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Women and inheritance in medieval England

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Women and Inheritance in medieval England, with focus on the 11th century

Frauen im europäischen Mittelalter

19. Oktober 2021

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Will protocol

- invocation
- notification
- donor
- motive
- bequest
- endorsement
- witnessing clause
- witness list
- curse/anathema

The Will of Leofgifu (S1521)

<https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/charter/1521.html#>

Keynes (2004): <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8794>

Will of Leofgifu, including bequests of land at Hintlesham, Essex, and Gestingthorpe, Suffolk, to Bury St Edmunds; the minster at (? Earls) Colne, Essex, to Æthelric and Ælfric, priests, and Æthelsige, deacon; land at Belchamp (? Walter), Essex, to her lady; land at (? Great) Bentley, Essex, to Alfwearð, bishop (of London); at Boreham, Essex, to her kinsman Ælfgar; at Bramford, Suffolk, to her kinsman Ælfric, Wihtgar's son; at at Willeham, Suffolk, to Stigand; at Stonham, Waldingfield, Suffolk, and Little St Osyth, Essex, to Æthelric, her brother's son; at Haughley, Suffolk, to her daughter Ælfflæd; 3 hides at Warley, Essex, to Godwine, her brother-in-law; land at Stonham, Suffolk, to Æthelmær, (her reeve); 30 acres at Waldingfield, Suffolk, to Godric, her reeve at Waldingfield; land at Lawford, Essex, to Æthelric, her chaplain, and Ælfric and other servants; 1 hide at Forendale to Æthelric the priest.

Timeframe: A.D. **1035 x 1044**

Language: Old English

Archive: Bury St Edmunds

MSS: **1)** Cambridge, University Library, Ff.2.33, f. 45r (s. xiii 2); **2)** London, British Library, Add. 14847, f. 15r-v (s. xiii/xiv)

Old English

[L]eofgife gret hyre leuedi godes gretinge. And ic kithe þe mine quide wat ic Crist an and his halegan mine louverdes soule to alisednesse and mine into þe holy stowe þer ic self resten

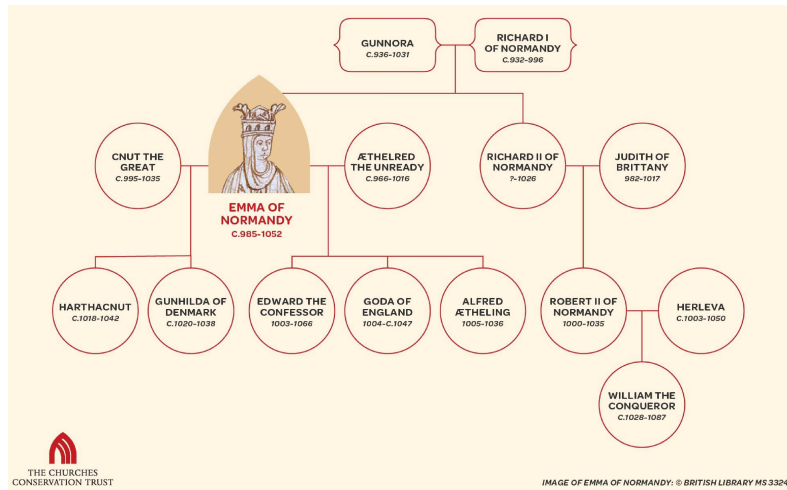
wille þat is at seynt Eadmundes byri. þat is þat lond at Hintlesham and þat lond at Gristlyngthorp. buten þat lond þat Ailsi hauede þat he at his lauere ernede and at me. and ic þridde aker on þan wude at Hintlesham habbe Ailri. and ingong and vtgong be feld and be fenne. And ic wille þat Ailric prest and Ailfric prest and Ailri diacon habben þat minstre at Colne. so here lofard it hem vthe. And ic wille þat Aylfric prest ben on þat ilke loh þe Aignoð was. And be se mund ofer þan minstre þe is ofer alle opere. and ic an þan kinge to marc goldes for min eruenumen to 7 gealaeste þat gold. and mine lauedi þat lond at Belhcham buten þat lond þat Godric mine stiward haued þat habbe he. and Alfward bisscop þat lond at Benetleye buten half hide þe Osemund hauede. þat ic an Alfwy min stiward. and þat he on sit. 7 Alfnod min stiward þat lond þat Berric hauede vnder hande. And Alfgar mine mei þat lond at Borham. And Alfric mine mey Withgares sone þat lond at Bromforde. And Stigand þat lond at Willauesham. And Ailric mine brotheres sone þat lond at Stonham and at Waldingfeld and at Lithletic. And Alflet mine douhter þat lond at Hag'e'le. And Godwine min aþum 7 mire meyan þa þre hide at Werle. And Lefkyld þa to hide onfast his owen. And Aylmer habbe þat lond at Stonham þe ic hym er to hande let. to reflande. And ic an Godric mine reue at Walddingfeld þa þritti acre þe ic him er to hande let. And Ailric min hirdprest 7 Alric mine chintes þat lond at Lalleford þe me best heren willen. 7 Ailric prest habbe an hide at Forendale. And ic wille þat alle mine men ben fre on hirde and on tune for me and for þo þe me bigeten. And ic bidde mine leuedien for godes louen þat þu þolie þat ani man mine quide awende. And se þe it awende. god almichin 'a'wende his ansene from him on domesday. buten ic it self do. God þe healde. Nu sinden þise write þre. on is mid þise kinges halidome. and oþer at seynt Eadmunde. 7 þridde mid Leofgife seluen.

Translation

Leofgifu greets her lady with God's greeting. And I declare to you my will, what I grant to Christ and his saints for the redemption of my lord's soul and mine, to the holy place where I myself wish to be buried, namely, Bury St Edmunds. That is, the estate at Hintlesham and the estate at Gestingthorp, except the land which Æthelsige had, which he acquired from his lord and from me. And Æthelsige is to have every third acre in the wood at Hintlesham, and ingress and egress by open land and fen. And I desire that Æthelric the priest and Ælfric the priest and Æthelsige the deacon shall have the minster at Colne as their lord granted it to them. And it is my wish that Ælfric the priest shall be in the same position in which Æthelnoth was. And may he be guardian over the minster who is over all others. And I grant to the king two marks of gold - my heirs are to succeed to the inheritance and pay the gold - and to my lady the estate at Belchamp except the land which my steward, Godric, has. He is to keep it. And to Bishop Alfwearð the estate at Bentley except the half hide which Osmund had; I grant that to my steward Ælfwig with that which he occupies, and to Ælfnod my steward the land which was in Berric's possession. And to my kinsman Ælfgar the estate at Boreham. And to my kinsman Ælfric, Wihtgar's son, the estate at Bramford. And to Stigand the estate at Willeham. And to Æthelric my brother's son the estate at Stonham and at Waldingfield and at Lithletic. And to my daughter Ælfflæd the estate at Haughley. And to my brother-in-law Godwine, and my kinswoman, the three hides at Warley. And to Leofcild the two hides next to his own. And let Æthelmær have the estate at Stonham which I have let to him as reeve land?. And I grant to Godric, my reeve at Waldingfield, the thirty acres which I have let to him. And the estate at Lawford to Æthelric my household chaplain, and Ælfric [and] my servants who will serve me best. And Æthelric the priest is to have one hide at Forendale. And I desire that all my men shall be free, in the household, and on the estate,

for my sake and for those who begot me. And I pray my lady, for God's sake, that you will [not] permit anyone to alter my will. And he who alters it - unless it be myself - may God Almighty turn his face from him on the Day of Judgment. May God keep you. Now there are three of these documents. One is in the king's sanctuary; and the second is at St Edmund's; and the third is with Leofgifu herself.

Emma's family tree



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