



Ralph (III) (iv) de Tosny.

c.1078 – 1125.

Father: Ralph (II)(iii) de Tosny.

Mother: Isabelle de Montfort.

Spouse: Alice (Adeliza) of Huntingdon (1085 – 1126).

Children:

1. Godeheut de Tosny (1100 – 1143). [Married Robert de Neubour]
2. Roger (II) (iii) de Tosny (1104 – 1157).
3. Simon de Tosny (1106 – 1184). [Was a monk, abbot, and then bishop.]
4. Hugh de Tosny (– bef. 1126). [He is known to have died before his mother.¹]
5. Margaret Isabel de Tosny (– 1161). [Married Walter de Clifford]

Roger de Tosny (1073 – 1091) was the first-born son of Ralph (II)(iii) de Tosny and should therefore have inherited his father's titles and estates, but he died in 1091, aged about 18 years, almost ten years before his father (who died in 1102). Since Roger had not had any children, it was Ralph, as second son, who inherited as seigneur of Tosny and Conches on his father's death.

In 1103, having probably already received his Norman inheritance, Ralph crossed to England and, being graciously received by the King, obtained his father's considerable English estates. That same year he married Alice (Adeliza) of Huntingdon – he was 25 and she 18. Her father was the powerful Waltheof II de Huntingdon and her mother was Judith of Lens (Senlis).

The following year (1104) he returned to Normandy with King Henry I (Beauclerc), son of William the Conqueror, and was present with that King at the Battle of Tinchebrai, 28 September 1106.

By 1110 he had returned to England when he was with King Henry I at Romsey.

At some time after 1119 King Henry gave Ralph the lands of Pont-Saint-Pierre along with the valley of the River Pitres.² These lands had been alienated from the dowry

¹ Dugdale's *Monasticon* Vol 6, pt. 1, pp.152.

{<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k133603q/f234.image>} gives a charter of Alice, his mother, where she says that Hugh is buried in the Priory of the Holy Trinity, London. She died abt. 1126.

² Charpillon, ii., 674.

of Adeliza de Tosny and were now returned at the king's command to the Tosny fiefdom by Ralph de Guader, lord of Breteuil.³

At Rouen, between 1118-1126, 'Radulfo de Todeneio', signed as witness a charter of King Henry (I) of England confirming a gift to the monks of Lire of the mills and forge of La Neuve-Lire (Eure).⁴

He was back in Rouen with the King in 1120.

He died in 1125-1126 and is thought to have been buried at Conches Abbey.

It can not be doubted that Ralph was a trusted 'aide' to the English King Henry I and that he felt strongly enough about his oaths of fealty to the king that he was regularly to be found supporting him on the battlefield with the royal army. But, in the true fashion of a nobleman, he was also a strong supporter of the Church and was a benefactor of the abbeys of Bec and Conches, and perhaps to the [Priory of West Acre](#) in Norfolk, founded by the Tosny family c. 1087.⁵

Ralph's lifetime also marked the significant increase of the family's focus of activity towards their properties and possessions in England, including the growing number of religious foundations which they had established there. This had the effect of leaving their ancient possessions in Normandy much more to their own devices and in the hands of various tenants. Historiography increasingly regards them as English lords.⁶ But they still clung with the same legendary fighting vigour to their lands and their rights in Normandy.

Raoul (III)(iv) began his career by choosing, contrary to his father's wishes, to place himself against Robert Courteuse (Curthose) and for Henry I Beauclerc in the quarrel between the two sons of the Conqueror. This wise choice immediately earned him a very successful English marriage: Adeliza, daughter of the Anglo-Danish Earl Waltheof - executed by the Conqueror in 1076, but then held in high esteem - and Judith, niece of King William. She was a wealthy heiress in her own right, and her brother-in-law Simon de Saint-Liz, Earl of Huntingdon, gave her a hundred pounds of land to add to her dowry. This marriage later earned Raoul (III)(iv) the honor of becoming (in 1113-1114) the brother-in-law of David I, King of Scotland from (1124-1153), second husband of Matilda, Adeliza's elder sister, and himself brother-in-law of King Henry I.

³ Musset (1978), p. 63.

⁴ Haskins, C.H. (1960) *Norman Institutions*, Harvard Historical Studies, Vol. 24., New York: F. Ungar, p. 297, no. 7. <https://archive.org/details/normaninstituti01goog/page/n315/mode/2up> (accessed 04/05/2025)

⁵ Probably by Ralph (II)(iii) de Tosny as he approached later life. (See also <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp402-404>)

⁶ Musset (1978), p. 63. 'Already in 1097 *Albert of Aix* (and *William of Tyre* after him) held Godehut de Tosny, Ralph's first-born, to have been born in England.'

From this profitable union were born three sons, Roger (II)(iii), Simon and Hugh, as well as several daughters, as is listed above. The second son, Simon, became a monk and was later made Bishop of Moray in Scotland.⁷ Hugh, the third son, is said to have died before his mother, i.e. before 1126.

Bibliography.

Musset, L., (1978) 'Aux origines d'une classe dirigeante: les Tosny, grands barons normands du Xe au XIIIe siècles', *Francia*, 5 (1978), 45-80, 71. <https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/fr/article/view/48691/42559> (accessed 02/02/2025)

⁷ See [Simon de Tosny](#).