A REALIGNMENT OF THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURY PEDIGREE OF THE EARLS OF WARWICK – COMPLETE PEERAGE CORRECTION

by Rosie Bevan[1]

ABSTRACT

Continuing our regular series of updates to the *Complete Peerage*, Rosie Bevan provides evidence for a solution to some problematic chronology and confusing relationships in the family of the 12th and 13th century Earls of Warwick.

Foundations (2004) ***1*** *(3): 194-197* *© Copyright FMG*

The traditional pedigree of Waleran, earl of Warwick, his son Henry, and their wives, and grandson, Thomas, as discussed in Dugdale (1675), Collins (1779), and C[okayne] (1959), has posed a number of difficulties for genealogists and historians of the family[2]. It is outlined below:

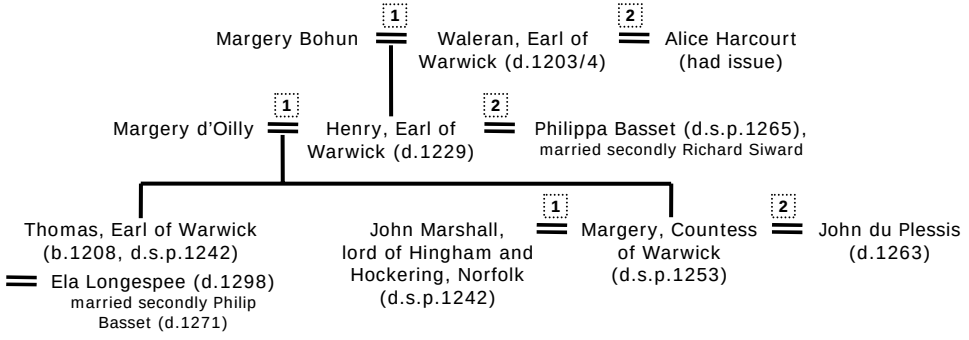


Fig 1. ***Traditional Pedigree of the Family of Henry, Earl of Warwick (d.1229)***

The greatest difficulty with this arrangement has been to reconcile the second-degree consanguineous marriage between Earl Henry and Margery d'Oilly[3] who, under this scheme, would have been first cousins by common descent from Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, and Margaret of Gloucester – such a closely related union would never have sanctioned by the medieval church[4].

Chronologically, another perplexing problem is that Margery d'Oilly's father died in 1163, making her at least 45 years of age when giving birth to her putative husband's son and

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1 Rosie Bevan is a former NZ government service librarian, regular contributor to soc.med.gen, and editor of the corrigenda web pages of the Keats-Rohan compilations, 'Domesday People' and 'Domesday Descendants' on the FMG web site (http://fmg.ac/Projects/Domesday/).

Email for correspondence: rbevan@paradise.net.nz

2 Both Dugdale (1675) and Collins (1779) rendered the same pedigree, except the latter omitted Henry's marriage to Philippa. I am grateful to Henry Sutliff III for providing this information.

3 Various contemporary spellings of this name included Doili, de Oleo, de Oleio, de Oilly, Doilly, d'Oilly, de Oili, de Oyli, but for the purpose of this article, d'Oilly, the recognisable version employed by Sanders, is used.

4 This problem was discussed by the medieval genealogy newsgroup, soc.gen.med, in May 2003.

heir; and as Henry was a minor in 1205, this means she would have been older by at least 30 years. This has induced genealogists to assume there must have been another Henry d'Oilly because Margery clearly was not daughter of the one who died in 1232. Indeed, Sanders (1960), normally careful in his interpretation of contemporary record, created another Henry d'Oilly dying in 1196, placing him between Henry (d.1163) and Henry (d.1243). This was adopted more recently by Keats-Rohan (2002), who included an entry for this middle Henry, confusing the biographies of three generations of the d'Oilly family in the process[5].

There is enough primary evidence to show that such manipulation of the d'Oilly pedigree is completely misguided. Wrottesley (1834) extracted, from the 1225 curia regis rolls, a three-generation pedigree of the d'Oilly line, which demonstrates that there had been only two Henry d'Oillys by that time[6]. In fact an eyewitness statement from the annals of Oseney abbey, (the d'Oillys founded this house in 1129), is confident that Henry d'Oilly II died in 1232[7] (Anon., 1864-69). As the post of annalist changed in 1233, (probably as a direct result of the death of Henry d'Oilly, for the political commentary in the annals changed from that of the baronial perspective to that of the king), this entry is certainly contemporary to the event.

There are other oddities about the Warwick pedigree; for instance, in 1205 Thomas Basset paid 500 m. for the wardship and marriage of the young earl to one of his own daughters. So why was Henry first married to Margery d'Oilly, before he married Philippa Basset? And why was Henry's son and heir called Thomas, when there was no precedent for the name in either family?

Searching for a solution to these problems, it is evident that the source for Margery d'Oilly's marriage to Henry, Earl of Warwick hinges on the 1263 inquisition post mortem for John de Plessis, *de jure* earl of Warwick, in which the devolution of the manor of Bradenham, Buckinghamshire is explained. It had originally been Maud de Bohun's *maritagium* when she married Henry d'Oilly.

"*…Humphrey de Bohun his grandfather gave the manor in free marriage to Henry de Oylly with Maud his sister, who had a son Henry and two daughters: Henry the younger had the manor for life and died without heir of himself, and the right of the manor descended to the daughters, from the elder of whom issued Thomas earl of Warwick and one Margery…*" (Anon., 1904-2003).

The implication is that the elder daughter of Henry d'Oilly was mother of Thomas and Margery. The key phrase as it appears in Latin, reads,

"*…unde de filia primogenita exierunt quidam Thomas Comes Warewici et quaedam Margeria…*" (Robert, 1865).

The inquisition took place many years after the deaths of the people concerned, and the jurors, not having first-hand knowledge of exact relationships between Henry d'Oilly II and Thomas and Margery, may have been mistaken or vague in their understanding of

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[5] The correct pedigree is found on the FMG website at http://fmg.ac/Projects/Domesday/

[6] Henry de Oilly impleaded William Basset, son of John, son of Osmund Basset, for half a knight's fee in Ipsden, Oxon. Henry gave the following pedigree in the suit:

Rob'tus de Oilly
|
Henricus de Oilly
|
Henricus nunc petens

[7] "*Item eodem anno [1232] Henricus de Oyli secundus, advocatus noster, defunctus est, et cum magna veneratione ut dignum fuit, in novo opere Oseneyae tumulatus*" (Anon., 1864-69).

them. It is also possible that the verb *exire* has been used in a loose sense, in the same way as *venire* is often used in inquisitions to mean 'coming forth' or 'descending from'. So, could Margery d'Oilly have been wife of Waleran, and not Henry? The chronology would certainly suggest it. The birth of Henry took place between 1184 and 1192[8] when Margery would have been in her twenties, having been a very young child when her father died in 1163. We know Waleran's first wife was dead by 1196, when the pipe rolls record his offer of 100 m. to marry Alice de Harcourt (C[okayne], 1959, p.364, note b).

To add to this speculation, there is no actual contemporary proof of a marriage between Waleran and a daughter of Humphrey de Bohun – the only reference given for the marriage by C[okayne] (1959, p.364, note a) is the unsourced 15th century history of the earls of Warwick, *The Rous Roll,* by John Rous (reprinted 1980).

"*Thys lord weddid furst margerite the dowghter of the Eorl of Herford and had no issw by her and aftyr a noder lady dam Maud and aftyr dam alice harcowt by wiche lady he had grete issw herry his Eyr Eorl aftyr sir Willerad and dam Alyce wyfe un to sir William maudut baron of hampsape…*" (Rous, reprinted 1980)[9].

Rous attributes Henry's maternity to Alice Harcourt – clearly a garbled account of this earl of Warwick. The source is both unreliable and anachronistic.

Without any satisfactory evidence, it would appear that the union between Margery d'Oilly and Henry, earl of Warwick has been assumed owing to confusion with Margery d'Oilly's mother, Maud de Bohun, and the descent of the Bohun's manor of Bradenham to Margery, Countess of Warwick. If we accept the argument that Thomas and his sister Margery were descended from the elder daughter of Henry d'Oilly I, as her grandchildren, the pedigree can be realigned in the following manner:

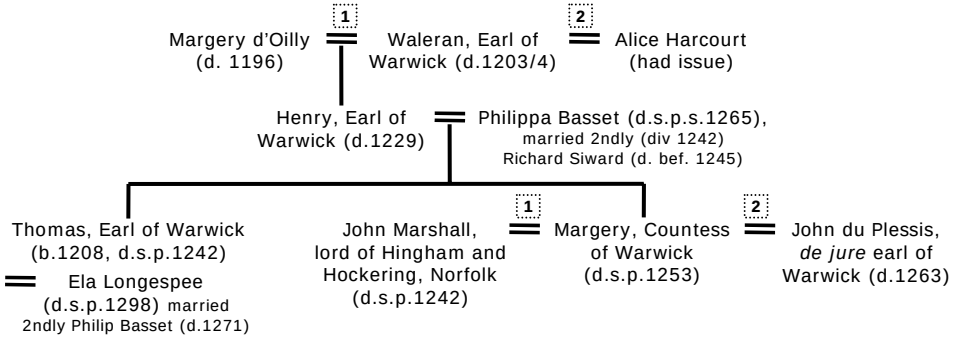


Fig 2. ***Realigned Pedigree of the Family of Henry, Earl of Warwick (d.1229)***

As a result of this simple adjustment the awkward chronology disappears; there is no problematic second-degree consanguineous marriage; the reason for Waleran's son being named Henry (for his maternal grandfather) makes sense; and Henry's son being named Thomas (also for his maternal grandfather) follows through - for Philippa would have married earl Henry shortly after her father bought his wardship and marriage in 1205. It also follows that when Philippa died in 1265, her third share of the barony of Headington, inherited from her father Thomas Basset in 1220, descended to the heirs of her sister

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[8] Date calculated by the fact he was underage in 1205 and granted the third penny for the county of Warwick in 1213.

[9] I would like to thank Linda Jack for providing this information.

Alice, because both of Philippa's children had predeceased their mother without issue (Sanders, 1960).

Significantly, supporting evidence for this proposed re-arrangement of the pedigree is a papal dispensation granted in 1254 for the marriage of Ela Longespee, widow of Thomas, earl of Warwick, and Sir Philip Basset, because they were connected in the third degree of affinity[10] (Anon., 1893-1989). Under the new revision, the relationship between Philip and Thomas, which was inexplicable before, is now apparent – a common descent in the second and third degree from Thomas Basset of Oxfordshire who had died in 1182.

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[10] *Dispensation to Ela de Warwick, of the diocese of Worcester to contract marriage with Philip son of Alan, knight, who is connected with her in the third degree of affinity.* (Anon., 1893-1989).