

## **Reinbald the Priest**

Reinbald the Priest

aka Reinbald de Pesbyter aka Reinbald Prater

Reinbald de Presbyter was the first Chancellor of England under William the Conqueror (also known as William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy).

William I (William the Conqueror) came to England with a multi-national force made up of armies supplied to him by various nobles from all parts of Europe. These "Nobles" were invited to join him and would share in the spoils of the conquest if they gave him their allegiance.

From this we can see how the names of families that established themselves in early Norman England were so diverse. A system was developed which allowed people to be known by the area of Europe they came from. For example, Hugh De la Mere - a Norman family that came from a castle in Britany which was built on the banks of a lake. Hugh de la Mere (or de la Mare) = "Hugh from the Castle of the Lake". The de la Mere or de la Mare name later became spelled Delamare. Rodger de Carews = Roger of the Castle Carew (in Wales). Thomas de St. Jean - Thomas of St. Jean in Normandy (now France) and later became St. John because of the family patron saint St. John.

More common men were named by their profession, for example: Smith = silver smith, leather smith, (a craftsman with a specific trade); Wheeler = a wheel wright, etc.

Reinbald de Presbyter was such a name.

Reinbald de Presbyter = Reinbald the "Elder" or the "Prester" or the "Prater". Presbyter = a Latin name meaning highly educated noble, manager of the Church, an Elder, a Priest. The Elders of the church of this period in history were not meek religious men, but instead were fearse fighting men who fought and conquered people in order to expand their religion. Reinbald was one who shared in the spoils of the conquest. He held the Manor of Frome in Somersetshire, Latton Manor in Wiltshire, and many others.

We are still researching reinbald, but most records are in Latin and very hard to read and translate. Reinbald is listed in the "Dooms Day Survey" that was conducted by the church between 1066 and 1086. The Dooms Day Survey consists of 800 volumes of hand written documents of a survey that was conducted by the church at the order of Odo, bishop of Beck, and half brother of King William I. King William wanted an assessment of all that he had conquered in England. He knew that the tax base established by the Saxon Kings was not a true assessment because of its age and the corruption of the tax assessors. Also, most of the properties that were held under the Saxon rule were being reassigned as "spoils" to those who came with their armies to assist William in the conquest. King William knew the only way to gain a true assessment was to have it conducted by someone other than the established assessors.

Odo, King William's half brother, was the Bishop of Beck and controlled the power of the Catholic Church in that part of the world. Knowing that no one would prevent church representatives from making a true accounting of property, King William arranged for Odo to have the monks make a survey of the conquest. This survey took approximately eight years to complete.

The people of England believed that it would only be a matter of time before the Danes would attack King William's holdings in England and with this new war, King William could call for people to give all of their assessed holdings to support the war against the Danes. That would mean "the day of their doom", thus the survey of the new property assessment became known as "The Dooms Day Survey".

A few years ago the volumes of the Dooms Day Survey were broken apart, cleaned, and copied to film, and rebound. The film taken is in the process of being translated from Latin into English. Copies of the Dooms Day Survey can be purchased on computer disk for about \$5,000. These are made available to the public in some parts of the U.S.A., but these are very incomplete. To this date, I do not believe that a full translation is available.

King William returned to his kingdom in Normandy shortly after securing the English Conquest, leaving his half brother, Odo, as his vassel representative. Odo was a harsh ruler and not long afterwards he began to have problems with the Norman Barons who could no longer withstand his harsh oppressive laws and his confiscation of property. Odo, still a bishop of the church, would confiscate property for himself using the threat of his ability to excommunicate those who opposed him. King William was made aware of this and returned with a force to expell his brother. Odo was returned to Normandy and confined to his holdings there. Thus, Odo had fallen from power. At one time he had been considered to be a candidate for the Popedome in Rome, but now he spent his life as a Nobleman in Normandy. He was replaced with the son of King William I, William Rufus (the Red). William Rufus became King William II.

It appears that Reinbald de Presbyter fell from power at the time Odo was expelled from England.

[from REINBALD THE PRIEST (REINBALD de PRESBYTER)--REINBALD PRATER, Chancellor (ref. The Dooms Day Survey, which consists of 800 hand written volumes, conducted by the Church in England between 1066 and 1086)]

REINBALD de PRESBYTER (also listed as Prester/Prater) was a priest, as well as Chancellor. During this period of history most priests were born of noble families and were generally considered not to have the same religious conviction as a monk. The noble priests were hard fighting men, often with their own armys. The noble priests of this period were found to have their position in the church for political reasons. As an example, the position of the Pope in Rome was purchased (going to the highest bidder) during the tenth century and earlier history. We also know that Reinbald gained his property (holdings) as a result of his exploits during the battles to secure England in the conquest. The conquest of England by the Normans (and allied

armies) began in 1066 and ended around 1086. Reinbald held under Odo, the Bishop of Beck and half brother to King William. Odo also is listed in the Doomes Day survey as holding one half of the Lordship of Eaton Water. All of Odo's holdings were taken away from him by the King when he began to create problems for the Barons. Odo was banished to Normandy.

It is also noted that when Odo's holdings were taken by the King that Eaton Water was held by "servants" of the King; a family noble to the King. The other half of the Lordship of Eaton Water was held by a noble family named Drews.

It is very common for Manors in England to have several Lordships. An example is Nunney, Somerset; The Praters held one half of the Lordship while the Maudleys held the other half in the late 1500's and early 1600's.

To give you an example of the spelling variations found in the old records in England: Williamus Prater's name was also spelled Wellelmus Pretor, Wellelmus Praepositus, Wellelmus Pratellius, and Wellelmus Presbyter.

My research continues, but I believe that Reinbald de Presbyter (Prater/Prester/"The Elder") was probably a brother to Guilliumus Prater of Eaton Water, Wiltshire, OR he was at least a close relative.

It is thought that Reinbald (also spelled Rainbold) was a descendant from Roman, Flemish, Welsh, and Norman Nobles. His holding around Latton Manor, Wiltshire, was inherited by the Earls of St. German and later came into the hands of our grandfather, George Prater of Latton Manor, Wiltshire, England.

I believe that George Prater was a Reeve of Nunney, Somerset, and other Manors held by the Paulets (Poweletts), as well as Manors held by the Earls of St. Germann and Earls of Bolingbroke.

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