





+114 Sep 1144

1140

[14 Sept.]

+1130

Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, <sup>(+ 1144)</sup> son of William de Mandeville, who m. Margaret Rie, dau. of Eudo de Rie, Capifer to King William Constable of London Tower, and grandson of Geoffrey de Mandeville, a companion of the Conqueror who obtained a considerable estate in England, largely the forfeited lands of Esgar (or Asgar) the Staller. He attended Stephen's Easter Court in 1136 & accompanied him against Ely in 1140. He took advantage of his position as Constable of London Tower to detain Constance of France after her betrothal to Eustace, Stephen's son.

He obtained Stephen's charter creating him Earl of Essex <sup>in 1140</sup> before Stephen's capture at Lincoln 2 Feb. 1141; the charter, still extant, is the oldest creation-charter preserved. On the arrival of the Empress Maud in London in June 1141 he joined her side & was made hereditary Sheriff, justice & escheator of Essex, with knights' fees & privileges. He deserted her, seized her loyal bishop & joined Stephen's queen. After the liberation of Stephen, Geoffrey was pardoned & granted still more lands, becoming Sheriff & justice of Hertfordshire, London & Middlesex, giving him a monopoly of administrative & judicial powers in those counties. His influence was now greater than that of any noble, many people listening to him in preference to the king. His ambition led him to intrigue on behalf of the empress, meeting her at Oxford in June 1142. Here he obtained a charter in favour of his brother-in-law, Ambrey de Vere, afterwards Earl of Oxford. In 1143 at St. Alban's Stephen had him arrested at court on the charge of treason. He was forced to surrender his castles of Pleshey, Saffron & Walden & above all, the Tower of London, the true source of his might. He was then released & burst into revolt with his brother-in-law, William de Say. He seized the Isle of Ely & Ramsey Abbey which became his headquarters. Stephen was unable to contain him but fortified Burwell which threatened Geoffrey's communications. In attacking Burwell Geoffrey was wounded in the head in Aug. 1144 & died at Mildenhall in Suffolk 14 September, excommunicate for having plundered church property. The Templars carried his body to the Old Temple in London where it remained unburied for 20 years. His son, Geoffrey, secured his absolution from Pope Alexander in 1163 & his remains were interred in the New Temple. He left by his wife, Rohese, dau. of Ambrey de Vere, <sup>(+ 1141)</sup> Chamberlain of England) at least 3 sons: Emulf who was exiled & disinherited, Geoffrey <sup>2nd Earl</sup> (+ 1166) & William Mandeville, Earl. <sup>3rd + 1189</sup> Beatrice, m. William de Say, 3rd Baron, Alice, m. John de Laep.