

Radulf Picot and the barony of Tonge

Radulf Picot played a prominent part in the history of Kent in the mid twelfth century. He made no showing on any wider stage, but in Kent he was a man of importance.

His name starts appearing in the 1120s. As "Radulf Picot of Stisted" he witnessed a charter of bishop Ernulf of Rochester in 1115×24 (*Privilegia*, fo 197r); he also occurs twice, in 1126×36, as a witness to charters of archbishop Willelm (Brett and Gribbin 2004, nos 62, 65). Apparently he came from Stisted in Essex, a place which belonged to the archbishop; perhaps by grant from archbishop Willelm he acquired two manors in Kent, Yaldham TQ 5858 in Wrotham and Lullingstone (repr Castle Farm) TQ 5263 in Shoreham (the same two manors which in 1086 were held by Goisfrid de Ros (Flight 2010, p 161)). They were held by knight's service: though the figures are variously reported, it looks as if Yaldham was counted as half a fee and Lullingstone as a whole one. There is, it should be said, no contemporary evidence connecting Radulf with either of these places: only the sequel makes it clear that they must have belonged to him. At some stage he also acquired some land in Sheppey -- at Stonepit TQ 9869 in Eastchurch -- which was part of the archbishop's manor of Teynham (and consequently also part of the hundred of Teynham). That Stonepit was owned by Radulf Picot is a well-documented fact (see below).

Before 1130, he also acquired a block of land in Kent which belonged to the barony of Port. The exchequer roll for 1130, among the debts brought forward from the previous roll (and perhaps from several rolls before that), records a payment made by Radulf Picot "for (the king's) concession of the land which Henric de Port gave to him" (GREx 1130:64). Why Henric gave him the land, why the gift had to be "conceded" by the king, are questions that can only be guessed at. But the upshot is clear enough. Out of this gift emerged the second-tier barony of Tonge TQ 9364, held by the service of five knights from the first-tier barony of Port. (In case anyone needs to be told, the place-name is pronounced "Tong"; the "e" is only there to fool foreigners.)

Radulf Picot served as sheriff of Kent during much of the reign of king Stephen; accommodating himself to the new regime, apparently without any trouble, he continued in office till December 1160. From the new king, in 1156-7, he procured the grant of some land at Kingsdown (part of the manor of Dartford) to be held by the service of half a knight. (The original charter was produced for the itinerant justices in 1293 and copied out in full among the "Quo warranto" proceedings (Illingworth 1818, p 357).) Because this entailed a loss of revenue for the king, the sheriff of Kent was allowed a corresponding deduction (108 shillings of white pence) in his account for the farm of the county. That entry occurs for the

first time in the roll for 1157 (*Et in ead' uilla in terris datis Rad' Picot c et viii s' bl'*, GREx 1157:101). For Radulf himself, the consequence was that he now became a first-tier baron, by virtue of holding some part of his estate directly from the king.

Radulf died in 1164-5. In the course of that financial year he incurred a fine of £200 for some unspecified misdemeanour (see below), but he was dead before the end of the year (i.e. before September 1165). In the entry relating to Kingsdown, Radulf's name is replaced by that of Willelm Malet (1165:102), and his land in Milton has been taken into the king's hands (1165:108). The king's agents seem also to have taken possession of Stonepit, on (I suppose) the almost-true assumption that the whole of the Isle of Sheppey belonged to Milton. Archbishop Thomas was not in a position to complain; archbishop Ricard did eventually recover his rights over Stonepit, but not until 1177 (*Et Ric' Chantuar' archiep'o xx s' in Stanpeta que fuit Rad' Picot de quarta parte anni per br' R' et amodo iiii li' per annum*, GREx 1177:203).

The heirs to Radulf's estate were his two unmarried daughters. What I said about them before (Flight 2010, p 254) was seriously mistaken. I explain briefly how I got things wrong, and how I have (as I think) now managed to get them right.

The itinerant justices at work in 1185 were under instructions to report the names of any widows for whom the king was entitled to choose new husbands. Radulf Picot's daughter Eugenia was one person who fell into this category: her husband Thomas fiz Bernard had died in 1184, and one of the manors which had belonged to her father (Kingsdown near Dartford) was held from the king in chief. Unluckily there is no surviving roll for Kent; but the roll for Cambridgeshire does still exist, and Eugenia Picot happens to get mentioned there, because she owned one manor in that county. This is the entry:

Eugenia Picot, who was the daughter of Radulf Picot of Kent and the wife of Thomas fiz Bernard, is givable by the lord king (*est de donatione domini regis*); she is 30 years old. She owns in Radfield hundred a certain manor which is worth £25 a year. It is of the feod of Gilebert Malet: Willelm Malet gave this manor to this lady by way of dower (*in dotem*). She had three sons with Thomas fiz Bernard, and one daughter: the eldest son is 10, the second is 8, and the third is 3 years old (ed Round 1913, p 87).

Discussing this entry in his introduction (pp xxxvi-vii), Round interpreted the phrase *in dotem* as I have translated it here, "by way of dower". That is, he took it to imply that Eugenia had been married to Willelm Malet (d 1170) -- a well-known

figure, one of the king's stewards, lord of a large barony in Somerset (Sanders 1963, pp 38-9) -- and was already a widow when (within the next few years) she got married to Thomas fiz Bernard. Thus:

Willelm Malet	=	Eugenia	=	Thomas fiz Bernard
d 1170				d 1184
		Gilebert Malet		

In an absent-minded moment he also supposed that Gilebert Malet, Willelm's son, was Eugenia's son as well; but that is plainly impossible. From the evidence of the exchequer rolls (some of which was cited by Round), it is clear that Gilebert came of age in 1174; so he was, on the face of it, about the same age as (perhaps two years older than) Eugenia. Realizing that, I thought it had to mean that Gilebert was Willelm's son by a previous marriage; and therefore I modified Round's tree to make it look like this:

?	=	Willelm Malet	=	Eugenia	=	Thomas fiz Bernard
		d 1170				d 1184
		Gilebert Malet				

But that creates a problem. On this reading, it is hard to see why Gilebert should be made responsible for half of Radulf's debts, or even for half of one particular debt owed by Radulf to the king. That debt incurred by Radulf shortly before he died (see above) is charged to him in the exchequer roll for 1165 (*Rad' Picot deb' cc li'*, GREx 1165:105). The entry is repeated in the next roll (*Rad' Picot deb' cc li' de misc'dia*, GREx 1166:112), with the annotation "but he is dead" (*sed mortuus est*). After that it disappears ... only to reappear in 1176, when it was decided that the debt should be halved between Thomas fiz Bernard and Gilebert Malet (who, as this evidence confirms, was now old enough to pay). This is the entry:

Rad' Picot redd' comp' de cc li' de mi'a. In perdon' per br' R' Thom' fil' Bernardi c li'. Et deb' c li', que requirende sunt a Gill'to Malet dap' (GREx 1176:207).

Thomas had a writ from the king forgiving his share of the debt; Gilebert paid off his share over the next few years (GREx 1177:204, 1178:122, 1179:117).

It is worth noting, by the way, how easily one can be misled by the wording of the exchequer rolls. Looking at this entry alone, one might think that Radulf Picot was still alive in 1176. It is still Radulf who answers for this debt; it is still Radulf who owes the unpaid £100, even though the money is to be demanded from Gilebert. In fact, as the exchequer knew, Radulf had been dead for more than ten years by then.

Nevertheless, the conundrum remains. If Gilebert was Eugenia's stepson, not her son, he ought not to inherit half of Radulf Picot's debt, any more than he ought to inherit half of Radulf's estate. And yet, for a fact, he did.

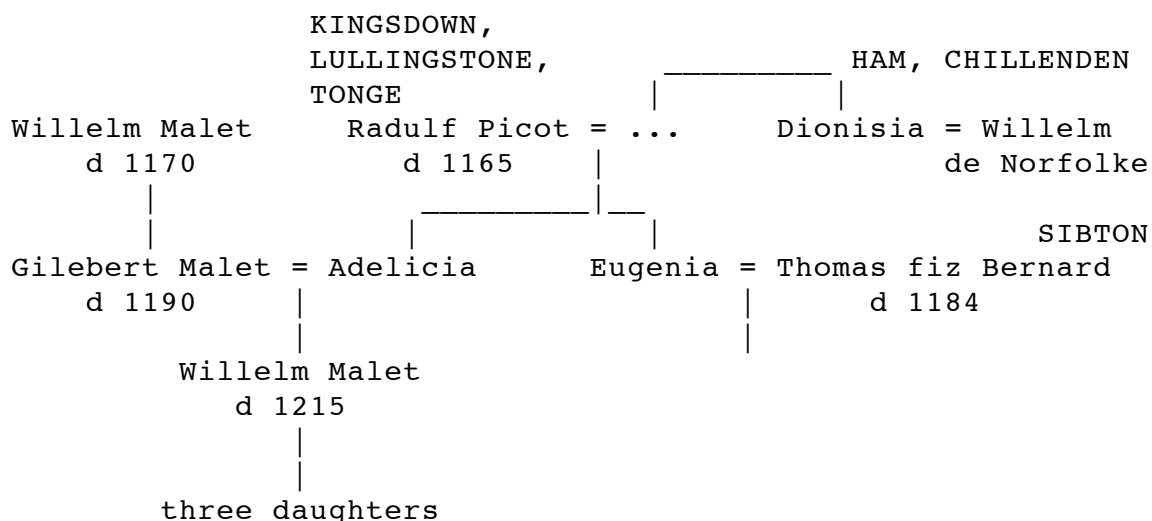
Writing about this before, I knew that I had a problem, but did not see how to solve it. Just recently, I have realized that the family tree has to be reconstructed on very different lines. The crux is the phrase *in dotem*. That phrase would normally mean what Round took it to be mean; but here it means something else. The correct translation is "by way of dowry". Willelm Malet was Eugenia's guardian, not her husband. It was (as far as I know) very uncommon for a guardian to give one of his wards one of his own manors. (A father might do this, but then the expression would be *in maritagium*, "by way of marriage-portion".) But I am sure that Willelm did precisely that. He gave Eugenia this manor in Cambridgeshire -- not for ever but during her lifetime -- by way of dowry.

As I understand it now, the story goes like this. On the death of Radulf Picot in 1164-5, custody of his heirs and lands passed (as was proper) to the king; and the king then gave it to his steward, Willelm Malet. In 1166, the certificate submitted by Johan de Port lists Willelm Malet as the holder of five knight's fees (Hearne 1728, p 73); a few years later, a schedule of the archbishop's knights lists him as the holder of one fee and a half (Colvin 1964). It is not stated in either list that Willelm holds these fees by reason of custody of the heirs of Radulf Picot; but that was the fact of the matter.

Within a few years (before his own death in 1169-70), Willelm had arranged marriages for both of Radulf's daughters. (There were indeed two, not just one.) The elder daughter (see below) became the wife of Willelm's son Gilebert (about 12 years old in 1164-5); the younger daughter, Eugenia (about 10 in 1164-5), became the wife of Thomas fiz Bernard. (Her oldest son was born in 1174-5; by then she was about 20.) The contract for this latter marriage put Thomas in possession of one of Willelm's manors, during Eugenia's lifetime: the manor in question, not named in the record, can be identified as part of Dullingham (Farrer 1920, pp 108-11, Wright 1978, pp 159-60).

After Willelm Malet's death, everything had to remain in suspense for a while because Gilebert was under age. Once he was old enough, the inheritance was partitioned between him and Thomas fiz Bernard: Gilebert got the manors held from the archbishop (Yaldham in Wrotham, Lullingstone in Shoreham), Thomas got the manors (Tonge and the rest) held from the barony of Port. (What happened to Kingsdown is harder to work out; I come back to this question below.) That unpaid debt of Radulf Picot's was divided between Gilebert and Thomas for the same reason -- because they were the husbands of Radulf's daughters.

This is the tree as I reconstruct it now, from these and other indications:



As far as Radulf's two daughters are concerned, the evidence was construed exactly like this by Wright (1978, pp 159-60); but I am doubtful whether the footnotes attached to that article are enough to prove the case.

The elder daughter, Adelia, does not appear in the record until 1190, when this entry shows up in the exchequer roll:

Aelizia primogenita filia Radulfi Pikot (deb') xl m' pro h'ndo recto de rationabili parte hereditatis sue de Tange et Kikesdon' que eam contingit uersus Eugeniā sororem suam (GREx 1190:151).

That is, she has promised to pay 40 marks in return for being allowed to sue her sister for her "reasonable share" of their father's inheritance. Her husband, it would seem, had just died; and she was finally free to take the case to court, in her own name, on her own account. This entry is carried forward from one roll to the next (occurring for the last time in GREx 1202:212) without anything ever being paid; then it gets dropped. The case dragged on for several years -- it was still active in October 1199 (Palgrave 1835, vol 2, p 71) -- but finally ceases to be heard of. Adelia was dead by April 1201 (as is implied by Churchill 1956, p 54); Eugenia died soon after that.

Puzzling over this, I thought it had to mean that Adelia was Eugenia's half-sister, Radulf's daughter by a previous marriage, whose claim to a share of the inheritance had been ignored till now. It is indeed very likely that Radulf Picot was married more than once. If he was old enough to witness a charter no later than 1124 (see above), he must have been over 50 when Eugenia was born. On the evidence known to me at the time, this conjecture was not implausible. Nevertheless it was wrong.

The evidence which I was missing was an unpublished charter from the archive of Leeds priory (DRc/T455). The document has suffered some damage, and in places the text is impossible to decipher. But the parts which matter are legible enough. This charter proves that Adelia was Gilebert Malet's wife; it also proves -- because the rent donated comes from Chillenden -- that she had the same mother as Eugenia, not just the same father. A charter of Eugenia's for the canons of Leeds (Thorpe 1769, p 410, from the original, DRc/T454) confirms the donation of Ham and Chillenden churches made to them by Willelm de Norfolke and (his wife) Dionisia, "my aunt on the mother's side" (*matertere mee*); so the Chillenden connection has to be traced through Dionisia's sister -- Radulf Picot's wife and the mother of his heirs.

Though I am satisfied that this interpretation is the right one, it is not unproblematic. If we look at the entry in the farm of the county which relates to the manor of Kingsdown, we can watch this manor pass to Willelm Malet (1165:102), to the sheriff while Gilebert is under age (1171:141 for 1169/70 and 1170/71), and then to Gilebert himself (1175:208 for 1173/74). The entry is carried forward, year after year, until 1194 (1194:242); only in the year after that does Gilebert's name get replaced by his son's (1195:1). On the face of it, then, this evidence seems to prove that Gilebert Malet died in 1194-5; and no doubt we should be happy to believe that if there were no evidence to the contrary. But there is evidence to the contrary, and I do not think there can be any doubt which evidence should be preferred. The entry in the exchequer rolls was, I take it, carried forward mechanically from one roll to the next, even after Gilebert was dead, until his son was old enough to inherit.

I suspect, in fact, that these entries in the exchequer rolls are even more misleading than that. They seem to be assuming that Kingsdown was part of Willelm Malet's inheritance, and would therefore descend as a matter of course to his son, his grandson, and his grandson's heirs ("the heirs of Willelm Malet", 1219:145 onwards). But that is not the case. Kingsdown was part of Radulf Picot's inheritance: if Gilebert Malet held it, he held it in right of his wife. As for Willelm Malet, Adelia's son, though he inherited his father's barony in 1194-5 as soon as he came of age, he would not have stood to inherit Kingsdown till after his mother's death. I doubt, however, whether the Malets were ever the owners of Kingsdown. In the scutage of 1187 the payment due for this half knight's fee was debited to Eugenia Picot (GREx 1187:209), not to Gilebert Malet; in the scutage of 1201 it was debited to Eugenia's son, Thomas fiz Bernard (1201:289), not to Willelm Malet; and the fiz Bernards remained in possession of the manor throughout the thirteenth century and beyond. (The charter of Henric II for Radulf Picot was in their family archive.) From the exchequer's point of view, after all, it was not important

to know exactly who the tenant was: as long as it was understood that the sheriff of Kent had a valid reason for not producing this sum of 1296 white pence, the details were immaterial.

This is the text of the charter mentioned above:

Adelicia Picot, widow of Gilebert Malet, for the prior and canons of Leeds: grant of a rent in Chillenden (DRc/T455)

Ego Aliz [P]icot vxor Gil['] Malet elegau mihi dudum sepulturam in ecclesia sancti Andr' de Rouec' sicut concep[tum] est in testamento confirmato auctoritate sigillorum domini mei et etiam W. filii mei. Set postquam idem [dominus] meus elegi[t] sibi sepulturam apud canonicam de Ledes quia dignum est ut uxor mihi sepulturam in eadem canonica de Ledes et cum corpore meo dedi eidem in elemosinam et liberam a[b] omni seruicio saluo seruicio regali v solida[tos] Ric' fil' Thom' et Ad[am] frater eius de Chilinden', et tres gallin' et dim' et dim' aucam. Cetera que concepta sunt in memorato testamento meo uolo per[ma]nere immota sicut ibi concepta leguntur. Hiis testibus, Nicol' priore de Ledes et Ioh'e canonico, Mal[et], Will'o de Hi..ham, Adam Escali, Reginaldo capellano, mag'ro Ric', Ioh'e Malet, Will'o clerico, Gileb' coco, Ioh'e seruiente, Henr' de Orpint', et pluribus aliis.

Adelicia is also on record as having donated some vestments to the monks of Rochester. A list of benefactors, compiled circa 1220, includes this entry:

Domina Alicia de Lullingstune, uxor Gileberti Malet, dedit casulam, et albam paratam, et stolam, et phanum unius panni (Thorpe 1769:123 from Vesp A xxii).

By Lullingstone is meant the manor in Shoreham held from the archbishop (see above); apparently Adelicia had made her home there, during her widowhood. (After 1190, she ought to have been in possession of a third of her husband's barony by way of dower; possibly she also had custody of the entire barony while her son was under age. I do not know whether any evidence exists bearing on either of these points. Kent is probably not the place to look for it.)

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