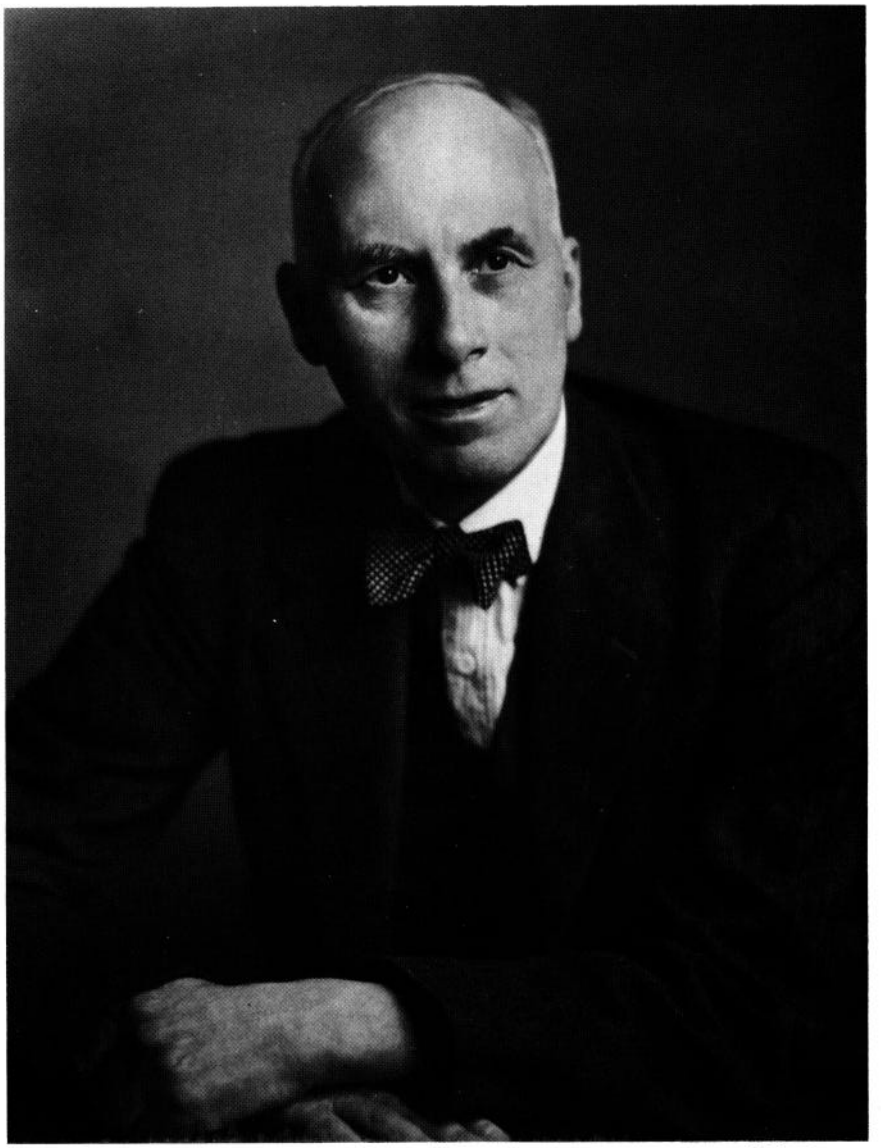
PLATE XIV



Walter Stoneman

D. C. DOUGLAS

DAVID CHARLES DOUGLAS

1898–1982

DAVID CHARLES DOUGLAS was born at Norwood, Middlesex, on 5 January 1898, the only son of Dr John Douglas, a medical practitioner, and his wife Margaret, née Peake. He was proud of the fact that there were literary connections on both sides of the family. His paternal grandfather, David Douglas of 22 Drummond Place, Edinburgh, was a publisher and had also edited Sir Walter Scott's *Journals* (1890) and *Familiar Letters* (1894). His mother was descended from Richard Brinsley Peake (1792–1847) the dramatist and godson of Sheridan.

Douglas was educated at Sedbergh, and though in retrospect the choice of school might seem strange for a child of his disposition—for he certainly did not recall his schooldays with pleasure—he was fortunate in his headmaster, W. N. Weech, and his history master, Neville Gorton, then fresh from Balliol but subsequently to be headmaster of Blundell's School and Bishop of Coventry (1942–55). It was Gorton who developed his historical bent so that in 1916 he won an open scholarship to Keble College, Oxford, though he could not take it up until the end of the war. Declared unfit for military service he served with a YMCA canteen in northern France (1917–18), but subsequently, with a better medical record, was able to join the Inns of Court OTC in England.

He went up to Keble in Hilary Term 1919, and in 1921 was duly awarded a First Class in Modern History. His tutor at Keble was J. E. A. Jolliffe, a remarkable and inspiring man whose first published work was to be concerned with hidation and customary payments which he used as clues to the 'era of the folk', imparting a sense of mysteriousness to the discovery of the early Anglo-Saxons. But Jolliffe's teaching and interests were not confined to the Anglo-Saxons. He was later to write much about the Angevin Kings, and at this date he taught a Special Subject on 'The Age of Dante'. Douglas took it and also went on holidays with Jolliffe to Italy and Austria, where he was immediately attracted by the broader vision of Europe and the Roman tradition of Italian culture. Jolliffe, who remained a close personal friend until his marriage, thus introduced Douglas to both Germanist and

Romanist history, and in his subsequent career, Douglas was to reveal the influence of both.

From 1921 to 1923 Douglas remained in Oxford as a research student, being awarded in 1922 the university research scholarship in Medieval History and Thought. The title of the award points to an aspect of Douglas's historical work which was neither Germanist nor Romanist but consistent throughout his career. He considered that all research should both stimulate the intellect and stir the imagination. He was rightly impatient of the lecturer who either could not see the significance of his own work or simply repeated the propositions of his predecessors. His first known publication was an article on 'The Oxford Lecture System' published in *The Oxford Magazine* (16 November 1922) while he was still a research student. It was a vigorous attack on the lectures given in the university, but also contained a firm positive statement:

> The only function in fact left to the lecture would seem to lie in the attempt to stimulate thought, to encourage reference to books and not to reproduce them. But, the lecturer, who is capable of doing this is of necessity rare, and when he does appear, he is dubbed as 'not a serious lecturer' or as a 'mere rhetorician'. And indeed once the consideration of 'evidence' has been banned from the lecture room, the path to easy generalities of more than doubtful value is all too easily trod. But the horror of 'rhetoric', though justified has made the Oxford lecture room a dreary place.

This was followed (also in *The Oxford Magazine*) by a review of Hearnshaw's *Social and Political Ideas of some Great Medieval Thinkers*, and his contemporaries must have thought that the line of his future development was clear.

None the less the subject he chose for research was the social structure of medieval East Anglia, as a student of Sir Paul Vinogradoff. Vinogradoff, who had previously been a professor in Moscow University, had held the Corpus Christi chair of Jurisprudence at Oxford since 1903; he was a pupil of Mommsen, combined the study of law with that of history, and had become the acknowledged authority on the history of the manor and of English society in the eleventh century. He it was who introduced postgraduate seminars into Oxford, his own producing a notable series of volumes, *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History* (1909–27), of which the ninth and last was to be by Douglas. Vinogradoff expected and obtained a high standard of industry from his pupils—Douglas remembered him as 'a marvellous scholar, but

tough and exacting'—and did more than anyone else to establish the Oxford School of Medieval History as it was to be for the greater part of the twentieth century. When Douglas applied to work under him, he was already interested in Scandinavian influences on English medieval society, and said so. According to E. F. Jacob, the rest of the interview ran as follows: 'Do you know Old Norse, Mr. Douglas?' 'No.' 'You will by October. Good morning.'[1]

There can be little doubt that it was Vinogradoff who was the dominating influence at this stage of his life. But for him, Douglas's historical interests might well have taken a different shape. As it was, he accepted the mould of the master and produced a number of notable works in his tradition—*The Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia* (1927), *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* (1932), articles on Domesday Book and its 'satellites' (1928–36), and finally, *The Domesday Monachorum of Christchurch Canterbury* (1944). Since they mark one distinctive strand in Douglas's work they are most conveniently considered together, even at the cost of breaking the strict chronological sequence of his life.

The Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia was published in Vinogradoff's series, Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History, and had been approved by him, even though it appeared after his death. The purpose of the book was to examine the condition of the peasantry in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries and to account for those features of their landholding which were peculiar to East Anglia. To obtain the necessary material Douglas had to work his way through many unpublished cartularies, particularly those of Bury St Edmunds, and to organize an enormous amount of disparate material. In his method and approach he followed in the footsteps of F. M. Stenton who had also been a scholar of Keble, some nineteen years before him, and who had also worked under Vinogradoff. Stenton's *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw* (1910), which had also been published in Vinogradoff's series, had investigated the Scandinavian origin of many agrarian institutions north of the Trent. Douglas determined to do the same for East Anglia and explored the soke, the hundred, the leet, the carucate, the bovate, the manslot, and the contractual freedom of the peasants who were sokemen or freemen. His investigations led him to the

[1] I have this story from David Walker. Douglas recalled that at this stage he was also taught by Reginald Lane Poole and E. A. Lowe, but their influence on him was less marked.

conclusion that the Danes had 're-arranged the tenemental organisation of the conquered people', introducing a 'Scandinavian system of land-sharing'. His findings which, though different, chimed in nicely with Jolliffe's 'Northumbrian Institutions' which had been published in the previous year's *EHR* were very warmly received. Though his view of Scandinavian influence in East Anglia has subsequently been challenged (amongst others by the present writer), it is probably fair to say that it is still held to a greater or lesser extent by many historians.[1]

In particular he was strongly supported by Stenton who admired his work greatly and had become a personal friend. At this stage the work of the two men was following a single course. Stenton had followed up his book on the Northern Danelaw with a volume of *Documents Illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw* as vol. v of Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, another series established and directed by Vinogradoff, this time in the name of the British Academy. Before his death Vinogradoff had arranged that Douglas should produce a comparable volume for East Anglia, and consequently the eighth volume of the series, now under the direction of Stenton, was Douglas's *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* (1932).

The records of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds are perhaps more ample than those of any other English abbey. Transcribed by monastic officials into some thirty or forty cartularies which, like the surviving originals, were subsequently dispersed in many different libraries and record offices, they form a most intractable archive. To attempt a complete edition would be the work of a lifetime. Douglas did not attempt that. Like Stenton in the Northern Danelaw, he made a selection, though (since he was dealing with one abbey only) he was able to include all, or almost all, the royal charters and almost all the charters of the abbots between 1066 and 1180.[2] But undoubtedly the most important document in the volume was 'The Feudal Book of Abbot Baldwin' (pp. 3–44) which had never been printed before and had been noticed only by John Gage in his *History and Antiquities of Suffolk:*

[1] R. H. C. Davis, 'East Anglia and the Danelaw', *TRHS*, 5th ser. (1955), pp. 23–39.

[2] The number of charters which he missed was small. They are printed by Rodney Thomson in 'Twelfth-century Documents from Bury St. Edmunds', in *EHR* 92 (1977), 806–19. See also *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, iii, no. 772, and Rodney M. Thomson, *The Archives of Bury St. Edmunds* (Suffolk Record Society, xxi, 1980).

Thingoe Hundred (London, 1838). As Douglas understood it, it consisted of three parts, of which the first listed the abbey's lands in Norfolk and Suffolk, hundred by hundred, the second the lands of the abbey's feudal tenants, and the third the holdings of the peasants on the abbey's lands in the Suffolk hundreds of Thedwestre, Blackbourne, and Cosford (though this last was incomplete). In his Introduction Douglas assumed that all three parts belonged to one work which he then dated to the period between the deaths of King William I (1087) and Abbot Baldwin (1098).[1] He argued that it represented a 'survey independent of the completed Domesday', embodying 'the results of an inquiry completed after the Domesday Inquest but *before* the royal clerics had ended compiling what we now know as the Little Domesday Book' (p. lxxvii). As a result of this view he believed that the colophon of Little Domesday which stated that that *Inquisitio* was completed in 1086 could be referring only to the 'original returns' and not to the completed Domesday Book which he dated nearer to 1100.

The date of Domesday Book was inevitably connected with the processes to which it had been made. In this respect the most promising clues were the documents which Douglas called 'Domesday satellites' and which seemed to be copies or adaptations of the Domesday Survey at some point, or points, in its development. Thus the *Inquisitio Eliensis* and the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* had long been held (as by J. H. Round) to have been derived from the 'original returns'. In claiming the same status for the 'Feudal Book of Abbot Baldwin', Douglas had also investigated and published other early surveys from Abingdon and Bury St Edmunds, and had interested himself in the pre-Domesday litigation at Pennenden Heath. This latter, since it was primarily concerned with the lands of Canterbury Cathedral, led him to undertake an edition of the *Domesday Monachorum of Christ Church Canterbury* (1944). It was published by the Royal Historical Society in a lavish edition which included a complete facsimile of the manuscript, made possible by the fact that the Society had purchased the paper and made the necessary printing arrangements before the outbreak of war.

For Douglas this book proved both a beginning and an end.

[1] Other scholars have been sceptical on this point. It is now thought that all three parts are subsequent to the death of Abbot Baldwin (1098), and that the 'third part' may be due to a separate survey in, or shortly before, 1119. See Reginald Lennard, *Rural England, 1086–1135* (Oxford, 1959), p. 359, and V. H. Galbraith in *EHR* 57 (1942), 168, and in *Domesday Book: Its Place in Administrative History* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 76–8.

One part of the Introduction, concerning the family origins of the Norman knights, marked the emergence of what was to be one of the main preoccupations of his later research—a matter of some importance which will be discussed below in a different context. But at the time of publication the section of the Introduction which commanded, and almost monopolized, the attention of historians was entitled 'The Genesis of Domesday'. This was because two years before V. H. Galbraith had published his important article on 'The Making of Domesday'[1] which had disputed the accepted view of the 'original returns', rejected the dates which Douglas had proposed for the 'satellites', and insisted that Domesday Book itself had been completed in 1086. So far as can be seen, Douglas's Introduction must already have been in draft form when this article appeared, but he hastily rewrote it in order to reply to Galbraith, and to maintain his view that the *Domesday Monachorum* should be dated 1087, later than the 'original returns' on which he believed it to be based, but earlier than Domesday Book itself. This view was contested immediately, and was finally rebutted conclusively by Reginald Lennard in a long and magisterial review which was published in the *EHR* in May 1946.[2] Lennard was, like Douglas, a former member of Vinogradoff's seminar and a strict upholder of its scholarly standards, and for this reason it would seem inevitable that Douglas should have been shaken, though he took pains not to show it or to lose control of his habitual courtesy. His pupils knew that he had not renounced his earlier views, and in 1977 he reprinted the short article on 'The Domesday Survey' which he had written for *History* in 1936 without any alteration, addition, or comment. The lack of comment was significant. He had withdrawn from the Domesday controversy in print. Even in his *William the Conqueror* such statements as he could not avoid were neutral almost to the point of evasion.[3] And he did no more work on manuscripts.

In tracing the development of the work which stemmed from research done for Sir Paul Vinogradoff we have followed one aspect of Douglas's career at the expense of others which were equally, if not more, important. Mention has already been made of the fact that at Oxford his university research scholarship was in 'Medieval History and Thought' and that his historical interests were not confined to his field of research. He had broader interests

[1] *EHR* 57 (1942), 161–77.
[2] *EHR* 61 (1946), 253–60.
[3] *William the Conqueror* (1964), pp. 347–54, esp. 348 n. 1 and 350–1.

and these had full opportunity to develop when he moved away from Vinogradoff's seminar to a lectureship at Glasgow University which he held from late 1923 till April 1934. To an outsider it seems that it was there the he began to find himself, a view which is strengthened by the fact that it was in the Glasgow period also that he became engaged (11 November 1931) and married (7 June 1932) to his wife Evelyn, only daughter of Dr Basil M. Wilson, Principal Medical Officer of Jamaica.

In 1923 the Glasgow History Department consisted of Professor D. J. Medley, an old Keble man, and two lecturers, both of whom were to become lifelong friends of Douglas's—Andrew Browning who in 1931 succeeded to Medley's chair, and W. E. Brown who subsequently became a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. G. O. Sayles joined the Department in 1923 but lectured (until Douglas's departure) on more modern periods, and in 1927 Edouard Perroy joined the French Department. It was stimulating company for Douglas. His main duty was to lecture on 'European History, 476–1272', but from 1926 he also offered a course on the 'Norman Conquest'. He subsequently published the substance of both courses, the one in vol. iii of E. Eyre's *European Civilization, its Origin and Development*, and the other as a small book, *The Age of the Normans*, in a series edited by John Buchan for the upper forms of schools. In both works Douglas adopted a Romanist position, tracing all the more important developments back to the Roman as opposed to the Germanic tradition, and laying far more weight on the Latin civilization introduced into England through Normandy than on that of the Anglo-Saxons. In view of his previous work on Scandinavian influences in East Anglia, this Romanism may seem surprising. It marks the beginning of a strong divergence from the views of Stenton whose work had previously been so closely allied to his own, but who was now becoming increasingly interested in the Anglo-Saxons.

Douglas was also developing as a writer and lecturer, discovering himself as a master of the 'broad sweep'. He was able to put into practice his ideal of formulating lectures so as 'to stimulate thought, to encourage reference to books and not to reproduce them'. He had a magnificent voice and a sense of style which was almost dramatic; it is said that when he was lecturing in the university the whole quadrangle would resound with the word *BARBARIANS*. He was soon in demand as a lecturer outside the University also, especially to The Historical Association. Medley pressed him to do even more of this extramural work, but Douglas

insisted that what he really wanted to do was to write books. In this and other respects he received much encouragement from W. Macneile Dixon, the Regius Professor of English, who sympathized with his general outlook and gave him an introduction to Bruce Richmond, editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Bruce Richmond had a flair for discovering new talent and immediately recognized Douglas's potential. Not only did he give him books to review (the first was by George Greenaway), but he also encouraged him to write front-page or 'turn-over' articles on such subjects as John Richard Green and Elizabeth Elstob 'the Saxon nymph', thus bringing to light Douglas's passionate interest in historiography. It was a marvellous discovery, but since the articles concerned subjects which were 'outside his period' and since they appeared in a journal which was both weekly and literary, there was a real danger that Douglas's stricter colleagues would regard them as 'journalism'. For this reason it was convenient that articles in the *TLS* were unsigned and that the identity of their writers was kept strictly secret, Richmond insisting on 'the discipline of anonymity'. Douglas flourished under this discipline. He adapted readily to *The Times*'s style and began to express his own opinions with a vigour which might not have flourished in other circumstances. In one of his earliest reviews (30 March 1933) he wrote:

> There must be many who feel that something is wrong with historical scholarship, if only for the reason that now the most influential works of history are not those written or praised by professional historians. There is also substance in the charge that the collection of facts is but rarely supplemented by their co-ordination into unifying theories, and that the writer who embarks on generalisation however ably is dubbed a 'brilliant amateur', unless he has made a large contribution to an already overgrown mass of detail.

This was not the language of Vinogradoff's seminar. It was the real Douglas.

In 1933 he began, with the encouragement of Stenton, to apply for chairs. His first attempts, at Westfield College and at Birmingham, were unsuccessful,[1] but in December 1933 he was appointed Professor of History at the University College of the South-West, Exeter, shortly before his thirty-sixth birthday. He was young for such promotion, but with three books to his

[1] The successful candidate at Birmingham was (Sir) Keith Hancock. Also short listed with Douglas was Norman Sykes, then professor at Exeter, but shortly to move to Westfield College, London.

credit, a fourth in the press, and several articles on the Domesday 'satellites', he was clearly a rising star in the academic firmament. He moved to Exeter in April 1934—his daughter Ann being born on 2 May in Norwood—and was happy immediately. He was full of energy and seems to have revelled in his new responsibilities. He and his wife liked the place and the people, and were themselves enormously popular. The only sadness came with the sudden death of his father who contracted septicaemia while conducting a post-mortem.

The impact which Douglas made on Exeter is described by George Greenaway, who was on his staff:

> During the five years of his tenure of the Exeter Chair, the Department of History was greatly expanded and underwent considerable change in the organization of the teaching work . . . David himself had very clear ideas about the need for more individual tuition and supervision of students along the lines of Oxford and Cambridge. It is not quite true to say that he 'introduced the tutorial system', for this had already been started under his predecessor, Norman Sykes. What David did was to regularise it and develop it until it became fully fledged, each student writing an essay per week for one of his teachers and receiving an *individual tutorial* (one hour's duration) in accordance with a departmental tutorial rota. By this means it was possible, if desired, to maintain a marked degree of continuity in reading and essay content. The department was average size for the 1930s, reaching a peak of 27 honours students in 1938–9. The staff consisted of the professor and two lecturers (Greenaway and W. D. Handcock), with an additional part-time lecturer (F. D. Price) who took his share in the tutorial work. David himself was highly skilled and most professional in his management of the tutorials, but it was perhaps in the formal lectures that he excelled. For some years he delivered the outline courses of lectures on both Medieval English and European History which were extremely popular with the students. His method of delivery in lectures was highly individual and extremely animated, *panache* is perhaps the word that springs to mind in describing it, and not without colour and humour. He was tireless in instilling into his students, and indeed his colleagues also, the paramount necessity of combining exact scholarship with enthusiasm and imagination. It is further significant that it was under his governance in these pre-war years that we first began to get students embarking on historical research and reading for higher degrees. In this, as in other fields of development, he was a pioneer.

David certainly took a full share in extramural activities. He loved attending college dinners, and he and his wife, Evelyn, entertained most hospitably both members of the university and civic dignitaries. Among sports and pastimes golf ranked pre-eminent, though he occasionally played Lawn Tennis, and was even known for a more than passing

interest in Exeter City Football Club . . . Principal John Murray, who was a great personal friend, frequently despatched him to deputise for him at School Speechdays etc.—as indeed he did with many other members of his staff—the difference being that, while most of us hated it, David positively enjoyed it.

It was also at Exeter that Douglas wrote his most original book. This was *English Scholars*, a study of those who researched into medieval history and literature in the period 1660–1730. Douglas was the first modern historian to pick out the importance of the period which saw the publication of works by William Dugdale, William Somner, Thomas Gale, Abraham Wheloc, John Smith, George Hickes, Humphrey Wanley, Henry Wharton, Thomas Hearne, Thomas Rymer, and Thomas Madox, names which used to baffle young medievalists who came across them without explanation in footnotes. Douglas was not content to leave them as names. He had come to know them at Glasgow, where the university library had a superb collection of historical and antiquarian works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At Exeter where (at that time) the library was not good and he had to rely very largely on The London Library, he began collecting the older works himself. In this respect, as in many others, he owed much to Stenton who, delighted to discover in him a fellow bibliophile, encouraged him in his purchases and introduced him to his own bookbinder. As a result Douglas recognized all these books as old friends, and was far more intimate with them than were most of his contemporaries, because he knew the very feel of them. '*Anglia Sacra* is today a book more praised than handled, and more often quoted than read',[1] he wrote; and the purpose of *English Scholars* was to show his fellow historians how much they were missing. It is still an important function of his book to instruct those embarking on historical research in the purpose, usefulness, and delights of the works of their remote predecessors, but unlike the ordinary researcher's manual, it has a breadth of vision which enables it still to 'open intellectual windows', convey the excitement of research, and suggest what history is about. Emphatically a book to fire the imagination, it set a new fashion in historiography which has continued to this day. It is not surprising that it was the book which Douglas regarded as his favourite, stating that it reflected, 'perhaps more intimately than any other, my own scholarly aspirations and emotions'.[2]

English Scholars was pubished six weeks after the outbreak of war

[1] *English Scholars* (1939), p. 184.

[2] *Time and the Hour* (1977), p. 10.

in 1939, but in spite of this inauspicious circumstance it attracted a lot of attention, all of it favourable. It received very flattering notices in the *English* and *American Historical Reviews*, as also in the last number of the *Revue historique* to be published before the fall of France. In February 1940 it was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for the 'best biography or literary work of that nature published in 1939'. It was an immense triumph provided that it did not cause the stricter type of academic to dub him a 'brilliant amateur'. Mrs Douglas recalls Galbraith saying to her, 'Don't let him go on with that type of writing. Get him back to the Normans.'

The return to the Normans was facilitated by Douglas's removal to Leeds where he had been appointed Professor of Medieval History in 1939 in succession to Hamilton Thompson. There he spent the six years of the war in a physical and intellectual climate very different from that of Exeter. Leeds was a far bigger university and Douglas, instead of being the only professor of history, found himself serving under a distinguished modernist, A. S. Turberville. What was more, the university wielded resources which for that date were considerable. Soon after he had been appointed he received a catalogue from the Dutch bookseller Mijhoff which listed 270 volumes of printed cartularies, almost entirely French, and he was able to persuade the university library to buy the lot; they arrived in Leeds, in spite of the war, at the end of January 1940, where they remain a memorial to Douglas's tenure of the chair. As a collection they have no rivals in England, and only one or two in France. They also mark a new development in Douglas's interests, emphasizing his move away from the Anglo-Saxon to the Norman and Latin, and giving him the opportunity to embark on the Norman genealogical studies which were to be the hallmark of his later works.

In its inception Douglas owed this new interest to his friendship with Lewis C. Loyd whom he had first met at the Royal Historical Society in 1937. Subsequently Douglas was to write that it was he who 'first directed my attention constructively to Anglo-Norman history, and who, with characteristic generosity allowed me to profit without stint from his instruction, and from his own researches'.[1] Another friend of Loyd's, (Sir) Charles Clay, was a frequent visitor to the Douglas's house at Leeds and encouraged him in the same way. Both Clay and Loyd were, amongst other things, genealogists and specialized on the Anglo-Norman nobility, but whereas Clay's work derived from the fact that he was editing

[1] *William the Conqueror* (1964), p. xii.

Early Yorkshire Charters, Loyd was concentrating on the origins of the Anglo-Norman families in Normandy. Between them they connected Leeds and Normandy with a genealogical chain, thus firing Douglas's historical imagination and steering his researches in a new direction. It was true that the war had made the French archives inaccessible, but Douglas had the printed cartularies at Leeds and the co-operation of Lewis Loyd, whose annotated copy of Round's *Calendar of Documents in France* served as a guide to the texts printed in them.[1] What was more, Douglas and Loyd corresponded regularly; the letters from Loyd are still preserved and testify both to his learning and to his determination to pass it on.

The transition from England to Normandy is marked by Douglas's article on 'Rollo of Normandy' (1942). It establishes the link with his Anglo-Scandinavian studies since it examines the origins of Rollo, first 'duke' of Normandy, identifies him with Rolf the *ganger* and thus shows that he was of Norwegian rather than Danish ancestry. This was followed by 'The Companions of the Conqueror' (1943), an article which established the number of named individuals known to have been present in Williams' force at Hastings as twenty-seven with another five probable.[2] In 1944 the Introduction to *Domesday Monachorum* contained important discussions of the continental connections of Odo of Bayeux and the family origins of Canterbury's Norman knights, while a separate article investigated 'the ancestors of William fitz Osborn'. Finally, the last work written at Leeds, and one of Douglas's most important contributions to historical knowledge, was 'The Earliest Norman Counts' (1946). Pointing out that the earliest dukes of Normandy had styled themselves 'counts', he established that in Normandy there were no counts other than the duke before the first quarter of the eleventh century, and that then they were all, or almost all, connected with the ducal family. He also argued that it was in exactly the same period that the other great families of Normandy arose to form a 'new nobility', since they were not descended from the nobility of earlier periods. This notion has been accepted by most English and French historians, though it is now (1982) coming under attack.[3]

[1] Loyd sent Douglas his copy of Round's *Calendar* on 15 February 1941, and Douglas transcribed Loyd's cross-references into his own interleaved copy which, together with Loyd's letters, remains in the possession of Mrs Douglas.

[2] For the subsequent position on this problem see J. F. A. Mason in *EHR* 71 (1956), 61–9, and esp. 62 n. 1.

[3] David Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), p. 134.

Douglas's years at Leeds coincided with the war exactly. Mrs Douglas recalls that they rented an old house next to a farm at Far Headingly on the fringe of the city, 'original but not easy to run during the war', and that Douglas himself was much involved, first with the Home Guard and then with the university's own Training Corps 'which was much more strenuous and efficient'. He also did a lot of lecturing round Yorkshire for the local war effort. In 1941 and 1942 he gave several series of lectures called 'War Commentaries' at Skipton and York on behalf of the Ministry of Information, and addressed public meetings on 'The Joint Inheritance of England and France'. He also involved himself in politics, speaking vigorously against socialism ('The Fallacy of a Golden Age after the War'), and addressed conservatives on 'The present challenge to English freedom' including (ahead of his time) an attack on the BBC's monopoly of broadcasting. At one point he considered, but rejected, the idea of making a career in politics, but instead concentrated on the Society for Individual Freedom which had been founded by Sir Ernest Benn in 1942, and in which Principal Murray of Exeter also was active. Subsequently (1949–51) Douglas was to be chairman of its council, but he refused the presidency and returned to a purely academic life.

By then he had left Leeds. In 1945 he had been offered the chair of history at Bristol, that university's emissary being a member of its council, W. N. Weech, who had formerly been his headmaster at Sedbergh. In many ways Douglas was not inclined to accept the offer. He had enjoyed his work at Leeds, the prestige of the history department there was far greater than that of Bristol, and he did not wish to let down either his predecessor, Hamilton Thompson, or the university, especially as his senior colleague, A. S. Turberville, had just died. On the other hand, his daughter's health was causing concern, and the medical advice was that he should move south. He therefore accepted Bristol's offer, though not without regret. Mrs Douglas recalls that after the move to Bristol he felt tired and depressed, and fell quite ill with thrombosis in one leg, which forced him to lie up for most of the day. This went on for months, and may well have been exacerbated by disappointment at the reception given to *Domesday Monachorum*. At any rate, 'he rather shut himself off and would not go to the Royal Historical Society or other meetings in London'.

It was at this time also that he abandoned his intention of making a complete critical edition of the charters of the early Norman dukes. He had announced the project in a footnote to

'The Early Norman Counts',[1] but when communications with academics in France were fully reopened, he found that a younger scholar, Marie Fauroux, had already embarked on a similar undertaking. He therefore dropped his own plans and awaited eagerly her publication of the evidence which would, in his view, correct the Germanist or Anglo-Saxon bias of his contemporaries in England. When he reviewed Fauroux's *Recueuil*, he was quick to point out that it included 130 charters of Duke William for the period 1035–66:

> It is surely worth recalling that this number approximates for instance to that of the surviving genuine charters and writs issued by Edward the Confessor during the whole of his reign for the whole of England. If less is known in this country of preconquest Normandy than of preconquest England, the cause assuredly does not lie in lack of testimony.[2]

In August 1947 Douglas suffered a further blow in the death of his friend, Lewis Loyd, then in his seventy-second year. Loyd, who was unmarried, had come to regard Douglas almost as a son, and he left him his books, complete with the shelves to house them. This was to prove an important and happy event in Douglas's career, for while his own library was still primarily concerned with the history of England, Loyd's was extremely rich in the printed cartularies and local histories of Normandy. As a result Douglas's determination to concentrate on Norman history was confirmed. In his study at 4 Henleaze Gardens he had almost all the research materials he required, and it was there that he did his work. He catalogued his library with his own hand and thoroughly enjoyed working in it—it has not always been realized how very hard he worked. In 1949 public recognition of his work came with his election to the Fellowship of the British Academy, and when, in 1951, he received an invitation to succeed Principal John Murray at Exeter he declined it, preferring to devote his time to writing.

Douglas was the first really distinguished historian that Bristol had had in its university, and his first task was to build up the history department. His predecessor, R. B. Mowat, had died four years before, leaving C. M. MacInnes (who in 1943 had been given a personal chair in Imperial History), F. C. Jones, who specialized in Japanese and American history, and two British

[1] *EHR* 48 (1946), 139 n. 2. Douglas may have been discouraged by Lennard's review of *Domesday Monachorum* which was published in the same number of the *EHR*.

[2] *EHR* 78 (1963), 732. P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (London, 1968), lists 165 charters and writs of Edward the Confessor (1042–66).

historians, Elizabeth Butcher and Margaret Sharp. By 1963 the number of staff had grown to seventeen, and Douglas was eventually able to boast that eight of those whom he had appointed had subsequently become professors. The impression which he himself made on his students is described by David Walker, who was one of the first (1946–9):

> He used different styles as a teacher. With a large audience he lectured with tremendous panache and an eye for dramatic effect. What I liked about him was that a lecture for a class of first-year students was as carefully prepared as, say, his Raleigh Lecture. He took great pains to produce a lecture which was a good piece of writing. He was rather proud of it, and that made him vulnerable. When he lectured at the celebrations of the Norman Conquest in 1966, he was teased by Galbraith who made some very sharp comments about the eighteenth-century oratory which Douglas could be relied upon to produce, and Douglas found the teasing very difficult, even at that age. With smaller groups he still used a rather grand manner, but he had the knack of reading the sources as if he were making new discoveries from them. . . . He taught me to value spontaneity in my own seminar work, just as Powicke taught me to stand and look back from a fixed point in time, and so far as possible avoid hindsight. Douglas did not have that particular skill. He was always conscious of the grand scale of his story and of the future consequences of what might be under discussion.
>
> Behind the facade of the extrovert he was a very private man. I think he was rarely at ease with students and he used an extravagant courtesy as a cover for shyness. For a seminar or tutorial, a student was ushered in with some ceremony and given a good chair; and there were formal enquiries about health and work before the session could begin. To be allowed to stand and talk with him was a rare sign that he had relaxed . . .
>
> He had a delight in hard work. Years after I had left Bristol, he told me that his recipe for contentment was to have 'a piece of work in hand and three or four books on my review table'.

The first 'piece of work' to occupy him at Bristol was the planning of *English Historical Documents*, of which he had accepted the General Editorship a year or so earlier. The aim of the series was 'to display the evidence and to indicate the main texts on which must be based our knowledge of English development'. Where the original texts were not in English they were to be translated, and the hope was that the whole collection (twelve volumes in thirteen) would be sufficiently comprehensive to enable not only history students but also the educated public to form their own opinions. The original idea was the brain-child of Douglas Jerrold, Managing Director of Eyre and Spottiswoode.

He took it first to (Sir) Frank Stenton who, though unwilling to accept the General Editorship himself, suggested a joint approach to Douglas and Turberville, both of whom were then at Leeds. By the time it came to the point, however, Turberville was a dying man and Douglas, after much thought, agreed to shoulder the whole burden himself. The task of finding editors for the individual volumes was not easy and he was very much relieved when Andrew Browning, his former colleague at Glasgow, undertook to do vol. viii (1660–1714) and 'gave the whole project, which was then very much in the balance, the support of a senior colleague'.[1]

Determined to set a firm pattern for the series, he decided to edit vol. ii (1042–1189) himself and to finish it speedily so that it could form a model for all the others. When he had completed the selection of texts and the form of their presentation he realized that if he was to finish within eight years he would need assistance. In September 1945 he therefore invited George W. Greenaway, his former colleague at Exeter, to act as his co-editor. For practical purposes they divided the work between them on a chronological basis, Douglas being responsible for the period before 1154 and Greenaway for the period after. Exceptions were the narrative sources where the translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was by Susie Tucker and Greenaway handled the Latin sources from 1135, and the whole section (Part IV) entitled 'Land and People' which was by Douglas alone. It was Douglas also who wrote the General Introduction to the volume.

By 1960 seven volumes of the series had been published and by 1977 another four, the two volumes which still remain to be published being those covering the period 1558–1660. The series as a whole is now to be found, usually in duplicate or triplicate, in every university library, and has helped to determine countless syllabuses. The price and size of the volumes have prevented them from being bought so widely by schools or by the general public, but the medieval volumes have had a particular success, both the first two volumes having gone into second editions. Part of the secret of their success has been the fact that they contain many texts which have never been printed in English translation before. The first volume, which Douglas entrusted to Dorothy Whitelock, has been immensely influential in the resurgence of Anglo-Saxon history in recent decades.

While Douglas was wrestling with these editorial problems and

[1] Douglas to E. L. G. Stones, quoted in Stones, 'Andrew Browning, 1889–1972', *Proceedings of the British Academy* lix (1973), 436.

acclimatizing himself to Bristol, he also wrote and delivered two important lectures, the David Murray Lecture at Glasgow (20 February 1946) and the British Academy's Raleigh Lecture (28 May 1947). The first of these, *The Norman Conquest and British Historians*, was in some sense a continuation of *English Scholars* since it discussed English historians' views of the Conquest from 1613 to 1943, with proper attention to Dr Robert Brady and Sir William Temple, as well as to J. R. Green, E. A. Freeman, J. H. Round, and F. M. Stenton. The second, *The Rise of Normandy*, summed up the work which he had been doing on Normandy at Leeds and (as can be seen in retrospect) marked out the lines along which he was to progress during the subsequent years.

In addition, he was beginning to undertake more and more book-reviewing, especially for the *Times Literary Supplement* whose rule of anonymity still appealed to him and enabled him to cover the extraordinary range of books shown in his Bibliography. He rarely spoke about this work, though he would occasionally remark, 'I dabble from time to time in the higher journalism', and his colleagues and pupils amused themselves attempting to identify his reviews by their style. He was a fair-minded reviewer, quick to see the point of a book and to discourse on it in an interesting way. His judgements were expressed with delightful urbanity: 'he can be read with interest since, even if he solves no problems, he successfully avoids controversy', or 'he has treated a vast subject in a large way, and his work is always stimulating and usually instructive'. When he had to summarize arguments against his own work (as in the case of works on Domesday Book) he did so conscientiously, concluding that they would 'undoubtedly be subjected to the technical criticism they deserve'. He treated the work of non-professionals with elaborate courtesy, and was careful to point out when the work of a professional was not suitable for general consumption: 'a book of this severely technical character is inevitably—and properly—directed towards the specialized scholar rather than the general reader'. He was adept at using words which did not imply full approval; 'novel' and 'original' were at best ambiguous, while 'educational' was never intended as praise in a literary journal. The whole corpus of reviews makes fascinating reading and constitutes a consistent attempt to persuade professional historians of the importance of presenting their work in a proper literary form. As he once put it: 'Any assertion that history is not a branch of literature seems to me to be belied by all the great historians from Thucydides to Macaulay.'

In the 1950s he pressed on with his Norman studies, delighting

in the fact that he was now able to visit Normandy. His articles on 'Edward the Confessor, Duke William of Normandy and the English Succession' (1953) and 'The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest' (1957) were immediately recognized as important. In November 1961 he was elected to Ford's Lectureship at Oxford in 1962–3. This was the highest honour for a professional historian and came at a timely moment since Douglas was due to retire from his chair at Bristol in the summer of 1963. He seized the opportunity to make the lectures the climax of his career. He announced his subject as 'William the Conqueror', delivered the lectures in Hilary Term 1963, and published them in May 1964. The result was a triumph. It combined the qualities which he valued most, broad scholarship, enthusiasm, and imagination. It became both a standard work and a best seller.

Many reasons could be given for this success. The book is written with a great sense of style and tells a story with unashamed excitement. It is also extremely learned and well documented, though the learning is worn so lightly that the ignorant would not for a moment be oppressed by it. It remains a favourite with students and the starting-point of all further research. But what was particularly new about it in 1964 was that it was Normanno-centric. This point of view was both natural and correct in the biography of the Norman duke who conquered England, but it was not the point of view which had been fashionable in English universities. In the 1960s the standard English authority was still Stenton whose biography, *William the Conqueror* (1908), had devoted only about one-quarter of its text to the affairs of William in Normandy, while in the second volume of the *Oxford History of England* (1943) he had treated the Conqueror's reign as an appendage to Anglo-Saxon England. By contrast about half of Douglas's book was concerned with the Normans in Normandy, and his main theme was not a lament on the fall of Anglo-Saxon England but a glorification of the Norman achievements. What was more, the book established the fact that Douglas's researches had led to a new view of the early history of Normandy and had sparked off further work in France, notably by Lucien Musset and Jean Yver. Nothing like this had been achieved by an English or American historian since Charles Homer Haskins had published his *Norman Institutions* in 1918. The honorary doctorate that the University of Caen had conferred on Douglas in 1957 had been very well earned.

William the Conqueror is unlike much of Douglas's other work, since it deliberately eschews 'the controversies of the past',

whether of Brady, Spelman, and Hearne or of Freeman and Round. His aim was to interpret the original sources directly for the reader.

> For this reason, a somewhat full citation of the authorities has been supplied, since this seems emphatically to be a case where readers should be given the opportunity of testing for themselves the adequacy of the evidence as well as the contrasted interpretations which have been placed upon it.[1]

This was the doctrine which had also inspired *English Historical Documents*, and there can be no doubt that the full and informative footnotes, appendices, and bibliography have made the book extremely valuable for scholars, without in any way detracting from the pleasure of the general reader. Douglas had achieved one of the great ambitions of his life, to bridge the gulf which had opened between specialist historians and the reading public. He had produced a work of scholarship which was also literature.

Douglas had retired in 1963. He had been elected an Honorary Fellow of Keble College in 1960 and he was to receive honorary doctorates from the Universities of Wales (1966) and Exeter (1974). He had won himself an international reputation, and it might have been expected that in his retirement he would take a rest. Delighting greatly in the sea he did indeed take his wife for lengthy cruises to Buenos Aires in 1964 and 1969, to Japan in 1967, and to Durban and Cape Town in 1970, but these holidays did not signify the end of serious work. On the contrary, he determined to pursue the Normans into the Mediterranean, visiting Sicily first alone (1965) and subsequently with his wife (1966), regretting only that he had left his first visit so late, and that he had not experienced the Norman impact on Sicily before.

On his return he settled down to a comparative study of the Normans in Normandy, England, South Italy, Sicily, and Antioch. He planned the work in two volumes, the first of which, *The Norman Achievement, 1050–1100*, was published in 1969 and the second, *The Norman Fate, 1100–1150*, in 1976. He wrote them with great relish, finding that the material from Italy and Sicily gave him many new insights into the Normans of England and

[1] *William the Conqueror* (1964), p. viii. The most important note to be added to the original sources is to be found in L. J. Engels, 'De Obitu Willelmi Ducis Normannorum Regisque Anglorum: Texte, modèle, valeur, origine', in *Mélanges Christine Mohrmann* (Utrecht/Antwerp, 1973), pp. 209–53, which shows that the monk of Caen's account of the death of William the Conqueror has been taken, much of it word for word, from Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* and the 'Astronomer's' *Life of Louis the Pious*.

Normandy. His aim in both books was to see 'how far the manifold activities of the Normans . . . can all be regarded as having formed part of a single endeavour'. He explored the family ties which united individual Normans in different countries, the way in which they adopted similar feudal arrangements everywhere, systematically turned their wars into holy wars, assisted the development of papal hegemony and stimulated culture, whether in England, Monte Cassino, or the medical school at Salerno. I remember him telling me about the book soon after he had sent it to the press, and how surprised I was by the gusto with which he repeated, 'How the critics will go for it! How they will tear it to bits!' Perhaps he was addressing his remarks *ad hominem* guessing (correctly) that I would be amongst those who would find it difficult to accept the thesis. But there can be no doubt that the two books have done much to persuade English medievalists to be less insular and to view their Normans in a wider setting.

Finally, in 1977, in his eightieth year, Douglas published some collected papers under the title *Time and the Hour* ('Come what may, Time and the Hour runs through the roughest day'). The Introduction contained a brief account of his life which was supplemented by the final item in the book which, though entitled 'A Select Bibliography', did not do anything like justice to his total output. Of the papers which he chose to reprint, five were historiographical, six on the Normans, and one each on medieval Paris, the Hundred Years War, and the Domesday Survey. Others would have chosen differently for him, but the choice he made was intensely personal and has to be seen as a statement of what, in retrospect, he valued most.

Douglas owed much to the security and contentment of his family life. His wife played a full part in all his activities and supported him with wise counsel, and his daughter Ann, herself an Oxford graduate in History, helped him in very many ways. This was important because, though outwardly an extrovert, he was basically a very private man. Perhaps because of his schooling, he kept his emotions to himself and did not allow himself to show when he was hurt. In public it was quite different. At major lectures he would 'ostentatiously sweep aside the microphone which lesser men required' and fill the hall with sound and animation, 'tying together the sleeves of his M.A. gown and bursting them asunder at the climax'.[1] He made a major contribution to historical studies and opened up the early history of

[1] The quotation is from Patrick McGrath's address at the memorial service at St Mary Redcliffe.

Normandy when it was more fashionable to concentrate on the Anglo-Saxons. In an age in which academics professed to scorn the literary arts, he wrote books zestfully and with style, with the result that, even though they embodied original research, they were read and enjoyed by all.

He outlived most of his contemporaries, and after a short illness in which he was sustained by the care of his wife and daughter, died on 12 September 1982. He was in his eighty-fifth year.

R. H. C. DAVIS

Note. I wish to thank Mrs Evelyn Douglas for much help and information, and also Miss Ann Douglas, Professors J. A. Cannon, C. R. Cheney, P. McGrath, P. H. Sawyer, G. O. Sayles, E. L. G. Stones, and J. A. Watt, Drs M. T. Clanchy and G. W. Greenaway, Messrs G. C. F. Forster, F. D. Price, and J. W. Sherborne, and the Revd D. G. Walker.

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