

A Transformed Life? Geoffrey of Dutton, the Fifth Crusade, and the Holy Cross of Norton.

Despite the volume of scholarship dedicated to crusade motivation, comparative little has been said on how the crusades affected the lives of individuals, and how this played out once they returned home. Taking as a case study a Cheshire landholder, Geoffrey of Dutton, this article looks at the reasons for his crusade participation *and* his actions once he returned to Cheshire, arguing that he was changed by his experiences to the extent that he was concerned with remembering and conveying his own status as a returned pilgrim. It also looks at the impact of a relic of the True Cross he brought back and gave to the Augustinian priory of Norton.

Keywords: crusade; relic; Norton Priory; burial; seal

An extensive body of scholarship has considered what motivated people to go on crusade in the middle ages (piety, obligation and service, family connections and ties of lordship, punishment and escape), as well as what impact that had across Europe in terms of recruitment, funding and organisation. Far less has been said about the more personal impact of crusading for individuals who took part. This is largely due to the nature of the sources from which, according to Housley, ‘not much can be inferred... about the response of the majority of crusaders to what they’d gone through in the East.’¹ With the exception of accounts of the post-crusading careers of the most important individuals, notably Louis IX of France, very little was written about how crusaders responded to taking part in an overseas campaign which mixed the height of spiritual endeavour with extreme violence. Yet something can be discerned about the aftermath of crusading and its impact on individuals and their lives when post-crusade activities, careers and life-changes are considered. The purpose of this article is to examine these themes in light of the post-crusade activities of Geoffrey of Dutton, a landowner from Cheshire who took part in the Fifth Crusade (1219-1221), considering why he went the crusade, how his experiences there may have shaped his identity when he returned home, and the impact this had on this relationship with the Augustinian Priory of Norton in Cheshire.

Geoffrey of Dutton, son of Adam of Dutton (*d.bef.* 1210)², was a knightly landholder in Cheshire; his main holding was in Sutton, but he also possessed lands in Great Budworth.³ In 1218 Geoffrey went on the Fifth Crusade, most probably in the

¹ Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross: Crusading to the Holy Land* (London, 2008), p. 275.

² *Early Cheshire Charters* ed. Geoffrey Barraclough, (Royal Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1957), p. 22, where Barraclough speculated that he died between 1200 and 1210.

³ Andrew Abram, ‘The Augustinian canons and their benefactors in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, 1115-1320’, Unpublished PhD Thesis (University of Wales, Lampeter, 2007), p. 271. Between 1171 and 1187 Adam, who was steward to the constables of Chester and a major landholder in north-west Cheshire, had granted lands in Warburton to the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, part of a wider range of grants to religious houses that included Norton and one which indicates an interest in supporting the crusading movement: Cheshire Record Office, (hereafter CRO) DLT/B2, fol. 200, nos. 1-5; *The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey* ed. W. Farrer, 3rd Series, 3 vols., (Chetham Society, 1898), I, pp. 735-6. Across England as a whole, in the last two decades of the twelfth century, when interest in the crusades spiked,

contingent led by Ranulf, earl of Chester. This was the first and only crusade in which men from the earldom of Chester played a substantial part, and this was due to Ranulf's leadership.⁴ Ranulf's motivations were mixed, no doubt including piety and concern for his own soul, but his decision to fulfil his vow (as so many were commuted for cash payments) could, in part, have stemmed from a desire to fulfil King John's own vow. Ranulf had taken the Cross alongside the king in March 1215, but John had died before his vow could be fulfilled. John's soul could presumably do with all the spiritual grace it could get. The Yorkshire Assize Roll of 1219 recorded that Ranulf was absent 'in the king's service in the land of Jerusalem', suggesting that he may have been going in John's place.⁵ Vow fulfilment like this was not unknown: William Marshal was charged with fulfilling the crusading vow of Henry the Young king when the latter was on his deathbed.⁶ Whether not John ever intended to fulfil the vow himself is debatable, but Ranulf was a loyal man and fulfilling his dead lord's vow was in keeping with his character.⁷

Unsurprisingly, given his status and wealth, Ranulf went on crusade with a sizeable retinue that included men from his earldoms of Chester and Lincoln. The *L'Estoire de Eracles Empereur*, a French continuation of William of Tyre's *Historia*, claimed that Earl Ranulf was accompanied by one hundred knights on the crusade. Though the source does not list them, and we can identify only a few from other sources, it is a plausible figure and it had a clear ripple effect in terms of recruitment and participation.⁸ Even the poorest knight, for example, would have taken a squire, whilst the wealthier might have taken several of his followers, so one hundred knights quickly scales up to several hundred men. From among Ranulf's vassals, this included his nephew John de Lacy, constable of Chester, who was excused from court in Yorkshire because he was away on crusade.⁹ In turn, John was accompanied by his own followers, most of whom came from Pontefract, such as his porter Roger, his steward Robert of Kent, and his physician, another man named Roger.¹⁰

Michael Gervers, 'Donations to the Hospitallers in England in the Wake of the Second Crusade', in ed. Michael Gervers *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (New York, 1992), pp. 157-9; for the correlation between supporting the Military Orders and interest in supporting the crusades, see Kathryn Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades, 1000-1300* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 153-155 following the launch of the Third Crusade, the number of Hospitaller foundations increased by over 50 per cent

⁴ For a wider discussion of the role and contribution of men of Cheshire, see Kathryn Hurlock, 'Cheshire and the Crusades', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 159 (2010), 1-18.

⁵ W. T. Lancaster, ed., 'Extracts from a Yorkshire assize roll, 3 Henry III, 1219', *Miscellanea*, 1 *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, 61 (1920), p. 179.

⁶ *History of William Marshal: text and translation* ed. A. J. Holden, trans. S. Gregory (London: Anglo-Norman Texts Society, 2002), ll. 6891-6911; Geoffrey of Vigeois, 'Chronicon Lemovicense' in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules and de la France XVIII* ed. Michael-Jean-Joseph Brial (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1879), p. 217; David Crouch, *William Marshal* Third Edition (London, 2016), p. 64.

⁷ Glyn S Burgess, 'I kan rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erl of Chestre', in *'De Sens Rassis': Essays in Honour of Rupert T. Pickens* ed. Keith Busby, Bernard Guidot and Logan E. Whelan (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 61.

⁸ 'L'Estoire de Eracles Empereur', in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux*, Tome Second (Paris, 1859), p. 342.

⁹ *Chronicon Petrobургense* ed. Thomas Stapleton (London, 1849), p. 7.

¹⁰ Beatrice Siedschlag, *English Participation in the Crusades, 1150-1229* PhD Thesis, Bryn Mawr (Privately Published, 1939), p. 97; *Chartulary of St John of Pontefract*, ed. Richard Holmes, 2 vols., (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1902), i, pp. 36-37, no. 21. For the service from Cheshire, see also Andrew Abram, 'The Pilgrimage and Crusading Activities of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester', in

Another crusader who must have served in either the retinue of Earl Ranulf or constable John de Lacy was Geoffrey of Dutton.¹¹ He had probably been part of the earl's contingent against the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Iorwerth in North Wales in 1211 or 1212, as he appears in a witness list at this time alongside individuals which, according to Geoffrey Barraclough, 'suggests a gathering of Ranulf III's contingent'; this makes it more probable that he served under Ranulf than John de Lacy on crusade.¹² His participation could be seen as part of the general recruitment of men from Cheshire at this time to fill the earl's contingent, but it is possible that Geoffrey had a familial link to the leading crusaders and was motivated to take the Cross by this.¹³ According to the antiquarian George Ormerod, Geoffrey was married to Alice, daughter of John de Lacy; another genealogy compiled as part of the 1580 visitation of Cheshire confuses the marriages of Geoffrey and his father Adam, and identified Alice as the daughter of John de Lacy.¹⁴ The common factor in these works is a link between Geoffrey and the Lacy family, and so through this marriage to Alice he was either the brother-in law or the son-in-law of John the constable.¹⁵ This additional familial tie would have been strong driving force in the participation of Geoffrey in the Fifth Crusade. Moreover, various branches of the Lacy family had strong interest in crusading that may have proved influential to those who were associated with the family; Gilbert de Lacy of Ludlow went to the Holy Land in the 1160s; Henry de Lacy, lord of Pontefract in 1177 with Philip of Flanders' crusade; and John Constable of Chester, father of Roger who assumed the Lacy name in right of his wife's inheritance in 1195, took part in the Third Crusade.¹⁶ Moreover, women were often transmitters of crusading interest to their husbands and sons in the Lacy family along the Welsh March, as was the case when Petronilla de Lacy married Ralph de Teoni.¹⁷

Earl Ranulf and his contingent left for Egypt in the first week of June 1218, having just secured a peace with Llywelyn ap Iorwerth.¹⁸ Whilst in Damietta, Ranulf was the most prominent of the English crusade leaders, contributing to the cost of strengthening the Tower of Chains which protected the entrance to the Nile at

Pilgrimage and Crusade in the Norman World eds. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 135-37.

¹¹ That John de Lacy had men who followed him is evidence as some of them formed the witness list for a charter he issued at Damietta in 1219, such as his steward Robert of Kent. *Pontefract Cartulary I*, no. 21, p. 37.

¹² Geoffrey Barraclough, *Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c. 1071-1237* Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (1988), p. 315.

¹³ Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, c.1095-1588* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 180-2.

¹⁴ Robert Glover and William Flower, *The Visitation of Cheshire in the Year 1580* (London., 1882), p. 88; George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester* ed. Thomas Helsby, 3 vols., second edition, (London., 1882), i, p. 573.

¹⁵ Abram, *Norton Priory* pp. 21-2.

¹⁶ Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium* ed. M. R. James, C. N. L. Brooke, R. A. B. Mynors, (Oxford, 1983), p. 71; *Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century: the Inquest of 1185 with illustrative charters and documents* ed. Beatrice Lees, (London, 1935), p. 276; *Early Yorkshire Charters* ed. William Farrers, 12 vols (London, 1914-65), iii, p. 289 #1629; Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades* pp. 69, 86, 87. For comparative examples, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Family Traditions and Participation in the Second Crusade', in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* ed. M. Gervers (New York, 1992), pp. 101-8.

¹⁷ Kathryn Hurlock, *Wales and the Crusades, c.1095-1291*(Cardiff., 2011), p. 128; for the impact of family tradition on crusading, see Nicholas L. Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps: the Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2012)

¹⁸ *Annales Cestrienses: or, Chronicle of the Abbey of S. Werburg, at Chester* ed. Richard Copley Christie, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society (London, 1886), p.50.

Damietta.¹⁹ He was also one of those, together with the King of Jerusalem and the French, who advocated accepting the offer made by the Sultan of Cairo that would have seen the return of Jerusalem to the Christians and the freeing of Christians prisoners.²⁰ He participated in the attack and capture of Damietta on 5 November 1219, but left Egypt in the spring of the following year. He returned to England in July 1220, and arrived home in Chester on August 16, thus missing the disastrous end to the Egyptian campaign that saw the crusaders defeated at Mansourrah on August 5th.²¹ His contingent was well managed and cohesive, and many of those who appear in service to him on crusade remained in his service after his return to England.

On his own return from this crusade, Geoffrey of Dutton appears to have gifted a portion of the True Cross to the canons at Norton Priory in Cheshire. How he acquired the relic is unknown, as the famed portion of the True Cross discovered at the time of the First Crusade was lost to Saladin at the Battle of Hattin on July 4, 1187. This relic had been crucial in giving the crusaders spiritual support on the battlefield, so much so that, according to Alan Murray, it was carried into battle at least thirty-one times.²² However, according to the chronicler Oliver of Paderborn (d. 1227), a piece of the True Cross was brought from Acre to Damietta by the Patriarch of Jerusalem as he journeyed to join the Fifth Crusaders in Egypt.²³ The relic was displayed or processed at various times throughout the course of the Fifth Crusade, such as when the Patriarch of Jerusalem processed it along the western bank of the River Nile, or when he soon after prostrated himself before it in the hope that this would aid the crusaders in their besieging of the Tower of Chains.²⁴ Small slivers of this portion of the Cross could have been acquired by crusaders like Geoffrey so that they could be carried home to Western Europe.

Geoffrey's chosen beneficiary, Norton Priory, was an Augustinian house that had originally been founded in 1115 by the constable of Chester, William fitz Nigel, at nearby Runcorn, but it was removed to Norton by 1134 at the request of the bishop of Chester.²⁵ The Dutton family became principal benefactors of Norton by the late twelfth century; many of them were buried in their own chapel and then the Lady Chapel at the north transept of the priory church.²⁶ The Dutton family was, in the words of Andrew

¹⁹ *Christian Society and the Crusades, 1198-1229: sources in translation* ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 79.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.50; 'Dieulacres foundation narrative', William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum : a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales*, revised J. Calley , H. Ellis , B Bandinel, 6 vols in 8 (London, 1817-30), v, p. 628

²² Alan V. Murray, "'Mighty against the enemies of Christ': the Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem", in *n The Crusades and Their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, eds. John France and William G. Zajac (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 221-2.

²³ *Christian Society and the Crusades*, p. 53; see also Adrian J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the time of the crusades: society, landscape and art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule* (London, 2001), p. 214, n. 34.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66; James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213-1221* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 143; The treaty the crusaders signed at the end of August 1221 saw them surrender Damietta, but gained them the empty promise of the return of the portion of the Cross lost at Hattin. Thomas C. Van Cleve, 'The Fifth Crusade', in *A History of the Crusades II: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311* ed. Robert Lee Wolff and Harry W. Hazard (Madison, 1969), p. 428.

²⁵ CRO DLT/B2, fol. 199; Tait, *The Foundation Charter of Runcorn (Later Norton) Priory* (CS, 1939), p. 2.

²⁶ Greene, *Norton Priory* p. 10; Abram, *Norton Priory* pp. 28-46.

Abram, 'indelibly linked' to the house, a bond which had been strengthened by the support offered to it by Adam of Dutton, Geoffrey's father.²⁷

Geoffrey of Dutton's reasons for gifting a relic to Norton partly drew on a family tradition of supporting the priory. When discussing crusaders who brought back relics to Europe, Norman Housley suggested that it was 'reasonable to infer that in deciding where to place them [relics], their donors were inspired by a 'spiritual strategy', in which they either consolidated existing ties of patronage or created desirable new ones.'²⁸ The earliest Dutton gifts were made in 1115, when the brothers Hugh and Gilbert Dutton gave Runcorn priory property between Runcorn and Halton, spurred by their lord's foundation of the priory itself. Hugh and Adam Dutton had made several donations to Norton at the turn of the thirteenth century in order to complete the priory church. Abram has linked the Dutton's involvement at this time to the development of family chapels to the north and northwest of the priory. Adam Dutton was particularly interested in Norton despite his religious benefaction elsewhere (at Warburton, which he co-founded in 1190; at the Cistercian house of Stanlaw; and to the Hospitallers, the latter of which might suggest an existing familial interest in the crusading movement). Between 1199 and 1205 Adam was allowed by the prior of Norton to assart or clear land between Stockham and Sutton.²⁹ He further gave the canons a salt house in Northwich, while land in Dutton and Warburton, and the mill of Sutton were gifted 'to God and for the construction of the church of the Blessed Mary of Norton'. As previously inferred, this was a significant family grant.³⁰

The portion of the Cross probably gifted by Geoffrey of Dutton was referred to in the chronicle of Whalley Abbey as the 'holy Cross of Norton' in 1287, where it was credited with restoring the site of a person who had been speechless for five years, and another who was blind.³¹ The chronicle was largely a copy of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, which ended in the mid-1340s, with further additions taking it down to the late 1420s, but it also included information such as that on the Cross which were added to the base text.³² Though the later additions to the *Polychronicon* were probably written at Whalley Abbey, the rest of the manuscript was probably not, and it is clear that there were two scribes working on this manuscript.³³ The earlier portion of the manuscript was probably written at another Cistercian house in northern England, as there is evidence that the northern houses of the order shared manuscripts. For the most part, they wrote what Taylor called 'invariably unambitious and circumscribed'

²⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

²⁸ Housley, *Fighting for the Cross* p. 272

²⁹ JRUL, Arley Charters, i, 20.

³⁰ Abram, *Norton Priory* p. 23. Adam's brother Hugh also made a similar grant and they encouraged a vassal, Wrono Punterling, to do the same. CRO, BLT/B2, fol. 200, nos. 4, 6, 15.

³¹ M. V. Taylor, 'The 16th Century Abbots of St. Werburgh's, Chester; Some Notes on Documents Relating to the Abbey and Other Religious Houses of Cheshire; and a Medieval Guide book to Chester', *Journal of the Chester Antiquarian Society*, new series, 19 (ii) (1913), p. 187; the original manuscript is BL Harley 3600.

³² There are numerous copies of Higden's work with continuations. In some copies the original ends in 1327, and others 1348 or 1352. The Whalley version continued from 1346. See *The Kirkstall Abbey Chronicles* ed. John Taylor (Leeds, 1952), p. 6; John Taylor, 'The Development of the *Polychronicon* Continuation', *English Historical Review* 76 (1961), 20-36.

³³ Taylor, *Kirkstall Abbey Chronicles* pp. 12-13.

accounts of history, but with enough pieces of local information in order to differentiate between them; hence the inclusion of the reference to the Cross at Norton.³⁴ Kingsland suggests that it was written by a Cistercian monk from Lancashire or Yorkshire,³⁵ despite the fact that the abbey was closely linked to Cheshire where it had originally been founded between 1172 and 1178 by John, constable of Chester, at Stanlow (or Stanlaw) before most of its monks moved to Whalley in Lancashire in 1296.³⁶ Andrew Abram argues convincingly for the link between Whalley, Kisktall and Stanlow which had the same founder-patrons, the constables of Chester, pointing out that works such as the *Genealogica* of Stanlow-Whalley and the *Status de Blackburneshire* written at Stanlow but concluding with ‘a straightforward history of Whalley Abbey’, show the literary links between the two houses.³⁷ Stanlow Abbey lies just over ten miles south west of Norton Priory, and so to find information on miracles that occurred at Norton in a text from Stanlow is not surprising.

It was not at all unusual for returning crusaders to offer the gift of a relic to a religious house, and portions of the True Cross were hardly rare in England in the era of the crusades. The priest of Bromholm Priory in Norfolk brought back a piece of the True Cross from Constantinople after 1205 which began to work miracles there in the early 1220s; he also stole 2 fingers of St Margaret, which he sold to St Alban’s Abbey.³⁸ St John’s in Chester had a piece of the True Cross in its Holy Rood, known as the Crucifix of Chester; this piece may have been brought back by Earl Ranulf after his participation in the Fifth Crusade.³⁹ The rood at Chester was a popular pilgrim destination by the close of the middle ages, and several Welsh poets composed works to the ‘merciful cross’ at St John’s.⁴⁰ In the late thirteenth century, Edward I gave his Cisterian abbey of Vale Royal a portion of the True Cross upon its foundation which he had ‘violently carried off’ from the Holy Land, while in 1394, Sir William Mainwaring left a relic of the True Cross to Acton Church in Cheshire, where he was buried.⁴¹

³⁴ Ibid, p. 14; *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397-1400: the Reign of Richard III* ed. Christ Given-Wilson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 153.

³⁵ Kingsland, p. 35

³⁶ According to the editor of the Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey, Stanlow was founded by John before his departure on crusade. *The Coucher Book, or Chartulary, of Whalley Abbey, vol 1*, ed. W. A. Hulston (Chetham Society, 1847), , (p. iv

³⁷ BL Cotton Cleopatra C.3, fols, 329-30 ; T. D. Whitaker, *An History of the Original Parish of Whalley* (Routledge: London, 1872), pp. 66-7; Andrew Abram, *The Charters and Others Documents of Norton Priory* (in preparation). I am grateful to Dr Andrew Abram for allowing me advance viewing of his work whilst it being prepared for publication. That Stanlow had an active scriptorium is evidence by these works and others. See O.S. Pickering, ‘Newly Discovered Secular Lyrics from Late Thirteenth Century Cheshire’, *The Review of English Studies* 43 (1992), 157-80;

³⁸ John Munns, *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Norman England* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 247, 268; F. Wormald, ‘The Rood of Bromholm’, *Journal of the Walburg Institute* 1 (1937), pp. 31-45; Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades*, p. 123.

³⁹ A. T. Thacker, ‘Later medieval Chester 1230-1550: Religion, 1230-1550’, in *A History of the County of Chester: Volume 5 part 1: The City of Chester: General History and Topography* (London, 2003), pp. 80-89.

⁴⁰ Maredudd ap Rhys’s ‘Poem to the Cross at Chester’, in Barry J. Lewis, *Welsh Poetry and English Pilgrimage: Gruffudd ap Maredudd and the Rood of Chester* (Aberystwyth, 2005), *passim*.

⁴¹ *The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey* ed. John Brownbill Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, (London, 1914), Book 9; Philip Morgan, ‘Of Worms and War; 1330-1558’, in

Crusading 'souvenirs' were popular among crusaders from the Welsh March; the stone reliquary discovered in Ruyton-in-the-Eleven-Towns in Shropshire in 1989 decorated with scenes from the life of St Thecla of Iconium was probably the result of the crusading activities of John le Strange, lord of Ruyton, at the time of the Third Crusade.⁴² Across England, relics of the True Cross were kept at Bromholm Priory, Salisbury Cathedral, Bar Convent in York, and Exeter, some of which had come to England as a result of crusading.⁴³ In France, Flanders and the Basso-Lorraine, in areas that 'supplied the main contingents of the crusade' there were also a substantial number of True Cross relics.⁴⁴

The gift of the Cross could have formed part of the homecoming ritual associated with crusading where religious houses might welcome back a benefactor and crusader, and that this was particularly the case when that crusader brought with them some sort of relic.⁴⁵ As Nicholas Paul put it:

The arrival of the returned crusader was clearly a memorable event... the crusader's return, and the presentation of relics to local religious communities, was performed in the style of the ceremonial receptions, or *adventus*, that celebrated the arrival of royal and princely figures at the chief town, churches and monasteries of their dominions. As public performances of power, friendship and subjugation, receptions were potentially powerful demonstrations of the legitimacy of the honored ruler or visitor.⁴⁶

On a smaller scale, this is what a returning ceremony could have achieved at Norton. If the canons there had welcomed back Geoffrey and feted the gift he brought this would have enhanced his prestige and, through this, the prestige of the priory as he was one of its leading benefactors.

Geoffrey in turn may have wanted to mark his homecoming because the penitential aspect of his journey had had a marked impact on him. There are examples of returning crusaders elsewhere in Europe becoming more religious as a result of crusade involvement, and this appears to have been the case with Geoffrey. According to some sources Louis IX of France expressed a desire to give up his crown and become

Death in England: an Illustrated History eds. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings, (Manchester, 1999), p. 137.

⁴² The reliquary is housed in the Medieval Collection of Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery (Rowley's House); Eyton, *Antiquities*, X, 113. The reliquary was identified by Dr Stephen Hill (Warwick University). Anon, 'West Midlands Archaeology in 1991', *Midlands Archaeology*, 34 (1991), pp. 60-1.

⁴³ A Frowlow, *La Relique de la Vraie Croix: recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, 2 vols, vol 1 (Paris, 1961), pp. 273, 379, 405, 414, 145-6. According to Frowlow, the relic possessed by Bromholm had belonged to first Latin Emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin I, who used to carry it in his expeditions, but which he had forgotten to take with him.' For earlier relics, see John Munns, 'The Vision of the Cross and the Crusades in England before 1189', in *The Crusades and Visual Culture* ed. Elizabeth Lapina, April Jehan Morris, Susanna A. Throop and Laura J. Whatley (Aldershot, 2015), pp. 57-74.

⁴⁴ Frowlow, *La Relique de la Vraie Croix*, p. 145

⁴⁵ For the example of the return of Count Robert II of Flanders, Guy II of Rochefort and others, see Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps* pp. 123-9.

⁴⁶ Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps* p. 124.

a monk when he came back from the crusade, but his wife talked him out of it; instead he lived plainly and with 'sober tastes'.⁴⁷

In addition to making his gift to Norton Priory, in the wake of the crusade Geoffrey of Dutton had a new personal seal made which depicted two hands holding a palm frond. The original survives on a charter of c. 1227 enfeoffing William of Barrow, and in a drawing on the copy of another charter in which Geoffrey granted lands to his daughter Agnes.⁴⁸ This palm frond represented the palm of Jericho, which pilgrims often brought back from Jerusalem. The ritual of bringing back a palm seems to have its origins in the eleventh century; in c.1050, Peter Damian mentioned the picking of palm fronds as a customary practice as those on pilgrimage. These palm leaves, collected in the plain between Jericho and the Jordan, were symbols of regeneration, of the spiritual benefits of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, and of the 'victory of faith over sin.' In 1180, William archbishop of Tyre in the Holy Land wrote that the palm of Jericho was 'the formal sign that the pilgrim's vow has been fulfilled.'⁴⁹ By the thirteenth century it was possible to acquire a palm from a vendor within the walls of Jerusalem, without having to go even to Jericho.⁵⁰

Although Geoffrey of Dutton and the rest of Ranulf's contingent went to Damietta and not the Holy Land, crusading ventures were seen as pilgrimages even when they did not go to Jerusalem and are described as such in the sources. Thus the Fine Rolls of 1221 records the respite granted to the crusader William of Torrington (Devon), 'who has set out on pilgrimage towards Jerusalem'.⁵¹ On 2 August 1220, the same source notes the death of Saher de Quincy, earl of Winchester, and refers to 'the day he set out on pilgrimage towards Jerusalem', even though it is clear that he only ever went to Egypt.⁵² Whether they reached Jerusalem or not, on their return crusaders, like pilgrims, were often dubbed 'the Jerusalemites', a name which they may have used during the crusade itself, and which stuck with them afterwards.⁵³ In light of this, it is entirely likely that Geoffrey adopted the imagery of the palm frond as a symbol of the fulfilment of his crusading vow and to demonstrate his piety to those who saw his seal. The fame of having been on crusade certainly made some returning crusaders into local celebrities: when the famed Italo-Norman crusader, Bohemond of Taranto, returned to Western Europe at the start of the twelfth century, many of the French nobles wanted him to act as godfather to their children.

One alternative possibility is that the crusaders who did not reach Jerusalem as part of their military activities still went there in order to undertake a pilgrimage. Arguably this was the primary aim for many crusaders. In October 1220, the Fine Rolls recorded that Alard le Fleming, who held land in Gloucester, 'has died, so the king

⁴⁷ Housley, *Fighting for the Cross* p. 274

⁴⁸ JRUL, Arley Charters, i. 55; CRO, DLT, B3, fol. 142.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Jonathan Sumption, *The Age of Pilgrimage: the Medieval Journey to God* (Mahwah, New Jersey, 2003), pp. 247-8

⁵⁰ Debra J. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 77-78

⁵¹ Josie Cullen, 'Fine of the Month, October, 2010: Prosopography in the Field of Crusader Studies and the Fine Rolls of the Reign of Henry III as a Source for the Fifth Crusade', Henry III Fine Rolls Project <http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-10-2010.html> (date accessed 20.10.16)

⁵² Fine 4/208, 2 Aug 1220 http://www.frh3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_012.html#it208_003 (date accessed 20.10.16); Tyerman, *England* p. 97; Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade* p. 242.

⁵³ Housley, *Fighting for the Cross* p. 270

heard, in Jerusalem;’ he could have fought with the English at Damietta and then journeyed independently to the Holy Land, though it is equally possible that Jerusalem was meant in general terms, as it was for Saher de Quincy.⁵⁴ However, usually those who survived the dangers of crusade returned with their lord for logistical and financial reasons once the crusade was deemed to be over, but often they still had time to go to Jerusalem. The Muslim powers who held the Holy City at any given time were generally willing to allow this as it demilitarised the crusaders. In 1192, once the Third Crusade had come to an end via the Treaty of Jaffa, the Muslim leader Saladin gave permission for ‘a series of unarmed pilgrimages to Jerusalem.’⁵⁵ It is practically possible that Geoffrey undertook such a pilgrimage to Jerusalem before earl Ranulf’s contingent returned to England, or that he could have stayed in the east and travelled independently of the Cheshire contingent: he does not appear again in the written record until an undated charter in which Herbert de Orreby gave lands to Geoffrey in Sutton and elsewhere on his return from Jerusalem, a charter which suggests that Geoffrey had granted him these lands before his departure on crusade.⁵⁶ Geoffrey of Dutton witnessed a grant by Ranulf to Dieulacres Abbey next to the justiciar, Philip de Orreby, Herbert de Orreby and others, dated by Geoffrey Barraclough to between August 1220 and the end of 1222.⁵⁷ This was not, however, necessary for the adoption of the symbol of the palm frond, which would have been equally acceptable if Geoffrey had stayed with his overlord’s force and never made it to the Holy Land itself.

The decision to include the image of a palm as a symbol of pilgrimage was not uncommon. Other seals bearing palm fronds have been found near Peterborough (possibly for a woman), in Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Lincolnshire West Sussex – the list goes on.⁵⁸ Henryk the Bearded, High Duke of Poland adopted the image of a palm on his seal in c.1224, probably to reflect a Levantine journey.⁵⁹ In other cases, seals depict the palm fronds in association with an image of St Peter, of St Catherine, to indicate their martyrdom, though the absence of a figure on the seal suggests that this was not what Geoffrey was trying to associate himself with, and that salvation and redemption of sin were most important to him.⁶⁰

Moreover, a seal was a very personal item in which an individual could convey something of himself to those who saw it. They were the most important way for an individual or official body to present an image of themselves, and they tell us not how others saw them, but how they wanted to be seen by their neighbours, patrons, tenants and anyone else who might come into contact with a document adorned with a seal. Geoffrey of Dutton chose this device over the more popular equestrian or armorial images of his contemporaries, which were clearly militaristic, or even the more

⁵⁴ Fine #4/279 http://www.frh3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_012.html#it279_002 (date accessed 20.10.16).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁵⁶ JRUL, Arley Charters i. 94.

⁵⁷ *Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester*, no 385.

⁵⁸ Seal Matrix IHS-1968E4, <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/108891> ; Seal Matrix IHS-64DF75 <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/88830>

⁵⁹ Mikolaj Gladysz, *The Forgotten Crusaders: Poland and the Crusader Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 166, no 81.

⁶⁰ Durham Cathedral Muniments: 272 (Seal of Simon of Bishopton, 1339) 1133 (seal of Thomas Gretham 1380-96), 1459 (Seal of Isolda Kayville, 1280).

peaceable images of a hunting or hawking knight.⁶¹ Geoffrey's own father Adam had also had a very personalised seal which, according to Thomas Helsby, 'represents a figure in a loose robe, upright, and looking to the left, holding something like an axe on the left shoulder.'⁶² This was presumably a reference to Adam's role in assarting lands in northwest Cheshire at the turn of the thirteenth century.

Geoffrey of Dutton's descendants took great interest in remembering the crusading activities of their forbear. According to Sir Peter Leycester, Geoffrey's son and namesake also sealed documents with his father's palm frond seal.⁶³ They also emphasised the military aspect of the crusade, no doubt because this was more illustrious and a way of enhancing their own lineage. Geoffrey of Dutton's grandson was Sir Peter de Warburton, born in c.1229, and through him the Warburton arms came to be surmounted by a Saracen's head, a reminder that the Warburtons had an ancestor who had been to the East. It is not clear when this device first appeared on the Warburton arms, but the use of a moor's head on heraldic devices first began in the thirteenth century and so it is not inconceivable that it was adopted in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century; equally, heralds of the early modern period – especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – had a love of embellishing arms, so the device could have been added then. Either way, we know that Geoffrey went on crusade, and so it serves to demonstrate how important crusade participation was considered in terms of status and kinship.

After gifting a relic to Norton Priory on his return from crusade, and adopting the palm motif of his seal, although during the 1230s Geoffrey of Dutton appears to have been active in local affairs, there was nothing extraordinary recorded about him or his relationship with Norton Priory. He died in c.1248, and was buried in the priory. Excavations at Norton in the 1970s uncovered over 140 burials, including one, number 439, that lay in the eastern end of the centre of the nave under a grave lid carved with a cross within a roundel, the shaft of which is flanked by two shields, the one on the right sitting a little lower on the shaft, and the flank terminating in a calvary.⁶⁴ The style of the grave lid suggested that this was a mid-thirteenth century burial, and the location of the grave in front of the pulpitum screen indicated that this was a high-status figure. Patrick Green erroneously suggested that this was the body of Richard (d. 1211), brother of the constable of Chester, based on the fact that Richard reportedly was buried

⁶¹ Adrian Ailes, 'The Knight's Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seal', in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* eds. Noël Adams, John Cherry and James Robinson (London, 2008), p. 8

⁶² Ormerod, *History of the County Palatine*, ed. Helsby p. 568 n. e.

⁶³ CRO, DLT, B3, fol. 142.

⁶⁴ For an image of the shield, see Greene, *Norton Priory* p. 8, fig 8. The skeleton in this grave, #439, is that of an adult male who suffered from Paget's disease, which inhibits the body's ability to renew and repair bone. In this instance, it had caused deformity of the skull, and thickening of bones in the upper body, changes which would have caused some pain for the sufferer. Shirley Curtis-Summers, 'Reconstructing Christian Lifeways: a bioarchaeological study of medieval inhabitants from Portahomack, Scotland and Norton Priory, England', Unpublished PhD Thesis (Liverpool 2015); the first full osteological analysis was conducted by Anthea Boylston and Alan Ogden. For the subsequent discussion on Paget's Disease of Bone in the Norton burials, see Fraser Brown and Christine Howard-Davies, *Norton Priory: Monastery to Museum, Excavations 1970-87* (Lancaster, 2008), pp. 160-4.

in a prominent location with the priory church. According to the fourteenth century *fundatorium*, however, Richard was buried in the chapter house.⁶⁵

It has also been suggested that this burial was of Roger, again brother of the constable of Chester, but that would not fit-with the mid-thirteenth century dating of the stone slab. This stone grave cover has now lost the detail which would have been applied to the carved shields; the crude carving of these shields in comparison to the detail of the cross suggests that they were intended 'to take a brass plate or smooth plaster-surface on which coats of arms could be painted heraldically to identify the deceased.'⁶⁶ However, something can be discerned of who the individual beneath them might have been based on the placement of those shields. They no doubt indicated the lineage of the person, one device being the heraldry of their father, and the other of their mother; the fact that the mother's device was noted, and that it was placed on the same level as the other shield, suggests that the mother was important enough to warrant remembrance, and that her lineage must have been of some import to the family of the deceased. Geoffrey of Dutton's mother was Agnes, daughter and heiress of Roger of Combray, and through her, Adam of Dutton, Geoffrey's father, received two moieties of land at Warburton, land in Aston and a property in Chester; the Warburton lands were not Geoffrey's main lands (those were at Sutton), but they became the primary holdings for Geoffrey's son, who may have wished to emphasize his hereditary claim to them when his father's grave slab was commissioned.⁶⁷ Andrew Abram, who has worked extensively on the records of Norton Priory, suggests that this is the body of Geoffrey of Dutton, who died in around 1248 which would fit the mid-century dating for the carved stone grave cover.⁶⁸ The combination of the dating and the heraldry certainly indicates that this could have been him.

In the decades following Geoffrey of Dutton's death, the relic he had brought back from the east proved a boon for the canons of the period. High-status relics of that sort inevitably drew pilgrims who would come and make offerings of money of expensive wax before them.⁶⁹ Where that relic was kept is not clear. One possibility is that a new shrine was built to house the piece of the True Cross. The construction of such shrines was popular in the twelfth century as they elevated the relic (literally by keeping it above the ground) and provided a focus for pilgrim veneration. Many shrines were also constructed so that pilgrims could be in as close proximity as possible to a miracle-working relic.

Where such a shrine was located is, though, much harder to determine. The chapel built at the east end of the church could have contained the shrine (indeed this seems to be the default statement on where the relic was housed);⁷⁰ the problem with housing a shrine in a monastic church is one of access, as almost all of the complex was

⁶⁵ Greene, *Norton Priory* p. 7; Brown and Howard-Davis, *Norton Priory: from Monastery to Museum* pp. 118-19.

⁶⁶ Brown and Howard-Davis, *Norton Priory* pp. 140-1.

⁶⁷ Manchester, John Rylands University Library (hereafter JRUL), Arley Charters, no. i. 68, i. 48, i. 31.

⁶⁸ Abram, 'The Pilgrimage and Crusading Activities of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester', p. 137.

⁶⁹ For example, see Sarah Blick, 'Votives, images, interaction and pilgrimage to the tomb and shrine of St Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral', in *Push Me, Pull You: Art and Devotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* eds. S. Block and L. Gelfand (Leiden, 2011), p. 26

⁷⁰ Greene, *Norton Priory* p. 21.

off limits to those who were not members of the community, and access of any kind was tightly controlled, especially in Norton's case as the priory was non-parochial and perhaps only high-status benefactors and pilgrims were allowed to access the nave. This chapel was not built until the period 1290-1310, so if it was built for the relic it is unclear where it would have been kept before this. It is plausible that a dedicated shrine chapel was only built c. 70 years after Geoffrey gifted the relic to Norton because it took that long for gifts inspired by the True Cross to mount up in order to pay for the building. The shrine could have been located in the east chapel if there was pedestrian access in and out of the church via the complex of chapels to the north of the quire, though it is interesting to note its square end, as an apsidal end was better suited to facilitating the movement of pilgrims around a shrine. However, the will of Joan of Dutton, Geoffrey's daughter-in-law, dated before 1275, requests burial in the chapel of Blessed Mary at Norton, and the traditional place for chapels of Our Lady is at the east end of a church, though Patrick Green identifies that chapel at the north east of the priory church as the chapel of the Blessed Mary.⁷¹ The shrine could have lain behind the altar, but before the entrance proper to the eastern chapel of Our Lady. It is also worth noting that at the Augustinian priory of Kirkham during the same period, the east end may have been extended to accommodate the increased number of canons there, rather than a venerated relic. Either way, the extension is suggestive of the rising kudos and importance of the priory at Norton, caused perhaps by the presence of the relic.

A second possibility, and one that fits far better with the story of Geoffrey's life, and his death, is that the portion of the True Cross was integrated into the *pulpitum* or rood screen which bisected the nave. In some places there were two screens, but in other monastic churches the function of *pulpitum* and rood were combined into one. Screens in churches were intended to separate the nave from the choir, to stop those who were not allowed access from leaving the west end of the church. Such screens were generally surmounted by a figure of Christ on the Cross (the Rood), and they were often already objects of veneration. Brecon Priory in Wales, for example, had a Holy Rood which was popular with pilgrims, as did St John's in Chester, where the relic of the True Cross was enshrined in a silver-gilt crucifix which surmounted the Rood. Its fame was such that from the late thirteenth century St John's became known as the Church of the Holy Cross.⁷²

The reason is that this was the most plausible location is that Geoffrey of Dutton's grave lies in front of the site of the Rood; this meant that Geoffrey would lie 'facing' the relic he procured in life, in death. Such a location, where he would be continually remembered by the community, would be most effective for the salvation of his soul. Burial *ad sanctos*, near to the relics of saints, had a long tradition. Patrons and benefactors were often buried near to works they had paid for or gifted to a religious house; in Cistercian abbeys, such burial sites 'were chosen for lay patrons and benefactors on the strength of their donations to the abbey.'⁷³ The same was true for individuals who contributed to the development of the abbey. A good example for that is at the Cistercian abbey of Meaux in Yorkshire. In 1349, Abbot Hugh of Leven was

⁷¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Dodsworth 62, fol. 43v; Greene, *Norton Priory* pp. 123-5. Dutton family wills of 1448 and 1527 also mention the chapel of the Blessed Virgin at Norton. JRUL, Arley Charters 8.9; CRO, 2/1.1 5b.

⁷² See, Barry J. Lewis, *Welsh Poetry and English Pilgrimage: Gruffudd ap Maredudd and the Rood at Chester* (Aberystwyth, 2005).

⁷³ Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings; Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries* (Turnhout, 2001), p. 218.

‘buried before the crucifix he had caused to be made for the rood screen’ in the abbey. Michael Carter suggests that he wanted to be buried there to benefit from the prayers of the pilgrims who ‘flocked’ to see the miracle-working image. Burial before a rood screen was desirable anyway as it was the ‘prime place of burial of those who did not qualify to be in the chancel’ as was the case in this monastic church; this was even more so if it was a site of especial veneration, and one which contained a relic donated by the deceased benefactor.⁷⁴ Burial before the Great Rood was popular long before Geoffrey of Dutton died – two bishops of Worcester (Samson d.1112, and Theulph d.1123) were buried before it in the cathedral, and in Anjou, Count Geoffrey was buried before the rood at Le Mans Cathedral in 1151 – and continued to be so afterwards. At Canterbury Cathedral, Archbishop William Courtenay (d.1396) was so keen to secure this prime spot that he left instructions in his will for the three deans already buried there to be moved elsewhere so that he could lie in their place ‘before the great cross.’⁷⁵ Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth century, wills expressed people’s desire to be buried before the Great Rood in across England.⁷⁶

So, what does any of this tell us about Geoffrey, the Fifth Crusade, and Norton priory? Did going on crusade change Geoffrey in some way, making him more concerned with spiritual matters and concerned to emphasise his status as a Jerusalemite? Geoffrey took part in the crusade as a member of a larger contingent from Cheshire, which was touched properly for the first time – in terms of participation – during the Fifth Crusade. Geoffrey joined because of the participation of his lord and family members, which were one and the same in the case of John de Lacy, and no doubt because of his own pious desire to fight against the enemies of the church. He was clearly interested in the salvatory nature of the journey, and probably continued his journey on from Damietta to Jerusalem once the fighting was over. He then adopted the symbolic palm leaf on his return, and gifted a relic of the True Cross to Norton Priory, a house supported by his family. It is then likely that this portion of the Cross was incorporated into the screen which bisected the nave, and when Geoffrey died in the mid-thirteenth century, he chose to be buried facing the screen under a slab which remembered his father and his mother, the heiress who brought his family land in Warburton. His crusading exploits were remembered by the Warburton family by the adoption of a Saracen’s head as a crest long after his relic had gone from the priory.

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⁷⁴ Peter Northeast, ‘Suffolk Churches in the Later Middle Ages: the evidence of wills’, in *East Anglia’s History: Studies in Honour of Michael Scarfe* eds. Christopher Harper-Bill, Carol Rawcliffe and Richard George Wilson (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 102; Michael Carter, ‘Cistercian Abbots as Patrons of Art and Architecture’, in *The Prelate in England and Europe 1300-1560* ed. Martin Heale (York, 2014), p. 238.

⁷⁵ Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London, 1997), p. 95.

⁷⁶ Richard Wheeler, *The Medieval Church Screens of the Southern Marches* (Logaston, 2006), p. 23. No reference is given for the wills. Aymer Vallance, *Greater English Church Screens: being great roods, screenwork and rood-lofts in cathedral, monastic and collegiate churches in England and Wales* (London, 1947), p. 3; David Park, ‘Medieval Burials and Monuments’, in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art* eds. Robin Griffith-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 78.