

## THE "HAYMESOCNE" IN COLCHESTER.

BY J. H. ROUND, M.A., LL.D.

A RECENT paper of mine on "The bishop's 'soke' in Colchester" (xiv., 137-141) was followed immediately by one on "Haymesokne in Colchester" by our editorial secretary. Mr. Rickword, who has made a thorough study of the Colchester Cartulary, found in it certain references to the names of the tenants of the bishop's 'soke' and their relatives, as to which I will only say that some of them are, to my own thinking, perhaps too speculative. Here, however, my point is that he calls the bishop's 'soke' "the Haymesokne, as Morant says it was styled" (xiv., 142). Morant does undoubtedly say so, in a note to his transcript of that passage in the Domesday Survey of Colchester which deals with the bishop's 'soke'; but was he right in doing so?

He supports his statement by the evidence of three independent documents. The first is "an inquest" of 10 Edw. II. (1316-7) in his own possession, reciting that Master John de Colchester claims to have a soke called Haymesokne within the walls of the Borough of Colchester, and holds therein his three-weekly court and does not suffer any execution therein by the king's officers.<sup>1</sup> The second is the Will of Thomas Franceys, in 1416, where there is mention "de dominio meo, alias diet. 'Soka in Hedstret vocat' Haymsokne." The third is a Law-Hundred roll of 6 Henry VIII. (1514-1515) in which "it is styled *Soca jac' in Havedstrete* ; so that it appears to have been a distinct Franchise, Liberty, or Jurisdiction." Quite so. Morant seems to have argued thus from the above evidence:—The Haymesokne is proved to have been "in Head Street; "the bishop's soke was bounded, on the east, by Head Street; therefore, as there are not likely to have been two 'sokes' in or bounded by Head street, the 'Haymesokne' must have been the soke about St. Mary's, which was the bishop's in 1206. I must confess to having always

<sup>1</sup> "Unam Sokam vocatam Haymesokne infra muros Burgi Colec' et in eadem tenet Curiam suam de tribus septimanis in tres septimanas, et nullam executionem fieri permittit in eadem per ministros Domini Regis."

felt extremely uneasy as to this identification. That the bishop's soke should assume and should obstinately retain this extraordinary name is a fact unexplained and, to me, highly improbable.

Now, we have only to turn to another page (p. 147) of Morant's *History of Colchester* to find him citing the charter of Richard I. to St. Botolph's Priory as confirming to its canons "all the alms, tithes, and lands which they possessed . . . of the hamesocna [*i.e.*, the Liberty]." <sup>1</sup> A very different explanation of this mysterious word!

The most authoritative text of this charter is that which is found in the official *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (1399-1401), edited by Mr. Robert Fowler, of the Public Record Office, a member of our council. The passage there runs thus (p. 374):—

Decimas et possessiones quas habent de feudo Willelmi filii Roberti de Hastingea et de feudo de Sakevill et de *hamiessocna*.

As this text is taken only from an *Inspeximis* of 1400, we may probably make the trifling emendation of reading the four minims *mi* as *im*, which would give us *haimessocna*; but this is in no way essential. The charter gives us no clue as to what or where this district was, but there is transcribed in the great cartulary of St. John's Abbey, Colchester, an agreement between that house and St. Botolph's Priory (pp. 545-6), concerning the church and tithes of St. Leonard's at the Hythe. Its date is 1227. It is there provided that the Priory is to receive—

Omnes decimas illas provenientes de *Sokaham*, tam de pastura quam de terra arabili, *que Sofia* se extendit ibidem a terra Walteri Ursi per boscum que vocatur Hedho ad molendinum eorum quod vocatur Newemelne.

This cartulary also contains (p. 310) two charters of Isilia, daughter of Robert de Setvans, granting to St. John's Abbey "terram quam Willelmus<sup>2</sup> Pulehare aliquando tenuit de me *de Soka Hann*." As 'Hann' makes nonsense, I propose to read the four minims *nn* as *im*, which gives us '*Soka Haim*.' I do this with the more confidence because the Cartulary's Table of Contents actually reads "de terra Willelmi Pullehare de Soka Haim" (p. lxviii). No locality is mentioned, but it is significant that the name of Edmund 'Pullehare'

<sup>1</sup> Morant spoke indifferently of 'the Liberty' or 'Liberties' of Colchester, by which he meant the four outlying parishes. Thus he devotes Cap. 3 of his Book II. to the "Parishes within the Liberty," but styles them a few lines lower down "within its Liberties" (p. 130). So also, on p. 95, he speaks of "the Liberties'" in his heading to a section, but, a few lines lower down, renders *Banleuca* as 'the Liberty,' as he does on p. 83, where he twice thus translates *Banleuca* in the famous charter of Richard I.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alexander' in the second charter.

<sup>3</sup> The name is indexed as 'Sokaham' in both cases (p. 684).

(a very rare *cognomen*)<sup>1</sup> is found in connexion with the soke in the other document (p. 545).

An entirely fresh light is thrown by the above agreement upon this document on our mysterious 'soke.' It is here spoken of as comprising pasture and arable land in St. Leonard's parish, and, as St. Botolph's Priory was concerned with the tithes of this land, it can hardly be questioned that this was the "Haimessocna" of Richard I.'s charter in 1189—less than forty years earlier than the deed of 1227. With regard to the grant by Isilia de Setvans, there is no direct clue to its date, but her husband, Walter de Belgrant, who confirms it, only occurs, I believe, in one other of the cartulary documents, an agreement between the Abbey and the Priory (p. 539), to which he is a witness, and which is certainly not later than the twelfth century. It should be observed that Isilia speaks of her power to give this land as being of her 'frank marriage,'<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, her marriage-portion. It must, therefore, have been held by her father before her. The Setvans family held the manor of Little Wigborough, and it is important to observe that they held it of the Earls of Gloucester. Morant does not carry them back beyond 1253, but in my edition of the *Rotuli de Dominabus*" (p. 80) there will be found a long and important entry on the land of Robert 'de Setvans' at (Little) Wigborough, which proves that he had there succeeded his father early in 1184, but that he was still a minor in 1185 and his land in the king's hands.<sup>4</sup> Now this entry contains a most important clause concerning land *in Colchester* which was appurtenant to the manor and should be valued with it.<sup>5</sup>

This brings me to my point. We have seen that the "Haymesocne," in these early days, lay, not in Head Street, but far away, in St. Leonard's parish, and that it then had nothing to do with the bishop or with his "soke." Can we then discover in Domesday some similar entry which would fit the description of our "Haymesocne" as containing arable and pasture and might even account for its name? I am going to make the bold suggestion that there is such an entry, an entry which has never yet been properly explained.

<sup>1</sup> 'Pullehare' alone is found as the name of a tenant in an early charter on p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> "Sicut illam quam bene donare potui sicut de meo libero maritaggio." On the prevalence of the *maritagium* at this time see my Preface to the *Rotuli de Dominabus* (cited below), p. xxxvi.

<sup>3</sup> Issued by the Pipe Roll Society. I presented a copy of this work to our Society.

<sup>4</sup> As part of the Earl of Gloucester's fief which was then, similarly, in the hands of the Crown. The earls had succeeded to Hamo's fief.

<sup>5</sup> " Et si terra de Colecestr' foret ei adjuncta, cum pertinenciis," *etc.*

In the *Victoria History of Essex* (i., 576) I have thus translated this passage :—

Hamo Dapifer (has) 1 house and 1 court (*curia*) and 1 hide of land, and 15 burgesses; and this was held by his predecessor Thurbert in King Edward's time; and all this, except his hall, used to render customary due in King Edward's time; and the burgesses still render it on their polls (*de suis capitibus*), but from their land and from the hide which Hamo holds the due is not rendered. In (that) hide (was) then 1 plough; now none; then and now 6 acres of meadow; and all this was worth 4 pounds in King Edward's time, and the same when he received (it); and now 40 shillings.

In his Colchester address to the Archaeological Institute (1876) Mr. Freeman described this as "an entry of special interest" and observed that, like his predecessor Thurbearn, "Hamo, besides a house, had a 'curia,' a rare word whose use I do not fully understand; and this 'curia' seems, I know not on what ground, to be identified with an existing house which keeps portions of Romanesque date." I have no idea to what house the Professor here alluded, but my own suggestion would be very different, namely, that this "curia" was the three-weekly court which John of Colchester, we have seen, claimed to hold, in 1310, within his "Haymesocne."

May we not, in short, derive the name of this "Haymesocne" from 'Hamo' or 'Haimo' *dapifer*? Although the form 'Hamo' may be the more familiar, 'Haimo' seems to have been the more usual form; for in the index to Mr. Davis' learned *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum* (vol. i.), in which the name of the *dapifer* occurs in five-and-thirty documents, he selects 'Haimo' for his index. Mr. Morris also, in a recent paper on "The Norman Sheriff" in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.* (April, 1918), gives the name ten times, and always as 'Haimo.'<sup>1</sup> 'Haymo,' of course, was only another form of 'Haimo.' In another place<sup>2</sup> I have suggested that, by another emendation—reading 'Henno' as 'Heimo'—we could identify 'Henno dentatus,' the hero of Walter Map's tale of the man who married a demon wife, as identical with the 'Haimo dentatus' of William of Malmesbury, the progenitor of 'Haimo Dapifer.' The above Domesday entry proves that his holding included arable and meadow, which latter must have been on the river, as it would have been in St. Leonard's parish. Let us return to the evidence proving a connection between the 'Soka Haim' and the Setvans family of Little Wigborough well before the end of the twelfth

<sup>1</sup> *English Towns and Districts*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> See also Dr. Armitage Robinson's *Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 34, 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Peerage and Pedigree*, ii., 266-8.

century. Domesday shows that Little Wigborough was held of 'Hamo Dapifer,' and within a century (*i.e.*, in 1185) a return of the manor states "si terra de Colecestr' foret ei adjuncta, cum pertinenciis, et molendinum esset reparatum," it would be worth, not 16*l.*, but 20*l.* a year." There was not and could not be a mill at Little Wigborough, but there could have been one on the meadow land by the Colne. It may only, of course, have been a coincidence that this difference of 4*l.* was precisely the amount at which Domesday valued the Colchester holding of *Hamo Dapifer*, both in King Edward's time and when he received it; but that the "soca Haim" did derive its name from him I can feel no doubt.

We must not, of course, forget that the later evidence, which I cited from Morant at the outset, does distinctly associate the "Haymesocne" with Head Street, but, just as numerous "burgesses," in Domesday, have land in the fields about the town, Hamo (or Haimo) may well have had his capital messuage in what may then have been the chief street of the town, though his land must have lain outside the walls. It is a noteworthy feature of his holding that it comprised, as Domesday shows, not only his own "hide" and meadow land, but also the lands of his burgesses, which, in conjunction with the use of the notable term *aula* and with the jurisdiction over his tenants which a 'soke' would have implied, must have given to the whole a resemblance to at least an inchoate manor.

Such 'sokes' were found in our oldest towns and are an ancient feature. At Winchester (the original capital) Queen Emma had granted to St. Swithun's "the remarkable manor and liberty of 'Godbeate,' a house, church and precinct in the High Street, in the very centre of the city," which retained its privileges from 952 to 1541. The prior and convent enjoyed there a court "from three wyke to three wyke," as in the Colchester 'Haymesocne.' In London we read of the earl of Gloucester's *soca* at an early date and of a *soca* belonging to the Honour of Huntingdon, given by earl Simon to Roger Fitz Reinfrid, the gift being confirmed by Henry II. in 1175. In 1189 Andrew Bucherel had his *socha* (Bucklersbury) and the prior of Holy Trinity was alderman of *Portsoken* Ward.