the Romans and identified in the Welsh tale of the *Dream of Maxen* as the site of the chief castle of Wales. Such associations helped stress a claim to be the rightful lords of the land, and gave men like Bertram III a psychological edge in establishing their lordship in the area. "In a world where tradition counted for so much, such memories of ancient glory were a real political advantage."

Before Bertram III de Verdun left on crusade in 1190, his frontier castle at Dundalk had - typically - become associated with a church and borough, all of which stood within a newly formed parish. This is revealed by a grant which Bertram III gave to "St John the Baptist's church of Dundalk" of "the tithes and all the ecclesiastical benefices of my whole land of Dundalk... and the lands of the burgages." The "whole land of Dundalk" is given bounds in the charter which seem to conform to the bounds of Magh Conaille itself, and it is the fact that Bertram gave the tithes of this land to the church at Dundalk which reveals that the cantred had now also become the basis for a parish. As 'nothing is clearer than the identification of manor and parish," it is also likely that Dundalk now formed not

189 P. Gosling, *From Dun Decla to Dundalk*, p. 256.
just the centre of a lordship but a manor too. At least some of this manor was still retained in demesne by the de Verduns in 1332, although the presence of a detached portion of Castletown parish at the mouth of the Flurry river suggests that subsequent settlement and enfeoffment may have reduced the area of the manor over time.  

The mention of burgages in the charter reveals that the borough of Dundalk had been founded by 1190. Although "the area around the town was heavily settled from the sixth to twelfth century A.D....this was in every sense a rural settlement." Bertram's borough was thus an entirely new foundation. So too was the church of St John the Baptist. A tradition, dating at least as far back as Ware's day, tells that Bertram III founded a hospital of Fratres Cruciferi at Dundalk around the end of Henry II's reign. It is likely that the church of St John can be equated with this hospital because John the Baptist was the usual patron saint for houses of this order. While on the subject, it is worth noting that by the later thirteenth century, when the hospital first appears in records, it was known as St Leonard's rather than St John's. Two pieces of evidence make it clear that both dedications refer to the same institution. In the first place, St Leonard's can be found holding the tithes of the lordship of Dundalk - as Bertram III had granted them to St John's - at the Dissolution. Secondly, and even more revealingly, the place is called the "hospital of St John and St Leonard" in a document surviving in the Gormanston Register. That the dedication of the hospital should change is not especially unusual. Looking at the dedications of monastic houses in England and Wales, Alison Binns has shown that dedications could change over time. "At some houses, what appears to have been the original dedication seems soon to have been forgotten or replaced with something else." Thus, Monks Kirby was dedicated to Saints Mary and Denys but ended up being referred to as the church of St Nicholas, who was the patron of its mother house.

Although Bertram III and his immediate successors appear to have been unable to conquer anything outside Magh-Conaille, it is clear that John's charter conveyed

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194 *Gormanston Reg*, no. 249.
196 *ibid*, pp. 56-7.
Map 1.5 County Louth and the lordship of Dundalk.
more than just this single cantred to the de Verduns. Otway-Ruthven believed that at least a part of the baronies of Upper Fews and Upper Orior in county Armagh had been granted to the de Verduns and a charter of about 1225 reveals that Nicholas de Verdun did indeed have claims in the area. In this charter, Nicholas granted to Theobald II Butler the cantred of Honectath "in the south of Armagh," although the grant was probably prospective. John's grant to Bertram III also included some lands on the Cooley peninsula. When Hugh de Lacy married Leselina de Verdun between 1194 and 1199, he was given half of the de Verduns' lordship of Dundalk. When Hugh's daughter, Matilda, later married David of Naas, Hugh granted her as her dowry "the whole land which I had with her mother in Cole (Cooley) and Uriel, and in the county of Louth." Exactly what lands Hugh had gained in Cooley as a result of his marriage is, however, unknown. The only place Hugh himself named was Ballymascanlan, a short way around the bay from Dundalk, which he granted to Mellifont abbey. Nor is there much later evidence with which to improve our knowledge, although in 1332 the de Verduns were still lords of the 'Newtown of Coly' which was probably situated near the now demolished motte and bailey at Mount Bagnall.

However, the grant probably did not include the whole of the barony of Lower Dundalk, which was basically composed of the Cooley peninsula, despite Otway-Ruthven's confident assertion to the contrary. While at least some of the southern-facing part of the peninsula was clearly in de Verdun hands, there is no evidence to suggest that Carlingford or any of the northern part of the peninsula was ever held by the family. Instead, this area seems to have been considered to be a part of Ulster. This is shown most explicitly by a charter of 1212 - when John held the earldom of Ulster following Hugh II de Lacy's forfeiture - in which King John granted Reginald, king of Man, a fee near Carlingford "in Ulster". Cooley was part of Ulster before the Anglo-Normans arrived and it may well be the case that a claim to the area was being perpetuated by John de Courcy when he raided into Cooley and even when, as the Annals of Ulster record under 1178, John de Courcy "went... with his knights, pillaging from Dun to the plain of Conaille". A north-south political division of Cooley would also reflect the geography of the

198 Ormond Deeds, no. 863 (5).
199 Gormanston Reg, pp. 195-6.
201 CDI, 1, no. 428.
202 AU, 2, p. 193.
peninsula, where the mass of Carlingford Mountain and its associated highlands effectively cuts the area in two, with the northern facing part forming an extension of Ulster across Carlingford Lough and the southern side forming a natural appendage to Magh-Conaille.

There is no evidence for Bertram having left Ireland until June 1188, when he appears as a justice in a fine made at Geddington. In the same month, Richard, duke of Aquitaine, soon to be King Richard I, attacked the count of Toulouse for imprisoning two knights returning from a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Philip II of France used the opportunity to renew his threats against Henry II and by July Henry had crossed to Normandy. It is likely that Bertram went with him, although there is no evidence for his being with the king until November 1188, when the *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* reveals that Bertram was present at the council of Bonmoulins. At this council, Henry II refused to acknowledge Richard as his heir, with the result that Richard did homage to Philip II for Normandy and Aquitaine and left his father without leave. The *Histoire* reports that William Marshall and Bertram de Verdun were sent after Richard to try to bring him back to negotiations. They got as far as Amboise on the Loire only to discover that Richard had already departed, having written over 200 letters summoning his vassals to arms. Going by his past record, it can probably be assumed that Bertram remained in France during the ensuing fighting until the king’s death at Chinon on 6 July 1189.

Richard arrived in England in August, and was crowned on 13 September. Bertram, who was now in his early fifties, is first recorded with the new king three days later at Geddington, although he might have attended the coronation and performed his sergeanty there. He then followed the court round the country, attesting charters made at Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds in November, and at Canterbury again and Dover in December. After Richard left England for the continent at the end of 1189, charters reveal that Bertram remained in England, and especially at Westminster, before rejoining Richard at Nonancourt in March 1190. As Bertram’s grant of lands in Uriel and Louth was dated at London, it is likely that he was given it at this time.

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During these last few months in England, Bertram was probably raising the money necessary to support himself on the crusade. However, he also found time to organise an exchange of lands with Burton abbey in 1188, giving the abbey "all his land in Stapenhill" in return for "the service of Geoffrey de St Maur and of his heirs and of his land of Field." In addition, the pipe roll for 1189-90 reveals that Bertram was involved in a plea against the bishop and canons of Lincoln and Ralph Murdac, concerning the manor of Marston St Laurence in Northamptonshire. This is that Marston which Ranulf II of Chester had been compelled to yield to the bishop and canons of Lincoln in 1153, in reparation for damages he had inflicted on the church. Bertram III's plea appears to have been undertaken despite the fact that in this agreement Ranulf had warranted to bar Norman's heirs from making any later claims.

Bertram de Verdun had rejoined the king at Nonancourt in March 1190 and accompanied the court to Rouen. A trail of charters then records his presence with the king at Marseilles, where Richard and his army waited for his delayed fleet, and then in Messina, where Richard and his army arrived on 22 September. Relations between the army and the people of Messina were not good and trouble soon brewed up. This was blamed on the soldiers' dalliance with the citizens' wives, but probably had as much to do with the escalating prices caused by the army's presence. Richard's solution was to take Messina on 4 October and to establish a fixed scale of prices. This also put Richard in a good position to deal with Tancred of Lecce, king of Sicily, who had imprisoned King William II's widow - none other than Richard's sister, Joan. In an agreement made with Tancred, Richard recovered Joan and was paid 20,000 marks as settlement of her claims to a dowry. Bertram de Verdun was one of those who stood surety for Richard in this agreement.

While at Messina he also witnessed the charter by which Geoffrey fitzPeter was granted the Mandeville inheritance.

It seems likely that from Sicily Bertram went with Richard to Cyprus, where Richard married Berengaria, although there is no evidence for his presence on the island. Whatever the case, he was to arrive at the siege of Acre at the same time as...
Bishop John of Evreux. Acre was finally taken on 12 July 1191, and divided between Richard I and Philip II of France. On 21 August, the day after Richard ordered the deaths of 3,000 Saracen prisoners, Richard marched on to Jaffa having given "the city of Acre to Bertram de Verdun and Stephen de Longchamp, the brother of the bishop of Ely, in custody. And he placed there his wife and his sister and the daughter of the Emperor Isaac [Comnenus] of Cyprus. And he also constituted other custodians who guarded the city and the queens and his treasure with the aforementioned guardians." Bertram then fades into obscurity until the Croxden chronicle remarks that in the following year (1192), "Bertram de Verdun...died and on St Bartholomew's day (24 August) was buried at Acre." Howden complements this terse statement by relating, equally succinctly, that Bertram died at Jaffa.

Thomas de Verdun, 1194-1199.

It seems that Thomas de Verdun was still a minor when his father died at Jaffa, as he can be found accounting for his relief of 300 marks for "having the land and castles of his father" only in the pipe roll of 1194-5. Until then, his lands and his person had been in the custody of one, or possibly more, guardians. The last of these was William fitzRichard, who can be found accounting for the period in which he had held the de Verdun lands in the same pipe roll. Thomas de Verdun thus achieved his majority sometime in the period between Michaelmas 1194 and Michaelmas 1195. In fact, the date can be narrowed considerably on account of the surviving record of a plea over land in Gresley brought against Thomas by William de Gresley, which dates to 20 October 1194. Presumably, then, Thomas achieved his majority between 30 September and 20 October 1194.

Having taken possession of his estates, Thomas did not tarry long in England. A charter, dated to 1194, reveals that he had crossed to Normandy before the end of the year and, on the altar of the Cistercian abbey church at Aunay-sur-Odon, confirmed by charter "the gift made by Juliana de St Remigio whose inheritance he

211 Roger of Howden, Gesta, 2, p. 190; Roger of Howden, Chronicle, 3, p. 128.
212 Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1192, fo. 72v.; Roger of Howden, Gesta, 2, pp. 149-50.
213 PR, 7 Richard I, pp. 198, 203.
214 ibid, p.198.
215 WS, 3/1, p. 28.
possesses by hereditary right, quit of all service and dues and other secular exaction, namely land at Formigneium worth a measure of wheat, a measure of barley, and eight measures of oats."216 It may be that Thomas was in Normandy to take possession of his family estates in the Avranchin. Alternatively, he may have been there as a result of some involvement with Richard I's campaign of that year. Even if the latter is true, Thomas did not regularly fight with the king in France. In 1196 he owed scutages for the second and third Norman armies, although he was quitted of these debts by writ of Geoffrey fitzPeter in 1198.217

In 1199, Thomas was "across the sea in the lord king's service" when a plea of mort d'ancestor was brought by a certain Milo against Marion, the daughter of Osbern.218 This notice might suggest that Thomas was fighting in France, a view perhaps reinforced by the fact that in 1198 the sum of £20 "de feodo" was paid to him out of the farm of Evreux.219 Alternatively, it might indicate that he had crossed to Ireland, where he was to die later the same year.220 This may even have been the occasion when Thomas de Verdun reached an agreement with Hugh de Lacy, which was certainly made at sometime between 1194 and 1199, concerning Hugh's marriage to Thomas' sister, Leselina. In it, Thomas granted "with Leselina de Verdun, his sister in frank marriage, the moiety of his whole land in Ireland and Uriel, with all its appurtenances, except that Thomas retains to himself and his heirs, whole and undivided, the castle of Dundalk and five knights' fees neighbouring and nearest to the castle, towards the sea and towards the land, on whatever side it shall please Thomas, and the harbour on the water of Athlone....... And whatever the said Thomas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy can conquer in the land of war, in their parts of the land of Uriel, they will equally divide all between them, as they have divided the land of peace." Thomas was to attempt to gain Earl John's consent to the marriage and agreement "by giving money or any other way he can."221

It has already been noted that Hugh de Lacy gained Ballymascanlan and other unidentified parts of Cooley and Uriel from this agreement.222 However, despite

216 J. H. Round, Cal. of Documents Preserved in France, 1, no. 537, p. 189.
217 PR, 8 Richard I, pp. 80-1; PR, 10 Richard I, p. 121.
218 WS, 3/1, p. 37.
220 Croxden Chronicle s.a.1199, fo. 72v.
221 Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3.
Otway-Ruthven's assertion to the contrary, it is unlikely that Hugh received Dunleer from Thomas de Verdun, simply because this, and the rest of Ferrard, seems to have been considered de Lacy property since at least 1189 and probably since 1172 when Hugh I de Lacy was first granted Meath "as O'Melaghlin best held it."\[^{223}\] Indeed, in 1211-12, when the de Lacy lands were in King John's hands, the sheriff of Dublin can be found accounting for Ferrard, which seems to prove the point. Otway-Ruthven, in fact, went on to note that "the subinfeudation of Ferrard is constructed on lines so totally different from that of Dundalk that one would not suppose the two to have been originally part of the same estate."\[^{224}\] This would indeed appear to have been the case.

Instead, Ferrard - or rather half of it - first appears in relation to the de Verduns in a mandate in the patent rolls of 27 June 1217 which ordered that Nicholas de Verdun was to be given possession of it.\[^{225}\] Nicholas subsequently found himself involved in a number of law suits concerning lands in Ferrard in the 1220's. In July of 1220 itself, a plea between the abbot of Mellifont and Nicholas over one and a half carucates in Mellifont was respited until the king should come of age, with Nicholas to be left undisturbed in possession until then. He was also involved in a plea with Adam of Napton over half a knights fee in Bernemeth in July 1221, with Ralph Bagod over a fee in Rath in 1226, and against Philip de Nugent over a small piece of land outside the bridge at Drogheda, which case was deferred numerous times.\[^{226}\] Brendan Smith has suggested that these pleas were the result of Nicholas de Verdun's dispute with Hugh de Lacy which had created confusion about landholding.\[^{227}\] However, the fact that Nicholas had not held land in Ferrard until 1217 could mean that these pleas were simply the result of the change in ownership occasioned by the grant that Nicholas had received. Nor is there evidence to suggest that de Verdun had received Ferrard as a result of his dispute with de Lacy. The grant precedes an order to restore the castle of Dundalk to Nicholas following his rebellion against John, so that it appears to relate to his return to

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\[^{225}\] *CPR*, 1216-1225, p. 74. The record states "mandamus vobis quod... plenam saisinam habere faciatis dilecto et fideli nostro Nicholao de Verdon." This stands in contrast to the command to "reddendo" the castle of Dundalk to Nicholas which immediately follows. The Latin, then, suggests this was the first time that Ferrard had entered de Verdun possession.

\[^{226}\] *CDI*, 1, nos. 996, 1467, 1542, 1568, 1623, 1676.

Henry III's obedience - although it might also reveal something of the apparently cordial relations between Nicholas de Verdun and William Marshal.

*Nicholas de Verdun, 1199-1231.*

Having been brought up at the court of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and his wife, Countess Idona, Nicholas de Verdun inherited his family's estates after his brother's death. He had apparently gained official seisin of his lands in England by 1200 when Richard de Camvill and Eustachia, his wife and Thomas de Verdun's widow, brought a plea against him over forty librates of land which the same Eustachia claimed as her dower. The case was not settled until 1204, when it was agreed that "Nicholas grants to Richard and Eustachia for the lifetime of Eustachia, the manor of Farnham in county Buckingham and the manor of Hethe in county Oxford and 40s. rent to be received of Henry de Verdun of the service he owes for the tenement he holds of the said Nicholas in Bucknall in county Stafford." Even then not all the problems were over. In 1207, the prior of Kenilworth claimed that Nicholas de Verdun had allowed Richard and Eustachia to present a parson to the church of Hethe. The right to present to this church, the prior argued, had been given to his priory by Lecelina de Clinton and this had later been confirmed by Bertram III, both of whose charters he then produced. Nicholas cheerfully agreed with the prior but pointed out that as a consequence Richard and Eustachia had never been seised of the right to present to the church. Camvill's attorney was unable to supply any defence and his client was consequently amerced.

Although there is nothing to suggest that Nicholas de Verdun's right to inherit his family's Irish estates was in any doubt, there appears to have been some delay in his gaining possession of them. It is only in the pipe roll of 1203-4 that Nicholas first appears as owing 100 marks, a destrier and a palfrey for his lands in Ireland, "as Bertram his father had held them in lordship... on the day of his death." He was subsequently excused the 100 marks in 1205, but the five marks at which the destrier and palfrey were valued appear on the pipe rolls until 1229, when Nicholas

228 *Leicestershire*, 4/1, p. 279.
229 *WS*, 3/1, p. 71. In 1200, Gerard de Camvill paid £1000 "for having the wife of Thomas de Verdun with her land, and for her marrying of Richard his son." (PR, 2 John, p. 87.)
231 *CRR*, 5, p. 54; *WS*, 3/1, p. 141.
was eventually pardoned the sum by the king. He may, in fact, have been given seisin slightly earlier than the account for his relief would suggest, as on 21 August 1203 a mandate was addressed to Meiler fitzHenry ordering that Nicholas be given "custody of the bridge of Drogheda, as it was in the king's hand, and as Nicholas' father held it." The wording of Nicholas' pipe roll entry is interesting. He wanted his lands as his father had held them. This might simply refer to the fact that some of the de Verduns' lands in Ireland had been lost to the archbishop of Armagh, as Nicholas de Verdun can be found fining for their recovery in the pipe roll of 1203-4. However, it is also possible that by employing this phrase, Nicholas de Verdun was declaring, at the very outset of his rule, his intention to recover that half of the de Verduns' possessions in Uriel which Thomas de Verdun had granted to Hugh de Lacy with his sister in marriage.

Nicholas de Verdun inherited his lands around the time that John became king, although thanks to John's failures in France this inheritance was soon to be diminished. In 1204 Normandy was lost, and with it went the de Verdun possessions in the Avranchin including Verdun itself. Nicholas had visited these estates on at least one occasion between 1199 and 1204 - perhaps while serving in France with John - this being revealed by a conventio he had made with Abbot Jourdain of Mont-St-Michel concerning a mill and a pond at Carolles, as well as by a confirmation of a grant made by Raoul de Carolles to the abbey which included this same mill and pond.

However, although Nicholas was concerned with his Norman estates, it does not seem that he took an active role in trying to save them falling from his grasp until the last minute. That he did not fight in the earliest of King John's campaigns in France is suggested by his owing scutages for the campaigns of 1202-4. An assize of mort d'ancestor over land in Denstone of 29 September 1203, however, states that Nicholas was "in the service of the king across the sea" at that time, where he may have played some role in the attempt to re-provision Chateau

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232 PR, 6 John, pp. 227, 229; CDI, 1, no. 267; PRO, E372/73, memb. 8.
233 CDI, 1, no. 185.
234 PR, 6 John, p. 227.
236 PR, 4 John, pp. 40, 185, 209; PR, 5 John, pp. 191, 192, 252; PR, 6 John, pp. 109, 211.
237 WS, 3/1, p.117. Nicholas must have crossed over to France only a little while before this plea was heard because he was charged for the fourth scutage in this year's pipe roll. (PR, 5 John, p. 252.)
1.6 The Twelfth- Thirteenth-Century Church at Carolles.
Gaillard which had been under siege since August. Nicholas was next in France in 1205, his presence there being revealed by the close rolls which record that he was acquitted "30 marks of his passage to Poitou." In 1206, John set out on what was to be a successful expedition to Poitou, during which he destroyed the rebel castle of Montaubon - previously deemed impregnable - and regained the north of the county when the viscount of Thouars returned to his side. It is likely that Nicholas was present on this expedition too. He was certainly at Portsmouth at the right time - 21 May 1206 - this being the date of a conventio he made with the shadowy Robert fitzWilliam, then aged about eleven, who was to wed Nicholas' sister, Agnes. By the terms of this agreement "Nicholas gave to the said Robert with Agnes his sister in free marriage one hundred and ten shillings of land (in Tugby, Halstead and Skeffington) and one pound of pepper saving forensic service.... The said Nicholas will have all the rents and issues of the whole of the said Robert's lands.... for the following two years, and if the said Robert wishes, for three years...... After the completion of the said two years,... the said Nicholas will make him a knight or find the cost of having him knighted." Unlike his father, Nicholas de Verdun was not close to the king and does not appear to have attended John's court at all frequently. As such, there is little evidence for the part he played in the politics of his reign. It is clear, however, that Nicholas de Verdun and his Irish estates were caught up in the disturbances caused by Hugh de Lacy which were to result in his forfeiture and exile. In May 1205, Hugh had been created earl of Ulster, having spent the previous four years harassing and capturing John de Courcy, the previous lord and conqueror of Ulster. From the time that he was created earl, Hugh began alienating his supporters and was at war with Meiler fitzHenry, the justiciar, from 1207. In May 1210 King John prepared an expedition to Ireland which was aimed against William de Braose and his de Lacy supporters. On 20 June, John landed at Crook near Waterford and set out for Dublin. When he arrived there, he was approached by five of the principal tenants of Meath, acting as envoys of Walter de Lacy, who placed all his lands and castles in John's hands. Walter's brother, Hugh, was left to the king. John marched through eastern Meath, taking possession of castles as he went, and then turned north through county Louth on his way to attack Hugh de Lacy, reaching Louth itself at the beginning of July. Hugh fled to Carrickfergus

239 CDI, 1, no. 267.
where he was besieged and escaped by boat to Scotland. John then took the earldom of Ulster into his own hands.\textsuperscript{242}

It is almost impossible to believe that Nicholas de Verdun did not play some part in a campaign which removed Hugh de Lacy from Ireland, as relations between the two men had been deteriorating from perhaps as early as 1205. The details of the dispute are unknown, although it would be typical of de Lacy's behaviour to have risen up against one of his erstwhile allies. Whatever the ins and outs, it is clear that before his expulsion from Ireland in 1210, Hugh had gained the upper hand against de Verdun in county Louth. This is revealed by a charter issued by Hugh de Lacy as earl of Ulster at some point after 1205, in which he made a grant to St Thomas' abbey, Dublin, "dated by our hand at Dundalk" of "the church of Dundalk, with its appurtenances, oblations and obventions of the castlery of Dundalk, which pertain to us."\textsuperscript{243} Neither Nicholas de Verdun, nor any members of his family, witness this charter and, as Dundalk had been specifically reserved to the de Verduns in the \textit{conventio} that Thomas had made with Hugh, this suggests that relations between the two men had already declined by the time it was made and that Hugh had driven Nicholas from his castle and manor. Nor was the church of Dundalk Hugh de Lacy's to give to St Thomas' abbey.\textsuperscript{244}

This latter point was made very firmly by Nicholas after Hugh had been driven from Ulster. Between 1210 and 1216, de Verdun rescinded Hugh de Lacy's grant and gave St Thomas' other rights in compensation.\textsuperscript{245} In one of two charters, Nicholas granted to the abbey "all the tenths and obventions, and all ecclesiastical benefices, of the fee of two knights in the first castlery which I will hold in my land of Uriel outside the cantred of Machwercunvilla (Magh Conaille)."\textsuperscript{246} This prospective gift was supplemented, in the second charter, by a grant of "all the ecclesiastical benefices of five carucates of land in my vill of Ballybarrack, with the

\textsuperscript{242} A. J. Otway-Ruthven, \textit{A History of Medieval Ireland}, pp. 79-81.
\textsuperscript{243} \textit{Register}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{244} Orpen thought that the dispute between de Verdun and de Lacy could be seen in Hugh's claims over the castlery of Dundalk, which had been explicitly reserved to de Verdun in the marriage agreement (G. H. Orpen, \textit{Ireland Under the Normans}, 2, p. 251). However, the \textit{conventio} speaks only of the five knight's fees immediately adjacent to the castle of Dundalk. Nicholas de Verdun's own charters to St Thomas' abbey suggest that the castlery of Dundalk was actually composed of the whole of Magh Conaille, in which case Hugh could have held some possessions within the castlery quite legitimately.
\textsuperscript{245} The date is provided by Luke de Netterville's attestation of one of Nicholas' charters as archdeacon of Armagh. He became archbishop in 1216.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{Register}, pp. 42-3.
free chapel...... Rendering then each year, for all rights and claims, one.. pound of wax to the vicars of the church of St John the Baptist of Dundalk."247 That the canons of St Thomas' had to pay a rent to St John's reveals that they had lost possession of the church. Indeed, Nicholas must have been rather pleased at having resolved the issue in this manner. Forcing the canons to pay a rent to the very church which de Lacy had previously - and unlawfully, as de Verdun would have seen it - granted to them must have seemed satisfyingly ironic.

It is likely that Nicholas de Verdun had been obliged to make these gifts to St Thomas' to effect the recovery of St John's. Certainly, the fact that he sent a letter to the archbishop of Armagh informing him of one of his grants suggests as much.248 St Thomas' was not otherwise favoured with the patronage of the de Verduns or, indeed, with that of the family's close followers, which could have been the result of residual bad feeling. Instead, Nicholas patronised the Hospital of St John the Baptist outside the New Gate of Dublin, a house of Fratres Cruciferi like that at Dundalk, granting it between 1203 and 1231 "a certain land which my father had from the gift of the lord king of England outside the New Gate of Dublin."249 This was the area known as 'Bertram's Court' after Nicholas' father, which lay across the road from the hospital. Henry of Wootton, one of Nicholas de Verdun's closest followers, chose to patronise St Mary's abbey. In about 1225, he gave this Cistercian house, with the consent of his son and heir, Hugh, "five carucates of land with their appurtenances in a suitable place out of my whole land which I hold of the gift of Nicholas de Verdun."250

How long Nicholas remained in Ireland after de Lacy's expulsion is unknown, but he had a lot of work to do and it is entirely possible that he did not return to England between 1210 and 1212. That he was in Ireland at around the latter date is revealed by the presence of Nicholas' name in a declaration issued by William Marshal and other "magnates of Ireland." In this, the named Anglo-Norman lords condemned the pope's treatment of the king's rights in Stephen Langton's election to Canterbury and stated that "with the king they are prepared to live and die; and to the last they will faithfully and inseparably adhere to the king."251 The reasons

247 ibid, pp. 43-4.
248 ibid, pp. 44-5.
249 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.498, fo. 60v.; E. St. J. Brooks, Register of the Hospital of St John the Baptist Without the New Gate, Dublin (Dublin, 1936), no. 127, p. 92.
250 Chartularies, 1, pp. 66-7.
251 CDI, 1, no. 448.
for this declaration are unclear. W. L. Warren saw it as being simply a declaration of loyalty after the discovery of a plot against the king's life by Robert fitzWalter and Eustace de Vesci, while Otway-Ruthven thought that it stemmed from a demand from John himself. Its intention, on the other hand, was probably to prevent a suspicious king returning to an Ireland which had already experienced what his power could do to the mightiest of lords. Nor, with one exception, did the magnates of Ireland break their word to faithfully adhere to the king, despite the troubles of the following three years. "In the civil war which followed the granting of the charter Ireland was in no way involved, and only one Irish tenant-in-chief, Nicholas de Verdun."252

King John was probably still confident of Nicholas' loyalty as late as 1214 as he was excused the scutage levied in that year - at three marks per fee - by writ of the king.253 However, this had changed by the time John agreed to Magna Carta in June 1215. This might have been because Nicholas played some part in the rebellion which led to the events at Runnymede. Alternatively or additionally, John might have considered Nicholas to have been one of those who were "truculently suspicious" of him after he had agreed to the rebels' demands.254 Both points are suggested by the fact that it was only on 25 July 1215 that John commanded William, earl Ferrers, "that when Ranulf, earl of Chester, shall have given surety for Nicholas de Verdun's faithful service, the earl deliver to Nicholas Bertram, his hostage.... William de Cantilupe is commanded to deliver to Nicholas de Verdun, William the son of Henry of Wootton, hostage of Nicholas, as above."255

Whether Nicholas was involved in the rebellion which led to the sealing of Magna Carta or not, he was certainly fighting against John when war flared up again in September 1215. Once John had died in October 1216, however, Nicholas quickly came over to Henry III's side, for as early as 14 December 1216 orders were sent to Geoffrey de Marisco, the justiciar of Ireland, "to cause to be restored to Nicholas whatever the justiciary took from the land when Nicholas receded from his fealty and service to King John and the king".256 This mandate was followed in June 1217 with orders to reseise Nicholas of the castle of Dundalk "whereof he

253 PR, 16 John, p. 48.
255 CDI, I, no. 624.
256 ibid, no. 727. Nicholas' return to Henry III's allegiance by far outpaced that of the majority of rebels. (D. Carpenter, The Minority of Henry III (London, 1990), p. 25, n. 3.)
was disseised because he went against King John in the war" and to give him half of Ferrard.257

The reasons for Nicholas' decision to fight against John seem clear. In the pipe roll of 1208-9 Nicholas was suddenly charged £551 for eleven and a half years' worth of "aid of the knights of the honour of the earl of Leicester" which, it was alleged, Bertram III de Verdun had collected as sheriff of Warwick and Leicester after the capture of Robert, earl of Leicester, in the reign of Henry II.258 Nicholas thus had a financial motive for rebelling against John and as such he can join men such as Gilbert de Gant, William de Mowbray, Peter de Brus, John de Lacy and others who also rebelled for financial reasons, having been "either....finally forced to pay their old debts to the crown or....saddled with huge new burdens by way of reliefs or proffers for favours."259 It is also possible that another factor played a part in Nicholas' decision to rebel. Holt has noted that the men who rebelled were the 'outs', those who had been "excluded from the spoils of office, despite a family tradition of service to the Crown in many cases."260 Nicholas de Verdun, whose father had been so involved in Henry II's administration, could well have numbered himself among such men.

According to David Carpenter "in some lesser cases.... usually in return for money, grievances were remedied."261 Matilda de Cauz, for example, fined £40 for the return of her hereditary forestership of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire which John had taken from her as early as 1202. Nicholas de Verdun's financial grievance too was quickly remedied through payment of a fine. The pipe roll of 1217-18 shows Nicholas offering 200 marks to be quit of the debt of £551 after it had been discovered that it could not be found against Bertram III's name in the rolls of Henry II or Richard I. It was accepted that Nicholas had been charged with the debt through the suggestion of Richard Basset, "by will and without judgement in the time of King John."262

There are two things worth noting before moving on. The first is that it was Richard Basset who suggested that the fine be placed against Nicholas' name.

257 CDI, 1, no. 790.
258 PR, 11 John, p. 16.
259 D. Carpenter, The Minority of Henry III, p. 6 and n. 5.
Richard Basset was the de Verduns' lord for the lands they held at Swinford, Walcote, Ashby Parva and Fleckney in Leicestershire and for that part of Croxden which was "of the fee of Madeley Holme" in Staffordshire, which had originally been granted to Bertram III by Geoffre y Ridel in 1176. We may, therefore, have some indication here of bad feeling between de Verdun and Basset families in John's reign. This could have been the result of some tenurial dispute or regional rivalry. Alternatively, it could have been the result of the tardiness with which Nicholas de Verdun dealt with Eustachia Basset's claims of dower after the death of her first husband, Thomas de Verdun, the details of which were noted earlier.

Secondly, it must be asked whether an association with William Marshal, Henry III's guardian, helped draw Nicholas away from the rebels so quickly and whether it led to the rapid remedy of his grievances. Nicholas' father, Bertram III, had been with Marshal at the conference at Bonmoulins in 1188 and they had pursued the future Richard I to Amboise together after his hasty departure. Equally, Walter de Verdun, who was probably Nicholas' cousin, was serving in Essex and Hertfordshire as under-sheriff to the Marshal in 1219 while at around the same time (1218-19) he was constable of the Tower of London "perhaps as the regent's deputy." Nicholas himself had clearly had some dealings with William Marshal too. He had joined in the 1212 declaration and the two men would also have fought against Hugh de Lacy in Ireland together. It is possible that Nicholas' confirmation of Hugh Bardolf's grant of land "in the territory of Hornton, namely, fifty-two acres in one field and twenty-four in the other field and five acres of meadow in his lordship, and one acre for making a messuage" to Stanley abbey also reveals some sign of friendship with Marshal, for Stanley was the abbey from which William colonised his Irish foundation at Duiske. Perhaps some legacy of this suggested de Verdun association with William Marshal can be found in Roesia de Verdun's fine to be quit of sending knights to fight against Richard Marshal in 1234.

264 P. Meyer, L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, II. 8225-8248
266 BL, Campbell Charter xiii, 22; W. de G. Birch, 'Collections Towards the History of the Cistercian Abbey of Stanley', Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine, xv (1875), p. 286. An abbreviated version of the grant survives in BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 185.
267 D. Crouch, William Marshal, Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147-1219 (London, 1990), pp. 141, 190-1.
268 PRO, E372/78, memb. Iv; BL, Additional MS 18446, p. 5.
After the accession of Henry III and the restoration of his estates, the surviving records give the impression that Nicholas spent much of the next ten years in Ireland where he seems to have been aiming to expand his territory. Some indication of this intent had already been given in the charter in which Nicholas promised St Thomas' abbey benefices in the first castlery he established outside the plain of Magh Conaille. These plans seem to have been first put into effect in 1217 when the Irish Annals of Loch Cé note that "a predatory host of the Foreigners of Uladh went to Ard-Macha (Armagh), which was all plundered by them..... At the end of the week afterwards O'Neill Ruadh and the son of Mac Mathghamhna came and took great prey from the Foreigners, viz; one thousand and two hundred cows. The Foreigners and O'Fothuelan went after them. The Eoghanachs turned against them and killed fourteen Foreigners who were clad in coats of mail, including the constable of Dealgan (Dundalk)." Uladh did once cover the area around Dundalk, although it had been part of Airgialla since the eleventh century. Nonetheless, although the identification of the foreigners as being from Uladh does not necessarily suggest a de Verdun expedition, the presence of the constable of Dundalk castle does at least point to de Verdun involvement, especially as Hugh de Lacy, the only possible contender for Dundalk, was in exile at the time. That Nicholas aimed to expand into Armagh is further revealed by a charter he granted to Theobald II Butler, probably in around 1225 when Theobald married Nicholas' daughter, Roesia. By this charter, Butler was granted "for his homage and service... twenty knights' fees in my land of Honectath in the south part of Armagh with all its appurtenances..... doing to me and my heirs the service of four knights for all service and exaction."

The only permanent gains made at this time, however, were small. Between 1203 and 1225 Nicholas de Verdun granted "to Henry of Wootton and his heirs, four knights fees in Cnokerterling on the high [ground] next to the mountain, in a suitable place by the inspection of prudent men. And one knight's fee where my fort [gap in MS] above my wood of Kane in a suitable place." Kane was situated on the western border of Dundalk, just to the east of the later de Verdun castle at Castleroche, which itself could well have been the successor to the fort of this charter. Brendan Smith thought that Henry of Wootton's possessions at Kane could have been placed under threat by Roesia de Verdun's agreement with Hugh

269 Register, pp. 42-3.
270 ALC, 1, p. 257.
271 Ormond Deeds, no. 863 (5).
272 Chartularies, 1, p. 65.
de Lacy in 1235, as one knight's fee at Kane had also been granted to Adam II of Audley by Hugh de Lacy, from whom it passed to his brother, Henry. Implicit in this statement is a belief that the two grants of Kane were the result of the dispute between de Lacy and de Verdun mentioned earlier. This need not be the case. They could well have been made before any bad feeling had developed, in which case what we are seeing here is simply the division of the conquests of the "land of war" that was envisaged in Leselina de Verdun's marriage agreement.

In February 1221 Nicholas was in England with Henry III when he took the castle at Bytham following the count of Aumale's rebellion, which was itself probably the result of the loss of the manor of Driffield in 1220. However, Nicholas de Verdun's chief concern at this time was the return of Hugh de Lacy to Ireland in 1221, as a result of which twenty-four battalions were gathered at Dundalk to fight "the son of Hugo." De Lacy returned in 1224, after a brief spell fighting for Llywelyn ap Iorwerth against William Marshal. The Annals of Loch Cé record that in this year "the son of Hugo came to Erinn against the will of the king of the Saxons, and causes of war and contention grew up between him and the Foreigners of Erinn, until the Foreigners of Erinn rose up against him, and he was banished to Aedh O'Neill king of Ailech." Hugh, then, had first gone to Meath, where he had met up with his brother William, and then proceeded to ravage the lands round about. Walter de Lacy was sent to restore order in his lordship, where he was joined in June by the younger William Marshal, who had been appointed justiciar. Hugh, meanwhile, was in Ulster besieging Carrickfergus, although he also took the opportunity to attack the lands in the earldom which had been given to the Galloway Scots by John. Then he turned his attentions to Dundalk. "The Foreigners and the Gaeidhel of Erinn..... assembled to proceed against [him], until they reached Muirthemhne (Magh Conaille) and Dun Dealgan (Dundalk); and from thence they demanded pledges and hostages from the sons of Hugo and from Aedh O'Neill." Such was the situation in northern Louth that on 25 August 1224 the

273 B. Smith, "Tenure and Locality in North Leinster', Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland, eds. T. B. Barry et al., p. 37, n. 51.
274 Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3. Gosling identifies Kane with the Wottonrath of Bertram III de Verdun's charter to the church of Dundalk, which would suggest that Henry had been granted lands there as early as 1190. This is possible, but Nicholas' grant to Henry appears to have been a new one as the charter states that he "gave and granted" these lands to him. (Chartularies, 1, p. 65.)
276 ALC, 1, p. 265.
277 ibid, p. 271.
278 ibid, p. 271.
king wrote to William Marshal, who was at the time himself fighting de Lacy around Dundalk, stating that "Nicholas de Verdun represents that his lands in Ireland are laid waste by Hugh de Lacy's war against the king and he demands compensation out of the lands of the king's enemies, which are of his fee without Meath, and out of the fees of other persons within Meath. Mandate that, estimating the damage which Nicholas has suffered in the king's service by his lands being laid waste and burned, the justiciary provide him with compensation as above."\(^{279}\)

It is not clear what form this compensation took. That it was stated as being of Hugh de Lacy's fee without Meath, however, suggests that Nicholas hoped to regain in this way those lands in the lordship of Dundalk which Thomas de Verdun had granted to de Lacy when he married his sister. Alternatively, it might be that Nicholas intended to use this mandate to legitimise steps he had already taken to recover these lands. It is at least certain that he had attempted to restore de Verdun control over the lands which had been lost to de Lacy. This is revealed in the conventio which Nicholas' daughter and heir, Roesia, made with Hugh de Lacy in 1235. In this, Roesia granted "that all men enfeoffed by the earl (Hugh) may hold and possess peaceably, doing to Roesia and her heirs the services that belong to them: except those of whom the lands were seized into the hand of Sir Nicholas de Verdun, father of said Roesia, for failure of service."\(^{280}\) Further evidence of Nicholas' attempts to recover these estates is contained in a later plea which records that Stachmanasran, a demesne manor apparently located close to Haggardstown to the north of the Fane river, had been regained by Nicholas "after the last return of king John from Ireland."\(^{281}\)

It seems that Nicholas still had some way to go in recovering his family's lands from Hugh de Lacy even in 1226, as in that year Walter de Lacy was given possession of whatever Hugh held "of the fee of Nicholas de Verdun," although, of course, this may have been considerably less by 1226 than it had been previously.\(^{282}\) The complete recovery of all the lands once held by Hugh de Lacy does, however, appear to have been achieved before 1235. The conventio made between Roesia and Hugh speaks of "that half of the land (presumably the lordship

\(^{279}\) CDI, 1, no. 1210.
\(^{280}\) Cormonston Reg, pp. 161-2.
\(^{282}\) CDI, 1, nos. 1371, 1372.
of Dundalk) which [Hugh] demanded from her in right of the agreement formerly made between the earl and Thomas de Verdon," words which suggest that Hugh was no longer in possession at that time.

Nicholas' last known action in Ireland was to guard the marches during Richard de Burgh's expedition against Connacht in 1227, when the justiciar built castles at Rindown and Athleague, the second of which was later to pass into de Verdon hands. From 1226, however, the records suggest that Nicholas was spending more of his time in England with the king, who was becoming ever more directly involved in government and finally declared his majority in January of 1227. On 30 June 1226 the king issued letters to Geoffrey de Marisco from Windsor by which Aedh, son of Cathal, the late king of Connacht, was ordered to surrender his land of Connacht, which were witnessed by Nicholas de Verdon amongst others. In 1229 it was stated that "the king retains Nicholas de Verdon on his service in England until the ensuing Autumn," while on 30 April 1230 a mandate was issued to Richard de Burgh "to respite until his return Nicholas de Verdon, gone with the king to parts beyond the sea," which must be a reference to Nicholas' accompanying the king on his expedition to Poitou in that year. In July 1231, just a few months before his death, Nicholas was again with the king in England.

Although Nicholas had held the wardship of William Perceval de Sumery in 1223, at which point he was ordered to hand the boy over to Ranulf III of Chester, de Verdon only really began to enjoy royal favour from the time his presence at court was recorded by the sources just mentioned. Apart from scutage exemptions, the main signs of this favour can be seen in three grants which Nicholas received between 1227 and 1230. In September 1227 Nicholas was granted "a weekly market on Tuesday at his manor of Bretford: grant also to the same of warren in his manors of Al[ton] county Stafford and Brandon county Warwick." May 1230 saw a further grant of fairs at Clonmore and Dundalk lasting for eight days from the vigil of the feast of St Martin, of a market on Thursdays at Clonmore and of free warren on his demesne lands in Ferrard. In 1228, another sign of royal

283 ibid, no. 1581.
284 ibid, no. 1402.
285 ibid, no. 1690.
286 ibid, no. 1821.
287 CCR, 1227-31, p. 535.
288 RLC, 1, p. 531.
289 CChR, 1, p. 58.
290 CDI, 1, nos. 1829, 1830.
1.7 The Seal of Nicholas de Verdun (British Library, Seal LXXV 74)
favour manifested itself when the king's "dear and faithful Nicholas de Verdun" and his wife, Clementia, were granted custody of "Susan, our niece, the daughter of Llywelyn prince of North Wales and Joanna his wife, our sister,... to be brought up safe and secure and without all injury". 291

At about this same time Nicholas began work on upgrading and rebuilding his castle at Brandon in Warwickshire. It would seem that one of the improvements he made was to increase the depth of the moats with which the castle, like that at Kenilworth, was surrounded. As a result of this the monks of Combe abbey brought an assize of novel disseisin against de Verdun in 1226, claiming that he had raised the pool at Brandon to so great a height that he had drowned their lands in Stretton nearby. 292 It was probably also as a result of these operations that Nicholas gave a charter to Combe abbey, relating to the "repair and amendment of the breaches which are situated above the mill pond which is called Perimulne which they have from the gift of William Chetwode and his wife.... Of which breaches one was between the ditch of my castle of Brandon and my meadow of Sprowsam and the other was at the old pond-bays, with leave to carry earth across this land." 293

Nicholas' building activities at Brandon were not solely concerned with improving the water defences. He also built a keep on the low motte there, which was securely dated to this period by Philip Chatwin on account of the style of the surviving moulded stonework and by finds at the site. This, probably one of the last tower keeps built in England, measured 55 feet by 42 feet externally and had walls eleven to sixteen feet thick. Antae-like projections flanked the north side, in the middle of which was the entrance, while recesses on the south side revealed the location of the garderobe chutes. The whole was faced with carefully made squared stones sandwiching a well laid rubble core. A concrete foundation and basement floor at least six feet deep would have prevented all attempts to mine the keep, because they brought the foundations down to water level. 294

293 BL, Cotton MS Vitellus A.i, fo. 55v.
294 The remains of the keep are described fully in P. B. Chatwin, 'Brandon Castle', Birmingham Archaeological Society, 73 (1955), pp. 66-72.
Due to the short occupation of the keep, which was destroyed in 1266, the excavated finds can all be dated to between 1226 and 1266, during which period the castle remained in the hands of three successive heads of the de Verdun family; Nicholas, Roesia and John. The finds thus reveal something about the environment in which the de Verduns lived and, on this account, some are worth mentioning. Fragments of pottery were found mainly on the south side of the keep where they may perhaps have been thrown out from a kitchen above, amongst which were jug handles, at least one of which was made in Coventry, and a red-ware pitcher which was glazed green and had faces modelled on the handle. A collection of arrowheads was also uncovered. These had probably been kept near the main entrance, possibly in a cupboard of which the hinge survives, where they would have been handy if suddenly required. A private seal was found at the bottom of the garderobe chutes and so was the head of a hoe which may, as Chatwin speculates, have come off while the seal was being searched for. Other finds included keys for various types of padlock, a small plain brooch and a draughtsman with a griffin in the middle.

In 1219, Nicholas de Verdun and perhaps Rohais, his mother, founded a hospital at Lutterworth, a few miles from Brandon. This was endowed with a pension from the church at Lutterworth and was also granted seven yardlands by Nicholas and his mother. Other, established, religious houses were also to benefit from Nicholas de Verdun's patronage. In the case of Breedon-on-the-Hill priory, this patronage just took the form of a confirmation charter. This rehearsed Henry of Crakemarsh's obligation to pay a rent of 20s. from the mill at Crakemarsh each year and then went on to state that "if the said rent is not paid to the prior and canons at the before-mentioned terms, I and my heirs will compel Henry and his heirs or assigns by our bailiffs to faithfully pay the said 20s. by the said terms." Kenilworth priory, on the other hand, received a completely new - albeit small - gift. Nicholas granted the canons "such a space in the field which lies between the meadow of the said canons and the road which runs from Brandon to Bretford for

295 The finds are catalogued in P. B. Chatwin, 'Brandon Castle', Birmingham Archaeological Society, 73 (1955), pp. 73-83.
296 VCH, Leicestershire, 2, pp. 42-3. The VCH expresses uncertainty over whether the Roesia who joined in Nicholas de Verdun's grants was his daughter or his mother. An inquisition of 1296, however, affirms that it was his mother. (Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 248.) Nichols also prints a grant that Nicholas made to the hospital of "two virgates of land with appurtenances of my lordship in the vill of Lutterworth." (ibid, p. 279.) This would seem to be a part of the seven virgates (or yardlands) given to the hospital by Nicholas de Verdun and his mother, which remained the total extent of the hospital's possessions in the town in 1279. (ibid, p. 248.)
297 Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 222, fo. 35.
the making of a road wide enough in all places so that two carts can meet one another for carrying the canons' hay from their meadow........ I also grant to the said canons that they are permitted to make a ditch around their meadow without contradiction or hindrance, and that I, Nicholas, shall fish in it whenever I wish."298

The last of Nicholas de Verdun's known religious benefactions concerns Rocester priory (Staffordshire). In 1278, an assize was brought to determine whether "Robert the abbot of Rocester had unjustly disseised Geoffrey of Denstone of his common of pasture at Northullehay, appurtenant to his free tenement in Denstone. The abbot took exception to the form of the writ, stating that there was no vill of Northullehay, it was only a piece of land, and that the pasture claimed was in Rocester..... And he stated that one Nicholas de Verdun was formally lord of the vill and had remitted and quit-claimed for himself and his tenants to the predecessor of the said abbot all his right in the common of pasture, and he produced the deed of Nicholas."299

The grant to Rocester is known only through the record of this plea, and it is such plea rolls which provide most of the remaining information about Nicholas' activities with regard to his tenants and neighbours. Thus it is from a record of 1293 that we know that Nicholas expanded his liberty of Alton. This states that "the tenants of the lands of William de Whythalk, Henry de Sharpeclif, William de Padewyk, Robert de Sharpeclif, and Thomas de Padewyk used to do suit at the hundred every three weeks and be geldable in all things with the hundred until sixty years ago, when they were transferred to the liberty of Nicholas de Verdun of Alton" after William of Ipstones populated previously uninhabited land acquired from William of Chetelton.300 Most of the reports contained in the plea rolls are less illuminating and tend to concern, as might be expected, Nicholas's involvement in various types of legal disputes. Their use is often limited still further by a lack of detail.301 A flavour of the variety of issues involved, however, can be gleaned from those cases for which a little more information is given. In April 1208 Nicholas de Verdun warranted the right of the abbot of Croxden to a mill in Stamford.302 In 1219, he brought an assize of darrein presentment against John parson of Roele

298 BL, Additional MS 47677, fos. 337-337v.
299 WS, 6/1, p. 176.
300 ibid, p. 265.
301 For example, the Warwickshire assize roll for 1221 records simply that Nicholas de Verdun was involved in pleas "of mort d'ancestor" against William de Bishopston and William de Rargston. (PRO, JUST 1/948, membs. 4 and 1v. respectively).
302 CRR, 5, pp. 19, 82, 84.
over the church of Skeffington.303 Between 12 April and 9 May 1221 de Verdun brought a suit against William de Bradeshull over half a virgate in Bradeshull, (Buckinghamshire) William subsequently acknowledging Nicholas' right to it.304

The records of these pleas do not provide enough information to make any sort of judgement as to whether Nicholas was a particularly litigious individual, or whether he was careless of the rights of others. What is clear, however, is that Nicholas, along with a great number of his contemporaries, frequently found himself at law both in England and Ireland - especially from 1219-20 onwards. Indeed, he was involved in a plea against Peter of Lutterworth over a virgate with appurtenances in Lutterworth in the Easter term of 1231,305 just a few months before his death which had occurred by 23 October of the same year.306

Roesia de Verdun 1231-47.

Little is known of Roesia de Verdun's life prior to her inheritance of the de Verdun estates. However, it is clear that she had been married at least twice already as the charter she gave to Grace Dieu in 1231x41 mentions her husbands, amongst others, as intended spiritual beneficiaries of the grant.307 The identity of her first husband is unknown, but he must have died before 4 September 1225 when Henry III sent a letter to Roesia urging her to marry Theobald II Butler308 (also called Theobald Walter in contemporary sources) the heir to the lordship of Nenagh in county Tipperary, who had previously been married to Geoffrey de Marisco's daughter.309 Roesia may have been reluctant to do this, as Henry sent another letter to her father asking him to encourage her to make the match.310

303 CPR, 8, pp. 161, 222, 339. Nicholas must have won, because the family still had the right of presentation to this church in 1316. (CIPM, 6, no. 54.)
304 M. W. Hughes, A Calendar of the Feet of Fines from the County of Buckingham 7 Richard I-44 Henry III, Records Branch of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, 4 (1940), p. 45.
305 CPR, 14, no. 1374.
306 CCR, 1227-31, p. 572.
307 Monasticon 6/1, p. 567.
308 RLC, 2, p. 60.
309 "[Theobald Walter] has so misconducted himself in regard to the king, that although he has married the justiciary's (Geoffrey de Marisco's) daughter, and has by her a son, the justiciary would, if it is the king's will, deprive him of all the land which he holds of the king in Ireland." (CDI, 1, no. 1443.) This notice dates to about August 1226, so that Geoffrey's comments must relate to a past marriage.
310 RLC, 2, p. 60.
Nicholas was apparently successful in this as Roesia did indeed marry Theobald Butler and had at least two children by him, a son, John, and a daughter, Matilda. John was to inherit the de Verduns' lands from his mother, having already adopted her toponym at least five years before her death and his career is discussed below. Matilda, who might have been married to Walter II de Lacy before his death between 1238 and 1241, had married John fitzAlan by 1242, the marriage being first noted in a fine of that year in which "Roesia de Verdun gave the king 50 marks for a certain writ so that she is not distrained for money by those executors of the will of John fitzAlan." This mentions John, John fitzAlan's son, "who married the daughter of the said Roesia." Matilda was to outlive her husband and went on to marry Richard d'Amundeville before her death in 1284. The inquisition post mortem made after her death records that she had held land in eight manors in dower in Wiltshire, Shropshire and Sussex along with three Sussex hundreds. To this can be added 100s. of land in dower in Chipping Norton in Gloucestershire which she had held in 1283 and, perhaps, the fee of William Jaye in Jaye in Shropshire which she had claimed to hold in dower in the same year.

Theobald Butler died in Poitou in 1230 and orders were given for Roesia to be assigned dower from his lands, with the custody of "the lands and heirs of Theobald Walter, and the marriage of the heirs" being given to Richard of Cornwall, Henry III's brother. There is no record of what Roesia received in Ireland, but the fact that these orders were also sent to the justiciary of Ireland suggests that she did hold something in dower there. At least some of the dower lands that Roesia de Verdun claimed in England are identified in a plea of 1233. In this, it is stated that Roesia "who was the wife of Theobald Butler petitions against Roger de Quency of a third part of the manors of Whiteheton and Merton with appurtenances in county Lancashire, and a third of the manor of Shipley (Yorkshire)... and a third of the manor of Belawe (Norfolk).... and a third of a £4 rent... from the manor of Perham (Suffolk)... as her dower." The outcome of the

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311 The Register of St Thomas' abbey records that an unnamed daughter of Roesia's had married Walter II de Lacy at an unspecified date. As Roesia is not known to have had any other daughters, Matilda is the likeliest candidate. (Register, p. 420.)
313 CIPM, 2, no. 489.
314 ibid, no. 536.
315 CCR, 1279-88, p. 213; CIPM, 2, no. 489.
316 CCR, 1227-31, p. 572; CDI, 1, nos. 1845, 1847.
317 CRR, 15, no. 372.
plea is not known, but as it does not arise again presumably some settlement was reached.

As a widow, Roesia had her own independent legal identity which would be retained provided that she did not marry again. She could inherit and administer her lands and bring law suits against those who infringed her rights - as indeed she did throughout her career in both England and Ireland.318 Consequently, when Nicholas de Verdun died in 1231, Roesia was no helpless heiress to be taken into the king's wardship and married at will, but was able to inherit her patrimony in her own right. So it was that on 23 October 1231 it was recorded in the fine rolls that, "Roesia, daughter and heir of Nicholas de Verdun, made with the king a fine of 700 marks for her relief, that she may have seisin of her father's lands at his death which belong to her by right of inheritance and that she may not be constrained to marry."319 She was also "to have peace of the demands which are made to her for the debts of that Nicholas [de Verdun]," which Nicholas' executors, Walter, abbot of Croxden, and Robert of Wootton were busy trying to pay off.320

In the first decade of her rule, Roesia founded the Augustinian nunnery of Grace Dieu near Belton in Leicestershire, granting it, in what seems to be a foundation charter, "the whole of my manor of Belton with the advowson of the church... and all other appurtenances and liberties which I or my ancestors once used to have in the same manor. Haying and holding of me and my heirs in pure and perpetual alms."321 Roesia may have founded this house as the result of a desire to equal her forebears. "The pride a founder took in a foundation was based on the knowledge that this action secured a certain social position with peers living and dead."322 Some indication that Roesia did indeed see herself as in competition with her ancestors - and that this was therefore at least part of the motivation for the founding of Grace Dieu - is provided by the report of the construction of Castleroche in 1236 noted below. Whatever its cause, the foundation of Grace Dieu placed Roesia amongst a band of eighteen widows who independently founded nunneries across England between c.1076 and 1284, who included in their

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318 For example, CDI, 1, nos. 2029, 2276, 2446; CCR, 1231-4, p. 153; CCR, 1242-7, p. 237; WS, 4/1, pp. 102, 103, 111.
319 CDI, 1, no. 1923; PRO, E372/76, memb. 1.
321 Monasticum, 6/1, p. 567.
number Margery, the widow of Bartholomew de Crek, who founded the nunnery at Flixham (Suffolk) in 1258-9, Herbusse de Clere who founded the Benedictine nunnery at Yedingham (Yorkshire) in 1158, after the death of her first husband and probably before her subsequent remarriage, and Margaret de Lacy who founded an Augustinian nunnery at Aconbury (Herefordshire) in 1216.323

Little is known of the history of Grace Dieu, although it is certain that the house was founded between 1231 and 1241, towards the end of the great period of monastic foundations, the later date being provided by a royal confirmation in the charter rolls of Roesia's grant of the manor of Belton to the nuns.324 The priory was established outside the village, where its fragmentary remains still stand in a field by the side of the road. Roesia subsequently made additional gifts to the priory. By 1242-3 the nuns held a third of a fee at Kirby in Lincolnshire "of the fee of Roesia de Verdun,"325 while the hundred rolls record that "the prioress of Grace Dieu holds two tofts and one bovate of the gift of Roesia de Verdun" at Burton, also in Lincolnshire.326 It is likely that Roesia had also granted the priory land at Great Limber in the same county where the nuns held the rents of assize, lands and tenants, as well as the farm of the manor, at the time of the Dissolution.327 Roesia thus alienated some of her more distant and isolated manors to the community but, despite this, the house was poor and struggling to the extent that in the early 1250's Adam Marsh wrote to Robert Grosseteste, the bishop of Lincoln, and to the archdeacons of Leicester and Oxford to enlist their help on behalf of the nuns.328

By 1246 Roesia de Verdun had also founded a Franciscan friary in Dundalk, at Seatown, of which the only remains are a late thirteenth-century tower.329 However, although Roesia founded these new houses, she also continued a family tradition of patronising the Cistercian abbey established at Croxden by her grandfather. Two original charters survive by which Roesia gave new possessions to the abbey. In the first of these Roesia quitclaimed to Croxden the rights which

323 S. Thompson, Women Religious (Oxford, 1991), appendix A, pp. 217-31. Aconbury was initially given to the Hospitallers but became a house of Augustinian nuns when Margaret discovered what the gift to the Hospitallers entailed. (ibid, pp. 50-1.)
324 CChR, 1, p. 265.
325 BF, p. 1110.
327 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 568.
she claimed in the wood of Hounds Cheadle (Staffordshire) within given bounds. In the second she granted the abbey "in pure and perpetual alms three bovates of land and a half with all their appurtenances in the vill of Hounds Cheadle and nine acres of land in Lindencliff..... After this I gave to the same monks the whole land which Alan of Lees held... in the land which is called Lees."330 A later law suit reveals that Roesia also granted the abbey a rent of 40s. per year from the mills at Alton, while the hundred rolls reveal a donation made to Croxden in 1244 of 6 virgates of land in Hartshorn, Derbyshire, where the abbey had been granted some property previously by Bertram III.331 These grants to Croxden abbey, referred to by Roesia as "my abbey", suggest a strong feeling of family as well as of piety.

It might at first be thought that further evidence of Roesia's piety could be found in the direction to Adam de Spaldinton, who was given custody of Roesia's lands after her death, "to maintain a taper out of the issues of the manor of Wilsford, continually burning before the high altar of the church of Salisbury, as was done in Roesia's time."332 However, the inquisition post mortem of 1274 makes it clear that this was the service by which the manor was held rather than an act of devotion.333 Although Wilsford and Stoke Farthing in Wiltshire first appear in de Verdun hands during Roesia's tenure of the family estates, they came to the family as a result of Nicholas de Verdun's marriage to Clementia Butler. This is revealed in a plea of 1243 in which Roesia claimed to hold Stoke Farthing as the heir of Philip Butler, the father of the said Clementia.334 It is also clear that Stapellaunton, which Roesia gave to her daughter in maritagium, came to the family in the same way and was, like Wilsford, held for the service of finding one wax taper for the church of Salisbury.335

Other lands did come into the family's possession in Roesia's time. A charter of John de Verdun's reveals that Michael Belet had granted Roesia a number of houses in Shoe Lane in London, although when and why is completely unknown.336 Perhaps it was due to his relationship with Walter de Verdun,
Roesia's cousin.\textsuperscript{337} Just as obscure is the way in which Bruntingthorp in Leicestershire had come into Roesia's hands by the time of the survey of 1242-3 - assuming that she was the first de Verdun to hold the manor. There is, however, some evidence to explain how it was that Ibstock, also in Leicestershire, found its way into Roesia's possession. Robert de Verdun, one of Bertram III's sons and so Roesia's uncle, had married one of Henry of Burton's two daughters at an uncertain date and acquired Ibstock through this marriage.\textsuperscript{338} On his death, presumably without heir, the manor came to Roesia as Robert's nearest kin, she being the descendant of his elder brother.\textsuperscript{339}

As a woman, Roesia's scope of operations was more limited than that of her male counterparts or relatives. She could not attend the king's council or parliament, nor could she join military campaigns or act as a member of a jury.\textsuperscript{340} However, as a tenant-in-chief she did have obligations to provide the military and other services by which she held her lands from the king. She was clearly called on to provide such service in 1234 during Henry III's campaign against Richard Marshal. Marshal appears to have been brought to rebellion against Henry III as a result of his need to assert his leadership over his family's affinity - a need which was the result of the fact that before his succession to his family's British estates Richard's career had been centred in France, so that he was consequently unknown to most of his British tenants.\textsuperscript{341} Henry III took Richard's castle at Usk in September 1233 after a three day siege and a truce followed. War, however, was resumed on 17 October on the news that Marshal, now allied with Llywelyn Fawr, had ejected the king's garrison from Usk. The court's baggage was subsequently attacked during Henry III's stay at Grosmont and a number of castles including Monmouth, Abergavenny, Cardiff and Carmarthen were taken or besieged by Richard and his Welsh allies.\textsuperscript{342} Roesia's contribution to Henry's effort against Marshal was to fine ten marks "that she be quit of sending knights to the army of the king in Wales."\textsuperscript{343}

In 1234, this was not an unusual course of action to take. Powicke stated that the king was able "to check a widespread movement among the barons, but he could

\textsuperscript{337} Michael Belet was Walter's brother-in-law. (N. Vincent, Peter des Roches, p. 214, n. 172.)
\textsuperscript{338} Leicestershire, 4/2, p. 749.
\textsuperscript{341} N. Vincent, Peter des Roches, pp. 396-7.
\textsuperscript{342} ibid, pp. 412, 418-19.
\textsuperscript{343} PRO, E372/78, memb. Iv.; BL, Additional MS 18446, p. 5.
not stir them to effective action in his cause... Opinion was against him." This is well illustrated in the pipe roll of 1234 which contains a large number of fines by which individuals, and especially churchmen, quitted themselves of sending knights to aid the king. For example, the bishop of Coventry fined 25 marks to be so quit. The bishop of Lincoln fined £110 and Henry Chamberleng five marks in the account for Lincolnshire, while in Norfolk and Suffolk the abbot of St Benedict of Holme fined 10 marks. In Kent, St Augustine's abbey in Canterbury fined sixty marks to be "quit of the service owed to the king in the army summoned to Ireland" (which was diverted to fight against Marshal) as did another fourteen Kentish laymen, amongst whom were Rannulf de Boseaul (who fined 40s.), John de Valeyres, (40s.), Thomas de Camvill (£10) and Roger de Andinton (60s.).

In Ireland, "for several years after Richard Marshal's death colonial society and Anglo-Irish relations were marked by a measure of harmony that had rarely if ever been known before." It was in this period of calm that Roesia de Verdun lived and worked. If she fails to appear on the broad stage of colonial politics, such as the conquest of Connacht, on account of her gender, her operations in the de Verdun lordship of Dundalk are more clearly seen. Roesia was concerned to recover lost lands and rights, as well as to increase the lands under her control. To this end in the first years of her rule Roesia finally brought to a conclusion the dispute with Hugh de Lacy which had loomed so large in her father's Irish career.

Roesia's agreement with Hugh of c.1235 was probably primarily intended to bring stability to relations between the two families, although in the event it set the recovery of the de Verduns' lands in county Louth on a permanent footing. In the conventio, Hugh "quit-claims for his life all right which he had in that half of the land which he demanded from [Roesia] in right of the agreement formerly made between the earl and Thomas de Verdun, saving the right of his heirs after his death if they could acquire any out of the former agreement. So that the said Roesia de Verdun and her heirs may hold all that moiety of land which the earl demanded from her, for the life of the earl. And if his heirs, while he live, wish to reclaim against Roesia, or move any suit upon the said land, by the said agreement, the earl will annul it." In return, Roesia gave the earl £200 to be paid within two years, with excommunication being threatened on either party who broke the

345 PRO, E372/78, membs. 1v., 4v., 6, 6v., 7v.
agreement - a clause possibly indicative of residual distrust between de Verdun and de Lacy. In the event Roesia's settlement proved final. Despite later attempts by Matilda, Hugh's daughter, to recover these lands, the de Verduns retained them undivided until the extinction of the male line in 1316.

At about the same time as she was recovering that part of Dundalk held by de Lacy, Roesia was consolidating the north-western frontier of her lordship. The close rolls reveal that by July 1236, Roesia de Verdun had "built a good castle strongly in her land against the Irish." This castle has been identified as that at Castleroche and the note of its construction goes on to state that this was something "which none of her predecessors was able to do," unusual words which probably owe their origin to Roesia's own report of proceedings and suggest a determination to prove herself at least the equal of her forbears. It should be noted, however, that the phrase castellum firmavit, at least in the twelfth century, is ambiguous. It is not, therefore, altogether clear whether this note refers to the construction of a completely new castle on a completely new site, or simply to the fortification in stone of an already existing stronghold. Whatever the case, Roesia was not content with the (re)fortification of this one castle, for in the same entry the king writes that she intended "to build another castle to the great security of our land" to fund which she was granted the service of Meath and Uriel. The location of this second castle is unknown. Otway-Ruthven favoured its identification with the motte-and-bailey at Mount Bagnall on the Cooley peninsula but it is possible that Roesia simply intended to rebuild her grandfather's castle at Dundalk.

Castleroche remains the best preserved of all the de Verduns' castles - they came to have at least eleven in total - and stands on the rock from which it takes its name overlooking the roads into Dundalk from Armagh and Monaghan (via Castleblayney). There is rather a nice, albeit apocryphal, local tradition about the construction of this castle which might provide some insight into Roesia's

348 ibid, p. 144.
349 CCR, 1234-7, p. 364; CDI, 1, no. 2334.
350 For example, Roger of Howden in his Gesta Henrici Secundi states that Roger de Mowbray firmavit a castle at Kinnardferry in Axholme, while Ralph of Diceto reveals that he simply rebuilt it. (F. M. Stenton, The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1961), pp. 202-3.)
352 Alton, Brandon and Weobley in England, Ewias Lacy in the Welsh march, Dundalk, Castleroche, Duleek, Lough Sewdy, Incheleffer, Moydow and Athleague in Ireland.
1.8. Castleroche.
character. It is said that when Roesia was first having the castle designed she promised the architect that if she liked the finished article then she would marry him. The architect, duly inspired to become master of lands in Louth and England, exerted himself to do the best job he could and, indeed, Roesia was very pleased with the finished result. However, as she stood admiring the view from the large windows of her new great hall and the architect arrived to remind her of her promise, Roesia decided that marriage was not an option after all and had the gentleman launched out of the hall window to fall to his death at the foot of the castle crag.353

Castleroche, which is built from roughly coursed limestone ashlar and greywacke, takes the form of a nearly triangular enclosure. The curtain walls follow the contours of the rock on which the castle stands and rise directly from it. Regularly spaced openings around the top of the wall suggest that a hoarding could have been fitted to provide some extra wall-top defence. All the main surviving buildings are grouped along the east wall. At the south, where the ground falls most steeply away, is the hall with its three large south-facing windows and a basement below which has a blocked sallyport in the east wall. Adjoining this is the gatehouse, where twin flattened 'D'-shaped towers, battered up to about three metres high, flank the gate passage. This was approached via a drawbridge which spanned the shallow rock-cut fosse which runs along the whole of the eastern side of the castle and separates it from the rest of a small plateau, upon which the borough of Castleroche probably stood. At the north-eastern angle stand the remains of a four storied 'D'-shaped tower, of which only the basement survives. Within the enclosure itself, which is now regularly used as a rather grand sheep-fold, stands a small square building. Its function and date are unknown.

The *Archaeological Survey of County Louth* suggests that the remains of the castle belong to a date later than Roesia's career so that it was "probably built by [Roesia's] son John, who died in 1274."354 No argument is put forwards in defence of this statement and an examination of the surviving structures, and especially the gatehouse, do nothing to support it. The gatehouse at Castleroche is relatively undeveloped, not at all like those built in the 1260's and 1270's at, for example, Caerphilly, Tonbridge and the de Verduns' own castle at Alton. Twin-towered

gatehouses were not new even in Roesia's day. Limerick and Dublin castles both sport early versions of such gatehouses, as does Montgomery castle in Powys which was built in 1223-31. The towers of all these structures, however, are more rounded and project further from the curtain walls than do those at Castleroche. A better comparison is provided by the gatehouse at Beeston castle in Cheshire, built by Rannulf III of Chester in c.1225 and known in contemporary documents as the 'castellum de Rupe' - as was Castleroche. Indeed, the similarities between Castleroche and Beeston in name and form may not be simply coincidence. The construction of these castles on their rocks of course owes a great deal to local topography. However, it is likely that Roesia de Verdun passed Beeston on her way from Staffordshire to Chester, where she would have crossed to her Irish estates, or that she attended Rannulf's court there as part of her tenurial obligations. The design of Castleroche, therefore, might well have been influenced by that of the castle at Beeston. It might in that respect have even been intended to act as a vehicle for propaganda, suggesting, perhaps, that the de Verduns' power in Louth was as great as that of the earl of Chester in Cheshire.

The construction of these castles might relate to an order previously given to Nicholas de Verdun to fortify his lands in 1229, from which he had been respited due to his serving with the king. This is suggested by Roesia's being granted the service of Meath and Uriel for the construction of the proposed castle near the sea, as Nicholas had been offered the same financial assistance. The construction of Castleroche did not greatly increase the lands under de Verdun control, however. It stands only a mile or two west of Kane, an area probably conquered by Nicholas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy before 1211. It may be the case that the conflict between Hugh and Nicholas was responsible for de Verdun's failure to fortify his land. Stability was required to build a masonry castle as the attempts to build at Roscommon and Caerphilly in the 1260's and 1270's demonstrate. It may be the case, therefore, that Roesia's successful construction of Castleroche was assisted by the end of the fighting between these Anglo-Norman families, as well as by

355 Limerick castle has been dated to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The construction of Dublin castle was ordered in 1205 but it was only finished in about 1248. (T. B. Barry, The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland, p. 65 for Limerick and p. 64 for Dublin; D. Sweetman, 'Anglo-Norman Fortresses,' The Illustrated Archaeology of Ireland, ed. M. Ryan (Dublin, 1991), p. 186 for Dublin.)
356 CDF, 1, no. 1690.
events in native Irish politics in Uriel at that time. Aedh Meith O'Neill had provided strong Irish leadership in the area, never fully submitting to the royal administration and even joining with Hugh de Lacy in 1224. However, on his death in the early 1230's he left a young son, Domhnall O'Neill, and this resulted in a challenge for the kingship by Domhnall Mac Lochlainn, who killed O'Neill in 1234-5. Katharine Simms believes that "this disunity amongst the Irish... made it possible for Roesia de Verdun to fortify Castleroche on the Louth-Armagh border," as well as for the lord deputy to establish a castle at Armagh in 1236, just as native weakness in Connacht in the 1280's allowed further westwards expansion by the Anglo-Normans in that region.

The political situation in Uriel raises questions about the possible expansion of Roesia's lordship at this time. In 1242, Roesia enlarged her territory southwards through the leasing of the king's manor of Louth, but if the justiciar could build a castle at or near Armagh city it is also possible that Roesia had managed to expand her lordship into the present county Armagh, the area having been a target for de Verdun ambitions since 1217. This could explain a record dating to 1243 in which Roesia was respited "regarding the settling of her land." Alternatively, this record could relate simply to the lordship of Dundalk.

It is certainly not difficult to see how Dundalk could have failed to attract settlers - or could have been depopulated - in the previous two or three decades. Security was vital for effective colonisation and it was something that the lordship of Dundalk was short of. In 1228-9, for example, Stephen of Lexington asked that the lands of Mellifont abbey be transferred out of Uriel as, "though there may be peace by the hour, there is no constant peace, no secure peace." He may not have simply been referring to attacks by the native Irish, for at the time he was writing relations between Nicholas de Verdun and Hugh de Lacy were still somewhat unsettled. The ravaging that de Lacy had carried out in Dundalk could not have made the area seem attractive to English settlers and could easily have led to the departure of any existing tenants. Nor were the de Verduns able to offer one of the more usual inducements to settlement of the frontier. Magnates like Hugh I

359 CDI, 1, no. 2544.
360 CDI, 1, no. 2567.
de Lacy promoted settlement in frontier areas, such as Ferrard or Westmeath, by making the knights' fees in these areas larger than those in more secure regions - in this case thirty ploughlands to a fee instead of twenty. However, the de Verdun lordship in Ireland was not large enough to be parcelled into fees of this size. Indeed, if Thomas de Verdun's *conventio* of c.1195 could mention five knight's fees around the castle of Dundalk, and Henry of Wootton and Adam of Audley could hold a fee each in Kane, the size of the fees of the lordship must have been small, so reducing the attraction of settling in the area. Nor were the de Verduns necessarily able to coax lesser tenants from their English estates to become their tenants in Ireland too. For example, in 1284 the sheriff of Staffordshire stated that Thomas Wade "draws his origin in Alton in [that] county" - the caput of the de Verduns' English estates - but was a burgess of Carlow.

Assuming the respite over settlement to have concerned Dundalk rather than any possible conquests in Armagh, Roesia seems to have taken steps to resolve at least some of the problems preventing the arrival of sufficient numbers of colonists. She reached agreement with Hugh de Lacy in c.1235 and built castles in and around 1236, so improving the security of the area which was also benefiting from the disunity amongst the Irish. Furthermore, Roesia founded or developed the Newtown of Dundalk, presumably in an effort to develop the commercial life of the lordship and to provide a magnet for colonists attracted by the prospect of burgage tenure, self-governance and freedom. Castletown Dundalk, the original borough founded by 1190, although it commanded the ford over the river, was inaccessible to shipping even in the twelfth century. The decision to establish the Newtown further downstream, therefore, "must have been related to a desire to develop a viable port to take advantage of the growing trade across and along the Irish Sea." It is possible that the grants of fairs and markets given to Nicholas de Verdun in 1226 and 1230 mark the establishment of the Newtown, but there is no other hint of its existence until Roesia's foundation of the friary at Seatown in 1246. Whether her attempts to develop the commercial life of her lordship were successful in attracting settlers, or whether the more peaceful conditions prevailing in the lordship from the later 1230's on were enough in themselves, the problems in

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362 *CDI*, 2, no. 2183.
363 It is possible that the castles at Faughart, Raskeagh and Barronstown were built at around this time too as they, along with Castleroch, form a defensive arc around Dundalk. If these castles were built by Roesia's tenants at her suggestion, they would be evidence of a high degree of central planning not otherwise apparent. The south-western border of the lordship of Dundalk was, of course, protected by the castles of the barony of Louth such as Castlering.
364 P. Gosling, *From Dun Dealg to Dundalk*, p. 263.
1.9. The effigy of Roesia de Verdun in Belton church.
attracting colonists appear to have been overcome as nothing more is heard of any need to settle the lordship of Dundalk.

Roesia de Verdun's career was, then, a successful one. She founded two religious houses, developed the Newtown of Dundalk, expanded and consolidated her lordships, settled thirty years of irregular relations with Hugh de Lacy and constructed two new castles as both a defence for her Irish lands and as a manifestation of family power. Roesia's career thus gives emphatic support to Ward's statement that "looking at the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, it appears that noblewomens' lands were as well run as in the time of their husbands or fathers." Indeed, Roesia's career also provides an example of the unsurprising fact that widows "had to perform the usual responsibilities inherent in medieval land ownership: doing business with their tenants, protecting them from outside encroachment, punishing them for not paying their rents, acting as guardians of their children and executors of their wills." Nor was Roesia unusual in not remarrying. Only seventeen of the forty-eight aristocratic widows who occur between 1225 and 1307 remarried, with 41% of each group being heiresses.

Where Roesia's career is unusual, however, is in her construction of castles. Medieval noblewomen did undertake building works. Elizabeth de Burgh, for example, built a new chamber at Clare in 1346-7 and a London house in 1352. Women can also be found holding castles. Christina de Marisco surrendered all her castles and fortifications in Ireland to Edward I and his queen in 1280, while Margaret, the widow of Edmund Mortimer, demanded the custody of one of the three Mortimer castles as part of her dower and was assigned Radnor. The construction of a new castle by an heiress or widow in a frontier region, such as Roesia de Verdun's Castleroche, however, seems most unusual.

367 ibid, p. 86
368 J. Ward, English Noblewomen, p. 84.
369 CDI, 2, no. 1771.
Chapter Two

HONOUR AND PROFIT: THE DE VERDUNS IN ENGLAND, IRELAND AND WALES, 1247-1316.

John de Verdun 1247-74.

John de Verdun must have been born between 1225, when his mother, Roesia de Verdun, married Theobald Butler and 1230, when Theobald died in Poitou. It will be recalled that his mother had inherited the de Verdun estates in her own right in 1231 and reached an agreement with Hugh de Lacy over the settlement to his claims in county Louth by about 1235. Relations between the families appear to have improved following this agreement. A report in the register of St Thomas' abbey, Dublin, states that Walter de Lacy's grandson and namesake married one of Roesia and Theobald Butler's daughters. Even undated, this marriage does at least suggest that relations between the families were cordial in the years before Walter's death in 1241. By that time both Walter's son, Gilbert, and his grandson, Walter, had died, and the heirs to the de Lacy inheritance were Margery and Matilda, Gilbert de Lacy's daughters. Margery, the elder of the two, had married John de Verdun by Easter 1242. Her sister, Matilda, married firstly Peter de Geneve, then custodian of the honour of Eye, and secondly Geoffrey de Genneville, the brother of Louis IX's biographer, both of whom were Savoyards like Henry III's queen. Initially the de Lacy estates and their issues were held jointly with Peter de Geneve, but by 13 June 1244 the lands had been partitioned and John and Peter were assigned their respective purparties, with two years in which to appeal against the division.

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1 Register, p. 420. It is this same genealogical narrative which states that John was the son of Roesia and Theobald Butler.
2 CRR, 16, no. 2257.
3 It should be noted that de Genneville was a Savoyard only by an indirect connection. Nonetheless, he has been identified as a member of the Savoyard party by Huw Ridgeway. H. Ridgeway, 'The Lord Edward and the Provisions of Oxford (1258): A Study in Faction', Thirteenth Century England, eds. P. Coss and S. D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1986), 1, p. 92.
4 CDI, 1, no. 2699.
The Irish estates which came to the de Verduns through this marriage have been previously identified and listed by A. J. Otway-Ruthven. These manors stretched from Coolock (county Dublin), Duleek and Kells (county Meath) in the securely held eastern part of the country, to tenuously held manors and castles on the banks of the Shannon in the west. The caput of these frontier lands was located at Lough Sewdy, a few hundred yards from the present village of Ballymore (county Westmeath). Here, the earthworks of a sizeable motte-and-bailey castle still stand on the bank of the reed-bordered Lough. The castle had been constructed by 1211-12, when the Irish pipe roll for that year also reveals a thriving manor here. Incheleffer was another of the de Lacy, and later de Verdun, demesne manors and the same pipe roll records that £6 10s. had been expended on "fortifying Incheleffer castle" by writ of the bishop of Norwich. The construction of this castle is indicative of an advance into Annaly (the present county Longford), which was capped by Walter de Lacy's construction of a castle at Athleague (now Lanesborough) in 1227. The site of this latter castle gave Walter de Lacy control of the first ford across the Shannon to the north of Lough Ree and, indeed, led to de Lacy taking possession of Ballyleague on the county Roscommon bank.

The de Verdun share of the de Lacy lands thus included property in the present counties Dublin, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Offaly amounting to a total of about fifty-nine knight's fees. Little can be added to what Otway-Ruthven has already said, given both the shortage of evidence and the limited number of interpretations which can be put on it. One caveat, however, should be brought forward. Otway-Ruthven's list of the baronies granted to John de Verdun is shot through with small exceptions. Thus she states that the de Verduns were given the baronies of Duleek Upper and Lower in Meath, except for Mornington, Donacarney and Ballymagarvey. The example is used because it is clear that Ballymagarvey, which Otway-Ruthven claims was left out of the family's lands in the barony of Duleek, was in fact held by Theobald I de Verdun.

In 1282, Geoffrey de Genneville accused Theobald I de Verdun of unlawfully entering this manor after the death of the tenant, Wentliana de Lacy. In a letter to

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2.1. The motte-and-bailey at Lough Sewdy.
Robert Burnel, it was stated that "it appears to Theobald that he could lawfully enter after the death of Wentliana, and that he had committed no trespass against the king. He ought not to have been disseised without judgement, because Wentliana who held the manor in dower,..., did not hold in capite of the king, but of Walter de Lacy. Wentliana's service out of that manor fell to Theobald as his purparty: she rendered fealty to him and paid him 20s. a year for it." Another example might give further insight into omissions in the partition. The old de Verdun demesne manor of Clonmore in Ferrard, which had been granted to Nicholas de Verdun by Theobald I, is missing from the survey of 1332. In this case, however, Otway-Ruthven knew that Clonmore had been omitted because there had been a previous grant of free warren in the manor to an earlier Nicholas de Verdun. The fact that a number of parishes are not mentioned in the partition of 1332, then, is not in itself an adequate reason for believing that they had not originally formed part of the de Verdun purparty. The partition is not wholly reliable, nor does it deal with any estates held by Elizabeth de Burgh in dower, and it seems more likely that the partition of the de Lacy estates was made with whole baronies when possible.

The evidence for the de Verdun share of the de Lacy lands in England and Wales dates from 1271 onwards, and takes the form of inquisitions post mortem and records from the Feudal Aids survey. These sources reveal that the de Verdun share was composed of half of the marcher lordship of Ewias Lacy, forty-five manors in Herefordshire and fifteen manors in Shropshire. Only three of these manors were retained in demesne in 1271, although this had increased to four by 1274 as a result of an exchange of lands with Hugh de Say. Weobley (Herefordshire), the old de Lacy caput, was one of these, as was the castle and much of the de Verdun half of the lordship of Ewias Lacy. Most of the remaining manors in Herefordshire formed a relatively compact group located to the west of the rivers Frome and Wye. In total, these subinfeudated manors accounted for

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8 CDI, 2, no. 1988.
9 CDI, 1, no. 1387.
10 CIPM, 6, no. 54, pp. 35-9. Hugh de Say gave Stoke-on-Tern to John de Verdun in exchange for lands in Ireland. (Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Reports and Other Publications (London, 1870), 2nd Report, 1874, appendix, p. 77; Rot Hundredorum in Turri Londinensi, Record Commission (London, 1812, 1818), 2, p. 55.) However, there is no reason to think that the manor had not formed part of de Verdun's share of the de Lacy estates in the first place. By the agreement, John simply turned an enfeoffed manor into a demesne manor. It is also likely that the fourteen outlying members of Stoke-on-Tern came to John at the same time. This is certainly the case with Morton Say which is recorded as having come to John by exchange in a plea of 1289. (WS, 6/1, p. 186.)
Map 2.1. The de Verdun share of the de Lacy lands in Ireland
twenty-five and three quarter fees in 1316. The manors in Shropshire formed two clusters, one centred around Ludlow and the other around the later demesne manor of Stoke-on-Tern, further north. The enfeoffed manors in this county accounted for seven and three-quarter fees. The survey of Feudal Aids of 1284-5 reveals further lands which do not show up in any of the inquisitions. Here the old de Lacy manors of Stratton, Coates and Eastleach Turville in Gloucestershire are all mentioned as being held of Theobald I de Verdun for the service of one knight's fee each.

In total this comes to thirty-seven fees held from the de Verduns, which accounts surprisingly for significantly over half of the sixty knights that Hugh de Lacy admitted to having enfeoffed on his lands in his carta of 1166. This figure can be further split up into its component parts. In 1212, there were twenty-five fees held of de Lacy in Herefordshire and ten in Shropshire. The survey made in 1242-3 gives a total of twenty-seven and three quarter fees for Walter de Lacy's honour in Herefordshire and a total of ten and three quarter fees in Shropshire at the same date. It would seem, then, that the de Verdun's purparty of the de Lacy lands included the lion's share of the estates in these two counties (92.8% of the fees in Herefordshire and 72.1% of those in Shropshire). Either that, or fourteen new fees had been created since the de Verduns came into possession of their moiety.

Furthermore, according to the inquisition post mortem of 1271, all the land held by the de Verduns of the honour of Weobley (that is, the de Lacy inheritance) in England and Wales was held for only seven and a half fees. In comparison, the purparty which passed first to Peter de Geneve and then to Geoffrey de Genneville, who married the second de Lacy heiress in turn, was held for only two-and-a-half fees. This again suggests an imbalance in the division. It also reveals that the servitium debitum of the de Lacy lands had come to be a sixth of what it had been in 1166 by the 1270's. Probably this change, which was not at all uncommon, had its origin in the first four decades of the thirteenth century. Greatly reduced service was obtained at the musters of 1223 and 1245, so that, while details

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11 For the demesne manors see CIPM, 1, no. 767; 2, no. 78; 6, no. 54.
15 BF, pp. 816-8, 972-3.
16 CIPM, 1, no. 767; 3, no. 43.
2.2 The de Verduns' share of the de Lacy lands in the English midlands
remained to be adjusted..... the practice of accepting service reduced by a ratio varying from one half to one twelfth dates at least from the [twelve] twenties.¹⁷

John de Verdun was thus already a substantial landholder when his mother died in 1247. On her death he fined 1,300 marks for succession to the de Verdun lands in England and Ireland¹⁸ and received seisin of them without any known problems.¹⁹ That no problems are heard of reflects the fact that nothing is known of John de Verdun's career before the 1250's, apart from his involvement in several law-suits. The earliest of these dates from 1248 and this, as its early date suggests, refers to an action allegedly performed by Roesia de Verdun - namely, the disseisin of William Marshall of fifty acres of land in Stanton (Staffordshire) and an acre in the neighbouring manor of Wootton.²⁰ John's own suits at this stage were confined to a complaint that he had been wrongly tried in a church court for the loss of a mare belonging to a freeman of Thomas, parson of Huttokeuther, and to a plea that Roger Picard, lord of Tretower in Brecon, had held his Herefordshire lands of John and not of the king who had taken them into his hand on Roger's death.²¹

It is pleas such as these that provide what little evidence there is for John's character. In 1266, John de Verdun began an ultimately unsuccessful suit to gain the full judicial liberties in his portion of Meath as previously held by Walter de Lacy. A record of an inquisition made concerning this case survives in a document of 1280. In it, the jury state that the liberties of Meath would provide a revenue of about £300 per year "even if all men should be treated well and decently there, which could not be hoped for if the liberties were granted to the lord John."²² John, then, was clearly considered a harsh lord by the tenants of his Irish estates. Nor did he always feel obliged to go through due legal process to keep or recover what he felt was his. After John's death, Henry of Bray, John's bailiff, stated that John had extorted a grant of thirty-five acres at Cotesbach from him by throwing him into his dungeon at Alton. In answer, Theobald I de Verdun stated that Henry had

¹⁸ CDI, 1, no. 2874.
¹⁹ John paid 1,065 and a half marks of this relief in the pipe roll of 1249. That John could afford to pay this huge amount suggests either that Roesia had left John a considerable sum in cash or that John's income was particularly high at that time. The remaining 234 and a half marks were paid off more slowly, which suggests the former view is more likely. Another £136 6s. 8d. was paid in 1254 and the last thirty marks were finally paid in by 1262. (PRO, E372/93, memb. 15v.; E372/98, memb. 7v.; E372/106, memb. 8.)
²⁰ WS, 4/1, p. 111.
²¹ WS, 4/1, p. 110; CCR, 1247-51, p. 225.
²² CDI, 2, no. 1666.
owed John £200 and had been put into prison until he made up the arrears.\textsuperscript{23}
Indeed, it seems to have been the case that John was not averse to claiming rights
that were not his at all. In 1274, the jury who answered the commissioners making
the hundred rolls accused John of unlawfully taking passagium in his demesne
lands and of appropriating warrens in Staffordshire.\textsuperscript{24}

One of the pleas in which he was involved reveals John de Verdun's industry in
acquiring small pieces of land to add to the estates already in his possession.
Evidence survives from which to trace this process in the neighbouring counties of
Staffordshire and Shropshire. By 1272 John de Verdun had gained possession of a
messuage, two carucates of land, a mill, fifteen acres of pasture, fifteen acres of
woodland and 30s. rent in Ellastone (Staffordshire), which lay immediately to the
east of those manors which formed the lordship of Alton. He had previously
unlawfully disseised Hugh of Shireford of part of these lands, but after Hugh had
recovered them by an assize of mort d'ancestor they had been granted to Adam
Chetwynd, and this Adam had granted them on to John. Consequently, when
Richard of Shireford sued John for these lands in 1272, the verdict was given in
favour of John de Verdun and they henceforth appear in de Verdun hands, as they
do, for example, in 1274 and in 1303.\textsuperscript{25}

In Shropshire, Hugh de Say had granted John "all his land in [Stoke-on-Tern] and
[Stokesay]... in exchange for the manor of Thober in Ireland, and six librates, ten
solidates and five denariates of land and rents in Stahel iban in Ireland" before
1274.\textsuperscript{26} John de Verdun also bought a moiety of half a virgate in Eaton-upon-Tern
(a member of Stoke-on-Tern) from Richard the son of Dionysia de Lega and his
wife, who had already granted John's seneschal another half virgate in the manor,
as well as a meadow which was to be held of the grantor for life at a rent of a half-
penny each year.\textsuperscript{27} Between 1260 and 1270, when the manor was alienated,
Coleman of Ludlow quit-claimed all right in eleven acres of land and three acres of
meadow in Stokesay to John for 30s., on condition that he released him from the
suit of court which he owed at Stokesay every three weeks.\textsuperscript{28} Finally, in February
1260 Isabel the daughter of Alan the miller quit-claimed all her right in a half

\textsuperscript{23} WS, 6/1, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{24} PRO, SCS/Staffs/3; WS, 5/1, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{25} WS, 4/1, p. 202; CIPM, 2, no. 78; WS, 7/1, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{26} Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 2nd report, 1874, appendix, p. 77; Rot
\textsuperscript{27} R. W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, 8, pp. 66-7.
\textsuperscript{28} ibid, 5, pp. 38-9.
virgate in Wetlinton to John de Verdun for 20s., while Hugh the son of William of Eaton quitclaimed 3s. rent in the same vill to John at about the same time.\textsuperscript{29}

On a slightly different track, John de Verdun can be found rearranging the pattern of land holding in his demesne manor of Coolock in county Dublin, presumably with the intention of making his lands there more compact. At an unknown date, Peter of Coolock (who also served as John's attorney on occasion) granted "to his lord, John de Verdun, seven acres of land in the fields of Coolock; of which 6 acres were held from William de Lacy and 1 from Amaric de Nugent.... in return John de Verdun grants Peter seven acres of land lying between Peter's curtis and the path leading from Coolock to Ballygriffin."\textsuperscript{30}

John de Verdun's accumulation of small pieces of land and miscellaneous rents in and around manors in which he already had an interest is similar to the activities of other magnates. In the case of the Clares, Altschul has shown that "from at least the mid-thirteenth century there was a marked tendency to acquire not only entire manors through exchange or purchase, but also to add smaller properties to the manors already in demesne."\textsuperscript{31} The de Bohuns, the Beauchamp earls of Warwick and the abbey of Bec can all be found collecting lands in a similarly piecemeal manner. The reasons for John de Verdun's desire to collect these assorted properties - apart from the obvious desire to increase his estates and, therefore, his wealth - are uncertain, but it does at least suggest an active management of the demesne, as do Theobald I de Verdun's later attempts to bring previously marginal areas under cultivation.

Although John de Verdun's movements become clearer from 1251, it is often the case that his actions remain almost completely unknown. For example, we know that he crossed to Ireland in 1251, but we do not know whether he played some role in the expedition that the Justiciar led against Armagh and the Cenel Eoghain in 1252. De Verdun involvement is perhaps suggested by the fact that the army encamped at the family's demesne manor of Dundalk. While it was so camped, a riot occurred between the English of Munster and Meath. The presence of contingent from Meath, a moiety of which was held by John, also hints at de

\textsuperscript{29} ibid, 5, pp. 39-40.
\textsuperscript{30} Cambridge, University Library, Doc. 4086. I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Robert Bartlett, for this reference.
Verdun's involvement. By 1253, John de Verdun had crossed back to England and from there accompanied the king to Gascony, although once again we have no details of his actions - if any - in the campaign against Gaston de Bearn that followed, or in the re-establishment of royal authority in the duchy.

The veil is lifted to some extent by the time of John's next known visit to Ireland in 1256. In that year the Annals of Connacht state that there was "a great meeting between Aedh Ó Conchobhair and John de Verdun at Ballyleague (county Roscommon)." This was one in a series of negotiations between Anglo-Normans and the royal family of Connacht which began in 1255 when Felim Ó Conchobhair, king of Connacht, had sent envoys to Henry III and which were presumably intended to increase political stability in the area. A meeting between Ó Conchobhair and Walter de Burgh, lord of Connacht, had taken place the same year, although this did not lead to peace by any means, as de Burgh almost immediately led a large army into Connacht. Negotiations, however, continued and in 1256 Aedh Ó Conchobhair, Felim's son, met with the Justiciar, Alan de la Zouche, and then with John de Verdun. Finally, in 1257 Felim Ó Conchobhair met the Justiciar, de Burgh and "the chief Galls of Connacht and the rest of Ireland" at Athlone. That John was personally included in this process reflects the power that the family now wielded in the west of Meath and is the first real indication of a geographical and political shift of interest away from their caput near Dundalk towards their more insecurely held manors bordering Connacht - Ballyleague itself being one of these manors. That Lough Sewdy in Westmeath was chosen as the location for Nicholas de Verdun's wedding to Basilia de Cogan, and that John de Verdun was - according to various sources - so active in this area provides some reinforcement for this view, especially as there is a complete lack of information about John de Verdun's activities in the original de Verdun lordship of Dundalk.

By 1257, John had returned to England where he was involved in the campaign against Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, prince of Gwynedd. That John continued to be held in royal favour is suggested by his appointment as "chief constable in the army by the king" for this expedition. According to Matthew Paris, he led the St Albans levies in the first wave of a battle - about which more details are not forthcoming - but military exploits like this were not typical of the campaign. The Welsh Brut y

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32 AFM, 3, p. 345.
33 AC, p. 123.
Tywysogyon states succinctly that, "Henry, king of England, and with him a mighty host, came to Deganwy. And he stayed there till the last feast of Mary in the autumn. And then he returned to England."35

By June 1258, the Baronial Movement had taken shape and had imposed the Provisions of Oxford on Henry III. It would seem that John de Verdun was himself one of the reformers, for he is named in the Provisions as one of those who were "chosen by the barons to treat in three parliaments a year with the king's council for all the community of the land about the common business."36 Carpenter and Maddicott both see the reform movement as inspired by a general hatred of the de Lusignans: "The lawlessness of the four Lusignan brothers, Henry's unwillingness to allow legal action against them, and their access to royal patronage, were all factors which gradually turned even the other curiales against them."37 For example, John fitzGeoffrey, Simon de Montfort and the earls of Gloucester and Hereford all joined the baronial cause on account of personal grievances against the Lusignans. Aymer de Lusignan had raided John fitzGeoffrey's lands at Shere in the spring of 1258, while Simon de Montfort had a long-standing quarrel with William de Valence over his wife's dower. John de Verdun too might have had his own quarrel with Geoffrey de Lusignan. On 28 June 1258, just a few days after the publication of the Provisions of Oxford, Geoffrey de Lusignan quit-claimed to the Lord Edward 300 marks arrears of his annuity in Ireland, 200 marks of which was owed to him by John de Verdun.38 This debt may have given John enough of a financial motive to support the baronial cause.

There may be an alternative, or additional, motive for John's support for the baronial movement of reform. In an argument which complements that of Carpenter and Maddicott, Ridgeway views the reform movement as the end product of a plot initiated against the de Lusignans by those who had previously directed and protected the lord Edward's interests and affairs between 1239 and 1258.39 Predominant amongst these were Queen Eleanor and her Savoyard countrymen, as well as native courtiers and those who had formed Edward's household. Amongst these latter men were figures such as John de Grey, justiciar

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36 EHD, 1189-1327, p. 364.
38 CDI, 2, no. 583.
of Chester 1245-50, and then Edward's lieutenant in Mid-Wales in 1257, John fitzGeoffrey, who had been keeper of Bristol castle - Edward's headquarters - since 1241 and Roger of Mold, justiciar of Chester 1257-9. Such men supported the baronial movement on account of Edward's growing association with his de Lusignan relatives in the months prior to June 1258 which threatened their position in his household. Suspicion that John might also be fitted into this argument arises from the fact that both of the other two recipients of the de Lacy lands, Peter de Geneve and Geoffrey de Genneville, were members of the Savoyard party. It is also the case that in John de Verdun's day a part of the inheritance due to his son, Nicholas, was held in custody by the queen.40 It might be the case, then, that John's marriage to Margery de Lacy owed something to the queen's influence, and that his part in the reform movement was the result of his continuing associations with Eleanor and her affinity.

Interestingly, on 15 June 1258, John de Verdun was granted free warren in his demesne manors in Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Wiltshire.41 On 28 June, this grant was followed by Geoffrey de Lusignan's quit-claim of the 300 marks to the Lord Edward, who seems to have dropped the demands for payment - certainly no more is ever said of the sum. The first grant presumably reveals the favour in which John was held by the reforming government of the day. The second is more difficult to interpret. It might be that Edward was asked, or forced, to make concessions to John de Verdun and Geoffrey de Genneville by this reforming government. It may simply have been made by Geoffrey de Lusignan as a way of financing the Lord Edward with the least pain to himself. Alternatively, it may have been a timely attempt to cut away the reason for John de Verdun's support of the baronial movement.

If this latter possibility was the intention - and it is only the timing of this transaction that makes it so suspicious - then it seems to have failed. Although John de Verdun had been replaced among the baronial twelve by William Bardolf by May of 1259, this could well have been a practical measure taken while John was absent in Ireland.42 It is not an indication that he had already thrown off his loyalty to the baronial movement, as he was again restored to the twelve in

40 Ws, 6/1, p. 102.
41 CChR, 2, p. 12.
42 He left around May. (CDI, 2, no. 616.)
October 1259 at which point he had returned to the country. He was at the same time appointed itinerant justice for Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire - all counties in which he himself held lands - along with Roger of Mold and Gilbert of Preston, fellow supporters of the baronial movement. The ensuing judicial eyre kept him in the country into the next year. In January, he was sent to guard his lands in the Welsh march, now placed under the overall command of Roger Mortimer, following the depredations committed by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd "against the treaty of the king." He was among those summoned to London at Easter 1260 by Henry III, who was still in France and concerned to prevent Parliament meeting without him, and was again in the capital on 5 August when he witnessed a charter granted to the archbishop of Tuam during Henry's continued absence.

Around August of 1260, John returned to Ireland. The peace established with the O'Conchobairs and the "chief Galls of Ireland" in 1257 had effectively collapsed the following year when Aedh Ó Conchobhair of Connacht, Teig O'Briain of Munster and Brian O'Neill of the Cenel Eoghain had banded together, with O'Neill being recognised by his compatriots as High King of Ireland. This Irish league, however, was defeated in May 1260 at Downpatrick. The annals report that several members of the O'Hanlons and Mac Lochlainns of Uriel died in the fighting, and it is likely that this increased the stability of the de Verdun lands around Dundalk. The sources, however, provide no information on the de Verdun lands in county Louth, concentrating instead on John's role in the renewed Anglo-Norman action against Connacht. In 1261 he constructed a motte-and-bailey castle at his demesne manor of Moydow (county Longford) to further improve the defence of his lordship from attacks made across the Shannon and to secure the route from Lough Sewdy to Athleague. The following year, "the Lord Justice of Ireland and John de Verdun came across [the bridge of] Athlone to Roscommon. They sent out marauding parties into Kinel-Dofa-mic-Aengusa (county Roscommon), who plundered all that remained after Ó Conchobhair of Connacht; and they marked out a place for a castle at Roscommon." The Annals of the Four Masters also report that in the same year, "a great depredation was committed by the English of Meath on Gilla-na-naev O'Farrell, Lord of Annaly; and his own tribe

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43 CCR, 1259-61, p. 143.  
44 ibid, p. 23.  
45 ibid, p. 158; CDI, 2, no. 672.  
46 ALC, 1, p. 441.  
forsook him and went over to the English." The presence of men from Meath, the proximity of the de Verdun estates and the events of 1271 - considered later - all suggest that John de Verdun may have had a part in this campaign as well.

John returned to England in October 1263, when summoned to London by the king to attend the Parliament there. When this meeting broke up in disorder, Henry III sent letters to John de Verdun, Gilbert de Clare, Roger de Quincy, and others, summoning them to Windsor "with the horses and arms brought by [them] to London." The summons is not evidence in itself that John de Verdun had now come over to the royalist side, but his subsequent actions make it clear that he had. The reason or reasons for this change are unclear, but three can be readily offered. Firstly, it is possible that he, like many others, was not prepared to take up arms against Henry, recognised defeat and accepted the compromise drawn up on 21 November at Kingston-upon-Thames. Secondly, Simon de Montfort - if not as yet the chief amongst the reformers, still one of the most dominant - had further angered the marcher lords, who included John de Verdun, by making agreements with Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, prince of Gwynedd. Such agreements were anathema to the marchers as Llywelyn had expanded the frontiers of Wales at the expense of marcher lords such as Humphrey de Bohun, whose lordship of Brecon had been effectively conquered in 1262. Indeed, such was Llywelyn's success that John de Verdun's lordship of Ewias Lacy found itself a frontier area again for the first time since the late eleventh century. Thirdly, the aims of the queen's party had been achieved by this time. "When Henry overthrew the Provisions in 1261 Edward was once again thrust into subordination, for the king was now firmly under the influence of the Savoyards and other veterans."

From this time on, then, de Verdun was conspicuous in the service of the king. In December he was made one of the keepers of Staffordshire and Shropshire along with Roger Mortimer, John fitzAlan, James of Audley and Hamo LeStrange, with a mandate to read the king's letters - which denied that he had brought in foreigners to the kingdom, or raised taxes for defence against foreigners and stated that most barons were on his side and that he hoped to repress those against him. His

48 ibid, p. 387.
49 CPR, 1258-66, p. 290.
52 CPR, 1258-66, pp. 357-8.
support for Henry III's position further manifested itself in the same month, when he appeared amongst the king's allies in giving his oath and consent to support Louis IX's decision on the Provisions of Oxford. This decision was encapsulated in the Mise of Amiens of January 1264 in which Louis annulled the Provisions. 53

The Mise of Amiens was followed by open war. Some of John's actions during the conflict can be recovered, although there is still much room for speculation. Possibly he was present when Edward captured Tutbury castle in the spring of 1264. Tutbury was the caput of Robert de Ferrers, one of de Montfort's most steadfast supporters, and lay only a few miles south-east of the de Verdun caput at Alton. Alton castle, in turn, was destroyed by Robert de Ferrers later the same year. 54 It is certain, however, that John fought on the royalist side at the battle of Lewes, where he was captured. Interestingly, it is an Irish source which gives this detail, which suggests his importance in contemporary events in Ireland. 55 Presumably John was released with the rest of the marchers to protect the Welsh frontier after the battle, but the course of his movements now becomes unclear.

Despite an agreement made with de Montfort at Montgomery in August 1264, the marcher lords remained aloof in their lordships. It was only after Earl Simon led an army to the march in December 1264 that Roger Mortimer and the other marcher lords were brought to bay. Under the terms agreed at a meeting at Worcester, and later confirmed at Kenilworth, Roger Mortimer and other leading marchers agreed to "[abjure] the realm of England... to proceed to Ireland in exile" for a year and a day. 56 John de Verdun was probably among those so "exiled", and the evidence hints that he might have been involved in the disturbances which rocked the colony at this same time. In December 1264, Maurice fitzGerald had captured the Justiciar of Ireland, Theobald Butler, and John de Cogan. In reply, Geoffrey de Genneville put Dublin castle in readiness and led an expedition against the fitzGeralds, while Walter de Burgh made war against them in Connacht where they were his tenants - indeed, the recent grants to de Burgh in Connacht may have contributed to the rising. Peace was restored in April 1265, along with the status quo ante. Now, it is notable in the light of all these events that John de Verdun can

54 Annales Cestriensis, ed. R. C. Christie, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, 14 (1886), p. 89; Croxden Chronicle, s.a. 1264 fo. 75; Cal of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (London, 1916-), 1, no. 312.
55 ACIon, p. 244.
be found in possession of Adare (county Limerick), Castle Robert, Croom, Uregare and Grean in 1266, manors in which he had been enfeoffed by Maurice fitzGerald, "by the will and ordinance of the king."57 There is no known link between de Verdun and fitzGerald to account for such a grant. Consequently the inference must be that John de Verdun played some part in putting down fitzGerald's rebellion in late 1264-65 and that these lands came to him as a result.58

John's movements emerge from this fog of conjecture only after Evesham. "The ferocity with which the royalists had crushed their enemies carried over into a widespread seizure of rebel lands."59 Thus, on the Sunday after the battle, John de Verdun seized Gilbert de Ymeworth's lands in Surrey. Moving north and west, de Verdun seized the lands of Reynold le Canin at Suchot and crops and goods from lands belonging to Ralph Jocelin and Stephen Buterel at Stanewell (Middlesex), as well as the bishop of Winchester's manor of West Wycombe (Buckinghamshire).60 From the reports which survive, John - like many others - does not seem to have required much proof that these men were rebels before seizing their lands. Reynold was stated to be "of London" which was probably enough to convict him of Montfortian sympathies, but no justification at all is given for Gilbert's or Stephen's disseisin.

The lands of other rebels were granted to John by the king after Evesham. He received houses in Fleet Street late of John de Flete on 17 October 1265,61 as well as Ralph Basset's manors of Sapcote and Stainton, and Roger de Luvetoft's manor of Wiso. Basset and Luvetoft, taking advantage of clause twelve of the Dictum of Kenilworth, had made agreements with John about the redemption of their manors by September 1267,62 but nothing is known about John's disposal of these other lands. They do not appear in the inquisition made on his death in 1274, so they were presumably granted away by that date. Indeed, it is not at all clear that John was particularly concerned to keep property in London. He had sold the land in Shoe Lane - off the Blackfriars end of Fleet Street - which Michael Belet had

57 CDI, 3, no. 800.
58 Alianor de Verdun, John's widow, made an agreement concerning dower in these manors in June 1278 (CDI, 2, nos. 1459 and 1461). However, there is no indication in these documents that the de Verdun possession of these manors was related to Alianor's marriage in any way, and the note that John was granted them by will of the king would seem to reinforce this.
60 Cal of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1, nos. 903, 807, 809, 630 respectively.
61 CPR, 1258-66, p. 466.
62 CCR, 1264-8, pp. 385-6, 391-2. Ralph Basset was charged ten times the yearly revenue of his manors, which seems an extortionately high sum.
granted to his mother to William de Ferrers before 1254, and he also granted to John of Kirkby "one sixth part of half a knight's fee" in Craneford, Middlesex, which he had acquired from William of Ashby.

On the larger political scene, John de Verdun had been appointed custodian of de Montfort's erstwhile castle at Odiham (Hampshire), which lay on the route between Winchester and Windsor, by 16 August 1265. Indeed, John de Verdun, along with William Beauchamp, also received Jordan de Sakeville's surrender of Windsor castle which must have occurred at about the same time. With Humphrey de Bohun and certain others, John had later negotiated the surrender of London, writing to the king with his colleagues on 6 October 1265 to announce that the city had submitted. His centre of activities moved from the south-east to the west in February 1266 when he was appointed to defend Worcestershire from the attacks of those still besieged in Kenilworth castle, which garrison in the meantime sallied forth and destroyed John's Warwickshire castle at Brandon, located just a few miles to the east of Kenilworth.

After the war, John was concerned to gain protection and remission for individuals including Theobald Butler, William Russell, and John de Costentin. Altschul has pointed out that Gilbert de Clare was anxious to gain pardons for his followers after the 'disturbances', which suggests that these were not simply random men, but characters who had some kind of connection with John. Indeed, this turns out to be the case. John de Costentin was a tenant of John's in Ireland, where he held Kilbixy and Kenkelly, and he also held land at Dromiskin (county Louth) of the archbishop of Armagh. William Russell was a tenant of William de Cantilupe in the lordship of Abergavenny, which neighboured Ewias Lacy. The

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64 BL, Cotton Charter xxx 2.
68 It should be noted here that the Stoneleigh Leger Book states that lord de Verdun was one of the besieged in Kenilworth, and that his castle at Brandon was then pulled down, presumably by royalist forces. This is clearly wrong, in that it is certain that John de Verdun, who held Brandon himself, was not amongst the besieged. Chatwin suggests that this might be another John de Verdun with a grievance against Roesia's son. (P. B. Chatwin, 'Brandon Castle, Warwickshire', Birmingham Archaeological Society, 73 (1955), p. 65.)
69 CPR, 1258-66, pp. 493, 542, 545.
71 CDI, 2, no. 146
Cantilupes were also tenants of the de Verduns in Warwickshire and this may explain John's actions on behalf of Russell. Theobald Butler was, of course, John de Verdun's half-brother, so that his intervention on Theobald's behalf is easily understood.

Following the fall of Kenilworth castle and the end of open opposition to Henry III, John de Verdun was chiefly concerned with his lands in Ireland and with Edward's crusade. He returned to Ireland in 1268 and was presumably concerned with promoting a peace which would be strong enough to last for the time that he would be away. Indeed, this seems to have been a common aim on the frontier once more as in this same year Aedh O'Conchobair "was summoned by the Foreigners of Erinn to a conference at Athlone."72 Such plans came to nothing, however. Instead, Aedh raised a force and attacked the Anglo-Normans to the north of the proposed meeting place, while the rest of the year saw Irish raids occurring along the length of the Shannon.

De Verdun's peace of mind would have been further troubled by the problem of raising adequate funds for the crusade. Edward himself was experiencing financial difficulties and eventually resorted to taking a loan off his fellow crusader, Louis IX. John resorted to mortgaging manors. This was a common course of action to take, but what is unusual in John's case are the terms that he was forced to accept. In 1270, John conveyed the manor of Stokesay, in Shropshire, to Philip de Whichecote. In 1274, Stokesay was valued at £26 13s. 4d. per year, yet Philip paid only £24 to hold the manor, without further charge, for three years.73 This stands in stark contrast to Henry fitzHenry's profitable sale of lands near Abingdon to the monks of the abbey there, as well as to Lloyd's general comment that "crusaders, as others, could expect to do well when disposing of their land. It was a sellers' market."74 Why John experienced such problems is unknown. Possibly they were due to Stokesay's position on the troubled Welsh frontier. Yet whatever the reason for these difficulties, they apparently illustrate both John's need for money and the trouble he had raising such funds.

Nor did the problems stop after the army set off. Having traversed France, the crusaders arrived at Aigues Mortes to discover that Louis' army had already left.

72 ALC, 1, p. 459.
73 R. W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, 5, p. 35.
By the time they arrived in Africa, Louis IX was dead and Charles of Anjou had signed a treaty with the Tunisian emir to save the rest of the disease-ridden French contingent. The English then crossed to Sicily where most of the fleet was destroyed in a storm. This must have been the final disillusionment for most of the crusaders, and in discussions it was decided to postpone the expedition for three years.  

It is known that John de Verdun was with Edward on Sicily, for he witnessed a charter there, but his movements after that are unknown. He may have returned to England from Sicily with many of his colleagues. If he did this, however, he must have made a leisurely journey back through France. Alternatively he might have followed Edward to Acre. This is suggested by the fact that there is no evidence of his being in England until May of 1272, at which point he was given protection to go to Ireland. If he had returned immediately from Sicily, he would have arrived in England long before this, and his delay in going to Ireland would then be surprising given the events of the previous year there. In 1271, an Irish resurgence began in the course of which "Nicholas mac John de Verdun, lord of the country of Uriel, was killed by Geoffrey O'Farrell and by those of the Analye."

Nicholas, John's eldest son, had probably been placed in charge of the de Verdun lands on his father's departure. The inquisition made on his death reveals that he had certainly held the English lands which had come to John de Verdun through his marriage to Margery de Lacy, centred around Ewias, Weobley and Ludlow, at that time. Exactly when he had been granted these, however, is uncertain. A law-suit of 1256 mentions that Ludlow had been demised to Nicholas by this date, but against this there is a grant of murage there to John in 1266. Equally, Nicholas does not seem to have received control of the lands in Herefordshire until after 1268, as in that year John, and not Nicholas, was quit of common summonses in the county. Some of this confusion is probably due to the fact that Nicholas had granted John back some of these lands. This was certainly what happened after Theobald had succeeded to his brother in Herefordshire as John's widow's dower

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76 CPR, 1292-1301, p. 58.
77 CDI, 2, no. 915.
78 AClon, p. 249; AFM, 3, p. 415.
79 CIPM, 1, no. 767.
81 CCR, 1264-68, p. 500.
settlement included a share of the lands "which the said John had of the gift of Theobald his son." 82

Very little is known of Nicholas' career. In 1259, the king had sent a mandate to Nicholas de Verdun and his allies, ordering them not to lay waste or destroy the lands which had belonged to John of Monmouth during the minority of his heir, under grave penalty. 83 Other than this, the only other information about Nicholas concerns his marriage to Basilia, the daughter of John de Cogan. This was celebrated at the de Verduns' manor of Lough Sewdy in county Westmeath at an unknown date, and was eventually to lead to a drawn out suit over dower between Basilia and John's eventual successor, Theobald I, in the later 1270's-80's. 84

Nicholas was not the only one of John's sons to die in Ireland at this time; his brother John was killed either at the same time or soon afterwards, leaving the way open for Aedh Ó Conchobhair to burn Meath as far as the Tuite castle at Granard and to destroy Roscommon castle. John de Verdun wrote to Henry III at some point after his return to Ireland in 1272, complaining that his lands there had been desolated and deserted during his absence and that "some persons of the king's council in Ireland have injured both himself and his tenants of the manor of Coolock, the only land which he possesses within the land of peace." 85 He also busied himself in strengthening the defences against Connacht by provisioning the royal castle at Athlone. 86 During 1273-4, John "spent much money in drawing to the king's peace diverse petty kings," including Aedh Buidhe O'Neill, "who styles himself king of all the Irish of Ireland," and Art O'Melaghlin, 87 actions which suggest his prominence in Anglo-Norman attempts to restore order in both Meath and Ulster. Simms has suggested that it was now that the rents found owing to the de Verduns by the Irish chiefs of Uriel in the partition of 1332 were instituted. 88 This contradicted the view put forward earlier by Otway-Ruthven. She thought

82 CCR, 1272-9, pp. 322-3.
83 CCR, 1256-9, p. 424.
84 CDI, 2, nos. 1443, 1635.
85 PRO, SC1/22/50; CDI, 1, no. 1840. Simms was the first to note that Sweetman had misdated this letter and to realise that it must have been written by John de Verdun. (K. Simms, 'O'Hanlons, O'Neills and the Anglo-Normans in Thirteenth-Century Armagh', Seanchas Ard Mhacha 9/1 (1978), p. 84 and n. 2.) It can be dated quite precisely because it also mentions his efforts to bring Aedh O'Neill to the king's peace which find an echo in the Irish pipe roll of 1273-4.
87 CDI, 1, no. 1840; IPR, 36th report, p. 37.
that these rents had existed at the time Hugh de Lacy, later earl of Ulster, had been married to Leselina de Verdun, so explaining their later division between de Burgh and de Verdun. Neither explanation is entirely satisfactory, however. Objections can be raised to Otway-Ruthven's argument on the grounds that some of these rents were owed from lands around Castleroche, which area does not seem to have been fully secured until 1236, after the re-unification of the de Verdun lordship of Dundalk. As Hugh's involvement with the de Verduns' lordship had thus ended by that time, the division of de Lacy rents between de Burgh and de Verdun does not make sense. Equally, Simm's argument can be criticised on the grounds that the O'Neill did not owe rents to the de Verduns. They were due from the O'Hanlons, the MacMahons and the O'Reilly's. John de Verdun's relations with these families is entirely unknown.

John de Verdun had died by May 1274, at about the same time as his rival on the Shannon, Aedh Ó Conchobhair. The occasion of his death - at age 44-49 - was apparently a cause for some suspicion as the Annals of Clonmacnoise state that "John de Verdun and thirteen other knights were poisoned in England." Unfortunately, whether this was accidental or deliberate is not clear, and no further details are forthcoming from any source. He was buried at Croxden abbey in Staffordshire, two miles south of his English caput at Alton, which castle he may have begun rebuilding after the damage inflicted upon it in 1264.

Theobald I de Verdun, 1274-1309.

Theobald de Verdun, the third son of John de Verdun (1247-74), was born in or about 1248. This can be established from the inquisition taken on his brother's death in 1271 which states that Theobald was then 23 and more, although it is worth noting that the inquisition post mortem taken in 1274 on his father's death, states that he was twenty-two and more at that date. He is first mentioned in records in 1264, when he would have been about sixteen, when the king gave him "four trees for his fire." Seven years later, in 1271, Nicholas and John de Verdun, Theobald's elder brothers, were both killed in Ireland and the de Verdun lands in

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90 A Clon, s.a.1275 (in error), p. 251,
91 CIPM, 1, no. 767; 2, no. 78.
92 CCR, 1261-4, p. 335.
2.2. The seal of Theobald I de Verdun (London, BL, Seal lxxxi 12).
Ewias Lacy, Weobley and Ludlow, which had previously been demised to Nicholas, passed to Theobald.\textsuperscript{93}

The fine rolls record that Theobald did homage for these lands, and seisin was ordered.\textsuperscript{94} The fact of his possession is further reinforced by a grant of murage for Ludlow to Theobald in 1271.\textsuperscript{95} That his tenure can be established firmly is important, as some confusion is thrown up by the inquisition post mortem taken after the death of John de Verdun in October 1274. This states that John held these lands in chief without any indication that they had been previously granted to Theobald. Some reconciliation of the two views might be made from Theobald's dower agreement with Alianor which mentioned that John had held lands in Weobley "of the gift of Theobald his son."\textsuperscript{96} However, as evidence is lacking it is possible only to note the discrepancy and not to solve it.

In the months following his father's death Theobald was in Ireland, and he fined 200 marks not to have to come to England to gain seisin of his lands.\textsuperscript{97} It is interesting in the light of this fine, with Theobald's consequent need for cash, to note that in May 1274 he leased "for one year for 56 marks..... to Ralph le Pedlir of Bradford of the water and wind mills of Lutterworth with the fisheries."\textsuperscript{98} It is, incidentally, this document which reveals that John had died by this time as it describes Theobald as Constable of Ireland. It is also apparent that - in the case of Lutterworth at least - Theobald was administering his lands before actually being granted seisin of them.

Theobald's presence in Ireland in November 1274 is indicative of the fact that his Irish lordships were one of his most pressing concerns in the first years of his rule, with notices surviving of his intended return to Ireland in 1275 and in 1276.\textsuperscript{99} Most of the evidence concerning Theobald's activities in Ireland between 1274-84 comes

\textsuperscript{93} AC, p. 159; AClon, p. 249; AFM, 3, p. 415; CDI, 2, no. 2274. The Abbeydore cartulary states that John de Verdun, second son of John de Verdun (d.1274), was granted the lands after Nicholas' death, although this information is academic as John is reported as being killed at the same time as his brother. (BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 260v.).


\textsuperscript{95} CPR, 1266-72, p. 612.

\textsuperscript{96} CCR, 1272-9, pp. 322-3.

\textsuperscript{97} CDI, 2, no. 1061. Theobald was still being made to account for these 200 marks in 1280, although a search in the Dublin Exchequer revealed that he had paid by then. (CDI, 2, no. 1743.)

\textsuperscript{98} BL, Campbell Charter vi.4.

\textsuperscript{99} CDI, 2, nos. 1113, 1220.
from judicial sources, which give no indication of the wider course of events outside their own direct interests. These reveal, for example, that in 1280 Theobald embarked on an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to regain the liberties Walter de Lacy had held in Meath, which had been granted to de Genneville but not to de Verdun.\(^{100}\) His failure led to the de Verdun share of Meath being administered as part of county Dublin until it was made a shire in its own right in the parliament of 1297.\(^{101}\) In the records of that Parliament, the very first article states that "Meath shall be a separate county, that is, both the land of the liberty of Trim and the land of Theobald de Verdun..... and that henceforth there shall be a separate sheriff there, and he shall hold his county court at Kells every Thursday.... And the said Theobald de Verdun, for himself and for Almaric de St Amand, his tenant, and their heirs, granted that henceforth they will do suit at the said county court of Meath, on condition that they are absolved from the suits which they owe at the county court of Dublin."\(^{102}\)

Theobald was also involved in land pleas with Matilda de Lacy in 1279-80,\(^{103}\) and with Geoffrey de Genneville and his wife over the manor of Ballymagarvey (county Meath) in 1282.\(^{104}\) This case is interesting because it is the earliest known occasion on which Theobald de Verdun can be found appealing to Robert Burnel, bishop of Bath and Wells and Edward I's chancellor, for help. Theobald was accused of entering Ballymagarvey without the king's licence and it looked likely that the manor would pass into the king's hands as a result. De Verdun wrote to Burnel praying "counsel and remedy from the bishop, because he fears that the justiciary will.... gravely inculpate Theobald."\(^{105}\) The wording could not more clearly reveal what Theobald hoped to gain from this relationship, although the last few lines of the letter suggest that Theobald and Burnel were more than just patron and client. Theobald used them to pass on the rather homely information that "Richard de Baskerville is either married or about being so. The wife of Walter de Baskerville is not pregnant, as he had heard." In August 1282 Theobald is recorded as owing Burnel £50 but whether this was a fee or a loan is not known.\(^{106}\) De Verdun asked

\(^{100}\) CDI, 2, nos. 1645, 1673.
\(^{103}\) CDI, 2, nos. 1590, 1648, 1651, 1741.
\(^{104}\) ibid, no. 1927.
\(^{105}\) ibid, no. 1988.
\(^{106}\) CCR, 1279-88, pp. 173, 183.
Robert Burnel for help again in 1284, requesting that he give counsel and aid to J. Maap engaged in "expediting arduous affairs" with the king.  

The bishop of Bath and Wells' help did not come cheap. As has been seen, Theobald might have owed him £50 for his action in 1282. Furthermore, in 1286 an *inspeximus* of letters under the seal of Theobald de Verdun survives to reveal that Theobald gave power to Robert Burnel "to confer all churches of Theobald's gift in England that may become vacant while he remains in Ireland."  

Even more definite evidence of payment for services rendered comes in the inquisition *post mortem* taken on Burnel's death in 1292. This reveals that Theobald had granted Robert Burnel the manors of Great Sutton and Whitchecot in Shropshire for the service of one knight's fee and for doing suit of court at Ludlow. These manors were clearly granted in heredity as Robert's nephew, Philip, is recorded as having held these same manors in his own inquisition *post mortem*.  

Robert Burnel's inquisition strongly suggests that Theobald was not the only individual to have sought the use of his influence at court. He is recorded as having held Hanley in Worcestershire of Hugh of Pleshy for no service. Similarly, Hull nearby was held of William of Sutton also for no service. Burnel had held Ham in Surrey from Maurice de Croum for a token rent of 1d. yearly, while Richard, earl of Arundel, had leased *Kyvele* in Wiltshire to him for twelve years. By 1265-72 Durham cathedral priory was also paying Burnel a pension. Nor was Burnel the only public figure to exploit his position, or have it exploited by those seeking help. Laurence de Brok was retained by the abbeys at Ramsey, Durham and St Albans. He was active in the court *coram rege* from 1234 or earlier and acted as king's attorney from 1247-70's. "Sometimes both *narratores* and judges might strike hard bargains and demand a regular fee in return for some temporary and specific service." Solomon of Rochester made such a bargain with Richard fitzStephen when he agreed to be favourable in all things to him in the eyre of 1281 in return for £5 fee each year.

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107 *CDI*, 2, no. 2366.  
109 *CIPM*, 3, no. 65.  
110 *ibid*, no. 194.  
112 *ibid*, pp. 5, 29.
It is only in 1284 that the curtain lifts enough to allow a glimpse of the drama unfolding in Ireland at that time as it related to the de Verduns and their estates. In this year, renewed war had broken out along the Shannon, and during the uncertain course of events Theobald's castle at Athleague (Lanesborough, county Longford), "one of the fortresses of Ireland towards Connacht," had been levelled, almost certainly by the O'Farrells of Annaly. On the Anglo-Norman side, a major expedition to Connacht had been undertaken in July and August of 1284, in which Theobald played no part whatsoever.

It was only in September that de Verdun gained the necessary protections to cross to Ireland, although it is clear that the situation remained disturbed even at that point. This is revealed by the fact that, as part of his preparations, Theobald de Verdun had requested that Nicholas de Netterville, "his familiar knight in the present Irish war, shall not, so long as he remains in that service be put on assizes, juries or recognisances and shall not be made sheriff, coroner, forester, verderer, agistor, regarder or other bailiff against his will." While this might suggest that de Netterville had already seen some action in Ireland, Theobald's own resistance to the Irish up to this point had manifested itself only in his refusal to pay 33 marks 6s. arrears of rent owed to the archbishop of Armagh in 1283. The likely reason for this action is illustrated in one of a series of articles drawn up against the archbishop by 19 August 1284, in which Theobald accused this prelate of receiving "his relatives and their maintainers, felons who were present at the death of Nicholas de Verdun, of John his brother, and of the knights who were with them....; ..[and who].. were present with others at the levelling of the castle of Athleague" - charges which were subsequently upheld.

The details of Theobald's actions after he crossed to Ireland are unknown. His men were given protections "to go to Ireland to convey thither wines, corn and other necessaries for Theobald's use," which may or may not imply the need to victual a body of troops, while Theobald himself was granted permission to "receive his Irishmen into the king's peace by counsel of the justiciary." Whether Theobald intended to employ force or negotiation to achieve this end is not clear,

113 CDI, 2, no. 2274.
114 ibid, no. 2297.
115 ibid, no. 2112.
116 ibid, no. 2274.
117 ibid, no. 2307.
118 ibid, no. 2298.
but perhaps it is not important. What is important is that Theobald was equipped to end the disturbances threatening those of his lands which neighboured Connacht. Furthermore, on his departure for Ireland Theobald was also given the means of improving the profitability, and perhaps even the stability, of his estates. This came in the form of grants of weekly markets and annual fairs at Dundalk, Castleroche (county Louth), Lough Sewdy (county Westmeath), Incheleffer, Moydow and Athleague (county Longford), and a grant of an annual fair at Duleek (county Meath).119

Although we know nothing of Theobald's actions, protections issued for him reveal that he intended to return to Ireland in 1285 and was remaining there in 1286.120 The duration of his stay is not known. He may have stayed long enough to conduct the new justiciar, John of Sandford, across his estates,121 but he had certainly returned to England by 1289.122 Although Offaly and parts of Meath remained disturbed throughout the last years of the 1280's, de Verdun's lordships themselves seem to have been spared. Only in 1289, after Theobald's departure, was there trouble near home. Richard de Tuite, whose family held some of their lands from Theobald, along with the English of Meath and Manus O'Conchobair attacked O'Melaghlin of Meath at an unidentified location in Westmeath. During this encounter, de Tuite was killed.123

By 1295 the O'Farrells had embarked on a new series of raids against the de Verdun lands in the present county Longford. Having already destroyed Athleague by 1284, the O'Farrells now continued their advance south-eastwards to the manor of Moydow where they demolished Theobald's castle. Other castles were destroyed at neighbouring Newtown and at Moybreakry (now Street), both in county Westmeath.124 Details of the de Verdun reaction are not forthcoming, although Theobald was again given leave to "treat with the Irish about coming to the king's peace."125 Whether or not any attempts were made to resettle the ravaged lands after the re-establishment of peace in the area is unclear. That

119 ibid, nos. 2303-4. How these grants might assist profitability is clear enough. That they could help stabilise the situation follows the reasoning put forwards by Gerald of Wales, and later historians, who suggest that markets could orientate economic reliance towards England and thereby aid the process of the consolidation of conquered lands.
120 CDI, 3, nos. 36, 88, 236.
122 CDI, 3, no. 545.
123 AFM, 3, p. 449.
125 CJRI, 1, p. 73.
Theobald was granted the right to markets there in 1284 suggests that it was at least intended. However, by 1332, if not before, Athleague, Moydow and Incheleffier were all without tenants or castles. Talking of Incheleffier and Moydow the partition states that "each acre used to be worth 2d. in the past time of peace, now their value extends to nothing as the land is waste and uncultivated due to the lack of tenants."\(^{126}\)

As has been seen from the complaint made against the archbishop of Armagh, Theobald de Verdun's western border was politically linked to his northern one. It may be that Theobald now turned his attentions to this northern border as in 1297 "Cu-Uaidh O'Hanlon, lord of Uriel, Aengus MacMahon, and many others of the chiefs of his people, were slain by the English of Dundalk on their return home from the earl [of Ulster]."\(^{127}\) Dundalk was the de Verduns' original Irish lordship, and had been under their rule since at least 1189-90. The events of 1312 were to show that the county community still looked to the de Verduns for leadership and so it would seem likely that this action was undertaken with at least the knowledge and encouragement of Theobald de Verdun, even if he did not personally play any role in the attack. This raid could have led - either directly or indirectly - to the death of John de Verdun, Theobald's eldest son, who is known to have died in Ireland in this year.\(^{128}\) It was probably also the catalyst for the events of 1299 when "many Irish men came to trouble (venerunt ad gravandum) lord Theobald de Verdun at the castle of Roche, before the feast of the Annunciation (25 March)."\(^{129}\)

Nor did Theobald limit his operations in the north to fighting the Irish. In 1297, he and the prior of St Leonard's, Dundalk, made the opening moves in a plea concerning the right to the advowsons of certain churches and chapels in the lordship which would last until 1300.\(^{130}\)

Further trouble arose in Uriel between May 1305 and June 1306 when Breen MacMahon sued for peace. MacMahon was to pay sixty cows for himself and his following to be admitted to the king's peace. In return it was agreed by all the Anglo-Irish marchers, except the de Verduns, that all goods taken from the Irish

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\(^{126}\) BL, Cotton Charter ii.24; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon Lands', *PRIA*, 66, section C (1968), pp. 426, 429-30, 435. It is unlikely that this situation was entirely a result of the Bruce invasion of 1315, as Lough Sewdy, which is known to have been burned by Bruce, still retained at least some of its value in 1332.

\(^{127}\) *AFM*, 3, p. 469.

\(^{128}\) *Croxden Chronicle*, s.a.1297, fo. 78.

\(^{129}\) *Chartularies*, 2, p. 329.

\(^{130}\) *CJRI*, 1, pp. 104, 113, 239, 270, 311.
from May 1305 would be returned. The de Verduns themselves were given leave to keep all the goods that they had taken in lieu of the rents owed to them by the Irish, unless the Irish preferred to pay these rents. That the de Verduns had taken goods from the Irish reveals that members of the family, or at least their men, had been active in the campaigning itself. Unfortunately, there is no information as to whether these arrears were the result of interruptions to a regular and working system, or whether they reflected de Verdun claims to rents which they were usually unable to collect. Whatever the case, these rents appear in the partition of 1332, making it clear that the claim to them was not dropped even after the extinction of the house.

Before leaving the de Verduns' lordships in Ireland, it should be noted that Dennis Murphy, writing in 1895, gave further information relating to Theobald's movements in 1306. He reported that Theobald de Verdun was besieged in Athlone castle in that year "by some of the Anglo-Irish." He also reports that previously, in 1288, Walter and Hugh de Lacy, a cadet branch of the family whose lands John de Verdun and Geoffrey de Genneville had inherited, had compacted with Richard de Burgh, earl of Connacht and Ulster, against Theobald. Typically, Murphy did not footnote these references, or elaborate on them, but it is possible that they were drawn from evidence since destroyed by the shelling of the Four Courts in 1922. Some support in favour of hostility between de Verdun and de Burgh can be found in the Annals of Ulster, which attribute the killing of Nicholas de Verdun in 1271 to Walter de Burgh, who himself died that year. It may well be, then, that there were further undercurrents affecting Theobald's career in Ireland and that he was involved in the almost endemic in-fighting amongst fellow Anglo-Norman lords which was commented upon by a seventeenth-century interpolation in the Annals of Clonmacnoise: "there raigned more dissensions, strifes, warres and debates betweene the Englishmen themselves in the beginning of the Conquest of this kingdom, than between the Irishmen, as by perusing the warres between the Lasis of Meath, John Coursey, Earl of Ulster, William Marshall, and the English of Meath and Munster, MacGerald, the Burkes, Butlers and Cogann, may appear."

131 CJRI, 2, p. 502.
134 AU, 2, p. 345.
135 AClon, pp. 266-7.
The period covered by Theobald's rule of the de Verdun lands thus saw a reduction in the area under his control. Since 1227 when Walter de Lacy had built a castle there, Athleague, which stood on the east bank of the Shannon and protected a ford across it, had been under Anglo-Norman control. By 1284 it was lost - perhaps permanently - to the Irish of Annaly. It was followed about ten years later by the manor of Moydow, a few miles to the south. These losses should not be overstated. They were relatively small and had always been insecurely held - witness the construction of a castle at Moydow as late as 1261. In contrast, Theobald's northern frontier appears to have remained geographically stable. The attack on Castleroche in 1299 seems to have achieved nothing, while the two known campaigns against the Irish of Uriel both met with some success. If no advances were made from Dundalk or Castleroche, at least no ground was lost.

It is unfortunate that we do not know more of the situation in the de Verduns' Irish lordships, but from the evidence we have it seems clear that Theobald was concerned about them. Like his father before him, Theobald I de Verdun spent a considerable part of his career in Ireland and it is likely that much effort and manpower was ploughed into the maintenance of his lordships there. It is perhaps useful to remember in this respect that the eldest sons of John and Theobald de Verdun, Nicholas and John, both met their deaths in Ireland in 1271 and 1297 respectively. There is, however, one area in which Theobald's career differs markedly from that of his father. While John de Verdun had been active with the justiciar in centrally led campaigns against the Irish, as he was, for example, in 1262, Theobald is not known to have played any role in national politics whatsoever. His actions in 1284, for example, seem to have been concerned only with his own lands and his own Irishmen. Unfortunately, like much else to do with Ireland at this time, the reasons for the Constable of Ireland's parochial attitude are unclear.

Theobald's Irish lordships were, of course, but one of the matters which pressed him for attention throughout his career. His English and marcher estates too called on his time and resources, while his king often demanded his service. The two were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Theobald's lordship of Ewias Lacy found itself perilously close to Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's expanding frontiers in the 1260's, so that Edward I's two Welsh wars led him both to serve the king and defend his own lordship. The first of these Welsh wars in 1276-7 arose through Llywelyn's
repeated refusal to do homage to Edward for his lands. There is no evidence for Theobald's involvement in this war, but given his position as a marcher lord it seems unlikely that he was not personally involved in some way, even if he did not take to the field himself.

In contrast, there is evidence for Theobald's involvement in the second Welsh war, which was sparked off in March 1282 when Dafydd ap Gruffydd took Hawarden castle by surprise. Theobald was summoned to Devizes on 6 April, where he acknowledged that he owed the service of three and a half knights which was to be performed by himself, Nicholas his son, Robert of Stapleton and by William of Sutton, a sergeant-at-arms. That this was duly carried out is revealed by a later entry in the close rolls of 1302. This notes that Theobald was to be quit of the scutage exacted by the Exchequer for the war of 1282, as he had been there with all his service. Men were also drafted from Theobald's lordship of Ewias Lacy. The Welsh rolls state that Theobald's bailiff was ordered to bring one hundred men to join the king's army under Hugh de Turbeville in November of 1282, while in March of 1283 another sixty men-at-arms were to be sent to Montgomery. Additionally, in May and June 1282 Theobald's men were given safe conducts to cross from Ireland with "corn, and wine, and other victuals for the army of Wales." 

"In the deep vale of Ewias, which is shut in on all sides by a circle of lofty mountains and which is no more than three arrow shots in width, there stands the abbey church of St John the Baptist," the centre of the Augustinian priory of Llanthony Prima which had been established by William de Lacy in c.1103. The priory had suffered during the wars of 1276-7 and 1282-3, but proved to be no more secure against the ravages of neighbouring Anglo-Norman lords such as the de Bohuns, or Theobald de Verdun. It was between the Welsh wars that Theobald made the first of a number of attacks on the priory which were to continue intermittently for the next twenty years. In November 1279, Walter of Hopton heard that Theobald had caused "beasts, as well of the plough as others,..., at the prior's manors of Oldcastle and Redcastle, to be taken and driven to his castle of

136 WS, 8/1, pp. 10-12
137 CCR, 1296-1302, p. 513.
139 ibid, pp. 221, 224.
Ewias, and impounded and detained there, the said prior not being permitted to replevy them until some had died of hunger, and until he had agreed with said Theobald to certain undue exactions."141 A second, unspecified complaint was levelled against Theobald and Warin of Grendon in 1279,142 and another in 1281.143 The final charge brought against Theobald dates from as late as April 1299 when, "the prior of Llanthony complains that Gilbert de Bohun came to his lands and houses in Ewias Lacy and carried away a large number of beasts to Crickhowell. Also that Theobald de Verdun and his 'subjects' and men of the parts of Ewias harass him."144 In one case, at least, it is clear that Theobald's 'subjects' were acting with Theobald's knowledge and approval. In 1283, Thomas of Laysham was said to have driven two oxen worth 10s, and three other beasts valued at 14s., from the prior's manor of Oldcastle into the castle of Ewias Lacy and from there to Weobley.145 He could hardly have done this if Theobald were not behind his actions.

Why Theobald acted in such an antagonistic manner to Llanthony is uncertain. However, it may be that the legal argument had its origins in a grant given to the priory by Walter de Lacy before 1216. De Lacy had granted the house "all justice of assault, murdrum and shedding of blood, and breach of peace, and whatever pertains to our power... and all pleas of theft, homicide, rape and arson" in the vale of Ewias in which the house itself was located.146 Effectively this had taken half the lordship of Ewias Lacy out of the lord's jurisdiction, creating a separate liberty in the neighbouring valley. In the light of this, it is notable that Redcastle and Oldcastle, the only places specifically named in any of the proceedings, are located on the end of the spur that separates the vale of Ewias from the valley which formed Ewias Lacy. Perhaps, then, Theobald believed, or could argue, that these manors lay outside the vale of Ewias and, therefore, outside the prior's liberty. He would then be free to demand services not due for the priory's lands which were located safely within the vale proper. This would explain the prior's complaint over Theobald's "undue exactions" and might, in fact, suggest that Theobald considered his raiding to be nothing more than distraint.

141 CPR, 1272-81, p. 350.
143 Cal of Chancery Rolls, Various, 1277-1326, p. 190.
144 CPR, 1292-1301, p. 465.
145 PRO, JUST/1/301, memb. 13.
146 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 138.
That the prior could complain to the royal court over Theobald's attacks at all was a result of the first Statute of Westminster of 1275. Chapter seventeen of this document had directed itself at any who "seize the beasts of another and [have] them driven into a castle or fort." It had further stated that if this occurred "in the marches of Wales or elsewhere where the king's writ does not run, the king, who is their sovereign lord, will do right therein to those who wish to complain." This clause, evidently utilised by the prior, was the first sign of Edward's attack on the autonomy of the marcher lords, which was to manifest itself most famously in the proceedings brought against the earls of Hereford and Gloucester in 1291. The case is so well known that its details need not be repeated here, although the attempts by the commissioners to form a jury relate directly to Theobald himself. The commissioners wished to empanel a jury of marcher lords to hear the case, but all - beginning with John de Hastings - refused to swear the oath. "All answered unanimously that it is a thing unheard of that they or their ancestors hereto had been compelled to take any oath in such a case. They also say that no such royal order ever came into those parts, except only that things touching this march were proceeded with in accordance with the use and custom of those parts." The commissioners then changed tack and tried to choose a jury from men from the marcher lordships instead. At this point, Theobald roundly declared his privilege; "And hereupon Theobald de Verdun claims his liberty as to this, that he says men of his land ought not to swear here."148

This declaration is indicative of Theobald's attitude towards his rights, although when he was brought to task at the Abergavenny court of Michaelmas 1291, which also decided on the case between Gloucester and Hereford, his crimes were unconnected with those of the earls. The Rotuli Parliamentorum records simply that Theobald was accused of "diverse transgressions and disobediences done to the lord king, in injury of the crown., and also in manifest contempt of the king."149 Davies believes that he was charged partly on account of his continuing attacks on Llanthony priory, which had been forbidden by Westminster I and which also went against the tenor of quo warranto, and this is certainly the interpretation suggested by at least one official report.150

147 EHD, 1189-1327, pp. 401-2.
148 Cal of Chancery Rolls, Various, 1277-1326, p. 337.
149 Rot Parliamentorum, eds. J. Strachey et al., Record Commission (London, 1783-1832), 1, p. 81.
More important, though, was Theobald's alleged contempt for the king's officials in the form of the sheriff of Hereford. De Verdun was accused of sheltering Philip Vaughan ab Ithel and others, who had raised "a multitude of Welshmen as much on horse and foot" and had driven the sheriff from Ewias Lacy "with force and arms" when he was serving the king's writs. Having done this, the Welsh then "outside that land of Ewias Lacy carried away, in contempt of the king, ten thousand pounds." Theobald was ordered to present these men, described in the Rotuli Parliamentorum simply as "certain Welshmen convicted in the king's court of certain contempts and transgressions done to the king," at court at Hereford. However, he failed to do so, stating that they were dead, vagrant or unknown. His disingenuous excuse was called into question when these men were found resident in Ewias Lacy, and he was consequently charged with false testimony "against his homage and fealty." It was almost certainly for this reason that Theobald forfeited his lordship, although a jury was ultimately to clear him of this alleged complicity.

Edward I had sentenced de Bohun and de Clare to the loss of their liberties and their freedom for their contempt of his prohibition to wage private war on each other. Theobald received the same punishments, but redeemed his body for 500 marks - considerably less than the earls had paid - and the king, bearing in mind the service of Theobald's ancestors, stated that he would allow the liberty of Ewias Lacy to be restored to Theobald's successor. In fact, it was restored to Theobald himself only a few months later in June 1292. There is nothing in Theobald's defiance of the king's orders, or in his alleged contempt of the king's officials, to mark him out from his contemporaries on the march. Nor is there anything in the method of his punishment to suggest that he had particularly incurred the king's displeasure. It was all part of Edward's great design, "calculated to show the Marcher barons, individually and as a group, that ultimately the king's mastery and authority were beyond challenge."  

Llanthony "within the liberty of the said Thcobald of Ewias Lacy against the prohibition of the king, forfeited the same liberty during the term of his life." The link between these events is implicit in the report.

151 PRO, KB/27/129, memb. 54; JUST/1/ 302, memb. 32. Incomplete reports and transcripts are printed in WS, 6/1, p. 200 and Rot Parliamentorum, 1, p. 82.
152 Rot Parliamentorum, 1, p. 81.
153 CPR, 1281-92, p.492.
154 M. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 351
This case is Theobald's most celebrated run-in with the crown, but it was not the only time that he was charged with contempt by Edward. After William of Caverswall's death, which probably occurred late in the summer of 1291, Theobald had precipitately sent Elias de Tynchwyk and others to take possession of Caverswall castle which William had held from him. When William de la More, the king's subescheator in Staffordshire, came to take possession of the castle for the king, he found Theobald's men already inside and refused to enter until they left - which might say something about the reputation of Theobald and his men in the area. For this, Theobald and his men stood in contempt of the king, although Theobald attempted to excuse his actions by stating that "he did this out of fear of the arrival of the earl of Arundel, and not in derogation of the king's right." The rest of the report is unfortunately illegible, but it is clear that Theobald's excuses were not considered adequate - indeed, this is the only reference to any dispute with the earl of Arundel. Caverswall was consequently forfeited, although it was returned soon after.

In 1300 Theobald was again in trouble, being charged at Dublin with the imprisonment of John le Fysshere and Hawisa the wife of Geoffrey Cavekin, "and for taking for himself right of prison against the king, and detaining them in prison and iron from the beginning of Lent until now." Theobald answered that John was his chamberlain and Hawisa his maid, and that when a stone of red carbuncle set in a ring and valued at 1,000 marks was stolen, John was accused of the crime on the oath of his fellow servants, and Hawisa charged with assent. Theobald argued that he had then detained them in chains to recover the stone, and not to appropriate the position of the king.

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156 It is almost the sole reference to his career by R. R. Davies and M. Prestwich and J. E. Morris mentions other details chiefly in relation to it.
157 The date is provided by a note concerning his widow which could be as early as Michaelmas 1291. However, the following events suggest that she may have been a widow for some few weeks or perhaps months previously.
158 *WS*, 6/1, pp. 207-8. The plea states that William died in July of 1292, but this must be an error.
159 *CCR*, 1288-96, p. 178.
160 *CJR*, 1, p. 314.
161 Theobald's fondness for jewels is attested elsewhere. In 1292, William de Tytteleye was summoned to answer a plea of Theobald's that he had unjustly detained a ruby set in gold, worth 100s. (*WS*, 6/1, p. 202). Equally, in the will that he made at Alton in 1295, Theobald left his sons, in total, one gold ring set with a ruby, one gold ring set with a diamond, a golden cross with a diamond, five gold rings set with sapphires, and "other precious stones." (BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97).
It is clear from these cases that Theobald could behave with scant regard to due legal process if he felt justified in doing so, or if it protected his own interests. Equally, twenty years of intermittent terrorism of Llanthony priory seems excessive, even though Theobald was within what he would see as his traditional marcher rights in attacking the priory. It is possible on the evidence of these few cases, therefore, to gain the impression that Theobald was something of a lawless brigand who was reluctant to recognise any authority but his own. However, this is an impression which appears to be simply illusion when a wider view is taken.

Theobald was involved in over seventy pleas during his career. Thirty of these relate to Staffordshire, and these can be used to illustrate a view that Theobald was not particularly lawless. He was certainly not particularly litigious. Only five of the pleas were brought by him, as opposed to twenty-five cases being brought against him. At first sight this suggests that Theobald did indeed spend his time attacking the rights and lands of others. However, the results of twenty-four of these thirty pleas have survived, and Theobald won his case in twenty-one of them - including all those brought by the *quo warranto* commissioners. Where the results are known, therefore, Theobald's actions seem to have been justified most of the time and this suggests that his arbitrary dealings with Llanthony, John le Fysshore and so on were more the exception than the rule.

What some of these Staffordshire law-suits also show is that Theobald de Verdun was actively engaged in the management and enlargement of his demesne, and that previously marginal land was being brought into cultivation during the period of his rule. This is apparent in the type of land involved in the following cases, all of which date from 1273. In the first Theobald de Verdun was accused of disseising the prior of Colewich of common of pasture in 100 acres of wood in Wootton. Later the same year, Theobald and Roger de Plane were accused of having unjustly disseised the abbot of Rocester of half of forty acres of moor and heath in Stanton. Finally, an assize was held to see if Theobald had disseised John de Prestwode of right of common in 100 acres of wood in Wootton. John Cheinel answered as Theobald de Verdun's bailiff and stated that Theobald was lord of vill of Wootton, which had a great waste appurtenant to it. It was stated that de Verdun had approved the wood and that this was lawful so long as John had been given adequate common of pasture elsewhere, which, it was argued, he had been.162

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162 *WS, 6/1*, pp. 226-8.
reclamation of marginal land seems to have been the chief means of enlarging the family's productive estates at this time. The only other additions to the de Verduns' estates made by Theobald were the lands in the manors of Saffron Walden (Essex) and Bisley (Gloucestershire) which had been gained on his marriage to Matilda de Bohun which had taken place by 1274.163

The confiscation of Theobald de Verdun's liberty of Ewias Lacy does not seem to have had any long-term effects on his relationship with Edward I, although his subsequent support of the king might, of course, reflect a desire to regain Edward's favour. He granted the king a fifteenth from his Irish lands almost immediately after the hearings at Abergavenny and Hereford in October 1291.164 He may also have made further promises of financial aid in return for the restoration of his liberty of Ewias Lacy, as Theobald made a grant of a fifteenth from this lordship immediately after it was returned to him in July 1292.165 In 1294-5, Theobald served in Gascony, which has been interpreted by Morris as an attempt to purge his contempt by serving abroad.166

The war with France had its origins in 1293, when English and French sailors clashed in the Channel. Attempts were made to restore the peace and in early 1294 Edmund of Lancaster made a secret agreement with Philip IV by which the English would pretend to surrender Gascony, as a sop to French opinion. Philip, however, did not stick to the agreement and did not return Gascony, forcing Edward into war to recover "his rightful heritage of which he has been most deceitfully defrauded."167 A muster was consequently summoned to Portsmouth in September, and the army sailed on 9 October under John of Brittany and John de St John. A second force was being collected even as this departed for the continent, but was diverted to fight in Wales after rebellion broke out there.

Theobald, then, must have sailed in John of Brittany's force, which raided Cap St Mathieu and the Ile de Re on its way south. The fleet then sailed up the Gironde, taking Castillon and Macou, Bourg-sur-Mer and Blaye, although an attack on Bordeaux itself failed. The fleet continued up the Gironde and received the

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163 CIPM, 5, no. 187; WS, 6/1, p. 106.
164 CPR, 1281-92, p. 449.
165 CPR, 1281-92, p. 503.
167 EHD, 1189-1327, p. 477.
surrender of Podensac, Virelade and Rioms before finally disembarking. The army was then divided. John of Brittany remained at Rioms while John fitzJohn liberated Bayonne. Most of these gains were almost immediately lost in the French counter-attack, so that by the summer of 1295 only Bayonne, Bourg and Blaye remained in English hands.168

Edward's prosecution of the war with France was delayed firstly by the rebellion in Wales in 1294-5 and then by the Scottish campaign of 1296. By 1297, however, Edward was ready to take the field against the French, having cemented an alliance with the count of Flanders which provided the king with a convenient landing base for his campaign. A summons to muster was duly issued, but contained no statement as to where the army was to serve - an omission due to the resistance to service overseas Edward had encountered when attempting to send troops to consolidate his position in Gascony earlier in the year.169 As things turned out, this lack of information became one of the complaints made against the summons in the Remonstrances which were drawn up in 1297. How could Edward's troops make the necessary preparations, it was asked, if they did not know where they were going? The Remonstrances also reveal the opposition that Edward had expected: "Because it is commonly said that our lord the king wishes to cross over into Flanders, it seems to all the community of the land that there they are not bound to do any service because neither they nor their predecessors or ancestors ever did service in this land." Complaints were voiced over the methods Edward had employed to raise money and "they say besides that they cannot pay an aid on account of the poverty they are in due to the aforesaid tallages and prises, because they scarcely have wherewith to support themselves." Further complaints were made as to the failure to keep the terms of the Great Charter and the Assize of the Forests.170

Theobald too made excuses for not coming to the muster, although he pleaded to be excused on grounds of illness rather than poverty for himself, and offered the death of his son, John, as excuse for not sending a proxy. Edward was unimpressed and wrote back in threatening terms:

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170 *EHD, 1189-1327*, p. 472.
"The king is not pleased with his letter of excuse for not coming to him with horses and arms, in accordance with the king's letter lately sent to him, in which he excused himself on the grounds of his infirmity of body and other causes of trouble and as also of the death of John, his eldest son, whom he proposed to send in his place....As, however, the king holds that his second son, Theobald, according to the king's recollection of him when he last saw him and as he learns by trustworthy testimony, is able and strong enough to supply his brother's place, he requests and orders Theobald to send him to the king in John's place to go with the king in his service at his wages, laying aside all excuse. This he is warned not to omit as he loves his honour and profit, and as the king trusts in him."171

In this way, Theobald's career provides "a unique instance of compulsion put upon a tenant-in-chief to serve abroad or to send a deputy."172 It should be noted, however, that Edward's memory may not have served him quite as well as he thought. Theobald II de Verdun was perhaps only sixteen in 1298173 and it is also clear that he had not yet been knighted. His dubbing was only carried out after he joined the king, as is shown by a report in the Croxden chronicle, "Theobald son and heir of Theobald de Verdun returned to England from Ireland and was made a knight... by King Edward on the day of St John the Baptist (24 June)." The fourteenth century chronicler, anxious to preserve a precedent for his house, added a note; "Memorandum, that an aid was demanded from us for making the eldest son of the lord a knight, but we gave nothing at all."174

In June 1301, Theobald was ordered "to amend without delay the trespasses of his people against Sir John de Hastings who is on the king's service as the king's clerk.... or the king will find a remedy."175 This impatient command marks the last recorded occasion when Theobald's behaviour troubled the king, although it was issued at a time when Theobald was also serving Edward in Scotland. Conquered in 1296, the Scots had rebelled the following year and their army under Wallace had gained a notable victory at Stirling Bridge. Edward responded by leading an army north in 1298, which in turn defeated the Scots at Falkirk, in which battle

171 CCR, 1296-1302, pp. 42-3.
172 Morris, The Welsh Wars of Edward I, p. 239.
173 The inquisition post mortem taken on his father's death in 1309 states that he was 22 and over under the entry for Buckinghamshire. Other reports give his age as 24, or even 31 years of age. It is possible, therefore, that he was anything up to 21 years old in 1297.
174 Croxden Chronicle s.a.1298, fo. 78; CIPM, 5, no. 187.
Theobald II was present. The situation remained disturbed, however, and Edward led another army north in 1300 which did little but besiege Caerlaverock castle and engage in a small skirmish at Cree in Galloway. In March, and again in May of 1301, Edward I requested that Theobald "go in person to join Edward, prince of Wales, at Carlisle or to send, in case he be prevented by illness, his son Theobald with a befitting company of men-at-arms, certifying the king by the bearer of his proceedings, as the king has this matter very much at heart." This army proceeded from Carlisle to Ayr and Turnberry, where the castle was taken, before returning to Carlisle, thence to join Edward I's army at Linlithgow.

In 1302, Theobald was asked to send a "strong force of men-at-arms in order to proceed vigorously with the war of Scotland." Presumably, these were employed with the other forces drafted from Ireland in besieging Rothsay castle, before fighting the Scots at Inverkip on the Clyde. The army remained in Scotland during the winter and embarked on the siege of Stirling castle in April 1304, finally taking the castle in July. No further summonses concerning Theobald or his men survive, although some commentators have stated that he served in the 1306 campaign against the newly crowned Robert Bruce.

Edward I died on 7 July 1307 at Burgh-on-the-Sands, and his son was crowned Edward II in February 1308. It can be assumed that Theobald played a ceremonial role at the coronation, for he held Farnham Royal (Buckinghamshire) by sergeanty of finding a glove for his right hand, using this to support the arm of the king while he held the sceptre at his coronation. There is no evidence that Theobald himself personally served Edward II in any other capacity, although the Rotuli Scotiae record that he and Roger Mortimer sent 100 footmen to the army at Berwick in 1309.

Theobald de Verdun died in 1309, aged about 61, at home in his castle of Alton. He was buried on 12 October at the family foundation of Croxden two miles

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176 This is revealed by the fact that Theobald II's arms are found on the Falkirk roll. (C. Moor, 'Knights of Edward I (T-Z)', Publications of the Harleian Society, 84 (1932), pp. 105-6.
177 CCR, 1296-1302, p. 491.
178 M. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 494.
179 CDI, 5, no. 47.
180 BL, Additional MS 46457, fo. 158.
181 PRO, C134/14/19; CIPM, 5, no. 187.
182 Rot Scotiae, Record Commission (London, 1814, 1819), 1, p. 84.
away. Although he had directed his only known piece of ecclesiastical patronage - a grant of pasture in the wood of Threpwood - to this house, he had in fact earlier asked to be buried at his grandmother’s foundation of Grace Dieu in Leicestershire. According to the terms of this will, which had been drawn up in 1295, some nine houses of Franciscan and seven houses of Dominican friars, as well as a single house each of Carmelites and Augustinians, were to be paid to say prayers for his soul. Although it is notable that both Llanthony priory and Croxden abbey were excluded from this list, it does, perhaps, reflect a piety no longer apparent in what remains with which to reconstruct his career. Equally, Theobald’s relationship with Croxden appears to have been more positive and active than the lack of surviving evidence suggests. It would otherwise be difficult to account for the epitaph given him by the Croxden chronicler which also looks forward to the rule of his successor: “Sir Theobald de Verdun our patron departed to the lord on Sunday the feast of St Bartholomew the apostle.... Concerning whom the words of the wise man may fitly be spoken "He died and was as though he were not dead for he left behind him one like unto himself" both in name and in fact, and further it can truly be said that he left behind him a defender of his house against enemies and one that to his friends renders favours.”

Theobald II de Verdun, 1309-1316.

Theobald II de Verdun first comes into focus in 1298, when he would have been about sixteen. As was mentioned earlier, his father had been summoned to the Flanders campaign but had sent back his excuses, stating that he himself was unable to attend through illness and that his son, John, who could have been sent in his place, had recently died. Edward I swept aside these excuses and ordered Theobald I to send Theobald II in his place. As a result "Theobald the son and heir of Theobald de Verdun returned to England from Ireland and was made a knight.. by king Edward on the day of St John the Baptist (24 June) together with Philip of Barington his comrade in arms." He subsequently fought at the battle of Falkirk, his presence there being revealed by the record of his arms in the Falkirk, Nobility

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183 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1309, fo. 79v.
184 Stafford, Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/4.
185 BL, Additional MS 18446, p. 7; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97.
186 Croxden Chronicle s.a.1309, fo. 79v.
187 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1298, fo. 78.
and Guillim Rolls.\textsuperscript{188} Theobald II may also have been present in the army under Edward, prince of Wales, on the 1301 Scottish campaign. Edward I had sent Theobald I a letter, requesting "that he will go in person to join Edward Prince of Wales at Carlisle, or to send, in case he be prevented by illness, his son Theobald with a befitting company of men-at-arms."\textsuperscript{189} Unfortunately, it is not known which of the Theobalds attended the prince.

In 1302, "Lord Theobald de Verdun heir of Lord Theobald son of John de Verdun married Matilda daughter of Lord Edmund Mortimer at Wigmore on 29th July."\textsuperscript{190} Preparations for the wedding had been in hand for some months previously, as it was back in April that Edmund Mortimer had received licence "to grant to Theobald (II) de Verdun in free marriage with his daughter Matilda the castle and manor of Dunamase in Ireland, and for Theobald de Verdun to grant 200 marcates in Lough Sewdy."\textsuperscript{191} In the event, Theobald does not seem to have gained Dunamase and it may be that de Verdun's claim to it was exchanged in return for a cash payment. Certainly, a financial agreement of some kind was made between Theobald and Edmund in 1302, although unfortunately the details of this arrangement - including the reason for it - are lacking. Indeed, it is only known through the command sent to the sheriff of Shropshire in 1311 "to arrest Edmund Mortimer and keep him in safe custody until he has paid Theobald de Verdun and Matilda, the daughter of the said Edmund, £3,000 which he had acknowledged that he owed them and which he ought to have paid on 11 November 1302."\textsuperscript{192} Mortimer's death delayed the resolution of the issue so that in 1313 the sheriffs of Hereford, Hampshire, Berkshire and Shropshire were ordered to deliver to Theobald and Matilda all the lands of Edmund Mortimer in their balliwicks "except those which could descend to any heir under age" to be held by them until the debt of £3,000 was satisfied.\textsuperscript{193}

The marriage seems to have caught the interest of the normally rather distant Croxden chronicler, who gives an account of its major landmarks. He tells us that in 1303, "on 11 August which was then a Tuesday, Matilda de Verdun gave birth

\textsuperscript{189} CCR, 1296-1302, p. 491.
\textsuperscript{190} Croxden Chronicle s.a.1302, fo. 78v.
\textsuperscript{191} CPR, 1301-7, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{192} WS, 9/1, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{193} WS, 9/1, p. 40.
to her firstborn daughter named Joan."\textsuperscript{194} In the eight following years, Matilda gave birth to another two or three daughters, as well as to two sons, John and William. These two sons were both to die before their father without heirs.\textsuperscript{195} Matilda herself was also to die young, and the report in the Croxden chronicle suggests that this was related to the birth of her last daughter in 1312. "On St Lawrence's Day (10 August) Matilda de Verdun, lady of Alton, there gave birth to her fourth daughter, named Margery, and on the day of St Lambert the bishop next following, namely 18 September, she departed this life at the castle of Alton." The manner of her burial, which was performed after a surprisingly long interval on 9 October, suggests that the marriage had been a happy one, as well as giving some indication of the increasing stature of the family. The Croxden chronicle states that "on the day of the blessed martyr Denis and his companions she was committed honourably to ecclesiastical sepulture in the conventual church of Croxden before the altar of St Benedict by Bishop Gilbert Enagdemenum, Thomas earl of Lancaster and all the nobility of the land being present."\textsuperscript{196}

The years 1312-13 were focal points in Theobald's career for reasons apart from the death of his first wife. Although orders had been given to deliver to Theobald II his patrimony on 28 September 1309,\textsuperscript{197} he had taken a back-seat in the politics of Edward II's reign up to this point, although the presence of Thomas of Lancaster at Croxden in 1312 might give an indication of his political sympathies and at least suggests that "Lancaster had been on particularly good terms with Theobald de Verdun."\textsuperscript{198} It was, after all, only a little more than a year since Piers Gaveston had been executed by Lancaster at Blacklow Hill and after this, "Lancaster, who took responsibility for the favourite's death, emerged clearly as the king's leading opponent."\textsuperscript{199} That Lancaster attended Matilda's funeral might, therefore, suggest that Theobald supported the aims of the Ordainers and had numbered among the opponents of Piers Gaveston. This view might be further supported by the fact that Theobald II de Verdun attended the tournament at Dunstable which was held sometime between 20 March and 7 April 1309, which appears to have served as a meeting place for those dissatisfied with Edward II's

\textsuperscript{194} Croxden Chronicle s.a.1303, fo. 79.
\textsuperscript{195} BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 260v.
\textsuperscript{196} Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1312, fo. 79v.
\textsuperscript{197} CFR, 1307-19, p. 49.
regime. It is likely that a plan of action was decided upon at the tournament and implemented at the Parliament held soon afterwards. Edward II asked for a twenty-fifth from the laity. This was granted only on condition that a remedy be provided for eleven grievances - most notable amongst which were the complaints against the abuse of purveyance - ten of which were eventually to be embodied in some form in the Ordinances of 1311.

Having received his patrimony in 1309, Theobald II had then effectively divided it by granting the custody of his Irish estates to his brother Milo. There is no evidence that Theobald visited Ireland himself before 1313. A series of three grants of protection dated to October 1309 and 1311, and January 1313 state instead that Theobald was remaining in England at these times. The only sign of his interest in his Irish estates is found in an agreement of 1311 to pay £20 each year to the Exchequer in Dublin for the debts of himself and his ancestors, although this might reveal less of Theobald's desire to order his affairs in Ireland than it does of the Irish Exchequer's concern to recover some much needed revenue. The scale of the de Verdun debts was significant. In 1302, Theobald I de Verdun had owed £848 scutage from his half of Meath and £159 13s.4d. from Uriel, and there is no sign that any real attempt had been made to pay these debts off up to this point.

Left to their own devices in Ireland, Milo de Verdun, and his brothers Nicholas and Robert, presided over the rebellion known as 'The Riot of Louth' early in 1312. The immediate causes of the rebellion are unknown, although the atmosphere in the area was probably tense following the murder of Roger Gernon, sheriff of Louth, in October 1311 and that of a MacMahon supporter in Ardee a few months previously, "by which the whole peace of these marches is disturbed." There is nothing, however, to suggest any link with events in England. Nor does Theobald de Verdun himself seem to have played any part in this rising, although he was...

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200 J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 97. Maddicott is not certain if the Theobald who attended the tournament at Dunstable was the same man who attended the Parliament later the same year, who is indeed more likely to have been Theobald I. (*ibid*, p. 100, n. 2.) However, the Theobald at Dunstable is likely, on account of Theobald I's age, to have been Theobald II, so that it remains likely that he had sympathy for the baronial reformers.

201 *ibid*, pp. 97-8.


203 *CPR*, 1307-13, pp. 197, 395, 522.

204 *CFR*, 1307-19, p. 103.

205 IPR, 38th report, pp. 62, 72.

involved in the settlement which followed. In April 1313, he and Roger Mortimer bailed Roger de Verdun and another twelve named and twenty-seven unnamed accomplices, who were to go and serve the king in the army in Scotland in reparation for their crimes.\(^{207}\)

It is possible, given its timing, that the 'Riot of Louth' had some influence on the choice of Theobald II de Verdun as justiciar of Ireland, although Hand sees it as being due to his connections with the English baronial party.\(^{208}\) Whatever its cause, the fine rolls record that Theobald had been appointed as justiciar by 23 May 1313,\(^{209}\) although it is clear that Edmund Butler continued to act as custos until June 1314.\(^{210}\)

It seems likely that Theobald did cross to Ireland in 1313. A protection given to him in May records that he was "going beyond the seas on the king's business,"\(^{211}\) while his presence in the country is apparently confirmed by the fact that orders to take the lands of John de Weiland into the king's hand were sent to Dublin for his attention in the same month.\(^{212}\) By November, however, Theobald was back at Westminster where he witnessed a charter and also issued one himself - his sole surviving actum - by which he quit-claimed "to Hugh le Despencer senior the manor and [his] right in the Hundred of Bisley (Glouces tershire) with the advowson of the church."\(^{213}\) By March 1314, Theobald was once more in Dublin, as Edward II sent letters to Aedh Ó Conchobhair of Connacht and Breen McMahon of Uriel, asking them to send men for the army going to Scotland and requesting that they bring any such troops to Theobald, the justiciary.\(^{214}\) In the next month, Edward II wrote to Theobald, Walter de Islepe, the treasurer, and officials of the Exchequer reporting that he had sent Alexander le Convers to Ireland to carry out his affairs. He also asked for men, both on horse and on foot, to serve in Scotland and as much money as was in the treasury.\(^{215}\)

\(^{207}\) CCR, 1307-13, p. 525.
\(^{209}\) CFR, 1307-19, p. 172.
\(^{211}\) CPR, 1307-13, pp. 576, 579.
\(^{212}\) CFR, 1307-19, p. 172.
\(^{213}\) CCR, 1313-18, p. 82; BL, Harley Charter 57.C.25.
\(^{214}\) Rot Scotiae, 1, p. 118.
\(^{215}\) ibid, p. 124.
Theobald himself was also summoned to Scotland in April. Letters of protection were made ready and these additionally disclose that he was to proceed in the retinue of Edmund de Maulac, the steward of the king's household. It is clear that Theobald II was somewhat tardy in complying with this summons as it was repeated in August when he was also told to appoint someone in whom he could confide to keep Ireland in his place. Even then, it is not at all certain that Theobald joined the king, as he heard pleas at Drogheda and Dublin on eight occasions between August 1314 and January 1315. On the last of these occasions he presided over the hearings concerning Nicholas de Verdon's murder of John de Parys. Nicholas, Theobald's brother, was subsequently pardoned "for the good service which [he] has done and will do in future to the king." Theobald de Verdon's last recorded action as justiciar was the taking of a fine from the bishop of Down in October 1314. The same month saw him summoned to the Parliament to be held at Westminster on the octave of St Hilary and ordered to find a suitable keeper for Ireland during his absence. If he did indeed attend at Westminster, he may never have returned to Ireland, for in January 1315 he was ordered to "deliver to Edmund Butler, justiciar of Ireland, all writs, memoranda and other things now in his custody."

So it was that Theobald de Verdon ceased to be justiciar just four months before Edward Bruce landed in Ireland near Larne on 25 May. From his place of landing Bruce marched south, taking and burning Dundalk, the de Verdon's most important Irish borough, on 29 June and then plundering the surrounding area. By November, Bruce was in Meath and spent Christmas at Theobald's demesne manor of Lough Sewdy, which he ungratefully burned on his departure. Despite this devastation of his estates, there is no evidence that Theobald remained anything other than indifferent to affairs in Ireland, presumably trusting in his brothers to act for him. While his estates in the north and west of Ireland were burning, Theobald was summoned to Newcastle to fight against the Scots, although it is not known if he obeyed the summons. He then settled down to wait for the opportunity to put into action his plan to increase the extent of his lands elsewhere. This he intended

216 WS, 9/1, p. 48.
217 CCR, 1313-18, p. 193.
218 NAI, KB2/7, pp. 1-17 passim for these headings.
219 ibid, p. 18.
221 CFR, 1313-17, p. 207.
223 Rot Scotiae, 1, p. 145. The summons is dated to 30 June 1315.
to do by marrying Elizabeth, the widow of the earl of Ulster's son, John de Burgh, and, since June 1314, the heiress to a third of the earldom of Gloucester.

Theobald later claimed that he and Elizabeth had agreed to marry when he was in Ireland. From the evidence we have, this makes February of 1315 the latest date for the initial arrangements to have been made, but it was not until 4 February 1316 (the day that some of his fellow magnates in Ireland were pledging loyalty to the king) that Theobald effected their intentions - without having first gained the king's licence. Elizabeth was in the king's wardship at the time and was resident at Bristol castle. According to Theobald's version of events, Elizabeth "came one league from the said castle on his orders, and there he married her; he added that he did not enter the castle and he did not believe that he had done anything in contempt of the king." The king, however, who was piqued at losing a ward for whom he had other plans, and angry about what he saw as contempt for marrying without his licence, accused Theobald of entering Bristol castle with force and arms and abducting Elizabeth.224

In the event, Edward recovered his heiress without further recourse to the law, for Theobald II de Verdun, having planted the seeds of an even greater future for his house, died before they could come to fruition just five months later in July 1316. "On 27 July which was Tuesday, in the morning at daybreak, Theobald de Verdun, patron of this house, departed this life at the castle of Alton and was buried at Croxden by the abbot thereof on 19 September."225

The Partition.

On his death, Theobald left three daughters to succeed him. However, his widow, Elizabeth, was pregnant and a male heir a hopeful prospect. The months of waiting finally ended amid probably muted rejoicing when "Lady Elizabeth the relict of Sir Theobald de Verdun on St Benedict's day (21 March) at Almesbury bore a daughter named Isabel and thus there are four sisters and no heir of the barony of Verdun."226 The final partition of the de Verdun lands amongst the sisters, however, had to wait sixteen years until Isabel came of age. This left plenty of time

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225 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1316, fo. 80.
226 ibid, s.a.1316, fo. 80.
for a great deal of political manoeuvring and wrangling over the form that the partition should take.

As Theobald's loyalty to the crown had been under question when he died (both as a result of his probable support of Lancaster's faction and his contemptuous marriage to Elizabeth de Burgh), "the king immediately showed his determination to transfer control of the estate into friendly hands by marrying Joan, the eldest of the four heiresses, to John, eldest son of William, Lord Montague." This marriage took place in April 1317 at the royal chapel at Windsor, some eight months after William Montague had actually been granted Joan's marriage. On the other side of the Irish Sea, Milo and Nicholas de Verdun were given the custody of their dead brother's lands "to hold until the full age of the heirs," after Elizabeth de Burgh's dower had been deducted. This dower was assigned to her in December 1316 and included Newbold Verdon, Lutterworth, Cotesbach (Leicestershire), Farnham Royal (Buckinghamshire), Brandon (Warwickshire), Stoke Verdon and Wilsford (Wiltshire), Kells (county Meath) and Coolock (county Dublin) with the pleas of Duleek (county Meath) and some other fees. Edward II was to make certain that these lands remained out of the hands of his enemies by marrying Elizabeth to his favourite, Roger Damory, shortly afterwards. In the short-term this was successful, although Damory ultimately rebelled himself in 1322.

It is clear that Edward was right to be worried. After John Montague died in August 1317, Edward II took Alton into his own hands, claiming that "certain malefactors" had recently entered it. It would seem from another report that they had "detained the [castle] from the king with the goods, armour and victuals found there... and asserted that they did the same in the name of the king's kinsman, Thomas, earl of Lancaster." Nor did it prove easy to evict these "malefactors" from the castle. They were still there in November 1317 when the sheriff sent in a report concerning his attempts to carry out his order to demand

228 CPR, 1313-17, p. 535.
229 CFR, 1307-19, p. 305.
230 CCR, 1313-18, pp. 381-2.
233 CCR, 1313-18, p. 575.
"those who are found therein, on pain of forfeiture of all that they could forfeit, to deliver the castle to him." The sheriff had gone to Alton with "knights and other good and lawful men" and went to the castle where he found "the gates closed and the drawbridge drawn and raised, and saw on the towers and walls of the castle armed men walking about." He asked who was keeping the castle and was told that it was Thomas of Barington, but that he was not in the castle at that time. Those inside took the sheriff's letters and promised to send them post haste to Thomas but "that in no wise could the sheriff have livery of the castle or another answer." 234

In April 1318, Joan was married a second time to Thomas de Furnival, son and heir of Thomas de Furnival of Sheffield castle. Orders went out for de Furnival to be given custody of Alton on 7 September 1318, 235 and his loyalty to Edward II in this troubled region was assured by his being granted two thirds of Theobald II's estates in both England and Ireland as his wife's purparty. 236 There were bound to be complaints from the other interested parties about this division of the de Verdun estates, but when they were finally made by Bartholomew de Burghersh, William Blount and their wives Elizabeth and Margery (the second and third daughters of Theobald II respectively) in 1320, they concerned not only de Furnival's custody of two thirds of the inheritance but also the extent of Alton taken in 1316 which, it was claimed, had been badly made. 237

Nothing seems to have been done about this, however, until after Edward II's deposition in 1327 - possibly because Edward still needed Furnival's support in Staffordshire at the time. It was consequently left to Edward III to order a new inquisition to be taken on 3 May 1327. The first of the two new extents produced at this time revealed that Alton was in fact worth £80 per year, against the valuation of £29 returned in 1316. 238 As a result in February 1328 the escheator was told to resume all Theobald de Verdun's lands which were not held in dower by Elizabeth de Burgh. "The court declared the partition so erroneously made should be held of no effect......, and because inquisitions taken at another time and

235 CCR, 1318-23, p. 10.
238 PRO, C135/7; WS, vol 1913, pp. 9-15.
returned into the chancery have been challenged, to cause all the said lands, excepting the said dower, to be extended.\textsuperscript{239}

This new inquisition had presumably not been completed by October when a new partition was made for Thomas, Bartholomew and William, as this was based on an "estimation of the true values of the castles, manors and lands aforesaid and not according to the extents returned into Chancery."\textsuperscript{240} This partition was itself soon challenged by Henry de Ferrers, the husband of Theobald's youngest daughter, Isabel, who had been given custody of the purparty falling to his wife in July 1331.\textsuperscript{241} Henry argued that errors had occurred in the partitions made for Thomas, William and Bartholomew, "more being assigned from those lands in the purparties of the said Joan, Elizabeth and Margery than fell to them, and less being reserved in the king's hands in the purparties of the said Isabel."\textsuperscript{242} Consequently, on 24 October 1331 the order was given to make another partition of the de Verduns' estates and the results of this final partition were enrolled in the close rolls on 26 March 1332. The enrolment does not include a transcript of the Irish partition, but this does survive in an early seventeenth-century inspeximus of a late-fourteenth-century inspeximus.\textsuperscript{243}

The purparties allotted to each of the four daughters in 1332 are illustrated in the table below. While the Irish partition of 1332 included a division of the de Verduns' knight's fees, the English one did not. These and the family's advowsons were only finally shared out amongst the heiresses or their representatives in 1344.\textsuperscript{244} The value of these fees, both in England and Ireland, has not been included in the table as the income which derived from them was irregular, being only forthcoming when a scutage was levied.

In 1332, therefore, the debates over the partition of the de Verdun lands were finally ended and Thomas de Furnival became the new lord of Alton by right of his wife, Joan. "And thus", says the Croxden chronicler, "that honourable and distinguished name of Verdun was passed to the Furnivals..... For eternity, however, let not the memory of that name pass from the hearts of those living in

\textsuperscript{239} CIPM, 7, no. 83.
\textsuperscript{240} CCR, 1327-30, pp. 327-8.
\textsuperscript{241} CPR, 1330-4, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{242} CCR, 1330-3, p. 450.
\textsuperscript{244} CCR, 1343-6, pp. 275-9.
this house, lest they be found ungrateful, because there is not another name given
to them under heaven to which they are bound to show such great reverence in
prayer or the giving of thanks. But let them say to themselves without ceasing, in
their hearts, words and deeds, that saying of the prophet Isaiah, "Thy name and thy
memorial is the desire of my soul."245

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manor</th>
<th>Joan</th>
<th>Elizabeth</th>
<th>Margery</th>
<th>Isabel</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manor</th>
<th>Value in 1332</th>
<th>Value in 1332</th>
<th>Value in 1332</th>
<th>Value in 1332</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alton and its members</td>
<td>£95 19s. 1.5d.</td>
<td>£95 13s. 2d.</td>
<td>£95 18s. 17.5d.</td>
<td>£99 11s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lordship in Oriel</td>
<td>Manor and castle of Castleroche, manor of the Newtown of Dunlalk and rents.</td>
<td>104 acres in demesne, fish-traps, rents and a toll.</td>
<td>Manor and castle of the Castletown of Dunlalk, rents and a half mark of service when levied.</td>
<td>Manor of Haggardstown and 64 acres in demesne, pleas, rents and a toll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lordship of Duleek</td>
<td>4 carucates and 68 acres in demesne, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>2 carucates and 252.5 acres in demesne, burgage rents, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>3.5 carucates and 146 acres in demesne, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>3.5 carucates and 54 acres in demesne, rents and services when levied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lordship of Lough Sewdy</td>
<td>6 carucates at Incheleffer, pleas, tolls, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>8 carucates at Athleague, burgage rents, pleas, tolls, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>8 carucates at Moydow, pleas, tolls, rents and services when levied.</td>
<td>8 carucates at Incheleffer, 8 carucates at Moydow, burgage rents, pleas, tolls, rents and services when levied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Value in 1332 | £50 5s. 2.5d. | £53 19s. 1d. | £48 1s. 10.75d. | £56 0s. 6.25d. |
| Total value   | £146 4s. 4d. | £149 12s. 3d. | £144 0s. 6.5d. | £155 12s. 0.25d. |

Table 2.1. The results of the partition of the de Verdun lands in 1332.

245 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1332, fo. 82.
Chapter 3

IN WOOD AND FIELD: THE DE VERDUNS' DEMESNE

Despite Theobald II de Verdun's plans to the contrary, the de Verdun estates had reached their final form - before partition - in 1313 when Theobald granted his share of Bisley (Gloucestershire) to the elder Hugh Despencer for five years. These estates were, as has been seen, an amalgam of lands gained through grants, fines, marriage and piecemeal acquisition from the time of William the Conqueror onwards, and in this were similar to the possessions of many other magnate families. These processes were not continuous or uniform throughout the period between 1066 and 1316. Indeed, the last major gain had been made by 1242 as a result of John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy. From that time on the additions made by each generation of the family were small - one or two manors at most - and largely took the form of small purchases and small gains made by cultivating previously marginal areas.

Previously, discussion of the de Verduns' lands has concentrated on their identification and the time when they came into the family's possession. Now, however, it is intended to consider the services for which these estates were held, to discuss the liberties with which they were granted, to examine the revenues which they generated and to analyse their economic structure. The main evidence with which to establish an idea of the revenues these lands produced and to reconstruct their economies is found - in the case of the estates in England and the march - chiefly in a series of five inquisitions, the first of which dates to 1271 and the last to 1327. Such inquisitions are notoriously suspect. As Hunnisett pointed out in 1971, "many inquisitions contain information which clearly could not have been provided, as is always stated, by the jurors, but must represent a compromise acceptable both to the presiding official and to the heir of the tenant-in-chief or other interested party; and in these circumstances earlier inquisitions were often copied verbatim." There may well be an example of such copying in the extents of

1 BL, Harley Charter 57. C. 25.
2 PRO, C133/39/20 (1271); C133/7/1 (1274); C134/14/19 (1309); C134/56/1 (1316); C135/7 (1327). CIPM, 1, no. 767; 2, no. 78; 5, no. 187; 6, no. 54; 7, no. 83. The Staffordshire sections are published in WS, vol 1911, pp. 159-162, 301, 333-337 and WS, vol 1913 pp. 9-18.
the manor of Brandon in the 1309 and 1316 inquisitions. The lack of an alternative source of information, however, means that no matter what the drawbacks of such evidence, these inquisitions have been used as a basis for much of the following discussion. The conclusions that have been drawn should thus be treated with caution.

At least the fact that there are five inquisitions concerning the English and marcher estates means that some of the major omissions and errors can be noticed. In contrast, the de Verdun lands in Ireland are illuminated only by a few family acta, by the Irish pipe roll of 1212 and by a single survey which provided the basis for the partition of the de Verduns' Irish estates in 1332, but which was probably drawn up some years earlier. The partition shows that the de Verduns held or claimed lands in eight modern Irish counties consisting of 173 manors. However, as Theobald II's widow, Elizabeth de Burgh, was still alive in 1332 the partition presumably fails to deal with a third of the de Verduns' Irish property - at least in terms of value. Certainly Coolock (county Dublin), Kells and part of Duleek (county Meath) were in Elizabeth's hands after Theobald II's death, but her remaining dower - if any - can only be guessed at. Equally, although the partition does refer back to a "past time of peace," especially when providing the values of arable land, there is no indication as to when this was, or whether the same time was meant on all the occasions on which the term was used. There are, therefore, considerable gaps in our knowledge of the family's holdings in Ireland and no evidence at all from which to chart their development in terms of organisation or income.

Services, courts and franchises.

The de Verduns had to perform specified services for their lands, which they held of a number of lords both great and small. In 1316, the most important of these was the king. At that date, and for some decades previously, the de Verduns owed their monarch the service of eight and a half knights for their lands in England and the march, and forty-seven and a half knights for their Irish estates - a total of fifty-

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six knight's fees. In addition, the earl of Warwick was owed the service of four and a half knights for the lands the de Verduns had held of him and his ancestors since they had come to the family on Norman de Verdun's marriage to Lecelina de Clinton in the 1130's, while four knights were owed to the earl of Ferrers (and later to the honour of Tutbury) for various lands in Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire which had been in de Verdun possession since Bertram III's marriage to Matilda de Ferrers, probably sometime in Stephen's reign. The de Verduns also owed the honour of Chester the service of "one knight doing castle guard at Chester for eleven days per year" in 1242-3 for lands in the Longsdons, Rushden and Ipstones (Staffordshire) which had probably first come to the family between 1129 and 1153. Castle guard was also owed for Stoke-on-Tern in the 1270's, to be performed at Shrawardine castle for forty days in time of war.

There were, in addition, a small number of demesne manors not held for military service. Wilsford in Wiltshire was held in 1247 and 1274 in return for keeping a candle burning before the high altar of Salisbury cathedral, although by 1316 this had been commuted to a yearly rent of £4 13s.4d. Stoke Farthing, the de Verduns' other manor in Wiltshire, was held of the abbess of Wilton for a rent of £11. Similarly, in 1274 and 1316 Lutterworth was held from John fitzAlan of Wolrinton for a rent of 10s. per year, which was due from fitzAlan himself for the keeping of the castle at Northampton. In one case, namely the manor of Whiston (Staffordshire) which was held of James de Bises, the service for which the manor was held is unknown.

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6 The de Verduns owed the king one knight from the lands of the honor of Alton in Staffordshire and Leicestershire and had done since at least 1166. See for example Red Book of the Exchequer, ed. H. Hall, Rolls Series (1896), p. 271 (1166); BF, p. 970 (1242-3); CIPM, 2, no. 78 (1274); 6, no. 54 (1316). Seven and a half knights were owed from the estates in Ewias Lacy, Herefordshire and Shropshire (CIPM, 1, no. 767; 2, no. 78). Bertram III had originally owed twenty knights from his lands based around Dundalk, but this had risen to twenty-two and a half by Henry III's reign. (Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 579/1, fo. 199, p. 415; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon Lands', PRIA, 66, section C (1968), pp. 443-4.) Lastly, twenty-five knights were owed from the de Verduns' moiety of Meath as is revealed by accounts for scutages in the Irish pipe rolls. (IPR, 38th report, p. 62.)

7 Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 222, fo. 29v.

8 BF, p. 970.


10 CLR, 1245-51, p. 114; PRO, C133/7/1; C134/56/1.

11 PRO, C133/7/1; C134/56/1.
All the de Verdun lands were held by either knight service or rents in this manner with the solitary exception of Farnham Royal in Buckinghamshire. In 1309 and 1316 it is recorded that it was held as a grand sergeancy "by service of finding a glove for [the king's] right hand on the day of the king's coronation, for supporting the king's right arm with his said gloved hand while the king shall hold his sceptre." It is not known for how long Farnham Royal had been held by sergeanty in this way. The only hint is found in the hundred rolls which record that the manor was given to Bertram III de Verdun by Henry II. This stands in contrast to the fact, recorded in Domesday Book, that Farnham Royal had been held by Bertram III de Verdun's great-grandfather in 1086 and consequently suggests either that Farnham had been lost in the interval and was then regranted to Bertram III, or that Henry II changed the terms on which the manor was held. In both cases, the introduction of this sergeanty service can probably be dated to Henry II's reign. Indeed, as long ago as 1880 it was suggested that the tenure was the result of Bertram III's service during the 'Great War' of 1173-4. "Bertram de Verdun, at this juncture, was sheriff of [Leicestershire] and Warwickshire, which were the strongholds of the rebellious Barons, and stood almost alone in the Midland Counties on the side of the King. It is not unlikely," it was argued, "that his services at this period were commemorated by the Grand Sergeanty of Farnham." If this was the case, Henry II's creation of the sergeanty for Farnham Royal would fit in with a point made by Elisabeth Kimball in her survey of sergeanty tenure. She stated that although "there can be little doubt that sergeanty was as old as the Conquest.... it is likely that most individual tenures were products of the twelfth century. There are extant no charters of the Conqueror or of William Rufus creating tenures identifiable as sergeanties, but Henry I, Henry II, and Richard I, granted a number." These sergeanties took no fixed form. Some involved the production of a certain number of arrows or of a foot soldier - a sergeant, hence the term - at stipulated times. In comparison, Hugh de St Philbert held Philberds in Berkshire in return for a duty of carrying wine, while the tenant of Hemingstone in Suffolk was to serve only on Christmas day. "He was to leap, whistle, and make a

12 PRO, C134/14/19; C134/56/1; CIPM, 5, no. 187; 6, no. 54. (Quote from latter.)
13 Rot Hundredorum, 1, p. 46.
14 DB, Buckinghamshire, 38,1.
15 WS, 1, p. 207.
passing of wind before the king." This duty was discontinued by Henry III on grounds of indecency.

Farnham Royal is notable among the de Verduns' lands not only for the manner in which it was held from the king, but also for the extensive judicial liberties which were apparently attached to it. According to the hundred rolls, Theobald I de Verdun held Farnham with "all the liberties that pertain to the crown." This would include such things as the right to hear the pleas of the crown, the franchises of return of writs, *Vee de Naam*, wa if and stray and all the lesser and more common liberties. According to a survey dated to 1279, Lutterworth and Cotesbach in Leicestershire were also held with *regale*, although it should be noted that the slightly earlier hundred rolls make no mention of such a great liberty on those manors.

When historians discuss the great (in terms of importance) franchises, they tend to talk only of the great (in terms of size) franchises such as the Eight and a Half Hundreds of Bury St Edmunds, or the liberties of Ramsey, Ely or Peterborough, the Banlieue of Battle abbey, the Rapes of Sussex and the Lowy of Tonbridge. The case of Farnham Royal provides a useful reminder that those who held such liberties might hold them in only a single manor. The hundred rolls provide other examples of this, recording that another five manors in Burnham hundred in Buckinghamshire, in which Farnham Royal was situated, were also held with all the crown's liberties. Equally, in Thurgarton and Wye wapentake in Nottinghamshire, Thomas de Carducis, Wychard de Charrolm, Adam of Sutton, Robert of Sutton and Peter de Montfort all claimed gallows, assize of bread and ale and "*alius alias regias dignitates*" in solitary manors.

The de Verduns thus held a great liberty in Farnham Royal. The sheriff was excluded and the king's writs were served and actioned by the de Verduns' own bailiffs. Great though such privileges were, they were still far inferior to those rights possessed by the lords of the Welsh march. In the marcher lordships "the

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17 *ibid*, pp. 35-6, 59.
18 "*Omnes libertates que pertinent ad regale*, *Rot Hundredorum*, 1, p. 46.
20 *Leicestershire*, 4/2, pp. 147, 247.
21 *Rot Hundredorum*, 1, pp. 239.
22 *ibid*, 2, p. 28.
common law did not apply and the king's writ did not run."

Lords enforced justice not in the king's name, but in their own. Indeed, attempts by the king to assert his authority in the area were not welcomed. In 1250 Walter Clifford forced the messenger who delivered the king's writ to eat it, seal and all. From 1242 the de Verduns belonged to this exclusive club, exercising such control in their own marcher liberty - the lordship of Ewias Lacy.

The extent of the jurisdiction of the lord of Ewias Lacy is best seen in a charter which Walter de Lacy, John de Verdun's predecessor in the lordship, gave to the canons of Llanthony priory. In it, Walter granted the canons "all justice of assault, murdrum and shedding of blood, breach of peace and whatever pertains to our power..... with forfeiture, breaking of truce, all pleas of theft, homicide, rape and arson, and all pleas which can be pleaded in the court of Ewias, with infangenteof and utfangenteof and the issues arising from amercements of pleas which are given before these canons or their bailiffs." These were the wide-ranging, viceregal powers which typify the marcher liberties.

However, although we know something of the lord of Ewias Lacy's power, almost nothing is known of the lordship's court or its administration under either the de Lacys or, later, the de Verduns. It is, however, clear that justice was administered in the lordship by the de Verduns' bailiff. In 1280, "the bailiffs of Elfael, Crickhowell and Grosmont [were] ordered to cause twelve to come to enquire whether Simon Basset, bailiff of Ewias Lacy, would not permit Richard Fouke to have justice done in his lord's court on various trespasses and grievances done to Richard by Adam de Fraxino." The composition of the court that he presided over is unknown. We do not know if there were separate English and Welsh courts, although it is apparent from the 1316 inquisition post mortem that some Welshmen held lands in the lordship.

The only other information concerning the court at Ewias Lacy comes in the records of the profits of the 'pleas and perquisites' of the manor which are

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25 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 135.
26 Welsh Assize Roll 1277-84, ed. J. C. Davies (Cardiff, 1940), p. 309.
27 CIPM, 6, no. 54.
contained in the inquisitions *post mortem*. These amounted to £5 (15% of the income from the manor) in 1274, £8 (17.7%) in 1309 and £6 13s.4d. (16.2%) in 1316. These were not large sums in comparison to those generated by Abergavenny and even the smaller neighbouring lordships. The Great Court of Abergavenny produced £112 7s.7d. in 1256-7, while in the same year that at Grosmont made £17 17s.10d. and the court at Monmouth £39 3s.

In addition to the ten marks produced by pleas and perquisites of the court, the 1316 extent also reveals that 5s. was brought into Theobald de Verdun's coffers from the *leyrwite*, a fine referred to in many manorial records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was originally a fine for adultery or fornication imposed by the secular power for the church, but had become something different by the fourteenth century by which time the church had unquestioned jurisdiction over such moral offences. Villeins, if accused of adultery or fornication would stand trial in the church court, where they might pay a fine for their offence instead of submitting to corporal punishment. However, as villeins had nothing of their own, this was tantamount to the alienation of the lord's property. *Leyrwite*, then, was the fine imposed by a lord on villeins who had paid a fine in the church courts to avoid a beating for their illicit sexual acts.

The de Verduns' remaining lands in England were held with more usual minor judicial liberties. According to the hundred rolls and consequent *quo warranto* proceedings produced between 1274 and 1280 John de Verdun or his son Theobald held the right to gallows, the assize of bread and ale and view of

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28 When considering accounts for 'pleas and perquisites' in 1943, Painter noted that there is "doubt as to just what this heading covered" and that "in all probability it did not always include the same items." (S. Painter, *Studies in the History of the English Feudal Barony* (Baltimore, 1943), p. 121.) It is possible that revenues from all the judicial sources, feudal, manorial and franchial, were entered under this heading. Nonetheless, in the absence of any other figures the amounts recorded under this title in the inquisitions *post mortem* do at least provide some idea of the revenues gained from the de Verduns' lordship court of Ewias Lacy and some basis for comparison with those of other marcher lordships.

29 The only land that de Genneville held in the liberty of Ewias Lacy was the manor of Walterston. In 1292 the pleas and perquisites of this manor were valued at £13. (PRO, C133/63/10.) Whether this sum should be added to the recorded value of the pleas from de Verdun Ewias Lacy is not clear. Even if they are added together, the thrust of the following comparisons is largely unchanged.


frankpledge in their demesne manors of Alton,\textsuperscript{32} Brandon, Bretford, Lutterworth, Cotesbach, Newbold Verdon, Debden and Saffron Walden.\textsuperscript{33} In addition, John de Verdun had \textit{uffangentheof} in Stoke-on-Tern.\textsuperscript{34}

When dealing with the view of frankpledge, \textit{The Mirror of Justices} states that "because it was anciently ordained that no one should remain in the realm if he was not in a tithing and plevied by free men, it is the hundredor's duty to view once a year the frankpledges and plevies, and for this reason, such views are known as views of frankpledge."\textsuperscript{35} The franchise of view of frankpledge, however, involved more than simply reviewing the tithings. Those who had view of frankpledge were effectively outside the hundredal jurisdiction and their courts thus performed the work of the hundred court. The sheriff's job, when taking view of frankpledge, was to empanel a jury of presentment which was required to tell all it knew about crimes recently committed in the hundred. "It is," so \textit{The Mirror of Justices} relates, "the sheriff's duty to enquire as to all personal sinners and into all circumstances relating to sins committed in such hundreds, and into wrongs done by the officers of the king and queen, and into wrongs done to the king and the commonalty of the people."\textsuperscript{36} These sins and wrongs would include such things as blood being unlawfully shed, the taking of treasure trove or walf (stray animals), boundaries having been moved, outrageous distrains made and "the breach of any assize of bread, beer, wine, cloths."\textsuperscript{37} If a lord, such as the de Verdun lord of Alton, held view of frankpledge, these duties fell to him too.

The various inquisitions \textit{post mortem} suggest that the manor courts in which these franchises applied provided the de Verduns with only small profits. For example, 'pleas and perquisites' amounted to 30s. (4.8\% of manorial revenue) in Weobley in 1274, but only 6s.8d. (0.8\%) in 1309. They brought in 4s. (2.5\%) at Brandon, 6s. (5.9\%) at Newbold Verdon and 10s. (3.3\%) at Lutterworth in 1316.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} View of frankpledge is not specifically named but is implied by the fact that Alton was outwith the hundred. (\textit{WS}, 6/1, p. 265.)
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{Rot Hundredorum}, 1, pp. 155, 239; PRO, JUST/1/962, memb. 2; T. John, \textit{The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80}, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History new series, 19 (Oxford, 1992), p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{34} \textit{Cal of Inquisitions Miscellaneous} (London, 1916-), 2, no. 1138. Definitions for most of these franchises can be found in J. G. H. Hudson, \textit{The Formation of the English Common Law} (London, 1996), pp. 244-7.
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{The Mirror of Justices}, eds. F. W. Maitland and W. I. Whittaker, Selden Society, 7 (1893), p. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Mirror of Justices}, pp. 39-40.
\end{itemize}
Painter thought that in a "large number" of cases the lord passed on the profits from the views to the sheriff. There is, however, some evidence that the de Verduns kept at least some of the revenues produced by these views as the inquisition of 1316 gives values for the 'pleas and perquisites' in Brandon and Newbold Verdon "with two views." It would seem that in these two manors at least, some, if not all, of the revenues arising from view of frankpledge were retained by the de Verduns.

There is no evidence for the development of the family's English manor courts with the exception of that at Alton. The earliest extant mention of this court comes in the charter by which Bertram III granted Sheen to Hugh of Okeover. In this, Bertram reserved to himself the wartpeny and Peter's Pence of the said land and recorded that the same Hugh and his heirs were to "come to the afforcement of [his] court, but only at the reasonable summons of [himself] or [his] seneschal." The court at Alton next appears in the time of Nicholas de Verdun (1199-1231), although it comes in a record dating to 1293. This reveals that "the tenants of the lands of William de Whythalk, Henry de Sharpeclif, William de Padewyk, Robert de Sharpeclif, and Thomas de Padewyk used to do suit at the hundred every three weeks and be geldable in all things with the hundred until sixty years ago, when they were transferred to the liberty of Nicholas de Verdun of Alton." This transferral had occurred when William of Ipstones populated previously uninhabited land which he had acquired from William of Chetelton. "Ever since the land had been inhabited the tenants had answered with the manor of Alton." The same entry informs us that the manor of Alton was entirely extra geldibile. This meant that Alton was excepted from making contributions to amercements and fines imposed upon the county, such as murdrum, the effect being to increase the burden that fell on the remaining vills. By 1274, the manor court at Alton may have become part and parcel of the portmanmoot of the borough there, which was perhaps supervised by the de Verduns' seneschals. This is suggested by the inquisition of 1274 which only records profits from pleas and perquisites deriving from the portmanmoot without mentioning a separate manor court.

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39 PRO, C134/56/1.
40 WS new series, 7, p. 135.
41 WS, 6/1, p. 265.
43 PRO, C133/7/1; WS, vol 1911, p. 160.
In 1189-90, John, then count of Mortain, granted Bertram III de Verdun four and a half cantreds in Uriel and Louth which were to become, at least in part, the lordship of Dundalk. John's charter of enfeoffment survives, albeit in a later copy, so that we know that Bertram was granted these lands with "sake and soke, toll and team and *infangentheof*, and justice of iron and pit and gallows, and all other liberties which pertain to the said land."\(^{44}\) When Nicholas de Verdun made a grant to Theobald II Butler in or about 1225 these liberties were even more fully defined and stated. Nicholas gave him "toll, team, *infangentheof*, judgement of water and iron, pit, gallows and duel."\(^{45}\) These franchises are typical of grants made in Ireland at this time. For example, John, lord of Ireland, granted William fitzMaurice the cantred in which Naas was situated with right to ordeal in 1185-6.\(^{46}\) Similarly, John granted Peter Pipard the land given to him by his brother with "toll and team, *infangentheof*, judgement of water, iron and gallows, wreck, and all liberties and free customs, except the pleas belonging to the crown." Finally, Theobald I Walter granted Gilbert de Kentewell five fees in Eliogerty near Thurles with "toll, team, *infangentheof*, judgement of fire, water, and battle and all free liberties.\(^{47}\)

It is worth noting that charters specifically granting the right to hold ordeals in England are extremely rare. Henry I's charters usually deal only with various Anglo-Saxon liberties, usually the well-worn toll, team, soke, sake and *infangentheof*. Only in two cases is the ordeal mentioned - in a charter to Croyland abbey, which is in any case dubious and might date from Stephen's reign, and in a grant to the church of All Saints in Warwick which was to have the ordeal of fire and water as it had held them under Edward the Confessor and the two King Williams.\(^{48}\) Stephen does not seem to have granted the liberty of the ordeal at all, with the one possible exception just noted, while in Henry II's charters, as they appear in the Delisle's *Receuil*, there is only one grant of ordeal. Even then, this is not a new grant by Henry II but part of the donations to the abbey of Pré in Rouen made by Henry I.\(^{49}\)

Why, then, do these charters granting lands in Ireland to Anglo-Norman conqueror-settlers refer to the judicial ordeal in a way in which both earlier and

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\(^{44}\) Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 579/1, fo. 199, p. 415.  
\(^{45}\) *Ormond Deeds*, no. 863(5).  
\(^{46}\) Gormanston Reg, p. 145.  
\(^{47}\) *Ormond Deeds*, nos. 863 (1), 34.  
\(^{48}\) *Regesta*, 2, nos. 1039, 1415.  
\(^{49}\) *Receuil*, 2, p. 107.
contemporary grants of lands in England do not? The ordeal was not unknown in pre-Norman Ireland. Brehon law makes mention of twelve different forms of the ordeal including tests such as 'the three stones', 'the cauldron of truth' and 'the adze of Mochta'. "Patrick," it was claimed, "established these tests to decide the disputes of the men of Ireland." However, Robert Bartlett has noticed that the native Irish glossators of the twelfth century sometimes show perplexity or indecision about the details of the ordeal when commenting on the earlier texts, suggesting that the ordeal was not common, or perhaps even current, in the twelfth century. He continues, "what is clear is that the ordeal of cold water was never mentioned in native Irish law, but was granted as a right... in the very earliest charters of the Anglo-French invaders. It was obviously an importation. As we do not know if, or how often, trial by ordeal was undertaken in pre-invasion Ireland, it would be rash to make the bold claim that the Normans reintroduced the ordeal; but it is clear that the ordeal pit of Anglo-Norman Ireland was a novelty, not a continuation of native Irish practice." The introduction of the ordeal pit for use in ordeal by cold water suggests strongly that these charters specifically mention the ordeal because it was part of the process whereby English legal practice was established in Ireland. Ordeal by cold water was the method set down in the Assize of Clarendon of 1166 by which thieves indicted by the jury of presentment should be tried. Other ordeals were to be used in civil pleas. According to Glanvill, if someone refused trial by battle either on account of old age or infirmity then "the accused must purge himself by ordeal, that is by hot iron or water according to his status: by hot iron if he is a free man, by water if he is a villein." That ordeal by iron was granted to Bertram III, and that duel (not specifically mentioned in John's charter) had been introduced by the time of Nicholas de Verdun at latest, would seem to reinforce the view that these grants were related to the introduction of what would become the Common Law into Ireland.

From 1242, the de Verdun lordship of Dundalk was supplemented by a moiety of the de Lacy lordship of Meath which came to the family with John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy. Meath had been granted to Hugh de Lacy by King Henry II in 1172 "with all its appurtenances for the service of fifty knights..... just

50 Ancient Laws and Institutions of Ireland (Dublin, 1865-1901), 5, p. 471.
as Murrough Ó Melaghlin or any other before or after him best held it."53 This and other similar charters "were... intended to convey the fullest liberties, giving their holders almost royal rights, with complete control of all administration and all jurisdiction, to the exclusion of royal officials."54 In 1279-80, this was taken to mean that Hugh was "enfeoffed by King Henry the elder of all Meath, and of all liberties which the king had there."55 That the writ of error was introduced meant that the Irish liberty courts had to enforce the king's justice, not marcher laws. The de Lacy lords of Meath thus ruled an area in which they administered the king's justice and acted on his writs in place of the sheriff or other royal officials who were excluded from acting on their lands.

Walter de Lacy was to retain this liberty until about 1223 when "Richard fitzRanulph appealed in Walter's court at Trim Robert Omalroni of the death of his brother. A day was named for the duel, but Walter's wife, in the absence of her lord and at Robert's procurement, commanded her seneschal to respite the duel. Richard the appellor... came to Dublin on the same day, and complained to Henry, archbishop of Dublin, then justiciary, of the injustice done to him in that court." The justiciary then took all Walter's liberties into the king's hand saving Vee de Naam, hue and cry, plea of bloodshed "and other pleas belonging to the court baron".56 In 1252 the full liberty was restored to Geoffrey de Genneville by royal charter. "Henry, king of England, has granted to Geoffrey de Genneville, and Matilda his wife, all liberties in their land of Meath, which Walter de Lacy had in right."57 The liberties of the De Verduns' share of Meath, however, were not so restored, so that "the de Verdun lords of [Lough Sewdy] never had any greater privilege than that of acting as sheriffs of their own lands."58

Despite this, there is some evidence to back up Otway-Ruthven's suggestion that de Verdun Meath continued to operate as a liberty regardless of the fact that John

55 CDI, 2, no. 1645.
56 ibid, no. 1645. It is dated to 1223 by A. J. Otway-Ruthven, A History of Medieval Ireland, p. 159.
57 Gormanston Reg, p. 7.
58 G. J. Hand, English Law in Ireland, 1290-1324 (Cambridge, 1967), p. 13. With these words, de Verdun Meath is more or less dismissed. However, pp. 123-31 provide a detailed discussion of de Genneville's liberty of Trim.
had not recovered the original franchise. In 1261 John de Verdun responded to
the administration of a plea concerning five carucates of land at Strachleylyn. He
stated that "the said land was in his liberty, and that [the defendant] ought to be
summoned by his bailiffs and was not summoned by them but by 'servientes' of the
king" - arguments which suggest that de Verdun was still exercising return of
writs in his share of Meath. Whatever the case, John de Verdun attempted,
unsuccessfully, to recover the right to hear pleas of the crown in 1267. The
timing of this attempt to regain the lost liberties is interesting. John de Verdun
petitioned for the restoration of the liberty at a time when he was enjoying royal
favour following his loyalty during the Barons' War. The inquisition returned on
this occasion, which is attached to an inquisition of 1280, stated that the Lord
Edward would be damaged to the sum of £300 if the liberty was restored, "even if
all the tenants of the tenement were decently and well treated, which they could
not hope would be done if these liberties were granted to Sir John." This
comment in itself is a useful sidelight on John de Verdun's rule, but it was probably
more the value of the liberty that prevented its restoration to him.

Gerard McGrath, who has recently examined the shiring of Ireland in the 1297
Parliament, has noted that Theobald I continued to hold these same curtailed
liberties until the late 1270's when Robert d'Ufford, the justiciary, took them into
the king's hand. "The circumstances would suggest that de Verdun lost the liberty
on the basis of quo warranto as the justiciar questioned his right to the liberties he
claimed. But because no writ was issued or proper process of law was followed
d'Ufford was instructed by the king to restore the liberty to de Verdun and then
proceed to investigate his claims." In March 1280, Theobald I appealed for the
restoration of his liberty and a search was made of the rolls for the liberties which
Walter de Lacy had held in Meath. By June 1280, the finished inquisition had
established the reason why Walter de Lacy had lost his liberty and Edward I had,
now that proper procedure had been followed, recovered the liberties of Theobald
de Verdun in Meath. In 1297 it was determined that "Meath be a county by
itself..., as well the land of the liberty of Trim as the land of Theobald de Verdun...

60 NAI, RC7/1, p. 321.
61 G. J. Hand, English Law in Ireland, p. 13.
62 CDI, 2, no. 1666.
63 G. McGrath, 'The Shiring of Ireland and the 1297 Parliament', Law and Disorder in
64 CDI, 2, no. 1645.
65 ibid, no. 1673.
and that there henceforth be a sheriff there... and that he hold his county court at Kells.... And the aforesaid Theobald, for himself, and Almaric de St Amand his tenant and their heirs granted that they will henceforth do suit of court at the said county court of Meath. This effectively ended all hope of recovering the liberty, although even then Theobald II seems to have been thinking about making a new attempt to regain it in 1310.

The jurisdictional franchises held by the de Verduns thus varied across their lordships. In Ewias Lacy the king's writ did not run and the de Verduns were responsible for providing justice in the lordship. In Alton and other of their midlands manors, the de Verduns held franchises which gave them only the limited administration of local legal proceedings. Such franchises do not seem to have been an especially significant source of revenue. In 1274 the listed profits from 'pleas and perquisites' accounted for 12.3% of total revenue. By 1309 this figure had fallen to 6% of total revenue and by 1316 it stood at 4.5%. The evidence for the extent of the de Verduns' liberties in Ireland is better than that for those in England and the march, with Bertram III's charter for Dundalk and the record of the inquisitions into the liberties of Meath both surviving. There remains, however, a lack of records for all the family's courts so that we know more of what the de Verduns claimed than of how they exercised their power. Indeed, much of the evidence for the English and marcher liberties dates only from the survey which formed the hundred rolls and the quo warranto proceedings that followed, so that even the dates when these liberties were acquired are frequently uncertain.

The value of the de Verduns' demesne: An overview.

There is little evidence from which to gauge the value of the de Verdun estates in England and the march apart from that provided by the series of five inquisitions post mortem which date from 1271 onward. The lack of minorities was a good thing from the point of view of the family, but it has its disadvantages for the historian. Only once, between 1192 and 1194, did the de Verdun estates come to be taken into the guardianship of the crown and consequently only once is an account for any of the de Verdun manors recorded on the pipe rolls. In the pipe

roll of 1195, William fitzRichard made account for a gross profit of £72 3d. from the lands of Bertram de Verdun which he had held in custody. FitzRichard's inventory deals with sales of grain from more than one manor and, indeed, specifically mentions payments for garrisons at the two de Verdun castles at Alton and Brandon, but as he accounted for the lands of Bertram de Verdun without qualification it is likely that the manors of Farnham Royal (Buckinghamshire), Cotesbach, Newbold Verdon, Belton, Lutterworth (Leicestershire) and Hethe (Oxfordshire) can be included too, as they were all held in demesne by Bertram at the time of his death in 1192. Helpfully, when speaking of the payments made to garrison the castles the account notes that these were for a term of six months. It is thus likely that the £73 3d. gross profit recorded by fitzRichard was the revenue produced from the manors in this same period, which equates to a sum of £146 6d. per year - a total which can be compared with the £325 or so produced by these estates (now minus Belton) according to the conflated inquisitions of 1274 and 1309.

According to the inquisition of 1274, the de Verdun demesne lands in England and Wales were producing an income of £417 14s.10d. per year at that time. Of this total, £95 8s. was produced by the manor of Alton alone. Another £105 was produced by the lands which John de Verdun had acquired in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Ewias Lacy which had previously belonged to the de Lacys and, in the case of Stoke-on-Tern, the de Says. By 1309, the income from the demesne had fallen to £277 13s.6d., the survey revealing a substantial fall in the revenues produced by the family's estates in Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Oxfordshire. This is a pattern continued in the inquisition of 1316, by which time the family lands were valued at only £213 19s.3d. A more detailed breakdown of these changes in income can be found in Table 3.1 below.

Quite how much this recorded decrease in revenue reveals a true situation rather than simply being a reflection of administrative inefficiency is unclear. Certainly, the 1316 inquisition was not as accurately made as it could have been as in 1320 Bartholomew de Burghersh, William Blount and their wives - who were the second and third daughters of Theobald de Verdun and had just come of age - complained that "in the said castle and manor of Alton, with its members... there are more than

68 PR, 7 Richard I, p. 198.
69 The scribe who wrote the inquisition inexplicably added a further £92 when he added the totals up in 1274, placing its value at £187 9s.6d. There is nothing in the inquisition to suggest why he did this, so it has been assumed that it was a mistake.
£60 of annual rent, and more than 200 acres of arable land, and diverse other tenements.... which were not set out in the extent.... made after the death of the said Theobald."\(^{70}\) The result of this and other complaints was that a new inquisition was made in 1327, although it omitted the demesne manors in Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire because they had previously been assigned in dower to Elizabeth de Burgh.\(^{71}\) In this, Alton was valued at £85 13s.1d. instead of its 1316 value of a little over £29, while Hethe in Oxfordshire was valued at £20 6s.6d. as opposed to just under £7 as it had been in 1316. Even with the corrections provided by the 1327 inquisition, however, there was still a loss in revenue of £101 between the maximum - if still incomplete - sum of 1274 and the survey of 1327 (with the 1316 totals added where there is no amendment). This £101 represents a loss of some 24% of the total revenue from the family's English and marcher demesnes since 1274. Standing alone, the 1316 figures show a loss of 49% on the 1274 value.

<table>
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<th>County</th>
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<th>1316</th>
<th>1327</th>
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<td>£26 13s. 11d.</td>
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<td>£ 74 5s. 5d.</td>
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<td>£10 13s. 8d.</td>
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<td>Ewias Lacy</td>
<td>£ 33 3s. 9d.</td>
<td>£ 39 8s. 9d.</td>
<td>£ 41 1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£ 45 8s. 8d.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>£ 20 2s. 9d.</td>
<td>£ 15 14s. 4d.</td>
<td>£ 42 9s. 1d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire</td>
<td>£ 5 19s. 11d.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>£417 14s. 10d.</td>
<td>£277 13s. 6d.</td>
<td>£213 19s. 3d.</td>
<td>£236 5s. 8d.</td>
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Table 3.1. Gross values of the de Verdun demesne in England and the march.

The partition of 1332 records that the value of those lands and rents held in the lordship of Duleek by the de Verduns was £77 4s. per year - a value which does not compare favourably with the farm of £58 10s.3d. for half a year (£117 6d. per year) rendered for the manor in the pipe roll of 1212, even when the fact that

\(^{70}\) *WS*, vol 1911, p. 343.

\(^{71}\) *CCR*, 1313-18, pp. 381-2.
Elizabeth de Burgh held the pleas and perquisites of the manor in dower is taken into account. This low valuation was probably due to a combination of the famine and coincident Bruce invasion which must have had a severe impact on the manor. It may be that a combination of these factors, along with the Gaelic resurgence which had been in evidence since 1284, had also had a considerable effect on the de Verduns' demesne manors in the lordship of Lough Sewdy. The partition gives two values for the de Verduns' demesne arable in the lordship, one for the "lapsed time of peace," the other as the current value when the survey on which the partition was based was made. Adding up the former values gives a gross total of £242 2s.10d., a sum which had fallen to £55 2s.10d. by the time of the survey, chiefly as a result of the lack of tenants to cultivate the fields. To this can be added £49 17s. from the lordship of Dundalk. At its maximum, then, the sum total of these lordships and manors as they appear in the partition of 1332 was £369 3s.10d., at lowest £182 3s.10d.. To this total must be added that for those lands held by Elizabeth de Burgh in dower. From the rental of her dower lands made in 1350 these appear to have been worth about £80 per year. The maximum value of the de Verduns' Irish demesne, in so far as it can be reconstructed, can thus be estimated at between a low of £262, current in about 1316 and thereafter, and a high of £450 during the "lapsed time of peace."

This regular income was supplemented by scutages when they were levied. Ashow, Barford and the other Warwickshire manors were held of the de Verduns for a total service of fifteen, a quarter and a third knight's fees. The de Verduns held them of the earl of Warwick for only four and a half fees so that they gained a profit of about eleven fees - £22 assuming a rate of 40s. a fee - every time a scutage was levied. The estates in England and the march gained by marriage to Margery de Lacy and exchange with Hugh de Say provided the de Verduns with the services of thirty-six and a half fees, and were held for providing seven-and-a-half knight's fees worth of scutage. These thus brought in a profit of £58 every time a scutage was levied. The de Verduns' moiety of Meath was held for twenty-five fees, while just under fifty-nine knight's fees had been enfeoffed on it, giving a

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73 This total includes the values put on lands "in the past time of peace." These were valued at nothing in 1332.
75 BF, p. 955; CIPM, 6, no. 54, p. 38.
76 ibid, pp. 38-9.
profit of nearly £70. Dundalk, on the other hand, never seems to have been enfeoffed even up to the service owed for it, the partition recording only seven knight's fees among the lands held from the de Verduns in the county.

The de Verdun estates in England, Wales and Ireland thus appear to have produced something in the region of £900 at their height in or around 1274 (with another £150 when scutage was levied), perhaps falling to somewhere between £500 and £600 by the first decades of the fourteenth century. The de Verduns were thus well out of the league of the contemporary top men and families in England. Thomas, earl of Lancaster, had an income of about £11,000 per year in 1313-14. The last Gilbert de Clare had about £6,000 per year in 1314.77 It would seem on this evidence that Theobald de Verdun was aiming very high when he married Elizabeth de Burgh - a third of the Clare lands would have trebled his income at a stroke. At a slightly lower level, Roger Bigod's revenues amounted to about £4,000 in 1306, while the Warenne earls of Surrey probably had something over £2,000 per year.78 For the de Verduns, then, we need to go lower then the titled aristocracy, although at its financial height the family does seem to have had sufficient income to support a comital title. "The grants made by..... Edward III to the earls created in 1337, suggest that an income of 1,000 marks or perhaps £1,000 was considered sufficient to maintain the status of an earl."79

If not the financial equal of the greatest men, the de Verduns' income was nonetheless comparable to that of a number of prominent individuals. In the inquisition post mortem which followed Edmund Mortimer's death in 1304, his lands in England and the marches were valued at a total of at least £814 19s.2d., although some totals have become illegible. In addition, Mortimer held the lordship of Dunamase in Leinster, bringing his total revenues to about £1,000.80 The de Verduns' relatively level standing with the Mortimers can perhaps be seen in the marriage of Theobald II de Verdun and Matilda de Mortimer of 1302. Other motives could have helped - the fact that they were neighbours on the march for example - but it is unlikely that the Mortimers, who were reaching the zenith of

80 For the inquisition on Edmund Mortimer's lands in England and Wales see PRO, C133/114/8. The value of the Irish estates (£121 7s. 6d.) is found in the inquisition post mortem taken on the death of Roger Mortimer in 1282. (PRO, C133/32/7.)
their power at this time, would have married far below their own level. The bishop of Worcester, too, held estates valued at around £1,000 per year and was thus on a par with the de Verduns, while - to provide an institutional rather than personal comparison - the revenues of the Augustinian house at Llanthony Secunda near Gloucester seem to have amounted to about £849 per year.\textsuperscript{81}

It is certain that from the late 1270's the revenues provided by the family estates were not keeping pace with the de Verduns' financial requirements. This might have been the result of a reduction in income provided by their demesne lands as is suggested by the inquisitions and partition. Alternatively (or additionally), this shortfall could have been caused or exacerbated by the building programme at Alton or by the purchase of the jewels of which Theobald I was so fond, both of which were vital to cutting a good figure in the world.\textsuperscript{82} Furthermore Theobald I de Verdun was involved in both Welsh wars of 1276-7 and 1282-3, as well as in various wars in Ireland, notably in 1284, and these too must have acted as a drain on his resources. Indeed, it is notable that the timing of such conflicts fits in nicely with the first records of Theobald's financial problems. Equally, Theobald might have been finding it difficult to make ends meet on account of the king's related demands for money. The \textit{Monstraunces} of 1297 state that so many tallages and prises had been taken that, "on account of the poverty they are in... [the barons] scarcely have the wherewithal to support themselves."\textsuperscript{83}

There are thus numerous reasons to explain why the de Verduns' revenues were proving inadequate throughout the last years of the thirteenth century. That they were insufficient is suggested chiefly by the various references to family debts which, although surviving from before 1231, become increasingly common from the time of Theobald I. From a plea brought after his death, it is apparent that John de Verdun was so determined to wrest a debt of £200 from his bailiff, Henry of Bray, that he threw him into his prison at Alton.\textsuperscript{84} In 1281-2, Theobald can be found acknowledging various debts on the close rolls, including one of 100s. owed to William de Ros, £50 owed to Robert Burnel and £80 owed to Robert de Stepleton.\textsuperscript{85} Theobald I also mortgaged Farnham Royal to Thomas de Verdun and

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{EHD, 1189-1327}, p. 472.
\textsuperscript{84} \textit{WS, 6/1}, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{CCR, 1279-88}, pp. 136, 173, 187.
Henry de Praers as security for a loan of £200 in 1284. In Warwickshire in 1285, Theobald I was sued by Robert, the parson of Skeffington, to whom he owed eight and a half marks, and by Nicholas of Wheathampstead, who brought a suit to recover £96. In Staffordshire in 1293, Theobald was summoned by the abbot of Croxden for arrears of £8 of a rent of 40s. that Roesia de Verdun had granted the abbey from the mills at Alton. By 1302 - to introduce some supporting Irish evidence - Theobald I owed fractionally over £848 in scutage from Meath and £159 13s.4d. from Uriel. Theobald II, was, as has been seen, to make an agreement concerning the repayment of these debts, but even then the terms imposed do not suggest abundant wealth from which to make such repayments. It may even be that the lack of de Verdun charters dating to the last years of the thirteenth century also reflects these financial problems.

That normal revenues were proving insufficient is also suggested by the de Verduns' sometimes dubious attempts to increase their income. The hundred rolls accused John de Verdun of having taken "by force and unjustly passagium through [his] demesne lands and elsewhere." In 1284 John de Prestwode sued Theobald de Verdun for eight acres in Prestwode of which he had dispossessed him, while in 1305 the men of Drogheda-next-to-Uriel complained that Theobald de Verdun was distraining them to pay tolls at his market of Duleek through his bailiffs, Roger and William, despite the fact that as tenants of the king's demesne they should not have been liable for such charges. Maddicott has pointed out similar cases relating to Thomas of Lancaster. The burgesses of Liverpool complained that Lancaster had seized tolls in their town, while Nicholas Russell was unlawfully deprived of his inheritance at Bradwell (Derbyshire). "Even after the usual cautious provisos have been made about the justice of some of these claims, and allowing that a few of them may have resulted from his ministers' greed rather than Lancaster's own, it is still impossible to avoid the conclusion that the earl was intent on increasing his revenue by whatever means."

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86 CDI, 2, no. 2305.
87 PRO, JUST 1/960, membs. 21v., 16.
88 WS, 6/1, p. 223.
89 IPR, 38th report, pp. 62, 72.
91 PRO, SC5/Staffs/3; WS, 5/1, p. 119.
92 WS, 6/1, p. 135.
93 CJRI, 2, pp. 60, 188. In 1307, Theobald stated in his defence that Walter de Lacy had taken such tolls from the men of Drogheda. (NAI, Ferguson MSS, 1, p. 108.)
94 J. R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, pp. 34-5.
Maddicott believed that if records survived for Thomas of Lancaster's exploitation of his feudal resources they would reveal him acting in the same way. Although such evidence does not exist for Earl Thomas, two examples do survive to illustrate Theobald I de Verdun's attempted, or actual, exploitation of wardships. In 1300 Agnes, the widow of William of Ipstones, was sued by Theobald I de Verdun to give up the custody of the heir and land of the said William. Theobald's case was argued on the basis that the manor of Ipstones was held by knight's service (at half a fee), as well as for a rent of 10s.1d. annually and suit at his court of Alton. Agnes, stated Theobald, had deforced him of this service - which had been established in the time of John de Verdun (1247-74) by John of Ipstones, the said William's grandfather - and had thereby damaged him to a total of £300. Agnes said that William of Ipstones had held in socage for a rent of 10s.1d. annually for all service. The verdict was given against Theobald, just as it had been in William of Ipstones' inquisition post mortem in 1295, and it was recorded that William of Ipstones had owed homage and fealty, the rent and suit of court, but that he had not held for military service. 95

In just this one case, then, the fact that the Ipstones held by socage rather than by military service had cost Theobald de Verdun £300 (if we accept his figure) in five years. Another illustration of the profit which could be gained through wardships comes from May 1302 when Theobald I was accused by Simon de Feipo of wasting the manor of Santry while it had been in his custody to the tune of £2,000. Wasting was, of course, a disreputable practice, but if de Feipo's claims are to be believed it was one that Theobald had developed into an art. It was claimed that de Verdun had sold the timber from a hall, two chambers, two stables and a granary, and that he had felled 300 fruit trees, 1,000 alders and 30,000 ash trees. If Theobald did indeed waste the manor to this extent, and make £2,000 in the process, then it can be seen that even if wasting was a disreputable practice it was also a profitable one, for he was fined only £156.96 That such profits could be made at least partly explains why the de Verduns can be found safeguarding their rights over wardships, as John de Verdun did in 1248 and 1263, 97 or - as in the Ipstones case - laying claim to such rights even when they did not actually exist.

95 WS, 7/1, pp. 72-3.
96 CJRI, 1, pp. 386-7.
97 CCR, 1247-51, p. 52; CDI, 2, no. 740.
The demesne manors: identification and location.

The revenues discussed above were derived in the main from the de Verduns' demesne manors which made up only a small proportion of their total estates, the rest of which were held by tenants chiefly for knight service but also for rents. Table 3.2 below identifies those manors which the various members of the family kept in their own hands and illustrates how the composition of the demesne changed over time. Two points should be noted. Firstly, the table does not list the de Verduns' demesne manors in the lordship of Lough Sewdy individually. This seemed unnecessary as all were held, or at least claimed, for the same period of time and all were acquired through John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy. Secondly, all the Staffordshire outliers of Alton have been entered under the name of that manor. Although Alton itself, along with Wootton and Stanton, was retained in demesne until 1316, a number of its Staffordshire outliers were not. The table is thus guilty of simplification here, although the hidden details have been recounted at length in chapters one and two above, and will also be noted in chapter four below.

The de Verduns' demesne manors can be identified as such in a number of ways. Greenway suggested that demesne could be identified on account of it being "distinguished by phrases which carry the full weight of proprietary right: it is retained 'in manu', as 'proprium dominium'. When demesne is alienated it is given in enfeoffment, alms, or other forms of tenancy."98 Thus in c.1180, Bertram III de Verdun granted "my land" of Croxden in free alms to the abbey he founded there in c.1179. In 1195-9 Thomas de Verdun made an agreement with Hugh de Lacy, soon to be earl of Ulster, in which "Thomas [retained] to himself and his heirs, whole and undivided, the castle of Dundalk and five knights fees neighbouring and nearest to the castle, towards the sea and towards the land, on whatever side it shall please Thomas."99 Similarly, in 1231-41 Roesia de Verdun granted "the whole of my manor of Belton with the advowson of the church and all other appurtenances" to the nuns of her own foundation of Grace Dieu.100

99 Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3.
100 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 567.
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<td>Wilts</td>
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<td>Gloucs</td>
<td>Bisley Part of manor</td>
<td>+</td>
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</table>

* = Land acquired by grant. + = Land acquired by marriage. # = Land acquired by exchange.

Table 3.2. Changes in de Verdun demesne manors, 1086-1316.

Aside from charters, the de Verduns' demesne manors are sometimes identified in the centrally produced records. There survive royal grants made to Nicholas, John and Theobald de Verdun in 1226, 1258 and 1284 respectively, all of which name
specific demesne manors. For example, in June 1285 John de Verdun was granted free warren in his demesne lands, including Newbold Verdon, Lutterworth, and Cotesbach (Leicestershire), Hethe (Oxfordshire), Stoke Farthing, Wilsford (Wiltshire) and Farnham Royal (Buckinghamshire). Furthermore, he was also granted this liberty in some short-lived demesne manors which fail to appear in his, or any other de Verdun, inquisition post mortem. These include Debden (Essex), Fowlmere, Barrington (Cambridgeshire) and Stokesay (Shropshire). Equally, because the inquisitions themselves are selective and do not mention all the de Verduns' manors, it must be assumed that those which were extended are those which were retained in demesne. Indeed, this is made explicit in the inquisition taken after Theobald II de Verdun's death in 1316. Here, the report on the statements of the Staffordshire jury begins, "[they] say upon their oath that Theobald de Verdun held in his demesne..."

Various factors led to the changing composition of the de Verduns' demesne. A glance at the careers of the various de Verduns reveals that the family's manors were acquired through a mixture of grants (Alton and Dundalk), marriages (Brandon, Ewias Lacy, Weobley and Lough Sewdy) and exchange (Stoke-on-Tern), although further small additions could occur through purchase. Equally, as the table shows, the composition of the demesne could change not just through addition but also as a result of lands being lost. Thus Saffron Walden appears to have been lost through a plea initiated by Henry de Bohun in 1280. Croxden and Belton were granted to the family's religious foundations and so too were those isolated lands in Great Limber and Stamford. Stokesay was leased out to Philip de Whichecote by John de Verdun for three years but was eventually granted away to Laurence of Ludlow, while Clonmore in Ferrard was granted to Nicholas de Verdun by his brother, Theobald II. In some cases, such as the two Cambridgeshire manors held briefly by John de Verdun, demesne manors disappear without trace.

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101 CDI, 1, no. 1387; CChR, 2, p. 12; CDI, 2, nos. 2303, 2304.
102 II 5, Vol 1, 1911, p. 333.
103 II 5, 6/1, p. 106.
105 R. W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, 5, p. 35.
106 Laurence held the manor by 24 October 1281 when Edward I granted him right of warren in the manor. (BL, Egerton Charters, no. 637.)
Alienations could, of course, be only temporary. In 1199 Thomas de Verdun's widow, Eustachia Basset, married Richard de Camvill. The dower arrangements were not settled until 1204 at which point it was agreed that Eustacia would hold Farnham Royal, Hethe and 40s. rent to be received from Henry de Verdun which he owed for the tenement he held of Nicholas de Verdun in Bucknall. By 1277 John de Verdun's widow, Alianor, held Brandon with its castle, along with Bretford, Flecknoe, Lutterworth, Cotesbach and a variety of other lands, advowsons and knight's fees in dower. In 1284 Farnham Royal was granted by Theobald I to Thomas de Verdun, whose relationship to Theobald is not known, and Henry de Praers for four years as security on a loan of £200. Before his death in 1271, John de Verdun's eldest son, Nicholas, had held the old de Lacy estates in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Ewias Lacy, while between 1295 until his death in 1297 John de Verdun, eldest son and heir of Theobald I de Verdun, held Farnham Royal from his father. These short-term alienations are something which the table does not illustrate, but they are a reminder that the composition of the demesne lands was in a state of almost constant flux.

Do the manors that were retained in demesne suggest any overall strategy of land holding? Greenway has shown that the Mowbrays retained important centres in their several districts and that these "served as pivotal points of honorial administration, where courts were held and rents and services from the surrounding estates were received." This was also the case with Alton. The de Verdun lands in England were concentrated in Staffordshire - and this remained as true for the period after 1247 when the de Lacy lands were annexed to the de Verdun estates as before it. Although the manors were spread across the north of the county, the area of greatest concentration was in the north east where they formed a more or less compact group around Alton. In turn, Alton became the obvious centre for the family's lordship in Staffordshire and, as the family's possessions were greater in Staffordshire than anywhere else, the caput of the family's whole English honour. It was this as much as the availability of a good defensive site that led to the construction of the castle there by c.1175 at the latest. Typically, demesne land was retained in the neighbouring outliers of Wootton,

108 IJS, 3/1, pp. 170-1.
109 WS, 6/1, p. 82.
110 CDI, 2, no. 2305.
111 CIPM, 1, no. 767.
1. Alton (and members)
2. Stoke-on-Tern
3. Ludlow
4. Newbold Verdon
5. Lutterworth
6. Cotesbach
7. Brandon
8. Flecknoe
9. Weobley
10. Ewias Lacy
11. Hethe
12. Farnham Royal
13. Wilsford
14. Stoke Farthing

3.1 Distribution of de Verdun demesne manors, 1274-1327
Ellastone and, later, Stanton. Alton with its Staffordshire members was also by far the most valuable of the de Verdun's manors in England and the march.\textsuperscript{114} This also helped to explain why Alton and its members should have been retained in demesne, even if many of its more distant outliers in both Staffordshire and Leicestershire were leased or granted out usually for rents or military service.

Another, albeit more widely scattered, group of manors can be found around the castle at Brandon. Here, though, the choice of which manors to retain in demesne may have been made, at least partly, for Norman de Verdun rather than by him. A castle was already established at Brandon by the time that Norman gained possession of the manors in the 1130's, and it was consequently the natural focus for the estates which lay in Warwickshire and southern Leicestershire, many of which had already been granted out by Geoffrey de Clinton to his own tenants, reducing Norman de Verdun's freedom of action still further. The same is also true of the old de Lacy demesne manors at Weobley, Ludlow, Ewias Lacy, Duleek, Kells, Lough Sewdy and so on. Here, the de Verduns simply inherited established castles and manors with a strong, and sometimes long, tradition as local centres of lordship. Gerald of Wales, writing of events in 1173, provides an illustration of the point. He writes that "the castles of Meath, namely Trim and Duleek, which shortly before this had been destroyed and abandoned by their castellan Hugh Tyrell, were now repaired and restored to their former condition."\textsuperscript{115} Even in the 1170's, therefore, Duleek was a centre of lordship in Meath. Finally, Dundalk may have become the centre of the de Verduns' lordship in Ireland because of the Irish traditions of that site, which centred on Cu Chulainn and the dun there, as much as on account of the same dun providing a ready made motte, or its position at a river crossing.

Such factors were probably enough to ensure that these manors would remain in demesne, but it is quite possible that their position was bolstered (or had even come about in the first place) because of the communications they offered with other parts of the honour. The manors at Incheleffer, Moydow and Athleague were kept in demesne perhaps partly because of the opportunities they offered for exploiting any further advances which were made at the expense of the Irish of Roscommon and Longford, but more probably because they formed a string of

\textsuperscript{114} PRO, C133/7/1.
manors connecting Lough Sewdy to Athleague with its bridge across the Shannon. It may well be that John de Verdun obtained Stoke-on-Tern from Hugh de Say by exchange because it provided a crucial stepping-stone, linking his estates in Staffordshire with his recently acquired possessions in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The same thinking might also have led to the retention of relatively isolated manors such as Newbold Verdon in Leicestershire, Hethe in Oxfordshire and Farnham Royal in Buckinghamshire. That at least some of these manors could have acted as staging posts for the de Verduns' travels across their estates is suggested by the distances between the manors. It is about twenty-seven miles, as the crow flies, from Hethe to Flecknoe and eleven miles from Flecknoe to Brandon. Going north from Brandon a similar pattern can be seen. Brandon to Lutterworth is a journey of ten miles. Lutterworth to Newbold Verdon is some fourteen miles. From Newbold Verdon, the de Verdun lords might have expected hospitality from the nuns of Grace Dieu, whose house was established on the de Verduns' erstwhile demesne manor at Belton, some eleven miles distant. From there it was a hard, but unexceptional, twenty-eight miles ride to Alton itself. Even the thirty-plus miles from Farnham Royal to Hethe was traversable in a day, although the prospect of riding the fifty or so miles from Hethe to Wilsford, the most northerly of the two Wiltshire manors, must have been somewhat daunting and it is likely that this journey at least was broken en route.

Additionally, Farnham Royal, and possibly Hethe too, may have been kept in demesne because they provided bases conveniently close to Windsor or Oxford respectively. Indeed, proximity to royal centres might also explain why Stoke Farthing and Wilsford were retained in demesne - they were both located a few miles from the royal palace at Clarendon. The importance of the palace in Henry III's reign is evidenced by his expenditure of between £4-5,000 on additions and reconstructions made to its buildings, and it is clear that both Edward I and II continued to use and repair the place. Indeed in 1317, the year after Theobald II's death, Edward II held a parliament here.

Most of the de Verduns' English demesne manors, especially those which provided stepping stones from one group of estates to another, had what is

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116 Rot Hundredorum, 2, pp. 55-6. The inquisition made on John de Verdun's death also mentions this exchange.

described in the inquisitions as a "capital messuage", or manor house, where, presumably, the de Verduns' would reside while staying at the manor. These manor houses were generally surrounded by a curtilage and sometimes had associated dovecots and fishponds, all of which would have provided at least some of the consumables required by the de Verduns and their household when they were present. At the hubs of their various lordships, at Alton, Brandon, Ewias Lacy and Weobley, however, the de Verdun lords would have resided in their castles along with their families and officials. The history of these castles while they were under de Verdun ownership, so far as it is known, has been recounted at length above. Although Brandon seems to have been a favoured residence of Nicholas de Verdun, who built the keep there, it apparently passed out of favour in the later thirteenth century and its fate was sealed by the destruction visited upon it in 1266, from which it never recovered. Alton, however, which had also suffered in the Barons' Wars, clearly remained a favourite residence as it was rebuilt and upgraded afterwards. A twin-towered gate house was added to the circuit of the walls and it has been suggested that the living accommodation was redesigned to echo that at Ludlow with which the de Verduns would have been familiar after 1242. That Alton remained the preferred residence is also suggested by the fact that both Theobald I and Theobald II de Verdun died there, as did Theobald II's first wife, Matilda Mortimer.¹¹⁸

The situation was different in Ireland, a contrast undoubtedly due to the insecure conditions which saw the beginnings of all the manors there. With the exceptions of Newtown Dundalk and Haggardstown, all the de Verduns' demesne manors possessed castles, even if - as in the case of Duleek and Lough Sewdy - the family did not retain any demesne land in the manors themselves. Those at Castletown Dundalk and Castleroche were of masonry construction, the former being upgraded in the thirteenth century and the latter being stone from its foundation in the years immediately before 1236. The form of the castle at Duleek, of which no trace now survives, is uncertain. There was a motte on the site, but it is not known if there was an attendant bailey or whether the castle was rebuilt in stone before 1316, although it seems likely that it would have been. The same cannot be said for the castles in the lordship of Lough Sewdy. Although the earthworks of a fine motte-and-bailey castle remain standing over the waters of Lough Sewdy itself, nothing at all survives of the neighbouring castles at Incheleffer, Moydow and Athleague. It is quite possible that these frontier castles were never rebuilt in stone.

¹¹⁸ Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1309, 1312, 1316, fos. 79v.-80.
especially the one at Moydow which was only occupied for thirty-four years (1261-1295). If these castles did remain earth-and-timber fortifications, their de Verdun lords - even if they did see their estates in England, Wales and Ireland as a unified whole - must have been uncomfortably aware of the differences between the Anglo-Norman core and periphery.

The economy of the demesne manors: The demesne land.

The de Verduns did not have demesne land in every one of their demesne manors. In England in 1274, for example, land was held in demesne in only three of the ten demesne manors (all of which were strictly outliers of Alton) in Staffordshire, at Alton itself, Wootton and Stanton - a pattern which is commonly found on manors with detached berewicks like Alton in both Staffordshire and neighbouring Derbyshire. Equally, nothing at all appears to have been retained in demesne in the manors of Duleek or Lough Sewdy apart from the castles. All the land there seems to have been rented out to the burgesses and free tenants, although there were 1,020 acres directly held by the de Verduns in various unidentified places across the lordship of Duleek and more still in the other demesne manors which were located within the lordship of Lough Sewdy.

Where the de Verduns did hold demesne land, it usually made up a smaller area of the manor than that held by the resident free tenants, villeins and cottars. For example, in Brandon, according to the hundred rolls of 1279-80, there were 280 acres (41%) in lordship, along with a park a league (three miles) in length. This stands against 405 acres (59% of the cultivated area of the manor) held by free tenants and villeins. According to the extent of 1309, there were at least 360 acres (90%) in villeinage in Cotesbach at that time and only 40 acres (10%) in demesne. At the same date there were 293 acres (12.7%) in demesne at Ewias Lacy against the 2,000 acres (87.2%) and 100 burgages held by the various tenants in the same manor. A few further illustrations could be provided from the inquisitions, but these examples provide a representative sample. Additionally, the partition gives some indication of the situation in Ireland. At Castleroche in 1332 there were 185 acres (49%) in demesne and 193 acres (51%) in the hands of the burgesses and

119 ALC, 1, p. 441.
free tenants. In Castletown Dundalk, the original de Verdun caput in Uriel, there were 194 acres (35%) in demesne and 360 acres (65%) held in free burgage. Two general points can be noted here. The first is the lack of any consistency in the area of the demesne land or the percentage of the manor it represents, which is typical of the picture widely reflected in both Domesday Book and later extents. The second is that "if the well balanced manor was one with a preponderance of tenant land," then the majority of the de Verduns' demesne manors, along with those belonging to the prior and monks of Westminster abbey, were well organised.

Well balanced demesne manors are not something that can be found in the de Verduns' lands in the present county Longford, however. In 1332 there were 1,680 acres in demesne at Incheleffer, 1,920 acres at Moydow, 960 acres at Athleague, 2,160 at Ballyleague across the Shannon in county Roscommon and 840 acres at Killinlee. The partition makes no mention of any rents being paid here and, indeed, states that there were no tenants on most, if not all, of the manors with the result that the land was worthless. This statement becomes "a commonplace in documents from the 1320's onwards" but nonetheless the partition implies that there had been tenants on these manors at an earlier period by giving the values current during the previous time of peace. When the depopulation occurred is unknown. It could have been as early as 1284 or 1295 when Athleague and Moydow were attacked by the O'Farrells, 1314 when the famine hit or 1315 when the Bruce invasion followed. That the manors were so large can be explained when considering that these were on the frontier and would have been, like parishes, large before settlement whittled them down. That the manors in Dundalk should have been so much smaller, then, is an indication of the extent of Anglo-Norman settlement that had taken place there by the first decades of the fourteenth century.

Although the de Verduns' retained only a minority share of their land in demesne in a majority of their demesne manors, the amount of demesne land retained in individual manors seems to have been substantial in comparison to that retained by other lords in the same counties. The 720 acres of demesne land at Alton in 1274 (or 610 acres in 1327), for example, compare favourably even with the "large

124 Assuming one carucate to be 120 acres.
"demesne" of the earl of Lancaster at Uttoxeter which covered 420 acres, or the same earl's demesne at Tutbury and Rollaston of 334 acres. Indeed, "most of those [demesnes] described in the late-13th- and early-14th-century [Staffordshire] inquisitions were of two carucates or less."\textsuperscript{125} In Leicestershire few landowners possessed more than four or five demesne manors and the de Verduns, even with under 100 acres in total in demesne in their three demesne manors in the county in 1309, still retained more land than most in their own hands.\textsuperscript{126} This is not so much the case in Ireland, and especially in Uriel. On average about 300 acres were retained in demesne on a demesne manor in Ireland, although there were obviously great variations between manors. At Cloncurry in county Kildare in 1304, for example, there were 125.5 acres in demesne, while at Tooloooban in Galway in 1333 there were 570 acres so held.\textsuperscript{127} The 185 acres in demesne at Castleroche and the 194 acres at Castletown Dundalk, then, were on the small side, although not especially so.

It seems from the figures provided in the three inquisitions post mortem of 1274, 1309 and 1316 that the amount of demesne land - especially arable demesne land - diminished over time. Table 3.3 below illustrates this process at Alton, Wootton and some of the other de Verdun manors using the figures provided by these three inquisitions. They suggest that the demesne at Alton was reduced from 720 acres to 206 acres between 1274 and 1316 and that the extent of the demesne land at Cotesbach dropped drastically from 240 acres in 1274 to nothing at all by 1316. These same inquisitions reveal a consequent fall in the revenue produced by these lands as illustrated in Table 3.4.

How should these statistics be interpreted? It is possible, and perhaps most likely, that these figures are largely the result of the inquisitions being badly made. This is suggested by the complaint made by Bartholomew Burghersh and his wife in 1320 which states that rents and 200 acres of arable land in Alton and its members had been omitted from the 1316 survey.\textsuperscript{128} A new extent was made in 1327 as a result of this and other complaints, and the resulting statistics have been included in tables 3.3 and 3.4 above. In two of the four manors covered by this inquisition

\textsuperscript{125} VCH, Staffordshire, 6, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{128} WS, vol 1911, pp. 342-3.
these new figures suggest that while the amount of demesne land may have fallen, it had not fallen as dramatically as the 1316 inquisition recorded. In the remaining two cases, it would seem that the amount of demesne land had actually risen again. Nonetheless, the amount of demesne land still showed an overall fall on its 1274 levels, so that badly made inquisitions probably do not provide a complete answer to this problem.

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<td>610 acres &amp; park</td>
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<td>480 acres</td>
<td>100 acres</td>
<td>57 acres</td>
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<td>110 acres &amp; park</td>
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<td>Farnham</td>
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<td>563 acres</td>
<td>303 acres</td>
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<td>Hethe</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84 acres</td>
<td>43 acres</td>
<td>92 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weobley</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>373 acres</td>
<td>240 acres</td>
<td>290 acres</td>
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Table 3.3. Changes in demesne land on some demesne manors, 1274-1316.

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<td>£2</td>
<td>£6</td>
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<td>Cotesbach</td>
<td>£4</td>
<td>£2</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>£2 10s.</td>
<td>£0 14s. 3d.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutterworth</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>£1 14s. 6d.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>£29  7s. 5d.</td>
<td>£1 13s. 4d.</td>
<td>£1 13s. 4d.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>£0 13s. 4d.</td>
<td>£0 10s.</td>
<td>£1 15s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>£2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilsford</td>
<td>£1 13s. 4d.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>£1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlow</td>
<td>£0 7s. 8d.</td>
<td>£0 3s. 4d.</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke-on-Tern</td>
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<td>£0 10s.</td>
<td>£2</td>
<td>£3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weobley</td>
<td>£4</td>
<td>£3 15s.</td>
<td>£4</td>
<td>£4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewias Lacy</td>
<td>£0 14s. 7d.</td>
<td>£1 13s. 4d.</td>
<td>£0 10s.</td>
<td>£0 10s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£79  3s. 0d.</td>
<td>£20 8s. 4d.</td>
<td>£19 15s. 5d.</td>
<td>£17 18s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4. Profit from the arable demesne land in England and Wales 1274-1327.\(^{129}\)

\(^{129}\) The value of the demesne land has been calculated by multiplying the carucatage or acreage stated to be in demesne by the value given to those acres. Values are given "per year" so it has therefore been assumed that these sums were produced every year. At worst, this will make the yearly values a little too high. Their relationship with each other is not likely to be too drastically affected.
Two other reasons for the falling area of the de Verduns' demesne can be put forward, although there is no way of knowing which, if either, of them were the true cause of it. It is possible that this fall can be attributed to a perceived trend amongst landlords which developed in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, it is argued, landlords responded to the problems of inflation and a rising population by directly exploiting their own lands, thus profiting from high prices and an abundant supply of labour. By the last decades of the century, however, "there are signs that... some landlords were turning back towards a system in which rents predominated, rather than continuing to rely on the riskier technique of direct management." The estate managers of the bishop of Winchester, for example, pared his demesne down from 13,000 acres in 1269 to under 10,000 in 1310 and the rents now received stopped the revenue fluctuating unpredictably as it had done previously when reliant on grain prices.

Evidence does exist to show that the two Theobald de Verduns leased out small amounts of their property to other landholders and magnates. In May 1274 Theobald I leased "for one year for 56 marks..... to Ralph le Pedlir of Bradford the water and wind mills of Lutterworth with the fisheries." In 1313 Theobald II leased his share of the manor of Bisley to Hugh Despencer for three years and by 1316 the manor of Flecknoe, previously held in demesne, had been farmed out for 40s. per year. Whether these examples can be taken as evidence of a more general trend to lease out lands, which would explain the fall in demesne land on the de Verduns' estates, is, however, unclear. As was mentioned in chapter two above, it is possible that Theobald I leased his mills because he needed money quickly, while Theobald II may well have been coerced to lease Bisley to Despencer given his, and especially his son's, influence at court at that time. Apart from the leasing of Flecknoe, then, there is no evidence that unambiguously suggests a change in the way the de Verduns ran their estates.

Secondly, the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries were a time of increasing poverty amongst tenants - about which more later - and it is possible that this situation had a considerable effect on the area of the de Verduns' demesne land. This is because it seems that "what lies behind the valuation [of the demesne

130 M. Prestwich, The Three Edwards, p. 246
132 BL, Campbell Charter vi.4.
133 BL, Harley Charter 57.C.25; PRO, C134/56/1.
land] is not the crops which the lord could obtain, but the rent which he might expect.”¹³⁴ Some support for the argument that the demesne land was tenanted might be found in the extent of the manor of Ardmayle in county Tipperary, where in 1335 there were 100 acres of demesne arable lying waste "because now no-one has dared to lease them.”¹³⁵ Equally, and to return to the theme of poverty amongst the tenants, the extent of Alton made in 1339 states that 240 acres of demesne land there lay uncultivated because it could not be leased and the herbage could not be sold because pasture was abundant and the tenants were poor and destitute.¹³⁶ If the inquisitions made up until 1327 were only concerned to record the amount of cultivated - and therefore profitable - land in demesne, it may be that a lack of tenants willing or able to rent it caused the apparent fall in its extent. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to provide any more satisfactory answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1194</th>
<th>1274</th>
<th>1309</th>
<th>1316</th>
<th>1327</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arable</td>
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<td>17.9%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents of assize</td>
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<td>59.9%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleas</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5. Breakdown of demesne revenue as a percentage of total value.

There is only one opportunity to compare the figures extracted from the fourquisitions with earlier information. This is provided by the presence of William fitzRichard's account for the lands of Bertram III de Verdun for the six months that they were in his custody in the pipe roll for 1194-5. The organisation of the de Verdun demesne manors, as they appear here, makes an interesting comparison with that of 1274 and later. Only £10 5s. (14.2% of income) was derived from the rents of assize in 1194. Instead the predominant source of income was from the sale of grain from the manors which brought in £40 2s. 11d. (55.8% of the revenue). Although the phrase "rents of assize" was not fixed at this time and "can mean lessees' farms, rents of manorial tenants, or a combination of the two,”¹³⁷ the

¹³⁶ WS, vol 1913, p. 77.
rent to crop sale ratio nevertheless strongly indicates that the de Verdun lands were being directly managed by their lord at this time.

Also notable in the account of 1194 is the presence of a significant amount of pastoral farming and stock rearing. Sales of 300 sheep, 40 cows and an unknown number of pigs together accounted for £11 11s. 3d. (16% of income), while the sale of fifteen mares and eight foals fetched 42s. Additionally, the sale of hides and skins amounted to a further 9s. Similarly, the survey of Kirkby in Lincolnshire, made to assess its value for the lay subsidy of 1225, reveals that profits from stock rearing accounted for 49.1% (£3 19s. 6d.) of the manor's recorded value, as against 49.9% (£4 11d.) from arable farming. In contrast, the inquisitions fail to mention any stock on the demesne manors, while the rents derived from the meadows and pasture averaged just 5% of total income in 1274 and 6.1% in 1316. Despite the lack of evidence of stock-rearing in the inquisitions, it is clear that it did take place on at least some of the de Verduns' demesne manors at the end of the thirteenth century. The dower agreement Theobald I made with Alianor, John's widow, in 1275 mentions "the swans and the foals of the stud and the swine" of the manors of Brandon, Cotesbach, Loges and Lutterworth.

It should be noted that the pipe roll account fails to mention any profits made from the sale of the wool that the sheep would have grown. This might have been quite substantial, not only because 300 sheep presumably reflected only a proportion of the total number of sheep owned by Bertram III, but also because the wool produced in the area around Alton, which was probably where most of the sheep were kept, was particularly good - at least for Staffordshire. The Italian merchant Pegalotti, writing in the late thirteenth century, stated that the wool from Bertram III's nearby Cistercian foundation at Croxden was worth between 11 and 21 marks a sack, the highest value for wool from Staffordshire and not so far short of the 28 marks a sack fetched by the very best of English wool - that produced by Tintern abbey near Chepstow.

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138 Lay Subsidy Rolls: 1225, 1232, eds. F. A. Cazel and A. P. Cazel, Pipe Roll Society new series, 45 (1983), pp. 23-4. Note that the survey does not record any values for rents from any tenants, so that these percentage values are inflated. This prevents its being used in comparison with the surveys of Alton and the inquisitions, but still reveals the significance of stock-rearing on at least one of the de Verduns' demesne manors at this period.
139 CCR, 1272-9, p. 323.
140 VCH, Staffordshire, 6, p. 9.
The nature of the 1332 partition allows only the simplest of analyses to be undertaken concerning the economic structure of the de Verduns' lordships in Ireland, and gives little indication as to how the situation here was affected by the ravages of the Irish, the famine and the Bruces. The extents found in the partition suggest that in Duleek the economy of the lordship in 1332 centred on the demesne land, with the various rents providing only about a third of the income - a situation entirely at odds with that found in England and the march from the late thirteenth century. Income from the demesne predominated in the lordship of Dundalk too. The overall revenues from the arable and pastoral lands held in demesne here amounted to 53.8% of the total, with rents providing 40.5%.

The case of Newtown Dundalk provides the only exception to this general picture. Here the relatively high value of the burgess rents - most of which were held in dower by Elizabeth de Burgh in 1332 - which make up 72.3% of the recorded income from the manor, suggest that following its foundation around the middle of the thirteenth century Newtown Dundalk developed into a thriving borough. This is a view reinforced by the fact that the pleas and tolls, though not of high value relative to other boroughs, made up a further 14.3% of manorial income despite the fact that the town was burned in 1315 at the very beginning of the Bruce invasions.

<table>
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<th>Name of Lordship</th>
<th>Value of demesne</th>
<th>Value of rents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duleek</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Sewdy</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6. Relative values of demesne land and rents on the de Verdun demesne manors in Ireland in 1332.

Kevin Down, while making the important point that the evidence is insufficient to indicate general trends reliably, has suggested that "it appears from the evidence of inquisitions post mortem that in the thirteenth century large areas of arable land were held in demesne and cultivated by tenants-in-chief... so that by the middle of

141 Note that while the partition provides some figures for the demesne land in the lordship of Lough Sewdy, it provides very few figures for rents accruing from the manors of which it was composed. These percentages are thus likely to be inaccurate.
the century a large surplus was available for export."142 Thus, Henry III and Edward I can both be found importing grain from Ireland to feed their armies in Wales. Indeed, Theobald I de Verdun was himself involved in this activity as in May and June 1282 Theobald's men were given "safe conduct in coming from Ireland with corn and wine and other victuals for the army of Wales."143 This record is also useful in suggesting that Theobald was still farming his demesne rather than letting it out at this time. In general, the aristocracy's demesne lands continued to grow during the second half of the century. On the Bigod manor of Forth, for example, a considerable increase in the arable acreage held in lordship had taken place between 1279, 1288 and 1306.144

It can, therefore, be seen that the economies of the de Verduns' Irish demesne manors, although strikingly different from that found on their English counterparts, do nonetheless conform to the overall pattern found in Ireland in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. There is another point which Down makes which might shed some extra light on why the situation on the de Verdun estates developed in the way it did. He notes that while demesne farming in Ireland probably declined as a result of the famine of 1315-18, just as it did in England, it might also be the case that both the widespread destruction caused by the Bruce invasions and the growing absenteeism of landlords affected the pattern, further encouraging the leasing of estates.

If absenteeism or residency could effect the relative importance of demesne farming in this way, then it is notable that John de Verdun and his son, Theobald I, were frequently present on their Irish lands. Although Theobald II can be found in Ireland only during the period when he was justiciar, he had made his brother Milo the custodian of his Irish lands in 1309, and he and his brother Nicholas seem to have been usually resident on the family's Irish estates. The two brothers also gained the custody of these lands during the minority of Theobald II's heiresses. It is clear from their actions in county Louth, both before and after their rebellion in 1312, that the de Verdun brothers were keen to maintain and indeed promote the strength of their lordship in the area and it may well be the case that the economy of the de Verdun manors in Ireland as it stood in 1332 owed not a little to their

143 Cal of Chancery Rolls, Various, 1277-1326 (London, 1912), pp. 221, 224.
constant presence on the family’s well populated (despite the effects of the Bruce invasion) manors in counties Meath and Louth.

Tenants, tenant land and services.

Mention has been made of the various social groups who were resident on the de Verduns' demesne manors. Generally these are shadowy figures, for while the inquisitions and the partition give the names of the more important free tenants who held manors, or smaller parcels of land, from the de Verduns for rents or knight service, they fail to provide any details about the burgesses, free tenants, villeins and cottars who lived on the demesne manors. In 1274, for example, the presence of villeins on the manors is revealed solely by the record of the income from the rents, and sometimes also the works, of the customary tenants. From this survey it would appear that Alton itself was devoid of villeins, although this was erroneous as in 1281 Theobald de Verdun stated that Robert son of Robert Gaunsel of Alton was his villein, while the survey of 1316 reveals the presence of cottars and labour services. Certainly most demesne manors had a mix of free and unfree tenants, although manors such as Fenton and Bucknall were populated only by free tenants. In 1279-80, for example, the population of Brandon consisted of three free tenants, twenty-five villeins and twelve cottars, that at Cotesbach of six free tenants and thirty-three villeins and that at Lutterworth of six free tenants, twenty-five burgesses and thirty-six villeins, these being the earliest surviving detailed extents of any of the de Verduns' manors.

The 1279-80 survey of Brandon is the only extent to provide the names of the villeins and cottars living on the manor. The twenty-five villeins came from at least fourteen families, with up to three members of the same family holding separate tenements in the manor. All the villeins have Anglo-Norman Christian names such as Roger, William and Henry, but the English descent of at least one family seems to be evidenced by their surname - Godblod. A minority of the other surnames take the form of toponymics. There are two Freseleys, a Frankton, three Godesbeches and two Butlesbys. Frankton is in Warwickshire, not far from both Brandon and Rugby. Butlesby might be Bittesby, located on the border between Leicestershire

145 WS, 6/1, p. 150
146 T. John, The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80, pp. 52-3; Leicestershire, 4/1, pp. 146-7, 247.
and Warwickshire and near to Lutterworth. Trevor John has suggested that Godesbeche is a mistake for Cotesbach\textsuperscript{147} - for which, it should be pointed out, there is no philological evidence - but Freseley cannot be identified. The fact that these villein tenants should have had toponyms that reveal their origins to have been outside Brandon itself suggests that the de Verduns had bought them from neighbouring lords - a practice deplored by both Peter of Blois and Wycliffe\textsuperscript{148} - and possibly, in the case of the Godesbaches, transferred villeins between two of their demesne manors.

Generally, the number of unfree tenants on the de Verduns' demesne manors outstripped that of the free tenants residing there. Aside from the three examples already mentioned, the three free tenants in Cotesbach in 1309 found themselves outnumbered five-to-one by the twelve villeins and three cottars who lived in the same manor, while the four freemen at Stoke Farthing in 1316 shared the manor with sixteen villeins. At Newbold Verdon in the same year, there were nine villeins, three cottars and just one free tenant. In contrast, at Weobley in 1309 only five villeins shared the manor with forty-five free tenants and 164 burgesses.

Where figures are given, the villeins living on these de Verdun manors held either a half or a full virgate of land, which appears to have been the standard allotment across England generally.\textsuperscript{149} The twelve villeins living at Cotesbach in 1309 held a virgate each in 1309, while at Stoke Farthing in 1316 there were 4 virgators and 10 semi-virgators. Each of the twenty-five villeins living at Brandon in 1279-80 held half a virgate. Only Lutterworth provides an exception to this general rule. Here in 1279 the villeins held only a fraction over an acre each.\textsuperscript{150} The cottars on all these manors do not seem to have held lands in them, although those living at Wilsford, unusually, held a third of a virgate. Generally, there is no information about the size of the holdings held by the free tenants in the demesne manors. In Brandon in 1279-80, however, the three free tenants held half a virgate each, the same allotment as the villeins, while in Cotesbach at the same date the free tenants held an average of a virgate and two acres each. In Lutterworth the free tenants were more liberally endowed, sharing sixteen virgates between the six of them.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} T. John, The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80, p. 349.
\textsuperscript{149} F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland, The History of English Law, 1, pp. 364-5.
\textsuperscript{150} Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 247.
\textsuperscript{151} T. John, The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80, p. 53; Leicestershire, 4/1, pp. 146-7, 247.
These lands were held in return for certain services, including labour services. In some cases, such labour services had been commuted to money payments. For example, the 1316 inquisition stated that the villeins of Cotesbach, Newbold Verdon and Lutterworth "do not work." Instead, they simply paid a rent for their land. Labour services had been commuted to money payments on a number of the de Verduns' other demesne manors. In Farley in 1274, for example, the service of the villeins was worth 12d. while in Denstone it was valued at 6d. Regardless of the fact that the number of villeins on these manors is unknown, these totals suggest that the amount of work provided by villein labour had been minimal, as does a calculation of the total income arising from commuted labour services when they can be calculated. In 1274, these payments amounted to only 20d. although by 1327 this had risen to £2 17s. 8.5d.

Often, no mention at all is made in the inquisitions of any labour services owed by the manorial tenants, commuted or otherwise. However, it would be unwise to assume on this basis that the villeins on these manors did not perform any such services for their de Verdun lords. For example, the extent made for Brandon in the inquisition of 1309 states that the customary tenants owed a rent of £4. From this it might be assumed that the villeins there owed no labour services. However, this assumption is qualified by the fact that those villeins who lived on the de Verduns' manor at Brandon appear to have owed both rent and labour services in 1279-80. The twenty-five villeins here "held half a virgate of land from the same Theobald [de Verdun] for 5s." In addition they had to find one man to work for two days each week from 29 June until 1 August. Then from 1 August until 30 September this man was to work for two days in one week and three days in the next. These labour services presumably relate to hay-making and harvesting and so it is not surprising to discover that with one exception the cottars were to find a man to work every Monday for the whole of this same period. It may well be the case that similar services were provided by villeins living on other de Verdun estates which are not illuminated by the 1279-80 evidence and which have not been recorded in the various inquisitions. It is only in those few cases where the

152 PRO, C134/56/1.
153 Compare the situation at, for example, Thorp Edmer in Leicestershire where the works owed by each villein were valued at 5s. per year. (R. H. Hilton, The Development of Some Leicestershire Estates, p. 13 and n. 1.)
154 T. John, The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80, p. 52
155 ibid, p. 53.
inquisitions specifically state that no works were owed, then, that we can be sure this was the case.

In addition to these rents and labour services Nicholas le Feur, one of the cottars at Brandon in 1279-80, held his cottage in return for "four hens and one cock at Christmas for all service."\(^{156}\) There is some late evidence that the villeins in the manor of Alton and some of its members also owed food renders. The 1339 inquisition *post mortem* taken on the death of Thomas de Furnival, who had married Joan, the eldest of Theobald II's heiresses, reveals that in addition to the customary rent the tenants at will in Alton also provided one strike of wheat.\(^{157}\) It seems unlikely that such a food render was instituted by Thomas in his brief tenure of the manor and it is consequently likely to date back to the time when the de Verduns held Alton.

Nor were the customary tenants the only ones to provide food renders on the old de Verdun lands. In 1327, the free tenants at Stramshall provided a food render in the form of two quarters of corn "for their relief of suit of [the de Verduns'] mill forever."\(^{158}\) In 1339 the free tenants at Alton provided one pound and a half and an eighth pound of pepper and one pound of cumin. In Denstone the free tenants rendered three quarters of wheat, in Stanton three strikes of wheat and in Stramshall four and a half quarters of wheat. In Bradley the free tenants paid, in addition to their rent, four horse shoes with clouts.\(^{159}\) Indeed, in one case at least, some free tenants held their lands in return for - admittedly limited - labour services. In 1279-80 the burgesses at Bretford held their lands in return for "making hay with 1 man for 1 day in Paynesmede, marking the wheat of the lord with 2 men and..... doing court at Brandon of three weeks in three weeks."\(^{160}\) More usually, the free tenants paid their rents and - as at Brandon - did suit of court "for all demands."

The free and unfree tenants on the de Verduns' demesne manors also produced revenue for their lords in the form of rents of assize. Once again, figures are scarce, but it seems that the villeins tended to pay relatively greater sums as rent than the free tenants living on the same manor. For example, the freemen of Stoke Farthing

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\(^{156}\) *ibid*, p. 53.

\(^{157}\) *WS*, vol 1913, p. 78.

\(^{158}\) *ibid*, p. 14

\(^{159}\) *ibid*, pp. 78-9.

paid an average of 17.5s. each in 1316 as compared to the 20s. paid by each of the
four virgators. The three free tenants at Cotesbach in 1309 paid 2d. and a pound of
pepper each in 1309 while each villein paid 6s. 8d. for their virgate of land. Finally,
in Newbold Verdon the free tenants paid 1s. each in 1316 while the villeins paid 5s.
each. On the other hand, the free and unfree tenants at Brandon in 1279-80 paid
the same pecuniary rent for their half virgates.

As was the case with the income from the demesne land, the inquisitions reveal
that although the rents paid for alienated manors remained static, or even
increased, the overall income from the rents of assize of both free and unfree
tenants decreased in value on two thirds of the de Verduns' demesne manors
between 1274 or 1309 and 1316 (Table 3.8 below). Although the inconsistencies in
presentation in the extents allow for few opportunities to examine the source of
these rents, the decrease in revenue does not seem to have originated in any one
section of the manorial community. There was a decline in villein rents at
Cotesbach where the twelve villeins paid £4 in 1309 and the eleven villeins only £2
5s. in 1316, although the rents paid by the three free tenants here increased from
2d. each to 4d. each in the same period. At Ludlow in both 1309 and 1316 the only
recorded rents came from burgesses, so that it is likely that the same was true in
1274. In this case, the burgess rents collected here dropped from £10 1s. in 1274
to £5 in 1309 and to £4 2s. 6d. in 1316.

The evidence does not suggest that this fall in revenue should be attributed to the
famine of 1316, with its effects on population and prices, as it is already apparent
in the inquisition taken in 1309. In this case, the fall in the value of the rents of
assize collected by the de Verduns may well be symptomatic of the increasing
poverty of the thirteenth-century peasant. May's analyses of the manor court rolls
of Winchester cathedral priory and those of the abbey of Bec suggest that poverty,
while generally on the rise throughout the thirteenth century, seems to have
accelerated from the 1280's and reached a peak in the first decade of the fourteenth
century. Such figures fit well with the evidence found in the de Verdun
inquisitions post mortem.

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161 A. N. May, 'An Index of Thirteenth-Century Peasant Impoverishment? Manor Court Fines',
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>£12 10s.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>£ 4 19s. 4d.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlow</td>
<td>£10 10s.</td>
<td>£ 5</td>
<td>£ 4 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£ 9 10s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke-on-Tern</td>
<td>£ 3 16s.</td>
<td>£ 4 4s. 9d.</td>
<td>£ 3 0s. 6d.</td>
<td>£16 8s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weobley</td>
<td>£15 4s.</td>
<td>£23 0s. 1d.</td>
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<td>£22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewias Lacy</td>
<td>£21</td>
<td>£19 16s. 5d.</td>
<td>£16 15s.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>£175 11s. 11d.</td>
<td>£102 12s. 2d.</td>
<td>£111 13s. 2d.</td>
<td>£83 11s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7. Income from the rents and rents of assize of manorial tenants in England and Wales 1274-1327.

That poverty was to blame for a fall in population and a consequent fall in rents on the de Verduns' demesne manors is supported by near contemporary evidence from the same or nearby manors. By 1322 fifty-eight messuages, 1,800 acres of arable, forty cottages, fourteen and a half virgates, twenty bovates and thirty-seven acres of meadow were listed as derelict in Uttoxeter, Barton, Rolleston and Marchington in Staffordshire. "The accountants offered lengthy explanations for the decline in rent income. The tenants had left, it was declared, both because of their poverty and because of the poor quality of the land." Equally, the extent made on the death of Thomas de Furnival in 1339 states that land at Alton, Stanton and Bradley was lying waste because of its poor condition and due to the poverty and destitution of the tenants.

Like the various inquisitions, the partition of 1332 reveals the presence of burgesses and free tenants on the de Verduns' Irish estates. Notably, however, no mention is made of any unfree tenants (betaghs) on the family's Irish demesne manors, despite the fact that it is clear from one plea that Nicholas de Netterville had betaghs on his manor of Dowth (county Meath) which he held from the de

163 *WS*, vol 1913, pp. 77, 79.
Verduns. Betaghfs were the native Irish residents of lands which had been taken over by the Anglo-Normans. When this occurred, they found themselves demoted in status from free commoners to unfree tenants - the equivalent of the villein in England. The betaghfs, and indeed the Irish part of the population as a whole, were unevenly spread across the Anglo-Norman area of occupation as Otway-Ruthven has shown from examining inquisitions contained in the Red Book of Ormond. In Brun there were perhaps thirty-one Irish to nine English tenants, at Cloncurry in Kildare 191 English to 111 Irish, while in some manors no betaghfs and only very few Irish tenants can be found at all, as was the case for Moycarkey, Beakstown and Shyanein in county Tipperary.

The apparent absence of betaghfs on the de Verdun demesne manors meant that there was no unfree population from whom to demand labour services. Nor does the partition suggest that any of the free tenants owed any labour services - something which would fit into the wider trend. "In Ireland the free tenants, who were predominantly English settlers, paid only fixed money rents, and even when demesnes were big, labour services were not an important part of the manorial economy.... It seems as if lords were prepared to sacrifice direct claims on their tenants' labour in order to encourage settlement." Indeed, Empey noticed that even betagh labour services were "generally" commuted to rents despite the emphasis on demesne cereal production. He opined that "the balance between exceptionally high commutation rents and cheap labour may have been decisively in favour of the lord. Besides, by the end of the thirteenth century there may have been a sufficient supply of immigrant labour available in the form of small free tenants and cottiers." In support of this, Otway-Ruthven noted in her History of Medieval Ireland that where the lord cultivated his own demesne, as on the Christ Church estates, the labour was probably hired as it was in England. Thus at Clonkeen in 1344, 471 out of 562 days reaping were done by labourers hired for the day as opposed to only 91 days work being done by customary labour. On the Bigod manors of Ballysax and Forth, hired labour was mainly responsible for

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164 CJIRI, 2, p. 175.
the harvests with a considerable contribution from *famuli* of Forth. Given the apparent lack of *betaghs*, the same reliance on hired labour was presumably true of the de Verduns' Irish demesne manors.

Bearing in mind the absence of *betaghs*, it would seem that when reference is made to the Irishmen of Theobald de Verdun in 1284 and 1295, and when in January 1306 Doneghuth O'Reilly and Gilpatrick McMahon are each specifically called a "faithful man" of Theobald de Verdun, such notes do not refer to mere *betaghs*. That these Irishmen were called Theobald's was probably not the result of any unfree status, but because they had some tenurial or client connection with the de Verduns. This is certainly the case with McMahon whose family owed the de Verduns' rents for their lands in Uriel, just as the O'Farrells - who were responsible for the death of Nicholas de Verdun in 1271 as well as the destruction of the castles at Athleague and Moydow - owed rents for their lands in county Longford. The smallest of the rents owed by Irish chiefs amounted to only 3s.4d. per year and was paid by *O'Thegan*, McLoirch and McColgyn, "who are called chiefs, who [hold] their lands among the woods of the same castle (Castleroche) by this service." More substantial rents amounting, according to the partition, to £5 each were owed by O'Hanlon and McMahon, who both also owed service as satellites to the earls of Ulster. It is possible that the sums were in reality higher as it is unknown if any of these rents were assigned to Elizabeth de Burgh as dower. As it stands, the total of £10 3s. 4d. in rents owed by these Irishmen equates to 20.4% of the recorded total regular revenue of the de Verduns' estates in Uriel (including Ferrard).

In the sections concerning the lordship of Lough Sewdy, the partition records that the O'Farrells owed £40 for lands in Muinter anghaile (Annaly), Mounckeanwill (probably another corruption of Muinter anghaile) and 'Clanawle', identified as Clann amhlaibh ui fearghail in the barony of Moydow. There was a further £10 owed by the O'Quinns from Montyrgilgaun and a rent of 100 squirrel skins, 24 cows and 60 ells of linen cloth from Clanarwy. It is notable, as Otway-Ruthven

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170 *CJRI*, 2, pp. 175-6.
172 A. J. Otway Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon Lands', *PRIA*, 66, section C (1968), p. 413. This same article discusses the origins of these rents at length and identifies the areas to which they relate.
pointed out, that although the partition states that the demesne manors in Longford were worth nothing it does not suggest that these rents were unobtainable - although given the hostilities between de Verduns and O'Farrells it is likely that they usually were. Nonetheless, considered altogether these rents reveal that the de Verduns had gained or inherited claims over the neighbouring native kingdoms across their northern borders.

*Boroughs and burgesses.*

The extents in both the inquisitions and the partition note the presence of burgesses on a number of the de Verduns' demesne manors. The presence of such a group, or at least of land held in burgage, is generally taken as evidence of the presence of a borough in the manor. Often, indeed, the "pettiest manorial borough...had little but burgage tenure to mark it off from the ordinary rural manor with a market." Burgesses, or lands held in burgage, were present at Castletown Dundalk, Newtown Dundalk, Castleroche, Duleek and Lough Sewdy in Ireland in 1332, at Ludlow from 1274, Lutterworth in 1279 and at Weobley and Ewias Lacy in 1309. When they are given, numbers of burgesses or burgages range from the twenty-five burgesses at Lutterworth and the fifty burgesses forming part of the de Verduns' moiety of Ludlow, to the hundred burgesses at Ewias Lacy and Duleek and the 164 burgesses at Weobley. There were, in addition, eighty messuages held in burgage at Castletown Dundalk. The number of burgesses is not always given but as most burgesses paid a shilling per plot it is possible to estimate the numbers of (occupied) burgages from burgess rents, as Graham has successfully shown for Carrick-on-Slaney and Carlow. Thus the 36s. 11d. rent from the burgesses of Lough Sewdy might suggest that there were thirty-seven occupied burgages there, while the £7 rent from Newtown Dundalk suggests 140 occupied burgage plots. Equally, the 40s. rent from the burgesses at Alton found in the extent for 1316 suggests that there might have been forty occupied burgages there at that date.

Comparisons are probably more helpful than the bare figures in attempting to grasp the relative size of these boroughs. The de Verduns' boroughs were dwarfed by towns such as Kilkenny or Youghal which had 1,600-1,700 and 1,200 burgesses

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175 PRO, C134/56/1; WS, vol 1911, p. 334.
respectively, although they do compare well with boroughs such as Abergavenny which had 230 burgesses in 1256-7\textsuperscript{176} and with Carmarthen or Cardigan which had 167 burgages and 130 burgages respectively in 1268.\textsuperscript{177} In 1252, Stratford-upon-Avon had only forty-seven burgesses, while Henley in Arden had sixty-nine in 1296.\textsuperscript{178}

Almost nothing is known about any of the de Verduns' boroughs. Some were inherited. Ludlow was a Lacy foundation as was Ewias Lacy where a burgage is mentioned in c.1234.\textsuperscript{179} The same is probably true of Duleek and Lough Sewdy in Meath. Weobley, on the other hand, may have been a de Verdun foundation as it fails to appear as a borough until it was represented as such on the eyre roll of 1255. It was subsequently listed as a parliamentary borough in 1295.\textsuperscript{180} Bretford, a mile or two away from the castle at Brandon, is also first mentioned as a borough late in the thirteenth century - in the hundred rolls of 1279 - and so may have been another of the de Verduns' thirteenth century town foundations. At that date there were nineteen burgesses holding thirty-one burgages for 2s. and the services mentioned above.\textsuperscript{181}

The only certain de Verdun borough foundation in England was at Alton, the caput of the English honour. The borough here had been founded by c.1239 as an agreement made between the burgesses of Alton and the abbot and convent of Croxden at about this date survives in the Staffordshire Record Office. This established that the burgesses' oxen were permitted to graze on Ringehay and in Longhurst wood at certain times of the year in return for a rent of 5s. and an agreement not to buy oxen from any other market than Alton. The abbey, in return, covenanted not to build a sheep-fold on the burgesses' land.\textsuperscript{182} The agreement comes complete with the pear-shaped municipal seal which bears a turretted gatehouse design. The 1274 inquisition goes on to provide further evidence of Alton's borough status by noting the existence of the portmanmoot there. It is doubtful whether the de Verdun founder ever expected the borough to grow to any

\textsuperscript{176} A. J. Roderick and W. Rees, The Lordships of Abergavenny, Grosmont, Skenfrith, Whitecastle and Monmouth Accounts of the Ministers for the Year 1256-7, South Wales and Monmouth Record Society, 2 (1950), p. 73.
\textsuperscript{177} R. A. Griffiths, Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales (Stroud, 1994), pp. 180, 286.
\textsuperscript{179} M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, English Medieval Boroughs, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{180} ibid, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{181} T. John, The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80, pp. 54-5.
\textsuperscript{182} Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/1.
size, although Alton's location above the Churnet valley might have held out possibilities of success, especially as nearby Uttoxeter was not founded until 1252.\textsuperscript{183}

Although no foundation charter survives there are some clues as to the limitations on the borough's independence from de Verdun control. Alton appears to be a typical example of the British seigniorial borough. Tait noted that suit to the lord's mills and ovens were usually retained, although often with some kind of alleviation\textsuperscript{184} and this was apparently true for Alton, as the toll of the oven and mills appear in the extent for 1316. Tait also noted that the portmanmoot was seldom free of seigniorial control, being presided over by the lord's bailiff or steward and with the lord taking all or a part of the profits of justice. In this respect it is notable that the 1274 inquisition records income from the portmanmoot but no separate manorial court, suggesting that the two were identical. Furthermore, the witness list of the burgesses' agreement with Croxden abbey begins with Roger Gernon, Roesia de Verdun's seneschal, whose name is followed by men who could well have been members of Roesia's court such as William of Ipstones, Robert of Denstone and William of Audley, again suggesting seigniorial supervision.

Graham noted, when attempting to examine the boroughs of medieval Ireland, that "some areas are particularly poorly documented..., especially Meath and Louth, in which it is possible to do no more than identify the boroughs."\textsuperscript{185} This is certainly true for the de Verdun boroughs of Duleek and Lough Sewdy although something more can be said of the borough of Dundalk. The town must have been founded before 1190 as a charter of Bertram III, which cannot be later than this year, includes a grant of burgages in Dundalk to the church of St John the Baptist there.\textsuperscript{186} The borough of Castletown Dundalk, then, was in existence from the very earliest days of the Anglo-Norman lordship. By the mid-thirteenth century a new town had been established a little nearer to the coast and out of the shadow of the castle. Roesia de Verdun had established a friary there - the tower of which alone survives - by 1246 which gives perhaps the earliest certain date for this borough's

\textsuperscript{183} M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, English Medieval Boroughs, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{184} A. Ballard and J. Tait, British Borough Charters 1216-1307, p. lxxxi.
existence.\(^{187}\) This, the Newtown Dundalk of the partition and the present day town of Dundalk, developed into a successful port, although still well out of the league of nearby Drogheda. It is likely that exports consisted chiefly of skins, hides, fish and linen which both Dublin and Drogheda exported to Chester or Liverpool.\(^{188}\) It is likely that Dundalk too exported to these same ports, especially Chester which would have provided the most likely crossing point from the de Verduns' Staffordshire and Shropshire estates. It is also known that in 1303-4 a total of eighteen Irish ships, including one from Dundalk and one from Dublin, carried out 1,648 tuns of wine from Bordeaux, the figures being provided by the Bordeaux wine customs. The port was thus involved in the wine trade, although perhaps only occasionally as there is no evidence for any such export in 1307-8 to Dundalk or Dublin, although one ship did come from Drogheda.\(^{189}\)

Markets were established in some of these boroughs. In England they were found at Bretford in 1279 and at Ewias Lacy, Weobley and Alton in 1309 or 1316. There was also a thriving market at Lutterworth by 1316, although the inquisitions fail to mention either the burgesses or burgages there which only appear in the survey of 1279. In 1309 income from the tolls of these markets amounted to a total of £18, with £12 of this coming from the market at Weobley alone. In 1316 this figure had fallen to £17 13s.4d., simply because the tolls of the market at Weobley were then valued at only £10. The Irish boroughs brought in far less. Tolls at Castleroche amounted to 16d. plus a cart or cattle toll amounting to 15s.7d. The pleas and tolls of Castletown Dundalk came to 3s.4d. as did those of Stachmanasran. Those of Newtown Dundalk amounted to one mark. No figure was recorded for the tolls from Duleek in 1332, but the tolls and pleas from Lough Sewdy were valued at 2 marks.

Apart from the mills and associated fisheries found in these boroughs, and indeed in other demesne manors such as Newbold Verdun and Brandon, there is no evidence in the inquisitions or partition of any industry on any of the de Verduns' demesne manors, with the exception of a salt-works (salinetum) recorded in Weobley in 1274 but not thereafter. Bertram III de Verdun had also once held a share in the salt-works at Middlewich in Cheshire, but he had granted this to

Croxden abbey by c.1180. Perhaps this indicates a lack of interest on the part of the de Verduns in developing industry on their lands, although this seems unlikely given the years of financial crisis that Theobald I faced. In this case, it is rather unfortunate that the de Verduns failed to discover the iron ore around their caput at Alton, which resources were being exploited in 1591 when the dowager countess of Shrewsbury offered to lease the ironworks and woods at Oakamoor and Alton to Sir Francis Willoughby. 190

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This chapter, then, has examined the franchises the de Verduns held with their lands and has discovered a tremendous variation across their estates from the near independent liberty of Ewias Lacy and the regalian rights of the manor of Farnham Royal to simply the administration of hundredal justice in Alton and elsewhere in the Midlands. The regular revenues generated by these franchises and by the de Verduns' feudal rights in general were not particularly great - only 10.5% in 1274 and 4.6% in 1316 of their total regular income. It seems that the sum total of this regular income had itself become insufficient by the late 1270's. Certainly it was not keeping pace with Theobald de Verdun's expenditure on building, jewels and military campaigns, or with the financial demands being made on him by the king. At this time of high expenditure, the de Verduns' impecuniousness was heightened by an apparent fall in the revenues produced by the demesne land, by the rents of assize and by pleas. Why the income produced by the demesne land and rents were falling in Ireland is clear. It was due to a combination of Gaelic resurgence and the Bruce invasion. Why it happened in England is less obvious, although all the evidence points to the increasing poverty of the de Verduns' manorial tenants as being the root cause of the problem. Whatever the reason for the de Verduns' financial worries, they certainly make it easier to understand why Theobald II would risk the king's wrath by marrying Elizabeth de Burgh in 1315. The revenues produced by her third of the de Clare inheritance would have come in very handy indeed.

"Like the estates which largely supported them," writes Maddicott, "a magnate's followers provided one of the springs of his power. They helped him to exploit his resources, landed and military, to maintain a curia for purposes both social and judicial, and to exercise the good lordship on which his standing in the local community and in the community of the realm partly depended."1 The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the household - the men who acted as officers in the de Verduns' administration and so most actively helped them exploit their landed resources - to establish the identities and relationships of those who attended the de Verduns' courts and to examine the extent to which tenurial or local links were forged or broken as the family gained both estates and power in England, Ireland and Wales.

The Household.

A magnate did not manage his estates himself. He required administrators to help him look after his castles, collect his rents and keep an account of his expenses. Not all of these officials would have always resided with their lord but, nonetheless, it is convenient to consider the highest-ranking officials - such as the steward, constable and chamberlain - as the men who formed the de Verduns' household. Such titled officials begin appearing in the households of members of the Norman aristocracy from the middle of the eleventh century. Thus by 1050 William fitzOsbern had a dapifer called William fitzBjarni and immediately before the Conquest Azo, lord of Bizy near Evreux, had a dapifer called Urse.2 Domesday Book reveals that dapifers - which term becomes, with the later seneschal, a synonym for steward - were widespread by 1086, being found on thirty-four honours of all sizes including those of Geoffrey de Coutances, Hugh de Grandmesnil and Hugh de Port.3 It is not surprising, then, to discover that the first de Verdun official to appear in the surviving records was the steward, although - as

is also the case with the Gant family⁴ - even this official does not appear until the middle of the twelfth century.

When the first de Verdun seneschals appear, they do so mainly in the witness lists of the de Verduns' own charters. The absence of de Verdun acta from before the time of Bertram III de Verdun (c.1155-1192) consequently means that there is no evidence for the composition of the court, or of the identities of any of the household officers, for the first three generations after the family's arrival in England, although it can probably be assumed that a steward was employed from before the end of Henry I's reign despite the lack of evidence for his existence. From the time of Bertram III onwards, however, we know the name of at least one seneschal for every generation of the senior line of the family down to Theobald I (1274-1309), although, of course, it is not known if the list is complete. At the end, the succession of de Verdun stewards is plunged into obscurity once again as no surviving record provides the identity of any of Theobald II's stewards or, indeed, that of any of his other household officials.

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<tr>
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<th>Source of information</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Arnold of Barton</td>
<td>1155-92</td>
<td>Pipe rolls and charters.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>Elias of Lutterworth</td>
<td>1224x7</td>
<td>Charter witness list.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roesia</td>
<td>Philip Lovel</td>
<td>1231x47</td>
<td>Charter witness list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
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<td>Non-de Verdun actum witness list.</td>
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<td>John Cheinel</td>
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<td>John</td>
<td>Ralph de Burgh</td>
<td>1284</td>
<td>Assize roll entry.</td>
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Table 4.1. A list of the de Verduns' stewards

Table 4.1 provides the names and suggested dates of all those known to have served as *dapifer/seneschal* to the de Verduns. It also reveals that dependency on charters for the identities of the earliest de Verdun stewards noted above. It is a dependency that is not limited solely to the de Verduns. Charters are equally important for uncovering the identities of the officials of the twelfth-century earls of Chester, Gloucester and Hereford as well as those of non comital families such as the Mowbrays. It is unfortunate, then, that for reasons explained already so few de Verdun acta survive. There are a total of forty-nine acta surviving in various forms which were issued by the four individuals who ruled the de Verdun lands between 1155 and 1247, although by no means all of these retain the witness lists so vital for the identification of household officials.

Any picture based on this sketchy evidence is likely to be a mirage, but it is worth attempting to establish whether the de Verduns' charters reveal their stewards and other household officials forming the nucleus of their court, as Greenway has suggested that the Mowbray charters do. In this respect it is useful to note that Arnold of Barton witnessed more of Bertram III's charters (four in all) than any other figure with the single exception of Adam of Audley (who witnessed five). To witness 25% of Bertram de Verdun's charters is an impressive tally, the impact of which is lessened only by the fact that there are but sixteen of them in total, and compares well to the 11% of Roger de Mowbray's 286 charters that are witnessed by Ranulf de Bellun, constable of Axholme castle, or the five of William Vernon's forty-three charters (11.6%) witnessed by Ralph d'Andeville, steward of Carisbrooke.\(^5\) Arnold's tally of four attestations becomes still more impressive when it is remembered that only eight of Bertram III's sixteen charters appear to have retained their full witness lists. Robert de Fortmoville witnessed forty-two of the eighty-one (52%) of Waleran of Meulan's charters which carry witness lists, a total which led Crouch to declare that he was "a constant follower of the count."\(^6\)

It is tempting, despite the shortage of evidence, to conclude the same thing about Arnold, although such statistics might simply mean that Arnold, and stewards in general, tended to be present on the occasions when charters were likely to be issued.


Elias of Lutterworth, Nicholas de Verdun's steward, witnessed three (20%) of his lord's fifteen extant acta which have survived complete with their witness lists. This total, although equalled, is not exceeded by any other character. In Elias' case, though, it is his longevity at the de Verduns' court that is most striking. Aside from Nicholas' charters he witnessed one issued by Thomas de Verdun in 1194x99 and even attested an agreement between Bertram III and Robert de Harcourt of 1166x91. The pattern of Elias' attestations of Nicholas' charters also provides an insight into the occasions when the steward was away from his lord. We do not know if Arnold of Barton accompanied Bertram III to Ireland. Although one of Bertram III's charters relating to lands in his lordship of Dundalk survives, it is a copy and does not include its original witness list. This is not the case with Elias. Five of Nicholas' charters relate to his Irish estates. All of these have witness lists appended. Elias of Lutterworth fails to appear in any of them. It can be deduced from this that Elias is unlikely to have played a role in the administration of the de Verduns' lordship of Dundalk, suggesting that there was already a separate steward for the family's lands in Ireland at this time.

If, then, only those charters which have witness lists and which relate to English lands are taken into consideration, it can be seen that Arnold of Barton attested 50% of such acta and Elias of Lutterworth 30% - four of eight and three of ten respectively. This is comparable to the situation under Roesia de Verdun where her two seneschals together witness four of her six acta (66%) which meet this criteria. Up to Roesia's death in 1247, then, it would seem from the pattern of charter attestations that the de Verdun stewards were among the most prominent individuals at the de Verduns' English courts. Counting attestations is not a satisfactory way of determining a league table of those who attended the family's courts, however. Many witness lists, like those of many other families, end with the phrase "and others" and it is possible that these others might have included chamberlains and such like, men whose job meant that they were unlikely to be anywhere other than the court but who did not attest charters for whatever reason.

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7 In 1185, Bertram III de Verdun was appointed John's seneschal of Ireland. However, despite this he did not always witness John's charters as such. Sometimes he attested as Bertram de Verdun, seneschal, sometimes simply as Bertram de Verdun. Consequently, it is assumed that Elias was acting as steward on every occasion that he witnessed Nicholas de Verdun's charters. He is actually named as such in a witness list just the once.

In this case, the fact that stewards do witness charters must reflect their important position in the administration or, perhaps, their own social background. Like Ralph d'Andeville, steward of Carisbrooke, Arnold of Barton appears on average fourth in the lists of witnesses. This puts him below occasional visitors such as Gilbert Pipard or Walter de Camvill - men of a social status roughly equal with that of Bertram III de Verdun himself - and also the rather more permanent Adam of Audley, but above the lesser members of the family and the smaller tenants. The same factors appear to influence the position of the names of Elias of Lutterworth, Philip Lovel and Roger Gernon who appear on average in sixth, fifth and sixth places respectively.

Unfortunately, after 1247 the number of surviving de Verdun acta which carry witness lists - never very great to start off with - declines sharply. There survive three for John de Verdun, six for Theobald I and one for Theobald II. Only twice, both times under Theobald I, does a titled seneschal witness any of these charters, although it is possible that Philip Lovel was still steward when he witnessed John de Verdun's charter recording his sale of houses in Shoe Lane to William de Ferrers, earl of Derby, in 1247x54. It may well be that this poor showing by de Verdun household officials is simply the result of attestation without title, something which had been common practice from at least the twelfth century. Certainly, it is not conclusive evidence of any fall in the status or the central position of the de Verduns' stewards at court and given the lack of other evidence it is an observation which can only be noted and not explained.

With their virtual disappearance from the de Verduns' own acta, the identities of their stewards must be recovered from other sources. Some appear in the witness lists of charters or agreements drawn up by the family's tenants or neighbours. The names of the Irish seneschals are found exclusively in the transcripts of the Irish pipe rolls. Because of the nature of all these various types of evidence, the dates between which all of these men held office are uncertain and somewhat sketchy. The Irish pipe rolls provide only instances of a steward's career rather than details as to its duration. Thomas de Champagne, for example, appears as seneschal intermittently in the Irish pipe rolls from 1261 to 1269. When his term in office began and ended, however, or whether he was seneschal throughout this period, is

11 IPR, 35th report, pp. 40, 42, 48; IPR, 36th report, pp. 33, 37, 44, 46, 46, 47.
entirely unknown, although in his case it is clear that he could not have continued serving in this capacity after 1271 as he was killed with the young Nicholas and John de Verdun by Geoffrey O'Farrell and his followers in that year.\textsuperscript{12} Equally, the charters or agreements which these stewards witnessed cannot be dated with any accuracy and, besides this, like the pipe rolls show only a moment when that individual was seneschal and do not delimit the whole period for which he served. Thus we do not know when even a relatively well-attested steward such as Arnold of Barton took up office, and while it is clear that he continued to act as steward until at least the first year of Thomas de Verdun's majority - this being revealed by his attestation as \textit{dapifer} of a charter issued by Thomas de Verdun to Henry of Tugby\textsuperscript{13} - we do not know when he was replaced either. The situation under Roesia de Verdun is such that we cannot even be certain which of her two stewards served first, although an educated guess can be attempted.\textsuperscript{14}

It is, however, unlikely that they served at the same time. Where stewards are known to have had responsibility across a magnate's estates, as is the case with the Clares or with Richard of Havering, steward of Simon de Montfort, the official in question is called "steward of Gloucester" (or "of the honour of Gloucester"), or "steward of the earl of Leicester". Maddicott argues that Havering's title implies a "comprehensive authority" so it is of interest to note that Roger Gernon witnessed an agreement between the burgesses of Alton and the monks of Croxden abbey as "seneschal of the Lady Roesia de Verdun" and that John of Wheathampstead similarly attested charters issued by Thomas Biddulph of Fenton Culvert as "seneschal of Sir John de Verdun.\textsuperscript{16} In Ireland, Thomas de Champagne was recorded as "seneschal of J[ohn] de Verdun." The recorded title of these stewards thus suggests that they held a comprehensive authority over the de Verduns' estates, similar to that exercised by the Clares' or Simon de Montfort's steward, from at least the time of Roesia de Verdun, although in all probability

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} NAI, RC8/1, p. 83.
\item \textsuperscript{13} BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 320v.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Although Gernon acts as an attorney for Roesia in 1239 against Philip Lovel, it is Lovel who is found in the witness list of one of John de Verdun's charters which might suggest that he served Roesia second. Alternatively, Philip Lovel may have served for two terms. Once before 1239 and then again after Gernon's departure from office.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/2/23/1; Stafford, William Salt Library, Allen-Simpkin Collection, Bundle 50 (Fenton Culvert), Bundle 1, nos. 641, 657. (Reference from the National Register of Archives.)
\item \textsuperscript{17} IPR, 35th report, p. 40.
\end{itemize}
earlier stewards such as Arnold of Barton had held a similarly wide-reaching authority. A warning against assuming all de Verdun stewards to have exercised the same powers is sounded by the fact that John Cheinel who is called "steward" in one of Theobald I's charters is also described simply as the "bailiff of Theobald de Verdun" in a plea of 1293 brought against the same Theobald by John of Prestwode.\textsuperscript{18} It may be that Cheinel was not Theobald I's steward in 1293, but as we do not know the dates during which he served in this position it is impossible to say. Alternatively, it may be that the de Verduns' stewards acted as both seneschal and bailiff as did the high steward of the bishop of Durham who was also bailiff of the bishop's lands in Lincolnshire.\textsuperscript{19}

A discussion of the duties of the de Verduns' stewards is severely hampered by a lack of evidence on the subject. Nonetheless rays of evidence occasionally break through the obscurity and these, at least, can be detailed here. All the Irish seneschals appear performing the same function - accounting for their de Verdun lord at the Irish exchequer - in different years and, under Theobald I, in rapid succession. Nor was this a recent development in the de Verduns' seneschals' duties. One or both of Arnold of Barton and Adam of Audley - who was apparently Bertram III's under-sheriff - can be found in the pipe rolls between 1180 and 1187 rendering Bertram III's account for his shrievalty of Warwick and Leicester and the honour of Chester.\textsuperscript{20} The seneschal thus had a financial function and there is indeed some evidence - discussed later - that he might also have occupied the position later taken by the receiver in other households.

The Seneschaucie, which was copied into Fleta, states that the steward should be eager to protect his lord's rights in all things. "It is his duty to hold the manorial courts...... so that then he may inquire carefully into withdrawals of customary dues, services, rents, suit to his lord's courts, markets and mills and to the views, and [into infractions] of other franchises belonging to his lord."\textsuperscript{21} This too the de Verdun steward can be found doing, although perhaps over-enthusiastically, in a plea of 18 November 1270. In this, John of Wheathampstead, Henry of Bray and Alan de Peys, the latter being named as John's bailiff, were charged "that whereas it

\textsuperscript{18} WS, 6/1, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{20} PR, 26 Henry II, p. 97; PR, 27 Henry II, p. 73; PR, 28 Henry II, p. 92; PR, 29 Henry II, p. 34; PR, 30 Henry II, p. 43; PR, 31 Henry II, p. 95; PR, 32 Henry II, p. 150; PR, 33 Henry II, pp. 20-1.
had been ordained by common counsel of the magnates of the kingdom that no one should be distrained to perform suit at the courts of their lords except according to the form of their feoffment, they had distrained [Roger Biddulph] to do suit to his lord of Alton, against the said prohibition. 22 With his general oversight of the de Verdun estates, it is not surprising to find the steward involved in the transfers of land or in the various agreements made among the de Verduns, their tenants and other interested parties. This is, of course, reflected in their attestation of the de Verduns' own grants and agreements. Arnold of Barton was the only named addressee in one version of a charter issued by Bertram III granting nine virgates in Long Whatton in Leicestershire to Walkelin son of Baldwin Doyle. 23 This function is also revealed by Roger Gernon's attestation as Roesia de Verdun's seneschal in the agreement made between Croxden abbey and the burgesses of Alton in c.1239. 24 Equally, John of Wheathampstead, who does not attest any of John de Verdun's own surviving acta, appears as his seneschal in two grants issued by Thomas "of the upper vill of Biddulph," lord of Fenton Culvert, 25 and in one issued by Margery, widow of Robert de la Chaumbre, concerning a certain part of the vill of Denstone in Staffordshire. 26

Denholm-Young has suggested that "the increasing complexity of private finance brought receivers and wardrobes to the fore, and the decline of private courts naturally lessened the importance of an official whose primary function had long been judicial." 27 There is no evidence from which to argue whether the importance of the de Verduns' seneschals declined in such a manner. Nor is there evidence to support Denholm-Young's implied if unstated belief that the men employed in this capacity were drawn from a rung or two further down the social ladder as a result. Arnold of Barton's obscurity clouds his social background but Elias of Lutterworth was a clerk as were Philip Lovel and John of Wheathampstead. Given Robert of Bucknall's position as bailiff of Totmonslow hundred it is plausible to suggest that he was a knight. In Ireland Thomas de Champagne and Robert de Cruys were certainly of this class. If anything, then, the status of the de Verduns' stewards

22 WS, 4/1, p. 181.
24 Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/2/23/1.
25 Stafford, William Salt Library, Allen-Simpkin Collection, Bundle 50 (Fenton Culvert), Bundle 1, nos. 641, 657. (Refer from the National Register of Archives.)
appears to rise as the thirteenth century wears on, even if their status at court is obscure. This was probably due to the family's own rising status as a consequence of John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy before 1242.

That John of Wheathampstead was a clerk is revealed by the nature of the rewards that he gained at the hands of his de Verdun master. He also provides one of only two examples of a de Verdun official being rewarded for his service, the other figure being John de Verdun's bailiff, Henry of Bray. Whether the example of these two figures speaks for the remainder of the de Verduns' household officials is, therefore, unknown. By September 1277 Wheathampstead had been made parson of the churches of Lutterworth and Kingsley.28 Henry of Bray was made rector of Stoke-on-Tern by Theobald I in 1304.29 Before 1275, Bray had also been granted land in Cotesbach in Leicestershire, which was identified as the capital messuage and valued at 2s. in the inquisition made on Theobald I de Verdun's death in 1309.30 Although no direct grant was given to him, it may be the case that John de Verdun caused land to be granted to Wheathampstead. In 1262, Dionysia de Lega and her son Richard acknowledged by fine that they had given half a virgate in Eaton-upon-Tern (a member of Stoke-on-Tern) to John of Wheathampstead who was to hold it from the lord of the fee, who was none other than John de Verdun.31

The evidence does not allow for much else to be said of the de Verduns' stewards, but it does permit a brief discussion of their origins and relationships with the family. An argument can be advanced for about two thirds (ten out of fourteen) of the stewards having had tenurial or local connections with the de Verduns before taking up their office. In the former category are found Elias of Lutterworth, John Cheinel, Robert of Bucknall, and Robert de Cruys. Elias' tenurial connection is suggested by his toponym, Lutterworth being one of the de Verduns' demesne manors in Leicestershire. Similarly, Robert of Bucknall's toponymic declares him to have come from, or resided in, another of the de Verduns' demesne manors, this time in Staffordshire. John Cheinel held land at Sutton in Warwickshire which made him a neighbour,32 but furthermore almost

28 CPR, 1272-81, p. 229.
30 WY, 6/1, p. 81; PRO, C134/14/19.
32 He was involved in a plea over common at Cateby pertaining to his free tenement in Sutton in 1272. (PRO, JUST 1/955, memb. 35v.)
certainly came of the family which had held lands from the de Verduns from between 1135 and 1166; lands which are identified as Catthorp and Billesdon in Leicestershire in 1316.\textsuperscript{33} Finally, Robert de Cruys came of a family which held lands of John de Verdun in the old de Lacy lordship of Meath as is evidenced by de Verdun's claim to his wardship in 1263.\textsuperscript{34} It is also possible that Arnold of Barton had some tenurial connection with the family, although this is uncertain due to Arnold's rather obscure toponymic. This could relate to Barton-under-Needwood (Warwickshire) as much as Barton-in-the-Beans (Leicestershire) - although the latter is tantalisingly near the old de Verdun demesne manor of Market Bosworth.

If not a tenant of the de Verduns, then, Arnold was a neighbour and the same can be said of Roger Geron, Elias of Odstone, Ralph de Burgh and possibly Thomas de Champagne. Roger Geron came from a family who had been granted lands in county Louth by King John, not far from Rosia de Verdun's own lordship centred on Dundalk but including half of the barony of Ferrard in the south of the county too. Elias' toponymic reveals that he had some connection with Odstone, a Leicestershire manor located close to the de Verduns' own manors at Newbold Verdon and Market Bosworth. Ralph was probably related to the earl of Ulster, the de Verduns' northern neighbour and, at times, rival. Thomas de Champagne, the first recorded Irish seneschal, may have been in some way connected with de Genneville, the de Verduns' neighbour in Meath, but could also have had his origins in Warwickshire. This can be tenuously suggested as in 1296 a Robert de Champagne witnessed a charter issued by Ralph Basset concerning the wardship of lands and tenements in Rugby (which is not so far from Brandon).\textsuperscript{35} This charter also provides the equally tenuous alternative that Thomas may have come to the attention of John de Verdun through his connection with the Bassets - the de Verduns having held lands in Staffordshire and Leicestershire from the family since 1176.\textsuperscript{36} That there was some English connection with the de Verduns is further suggested by an earlier Robert de Champagne witnessing charters issued by both Thomas and Nicholas de Verdun.\textsuperscript{37} Philip Lovel too may have had some link with

\textsuperscript{34} CDI, 2, no. 740.  
\textsuperscript{35} BL, Cotton Charter xiii.3.  
\textsuperscript{36} This tenurial link was established in a fine made between Geoffrey Ridel and Bertram III de Verdun in 1176. (BL, Sloane Charter xxxi.4, no. 34; J. H. Round, Feudal England (London, 1895), p. 514.)  
\textsuperscript{37} BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 320v; R. R. Darlington, The Glapwell Charters (Kendal, 1957-9), no. 1.
the family before his appointment. The Lovels' obscure connections with the de Verduns are illustrated by a charter enrolled in the *curia regis* rolls for 1215. This charter, which was issued by Matilda, countess of Ivry, granted land to William Lovel and was witnessed by no less than four members of the de Verdun family, two of whom bear the especially twelfth-century family names of Norman and Ruelent.38

It is not particularly unusual to find that officials had such tenurial or local connections with their masters. Three of four stewards of Roger de Mowbray were tenants.39 So was Thomas of Astley, steward of Simon de Montfort.40 From the time of John de Verdun (1247-74), however, there is a trend towards employing men with no known previous connections with the family as stewards. The first of these 'outsiders' was John of Wheathampstead. In 1254 and 1256 he was exempted from being put on assizes, juries and recognitions at the instance of William de Wheathampstead, king's clerk.41 This court connection may well have been responsible for Wheathampstead's appointment as John de Verdun's seneschal. Indeed, it is also possible that Thomas de Champagne owed his position in John de Verdun's household to the court as much as to his possible local connections. His toponym suggests that he might have had connections either directly with the queen's Savoyard party or with John's neighbour Geoffrey de Genneville, a member of that party. Nothing is known of Robert le Despencer, Robert Waleys or Ralph de Sepeye who appear as Theobald I de Verdun's seneschals in Ireland in quick succession between 1278-1280, so that the cause of their appointments is unknown. It is worth noting that although a Thomas Despencer does occasionally witness charters of both Bertram III and Nicholas in the years up to 1206,42 there is no indication of any continued relationship between the families after that point which might help to explain Robert le Despencer's position. Why Theobald only employed these men for a year at a time is unknown. Perhaps he agreed with Walter Map's acquaintance who changed servants every year to keep them loyal to him,43 although it is not unusual to find officials changing frequently. "It is certain

38 *CRR*, 7, pp. 325-6.
41 *CPR, 1247-58*, pp. 381, 477.
that none of the Fortibus, Lacy, Bigod or Clare stewards remained in office for more than a few years. The reason seems to have lain with the stewards themselves rather than the lords, for this fluidity has suggested to Denholm-Young that stewards sought a wider experience than that found in just one administration.

There thus appears to be a move away from appointing a tenant or neighbour as seneschal under the later de Verduns. Perhaps this was a result of the increasing use of professional administrators in this capacity by land-owners across the board. Perhaps the increasing status of the de Verduns, whose power was now enhanced through their share in the de Lacy lands, proved an attractive lure for those seeking office through connections at the royal court. One index for testing a move towards the professionalisation of the de Verdun administration might be to examine whether any of the de Verduns' seneschals were employed by other magnates or by the king in positions of responsibility either before, during or after their service with the de Verduns. If this were to be considered a satisfactory approach, then it is interesting that in only three cases do de Verdun seneschals turn up working for the royal administration.

The first was Philip Lovel. Soon after Roesia de Verdun's death Philip is found at Henry III's court where he appears to have impressed the king. In 1249 he was made a justice of the Jews, on which he was to drop all other outstanding royal business and three years later he was appointed the king's Treasurer during pleasure. His occasional rewards of deer and timber were supplemented in 1257 by a grant of free warren at his demesne lands in La Le and Dunston in Warwickshire, Littlebury in Essex, Snorscomb in Northamptonshire and Brickhill and Potsgrave in Buckinghamshire. His occupations in the royal household did not preclude continued activity in Staffordshire. In 1250 Robert of Stafford was successfully sued by Philip to surrender Isabella, daughter and heiress of Ralph of Mutton, the custody being his on account of custody of lands of Vivian de Standon. It is in a case of 1260, however, that Philip's character is best revealed. Thomas de Mere was said to have given two parts of a quarter fee in Mere and Aston to Philip Lovel. However, in court Thomas admitted that he and Philip had talked of the demise of this custody at St Thomas' priory church in Stafford, but that the business had been left unfinished as Thomas had receded from the

44 N. Denholm-Young, *Seignorial Administration*, p. 70.
45 *CCR*, 1247-51, p. 234; *CPR*, 1247-58, p. 149.
46 *CChR*, 1, p. 473.
47 *WS*, 4/1, p. 119
arrangement. Later that same day, however, some of Philip's servants had come to Cresswall, where they had beaten Thomas up and forced him back to the priory until he agreed to the grant.48 This case appears to have come to court after Lovel's death at the very end of 1259, which is recorded by Matthew Paris. "Whilst the festivities of Christmas were being kept up... Philip Lovel, a particularly intimate counsellor of the king's, and one-time treasurer, died on St Thomas' day (29 December), at his church at Hamstable, through grief, as was stated, and bitterness of spirit, at not having reconciled himself to the king... The king demanded from him an immense sum for the offence committed by him according to report, in his forests."49

John Cheinel, like Philip Lovel, entered royal service apparently after serving as seneschal to Theobald de Verdun, although his employment was altogether more mundane than Philip's. Between 1311 and 1313 he was given various commissions of oyer and terminer. Five commissions were for Lincolnshire, two for Shropshire and one each for Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Staffordshire. There was also a commission to view the bridge over the Avon at Chesford in Warwickshire.50 Elias of Odstone was also given a commission of oyer and terminer in June 1282, touching the persons who broke into the park of the abbot of Garendon. Earlier the same year, in April, he had been given a commission to enquire into the complaints of the prioress of Grace Dieu concerning trees in the wood at Belton.51

By the thirteenth century the increasing professionalisation of the royal household led to the recruitment of baronial administrators. "Many of the Clare officials put their experience to good use in later service to the Crown, and indeed some may have been royal commissioners while still members of the Clare familia, although there is no direct evidence of this in the period."52 Examples include John de Cornherd, who was seneschal of Richard, earl of Hertford, in 1199. He went on to hold a number of important positions under Kings John and Henry III, including that of keeper of the archiepiscopate of Canterbury sede vacante. Richard Heydon, seneschal in 1279, became a royal justice in 1283, while Roger de Scaccario, who was seneschal of both Tonbridge and Clare at various times between 1247 and

48 ibid, p. 142.  
49 EHD, 1189-1327, p. 143.  
51 CPR, 1281-92, pp. 46, 48.  
1258, was also active in judicial capacities for the Crown by 1259-60. Nor was this mobility a thirteenth-century phenomenon. Alan de Neuville was Waleran of Meulan's butler from the 1130's to the 1150's before leaving his service to enjoy a new career as a royal minister.\textsuperscript{53}

Given the lack of evidence for many of the men who served as steward to the de Verduns, it is impossible to be completely sure why they were chosen for the post, although their professionalism remains a possibility. Robert of Bucknall, however, may well have been considered suitable for the office not just on account of his local or tenurial connections with the family, but also because of factors made clear in a plea of 1303. In this year, an assize was set up to see if various parties including John and Theobald de Verdun had unjustly disseised Henry son of Thomas de Shireford of a messuage, two carucates, twelve bovates, of land and a mill at Ellastone. Theobald stated that John de Verdun had died in seisin and put himself on the assize. This was delayed through defect of recognitors "as Robert de Bucknall, the chief bailiff of Totmonslow is the seneschal of Theobald de Verdun and had summoned the assize."\textsuperscript{54} It may well be that Robert's own position in Totmonslow hundred, the hundred in which most of the de Verduns' manors in Staffordshire were situated, made him the ideal candidate for the job. Bucknall must have provided Theobald de Verdun with a useful chance to increase the reach of his power in north-eastern Staffordshire. Despite the benefits of Bucknall's position, however, his employment appears to have been largely opportunistic as there is no evidence that the family systematically attempted to extend their influence through the officials they appointed. Bucknall stands alone in this respect.

By 1100 the households of the greatest magnates such as the earls of Shrewsbury or Robert of Leicester had developed to include not just a seneschal but also a butler, constable, chamberlain and marshal.\textsuperscript{55} In the later twelfth century a royal clerk and official such as Walter Map had a small household of his own, of which he had much cause for complaint. "I myself am the ruler of but a small establishment, and yet I cannot hold the reins of my little team. I try to be good to them all so far as I can, that they may suffer no lack either in food, drink or raiment: their object, on the other hand, is to scrape together out of my substance

\textsuperscript{53} D. Crouch, \textit{The Beaumont Twins}, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{54} WS, 7/1, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{55} D. Crouch, \textit{The Image of Aristocracy}, pp. 291-2.
by any and every means something to increase their own."56 Indeed, Crouch believes that lesser men may not necessarily have had smaller households, and bases this conclusion on an examination of the household of Agnes, lady of Clifford, and that of the lord of Erdesby, which in 1284 had twenty-five members including two stewards, a wardrobeer and his deputy and chaplains.57

Whether the de Verdun lords of Alton, Brandon and Dundalk had a similarly evolved household in the twelfth century is not known. It is only from the beginning of the thirteenth century that officials other than the steward are recorded, although it must be expected that they would have existed from at least the 1190's when the grant of land around Dundalk would have enforced the family's absence from one or the other of their lordships. The first record of a de Verdun constable, that of Dundalk, appears in 1217 where his death in a skirmish is noticed.58 In c.1236 the first constable of Alton appears in the form of Thomas Perhitun, who attested a grant from Peter of Saucheverel to Croxden abbey of about this date in this capacity.59 Little is known of Thomas other than that he held a knight's fee in Oveshull in Warwickshire, originally of the gift of Henry II, by 1221. It would seem that Thomas had died by 1236 at the latest as the survey in the Book of Fees for 1235-6 states that Adam of Perhitun held this fee in that year, as well as lands Berkshire, Northumberland, Wiltshire and four fees in Northamptonshire at Waldegrave and Moulton which were held from the Bailliol fee.60 Finally William de Rownall - named from another de Verdun manor - appears as constable of Brandon under John de Verdun in c.1260-70.61 Like many of the seneschals, then, the de Verduns' constables were apparently tenants or neighbours of the family.

The constable was originally concerned with commanding the knights of the lord's household, although by the mid-twelfth century "the constable's importance was declining and had become connected with garrison rather than with household duties."62 Denholm-Young states that "in the thirteenth century [the constable] is

58 ALC, I, p. 257.
59 Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/23.
60 BF, pp. 502, 504, 515, 1340.
often no longer a knight, and as a mere bailiff he combines the custody of the castle with the financial and administrative work of the bailiwick. There is no evidence to reveal what the de Verduns' constables' duties were but in two cases at least the constable of Alton was also the seneschal. John of Wheathampstead was called constable of Alton in a charter witness list of c.1260-70. The point is made even more forcefully in the case of Robert of Bucknall, who is described in separate documents as both Theobald de Verdun's steward and constable of Alton in 1303. A comparison with the administration of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, suggests that this combination of offices reveals that the de Verduns' seneschal included in his duties the function normally provided by the receiver - a facet of his job which is perhaps reinforced by some of the evidence discussed above.

Other officers are cursorily mentioned in the surviving records. A Robert dispensator attested Roesia de Verdun's two surviving charters to Croxden abbey, although from this evidence nothing can be established about him. Chamberlains had appeared in the household by the time of Theobald I, the appearance of such an official being the "most characteristic feature of these thirteenth-century organisations." John le Fysshere was Theobald's chamberlain in Ireland. He appears as such in a plea whereby Theobald was accused of falsely imprisoning him after the disappearance of a valuable ring. The ring had presumably come into his care as part of his job as the chamberlain looked after the lord's cash, jewels and other valuables as well as his bedding, clothing and laundry arrangements. It is presumably for this reason that an agreement found in the Warwickshire assize roll of 1285 uses the phrase "chamberlain and receiver (receptor)" for this official. A Ralph the chamberlain appears in Theobald I's will, which was drawn up in 1275, where he is also described as a valet along with William de Sutton.

Such were the officers of the de Verduns' household, at least in so far as they are recorded. It should be noted that there is no record of any chaplains in the household - indeed, very few clerks even appear in charter witness lists, the most

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63 N. Denholm-Young, Seignorial Administration, p. 7.
65 WS, 7/1, p. 108; Stafford, William Salt Library, Allen-Simpkin Collection, Bundle 50 (Fenton Culvert), Bundle no. 1, no. 643. (Reference from National Register of Archives).
67 N. Denholm-Young, Seignorial Administration, p. 13.
68 CJRI, 1, p. 314.
70 PRO, JUST 1/960, memb. 17.
71 For the will see BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97.
notable exception being Elias of Lutterworth who is referred to as a clerk in the witness list of Thomas de Verdun's grant to Henry of Tugby. No chancery is recorded. Whether or not these bodies did actually exist in the de Verduns' administration must therefore remain unknown.

Under the central household administration there was, of course, a local administration run by the bailiffs who appear in the sources from the mid-thirteenth century. Various bailiffs are mentioned, although the evidence tends to reveal little more than their names. The geographical extent of their responsibilities is unknown. There may have been a bailiff for every manor or for a group of manors. Equally, the duties of the de Verduns' bailiffs, with the exception of those of Simon Basset whose judicial powers in Ewias Lacy have been noted in previous chapter, remain obscure. Alan Peys appears in the hundred rolls for Totmonslow hundred under the item concerned with those who acted maliciously under cover of their office, which states that "Alan Peys, the Bailiff of John de Verdun of Alton, took six oxen and cows from Richard of Rudyard, and retained four of them, and for giving up two of them, took a mark from the said Richard." This case might record a distraint made on Rudyard as a result of a responsibility to enforce services owed to the family, something which can also be seen in the case in which Peys and Bray appear with Wheathampstead. In addition, Fleta states that bailiffs had widespread duties of supervising the ploughing, the mowers, reapers, carters and threshers. The bailiff, states Fleta, "ought to occupy himself diligently with all the duties allotted to him, lest deceit and negligence on his own part and the folly of servants should, when his accounts are rendered, condemn him to well-deserved punishment."

John de Verdun's bailiff, Henry of Bray, is worth further mention as the fourth and last of all the de Verduns' officials who went on to have a long and colourful career after leaving the de Verduns' service. He first appears in 1254 when he went with the queen to Gascony although he fails to appear near the royal court again until after John de Verdun's death in 1274. His relationship with de Verdun may have become strained by this time as Henry was to bring a plea after John's death accusing him of unjustly disseising him of land and throwing him into prison. Theobald answered by stating that Henry had owed John £200 and that he had

72 PRO, SC5/Staffs/3; WS, 5/1, p. 120.
73 WS, 4/1, p. 181.
75 CPR, 1247-58, p. 376.
been put into prison until he made up the debt. Theobald I either lost the case or later came to terms with Henry because he can be found holding a messuage and land in Cotesbach in 1309. In 1275 he was bailiff of Gwent and keeper of Abergavenny castle and was presented to the church of Llangattock-on-Usk in August 1276 and that of Llanthelion in October 1277. By September 1282 Henry had been appointed escheator south of the Trent. In 1293 Bray was accused of trying to take seisin of land in Westwode, which William of Westwode had given him, against the wishes of the superior lord - the abbey of Dieulacres. However, Henry had an alibi - he was in prison in the Tower by judgement of the king. This stands against the record in the Dunstable annal under 1289 which states that "outrageous things were said of master Henry of Bray, escheator and justiciar of the Jews, but by a fine he made peace." It was not just seneschals, then, who might go on to have careers in the king's service.

As mentioned, Henry was one of the four de Verdun officials who went on to serve the king. This traffic, however, was not all in one direction. Generally speaking, "public service to the king, far from precluding private service to powerful individuals and corporations, now invariably facilitated it." Robert de Bures, for example, who was custodian of the royal forest of Cannock from 1295 to 1306 and a royal justice in April 1307, served as seneschal of the honour of Clare from Michaelmas 1307 until 1309, before serving again as a royal justice of oyer and terminer in Norfolk in April 1314. Hervey de Borham, another of the de Clare's seneschals and active as such in 1259, had previously served in the Montfortian government in 1264-5 and was appointed keeper of the peace for Essex and Hertford by Henry III in 1266. The surviving records give no indication at all that de Verdun stewards such as Thomas de Champagne or John of Wheathampstead, albeit that they might have come into de Verdun service through court connections, had served the king in such a way before their appointment. Nonetheless, examples of the de Verduns employing royal officers can be found, not by examining the household officers, but when looking at their attorneys.

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76 WS, 6/1, p. 81; PRO, C134/14/19.
77 CPR, 1272-81, p. 126.
78 ibid, pp. 160, 234.
79 CPR, 1281-92, p. 58.
Attorneys.

It should be stated at the outset that a great many attorneys were employed by the various generations of the family. Roesia de Verdun employed at least thirteen attorneys at different times, John de Verdun used the services of at least seven and Theobald I employed at least thirty-nine different attorneys during his thirty-five year tenure of the family's lands. Theobald's total comes to an unusually large number and is perhaps the most concise indication of the extent to which he was involved in litigation in the courts. In comparison, the patent rolls reveal that Edmund Mortimer, who ruled his family's lands between 1282 and 1302, employed a total of only three attorneys throughout his career.\(^{83}\) Theobald Butler in a similar period employed six attorneys,\(^ {84}\) while Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, appointed seven between his accession in 1275 and his death in 1299.\(^ {85}\)

The patent and various judicial rolls show that a majority of these de Verdun attorneys were appointed to this position on one or perhaps two occasions only. This does not appear to have been unusual. Paul Brand has noted that agreements were made whereby attorneys were appointed to act in one case, or in a group of cases, and received one-off payments for doing so.\(^ {86}\) Certainly, such appointments are typical amongst those identified attorneys employed by Mortimer, Bohun and Butler. Five of de Bohun's seven attorneys were appointed just the once, as were all three of Mortimer's and all six of Butler's. The terms of the de Verduns' attorneys' power varied in length, but were not greater than six years and generally less. Although they were appointed just the once, or perhaps twice, the de Verduns' attorneys could work on a number of pleas at the same time. In 1285, for example, Henry of Hockeley, who was also to act as an attorney in 1308, and William the clerk of Bretford represented Theobald I de Verdun in a total of nine separate pleas.\(^ {87}\)

\(^{83}\) CPR, 1281-92, p. 380; CPR, 1292-1301, p. 590.
\(^{84}\) ibid, pp. 1, 51, 352.
\(^{85}\) CPR, 1272-81, p. 170; CPR, 1281-92, pp. 161, 164, 262, 274; CPR, 1292-1301, pp. 65, 226, 227.
\(^{86}\) P. Brand, the Formation of the English Legal Profession (Oxford, 1992), p. 92. Brand also notes that these agreements were often of an oral nature with the result that if attorneys sued for non-payment, clients would simply deny any agreement having ever existed. It is tempting to see such non-payment as the reason for Theobald I's constantly changing legal representation, although the evidence is silent on the matter.
\(^{87}\) PRO, JUST 1/956, membs. 32-3.
Can it be assumed, in an age which saw an increasing extent to and complexity in the law, that these men were professional lawyers? Many of those attorneys who were employed by the Clares "were professional lawyers who can be found representing other barons besides the Clares." This is not the case with almost all those employed by the de Verduns, who fail to appear again in any definite shape or form in the records - something which is also true of many of those attorneys who found themselves in the pay of Mortimer, de Bohun and Butler. Such obscurity, however, does not necessarily mean that these men were not professionals. Given the extremely small number of non-professional attorneys in the 1280 and 1300 eyres, it seems likely that most of these men were more than just amateurs, especially as in many cases no prior links with the de Verdun family can be uncovered. Certainly even the most obscure can be shown to have had at least some legal training. Peter of Coolock, for example, can be found acting for Theobald I in Ireland in 1302 against the archbishop of Armagh. He successfully pleaded that the case could not proceed as the original writ was not present. Unfortunately, however, Coolock had managed to forget to bring the letters patent which established his position as Theobald's attorney with him on the first day of the trial and, despite his spirited wrangling, Theobald was found guilty of default as a result. This could well explain why he was only employed by Theobald once.

The backgrounds of most of the de Verduns' attorneys are unknown, but there is sufficient evidence to show that some at least were drawn from a variety of groups connected with the family. Peter of Coolock, mentioned above, was one of Theobald I de Verdun's tenants, taking his toponym from the de Verduns' only demesne manor in county Dublin. He had previously granted to "his lord John de Verdun seven acres of land in the fields of Coolock" and had received seven acres of land "lying between Peter's curtis and the path leading from Coolock to Ballygriffin" in return. Henry of Hockeley too was a tenant, holding a messuage and half an acre from the de Verduns' at Bretford before 1293. Other attorneys were drawn from the de Verduns' household. Roesia de Verdun's seneschal, Roger Gernon, appears as her attorney in 1239 in pleas against Peter of Lutterworth, Robert fitzThomas, Philip Lovel and Sibilla de Verdun, and in 1240-1 against the

89 Put by Brand at 3% and 1% of the total number of attorneys respectively. (P. Brand, *The Formation of the English Legal Profession*, p. 73).
90 Perhaps gained from the elementary legal courses that Brand has noted. (ibid, pp. 117-8).
91 *CJR*, 1, pp. 417-8.
92 Cambridge, University Library, Doc. 4086.
93 PRO, JUST 1/963, memb. 5.
abbess of Wilton. Ralph de Burgh too, steward in 1284, acted as attorney in the same year. This is not unusual. Denholm-Young has noted that "stewards had frequently to represent their masters in important cases." Members of the family appear as attorneys too. Theobald I appeared as John de Verdun's attorney on one occasion, while Thomas de Verdun acted in the same capacity for Theobald I in 1284-5. Similarly, Gilbert de Bohun was made an attorney for Humphrey de Bohun in 1296. There is only one occasion, however, when one of those men who can be placed in the inner circle of the de Verduns' following acted as an attorney. This was Henry of Wootton who acted as Roesia's attorney in Ireland in 1238.

Towards the end of thirteenth century a small number of royal officials served as attorneys for de Verduns. The most notable of these was Malcolm of Harley who acted as Theobald I's attorney in 1284 and 1285 when he was escheator south of the Trent and who might have been rewarded with half a knight's fee in Wildredehope in Shropshire for his trouble. The de Verduns' employment of royal officials as attorneys can be compared with that of Humphrey de Bohun who can be found regularly employing Henry of Enfield as an attorney between 1276 and 1287. Henry was a royal justice, holding a commission of oyer and terminer in September 1293 and being appointed justice of common pleas for the lowy of Tonbridge in the same year. Other examples can be found in Maddicott's detailed study of the retaining of royal justices and officials as attorneys.

There is some indication that Malcolm of Harley was retained as an attorney - presumably by Theobald I - by the grant mentioned above, although there is no other evidence to suggest that Harley or any other de Verdun attorney was employed on anything other than a short-lived and ad hoc basis. That is not to say, though, that Theobald I de Verdun did not retain important figures at court. It is

94 CRR, 16, nos. 846, 1213, 2742.
95 PRO, JUST 1/460, memb. 39v, 42; JUST 1/461, memb. 31v.
96 N. Denholm-Young, Seignorial Administration, p. 74.
97 CPR, 1266-72, p. 649.
98 CPR, 1281-92, pp. 131, 157; CDI, 2, no. 2292.
99 CPR, 1292-1301, p. 226.
100 CDI, 1, no. 2446; Gormanston Reg, p. 161.
101 CPR, 1281-92, pp. 131, 157, 172; CIPM, 6, no. 54, p. 39.
102 CPR, 1272-81, p. 170; CPR, 1281-92, pp. 164, 262, 274.
103 CPR, 1292-1301, pp. 50, 56.
notable that almost all of the individuals who were apparently granted lands on de Verdun estates in Herefordshire and Warwickshire between 1242 and 1316 were royal officials or their sons. Why Theobald I granted these officials lands rather than simply giving them fees and robes is not clear. What these royal officials did for the family and how often their services were called upon is also unknown. Nor is it known whether these enfeoffments acted as a fee for a single action or as a retainer. All, however, acted as justices in areas where the de Verduns had interests to protect.

Thus, Philip and Rhys ap Howel, who might have first become known to the de Verduns through their connections with Humphrey de Bohun, are found holding a share of seven and a quarter knight's fees in perhaps as many as ten manors in Herefordshire in 1317.105 They were employed between 1297 and 1316 in raising troops and hearing pleas in Wales and the marches as well as organising the defence of North Wales against the possibility of attack by the Scots in Ireland in 1315.106 John de Cantilupe also appears in the survey of 1317, holding two knight's fees "and three parts of a fee" in Avon Dasset in Warwickshire. In 1308 he was commissioned to enquire "touching the confederacies of divers persons at Arden... whereby the people of that neighbourhood are intimidated" with Robert de Verdun.107 In the same year and in 1314 and 1316 he was appointed conservator of the peace in Warwickshire.108 The enfeoffment of royal justices was not limited to lands in England and the marches. Before 1332 Richard of Exeter had been given lands in county Louth by the de Verduns. The elder Richard of Exeter had acted as sheriff of Dublin and Trim in 1294-5 and 1297 respectively, had regularly been appointed as an itinerant justice between 1258 and 1269 and had served as deputy justiciar in 1270 before his death which had occurred by May 1301.109 His son and namesake was employed as sheriff of Roscommon in 1301. He served as a justice of the common bench between 1302 and 1324, becoming chief justice, and also held the office of keeper of the castle of Roscommon.110 It seems likely that both Richards were granted lands by the de Verduns, for the partition reveals that Elizabeth the widow of Richard of Exeter held a share of Stephenstoun along with

105 The survey of 1316, which is part of the inquisition post mortem taken after the death of Theobald II, is not exact. Philip and Rhys are simply listed along with other tenants in two groups of manors.
106 CCR, 1296-1302, p. 44; CCR, 1313-18, p. 253; CPR, 1313-17, pp. 318, 322.
107 CPR, 1307-13, pp. 53, 62.
108 ibid, p. 237; CPR, 1313-17, pp. 109, 123, 482.
109 CDI, 4, nos. 129, 139, 226, 408, 806.
110 CJRI, 2, pp. 11, 13, 299, 355, 359, 491, 502-3.
a fee and a half in Brounestoun, Verdonstoun and Philipstoun in Ferrard, while Richard of Exeter (presumably the younger Richard) held Stachallan in Slane.

The intention behind the retaining of such men was to enhance the patron's chances of winning any legal disputes which might arise. "The support of influential men, however, was in itself not always sufficient to guarantee victory for the lord. Juries had to be packed, sheriffs and sub-sheriffs won over, and the threat of force always held in reserve."\textsuperscript{111} It would, of course, be easier to win sheriffs over if they had associations with a family and it is notable in this respect that a number of sheriffs in later thirteenth-century Ireland were in Theobald de Verdun's pay. In 1284, Nicholas de Netterville was described as one of Theobald I de Verdun's household knights. Netterville had served as sheriff of Louth from 1281-4 and in 1285 was made a royal justice and assigned to Louth. In 1297 the sheriff of Dublin was a Richard Taff, who held lands from the de Verduns in Ferrard.\textsuperscript{112} Similarly, in 1302 Theobald is recorded as having given his fee and livery to the sheriff of Dublin.\textsuperscript{113} Links of some kind, even if they cannot be proven, must also be suspected with Walter Dovedale who was sheriff of Louth but whose toponym relates to a manor just a few miles from Alton in Staffordshire and with Roger Gernon, another sheriff of that county. In England too, the de Verduns must have had periods of increased influence when William of Caverswall acted as sheriff of Staffordshire in 1261 and then as bailiff of Totmonslow hundred (from 1267 until his death).

\textit{Court and following.}

The evidence for an analysis of the de Verduns' courts or a discussion of the identities of their followers is far from complete. Matthew Paris did not provide a list of John de Verdun's friends as he did for his contemporary William de Valence. Nor were connections with the king's court sufficiently close for their identities to have been recorded in the various royal rolls.\textsuperscript{114} Neither are there the various protection lists from which, in the case of Aymer de Valence, it is possible to

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{CJRL}, 1, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{113} ibid, pp. 387.
establish the names of those men and retainers who accompanied him in war or on diplomatic expeditions. Instead, the material for such an exercise rests largely in the family’s surviving acta, these being only occasionally supplemented by references in both charters issued by other landholders and the various centrally produced rolls.

The de Verduns’ court is referred to as the curia in all contemporary documents, suggesting, according to Judith Green’s interpretation for the court of Henry I, an occasion “where [they] took counsel and dispensed justice to [their] subjects.” Crouch, when discussing the Beaumonts’ curia, makes the further point that this body was also intended to express the family’s power through its demonstration of the allegiance of dependants. The de Verduns’ curia is first mentioned in the reign of Henry II, probably at the beginning of the 1180’s, when in a witness list to a charter issued by Henry de Clinton several men are noted as belonging to “the court of Bertram de Verdun.” At about the same time, Bertram III de Verdun made reference to his court in the charter by which he granted Sheen to Hugh of Okeover. There are also some references to the de Verduns’ manor courts. An assize roll entry states that Nicholas de Verdun increased the geographical extent of the jurisdiction of his court at Alton, and from this and other similar records we know that the court met every three weeks. This was also the case for the manor court at Brandon which is mentioned in the hundred rolls of 1279-80. In Duleek in Ireland, however, the manor court met every two weeks. Such details are generally contained in pleas or inquisitions which perhaps emphasise the family’s concern to ensure that suit of court was performed, for it was at court that the power and influence of the family could best be demonstrated publicly. There seems, though, to have been little dispute about performing such suit by tenants who were, instead, mainly concerned to avoid any question of their owing military service for their lands.

118 BL, Harley MS 3650, fos. 8-8v.
119 WS new series, 7, no. 13, pp. 135-6.
120 WS, 6/1, p. 265.
122 CFR, 1327-37, p. 47.
Stenton wrote that "the Leges Henrici Primi warn a man who is about to hold a plea in his own court 'or in any place where the business is transacted' to bring together his pares and neighbours to afforce the court - a passage helping incidentally to explain the frequency with which feudal charters are addressed to the grantors friends as well as to his men."[123] Greenway, in a similar vein, stated that "the address clauses of charters - to 'all my men and friends' - reveal the general nature of the company present at the sessions of the honour court."[124] These comments suggest that it might be worth examining the address clauses of the de Verduns' surviving acta for some indication as to the composition of their court.

Not all the surviving acta come complete with their address clauses. Of those of Bertram III's that do, however, five are addressed "to all his men and friends" while another two are addressed simply "to all his men". Two others are addressed "to all sons of Holy Mother Church" or something similar. The one surviving charter issued by Thomas de Verdun to have retained its address clause is directed at "all his men". Nicholas de Verdun's charters are addressed more generally. At least ten, and probably an eleventh which has lost part of this clause, are addressed simply to those "as much of the present as of the future." So too is one of Roesia de Verdun's charters, with two others being addressed "to all Christ's faithful".

From this, it seems that apart from the apparent abandonment of an address directed to all their men and friends, there is little uniformity in the diplomatic of the surviving address clauses of the de Verduns' charters. Nor is this in any way unusual. The charters issued by Margaret de Bohun between 1165 and 1197 show similar variations and choice in address and the same is true of those charters issued by William Vernon, earl of Devon, between 1191 and 1217 and those of Ranulf III of Chester.[125] The only definite pattern that does emerge from such a study is that when charters are addressed "to all Christ's faithful", "to all sons of

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Holy Mother Church" and other variations on this theme, they all contain gifts to an ecclesiastic or a religious institution.

In fact, despite the words of Stenton and Greenway there is little reason to suppose that the address clauses in de Verdun charters, or indeed the great majority of those issued by any other lord, do very much to indicate the composition of that lord's court. A charter is a written record of a gift and, it is generally agreed, issued subsequent to it - hence the verbs of the dispositive clause being in the perfect tense. The purpose of the charter, then, was to prove a claim to the title of a piece of land or a rent or some other property real or otherwise. In this capacity, charters might be produced in courts other than that of the lord who made the gift and issued the charter in the first place. The address of any charter needs to be seen in this context. 'To all his men and friends' is not an indication of the composition of an honour court, but a wide-ranging address intended to embrace as wide an audience as possible. While the use of the term 'his men' is unambiguous, it is likely that 'friends' has a broader meaning than that given to it in the present day. It could simply refer to anybody who would be prepared to recognise the validity of the charter. It is, then, a general address, less specific than the kings' hierarchically arranged list of ecclesiastics and laymen but serving the same purpose. Nor does it necessarily apply to those who attended the court. The address includes men and friends of the future as much as of the present. Attempting to establish the composition of any magnate's court from the choice of phrase by which he or she opened their charters - even when they included phrases like "men and friends" - is thus unlikely to produce any solid result.

Instead, it is the witness lists of these charters that provide in the main what evidence there is for the identification of a lord's followers in general and the de Verduns' followers in particular. Crouch, when studying William Marshal, noted that those who appear in the witness lists of his charters are the same men who appear in the near contemporary Histoire. This, he argues, vindicates the use of witness lists in establishing the identities of baronial followers.\(^{126}\) However, the use of witness lists for establishing the names of the followers of the de Verdun family remains problematic - especially as there are so few of them. When Stringer studied the career of David of Huntingdon he had the luxury of fifty-five witness lists. Anyone who witnessed three times or less was consequently dismissed as a

follower of the earl. Yet to find an individual attesting three or more of Bertram III de Verdun's charters is extremely unusual. Most attest only once, as the table below shows. This, of course, makes it difficult to distinguish the real family followers from the birds of passage (to use Stringer's phrase). Sometimes help can be found in the charters themselves. In a very few cases place-dates reveal that charters were made outside the de Verduns' own centres of power - one *conventio* of Nicholas de Verdun's, for example, was dated to 1206 at Portsmouth. When individuals attest a document like this and then fail to appear with the de Verduns ever again, it is likely that they appear through the happy coincidence of being in the same place at the same time rather than through any real connection with the family. Such men have thus been excluded from what follows. Often, though, there are no such clues. It has therefore seemed best to dismiss all those who attested only once as members of the de Verduns' court or following and to exclude them from the following discussion.

The result of this, as will be seen from the figures in table 4.2 below, is that the vast majority of those who attest the family's surviving acta must be written off as members of any inner circle of followers and friends. Instead, they form a group comprised of royal clerks, the sons and friends of men with whom the various generations of the family were connected (men like Bertram III de Verdun's patron Richard de Humez), along with neighbours and, presumably, acquaintances of all kinds who happened to be with Bertram III, or any of his progeny, on the day when the charter was drawn up and witnessed.

The two tables below illustrate further problems with the evidence as it stands. The chronological spread of the surviving de Verdun acta is very uneven. Most date from between the tenures of Bertram III and Roesia de Verdun (c.1155-1247) and there is a corresponding and consequent weighting of witnesses towards this same period. As such, the examination of the de Verduns' following has tended to concentrate on the interval between these years rather more than on the later thirteenth century and the rules of John and Theobalds I and II de Verdun. Equally, the bulk of the charters originated in England, with the result that the discussion below generally excludes a consideration of the de Verduns' following in Ireland.

Despite their small numbers and the constantly shifting pattern of the attestors themselves, the witness lists of the de Verduns' charters do provide the identities of

several men who can be considered core members of the followings of Bertram III (c.1155-1192) and Nicholas de Verdun (1199-1231).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issuer's Name</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Attests x1</th>
<th>Attests x2</th>
<th>Attests x3</th>
<th>Attests x4</th>
<th>Attests x5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bertram III</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roesia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theobald I</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Showing the frequency of attestation by individuals in the witness lists of de Verdun acta.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issuer's Name</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Tenant</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bertram III</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roesia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theobald I</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3. Numbers of witnesses in de Verdun acta and their origins.

The earliest of these figures is Adam of Audley who witnesses five of Bertram's charters. His toponym reveals that he must have held land in Audley, if not the manor itself, from Bertram III de Verdun. Unfortunately, it is not clear if Nicholas de Verdun's grant of Audley to Henry of Audley - which had taken place by 1227 - was a new gift or simply a confirmation of an already existing one, although it seems clear that it must have been made after 1166.\(^\text{128}\) Although he is given no official position, Adam accounted at the Exchequer for Bertram III on occasion and his importance to de Verdun is suggested even more pointedly in a charter of Richard fitzHubert's found in the Kenilworth cartulary, in which Adam of Audley is described as "sheriff of Warwick" without qualification.\(^\text{129}\) However, he did not spend his time exclusively at de Verdun's side. He can be found attesting charters entirely independently of the de Verduns in Warwickshire, and especially in

\(^{128}\) CChR, 1, p. 36. The grant must have been made after 1166 as Bertram III's carta does not mention the tenancy, the manor being held in chief as one knight's fee.

\(^{129}\) BL, Harley MS 3680, fo. 22v.
Staffordshire, which can be used to show that he lived until at least 1210.\textsuperscript{130} The pattern of his charter attestations reveal likely associations with the Bagots, but Adam also held land at Bagnall from Ivo Pantulf of Wem\textsuperscript{131} and probably also had connections with the Muttons - a family which came to hold land in Ireland under Bertram III.

This connection continued into the next generation. Adam witnessed one of Thomas de Verdun's charters\textsuperscript{132} and his own son, Henry of Audley, was prominent at the court of Nicholas de Verdun, as is evidenced by his attestation of two of Nicholas' charters.\textsuperscript{133} His links with the de Verduns are further highlighted by a grant of a pasture on Morridge (to the east of Leek) to Croxden abbey.\textsuperscript{134} His proximity to de Verdun may have led to the furtherance of Henry's career, although there is no evidence that Nicholas de Verdun gave him any material help himself. Instead, Henry began his career as constable to Nicholas de Verdun's brother-in-law Hugh II de Lacy when he was earl of Ulster - an office which had previously been held by his elder brother, Adam.\textsuperscript{135} On Hugh's disgrace in 1214, Audley attached himself to Ranulf III of Chester, witnessing a total of twenty-eight of the earl's charters. Between 1216 and 1221 he served as sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire and also acted as deputy for Ranulf III, by whom he was rewarded with grants of lands in Newhall (Cheshire) and Alstonfield (Staffordshire) and with rents from Tunstall, Chatterley, Chell, Thursfield, Bradwell and Normacot between 1217 and 1227.\textsuperscript{136} Indeed, by 1227 Henry had acquired a lengthy catalogue of lands and rents across Staffordshire and Cheshire including all the land that Aenora Malbank held in Cheshire within the Lyme (which he had received by about 1214), as well as the site of Heighley castle near Audley, which became the Audley family seat, which was granted to him by Henry of Bettley and Hervey of Stafford. Henry advertised his successes in the time honoured way by founding the Cistercian abbey at Hulton between 1219 and 1223.\textsuperscript{137} From his service with Ranulf of Chester, Henry went on to become a royal official, being entrusted with several Welsh border castles by the crown

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{130} WS, 2/1, pp. 256, 263, 266.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 320v.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} WS, vol 1911, p. 422; SRS, vol 1937, no. 41, p. 24.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} BL, Cotton Charter xi.38; VCH, Staffordshire, 3, p. 226.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} CChR, 1, p. 36.
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Ibid, p. 36; G. Barraclough, Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, no. 396.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} VCH, Staffordshire, 3, p. 235. There were brethren at the abbey by 1219 but Henry did not give the monks a foundation charter until 1223.
\end{itemize}
between 1223 and his death which occurred shortly before November 1246 when his son did homage for his lands.138

It has long been suspected that the Audleys were related to the de Verduns in some way. Wrottesley stated the case most strongly, arguing that it was "remarkable that no service except fealty was due to the Verduns for most of [their] lands, and this strengthens the opinion which has been usually held by archaeologists, that the Audleys were a younger branch of the Verdons of Alton."139 The argument is based on shaky ground, however. The inquisition post mortem taken after John de Verdurfs death in 1274 states that the Audleys held their lands from the de Verduns for one knight's fee. The inquisitions which followed the deaths of James, Henry and William of Audley in 1274, 1276 and 1283 respectively all state that they held various lands of John and Theobald I de Verdun for the (reduced) service of half a knight's fee.140 The key-stone of Wrottesley's argument can thus be dismissed. Nor is there any other unambiguous evidence for a marriage between de Verdun and Audley at any point. Even the fact that the Audleys' coat of arms was that of the de Verduns' with the tinctures reversed need not suggest cadency, for a lord's chief tenants might adopt such a bearing.

With no individual witnessing more than three of Nicholas de Verdun's charters, it is difficult to single out any individuals who might have formed the inner circle of his following with the single of exception of the one man who attested de Verdun's charters on both sides of the Irish Sea. This man was Henry of Wootton. Henry first appears at the de Verduns' court in the time of Bertram III where he 'Witnessed de Verdun's grant of Sheen to Hugh of Okeover.141 He may have been granted land in county Louth by 1191 as a Wootonrathe existed there by that time.142 Before 1225, this grant was further supplemented by one in which Nicholas granted him four fees in Cnockterling and another in Kane in Uriel.143 That he was of some importance in Nicholas' household is further suggested by the fact that King John took his second son, William, as hostage for Nicholas de Verdun's

139 WS, 3/1, p. 225.
140 CIPM, 2, nos. 97, 196, 476.
141 WS new series, 7, no. 13, pp. 135-6.
143 Chartularies, 1, pp. 65-6.
loyalty before 1215. Like Adam of Audley, Henry of Wootton appears in Staffordshire independently of Nicholas de Verdun. At some date after 1184, he granted Rocester abbey two bovates in Suenesco and an assart in Wadhul, the charter being attested by Hugh of Okeover and Philip of Draycote. His employment on local juries saw him in the company of other families who also had links with the de Verduns such as William of Ipstones, Nicholas de Verdun's cousin, John de Saucheverel and Nicholas of Mutton.

O'Halloran suggested that the family could have originated from Somerset but considered that "in view of their strong connections with the de Verduns... it seems more likely that they came from the hundred of Wutton in Warwickshire, where they would have been neighbours of the Verduns." This is a view followed by Brendan Smith but it is likely to be an erroneous one. It would, for a start, be extremely unusual for a family to have taken their toponym from a hundred rather than from a manor. Instead, it seems much more likely that the Woottons took their name from the manor of Wootton (now Wootton-under-Weaver), which is found just to the north of the de Verduns' manor of Alton and was, at this time, a member of it. A record of the family's endowment in the manor may survive in the 1274 inquisition post mortem when Hugh of Wootton can be found holding one virgate of land for 10s. rent. That Henry came from Staffordshire is also suggested by his service on Staffordshire juries and his grant to nearby Rocester.

These are the names that stand out when examining the charters issued by the various generations of the family. However, it may be that the identities of others who formed the core of the court might be established if instead of looking at the appearance of individuals in the charters issued by one member of the family a wider view is taken and individuals or families appearing over several generations are considered too. In such a way if Henry of Wootton's position in Nicholas' following was not already clear on account of his grants from, and travels with, his lord, it would have been strongly suggested by his longevity at the de Verduns' court where he saw three generations of the family come and go. Taking such an approach does indeed result in new names - of both individuals and families - standing out as being prominent amongst those who attest the extant charters.

144 CDI, 1, no. 624.
145 WS new series, 7, pp. 174-5; WS, 3/1, pp. 105-6, 118.
147 PRO, C133/7/1; WS, vol 1911, p. 160.
William Pantulf is one such individual. He can be found with Norman Pantulf at the court of Bertram III and by himself at those of Nicholas and Roesia de Verdun witnessing seven times in total. William Pantulf, whose family had its caput at Wem (Shropshire), was the son of Ivo Pantulf who can be found granting lands to Shrewsbury, Combermere and Haughmond abbeys. This Ivo took as his second wife Alicia de Verdun, Norman de Verdun's sister, and William was one of the sons of this marriage. He was, therefore, Bertram III de Verdun's cousin. There is little evidence for the later history of this branch of the family. By November 1227 at the latest, William Pantulf - probably the same man - held land in the manor of Hales in Staffordshire, recorded as being half a knights' fee in the survey of 1242-3, from the fitzAlans. Interestingly, in 1228 William Pantulf stood surety for Henry of Audley's champion in a duel against Hervey Bagot over Horton, an action which reveals links with another family closely associated with the de Verduns.

From a later period comes William of Caverswall who attested charters issued by Roesia, John and Theobald I de Verdun in a career covering about forty-five years. William of Caverswall was sheriff of Staffordshire in 1261 and went on to farm Totmonslow hundred in the county from 1267. By 1272 he held the hundred for life for a rent of £10 per year. In 1262 he stood surety for Philip Marmiun who had damaged Ralph Basset's mill at Bitlescote and carried away the flour from there to his castle at Tamworth in an effort to distrain Ralph. William's action here suggests he had connections with another of the county's more important lords. Other than this, William of Caverswall was frequently employed on Staffordshire juries and can be found accumulating small parcels of land in the county. Fines made in 1272 reveal he held three virgates in Holm and a messuage and two bovates in Quikeshull. Other pleas in the same year suggest that he had recently acquired a messuage and twenty acres in Fulford and a messuage and six acres in Mulewys and Cotes.

Apart from these two individuals, three families stand out over time, two of which are rather obscure. Members of the first of these, the Praers family, are

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148 *WS*, 4/1, p. 226; *BF*, pp. 969, 974.
149 *WS*, 4/1, p. 50.
150 PRO, E372/105, memb. 1v.; E372/111, memb. 3.
151 *WS*, 4/1, pp. 151-2.
152 For example, *WS*, 4/1, pp. 200-2.
153 *WS*, 4/1, pp. 254-5, 258-9, 196, 199.
prominent in the charters issued by the earls of Chester and it was most probably their connection with the earldom that led to their association with the de Verduns. By 1119 Richard de Praers, who is described as a baron of the earl of Chester, had given Noctorum on the Wirral to Chester abbey and the grant was witnessed by his sons William and Adam. Adam also attests a charter of Ranulf I to Chester abbey, which might be spurious, along with several charters of Ranulf II. A Matthew and Robert de Praers also made a grant to Savigny which suggests a Norman, or at least French, origin in or near the Avranchin. This grant even opens up the possibility that there might have been associations between the Praers and de Verduns before the Conquest. A tenurial link between the families was established in the time of Bertram III when he granted to Henry de Praers "for his homage and service Saxa the daughter of Norman de Beaumont with her part of the whole of the fee of the said Norman, namely all Dorsington, etc." This was held for one knight's fee in 1316. The de Verduns may also have granted land in Ireland to the Praers family as by 1227 Henry de Praers had given land in Ireland previously held by Thomas de Praers to Henry of Audley.

The Normanvilles are equally shadowy. The connection between the families probably arose when Bertram III was given Burton Overy by the earl of Leicester, probably after 1174, as Ralph de Normanville appears to have been the earl's tenant on that manor. The Normanvilles may also have been granted lands in Ireland by Bertram III. Certainly a member of the family held property there by 1191. A total of four members of the family attested charters issued by Bertram III himself and by his granddaughter Roesia de Verdun.

The third family, and the one with the longest record of attestation of de Verdun charters, was that of Draycote. At some point between 1158 and 1184 Bertram III gave "to Hugh de Draycote and his heirs, the whole land which is of my fee of

156 Oxford, Queens College Library, MS 149, fo. 69.
157 *CIPM*, 6, no. 54, p. 38.
158 *CChR*, 1, p. 37.
Newton (in Totmsonslow hundred, Staffordshire), with all appurtenances, to be held from me and my heirs for ten shillings rendered annually for every service. Hugh's son, Philip, subsequently attested Bertram III de Verdun's Croxden abbey foundation charter, but there is then a considerable gap until a later Philip of Draycote attests one of John de Verdun's charters and Richard of Draycote, Philip's son, one of Theobald I's. This family, which also held lands in Draycote, Stalinton, Cresswall, and Leyes by 1294 was active in Staffordshire, with members serving on juries and acting in various pleas. Indeed, they also held office for a time in the county as Philip Draycote was described as a coroner in 1293. Interestingly, there was also a connection between the Draycotes and William of Caverswall. A case of 1271 reveals Philip of Draycote and Caverswall being jointly accused of disseising Richard le Parker of forty acres of common in Fulford, while in 1269 the prior of Stanes sued Philip to acquit him of the service which William Caverswall demanded from his tenement at Stalinton which the prior held of Philip.

The surviving evidence allows only these few individuals and families to be identified as members of the core of the de Verduns' followings. Even amongst this limited number, however, several trends are obvious. All were knights, albeit of differing status within that class. Henry of Audley and William of Caverswall, for example, possessed their own castles while Henry of Wootton or the Draycotes were of a lower degree. Equally, when they are known, the interests of all these men and families, with the exception of the Normanvilles, were centred on Staffordshire. This confirms something that might have been already suspected - that the core of the following was recruited from the area in which the de Verdun family's own power was centred, around their chief castle in the area where their lands were most closely concentrated. This fact might also suggest that the family was not able to extend its power elsewhere successfully, but could only consolidate its hold in Staffordshire, particularly in the north-east of the county.

Not unconnected with this last point is the fact that all the men and families mentioned, bar William Pantulf, were tenants of the de Verduns. It is important to point out here, however, that it is not entirely clear when some of these men

161 *WS*, 3/1, p. 225.
162 *WS*, new series, 12, p. 13; Stafford, Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/4.
163 *WS*, 6/1, p. 298.
164 *ibid*, p. 282.
165 *ibid*, p. 49; *WS*, 4/1, p. 178
attained that station. Some families, such as the Audleys and Woottons, lived on
manors that were owned by the de Verduns and had thus always been their tenants.
Others, such as the Draycote, Okeover and Praers families, became tenants at a
certain point, in these cases this point being when Bertram III gave them land.
Whether such a grant marked the beginning of a close association between families
or was simply a reward for previous service is unknown. Pantulf himself was
related through marriage and is in that respect unusual, not just in terms of his
place at the centre of the court, but in his very presence there. The evidence of the
witness lists reveals no other figure who was related through marriage attesting a
charter. Ferrers, Basset, Butler, Lacy, Cogan, Bohun and Mortimer fail to appear
in charters made at the de Verduns' courts. The only significant family relationships
were those which existed between other members and branches of the de Verdun
family itself, and these will be examined in the next chapter.

It is, of course, not surprising that a large number of the de Verduns' tenants were
found at the centre of their court. The tenants of every magnate or baron were
supposed to perform suit at their lord's court. "The tenant was expected to assist
the lord in his affairs, give counsel, and attend him as a suitor and judge in the
formal meetings of his court." Indeed, such requirements can be found in de
Verdun grants and in records of the services owed for lands. After 1179, Bertram
III granted to Hugh of Okeover "the whole land of Sheen with all its
appurtenances." He was to hold of Bertram "freely and absolved and quit from all
exaction and service" except that Hugh and his heirs were to come "to afforce my
court, but only if reasonably summoned by myself or my seneschal." Between
1231 and 1247 Thomas de Lecthon and Felicia daughter of Denis of Darlaston, his
wife, made recognition for themselves and others "that they ought to do service in
the court of Roesia de Verdun at Alton in perpetuity." Equally, Simon de
Criketote held certain lands of Theobald de Verdun in Listornan in Meath for 20s.
scutage and doing suit at court at Duleek every two weeks. However, the names
of many more tenants than those who appear in the surviving charters are known
and this suggests that we are seeing a close relationship between certain tenants
and their lord here rather than simply a fulfilling of obligations.

166 K. Stringer, Earl David of Huntingdon, 1152-1219: A Study in Anglo-Scottish History
(Edinburgh, 1985), p. 163.
168 WS new series, 12, pp. 13-14.
169 CFR, 1327-37, p. 47.
This is a pattern that can be seen in the courts and followings of other magnates in the twelfth century. The witness lists of the charters issued by members of the Mowbray family down to 1191 reveal that "the lord's family and the members of his household were joined by a heterogeneous group of men who came from the middle and lower ranks of the free tenantry. This group included knights holding as many as five fees, as well as lesser tenants holding fractions of fees, sub-tenures or estates in socage"170 For David of Huntingdon, "significantly more than half the inner circle... demonstrably held of Earl David by lay tenure."171 However, this situation appears to have been beginning to change during the first two decades of the thirteenth century. William Marshal's knights were generally not his tenants, twelve out of eighteen identified by Crouch having no such tenurial relationship with him.172 Instead, they seem to have been recruited on account of their territorial interests. The Bloets for example were important in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset - just where the Marshal was trying to build up his own area of influence. Equally, although Simon de Montfort's affinity did include some of de Montfort's tenants, "the majority of Montfort's closest followers were his neighbours but not his tenants. Here he was able to take advantage of the good fortune which had removed the leading rivals to his local supremacy."173 The following of Montfort's contemporary, Earl Roger de Quincy of Winchester (d. 1264), has also been studied and the inner and outer circles of this following identified. "In neither circle were the earl's tenants significantly represented."174

That the inner circle of de Verduns' English following remained tenant-based well into the thirteenth century, and perhaps even throughout it, thus appears to stand against the model provided by these examples. It might, however, be possible to explain why the de Verduns' following apparently remained based on the tenantry. Unlike Simon de Montfort, the de Verduns' always faced a number of rivals to their local supremacy, the most obvious of whom were the earls of Chester and the Ferrers earls of Derby. This might have led to difficulties in attracting neighbours to their court. Equally, in his survey of the thirteenth century Harding noted that the importance of tenurial links decreased as the kings' government began working with the knights of the shire.175 In response, the aristocracy focused their attentions

171 K. Stringer, Earl David of Huntingdon, p. 163.
172 D. Crouch, William Marshal, p. 138.
175 ibid, p. 259.
on retaining county officials and members of what can be called the county gentry. It is this very process that might be responsible for the continuing importance of the de Verduns' tenantry in their following because the county officials and gentry of Staffordshire were, by and large, also tenants of the de Verduns. Examples have already been given, but they can be recapped here. William of Caverswall was sheriff of Staffordshire and then bailiff of Totmonslow hundred. Philip of Draycote was a Staffordshire coroner in or about 1293. Robert of Bucknall was both steward of Theobald I de Verdun and bailiff of Totmonslow hundred in 1303 and his toponym suggests that he was at least a neighbour of the de Verduns' in Bucknall if not a tenant of the family there. Equally a great number of the de Verduns' tenant witnesses, including Henry of Denstone, Henry of Wootton, the Draycotes and William of Caverswall, were employed as jurors in the county. It might be the case, therefore, that tenants maintained their predominance in the de Verduns' following simply because they were one and the same as those men whom the thirteenth-century aristocracy in general were targeting for recruitment into their households.

If it was the intention of the de Verduns to increase their influence in the county by retaining such officials, then their schemes appear to have failed. John de Verdun might have unjustly taken "by force and unjustly passagium through [his] demesne lands and elsewhere" and he might have appropriated a wood to his warren and free chase at Alton, but the weight of his power was not sufficient to smother the cries of those whom he oppressed who clearly felt no fear in complaining to the king about his actions. Indeed, even the abbot of the family's own abbey at Croxden complained in 1293 that Theobald was £8 in arrears on a rent of 40s. which had been given to the abbey by Roesia de Verdun.

Instead, it seems that it was the lack of any rival power centre rather than the recruitment of county officials that allowed the de Verduns', and aristocratic families in general, to act in anything approaching an arbitrary fashion. In the Welsh marcher lordship of Ewias Lacy, for example, the de Verduns had no rival to their power. Even the de Gennevilles, who held the other moiety of the lordship, failed to provide an alternative focus, probably because it was the de Verduns who held the chief castle of the lordship. Here, Theobald de Verdun could do as he wished. He could terrorise the prior of Llanthony in his dispute over the limits of

176 PRO, SC5/Staffs/3; WS, 5/1, p. 119.
177 WS, 6/1, p. 223.
his jurisdiction or he could drive the sheriff of Hereford from his lordship by force and the arms of a thousand Welshmen. It was only Edward I himself who could bring Theobald to heel, but even he could not secure a verdict against Theobald from a jury raised in de Verdun's lordship. It is events in county Louth at the beginning of the fourteenth century, however, that provide the best examples of the extent of the de Verduns' power over their own estates. Theobald II de Verdun's brother, Nicholas, could "pursue a vendetta against John del Aunee which involved raiding his land and having his crops taken in lieu of payment of damages," while Milo de Verdun, his brother, could allow Richard de Tuyt to take pigs in lieu of rent. Indeed, in 1312, Robert, Nicholas and Milo de Verdun were able to persuade the embryonic county community to follow their lead, raise a force and defeat the king's army following unwelcome royal interventions in the county. In part, the family could act in this manner because many of the tenants in county Louth held their lands from the de Verduns and consequently owed them their homage and service, but their power was strengthened further by the lack of any alternative to it in the area. The old Pipard lands based around Ardee had been acquired by exchange by the crown in 1301-2, but the vacuum left by the departure of one of the two families closely connected with Louth was not filled. There was thus no alternative to the de Verduns' power and, it would seem, little hope of getting justice against them from the justiciar in Dublin.

Neighbours, as opposed to tenants, do not seem to have been included in the core of the following at any point. Most attest just once, none more than twice. If once is chance and twice only coincidence, then their position in the following is at best uncertain. Some names, however, are pushed forwards by the notable geographical distances between their attestations or by some scrap of supplementary evidence which hints that their association with the de Verduns was more than just coincidental.

The first of these figures is Gilbert of Segrave. Gilbert attested two of Bertram III de Verdun's charters but - and it is this which suggests a more than passing relationship between the two men - also attested a charter issued by Henry de Clinton at Clinton's own court but in the presence of Bertram III and amongst a number of witnesses from Bertram's court. Gilbert's father, Hereward, held land

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179 BL, Harley MS 3650, fo. 8. He is found between Arnold of Barton and Robert, the clerk of Alton.
in Segrave in Leicestershire - which is located near to the de Verdun lands around Belton - by the beginning of the twelfth century and by 1218 this was held of St Mary de Pré and the earl of Chester. By 1166, Gilbert had also acquired Brailes in Warwickshire from the earl of Warwick. By the last decade of Henry II's reign, Gilbert of Segrave had entered royal service, the pipe rolls showing that in 1187-8 he accounted for the revenues of St Mary's abbey, Leicester, along with Robert, a canon of the same house. His rise continued under Richard I. In 1192-3 he accounted for the farm of the counties of Warwick and Leicester on behalf of Hugh, bishop of Coventry, and in 1195 and 1197 did the same for William d'Aubigny. In 1196 he was justice in eyre for Lincolnshire with Henry of Whiston. He died before Michaelmas 1201.

A second figure also stands out amongst those who attest Bertram III's charters. Gilbert Pipard held six fees of the honour of Wallingford, including Rotherfield Peppard, which took its name from the family. Like Bertram III, Gilbert was prominent in Henry II's service, being sheriff of Gloucestershire from 1167-71, sheriff of Herefordshire between 1171 and 1173 and sheriff of Lancashire from 1185-9 as well as being employed as an itinerant justice. From 1176 Pipard was a baron of the Norman exchequer and in 1179-80 was the keeper of Exmes. He farmed Chester from 1181-5, at which point he went to Ireland with Bertram de Verdun, where in c.1189 he was granted lands centred on Ardee in county Louth. He died September 1191 at Brindisi on his way to the Holy Land. Gilbert Pipard and Bertram III de Verdun seem to have formed a close bond from about 1180, at about the same time as Richard de Humez, Bertram III's patron, died. They frequently appear together in charters issued by Henry II in France, England and Ireland, in which their names are often found adjacent to each other in witness lists. The strength of this relationship is also suggested by their being granted neighbouring lands in Ireland and by Gilbert's attestation of two of Bertram III's charters.

This relationship, then, originated at court and went on to effect the settlement of Anglo-Norman Ireland. In this respect it was of a different nature to the

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relationship with Segrave - and perhaps one with Walter Camvill who also witnessed two of Bertram III's charters - which appear to have their origin, at least in part, in the proximity of Bertram III de Verdun's estates to their own. It is interesting to note that the two most prominent of Bertram III's followers who were not his tenants were from Leicestershire and Warwickshire rather than Staffordshire. It perhaps indicates a desire by Bertram to increase his influence in the area. If this was the intention then it is notable that Bertram was successful only on a personal level because neither man appears again in charters issued by Thomas or Nicholas de Verdun. Indeed, Gerard de Camvill and his son, Richard, were involved in hostile litigation with Nicholas over the dower of Thomas de Verdun's widow, Eustachia, whom Richard had subsequently married. In this case, perhaps the relationships with Segrave and Camvill are attributable to the fact that Bertram was sheriff of Warwick and Leicester for fifteen years (from 1170-85) as well as being close to the king. These factors would have made him and his court a likely focus for those desiring to further their own family's fortunes. That this was indeed the case is also suggested by a decline in the status of those neighbours found attesting de Verdun charters after Bertram III's death and before 1247 when John de Verdun's marriage to Margery de Lacy gave the family in its own right more power and influence than it had ever had before.

Under Nicholas de Verdun, William Charnelles stands out through attesting two of his charters. He held three carucates in Wymondham in Leicestershire with Hugh Pusleg in 1236 and the heirs of William Charnelles held half a fee there and in Elmesthorp, again in Leicestershire, of the earl of Warwick in 1242-3. William had held this latter manor from at least 1226. A second figure, Richard Garshale, attested charters issued by both Thomas and Nicholas de Verdun and held (an unspecified) part of Burton-on-Dunsmore in Warwickshire from the de Verduns by 1236 at the latest. Both Charnelles and Garshale can be found at Portsmouth with Nicholas de Verdun in 1206 which might be taken as evidence for a closer relationship with de Verdun than a count of attestations alone suggests.

Roesia de Verdun's charters are attested chiefly by members of her own family and by tenants such as Henry of Audley. One figure does stand out amongst those

182 See the biography of Nicholas de Verdun in chapter one above.
184 Book of Fees, p. 507.
witnesses with no known tenurial connection with the family. This is William de Martinwast who attested three of Roesia's nine charters. He held lands at Noseley and Goadby in Leicestershire,\textsuperscript{186} manors which lay close to de Verdun possessions at Skeffington, Tugby and Halstead in the same county. Indeed, by 1316 Theobald II de Verdun held land in Noseley itself,\textsuperscript{187} hinting that their lands may have bordered each other even more closely.

Following the trend set by Segrave, Camvill and Pipard, none of these unusually prominent neighbours attested the charters of more than a single generation of the family so that it can be assumed that the relationships were of a personal nature. It is, however, interesting to note that the landed interests of all these characters were centred outside Staffordshire. Instead, they were based in Warwickshire or Leicestershire where the de Verduns' had demesne manors at Brandon in Warwickshire and at Lutterworth, Cotesbach, Newbold Verdun and - before 1231-2 at least - Belton in Leicestershire. Indeed, it may well be the case that the appearance of these men at the de Verduns' court was related to an attempt to build up de Verdun influence in these two midland counties. While it is clear that their Staffordshire estates remained important to them and continued to occupy their attention - as is evidenced by Nicholas de Verdun's expansion of the jurisdiction of his manor court at Alton as well as by Roesia and John de Verdun's gifts to Croxden abbey - it is clear that the period between c.1170 and 1274 saw the family taking an increased interest in their estates in Warwick and Leicester. Bertram III probably acquired Burton Overy and Bosworth between 1174 and 1179. In or around 1228, Nicholas de Verdun constructed a new masonry castle at Brandon, while Roesia de Verdun established a house of Augustinian nuns near the old demesne manor at Belton in 1231-2. It is equally noteworthy that between 1199 and 1274, all the family's debts were recorded in the pipe rolls under the account for Warwick and Leicester rather than under Staffordshire as they had been before and were to be again afterwards. This also seems to suggest a change in geographical emphasis.

It is not entirely clear what, if anything, the de Verduns' followers received in return for their service and loyalty. Some might have received grants of land, although it is difficult to establish if this is the case due to ignorance about whether they received these lands before or after serving the de Verduns. As such, it

\textsuperscript{186} VCH, Leicestershire, 5, pp. 17, 264.
\textsuperscript{187} CIPM, 6, no. 54.
remains unknown whether these grants provided the starting point for the connection with the de Verduns or were instead the result of services already rendered. It is only in the case of the Woottons, and probably the Audleys, that any solid conclusions can be drawn. Henry of Wootton was granted five knight's fees in Ireland by Nicholas de Verdun, having made his first appearance at the court of Bertram III de Verdun. In his case, it seems clear that the grant was the reward for an already lengthy record of service.

The rewards of service, then, could be great, especially as the family had a large amount of land in Ireland to grant away and, apparently, found difficulty in settling it all. However, it is clear that patronage was not restricted solely to those who formed the core of the following. It has already been noted that Hugh of Okeover was granted the manor of Sheen by Bertram III, but grants of varying amounts of land were also made to figures such as Geoffrey Cheinel, Walter Breton, Henry of Tugby and Richard del Shawe between c.1135 and 1231. With the exception of Henry of Tugby, these men fail to appear in the witness lists of any of the surviving de Verdun acta. In such cases, these grants were probably made not as rewards for service but with the intention of increasing the extent of the de Verduns' influence and, therefore, power through the tenurial link which was created and the obligation of attending the family's court which went with it.

Patronage, of course, need not reside simply in the making of grants. Those serving in any magnate's following hoped that their lord might use his influence to promote their own careers. Thus Ralph Brito entered Henry II's service as a result of his connections with Richard de Lucy and Gilbert Foliot who employed their own influence at court in Brito's favour. It is unlikely that the de Verduns - even Bertram III who was closer to his king than any other member of the family - were able to do very much to promote the careers of their own followers in this way except at the most basic level. The younger Adam and Henry of Audley, for example, probably came to the attention of Hugh de Lacy as a result of their associations with Nicholas de Verdun, who was Hugh's brother-in-law. Henry's subsequent rise under Hugh and then Ranulf III of Chester, however, owed little if anything to Nicholas. Gilbert of Segrave's entry into the king's service and his son Stephen's subsequent rise to the chief justiciarship probably also owed more to Earl Ranulf than to Bertram III or Nicholas de Verdun - although a point in Bertram

188 J. E. Lally, 'Secular Patronage at the Court of King Henry II', BIHR, 49 (1976), p. 169.
189 R. Turner, Men Raised from the Dust, p. 123.
III’s favour arises from the fact that Stephen rather than Gilbert is the first member of the family to attest any of the earldom’s charters. Indeed, the earl of Chester’s influence over the area in which the de Verduns’ own lands were most concentrated in England provides one of the greatest obstacles to assessing the extent of their ability to promote the careers of their followers. It is perhaps only in the case of the Woottons that the de Verduns can take any measure of the credit for the advancement of various members of the family. A Robert of Wootton, who attested Nicholas’ grant to Henry and acted as executor to his will, was one of the socii of Henry of London in Warwick and Leicester in 1206. William of Wootton was accused of having destroyed a wood in Shropshire which belonged to Walter de Lacy in 1207, while it had been in his custody following the death in 1186 of Hugh de Lacy.  

190 Henry of Wootton expressed his debt in his own grant to St Mary’s abbey, Dublin.  

191 The exposition clause of this charter states that the gift was made for the souls of both Bertram and Thomas de Verdun. Henry’s remembrance of his erstwhile patrons bears comparison with similar phrases in Bertram III’s charter to Croxden abbey, where Richard de Humez’s role was remembered, and in Henry of Audley’s charter for Hulton abbey which stated that masses were to be said daily for the soul of “his lord” Ranulf III of Chester as well as for Henry’s predecessors.  

192

Lay tenants.

Those tenants who made up the inner circle of the de Verduns’ following were but a small minority of the men and women who held lands from the family. After Theobald II’s death in 1316, when the de Verdun lands were at their greatest extent before their division amongst his heiresses, fifty-six named individuals held nearly fifty-four knight’s fees from the de Verduns in six English counties. A survey, probably made at about the same time in Ireland and embodied in the partition of 1332, records a total of sixty-nine named men holding something over sixty-five fees, if calculating by recorded fees, or over ninety-five fees if calculating

190 B. Smith, ‘Tenure and Locality in North Leinster in the Early Thirteenth Century’, Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland, eds. T. B. Barry et al. (London, 1995), pp. 36-7 and n. 49. 

191 Chartularies, 1, p. 66. 

192 VCH, Staffordshire, 3, p. 235. Ranulf was described as Henry’s lord in his foundation charter for the abbey.
by the value of scutage payments. Added to these were those men and women, like the Draycotes and Caverswalls, who held their land for annual rents in money or kind, many of whom are not individually named in the surviving records.

Assuming that Bertram III's *carta baronum* provides an accurate record, it is clear that the de Verduns did not begin to enfeoff tenants on their estates until after 1135. There could be a number of reasons for this, but one thing that it does suggest is that the earliest members of the family did not feel insecure on their lands. In contrast, Geoffrey de Clinton rapidly settled his lands in Warwickshire with men drawn from the vicinity of his home in Normandy, in an effort to provide himself with some reliable support against the aggression of his unwilling lord and neighbour, Earl Roger of Warwick. It may be that this security was due not only to the fact that the de Verduns do not seem to have been imposed on Staffordshire in the same way that de Clinton was in Warwickshire but also because relations between the family and the earls of Chester were, indeed, cordial. This is best evidenced by Bertram II's attestation of a charter with Earl Ranulf I in c.1124x9 and by Norman de Verdun's prominent position at the court of Ranulf II until his death in 1152-3.

Between 1135 and 1166, Ruelent de Verdun and Geoffrey Cheinel had been enfeoffed with half a knight's fee each, Geoffrey's being later recorded as consisting of Billesdon and Catthorp in Leicestershire. By 1190, Henry de Praers had been given a fee in Dorsington in Warwickshire by Bertram III. These three men, notably all of French origin, are the only figures known to have held land of the de Verduns for knight service in the twelfth century. This means that any tenants the de Verduns had before 1135 held for a rent instead. The names of only two likely early tenants are known. They are Orme of Darlaston, whose family held lands in Fenton, Biddulph and Bucknall of the de Verduns, at least by the end of the twelfth century, and Liulph of Audley, who appears with his toponym in the pipe roll of 1129-30 and so must have held lands in Audley by that date. Both were English

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193 Both figures are approximate. It should be noted that the scutage paid per fee differed considerably in Dundalk. The figure has been calculated assuming a flat rate of 20s. per fee. The exact total is £95 7s. 10d.
196 *CIPM*, 6, no. 54.
197 Oxford, Queen's College Library, MS 149, fo. 69.
and, indeed, it seems likely that the English made up the majority of the de Verduns' tenantry. This is suggested firstly by the fact that the first abbot of Croxden abbey, Thomas, was an Englishman and secondly by the general absence of French toponyms amongst those holding land from the family in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. In some ways, the fact that Herbert de Verdun, Bertram III's brother, who was granted Ipstones abandoned his old toponym in favour of the name carried by his new manor stands against this theory. However, in this case it still took two generations to completely eclipse his original family name so that it is notable that such changes do not show up elsewhere.

Bertram III's grants have been explored in detail already. Two major trends are evident. The first is a tendency to give lands to people or places associated with Richard de Humez, Bertram's patron. The second, which has been explored above, is a focus on granting manors to local knights such as Hugh of Okeover and Hugh of Draycote, which was intended partly to increase the family's influence in the area through tenurial links and partly, perhaps, to be a reward for service.

At the same time as Bertram III was completing the slow settlement of his lands in England he was embarking on the altogether more urgent colonisation of his newly acquired lordship of Dundalk in Ireland. There is not much in the way of direct evidence for this process. There are, however, two charters issued by Ralph of Mutton between 1189 and 1190 which reveal that he had been granted lands in the south of the lordship around Dromiskin by that point. 198 Ralph was the son of Eudo of Mutton who in 1166 held Mitton in Penkridge, Rudge in Standon, and Apeton in Bradley from the house of Standon, of which they seem to have been a cadet branch. He was elected to an assize with Henry and Miles de Verdun in 1227 and before his death in c.1228 he was a frequent witness to Staffordshire deeds, appearing with members of the Bagot, Draycote and Audley families. Indeed, Wrottesley thought it likely that Isabella, the daughter of Adam of Audley, married Ralph's son, Adam. This is suggested by a later confirmation by Henry of Audley and by the fact that the Muttons took up the Audley coat of arms differencing it with a canton. 199

198 WS, 12, nos. 3 and 4, p. 272.
199 ibid, pp. 244-5, 274, note to no. 8; WS, 4/1, p. 47. For examples of charters Ralph witnessed see WS, 2/1, pp. 263, 266, 267.
Other families may have been introduced into the later county Louth by Bertram III at about the same time, although any conclusions based on the extremely sketchy evidence can only be conjecture. Henry of Wootton, who was granted five knight's fees in Uriel by Nicholas de Verdun before 1225 had probably already been granted some land in Ireland by Bertram III as a Wootonrathe had come into existence by 1191.\textsuperscript{200} The Audleys too appear in Ireland in the first decade of the thirteenth century holding Dunleer from Hugh II de Lacy.\textsuperscript{201} Osbert de Clinton of Coleshill, Bertram III's cousin, granted "one other carucate of land of my conquest in Uriel" to St Thomas abbey, Dublin in 1195.\textsuperscript{202} In 1191, Geoffrey de Normanville granted the tithes of his unspecified fee in Uriel and twenty acres of land to Llanthony Secunda near Gloucester.\textsuperscript{203} That he may have been granted his fee by Bertram is suggested by other members of the Normanville family being de Verdun tenants at Burton Overy in Leicestershire before c.1179 and by the fact that Ralph de Normanville held lands in Warwickshire.\textsuperscript{204} Brendan Smith seems also to suggest that the Naptons might also have been introduced into Louth by the de Verduns.\textsuperscript{205} They seem to have been a branch of the Arden family of whom Bertram III held Wolfhampcote in Warwickshire and in whose charters he appears in the Kenilworth cartulary.\textsuperscript{206} Adam de Napton appears in the Stone cartulary, establishing the local links even further, especially as one document makes it clear that he held lands both in England and Ireland.\textsuperscript{207} O'Halloran thinks that the Folevilles, who turn up in Meath as tenants of de Feipo, were introduced into Ireland by Bertram III.\textsuperscript{208} She bases this point on the tenurial connection between the families recorded in the 1242 survey, although it is worth noting that this connection had existed since 1176 when Bertram III de Verdun had reached an agreement with Geoffrey Ridel.\textsuperscript{209} The Praers family also held land in Ireland before 1227, by which point it had been granted to Henry of Audley,\textsuperscript{210} and it is


\textsuperscript{201} \textit{CChR}, 1, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{202} Register, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{203} E. St. J. Brooks, \textit{Irish Cartularies of Llanthony Prima et Secunda}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{204} Mentioned in the Croxden abbey foundation charter, Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47; BL, Cotton Charter xi.7; \textit{Monasticon}, 5, p. 662; C. Lynam, \textit{St Mary's Abbey, Croxden, Staffordshire} (London, 1911), appendix 1, pp. i-ii.


\textsuperscript{206} BL, Harley MS 3650, fos. 16v.-17, 31-31v.

\textsuperscript{207} WS, 6/1, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{208} J. N. O'Halloran, 'The Lordship of Meath, 1172-1309', p. 93.


\textsuperscript{210} \textit{CChR}, 1, p. 37.
likely that this family too was introduced by the de Verduns. This is also suggested by the fact that Adam and Thomas de Praers witness two of Nicholas de Verdun's charters which were made in Ireland.²¹¹

It is possible, then, that at least eight families were introduced to Ireland by the de Verduns. It has been noted that not all of these families are recorded as holding lands from the de Verduns. Adam II and Henry of Audley, for example, held Dunleer from the earl of Ulster. Osbert de Clinton held lands from the Pipards, the de Verduns' neighbours in Uriel. The Folevilles held from the de Feipos in the lordship of Meath. Lack of record, however, does not provide adequate evidence to dismiss the possibility that these men and families might have held lands from the de Verduns in Dundalk in the earliest stages of the settlement of the lordship. Common sense suggests that the thing which attracted these men to Ireland in the first place was the grant, or at least the promise, of lands there. Even if we accept the notion that Audley, Clinton and company were introduced into Ireland, but not enfeoffed there, by the de Verduns, it is still clear that the men the de Verduns were probably responsible for bringing to Ireland were either their tenants in England, close followers of the court, or neighbours. This observation allows two main points to be made.

Firstly, some qualification must be made to Brendan Smith's recent work on North Leinster. Smith has noted that the major tenants of magnates such as the de Lacy's and Clares did not play any significant role in the settlement of their Irish estates. He goes on to suggest that this is even truer of the de Verduns and Pipards who were themselves there because they had been proven administrators, rather than being substantial tenants-in-chief, and that this situation is indicative of the decline of the importance of the honour.²¹² This, however, does not seem to be the case. The greatest of the de Verduns' tenants, the Audley and Praers families, are found in Ireland in the first decades of the thirteenth century and they were probably there long before then. Lesser English tenants such as the Folevilles, Normanvilles and Woottons also turn up, as has been seen. There were thus a considerable number, if by no means all, of the de Verduns' tenants in Ireland and more specifically Louth at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Nor is the comparison between the de Verduns' tenants and those of the de Lacys and Clares

²¹¹ Register, pp. 42-4.
²¹² B. Smith, 'Tenure and Locality in North Leinster in the Early Thirteenth Century', Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland, eds. T. B. Barry et al., pp. 29-30.
particularly valid. O'Halloran has argued that Hugh de Lacy's greatest tenants failed to become involved in Ireland because the risks were too great for families that already held sizeable areas of land in England.\(^{213}\) Even the greatest of the de Verduns' tenants, however, held only one fee from the family in England. For them, Ireland was a land where their family's fortunes could be considerably improved and this remains equally true regardless of whether the Audleys, Praers and so on held lands in Ireland of the de Verduns or not. \(^{213}\) If these men were not tenants of the de Verduns in Ireland, then, it was not because getting involved in Ireland was too much of a risk. Other factors, now lost, must have come into operation instead.

Secondly, might it not be important that at the same time as he was establishing new tenants from the midlands on his lands in England, Bertram III was choosing men from the same area to be his tenants in Ireland? Of course, Bertram III was going to look for tenants for his Irish lands amongst his neighbours, friends and existing tenants, but this obvious point should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the effect of giving neighbours in the English midlands lands in Ireland would be to establish a tenurial link which would bind that man or family to the de Verduns. Granting such men as Ralph of Mutton lands in Ireland, therefore, would at the same time increase the scope of Bertram III's connections and influence in the English midlands.

After 1231, there are no charters to reveal the identities of those being enfeoffed on the de Verduns' Irish estates, while the evidence contained in the Gormanston Register reveals only that tenants had been imposed on parts of Dundalk by Hugh II de Lacy while half of the lordship was in his hands following his marriage with Leselina de Verdon and the associated agreement with her brother Thomas.\(^{214}\) The 1332 partition reveals the names of other families who were almost certainly introduced by Hugh de Lacy at this same time. John de Mandeville held at Knockdewon in 1332. A Martin de Mandeville was one of the knights of Hugh de Lacy in the twelfth century and as the Meath and Ulster Mandevilles were related it is likely that the Mandevilles were introduced by de Lacy from Meath into both Louth and Ulster.\(^{215}\) Thomas de Netterville held land in Baskervillesrath in 1332. The presence of a manor called Baskervillesrath suggests that a member of the de Lacys' most prominent tenant family did settle in Ireland at some point. When they

\(^{214}\) Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3.
\(^{215}\) J. N. O'Halloran, 'The Lordship of Meath, 1172-1309', p. 64.
left is unknown. A likely date is in John's reign when Hugh II de Lacy was expelled and Nicholas de Verdun began to recover the whole of his lordship and remove as many of those tenants who had been granted lands by Hugh II as he could. Whatever the case, Baskervillelesrath clearly came to be held by the Nettervilles who were themselves tenants of the Lacy's in Ferrard. In this case, however, it is apparent that Nicholas de Verdun felt no hostility to the family. Luke and Nicholas de Netterville attest one of Nicholas' charters to St Thomas' abbey in Dublin before 1216.\textsuperscript{216} It may be that Nicholas saw advantages in cultivating Luke's friendship given his position as archdeacon of Armagh. If this is the case, his subsequent election to the archbishopric of Armagh in 1216 must have strengthened the connection still further.

The partition also reveals the names of those who had held lands from the de Verduns in the old de Lacy lordship of Duleek in Meath. However, it is generally impossible to establish which tenants were settled by de Lacy and which by de Verdun. Given Duleek's position near the east coast, it is likely that the tenancies of most of these families dated back to before 1241. It is clear, however, that families with prior connections with the de Verduns in England or Ireland had not intruded themselves into Meath in the interval between 1242 and 1332. Only other members of the de Verdun family itself had succeeded in doing this. In the first three decades of the fourteenth century Milo and Nicholas de Verdun, Theobald II's brothers, had established themselves across the family's Irish estates. Milo held Dengin in Uriel and at Finore in Duleek, while Nicholas had acquired parcels of land at Baligeth in Duleek, in seven manors in Ferrard and at Dungooly in Uriel.

The scanty evidence for the de Verduns' Irish estates obscures the stability or tumult that might have characterised the composition of the tenantry there. Stability, however, certainly existed throughout the thirteenth century on the manor and outliers of Alton. The inquisition \textit{post mortem} of 1274 lists those men who held lands in Staffordshire from the de Verduns at that date. Amongst them the Okeovers can be found holding Sheen, the Draycotes still held Newton, the Audleys held Audley and so on. The survey of 1316 further reveals that Praers still held Dorsington and Geoffrey Cheinel's descendant, Walter, still held Billesdon and Catthorp. Where the names of the tenants are known, then, there is great continuity of tenure. Equally, the amount of land held by these families from the de Verduns remained static. There was no expansion of interests.

\textsuperscript{216} Register, pp. 42-3.
These individuals are the exception rather than the rule. In most cases the identities of the de Verduns' tenants only come to light in the survey of 1242-3. When these tenants were first given their lands is something of a moot-point but it seems likely that they were inherited rather than chosen by the de Verduns. The lands which the de Verduns held in Warwickshire, for example, were probably settled by Geoffrey I or II de Clinton, either before Norman de Verdun's marriage to Lecelina de Clinton, which had occurred before 1135, or between c.1137 and 1180 in the period when Geoffrey II had recovered Lecelina's dower lands. The lack of de Verdun control over the choice of their tenants is even more strongly suggested in the case of those lands in Herefordshire and Shropshire which formed the de Verdun share of the de Lacy inheritance. The survey of 1242-3, which by happy chance was taken just after the death of Walter de Lacy, before the pattern of land-holding could be changed, can be compared with the survey of de Verdun knight's fees of 1316. Such a comparison reveals that the great majority of families who appear as tenants in 1316 had been enfeoffed by the de Lacys before 1242. The holdings of some, admittedly, changed during the interval, but there is no evidence that this was the result of intervention on the part of the de Verduns. It is much more likely to be the result of marriages or grants between established tenant families.

Where changes in personnel are discernible, however, they suggest that the de Verduns' attempts to increase their influence and power had changed direction during the thirteenth century. Grants of land were still used as the means of building up influence, but now, instead of encouraging neighbours or local notables to become tenants, the family concentrated on recruiting both county and national officials and then retaining them by enfeoffment. The national figures in question have already been mentioned. Robert Burnel,217 Malcolm of Harley, John de Cantilupe, Philip and Rhys ap Howel were all enfeoffed on lands in Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire before 1317. The two Richards of Exeter, similarly, had been given lands in Ireland before 1301 and 1332 respectively.

Philip of Barrington appears as holding a fee in Crakemarsh and Creighton in 1316. These he seems to have received through his mother, Amabel the Lady of Creighton, and so he may not, strictly speaking, have been granted his lands by the de Verduns. Nonetheless he remains worth mentioning if only because the Croxden

217 Burnel's work for Theobald I de Verdun has been discussed at pp. 95-6 above.
chronicler thought he was too. Under the annal for 1298 it is recorded that Theobald de Verdun and Philip of Barrington were knighted together by the king. Philip's importance, both for Theobald de Verdun and the Croxden chronicler, probably lay in the fact that he went on to become steward of Tutbury and so provided Theobald II with a close link to Thomas of Lancaster who, perhaps revealingly, attended the funeral of Matilda de Mortimer at Croxden in 1312. Barrington joined in the attack on the Despencers in 1321 and although pardoned seems to have stood with Lancaster in 1322.

Other connections were being forged in the Welsh marches from the end of the thirteenth century. Aside from the marriages between de Verduns and other families who were prominent in the march (about which more later) one, or perhaps two, grants of land suggest a desire to consolidate or even enhance the family's position in the region. Before 1284, John de Grey was granted the manor of Stokesay in Shropshire. Born in 1268, John was the son of Reginald de Grey who acted as Justice of Chester and North East Wales from 1281-1299 - John himself acted as vice-justice between 1296 and 1297. De Grey had granted the manor to the famous wool merchant, Laurence of Ludlow, by 1284 and it was Laurence who began work on the castle that stands there today. The second grant was made by Theobald II in 1313. In this he quit-claimed to Hugh Despencer senior the manor of Bisley and all his right in the hundred. The Despencers, of course, were notorious for their acquisition of land and the fact that this grant takes the form of a quit-claim suggests that Theobald may not have been making the gift entirely willingly.

The above discussion has concentrated exclusively on those of the de Verduns' tenants who held their lands in heredity either in return for military service or for an annual rent. There were, however, men who held lands from the family for a shorter term. In 1270, for example, John de Verdun leased Stokesay to Philip of Whichcote for life. In 1284, Theobald recognised that he owed Thomas de Verdun and Henry de Praers £200 which was to be paid out of the issues of the

218 Croxden Chronicle s.a.1298, fo. 78.
219 Croxden Chronicle s.a.1312, fo. 79v.
223 BL, Harley Charter 57.C.25.
224 R. W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, 5, p. 35.
manors of Farnham Royal and La Sere in Buckinghamshire. As a security on this payment, Theobald granted the two men the manors in question for four years. In such cases it is clear that the grants were simply about money. John de Verdun leased Stokesay in order to quickly raise cash to pay for his crusade. Theobald de Verdun granted Farnham to de Verdun and Praers to pay back a debt. Such grants were both temporary and expedient.

Religious tenants.

The pattern of the family's religious patronage, by which it is meant patronage of religious houses rather than individuals, has been described at length previously and so need be repeated here. As a result of this patronage the de Verduns gained a number of ecclesiastical tenants, the most important of which were the family's own foundations of Croxden abbey in Staffordshire, Grace Dieu priory in Leicestershire and the Hospital of St Leonard in Dundalk. This number increased through the de Verduns' inheritance of a number of tenant houses which had been given lands by the family's predecessors. Of these Llanthony Prima in the Vale of Ewias was the most important.

Very little is known of the de Verduns' relationships with these religious houses, which suggests that by and large they were peaceful. Violence did break out between Theobald I de Verdun and Llanthony priory in the 1280's-90's, and to a much lesser extent between Theobald and Combe abbey in Warwickshire, but these were exceptional cases and not repeated elsewhere. The greatest dispute between the de Verduns and their own foundation at Croxden arose in 1293 when the abbot complained that Theobald was in arrears on a rent of 40s. per year which had been granted to the abbey by Roesia de Verdun. Indeed, relations between the de Verduns and their abbey were good enough for the family to have been remembered as protectors rather than persecutors of the house. Equally, the greatest recorded dispute to arise between the de Verduns and the Hospital of St Leonard in Dundalk concerned the rights to the advowsons of the churches of Oldcastletown, Dundalk, Adken, Kane and the chapel at Castleroche. The case

225 CDI, 2, no. 2305.
226 WS, 6/1, p. 223.
227 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1309 and 1316, fos. 79v.-80.
dragged on for the three years between 1297 and 1300 without any settlement being reached but there was never any sign of violence. 228

Because the cartularies for all the houses founded by the de Verduns are lost, there is little way of knowing the extent to which they acted as a focus for the patronage of the de Verduns' tenants, as St Werburgh's in Chester did for the barons of the honour of Chester. Henry of Audley had granted Morridge to Croxden abbey by the 1230's, 229 and the list of the abbey's possessions produced by Henry VIII's commissioners further suggests that grants had been made by the Okeovers and Cheinels at some unknown point. 230 Generally, though, this list suggests that the abbey acquired most of its lands from the de Verduns themselves, or from characters who were not the family's tenants. Croxden abbey does not, therefore, appear to have formed the focus for the patronage of tenants of the honour. This is perhaps not surprising. The de Verduns' tenants tended to hold lands from a number of other men so that there was never an honorial baronage of the kind envisaged by Stenton, which might have declared its unity in the patronage of their lord's abbey.

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This chapter, then, has examined the de Verduns' household, following and tenants. The development of the household and the duties of the various officials have been sketched. It has also been noted that few of the de Verduns' officials went on to serve the king. Nonetheless, the status of their officials seems to have risen throughout the thirteenth century, a state of affairs which was probably brought about by the family's own rise in status after 1242. While the de Verduns' officials may not have gone on to serve the king it is nonetheless the case that the de Verduns, and especially Theobald I de Verdun, employed and enfeoffed royal officials, presumably to increase their voice at the king's court. The influence of these officials was bolstered in the localities by the retaining of sheriffs, so that overall it seems as if the retainer was becoming politically more important than the tenant and the honour to the de Verduns, as to so many magnates, in the later part of the thirteenth century.

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228 CJRI, 1, pp. 87, 104, 110, 112-4, 239, 270, 311.
229 VCH, Staffordshire, 3, p. 226.
230 Monasticon, 5, pp. 663-4. That these families made grants is suggested by the abbey's possession of lands and rents in Okeover and a farm of 10 marks in Caythorpe (Catthorp).
Ties of tenure, however, do seem to have been important in the earliest stages of the settlement of county Louth in general and the lordship of Dundalk in particular. This stands against the argument put forwards by Brendan Smith, although his argument is affected by the omission of some of the characters given land in Ireland by Bertram III and by the wrong origins being ascribed to other figures. Behind everything, however, be it the recruitment of new tenants from neighbouring parts of Staffordshire or the enfeoffment of royal officials, stood one intention: to enhance family influence in the areas in which the de Verduns held lands and, in so doing, to increase the power wielded by the family.
Chapter 5

ALL MY ANCESTORS: FAMILY RELATIONS, MARRIAGES AND IDENTITIES.

"There is no need," Georges Duby has stated, "to emphasise the importance of kinship bonds on the society we call 'feudal'. They are the inner framework - so much so that many relationships outside the family adopted a similar structure." A few lines later he goes on to assert that "kinship plays a great part also in the unfolding life of politics, in the game of alliance and opposition, and in the advancement of careers."¹ Thus it is that this chapter, having attempted to establish the framework of the de Verdun family in England and Ireland, goes on to explore how the senior member of the family patronised his or her siblings and children and discusses which members of the family were called on when the head of the house needed help. This is followed by a discussion of the various marriages the family made - an important card in the game of alliances - along with any perceived trends in their arrangement. Finally, the various ways in which the family might have seen itself - its identities - have been considered.

Family members 1066-1316.

Any study of the de Verdun family itself is condemned to attempting the construction of a family tree, as well as a brief analysis of the evidence on which it has been built. Given that this thesis covers some 250 years of the family's history, this exercise is of necessity a lengthy one. The senior line went through nine generations during this period. Each generation but one had brothers and sisters who in turn often produced their own cadet dynasties. That such cadet dynasties were formed is evidence of the fact that the younger sons of the de Verdun family frequently married - in contrast to the juvenes of the continent examined by Duby.² Laying out the labyrinthine clutter of information that results can easily become confusing. As such, the following discussion proceeds through each generation of the senior de Verdun line in turn. The known siblings of each generation are

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discussed at that point and any cadet lines established are followed, either until they die out, or until the death of Theobald II in 1316. Many cadets continued long after the extinction of the senior male de Verdun line, but that later history has not been explored here.

Table 5.1. A de Verdun family tree, showing known or suggested sibling relationships.
Mortimer has pointed out that "the history of twelfth-century families is obscure. Partly the problem is one of basic facts, of finding the evidence to establish relationships." This problem is not restricted to the twelfth century. There are few basic facts for establishing the relationships between the multifarious individuals who turn up with the name de Verdun in twelfth-, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century documents. However, although evidence is short, there is sufficient to make the construction of a reasonably complete, and apparently reasonably accurate, family tree possible. The best of this evidence is usually found in charters and legal pleas. The de Verduns' charters sometimes name brothers, fathers and mothers either within the text itself or in the witness lists which follow. Legal pleas can occasionally provide whole genealogies covering a century of a cadet branch's existence, although more often they, like charters, provide only the names of fathers, sons and sisters. Inquisitions post mortem, which survive from Henry III's reign onwards, provide similar information and even the terse pipe rolls occasionally provide some useful facts about relationships. These, then, are the quarries from which good, solid evidence can be mined. Unfortunately, it is often necessary to use more tenuous clues. A coincidence of names, for example, can hint at a relationship. So can a tenurial link or a certain geographic area of operations. In such cases, however, any conclusions reached remain at best subjective.

Although he was the founder of the most prominent branch of the family in England and Ireland, it is not known if Bertram I de Verdun was a representative of the senior line of his family, whether he himself was his father's heir or a younger brother, or if he was the only member of his family to have come to England in the years following 1066. Consequently, when an Ivo de Verdun appears in a charter of 1108x20 granting "two parts of his tithes of Moulton" in Norfolk to Thetford priory, it is difficult to establish the relationship between Ivo and his contemporary, Bertram II. That there was a relationship, however, is suggested by evidence dating to the second half of the twelfth century. In 1166, William de Verdun can be found holding six fees of the old enfeoffment from the Bigod earl of Norfolk and it is clear from entries in the pipe rolls between 1185 and 1196 that this William had a brother called Bertram. It is his name, so prominent in the senior English line of the family until the end of the twelfth century, which suggests

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4 Monasticon, 5, p. 149.
6 See for example PR, 31 Henry II, p. 35.
a link between these two de Verdun families. In fact, Bertram's name suggests not only a common origin for these two families, but also that the Norfolk branch was concerned to promote its links with the Staffordshire line. These links could only have been strengthened by Nicholas de Verdun's being brought up at the court of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and Countess Idona.

Both Bertram and William patronised Thetford and Blytheborough priories and Sibton abbey, and it is the cartularies of these houses that allow their earlier successors to be identified. Philippa Brown, who has edited the Sibton abbey cartulary, has already provided the framework of the family down to the 1250's and this can be used as the basis for reconstructing the descent of this cadet branch here. Bertram de Verdun was still alive in 1213 when he had interests in Great Moulton, the manor which had featured in Ivo de Verdun's grant to Thetford priory, but when he died and whether he had any heirs is not known. William de Verdun was succeeded by his son, Guy, who had already married Alice, perhaps his second wife, by about 1203 and continues to appear in documents with her down to 1229. He was a justice in Suffolk in 1232 and died at some date after 1236.

Guy was succeeded by his son, William, who confirmed to Sibton abbey the grants that had been made by his father. The only de Verduns recorded in Norfolk in 1242-3, however, are John and Guy, who can both be found holding in Bressingham of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. Whether this reveals that William was now dead is uncertain as the 1242-3 survey, contained in the Book of Fees, fails to record the earl of Norfolk's tenants. William certainly had a son called John, and it is likely that he can be identified as the John de Verdun who is stated to have had a son called John who was himself to be given seisin of half of the manor of Culfo in 1278, this manor having first appeared in de Verdun hands in 1210-12. It seems, then, that the first John ruled his family's lands between about 1242 and 1278 and that he was succeeded by his son and namesake who died in 1295. The

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7 I am encouraged in this conclusion by Dr. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan who thinks that the occurrence of the name Bertram in the two de Verdun families is a good indication of a relationship.
8 Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 279.
10 CPR, 1225-32, p. 510; CCR, 1234-7, p. 231; BF, p. 578.
11 P. Brown, Sibton Abbey Cartularies, 2, no. 283.
12 BF, p. 910.
13 CCR, 1272-9, p. 439.
inquisition made on John II’s death further reveals that he had married Eleanor de Furnival and had an heir called Thomas who reached his majority in 1297.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}

  \node (ivo) at (0,0) {Ivo};
  \node (william) at (0,-1.5) {William};
  \node (bertram) at (1,-1.5) {Bertram};
  \node (d.c.1213) at (0,-3) {d.c.1213};
  \node (guy) at (0,-4.5) {Guy};
  \node (d.c.1236) at (0,-6) {d.c.1236};
  \node (william2) at (0,-7.5) {William};
  \node (d.c.1242) at (0,-9) {d.c.1242};
  \node (john) at (1,-13) {John};
  \node (guy2) at (1,-14.5) {Guy};
  \node (d.c.1278) at (1,-16) {d.c. 1278};
  \node (oc.1242-3) at (1,-17.5) {oc.1242-3};
  \node (john2) at (1,-20) {John II = Eleanor de Furnival};
  \node (thomas) at (1,-21.5) {Thomas};
  \node (b.1276 d.1315) at (1,-23) {b.1276 d.1315};
  \node (john3) at (1,-24.5) {John};

  \path (ivo) -- (william);
  \path (ivo) -- (bertram);
  \path (william) -- (d.c.1213);
  \path (william) -- (guy);
  \path (guy) -- (d.c.1236);
  \path (d.c.1242) -- (d.c.1236);
  \path (d.c.1278) -- (john2);
  \path (john2) -- (guy2);
  \path (guy2) -- (oc.1242-3);
  \path (john) -- (john2);
  \path (john2) -- (thomas);
  \path (thomas) -- (b.1276 d.1315);
  \path (b.1276 d.1315) -- (john3);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Table 5.2. Conjectural family tree for the Norfolk cadet of the de Verdun family.

It is clear that this cadet line had been busy increasing the lands it held in the period from 1166, for in a survey of 1306 Thomas de Verdun is recorded as holding twelve fees from the earl of Norfolk - twice the previous number. These fees comprised lands in ten manors in three counties. These were Stagenho in Hertfordshire, Apton, Aslacton, Bressingham, Forncett, Moulton, Saxlingham and

\textsuperscript{15} CIPM, 3, nos. 298, 437.
Tibenham in Norfolk, and Martlesham and Shadingfield in Suffolk. Thomas died in 1315, just a year before Theobald II, and his son John inherited his estates.

Bertram II de Verdun's siblings are entirely unknown and the evidence remains sketchy for his son, Norman, although there are some hints that he might have had some brothers. A Roger, Thomas and Bertram de Verdun appear once each in Ranulf II of Chester's charters, while William de Verdun attested the Treaty of Devizes in 1153 which related to the earldom and the midlands as a whole. The relationship of Roger and Thomas de Verdun to Norman is not clear as they appear only on these single occasions. That Thomas was to be the name of Bertram III's eldest son (born in about 1174) might suggest that this Thomas was Norman's brother - although it is perhaps more likely that Bertram III was influenced in his choice of name by the rapidly growing cult of the recently martyred archbishop of Canterbury. The Bertram de Verdun who attests Ranulf II's charter in 1146 is probably not Bertram III de Verdun, as Barraclough suggested, but the same Bertram de Verdun who appears in the witness lists of confirmations issued by Hugh and Henry of Arden to Kenilworth priory, which can be dated to between 1139 and 1147. It may also be this same Bertram who appears in William de Verdun's agreement with Mont-St-Michel in 1155. His name and his links with the earldom of Chester, Warwickshire and the west of Normandy suggest that he was one of Norman's brothers, but the evidence is by no means unequivocal.

The last of these men, William de Verdun, can probably be identified as the same man who is found in Normandy in c.1145, attesting William Paynell's foundation charter for Hambye abbey. William also appears in the cartulary of Mont-St-Michel in the mid-1150s and is recorded as holding land from the abbey in 1172, about which time he was named as a miles jurator of Avranches. William's Paynell

17 CIPM, 5, no. 596.
18 G. Barraclough, The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c.1071-1327, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 126 (1988). For Roger see no. 35; for Thomas see no. 65 and for Bertram see no. 76.
19 ibid, no. 76, n.
20 BL, Harley MS 3650, fos. 16v.-17, 31-31v.
22 ibid, pp. 333, 341-3, 351; Receuil, 1, p. 345; EYC, 6, p. 92.
connections can be seen at work in England in 1154x8,23 but he may have been in the country for some months prior to this appearance as William de Verdun witnessed the Treaty of Devizes in 1153, which transferred the late Norman de Verdun's estates to the earl of Chester.24 It is not entirely certain that each of these appearances relates to the same William de Verdun, although there is nothing implausible in assuming that they do. The location of his lands in Normandy, his involvement in the granting of the de Verdun lands to Ranulf of Chester and the timescale established by the charter evidence means that he too may have been one of Norman de Verdun's brothers. It is not known whether this William had any heirs, but it might be that he was the father of Simon de Verdun who appears in the 1180 and 1181 pipe rolls and, as such, the founder of the cadet branch that a plea of 1317 reveals became the Wrottesleys.25

One final figure warrants consideration as one of Norman de Verdun's brothers. Ruelent de Verdun's first securely dated appearance comes in 1166 when he is recorded as holding half a knight's fee from Bertram III de Verdun of the new enfeoffment.26 He goes on to appear in the witness lists of one of Bertram III's own acta and attested three other charters with Bertram.27 From this slight evidence it might be tentatively suggested that Ruelent was Bertram's brother, were it not for the fact that on one occasion, dateable to c.1174, a Ruelent de Verdun junior appears in a charter witness list which might suggest that Ruelent senior was dead by that point.28 Certainly the fact that Ruelent junior had himself died by 1200 suggests that he, rather than his father, was of the same generation as Bertram III. On his death, Ruelent II left a daughter called Nichola who was probably also his heiress. In 1200, she fined to have an inquisition to see whether she was "of the gift of the lord king when the earl of Chester married her to Anketin de Brikesard."29

It is only from the time of Bertram III de Verdun that there is indisputable evidence with which to identify the brothers of the senior member of the family.

23 EYC, 6, pp. 100-1.
24 Regesta, 3, no. 180.
25 WS, 9/1, pp. 62 and n. 3.
28 BL, Harley MS 3650, fo. 8.
Herbert of Ipstones, who appears in a charter which Henry de Clinton gave to Kenilworth, is mentioned in the pipe roll of 1174-5 as being Bertram's brother.  

From his toponym, it can be assumed that he based himself at Ipstones, north-west of Alton, a moiety of which manor was held by the de Verduns from the honour of Chester probably from the time of Norman de Verdun onwards. Herbert probably died before his brother as Bertram III's grant of Sheen to Hugh of Okeover is attested by William de Verdun and his brother, Herbert.

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Herbert of Ipstones  
oc.1174-5

William I of Ipstones  Herbert of Ipstones  
oc.1199-1203

William II of Ipstones = Sarah, eldest dau. and coheir of John Bagot of  
oc.1220-61 Blymhill

John I of Ipstones (1.) = Beatrice = (2.) Richard of Okeover  
(Also called William)  
b.1232-3 d.c.1273

William III of Ipstones = Agnes = Sir William Wyther  
oc.1274, d.1292

John II of Ipstones = Elizabeth  
b.1284 d.c.1338

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Table 5.3. Conjectural family tree for the Ipstones family.

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This William, according to a family tree produced in 1911, died about 1220 to be succeeded by his son, William II.  

According to a plea of 1334, William II married

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30 BL, Harley MS 3650, fo. 8; PR, 21 Henry II, p. 68.  
31 WS new series, 7, pp. 135-6.  
Sarah, a daughter of the Bagots of Blymhill. He also attested various local deeds including an agreement made between Croxden abbey and the burgesses of Alton in c.1239. In 1244, William granted Stephen, abbot of Dieulacres, and his men of Leek common of pasture throughout the vill of Ipstones for all manner of cattle, the charter providing the additional information that William had enclosed some meadows in Ipstones at Easter of that year and that he had a park in the manor.

The plea of 1334 mentioned above provides the names of the remaining thirteenth-century members of the Ipstones family. William II was succeeded by his son, John I of Ipstones, who is also called William in contemporary and later records. For example, John's son, William, named his father as William of Ipstones in a plea of 1281 and as John in a case of 1282, with Beatrice being named as his widow in both pleas. In 1309, during a plea over lands in Grindon, John of Ipstones named his grandfather as William of Ipstones. Four years later, in a later stage of the same plea, John named his grandfather as John of Ipstones. John I was "lately deceased" by 1273 and was succeeded by a son called William. William III can be found augmenting his family's holdings, being granted two acres in Derrington near Stafford by Richard son of Richard in 1274x86, and land in Mayfield and certain rents and services owed from John de Kynardsley by the daughters of Sir Thomas Wyther. William III died in 1293, leaving a widow, Agnes, and an heir, John, who was to outlive Theobald II.

A second of Bertram's brothers can also be confidently identified. Ralph de Verdun first appears in Ireland in 1172, where he witnessed Henry II's grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy. Ralph then appears in a series of pipe roll entries dating from 1174 until 1199 where he appears as holding land worth £20 in Bloxham as part of the terrae datae in Oxfordshire, and he is also recorded as holding the castle of Tillieres in 1180. At about the same time he was granted land in Cerney

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33 **WS**, 9/1, pp. 43-4.
34 Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/1.
36 **WS**, 6/1, pp. 151, 123.
37 **WS**, 9/1, pp. 12, 39.
(Gloucestershire) by Margaret de Bohun and attested five of her charters. That Bertram and Ralph were brothers is revealed by an abbreviated family tree which appears in the cartulary of St Mary's abbey, Dublin. The fact that Ralph held Bloxham from the king, and that it appears in the account for the *terrae datae* in Oxfordshire, allows the structure of his family to be recovered, as the pipe rolls record the changes of tenants and hence also provide accurate dates for their careers. From Ralph, then, Bloxham passed down to his son William, who held the manor between 1199 and 1203. From William, the manor passed to his brother, Walter, who fined 120 marks in 1204 "for having one knight's fee in Bloxham which was Ralph de Verdun's, his father, and William's, his brother, whose heir he is." Walter continued to account for the manor until 1230. Something of Walter de Verdun's career has already been mentioned above. He was sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire, constable of the Tower of London, a justice and an envoy to Rome in 1220. Walter had a son called Ralph, who fined for his relief in the pipe roll of 1230 and accounted for £13 worth of his father's debts. Ralph II held his family's manor of Bloxham until his own death in or before 1239 at which point William de St Amand quit-claimed to Amaury de St Amand his brother and the king's seneschal "all the rents, lands and tenements late of Ralph son of Walter de Verdun, their kinsman, in England."

Charters provide secure evidence with which to identify four of Bertram III's own sons and two of his daughters. His eldest son was Thomas whose career has been discussed above as has that of Nicholas, Bertram's second son who succeeded his brother in 1199. Bertram III's third son appears to have been named after himself. Certainly this Bertram received grants of land from his father and from his brothers Thomas and Nicholas in a way which suggests that he was next in line to the

43 *Chartularies*, 2, p. 27
44 PR, 1 John, p. 219; PR, 5 John, p. 187.
45 PR, 6 John, p. 111; PR, 14 Henry III, p. 245.
47 PR, 14 Henry III, pp. 249, 247.
48 *CChR*, 1, p. 247.
succession. As a Sibilla, the wife of Bertram de Verdun, appears in a plea over dower in 1239, it can be assumed that Bertram was dead by that date. Bertram had a son who was also called Bertram, this being revealed by a charter in which he granted "to John de Coleville and Cecilia my daughter... those fifteen virgates of land in Lutterworth which my said father, Bertram de Verdun had once from the gift of Nicholas de Verdun, his brother." Bertram's daughter, Cecilia, is his only known offspring, so that this particular cadet line seems to have died out at this point.

The last of the known brothers was Robert, who is named as such in the witness list of one of Nicholas de Verdun's charters. Robert married one of the heiresses of Henry of Burton and acquired Ibstock in Leicestershire as a result. He seems to have died without heirs, however, as the manor can be found in Roesia de Verdun's possession by 1235-6. Bertram III's two known daughters are revealed as such in their respective marriage agreements. Between 1194 and 1199, Thomas de Verdun gave "Leselina de Verdun, his sister," in marriage to Hugh de Lacy, while in 1206 Nicholas de Verdun reached an agreement with Robert fitzWilliam at Portsmouth, to whom he was giving "Agnes, his sister, in free marriage." Leselina had at least one daughter, Matilda, from her marriage to de Lacy, who was later married to David, baron of Naas. Nothing more is known of Agnes or any family that she might have had.

It may be that two other individuals can be identified as Bertram's sons. A Henry de Verdun can be found holding in Bucknall in Staffordshire from Nicholas de Verdun in 1204, and as he appears to have been the first member of his family to hold this tenement it may well be that he was Nicholas' brother as members of the...
family only seem to have given land to their immediate relations.\textsuperscript{59} The various generations of the family down to the 1340's are once again recorded in a plea, this time dating to 1343.\textsuperscript{60} From it and other sources, it is known that this first Henry de Verdun married Hawisa, also called Avice, de Gresley and through her acquired lands in Tunstall, Normacot, Chadderley, Darlaston and a share of the advowson of the church of Biddulph, which was the subject of the plea. Henry was active on juries in the county, attested a number of charters and apparently acted as a sheriff and coroner before his death in around 1238.\textsuperscript{61} He had a son who was also called Henry and a daughter called Hawisa, who granted her brother "all of my right etc. which I had etc. in all that land... which the said Henry my father gave me in the vill of Biddulph."\textsuperscript{62}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{c|c}
\hline
 Henry = Hawisa  &  \\
 d.1238  &  \\
\hline
 Henry II  &  Amice  \\
 d.c.1272  &  \\
\hline
 Henry III  &  Alexander  \\
b.c.1258  &  d.c.1316  \\
\hline
 Vivian  &  \\
oc.1316-1343  &  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 5.4. Conjectural family tree of the de Verduns of Bucknall and Darlaston.}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{59} This argument could easily become cyclical. However, for some evidence as to its accuracy see below, pp. 246-8.
\textsuperscript{60} WS, 9/1, pp. 111-3.
\textsuperscript{61} WS, 4/1, p. 71; CCR, 1237-42, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{62} WS, vol 1911, p. 421.
Henry was involved in the fighting in the midlands during the Barons' War, this being revealed by a plea of 1268.\textsuperscript{63} Henry II had died by 1272, leaving a minor called Henry and a widow called Amice.\textsuperscript{64} Henry III had clearly achieved his majority by 1279 when he sued the abbot of Combermere for a messuage and one and a half hides in Yarlet.\textsuperscript{65} He may have had a brother called Alexander who appears in a plea relating to Darlaston in 1283 while a Roger de Verdun appears in Aston near Stone (which is near Darlaston) in 1293.\textsuperscript{66} Henry was succeeded before 1316 by a Vivian de Verdun, who was presumably his son and heir on account of his holding Darlaston and Bucknall at that date.\textsuperscript{67} Certainly he was the heir to the right of advowson at Biddulph in 1343, but it is not stated there that he was Henry's son.

Finally, it is possible that Milo de Verdun was another of Bertram III's sons. He attests charters issued by Bertram III, Thomas, Nicholas and Roesia de Verdun, being, in fact, the most frequent witness of the latter's charters, appearing in them on both sides of the Irish Sea, sometimes along with his two sons, Nicholas and William.\textsuperscript{68} The very fact of Roesia's succession to the de Verdun estates means that this Milo cannot have been Roesia's brother. The fact that he already had two children during Roesia's rule means that he is very unlikely to have been one of her own children. He must, therefore, have been either an uncle or a cousin - certainly he is unlikely to have been more distantly related. That one of his own children was called Nicholas - a name new to the family when Bertram III chose it for his son - makes it perhaps a little more likely that he was Roesia's uncle.

Thomas de Verdun, it will be remembered, died prematurely and childless in Ireland in 1199, and the de Verdun estates passed to his brother, Nicholas. Nicholas might have had a son called Bertram. This is suggested by the appearance of a Bertram de Verdun as a hostage of the king in 1215, because John liked to take heirs,\textsuperscript{69} and also by a charter in which Nicholas de Verdun granted to

\textsuperscript{63} WS, 4/1, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{64} ibid, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{65} WS, 6/1, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{66} ibid, pp. 154, 237.
\textsuperscript{67} WS, vol 1911, p. 411.
\textsuperscript{68} Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593\textbackslash A\textbackslash 2\textbackslash 3\textbackslash 2, D593\textbackslash A\textbackslash 2\textbackslash 3\textbackslash 3; Gormanston Reg, p. 161; Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Reports and Other Publications, (London, 1870-), 78 (Hastings), 1, p. 31; WS new series, 12, pp. 13-14.
"Bertram de Verdun his son" an annual rent of 20s. from Field.  

That uncertainty remains is due to the fact that in another charter dealing with the same matter the grantee is named as Bertram de Verdun, Nicholas' brother.  

Whatever the case, this presumed son must have predeceased his father, for when Nicholas died his estates passed undivided to his daughter Roesia, who must also have been his sole heir. Roesia herself is only known to have had two children, John her son and heir and Matilda who was to marry John fitzAlan and then Richard d'Amundeville before her death in 1283.    

It is also possible that this Matilda had married Walter II de Lacy previously, certainly a daughter of Roesia's had.  

John de Verdun had only four known children. Nicholas, his eldest, was killed in Ireland in 1271.  

John, his brother, about whom nothing but the fact of his death is known, was killed at the same time. This left John de Verdun's third son, Theobald I, to succeed his father in 1274. These three children were apparently by John's first marriage to Margery de Lacy. His second marriage to Alainor de Bohun also seems to have produced a son, called Humphrey after the bride's father. He was born in 1267 and died in Paris in 1285, presumably without an heir, these details being provided by the Croxden chronicler who took an unusual and inexplicable interest in Humphrey's brief life.    

Three generations of very limited horizontal growth were ended during the rule of Theobald I. A list of his children is provided in his will of 1295. Their names in order were; John, Theobald, Milo, Bertram, Nicholas, Walter, William and a daughter called Roesia. This list, however, may not be complete. A case of 1304 names a Bartholomew as being one of Theobald's sons, while another son, Robert, was active in Ireland and pre-eminent in the Riot of Louth of 1312.  

John, Theobald's eldest son, died in Ireland in 1297, leaving Theobald II as his heir. Milo was given custody of Theobald II's lands in Ireland in 1309 and worked there with his brothers Nicholas and Robert, whose actions are discussed below. Bertram seems to have become a priest and can probably be identified as the

72 CIPM, 2, nos. 489, 536.
73 Register, p. 420. See above, p. 75.
74 AClon, p. 249; AFM, 3, p. 415.
75 NAI, RC8/1, p. 83.
76 Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1267, 1285, fos. 75v., 76v.
77 BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97.
78 WS, 7/1, p. 108; CJRI, 3, pp. 237.
79 Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1297, fo. 78.
character who was the rector of Lutterworth and Market Bosworth in 1308.80 Nothing is known about the careers, marriages or offspring of Walter, William and Roesia.

Finally, then, we come to Theobald II's children. It is known from the Abbeydore cartulary that Theobald II had two sons called John and William.81 Both, however, predeceased their father so that Theobald left his lands to his four daughters, Joan, Elizabeth, Margery and Isabel. The three eldest daughters were the children of Theobald and Matilda de Mortimer, who had died in 1312. The last, Isabel, was the posthumous offspring of Theobald and Elizabeth de Burgh, his second wife, whom he had married in 1315.82

These then were the brothers, sisters and cousins of the senior members of the de Verdun family in so far as they can be traced from the beginning of the family's existence in England until the extinction of the senior male line in 1316, although questions still remain over some of the relationships suggested in the above discussion. Needless to say, it has not been possible even to suggest a place for all those men and women who appear in the various records with the de Verdun toponym. At least twenty-five individuals from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries cannot be fitted into this family tree. They include amongst their number the Bartholomew de Verdun who appears just once in the record of a plea of 1269, when it was stated that he had killed Hasculf the forester of Leicester and Rutland in his own house during Stephen's reign.83 It is also impossible to establish the family relationship of a certain John de Verdun who was involved in a particularly nasty accident in June 1277. According to a record in the Inquisitions Miscellaneous, a dispute had arisen in the abbot of Colchester's house between Robert of Kenilworth and a John de Verdun "esquire of Godfrey de Beumond, knight, over some straw which John demanded from Robert." The argument over this straw evidently became rather heated "and John took his sheathed sword to strike Robert, but the sheath falling off, he struck him with the naked sword on the brain pan." This, the inquisition goes on to tell us rather graphically, caused a wound three inches wide and two inches deep, reaching to the brain, "whereof Robert languished until 13 July."84

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80 VCH, Leicestershire, 1, p.361.
81 BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 260v.
82 Croxden Chronicle, s.a. 1312, 1316, fos. 79v.-80.
84 Cal of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (London, 1916-), 1, no. 2212.
Perhaps the most important of these omissions concerns a cadet family which was based in Derbyshire from the very beginning of the thirteenth century, whose line can be traced in the charters found in the Chester abbey cartulary. The first member of this cadet was a man called William de Verdun who married Aliz, one of the three daughters of a lady called Dina who, incidentally, held lands in Osgathorpe from Bertram III de Verdun. A final concord of c.1200 concerning the partition of Dina's lands reveals that William and his wife received the lands "which Robert fitzWalter (Dina's husband) held in Aston and Shardlow and Wilne" with various exceptions. William de Verdun and his sons appear on various occasions in the Chester abbey cartulary where a trail of charters reveals the gradual dissipation of their lands in these three manors through grants both to Chester abbey itself and to various laymen. These charters allow the descent of the family to be uncovered so that it is clear that the William who married Aliz died around 1228 and had a son and heir called William. This William died between 1240 and 1249 leaving a son called Arnold (1249-65) who in turn had a son called William who was active between about 1250 and 1300.

Patronage and politics.

Family trees, both modern and medieval, suggest that families should be seen in terms of lineages. Indeed, Georges Duby, having studied documents such as the family tree drawn up sometime after 1152 by Lambert, a canon of St Aubert of Cambrai, whilst he was writing his Annales Cameracenses, has concluded that the change from kinship group to lineage took place in the second half of the eleventh century. However, Sir James Holt has pointed out that "the emphasis which has been placed on family solidarities and lineage is almost predetermined by the nature of the sources used," which were ecclesiastical in origin and "emphasise lineage and family solidarity because one of their objects was to maintain the link with the

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85 WS, 3/2, p. 156.
87 J. Tait, The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St Werburgh, Chester, Chetham Society new series, 79, 82 (1920, 1923), 1, nos. 134, 139, 143, 148, 224.
88 ibid, nos. 132, 140, 145, 150, 171, 191, 193.
89 ibid, no. 223.
90 G. Duby, The Chivalrous Society, pp. 134-148 and especially p. 135-6
benefactor and his heirs"91 - just as those legal cases mentioned above emphasised lineage because they were concerned to show the descent of a particular right. Holt then goes on to explore family relationships in the light of the patronage and support of family members and something similar can be done here for the de Verduns.

When the de Verduns, and indeed any other family, made grants to a religious house or church, they stated that the gift was made for their own soul and for those of a number of other people. Often it is simply stated that the gift was made for "the souls of my ancestors and successors" or for the souls of "all my ancestors and successors."92 It is difficult to establish who, exactly, is meant by this phrase, although some help might be provided by a charter issued by William de Vernon, earl of Devon, in 1175x84. By this instrument, he confirmed a grant made by his grandfather, Richard de Redvers, to Christchurch priory "for the salvation of my soul, of my father's and mother's and those of all my ancestors and friends."93 De Vernon later sent a letter to his nephews, notifying them that he had made this confirmation and stating more fully just who had been intended to benefit from it. According to this letter, the confirmation had been made "for my salvation, and for your salvation, dearest nephews, and for the soul of my father and of my mother and of my dear brothers Henry and Earl Richard, your father, and for the salvation of all our relatives, ancestors and friends."94 One's ancestors and friends, then, could clearly include a wide-ranging group of relatives.

Something more concrete can be established if the generality of ancestors and successors is ignored and instead only those who are specifically named are taken into account. Bertram III de Verdun's grant of the church of Great Limber to Aunay-sur-Odon was made on condition that "two monks should always be received into the abbey who should specially celebrate divine service for the weal of his soul and that of his father."95 His foundation at Croxden abbey was made "for the souls of Norman de Verdun, my father, and of Lecelina, my mother, and of

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92 See for example, BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A. i., fo. 55v; Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593A12234.
94 ibid, no. 68.
95 Caen, Archives du Calvados, H. 667; J. H. Round, Cal of Documents Preserved in France, 1, no. 531; L. D'Ainsy, Extrait des Chartes et Autres Actes Normands ou Anglo-Normands, que se Trouvent dans les Archives du Calvados (Caen, 1834), 1, no. 344
Richard de Humez who brought me up, and of my predecessors and for my salvation and that of Rohais, my wife, and my successors."96 Finally, Bertram III granted the tithes and ecclesiastical benefices of Dundalk to the church of St John the Baptist there "for the welfare of my soul and for the welfare of Dame Rohais, my wife, and of all my ancestors." 97

Bertram's charters thus specifically name only a small group of people as intended beneficiaries of his grants - his parents, his second wife and Richard de Humez, his guardian and patron. This is a pattern followed in charters issued by his son, Nicholas, and his granddaughter, Roesia. Nicholas granted land outside the New Gate of Dublin to the nearby Hospital of St John the Baptist "for the salvation of my soul, and for the souls of my father and mother and my ancestors."98 Similarly, a grant to St Thomas' abbey, Dublin, was made "for the salvation of my soul, and of Bertram de Verdun, my father, and R[ohais], my mother, and of my kinsmen and friends,"99 while a grant to the hospital Nicholas had founded at Lutterworth was made "for my salvation and for the souls of my father and mother and of Thomas de Verdun, my brother, and of Earl Roger and countess Idona, who brought me up, and of all my ancestors and successors."100 His daughter, Roesia, founded Grace Dieu "for me and my heirs and the souls of my parents and of all my ancestors and of my husbands."101

It is likely that the de Verduns intended to benefit the souls of their nearest and dearest when they made such grants and if this is the case then it must be presumed that those singled out for a mention were those closest to the grantors. The group which emerges is composed of the nuclear family of parents, partners and in one case a brother, with the occasional addition of foster parents or guardians. The omission of any specific mention of children in these clauses is a little unusual. In comparison, charters issued by three generations of Mowbrays show concern for

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96 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47; BL, Cotton Charter xi.7; Monasticon, 5, p. 662; C. Lynam, The Abbey of St Mary, Croxden, Staffordshire (London, 1911), appendix 1, pp. i-ii.
98 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.498, fo. 60v.; E. St. J. Brooks, The Register of the Hospital of St John the Baptist Without the New Gate, Dublin (Dublin, 1936), no. 127, p. 92.
99 Register, pp. 43-4.
100 Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 279.
101 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 567.
the souls of their sons and heirs.102 Charters issued by William de Vernon include mentions of the souls of the king, Earl Baldwin and Richard, his brothers, Hawise, his sister, his father, his mother, his wife and Baldwin, his son.103 William's aunt, Hawise, provided a lengthy list of intended beneficiaries in one of her own charters. Her gift to Christchurch priory was made for "my soul, and for the soul of my lord, William de Roumare, and my son William de Roumare, and for the soul of my dear brother Earl Baldwin... and for the salvation of William de Roumare my nephew and heir and his brother Robert, and for the soul of my father, Richard de Redvers, and of Adeliz my mother and my noble nephew Earl Richard, and for the souls of my brothers, William de Vernon and Robert de St Maria Ecclesia, and my nephew William de Vernon and for the souls of all my ancestors."104

The family relationships of those specifically named in the de Verduns' ecclesiastical benefactions, then, seem to have been more than usually narrow. This may simply be the result of the relative lack of surviving de Verdun acta, although it is notable that the spectrum of relationships is not much widened when other evidence is brought into consideration. Having examined the spiritual beneficiaries of the de Verduns' grants, the witness lists appended to their charters also provide some information concerning the family members who attended their courts. No fewer than six different de Verduns attested Bertram III's acta, although none of them did so more than once.105 Unfortunately, none of them can be convincingly identified, although it is possible that the Henry, Robert and Milo who appear might have been Bertram's sons, while the Ruelent de Verdun who witnessed Bertram III's grant of Wolfhampcote to Walter Breton was probably either his brother, uncle or cousin. In addition William Pantulf, Bertram's cousin, also appears relatively frequently in these witness lists and in those of Nicholas' and Roesia's charters. Two de Verduns attest Thomas' surviving acta - Milo de Verdun, probably his brother, and the otherwise unknown master Vivian de Verdun.106 Milo is the only de Verdun to attest Nicholas de Verdun's charters, which he did on three occasions, and is the most prominent of any of the witnesses of Roesia de Verdun's charters, attesting five times in all on both sides of the Irish

104 ibid, no. 110.
106 BL, Harley MS 5804, fo. 320v.; *Gormanston Reg*, pp. 144, 192-3.
Sea. He was joined at Roesia's court by his sons, Nicholas and William, and by Bertram de Verdun who would have been either Roesia's uncle or her cousin. Thomas de Verdun, rector of the church of Ibstock, also attested one of Roesia's charters, but how he was related to her is entirely unknown. Charter attestations, then, appear to suggest the presence at court of uncles, brothers, sons and cousins.

Patronage of family members could take a more worldly form than the spiritual aid included in religious donations. The earliest evidence for junior members of the family holding land from the senior line dates to the survey of knight's fees of 1166 when Bertram III's carta reveals that Ruelent de Verdun had been granted half a knight's fee since the death of Henry I. Ruelent's relationship to Bertram III is not as clear as could be hoped, but this is not the case with Bertram's brother, Herbert, to whom Bertram III himself or Norman, his father, granted the manor of Ipstones. The grant must have been made in fee and heredity for it passed down to William's sons and their heirs in turn, as has been seen already, and they took it for their toponym. In 1293 it was held of Theobald de Verdun with Foxt for service of finding "one man for service in the castle of Alton during war for forty days" as well as suit of court. Bertram III also patronised his sons. In one of his charters, Thomas de Verdun confirms "to Bertram de Verdun, my brother, and his heirs, the whole vill of Foremark, with all its appurtenances, which Bertram de Verdun, my father, gave to the same when he was setting out for the land of Jerusalem, and the fee of one knight in Hartshorn, and the fee of half a knight in Stanton and New Hall and the fee of a third part of a knight in Staunton Harold." Bertram III had thus made the original grant to his (probably third) son, although Thomas was keen to point out in this same charter that this land was "not only from the gift of the said Bertram, my father, but also from my undiluted grant and perpetual gift." Indeed, there is evidence that Thomas also gave land to Nicholas de Verdun, Bertram III's second son and Thomas' eventual heir, one of Nicholas' charters

107 WS new series, 7, pp. 137-8; Register, pp. 42-3; SRS, vol 1937, no. 41; Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593\A\2\23\2, D593\A\2\23\3; Gormanstone Reg, pp. 161-2; Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 78 (Hastings), 1, p. 31; WS new series, 12, pp. 13-14.
speaking of "fifteen virgates of land in Lutterworth, namely those which Thomas de Verdun my elder brother, now dead, before gave to me."  

Nicholas himself is probably responsible for the grant of Bucknall to Henry de Verdun, his postulated brother, before 1204. He also continued the patronage of his brother Bertram after his own succession to the de Verdun estates. In the charter just noted, Nicholas granted those fifteen virgates in Lutterworth to "Bertram de Verdun my younger brother and his heirs." Equally, Nicholas was to grant "Bertram de Verdun his brother.. a yearly rent of 20s. due from the abbot of Burton in exchange for seven virgates of land in Misterton which he had by grant from the said Nicholas." Indeed, Bertram seems to have done very well for himself through the patronage of his brothers. Along with these lands in Foremark, Stanton, New Hall, Staunton Harold and Lutterworth, and the rent from Burton abbey, Bertram can be found holding a messuage with appurtenances in Stamford (Lincolnshire) in 1212 which must have come to him either from his father or his brothers.

There is no more evidence for grants being made to sons before their succession until the time of John de Verdun in the second half of the thirteenth century. It is clear that John gave his eldest son, Nicholas, lands in Weobley, Ewias Lacy and Ludlow before the latter's death in 1271, and it seems that at least some of these estates were then passed on to Theobald, originally John's third son but now his heir after the early deaths of his two elder brothers. After his succession in 1274, Theobald I continued the tradition of giving lands to the heir while he was waiting to succeed. John de Verdun was given the manors of Farnham Royal and La Cere by his father, probably in around 1295 and certainly before August of that year when orders were issued to give John seisin of these lands which had been taken into the king's hands as Theobald had enfeoffed him with them without licence.

There is no surviving record of grants being made to sons who were not also heirs until sometime between 1267 and 1286 when Alianor de Verdun, John de Verdun's second wife, granted their son, Humphrey, some unspecified amount of

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111 Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 278.
112 WS, 3/1, pp. 170-1.
113 WS, 5/1, p. 47; SRS, vol 1937, no. 41.
114 BF, p. 196.
115 CIPM, 1, no. 767.
116 CCR, 1272-9, p. 323.
117 CFR, 1272-1307, p. 357.
land in Debden in Essex, which had formed part of her marriage portion. This case is a little different to those previously mentioned in that it probably reveals a mother's concern for the fate of her offspring if left to the charity of his step-brothers. Examples of younger sons being given lands by their father during his lifetime only become visible again in 1299, when Theobald acknowledged the charter by which he had granted "to Milo de Verdon his son, his whole land of Ballymaccloth and Ballymacgonnoure, to hold in tail male of the king." Theobald I had also given his second son and eventual heir, Theobald II, lands at Donaghpatrick in Meath by 1303, while another of Theobald I's sons, Nicholas, was given the manor of Dungoooly to the north of Dundalk in Ireland. His holdings in county Louth were supplemented during the rule of his brother, as Theobald II granted Nicholas his demesne manor of Clonmore in the barony of Ferrard and possibly also £20 of land from the demesne in the lordship of Duleek when he received knighthood.

Alongside lands, Theobald I was able to provide one of his younger sons with ecclesiastical benefices as it is likely that the Bertram de Verdun who was rector of Lutterworth and Market Bosworth in 1308 was Theobald's son of the same name. However, while it is the case that other members of the family can be found holding benefices that were in the hands of the senior line, such as Thomas de Verdon who was parson of Ibstock in the 1240's, or that Nicholas de Verdon 'acolyte' who was rector of the church of Stoke-on-Tern in 1307, it is not clear how they were related to the contemporary head of the family.

In 1295 Theobald I de Verdon made a will, the text of which has survived. In it, Theobald divided his moveables between eight named children (seven sons and a daughter). This is not unusual, of course, because moveables had always been

118 This is clear from a grant that Humphrey himself made to Humphrey de Bohun when he granted land in Debden to him. (PRO, DL25/L. 1471.)
119 CJRI, 1, pp. 228-9.
120 NAI, RC7/10, p. 39.
121 NAI, Ferguson MSS, 1, p. 141; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Partition of the de Verdon Lands', PRIA, 66, section C (1968), pp. 408-9; Rot Patentium et Clausorum Cancellarie Hiberniae Calendarium, Record Commission, (London, 1828), 1, p. 129. Nicholas is also said to have held Mandevillestoun in this document, but he is unlikely to have been granted this by Theobald I as he can be found asking for the manor in several letters to Edward II.
122 CCR, 1313-18, p. 369.
123 VCH, Leicestershire, 1, p. 361.
124 Monasticon, 6/1, p. 567; R. W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire (1854-60), 8, p. 69.
125 BL, Additional MS 18446, pp. 7-11; NLI, MS 8513, p. 97.
treated differently from land - something that Maitland was to complain about\textsuperscript{126} - but it is interesting to pause briefly to see what he left to each of them. To John, his eldest son, he gave one golden ring with a ruby, a ring with a diamond and a cross of gold with a diamond inlaid in the cross, along with other precious stones. Theobald also left John an aketon and a gambeson along with some pieces of armour including a hauberk, a small hauberk, two lined iron gorgets, one iron bascinet, one iron cap and a pair of iron greaves. He was also given two cloaks and all of Theobald's tents and pavilions. Theobald II received a similar combination of jewellery (gold rings with sapphires) and armour, as did Milo and Bertram, although the two latter also received a cash sum. Nicholas was left a gold ring with a sapphire and £200 unless he had been promoted to an ecclesiastical benefice worth 100 marks per year. Given Nicholas' later activities in Ireland, he seems to have been fortunate in escaping from this intended ecclesiastical career. It clearly would not have suited him. Walter received a gold ring with a sapphire and £200, while William the youngest mentioned got £100 as did Roesia, Theobald's only named daughter.

In total, then, Theobald left his children four suits of armour, a large collection of gold and jewels and £800 in cash - an impressive tally given the extent of Theobald's indebtedness at this same time. What is also notable about this will, however, is that even when Theobald had total freedom in the disposition of his property the only beneficiaries apart from his own children were Radulf de Camera and William of Sutton, Theobald's valets, who received twenty marks and ten marks respectively, "diverse servants," who were to receive 40s. each, and John "the son of lord Nicholas de Verdun" who received 100 marks. Even with personal property, then, it was the immediate family that took the lion's share.

Holt believes that "patronage presents the family viewed from its fringes looking inwards towards the centre"\textsuperscript{127} and although this seems less than convincing in that it was the head of the family who decided which of his relations to patronise, it is still useful to do as Holt does and go on to consider which family members the head of the house turned to for help and support when he needed it. It should be stated at the outset that to find the de Verduns working with one another is quite a rare occurrence. Generally, the senior member of the family acted on his or her

own. On those rare occasions when they can be found working with, or seeking help from, others they usually turned to their friends, neighbours, tenants and officials. Thus, Bertram III worked closely with, in turn, Richard de Humez and Gilbert Pipard, the constable of Dundalk died fighting the Irish in 1217\textsuperscript{128} and Peter of Coolock, Roger Basset of Duleek, John Jordan of Duleek and others stood as security for Theobald I de Verdun's payment of his debts to the king in 1304.\textsuperscript{129} Even attorneys were almost without exception not members of the family.

That said, there are occasions when members of the family can be found working together. These all date from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, at a time when the family's lands and importance (at least in Ireland) had been greatly increased through marriage.\textsuperscript{130} Once again it is the members of the tight-knit nuclear family group, brothers and sons, that crop up in this context.\textsuperscript{131} Theobald I de Verdun acted as attorney for his father in 1272,\textsuperscript{132} while Nicholas and John de Verdun looked after their father's estates while he was away on crusade from 1270, meeting their deaths as a result in 1271.\textsuperscript{133} Equally, Theobald II took his father's place in the army of 1297, and although this was forced on him by the king, Theobald I suggests in his letter that he had originally intended to send his son John to represent him.\textsuperscript{134}

The best example of how the head of the family might employ his younger brothers, and how they in turn might gain from the situation, is found in the rule of Theobald II. In 1309, Milo de Verdun was made guardian of Theobald's lands in Ireland,\textsuperscript{135} although, despite this, it is his brother Nicholas who seems to have been

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\bibitem{128} ALC, 1, p. 257.
\bibitem{129} Holt, EX2/1, p. 113.
\bibitem{130} Holt thinks "novel circumstances" can account for the increased importance of family members. (J. C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and the Family in early Medieval England III: Patronage and Politics', TRHS 5th ser., 34 (1984), p. 23.) The increase in the estates and Theobald II's later decision to absent himself from Ireland provide the two most obvious novelties to affect the family and it is indeed likely that they help to account for the increased prominence of family members in the administration of the family estates.
\bibitem{131} There is one possible exception to this rule. In 1284, Thomas de Verdun can be found lending money to Theobald. (CCR, 1279-88, p. 301; CDI, 2, no. 2305.) Unfortunately, Thomas' relationship to Theobald is not known. However, the likelihood that he was acting out of family feeling is itself qualified when it is considered that Thomas and his associate Henry de Praers can be found lending money to a number of people in the close rolls between 1284 and 1287. (CCR, 1279-88, pp. 411, 414, 427, 435, 472.)
\bibitem{132} CPR, 1266-72, p. 649.
\bibitem{133} ACLon, p. 249; AFM, 3, p. 415; NAI, RCR/1, p. 83.
\bibitem{134} CPR, 1296-1302, p. 42.
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the driving force on the family's Irish estates. Both Nicholas and Milo had already been politically active in Ireland for some years before 1309. In 1303, Nicholas and others had stood as security for Theobald I concerning the debts he owed to the king while in 1304 he gave security to pay £6 6s. of the service of Dundalk. In 1306 Nicholas appealed against John del Aunay having been accused by John of robbing his faithful *hibernici*. John had then complained of this to the earl of Ulster, "by which the earl was moved beyond measure against Nicholas, and had ill will against him; to his damage of £200." Nicholas stated that these *hibernici* were felons, and was supported by the jury who stated that they were indeed felons "of the company of Malys O'Reilly, and were with him to slay Peter le Petyt and other faithful Englishmen, and freely went with him to do homicides, robberies, burnings, and other evils, on men of peace." Both Nicholas and Milo had also played some role in attempting to promote stability in the areas in which the family held lands. In 1306, Nicholas acted as a pledge for Conluth O'Hanlon who was "charged with diverse robberies," while in 1308, Milo was given leave "for the good of the peace... to treat and parley with the Irish of the parts of Meath and Uriel."

The brothers are most famous, however, for their part in the so-called 'Riot of Louth' which took place in 1312. The 'Riot' itself was centred on the lands of Mellifont abbey, and began with Robert de Verdun - another of Theobald II's brothers - and Walter de la Pulle taking the fealty of the free tenants and betagh of the king early in the year and extracting ransoms from those who refused to comply, with the intention of taking their fealty in the following June. When John Wogan, the justiciary, finally arrived in Drogheda with his force in April, the county community "requested that [they], to avoid the injury which might come to the country by the coming of the army, might guard the country.. at their own charges, and that the said Nicholas and Milo de Verdun his brother might have the custody of it." Wogan acquiesced to this request and then ordered his men to disperse.

However, Wogan had previously sent a small force off to guard Ardee, and news of his decision failed to reach them. This force heard that the rebels were in the town of Louth, just to the north and promptly marched off to attack them, displaying the king's banner. Wogan asserted that when his men arrived at Louth

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136 NAI, EX2/1, pp. 59, 121.
137 *CJRI*, 2, pp. 186-7.
138 *ibid*, p. 503.
139 *CJRI*, 3, p. 51.
they found that they were fighting not only Robert de Verdun, but also his brother Nicholas and a body of men from the de Verdun lordship of Dundalk with him. In a not entirely contradictory report, Nicholas de Verdun answered that these men were the members of a posse he had collected from Dundalk, upon being appointed keeper of the peace, with the intention of going to parley with Robert to induce him to surrender. "While treating with them they saw the town of Louth and other towns of those parts burning." So he granted Robert and his men a truce and combining their forces attempted to apprehend those who had set the town alight in his capacity as keeper of the peace. In the battle which followed the royal forces were decisively beaten. The losses were heavy, although it was alleged that some were slain who could have been taken alive, while others were imprisoned and their arms stolen. Following the victory, Nicholas and Robert de Verdun, along with most of their supporters, appeared before Wogan in Drogheda, and were ordered to be before the council in Dublin in May. The 'rebels' were then allowed to purge their crimes by the payment of fines and by serving in the Scottish campaigns.

As Brendan Smith has noted, this was not the only time that Nicholas had acted in a lawless manner. In January 1315, he appeared before the justiciar - who was none other than his brother Theobald - at Dublin, accused of the murder of John de Parys. Without a hint of irony, Theobald pardoned him "for the good service which Nicholas de Verdun has done and will do in future to the king." In April of the same year, Thomas of Stanley was accused and convicted of a whole series of crimes in which Nicholas too had been implicated - although it is notable that Nicholas was not himself prosecuted for them. Stanley was accused of "abetting and instigating Nicholas de Verdun, knight, to send his horses with their grooms to the house of master Ralph de Blound, with malicious intent to remain at Paynestoun at the cost of master Ralph against his will." It was also stated that Nicholas had been "seizing everywhere, as well as in the demesne of lord Theobald de Verdun as elsewhere, horses and afers to do diverse cartings, and likewise oxen, cows, pigs, hoggets, geese, hens and other victuals commonly against the will of those to whom those cattle belonged, for which by the advice and procuration of Thomas he paid too little." Thomas had also "abetted and procured" Nicholas in

142 NAI, KB2/7, p. 18.
taking a horse and 40s. from Adam le Waleys. Lastly, Nicholas had taken horses and cash to the value of 20 marks and Thomas of Stanley 100 marks from Robert son of Peter Morial who had given it to them "for the purpose of coming to terms with Nicholas and Thomas on certain matters maliciously invented against [him]." This Robert and Peter had done "against their will, through fear of death, because [they] understood for certain that unless they should do so Nicholas, by the procuration of Sir Thomas Stanley, would have killed them." At the same time Stanley's son, Adam, was convicted of "lately coming to the house of Adam Cornewaleys together with other malefactors and unjustly beating, wounding and maltreating him and drinking his beer against his will." Given Thomas of Stanley's association with Nicholas de Verdun, it is likely that Adam acted in this way with de Verdun's approval. Certainly he can be found fighting against the Scots in 1315 in Nicholas' company.

Milo, Nicholas and Robert de Verdun, along with Thomas and Adam of Stanley, were to redeem themselves in the eyes of the king during the Bruce invasion of 1315-18. In the autumn of 1315 both Nicholas and Milo assured the king, in nearly identical letters, that they would do all in their power to help defeat the Scots, Nicholas adding that he had "heard for certain that, unless the Scots are attacked by the king and his forces in Scotland, the Scots will attempt to conquer Ireland during the coming winter with the aid of certain men of Ireland." He also asked for the king's favour because he had lost his lands and revenues, his horses and armour, and his followers as a consequence of the invasion.

Despite his lack of funds, Nicholas had some success in the war against the Scots and Irish. In October 1316, Edmund Butler was ordered to call members of the council before him to see "whether the release of Mara, wife of O'Hanlon, from prison in the town of Drogheda, where she was placed by Nicholas de Verdun, by whose men she was captured in war, would be injurious to the king or to the disturbance of the peace, and if he find that she can be released safely, to deliver her to Nicholas to make his profit of her." It may be that Mara had been captured in the same attack by the O'Hanlons on Dundalk which saw Robert de

\[143\] *ibid*, p. 21.
\[144\] *ibid*, p. 23.
\[145\] J. R. S. Phillips, 'Documents on the Early Stages of the Bruce Invasion of Ireland, 1315-16', *PIL*, 79, section C (1979), nos. 15, 16.
\[146\] *CCR*, 1313-18, p. 368.
Verdun killed in the same month.\footnote{147} Milo de Verdun too was prominent in the war, being one of the leaders at the battle of Faughart in 1318 which saw Edmund Bruce killed and the Scots involvement in Ireland ended.\footnote{148}

By the time the Scots were defeated at Faughart, Theobald II de Verdun was dead and his Irish estates had been placed in the custody of Nicholas and Milo by the king.\footnote{149} It would seem that Edward II was satisfied with the job that the brothers had been doing in Ireland, and it must be presumed that by and large Theobald II had been as well. Certainly making Milo the guardian of his Irish estates had its advantages for Theobald. He was able to leave his lands there to his brothers and was consequently unlikely to experience the opprobrium suffered by absentee landlords because he had delegated his duties to members of his own family who had their own interests in the area to protect and their own careers to build.\footnote{150} That is not to say that Theobald and his brothers always pulled in the same direction. As mentioned earlier, by 1315 Nicholas was reported to have attacked Theobald's own demesne lands in county Louth, something which Brendan Smith has suggested might have been due to concern over the impending partition of the de Verdun lands amongst Theobald II's daughters.\footnote{151}

Nicholas and Milo, of course, also gained from this agreement. Their name gave them a great deal more power than their landed means could ever have given them, allowing them to draw on one hundred and twenty years of family tradition in county Louth which they exploited to the full. Custody of the de Verdun lands in Ireland, and the part Nicholas and Milo consequently played against the Scots, also allowed the brothers to establish themselves on the wider political scene. Milo de Verdun married a daughter of the chief justice of Ireland, Richard of Exeter, in 1313, for example,\footnote{152} while in 1338 the king could refer to "the great place [Nicholas] will hold and holds in Ireland."\footnote{153}

The evidence discussed above, then, suggests a dynastic structure to the de Verdun family similar to that found in ecclesiastical sources such as the register of

\footnote{147} Chartulares, 2, p. 350. 
\footnote{148} ibid, p. 359. 
\footnote{149} CFR, 1307-16, p. 305. 
\footnote{152} Chartulares, 2, p. 343. 
\footnote{153} CFR, 1337-47, p. 94.
St Thomas' abbey, Dublin, and the Abbeydore cartulary which both provide family
trees for the de Verduns. The patronage of family members both spiritual and
temporal focused on the nuclear family, although a slightly wider group which
included uncles and cousins can be found attesting the de Verduns' own acta. On
the few occasions when family members can be found working in concert with
each other it is the same nuclear group that is involved. Fathers looked to their
sons, and brothers to each other, when they wanted help in the administration and
defence of their lands. This is also the case with the Clare family. Altschul has
noted that there is "sufficient evidence to adduce specific examples of family co-
operation and cohesion over the course of [the] century [1217-1317.]
"\textsuperscript{154} The examples that he then goes on to cite all reveal siblings helping each other. For
example, William de Clare served in the retinue of Earl Richard during military
campaigns. When William was defeated in a tournament in France, his brother
went abroad to restore his prestige.\textsuperscript{155} Equally, in 1285, Bogo de Clare helped his
brother Earl Gilbert imprison the abbot of St Augustine's, Bristol, in the earl's jail
at Cardiff at a time when Gilbert was involved in a jurisdictional dispute with
him.\textsuperscript{156} It is also clear, especially in the case of Bertram III de Verdun, that a
guardian could come to hold as important a place in an individual's affections as
members of the nuclear family.

\textit{Marriages, widows and dower disputes.}

Most of the marriages made by the representatives of the senior line of the de
Verdun family have already been noted in chapters one and two, as have some of
those made by their younger sons and daughters. They can be recapped here
briefly. The identities of the wives of Bertrams I and II, are unknown. It is only
from the 1120's that we have evidence as to the identity of the de Verduns' partners. By this point the de Verduns had been established in Staffordshire and Leicestershire for about a decade and it is consequently no surprise to discover that
from then until the 1190's the de Verduns took their wives or husbands from other families with lands in the English midlands, such as the de Clintons, the de Ferrers earls of Derby, the Pantulfs and the Bassets.

\textsuperscript{154} M. Altschul, \textit{A Baronial Family in Medieval England: The Clares, 1217-1314} (Baltimore,
1965), p. 29.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{ibid}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{ibid}, p. 49.
In 1189-90 Count John of Mortain granted Bertram III de Verdun lands in Ireland, centred on Dundalk, and this changed the emphasis of the family's marriages. The de Verduns now had a new region in which to consolidate their interests and can be found marrying among their fellow Irish landholders from 1194-9 when Thomas de Verdun married his sister, Leselina, to Hugh de Lacy, the future earl of Ulster, whose brother was lord of Meath.\footnote{Gormanston Reg, pp. 144, 192-3.} Nicholas de Verdun's bride, Clementia, appears to have been a member of the Butler family - although not necessarily a representative of the senior line - and the same is true of his daughter's husband,\footnote{CRR, 17, no. 1462.} Roesia marrying Theobald II Butler in 1225 at the express wish of the king.\footnote{RLC, 2, p. 60.} Two more marriages with the de Lacys followed. An unnamed daughter of Roesia de Verdun's was married to Walter II de Lacy while John de Verdun was married to Walter II's elder sister, Margery.\footnote{Register, p. 420; CRR, 16, no. 2257.} Nicholas II de Verdun was married to Basilia de Cogan, whose family held lands in Munster, before his death at the hands of the Irish in 1271.\footnote{CDI, 2, no. 1443.} Lastly, Milo de Verdun was married to a daughter of Richard of Exeter in 1313.\footnote{Chartularies, 2, p. 343.}

As a result of Walter de Lacy's untimely death between 1238 and 1241, John's wife Margery had become one of two heiresses to the de Lacy lands. John thus acquired half the lordship of Meath in Ireland, half of the Welsh marcher lordship of Ewias Lacy and lands in Hereford (based on the castle at Weobley) and Shropshire (based around Ludlow). As a result, the last three heads of the de Verdun family took their wives from families associated with the Welsh march. By 1258, John de Verdun had taken as his second wife Aliauer de Bohun, her identity being revealed by her seal which carries both de Verdun and de Bohun bearings.\footnote{BL, Seal XC. 91. Printed in WS, vol 1913, pp. 297(facing), 298.} This identification of John's bride is further supported by the fact that they had a son called Humphrey, who went on to give lands in Debden to Humphrey de Bohun in exchange for Nuthampstead before his death in 1285.\footnote{PRO, DL25/L. 1471; Croxden Chronicle s.a. 1285, fo. 76v.} Theobald I was to marry, in his father's lifetime, another member of the same family - Matilda.\footnote{The de Bohuns, of course, held the great lordship of Brecon which neighboured de Verdun Ewias Lacy. Theobald II married Matilda de Mortimer in 1302, whose...}
5.1 The seal of Alianor de Verdun (London, BL, Seal xc 91)
family's lordship of Wigmore lay between Weobley and Ludlow, although there was an Irish dimension to this marriage too as Theobald was to have gained the lordship of Dunamase from it, although in the event this failed to happen.\textsuperscript{166} Matilda died in 1312 and Theobald then took as his second wife Elizabeth de Burgh, one of the three Clare heiresses.\textsuperscript{167}

How much influence the de Verduns had in the choice of their marriages is not clear. We do not know if they initiated marriage negotiations with de Clinton, Basset, Butler, de Bohun \textit{et al} or whether they were approached by these families, although it does seem unlikely that the de Verduns would have suggested a marriage to Earl Robert de Ferrers in Stephen's reign. Instead, de Ferrers probably married his daughter, Matilda, to Bertram III de Verdun in an effort to counter the influence which Earl Ranulf II of Chester was exerting over the family.\textsuperscript{168} Political considerations probably also dictated the marriages made between an unnamed daughter of Roesia de Verdun and Walter II de Lacy, and that between John de Verdun and Margery de Lacy. These might have been intended to provide a permanent solution to the dispute which had arisen between the two houses following the marriage of Leselina de Verdun to Hugh de Lacy between 1194 and 1199.\textsuperscript{169} In one case at least it seems that the de Verduns had been given very little room for manoeuvre in their choice of marriage. In 1225, Henry III wrote to Roesia de Verdun and her father, urging a marriage between Roesia and Theobald II Butler.\textsuperscript{170}

Aside from such political considerations, the opportunity to acquire large swathes of land was an important factor when making marriages. Lecelina de Clinton's large \textit{maritagium} was undoubtedly attractive to Norman de Verdun, although it is unclear whether John de Verdun realised when he married Margery de Lacy that he was going to acquire a moiety of her family's estates in England and Ireland. The location of the family's existing lands seems also to have been important when considering marriage options as it is likely that these marriages were intended to consolidate the de Verduns' position in the various areas in which they held estates already. Altschul has stated that the marriages made by the de Clares were

\textsuperscript{166} Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1302, fo. 78v.; \textit{CPR}, 1301-7, p. 33.  
\textsuperscript{167} Rot Parliamentorum, eds. J. Strachey \textit{et al.}, Record Commission (London, 1783-1832), 1, pp. 352-3.  
\textsuperscript{168} See above, pp. 18-19.  
\textsuperscript{169} See above, pp. 45, 49-51, 56-8, 75.  
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{RLC}, 2, p. 60.
"dictated by political and territorial considerations." More generally, Scott Waugh has noted that "Regional interests... weighed heavily in contracting marriages. Thus, a landholder seeking to consolidate his territorial interests might seek a wife for himself or wives and husbands for his children from families with lands near his own." It is noteworthy in this respect that as the de Verduns acquired lands in a new area, so marriages were made with the families already established in that area.

Waugh's study of the Mortimer marriages reveals a deliberate policy of making marriages with families with landed interests in the same area. "For three generations, Mortimer men and women drew wives and husbands from a pool of cousins descended from or allied by marriage to the Marshal family," in an effort to increase their estates, to prevent them from being dissipated and to direct the devolution of their property. One sign of such marriage strategies, Waugh argues, is the occurrence of brother-sister co-marriages. "A co-marriage could take the form of either marriages between brothers of one family and sisters of another or marriages between the sister and brother of one family and the brother and sister of another... the latter was most ideal in terms of preparing for the accidents of inheritance. Not only did dowries balance one another, but it guaranteed that property would descend within the two families, unless both couples were childless." Something similar could also be reached through matches between siblings and cousins. The existence of a brother-sister co-marriage with the de Lacy family in the 1230's-40's, then, might have been intended to help the two families control the devolution of their neighbouring lands in the future, although it would have provided the de Lacys with some hope of retaining an interest in the lordship of Dundalk or, indeed, claiming it in its entirety were the de Verdun line to fail in the future. Equally, the marriage of John de Verdun and his son, Theobald, to two members of the de Bohun family could reveal the employment of a marriage strategy in the march.

Whatever the reason for these marriages being made, it is clear that they did not generally lead to co-operation between the de Verduns and the other families

173 *ibid*, pp. 39-45.
174 *ibid*, p. 39.
175 *ibid*, p. 38.
involved. The only exception is the de Bohun family. John de Verdun can be found in Humphrey de Bohun's company during the Barons' War when in 1265 they received the surrender of London together. John also attested two charters issued by Humphrey between 1239 and 1274, as well as one made by his son, Milo, in 1270.\textsuperscript{176} Equally, Theobald I was joined in his attacks on Llanthony priory on at least one occasion by Gilbert de Bohun.\textsuperscript{177}

It was more often the case that instead of enjoying their support, the de Verduns became immersed in disputes with the families into which they had married. For example, Norman de Verdun's marriage to Lecelina de Clinton led to a rift with her brother, Geoffrey II, which was to last until the 1180's when Lecelina's maritagium was finally restored to her.\textsuperscript{178} Thomas de Verdun's marriage to Eustachia Basset led to an untidy dower dispute with Nicholas de Verdun which could have resulted in King John demanding a large debt from Nicholas at Richard Basset's suggestion.\textsuperscript{179} Leselina de Verdun's marriage to Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, led to a protracted dispute with Nicholas de Verdun throughout the 1220's which was only finally ended when Hugh and Roesia de Verdun came to an agreement in c.1235.\textsuperscript{180} Finally, Theobald II's marriage to Matilda de Mortimer led to a plea against Edmund de Mortimer in which he was stated as owing his son-in-law £3,000, probably in lieu of the lordship of Dunamase which had formed Matilda's maritagium.\textsuperscript{181}

In total, there were at least fifteen marriages made by the various heads of the de Verdun family between c.1066 and 1316. We know nothing about two of these marriages - those of Bertrams I and II - apart from the fact that they must have occurred. In six of the remaining thirteen cases, the de Verdun lord left a widow on his death. The last of these was Theobald II's second wife, Elizabeth de Burgh. However, as she survived the last male representative of the senior line she will not be considered in the following discussion, which aims to examine the relations between these widows and the heir to the de Verdun estates.

\textsuperscript{177} CPR, 1292-1301, p. 465.
\textsuperscript{178} See above, pp. 14, 30-1.
\textsuperscript{179} See above, pp. 47, 54.
\textsuperscript{180} Gormanston Reg, pp. 161-2.
\textsuperscript{181} CPR, 1301-7, p. 33; WS, 9/1, p. 25.
In two of these five cases, widows and heirs seem to have had a good and even supportive relationship. The earliest of them, Lecelina de Clinton, received Bertram III's help when she made a fine of 60 marks to regain her lost maritagium in 1180.\textsuperscript{182} By the following year, Bertram had interceded with the king for her and obtained a reduction of 15 marks in the outstanding debt of 40 marks, while the pipe roll of 1182 records that Bertram and Lecelina had been quitted of their debt through the king's writ.\textsuperscript{183} In this instance, Bertram's help is all the more expected because he was going to benefit in the long term from the recovery of Lecelina's considerable maritagium too. There seems to have been no such ulterior motive influencing the relationship between Thomas and Nicholas de Verdun and Bertram III's widow, Rohais. She was allowed to enjoy her dower in Kirkby (Lincolnshire), Wiles (Buckinghamshire) and Lutterworth (Leicestershire) without any known hindrance or dispute being brought by Bertram III's sons. Indeed, relations were such that Nicholas and Rohais founded the hospital at Lutterworth together in 1219.\textsuperscript{184}

In contrast, the remaining three widows were involved in dower disputes with the sons of their former spouses. The first of these was Eustachia Basset, who was the widow of Thomas de Verdun. The details of her dispute with Thomas' brother Nicholas over her dower have been laid out above but can be briefly repeated here. In 1200 Richard de Camvill and Eustachia, his wife and Thomas' widow, brought a plea against Nicholas over forty librates of land which the same Eustachia claimed as her dower.\textsuperscript{185} The case was not settled until 1204, when it was agreed that Nicholas should grant "to Richard and Eustachia for the lifetime of Eustachia, the manor of Farnham in county Buckingham and the manor of Hethe in county Oxford and 40s. rent to be received of Henry de Verdun of the service he owes for the tenement he holds of the said Nicholas in Bucknall in county Stafford."\textsuperscript{186}

John de Verdun's second wife, Alianor de Bohun, was also to outlive her husband. In 1275, she sued John's son and heir, Theobald I, for a third of his holdings in Newbold Verdon, Lutterworth, Cotesbach, Brandon, Bretford, Flecknoe, Alton, Stramshall, Crakemarsh, Wooton, Bucknall, Fenton Culvert,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{182} PR, 26 Henry II, p. 29
\item \textsuperscript{183} PR, 27 Henry II, p. 113; PR, 28 Henry II, p. 125.
\item \textsuperscript{184} JCS, 2, p. 43; Leicestershire, 4/1, p. 248.
\item \textsuperscript{185} WS, 3/1, p. 71. In 1200, Gerard de Camvill paid £1000 "for having the wife of Thomas de Verdun with her land, and for her marrying of Richard his son." (PR, 2 John, p. 87).
\item \textsuperscript{186} WS, 3/1, pp. 170-1.
\end{itemize}
Balterley, Ellaston, Bidulf, Hethe, Farnham and La Cere, Stoke Farthing, Wilsford, Weobley, Ewias Lacy and Walterston, Stoke-on-Tern, Aldeleye and Ludlow. Theobald conceded dower in these manors except in the castles of Ewias Lacy, Weobley and Alton, but "as it was not just that Alianor should have only a third of the said manors, the sheriffs were ordered to make extents of the manors and tenements." 187

An acceptable arrangement was made in November 1275. The agreement, which survives in the close rolls, states that Theobald had "granted to her as dower the manor of Brandon, Bretford and Flecknœ county Warwick, Cotesbach, Loges and Lutterworth county Leicester, with the advowsons of the churches of Lutterworth and Cotesbach (excepting £9 yearly of the land of the villein-tenants of Lutterworth)." Alianor was also to receive a third of the knight's fees in Brandon, Lutterworth and Cotesbach and it was agreed that she "may not exact aught outside the towns aforesaid hereafter for her dower, neither from the manor of Newbold Verdon nor from the manor of Bittersby, nor elsewhere in England." She was also to be reasonably dowered "of the lands of Weobley, Ewias and Ludlow which the said John, her husband, had of the gift of Theobald his son, except the fees pertaining to the said manors... which Alianor has granted to Theobald for life." The agreement then turned to Ireland. Alianor was to have her dower in Duleek, but she had granted to Theobald "that he shall have out of her dower in Uriel... the value of all her dower of Weobley, Ewias and Ludlow in England and of Duleek in Ireland. If anything of her dower in Uriel remain to her after she has satisfied Theobald for having her dower in Ewias, Weobley and Ludlow and Duleek the remainder shall be assigned to Theobald for making equal extent in Duleek. A suitable mansion shall be made for her in Duleek outside the chief messuage at a reasonable extent of her houses in Uriel. If her dower of Uriel and Meath do not suffice for the value of her dower in Weobley, Ewias Lacy and Ludlow and Duleek, she shall receive so much less in Duleek." Other clauses dealt with the livestock on the manors and with refunding to Theobald the expenses of cultivation. 188

This was a sizeable and fairly compact group of de Verdun lands and included Theobald's castle at Brandon, which had been burned and at least partially demolished in 1266 during the Barons' War. Theobald apparently decided to

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187 I/S, 6/1, p. 71.
188 CCR, 1272-9, pp. 322-3.
reclaim some of this land by crook. He seems to have undervalued the lands in Uriel so as to reclaim as much as possible in Duleek. He then took her lands in Uriel into his own hands but failed to deliver to Alianor her dower lands elsewhere. Such was the complaint of a plea in 1276 which accused Theobald of not having put her in seisin of her dower even though he had been "put in seisin of her dower in Uriel by an extent not made justly." Consequently, Theobald's seisin of Uriel was revoked and the king ordered his officials that "if they have caused Theobald to have seisin of [Alianor's] dower in Uriel, to cause her to have again seisin thereof." Theobald was not to be given seisin again until the justiciary and chancellor had been informed that he had given Alianor her dower in England and Duleek. This he had done by 1277 at the latest, as he was then to bring a suit against Alianor causing her to respect the terms of a fine made between them concerning the live and dead stock of these manors, by which Alianor had agreed to pay Theobald for what had been consumed by her.

In a way typical of most dowagers, little else is known about Alianor or her activities on those parts of the de Verdun lands granted to her. A plea of 1278, however, reveals that Theobald had not been exploiting some meek widow. In that year Ela, countess of Warwick, stated that she had sent John, the provost of Claverdon, to Brandon with a letter quitclaiming the relief that Theobald owed her for the castle and manor in return for 10 marks. "Alianor (and two others) imprisoned John, within the castle of Brandon, and had taken by violence the said letter without having paid a farthing of the said ten marks." In the same year, Alianor also made a bond with John de Aveyns "in consideration of a release... regarding her dower out of the free tenement which her husband had of the gift of Maurice fitzGerald in Ireland." This tenement included property in Adare and Grean which John de Verdun had held in 1266 when he had granted it back to Maurice fitzGerald on the occasion of his marriage. Alianor is not mentioned in the hundred rolls drawn up concerning Warwickshire in 1279. These mention only Theobald in relation to Brandon and Bretford and it is thus possible that she was dead by this point. Certainly, she fails to appear again in any source.

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189 ibid, p. 288.
190 ibid, p. 343.
191 ibid, pp. 288, 342.
192 WSS, 6/1, p. 82.
193 ibid, p. 86.
194 CDI, 2, no. 1459.
The settlement of Alianor's claim to dower was swift in contrast to the case of Basilia de Cogan who first brought her plea for dower in 1278. Why Basilia, Nicholas de Verdun's widow, began her plea seven years after her husband's death is unknown, but the delay makes suspect her wide-reaching claims for dower. Exactly what this claim was is made clear in a report of proceedings which took place in 1280. Basilia demanded a third of all the de Verdun demesne manors in Ireland, with a few small exceptions, "whereof the said Nicholas formerly her husband and son and heir of John de Verdun, had, with the consent of the latter endowed her ad ostium ecclesiae when he married her." Theobald contested this, and produced "a deed of agreement made between the above named John and John de Cogan,..., whereby the former endowed her of 100 librates of land in the manor of Lough Sewdy, and it was provided that when Nicholas had reached his age, and had recovered the residue of his inheritance, which was in custody of the queen, John de Verdun should be quit of the 100 librates; and Theobald asserts that Basilia ought not to be further endowed." Both sides then put themselves on the country, and an inquisition was ordered. In 1281 the jury hearing the case was respited for three weeks on account of an inquisition - presumably this same inquisition - not being returned, and a new day was given to Theobald and Basilia in the quinzaine of Easter of 1282. Nothing further is heard of the case.

The reason why Lecelina and Rohais were treated well by their husbands' successors and why Eustachia, Alianor and Basilia were embroiled in disputes over their dower is not difficult to establish. The two former widows were the mothers of their husbands' heirs, the three latter women were not. This pattern is typical, being found in, for example, the relations between heirs and widows in the Mortimer family as examined by Linda Mitchell. Her study led her to conclude that "if the heir had to contend with a dowager who was his stepmother rather than his biological mother... his antagonism toward her might cause him to obstruct her seisin all through her life, first by refusing to grant her dower, then by contesting her seisin through litigation and outright trespass... Even mothers who faced little opposition from their heirs often compromised... on the amount and extent of their

196 CDI, 2, no. 1443.
197 Ibid, no. 1635.
198 Ibid, no. 1858.
dower holdings, an arrangement that invariably favoured the heir rather than the dowager.  

Family identities, 1066-1316.

Names have always been one of the more obvious foundations of identity. In the Ancient Egyptian New Kingdom, several separable factors were considered essential in order to possess existence and identity. One of these was a name. After death, the person who had succeeded in keeping together all these various elements was transfigured and proceeded to the afterlife. However, anyone who had lost one or more of these elements was condemned to a condition of eternal death. This is why when Ramesses IV punished the killers of Ramesses III he removed both their names and their titles. Names, then, were crucial to existence and identity for the Ancient Egyptians. Ralph Davis noted in his biography of King Stephen how names were still fundamental to a man's identity in the twelfth century, providing the example of Waleran of Meulan and stating that if ever Waleran "lost Meulan and had to change his name, hardly anyone would know who he was." Implicit in this comment are values which Sir James Holt has elucidated more fully. "Nomenclature," he has remarked, "can take us deep into the consciousness of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy: into their family organisation, into their notions of property and title, and into their sense of history."  

The very fact that the family called itself, and was known by others, as de Verdun is thus revealing in itself, especially as after 1102, Henry I gave Bertram II de Verdun a compact lordship in Staffordshire along with a more scattered group of manors in Leicestershire. This new honour dwarfed Bertram de Verdun's patrimony in Normandy but its acquisition did not lead to a change of toponym. In contrast, Robert de Tilleul, whose father Humphrey, like Bertram de Verdun, held only a few manors in Normandy, changed his name to Robert of Rhuddlan after being given a sizeable chunk of North Wales by William the Conqueror, probably

in 1081 and certainly before 1086.\textsuperscript{203} His new name was taken from the caput his new and sizeable estates which overshadowed those which made up his patrimony in Normandy. That Bertram de Verdun did not similarly change his name suggests that the relative size of his estates was not the only factor to be taken into consideration when contemplating a change of name. Presumably, points in favour of retaining his Norman toponymic included the importance to Bertram of his Norman heritage and identity, and the fact that his name and family had been established in England for over thirty years before the acquisition of these midlands manors, at least some of which time had been spent in royal service. Consequently, it would have been much harder for Bertram de Verdun than for Robert of Rhuddlan to have changed his toponym without experiencing the sort of crisis of identity envisaged by Davis and Holt. Furthermore, as the earliest of the de Verduns' tenants in Staffordshire seem to have been of English descent, it is possible that the retention of the family's Norman toponym was intended to emphasise the difference between lord and tenants.

Sir James Holt has stated that "the hereditary toponymic surname goes with the tenure of land. It is not just a name but a title."\textsuperscript{204} This is true of the earlier de Verduns, but it seems that this element had already become redundant by the time that Normandy - and Verdun with it - was lost to Philip Augustus in 1204. However, it is clear that the name remained closely associated with the estates that Bertrams II and III had built up in England and Ireland between c.1102 and 1190, and this is illustrated by the actions that John de Verdun took when he succeeded to his mother's estates in 1247. John, from the time that he first appears in royal records in 1242, is called John de Verdun.\textsuperscript{205} As the son of Theobald II Butler's second wife, he gained none of his father's lands, but he was always heir to his mother's patrimony and this explains how it was that he took his mother's name. To quote Holt again, "The system of nomenclature was strongly patrilineal. There was only one circumstance in which a man might take a name from his mother's or his wife's line, and that was when he inherited her rights."\textsuperscript{206} It was something that was also done by Eustace fitzJohn's or Nigel d'Aubigny's heirs after their fathers acquired large estates through marriage, and the practice has been taken as an illustration of the way in which names and tenure were interlinked.

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{CRR}, 16, no. 2257.
John de Verdun and his son and heir Theobald I, however, appear to have taken the association of names and land one step further. To stress the legitimacy of their inheritance of the de Verdun estates and to stress that the de Verdun family was continued in their persons, John and Theobald I looked not only at the hereditary toponymic but also at the Christian names which previous generations of de Verduns had given to their children. This may not be immediately apparent. The names of John's heir, Theobald I, and of Theobald I's heir, Theobald II, seem to highlight the family's Butler connections rather than their de Verdun ones. This, however, was simply the way things turned out rather than the way they were planned. John de Verdun's eldest son was called Nicholas, after Roesia's father who was also the last male head of the senior de Verdun line. His second son was named John after himself. As has been noted already, both were killed by the Irish in 1271 and so it was that Theobald, originally the third son, inherited the de Verdun estates.

Theobald I provided a convenient list of his offspring in the will that he made in 1295. They were called, in order, John, Theobald, Milo, Bertram, Nicholas, Walter and William, and there was also a daughter called Roesia. The eldest two sons were clearly named after Theobald's father and then Theobald himself. Milo, Bertram, Nicholas, Walter and William were all names that had been current in the de Verdun family from the twelfth century onwards. For example, one or more Milo de Verduns witness charters issued by Bertram III de Verdun, Thomas, Nicholas and Roesia de Verdun, that is charters issued throughout the whole period from 1180-1247.

Bertram, to take a second example, had given the family even more extensive service. The first de Verdun to appear in England was called Bertram (he is probably the same man who witnessed a charter in Normandy in 1066). He was succeeded in about 1100 by Bertram II. Bertram II's son, Norman, had a brother called Bertram who attests charters in the midlands during Stephen's reign and appears in Normandy in 1155. Norman de Verdun was succeeded by his son,
Bertram III in 1152-3 and he continued to rule his family's lands until 1192. He also had a son called Bertram, who was given lands by his father and by his brothers Thomas and Nicholas. Nicholas himself probably had a son called Bertram who was a hostage for his good behaviour in 1215 but who was to predecease him.

Although the evidence is by no means conclusive, it seems that there is a strong case for thinking that John and Theobald I de Verdun deliberately conformed to a de Verdun family identity, manifested in a toponymic and a set of regularly used Christian names. This belief is strengthened further when it is considered that, despite having inherited half of the de Lacy lands, no effort was made to reflect the de Lacy side of the family in the names given to these children. There are no Hughs or Gilberts and although there is a Walter, his name is a long way down the list of Theobald I's children and its presence is ambiguous, because the name had a tradition in both de Verdun and de Lacy families.210

The reason that John promoted his de Verdun lineage seems to be due to the connection between name and tenure mentioned previously. It is just possible that this course of action was a response to rival claims for the estates, as "the succession of a new lord, particularly one who was not the simple heir of the decedent, might also bring a flurry of conflicts."211 Philip Chatwin has noted that the Stoneleigh Leger Book apparently records the existence of another John de Verdun, whose actions during the Barons War suggest that he might have considered himself the rightful heir to the de Verdun lands.212 Alternatively, by employing the de Verdun toponym and Christian names, John may have been underpinning his power in Ireland and Staffordshire through his deliberate identification with the old family.

In 1179-80 Bertram III de Verdun founded an abbey at Croxden in Staffordshire "for the souls of Norman de Verdun, my father, and of Lecelina, my mother, and of Richard de Humez, who brought me up, and of my predecessors and for my

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210 It will be remembered that Ralph de Verdun's son (Nicholas de Verdun's cousin) was called Walter.
212 P. B. Chatwin, 'Brandon Castle, Warwickshire', Birmingham Archaeological Society, 73 (1955), p. 65. Note though that the John son of William de Verdun to whom Chatwin refers was a member of the Norfolk branch of the family.
salvation and that of Rohais, my wife, and for that of my successors." The abbey, which had been founded for the family's spiritual well-being, was to provide a symbol of family identity for every later generation of de Verduns. For example, Roesia de Verdun gave the house a rent of 40s. from the mill at Alton at some date before her death in 1247, John de Verdun gave six virgates in Hartshorn in Derbyshire, while Theobald I gave a grant of common pasture at Threpwood. Furthermore, the abbey became something of a family mausoleum. The chronicler notes that Norman de Verdun, who must have been moved from his initial resting place, was buried there, as were Nicholas, John, Theobald I and Theobald II de Verdun. The family's close association with the house is also revealed by the Croxden chronicler, whose words, of course, reveal not just how the de Verduns saw the abbey but how the abbey - or at least its chronicler - saw them. John de Verdun was "a mighty patron of this house", Theobald I's death was the easier to bear because "he left behind him one like unto himself...... a defender of this house against enemies and one that to his friends renders favours." Theobald II was also described as a "patron of this house" but the Churchillian prose really kicks in when the chronicler talks of the partition in 1332 when "that honourable and distinguished name of Verdun was passed to the Furnivals (Thomas Furnival having married the eldest of Theobald II's heiresses)... For eternity, however, let not the memory of name pass from the hearts of those living in this house, lest they be found ungrateful, because there is not another name given to them under heaven to which they are bound to show such great reverence in prayer or the giving of thanks."

The patronage of Croxden, then, although not exclusive to the family, was nonetheless a symbol of family identity for the senior line of the family. This seems especially apparent for the period after 1247 because Croxden was not the only abbey John inherited, although it was the only one that he patronised - at least so far as we can tell. Llanthony Prima was probably the most important of the de Lacy foundations, but it did not gain de Verdun support. Indeed, the opposite occurred with Theobald I attacking the abbey's possessions at intervals throughout the

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213 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Staffordshire, Charter 47; BL, Cotton Charter xi. 7; Monasticon, 5, p. 662; C. Lynam, The Abbey of St Mary, Croxden, Staffordshire, appendix 1, pp .i-ii.
214 RS, 6/1, p. 223.
216 Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, Sutherland Collection, D593/A/2/23/4.
217 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1334, fos. 83v.-84.
218 Croxden Chronicle, s.a.1274, 1309, 1316, 1332, fos. 76, 79v., 80, 82.
5.2 Croxden abbey.
1280's and 90's.\textsuperscript{219} Patronage of Croxden thus provided a platform for expressing family identity. The fact that the last three generations of the family chose to patronise Croxden abbey rather than any of the de Lacy houses that they inherited suggests once again a deliberate choice of family identity. They stressed their claims to be de Verdun at the expense of their de Lacy connections.

The second point to be considered here is whether the de Verduns can be said to have possessed a particular regional identity. Everybody is affected by the places where they have lived. These places contribute something to how people think and behave and how things are perceived. Similarly, the place where you live can effect how others see you. Examples of this are provided by the broadest regional stereotypes. You can be a shandy-swilling southerner, or a tight-fisted jock. A search for regional pigeon-holes to drop the de Verduns into can be undertaken by establishing which areas they were concerned with, whether there was any discernible preference by members of the family for any of these areas and whether they were perceived by others as being attached to any particular area. To this end we can look at where members of the de Verdun family spent most of their time, where they put in an especially noticeable effort to maintain or expand their lands and rights and where they played a particularly prominent political role. We can also examine where the king can be found thwarting de Verdun ambitions or bringing members of the family to heel. We can ponder the scanty evidence that the witness lists of de Verdun acta provide and we can consider the marriages that the members of the family made.

As these marriages, and the possible reasons for them, have been described already, their bearing on the present question can be dealt with quickly here. Although the de Verduns took their brides or husbands from families with lands in the midlands, Ireland and the Welsh march at different times, it does not seem that this changing geographical emphasis relates to any particular preference for any of the regions in which the de Verduns' had lands. Instead, it appears to relate to a need to consolidate the family's position in the areas that they were newest to.

What then do the preoccupations of the various members of the family, the attentions of king and chroniclers and origins of charter witnesses suggest about the de Verduns' regional identity? In England, it is difficult to find the de Verduns

taking a particularly prominent stand in any of the regions in which they held lands. It is only the rule of Theobald I that provides a well illuminated example of de Verdun attachment to a particular region and a particular set of liberties. His dealings with Llanthony priory have been detailed already. Then, in 1291, the sheriff of Hereford came into Ewias Lacy to take an inquisition. This was against the custom of the march and, apparently as a result, Philip Vaughan ab Ithel and others intercepted the sheriff "with a multitude of Welsh as much on horse as on foot" and "outside that land of Ewias Lacy they carried away in contempt of the king 10,000 pounds." Theobald was later cleared by a jury of having any part in this affair, but he can again be found defending his privileges in another incident dating to the same year. Edward I, who wanted to rein in the marcher lords, had begun proceedings against the earls of Hereford and Gloucester as a result of a war they had been having between themselves over the borders of their respective lordships. The commissioners were sent to the march to empanel a jury of marcher lords to swear as to the truth of the case. However, when they all refused to do so, the commissioners changed tack and tried to chose a jury from men from the marcher lordships instead. "And hereupon Theobald de Verdun claims his liberty as to this, that he says men of his land ought not to swear here." The glare of the spotlight on Theobald I's actions in the march, however, should not blind us to the more routine activities of the family which reveal that between 1247 and 1316 they were equally concerned with their estates in Staffordshire and Shropshire as those in Hereford and Ewias Lacy. John de Verdun tried to enlarge the scope of his lordship in Staffordshire as the hundred rolls report that "the lord of Alton... take[s] by force and unjustly passagium through [his] demesne lands and elsewhere" and claimed that he had appropriated three warrens to himself. Equally, he can be found rebuilding Alton castle after its destruction in 1264, and making assarts in Farley. Theobald I too was accused of taking illegal tolls in Staffordshire and can be found involved in a number of land pleas in the same county, most of which suggest that he too was bringing previously marginal areas into cultivation in Alton and its surrounding members. It is also worthy of note that John and the two Theobalds all died at Alton castle which - it is clear from the

220 PRO KB27/129, memb. 54; JUST/11/302, memb. 32. Incomplete reports and transcripts are printed in HN, 6/1, p. 200 and Rot Parlamentorum, 1, p. 82.
221 Cal of Chancery Rolls, Various, 1277-1326, p. 337.
222 PRO SC5/Stafts 3; HN, 5/1, p. 119.
223 PRO C133/7/1, HN vol 1911, p. 160.
224 HN, 6/1, pp. 267, 226-8.
partition of 1332 - had remained the chief seat of the family in England and that they and other members of their family continued to be buried at Croxden abbey.\textsuperscript{225} Furthermore, the witness lists of the surviving de Verdun charters - which admittedly decline markedly from 1247 - suggest that all the close friends or followers of the family were Staffordshire tenants, the last identifiable one of these being William of Caverswall who died in 1291.\textsuperscript{226}

Staffordshire and Alton thus remained a focus for the family's activities and influence. It is also clear that the de Verduns were concerned to enlarge and protect their lands in Shropshire too, which formed the bridge between the Staffordshire estates and those in Hereford and the march. John de Verdun purchased small pieces of land to supplement his existing holdings in Eaton-upon-Tern and Stokesay.\textsuperscript{227} He was also given a grant of murage for Ludlow, and gained the manor of Stoke on Tern from Hugh de Say in exchange for lands in Ireland.\textsuperscript{228}

Other areas, however, were clearly less important to John and his successors. Under Nicholas and Roesia de Verdun there seems to have been an attempt to increase de Verdun influence in Warwickshire and Leicestershire. Nicholas founded a hospital at Lutterworth in 1219 and built a new keep at Brandon in 1226,\textsuperscript{229} while Roesia founded a nunnery at Grace Dieu near Belton in 1231-2.\textsuperscript{230} Nicholas' charters too were attested by an increased number of Warwickshire and Leicestershire landholders. By the 1270's, however, de Verdun interests in these counties seems to have been on the wane. These manors were used to dower de Verdun widows, such as John's second wife, Alianor, whose settlement included Brandon, Bretford, Flecknoe (Warwickshire), Cotesbach, Loges and Lutterworth (Leicestershire) and a reasonable share of lands in Weobley (Herefordshire).\textsuperscript{231} The manor house at Cotesbach was granted to John de Verdun's bailiff, Henry of Bray,

\textsuperscript{225} Compare the case of the fitzAlan earls of Arundel, who moved their caput from Oswestry to Arundel in the fourteenth century. The move was marked by the construction of a new chapel near to the castle in which the earls then had themselves buried. I would like to thank Prof. Given-Wilson for this information.

\textsuperscript{226} See above, pp. 201-207.

\textsuperscript{227} R. W. Eyton, \textit{Antiquities of Shropshire}, 5, pp. 38-9; Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 2nd report (1874), appendix, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{228} \textit{CPR}, 1266-72, p. 16; Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 2nd report (1874), appendix, p. 77.


\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Monasticon}, 6/1, p. 567; \textit{CChR}, 1, p. 265.

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{CCR}, 1272-9, pp. 322-3.
before 1274,\(^{232}\) while Flecknoe had been farmed out by 1316 for a rent of 40s. per year.\(^{233}\) There also seems to have been little interest, at any time since the beginning of the twelfth century, in the single manors held in demesne by the family in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Hethe and Farnham respectively. When they appear in records, it is generally to note that they have been granted as dower (as they were in 1204)\(^{234}\) or that they are being leased as repayment for debts, as Farnham Royal was mortgaged to Thomas de Verdun and Henry de Praers in 1284.\(^{235}\)

In England, then, the de Verduns' regional identity changed over time. This was not only the result of new acquisitions changing the direction of de Verdun interests, but was also due to a change of heart over their estates in Warwickshire and Leicestershire from the 1270's - although this might perhaps have been caused by the John's acquisition of estates in the march. There was one stable element, however, this being the Staffordshire lordship based around Alton which seems to have remained a focus for the de Verduns' identity from the beginning of the twelfth century when it was acquired until 1316.

The attempt to distinguish a particular prominence in any area and a particular concern for estates and rights becomes easier if Ireland is added to the equation. Nicholas and Roesia both showed an especial concern for their Irish estates and had a prominence in Irish affairs which overshadowed any role they had in England and this tradition of involvement in Ireland was taken up with aplomb by John de Verdun. The Irish pipe rolls record that John provisioned the royal castle at Athlone in 1272, while he treated with the Irish in 1273-4.\(^{236}\) John is the only member of the family to have been noticed to any extent by the Irish annals and that these record both his actions and his name provides evidence not just of his deeds but of his prominence in Anglo-Irish society. The *Annals of Loch Cé*, *Clonmacnoise*, *Connacht* and the *Four Masters* variously record his meeting with Aed O'Conchobair in 1256, his construction of a castle on his demesne manor at Moydow in 1261 and his raid into Roscommon with the justiciar in 1262.\(^{237}\) It is also remarkable that it is the Irish *Annals of Clonmacnoise* rather than an English

\(^{232}\) WS, 6/1, p. 81.  
\(^{233}\) PRO, C134/56/1; CIPM, 6, no. 54. 
\(^{234}\) WS, 3/1, pp. 170-1. 
\(^{235}\) CCR, 1279-88, p. 301; CDI, 2, no. 2305. 
\(^{236}\) IPR, 36th report, p. 24; CDI, 1, no. 1840; IPR, 36th report, p. 37. 
\(^{237}\) ALC, 1, p. 441; AClon, p. 243; AC, pp. 123, 135, 139; AFM, 3, pp. 345, 385-7.
source which note that John de Verdun was captured at the battle of Lewes in 1264, and which record that "John de Verdun and thirteen other knights were poisoned in England" in 1274. The future Edward I was also clearly concerned about John de Verdun's power in Ireland and thwarted his attempts to have the liberties of Meath restored to him, although Geoffrey de Genneville (who had inherited the other half of Meath, but who had no prior Irish connections) was allowed to exercise them.

The tenor of these reports is supplemented by the fact that John spent about twelve years out of a career lasting twenty-seven years in Ireland, which also saw him on crusade and fighting in Gascony with the king. As Frame states, he was one of very few who seem to have divided their time at all equally between English and Irish estates. The value placed on the Irish estates is also revealed in the high cost to family members and officers. Nicholas II and John II de Verdun were both killed by the Irish of Annaly (county Longford) in 1271, along with the de Verduns' seneschal, Thomas de Champagne. Finally, it might be the case that something can be seen of John's identification with his Irish estates in his use of the title "constable of Ireland" in the address clause of his charter granting Craneford to John de Kirkeby.

Theobald I, on the other hand, was much less prominent in Ireland, although between 1274 and about 1300 he too divided his time roughly equally between his English and Irish estates, where he can be found attempting to restore peace after wars in 1284 and 1295. After 1300, however, Theobald de Verdun appears to have remained on the other side of the Irish Sea. This may have been the result of his service in Edward I's protracted Scottish wars, but it could also reflect a real change in attitude to his Irish estates which might also be reflected in the titles that Theobald gave to himself. In 1274 he appears in one of his own charters as Theobald de Verdun, constable of Ireland. In 1300, he attested the Barons' letter to the pope as Theobald de Verdun, lord of Weobley.

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238 AClon, pp. 244, 251.
241 AClon, p. 249; AFM, 3, p. 415; NAI, RC8/1, p. 83.
242 BL, Cotton Charter xxy.2.
243 CDI, 2, no. 2298; CJRI, 1, p. 73.
There need be no uncertainty about Theobald II's attitude to his Irish estates. In 1309, shortly after inheriting his family's lands, Theobald II gave his brother Milo the custody of all his possessions in Ireland and dismissed them from his mind.\textsuperscript{245} This was unfortunate because Milo's brother Nicholas operated something very much like a protection racket in county Louth - which is itself indicative of the power that they could wield there - and in 1312 Theobald's brothers and their supporters clashed with troops flying the king's colours at the town of Louth during the so called Riot of Louth.\textsuperscript{246}

It may well have been as a result of this event that Theobald II found himself appointed as justiciary of Ireland in 1313 until January 1315.\textsuperscript{247} It is ironic that the family reached the zenith of its power in Ireland in the shape of a man who had wanted nothing whatsoever to do with the country, but it is also revealing that Theobald was presumably considered to have sufficient power and influence to be able to re-establish peace and stability in the country. Theobald might have rid himself of his Irish estates, but it would seem that he could not erase a family tradition of power and influence in the country so quickly.

So, then, the de Verduns proclaimed their Norman origins in their toponym, while their actions show them to have been concerned above all with their estates in Staffordshire, the Welsh march and Ireland. Just as interest in their lands in Warwick and Leicester declined after about 1270, so too did their interest in the Irish estates after about 1300. Others saw them at times as Staffordshire barons at others as marcher lords but predominantly they were seen - on both sides of the Irish Sea - as an Irish family.

Because the de Verduns held lands in England, Wales and Ireland they can be identified by today's historians as British lords - at least until 1300. Rees Davis and Robin Frame, amongst others, have argued that at an aristocratic level national barriers were blurred so that "a study of the aristocracy, especially in the century 1170-1270, (note the dates) which overlooks the 'British' dimension in its

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textit{CFR}, 1307-19, p. 172; \textit{CPR}, 1313-17, p. 207.
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composition is assuredly less than a 'complete peerage'." What Frame says of Walter de Lacy can stand as a general rule. "Walter de Lacy was an 'Irish baron'; he was also an 'English baron' with a marcher emphasis, he was in addition a significant Norman proprietor, a royal castellan, and an intermittent attender at court...He can be understood only in the setting of the British Isles, and indeed of the Angevin dominions as a whole." Magnates treated their lands as a unified whole irrespective of where they were in relation to each other. Thus, to use Davies' examples, Elizabeth de Burgh ate salmon from her Welsh estates while residing at Clare (Suffolk), and Roger Mortimer constructed a bridge at Coleraine with timber from his estates at Usk. Officials too were moved about estates. John de Crepping served as sheriff of Glamorgan and Clare attorney in the lordship of Kilkenny. Equally, personnel were often similar on both sides of the Irish Sea. Household officials might travel with their lord, or tenants might hold lands in both England and Ireland. "When a Marshal or a Lacy crossed over, he entered an environment that contained some of the same old faces; indeed he carried part of his environment with him." The de Verduns fit this pattern well. It is clear that Thomas, Nicholas, Roesia, John de Verdun and even Theobald I were greatly concerned with the administration and exploitation of their Irish lands. They crossed the Irish Sea frequently and spoke of intended conquests, of castles built and agreements made with the Irish or fellow Anglo-Norman lords. We have no accounts to reveal that produce grown on one lordship was transported to another, but we can guess that it was because Theobald I de Verdun is known to have had three ships which were sunk on the king's service in 1276. Three ships suggests that Theobald was transporting things other than his own person to and from Ireland. Equally, the de Verduns established a number of their English tenants in Ireland too, while charters issued on both sides of the Irish Sea - which survive only for the period between 1199 and 1247 - reveal the presence of Henry of Wootton and Milo de Verdun in both England and Ireland.

251 R. Frame, Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450, p.155.
252 CDI, 2, no. 1294, p. 240.
This situation changed in 1309 when Theobald II put the whole of his Irish estates into the custody of his brother Milo and absented himself from the country. However, even this (personal) disengagement from Ireland finds an echo in the actions of contemporaries, with Rees Davies' words suggesting that the change can be seen from about 1270. Why did Anglo-Irish lords begin to absent themselves from their Irish estates? Katherine Simms and Robin Frame have suggested a number of factors causing this absenteeism including falling agricultural profits, the effects of partitions which often benefited magnates with no previous ties with Ireland and increasingly insecure conditions. Indeed, this latter point had direct implications for the de Verduns who had lost their manors and castles at Athleague and Moydow by 1295, while fighting the Irish had cost the lives of John de Verdun's two eldest sons.

However, there may well be at least one more factor which influenced Theobald II's decision to absent himself from his Irish estates and which may well have had a similar effect on other lords. This other factor is the court, by which is meant access and reaction to the king and his policies. Over the course of their history, the de Verduns were motivated as often by their court connections as by any regional identity that they might possess at any time.

For example, Bertram I de Verdun went on the king's service overseas, so Domesday Book tells us, and his absence was used by Geoffrey de Mandeville to appropriate a part of Bertram's manor into his own manor of Amersham and by Ralph Tailboys to build a mill on Bertram's land. Bertram III de Verdun's service to Henry II dictated the course of his career and took him to Spain, Ireland and on crusade. It also led to Bertram's support of Henry II in the Great War of 1173-4 despite the fact that his lands in England were surrounded by those of the hostile earls of Derby, Chester and Leicester, while his Norman estates were also at risk from the earl of Chester, vicomte of the Avranchin, who was active in the area until captured at Dol. In contrast, the Paynell lord of Dudley, whose lands were also surrounded by those of the earls of Leicester, Chester and Ferrers, did join the rebellion, probably as a result of these local contacts. Similarly, John de Verdun, whose career and crusade were also largely the result of connections with the

court, supported Henry III during the Barons War and suffered capture at Lewes and the demolition of two of his castles in the rebellious midlands as a result.

In all these instances, the fact that their lands were exposed by their service to the crown did not prevent members of the family from supporting the king. Their identity or standing as kings' men - it must be assumed - was more important to them than the safety of their lands. To take a different point of view - but one which still reveals the centrality of the king to the de Verduns actions' - Nicholas de Verdun briefly rebelled against John in 1215-16 and lost his lands as a result. He did this partly because he suddenly found himself owing £551 to the king "by will and without judgement", but also perhaps because he like others was "excluded from the spoils of office, despite a family tradition of service to the Crown."255

The de Verduns thus had a long-standing identity, or culture, of service to the crown and it is likely that this aspect of Theobald II's family identity could have had a significant impact on his decision to disengage from his lands in Ireland. It is well known that by the fifteenth century Ireland provided a convenient stage on which to place characters whose presence in England or at the court was undesirable. Thus, Richard, duke of York, was sent off to Ireland in 1450. Gregory's Chronicle recorded that he was "exsylde into Irlonde for hys rebellion as those about the king informed him." A contemporary political song made a subtle but important change and noted that he was "exiled from our sovreign lord's presence."256

This sort of language can, perhaps surprisingly, be found in chronicles from the mid-thirteenth century. In December 1264, following terms reached at Worcester and confirmed at Kenilworth, the chronicle of the Mayors and Sheriffs recorded that Roger Mortimer and other leading marchers agreed to "[abjure] the realm of England... to proceed to Ireland in exile" for a year and a day.257 It is notable that the chronicler should, like those fifteenth century writers, term being sent to Ireland an 'exile' and it suggests that links between Ireland and England were no longer as close as they had been even in the 1230's. The career of Piers Gaveston, Edward II's favourite, provides another useful example of the perceived remoteness of Ireland. In 1308, Gaveston was made lieutenant of Ireland and sent

off to govern the colony in response to Henry of Lincoln's demand that he be banished. 258

Ireland was thus seen by the late thirteenth century as a place where difficult characters could be sent to keep them out of the way and prevent them from causing trouble. Why? Because the king did not go to Ireland. Not since 1210 had the king of England set foot on his other island and if the king was not there then the opportunity to play a leading role in affairs was lost, as was the opportunity gain patronage or the advantage in law suits. Indeed, Robin Frame has noted that it was at the king's court in England that major Irish disputes were won or lost. John fitzThomas, for example, succeeded in gaining lordships in Ireland through his associations with the court and by going on campaign with the king. The absentee Joan Mortimer was able to keep hold of her vulnerable liberty of Trim because each time the Irish parliament seized it she quickly got wind of what was happening and had the Irish government's actions reversed at Westminster. 259 Access to the king was thus vital and if a magnate wanted to be involved in events of importance or influence judgements, then he or she had to be in England. No wonder then that so many of the absentee nobles were "near the centre of affairs in England." 260

The absence of the king, of course, had been a problem since 1210, but it seems that time had made it worse. "Perhaps the greatest flaw in relations between England and Ireland," as Lydon has said, "was the continuing absence of the king" which was also a "weakening factor" in such relations. 261 Frame has suggested that royal absenteeism caused "practical, and even psychological problems; for medieval political societies depended for their cohesion on contact between the ruler and his greater subjects. The supreme lord of Ireland did not come among the Anglo-Irish lords.... there was no court in Ireland where magnates could receive public favour and confirmation of their self-esteem." 262 Henry III had planned expeditions to Ireland in 1233 and 1243, but neither came to anything. When

259 R. Frame, Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450, pp. 37-8; R. Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 73.
260 Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 72.
262 R. Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 8.
Edward was made lord of Ireland in 1254. Confusions over his and Henry III's jurisdiction led to the crown's taking even less interest in the island and this position could only have been worsened when events in Scotland turned Edward I's attention northwards. At the same time the Irish parliament became increasingly independent. All of these factors combined to make attendance at court in England increasingly vital from the 1250's or 60's on.

Other factors could also have affected Theobald's decision to absent himself from Ireland. As English nationalism grew, the status of the Irish declined. To call a man an Irishman when he was not became a defamatory statement which could lead to legal proceedings. In 1303 a wardrobe clerk referred to the earl of Ulster and other Anglo-Irish lords who came to fight with King Edward I in Scotland as Hibernici, and so must have classed as Irishmen all those who lived in Ireland, regardless of background. All this seems to have had some effect on the Anglo-Irish lords living in Ireland. In 1317, the Gaelic lords petitioned the pope and stated that the English of Ireland called themselves of the middle nation, in other words that the Anglo-Irish saw themselves as a nation apart. It may also have had some effect on Theobald II's decision to quit the country and so ensure that his Anglo-Norman identity was not tainted by his involvement in the barbaric island over the water.

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This chapter, then, has endeavoured to lay out the genealogies of as many members of the de Verdun family as possible. Several of the cadet lines formed were long-lived, surviving for longer than the senior male line of the family, most are obscure. From a consideration of the senior line's patronage of family members, it would seem that the members of these cadets would not have been considered family after the second generation. Instead, the pattern of this patronage, both spiritual and temporal, focuses exclusively on the dynastic family - when the relationships of those who received it can be established. Holt has shown how patronage could be spread over a wide family group with uncles granting lands to

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265 *ibid*, p. 2.
nephews, godparents to godchildren and grandmothers to granddaughters.266 This was not the case with the de Verduns.

It is clear that the senior line of the family had a view of its own identity, manifested in a toponymic, certain Christian names and the patronage of Croxden abbey. It is also clear that the last three generations of the senior line took some trouble to conform to this identity, probably in order to stress the legitimacy of their inheritance of the de Verdun name and lands after the original line ended with Roesia de Verdun in 1247. The de Verduns' family identity or culture also stressed service to the crown and it may be that this was at least partly responsible for Theobald II de Verdun's absenteeism from his Irish estates. It has been argued that the absence of the king from Ireland and the increasing separation of the Irish Parliament could have played as important a role as the growing insecurity and falling profits did in leading magnates to desert their Irish lands.

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