Spring 6-1-2024

Abusive Abbots and Malevolent Monks: Monasteries and Violence in the Early Anglo-Norman Period

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by

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an undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science

in

History

And

University Honors

Thesis Advisor

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2024

Abstract

This investigation examines the conduct of abbots and monasteries from 1066 to 1087 in the context of violence and monasteries. It analyzes monastic chronicles and Anglo-Norman histories. The two historiographical lineages that emerge: the Norman Conquest and religious warfare. After the initial conquest in 1066, four native abbots offer insight into a range of local monastic behaviors during the early years of Norman rule. The Normans, in their combat against rebellious monasteries, developed procedures to remove local abbots in 1070. This connection between rebellions and monasteries drove the militarization of monasteries by both the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons. The militarization of monasteries reinforced the reforms implemented by foreign abbots and overseeing the native monks. Investigating the actions of four foreign abbots outlines Norman oppression of Anglo-Saxon monks and how procedures extended from abbots to monks.

Keywords: Abbot, Monastery, Norman Conquest, Anglo-Norman, England.

Introduction

Glastonbury monks disputed with Abbot Thurstan on his reforms, strict rule, and corruption. In response, Thurstan ordered his knights to attack the monks. The defiant clergy then sprinted to their sanctuary, the Anglo-Saxon timber church. By securing the wooden door, the secluded monastics defended the front of the church from Thurstan's aggressive warriors. Abbot Thurstan's knights arrived unwilling to delay and eager to engage the men. In the house of worship, subversive monastics sought physical and spiritual protection. They equipped themselves with defensive weapons and meditated at the central altar. After invading the choir, the belligerents launched an assault on their prey with ruthless determination. Warriors shot bolts and arrows from the second floor, unleashing violence against monks defending themselves with metal and wooden crosses. A second armed group of soldiers then entered and assaulted the huddled men who sought divine intervention. Three rebellious monks of Glastonbury bled to death at the altar, as Norman soldiers dragged the surviving monastics outside the holy space.

After Thurstan disciplined the defiant Glastonbury monks with violence, the privileges of being church officials protected the Glastonbury monks and abbot from corporal punishment in the court of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, and William, King of England. King William and Archbishop Lanfranc removed the native monks alongside Abbot Thurstan. William and Lanfranc moreover deposed and scattered the remaining resistant Glastonbury clergy across Anglo-Norman England with entrusted monastic wardens. The king and archbishop then exiled Thurstan back to his original monastery in Normandy. Seven years after Lanfranc's punishment,

King William's death and his successor's venality allowed Thurstan to pay England's new king and return to his prior abbacy.[1]

Two years after William's death in 1087, St. Augustine's monks in Canterbury objected to the appointment and authority of their superiors in three stages. First, the monks barricaded themselves inside, denying entry to protest Archbishop Lanfranc with Wido, the incumbent abbot from Normandy. Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury inserted himself in the dispute as the top ecclesiastical official in William's rule. After an exodus of monks, Lanfranc caught, incarcerated, and separated the dissenting criminals.[2] The second stage began after a monk confessed to Lanfranc his wish to kill Abbot Wido of St. Augustine's. Archbishop Lanfranc responded by ordering the monk's public whipping, disrobing, and exiling. Last, Lanfranc's death in 1089 sparked the remaining monks alongside Canterbury citizens to rebel against Abbot Wido. After escaping the rebellious mob, Wido returned with two Norman bishops. This trio of Norman ecclesiastical aristocrats deposed, arrested, and imprisoned the twenty-five rebellious Anglo-Saxons within separate monasteries.

In these two examples, abbots employed tools created by the king and archbishop to attack argumentative monks in Glastonbury (1083), followed by brutal retaliations against protests at Canterbury (1089). By eliminating local abbots, King William, alongside Archbishop Lanfranc, hastened migrating Norman ecclesiastics to England in 1070. Norman monasteries reinforced William's military operations. Anglo-Saxons likewise mobilized monasteries to

[1] John and Florence of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, trans. R.R. Darlington, Patrick McGurk, and Jennifer Bray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 183; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. George Norman Garmonsway (London: Dent, 1953), 214-215; William of Malmesbury, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, trans. Frank Lomax (Llannerch: J.M.F., 1992), 78.
[2] "Acts of Lanfranc" in *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel (787-1001 A.D.) with Supplementary Extracts from the Others,* 287-292 ed. John Earle and Charles Plummer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), 291. Archbishop Lanfranc placed the leader of the resistance in chains with a local lord.

reinforce their rebellions.[3] This dual and opposing use of abbots empowered monastic militarization efforts and retaliation against internal monastic subversions.

This analysis of abbatial conduct during King William's conquest of England places these grim events within the historical context of violence and the medieval church. After the Norman invasion in 1066, four abbots appointed before Norman rule outline the range of monastic behaviors during the first years of his rule. William's early reign began with invading England (1066) and ended at the Harrying of the North (1070). Resistant native monastics, reinforcing the rebellion in Ely (1070), underscored the role of abbots in boosting external violence.

In combat against rebellious monasteries, William alongside Lanfranc created procedures for removing this protected class of political rivals.[4] Normans started targeting nearby monasteries during William's middle reign, weakening their connection with rebellions. In doing so, William signaled the Norman and Anglo-Saxon militarization of monasteries. While William reigned, Lanfranc directed Norman abbots to import French military and monastic traditions. French knights reinforced the reforms made by new abbots while watching over natives. The long-term effects monastic policies in the middle reign of William become clear when examining the actions of four abusive foreign abbots.[5]

[3] Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 23; David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 116.
[4] There is corroborating evidence for William and Lanfranc deposing, imprisoning, and isolating the abbots of Malmesbury (1066), Glastonbury (1077), Abingdon (1070), and Croyland (1075). In addition, Lanfranc repeated the process with the monks of Glastonbury (1083) and St. Augustine's (1089).
[5] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 105, 111, 114, 118. Knowles detailed how abbots acquired knights during William's reign.

Historiography

This analysis focuses on evidence of the church's association with brutal conflicts with the Normans. In this examination, the two historiographical lineages that arise are the Norman Conquest and religious warfare. Historians have studied 1066 for its political, military, constitutional, and linguistic implications.[6] In contrast, ecclesiastical warfare has arisen a new and less-explored topic of research that studies bishops in cathedrals and religious aspects of warfare. Histories of religious conflict in the High and Late Middle Ages illuminate the pivotal role of religious institutions in reinforcing violent conflicts between individuals outside the church.[7] Records of internal monastic violence are not abundant or common. The study of medieval spiritual war clusters on individual bishops and the Crusades, a series of wars in the holy land following William's conquest by 30 years (1096). With far-reaching consequences, for example, the First Crusade (1096-1101) overshadowed William's reign (1066-1087). In addition, earlier academic histories overshadowed the victories of Normans in the Mediterranean, favoring William's conquest in 1066. Historians have emphasized the French bishops associated with warfare, including Odo, the bishop of Bayeux and earl of Kent; Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances; Remigius, the bishop of Kent and abbot of Fécamp. Historians have further noted the military acts of the Abbots Turold of Peterborough (1070) and Æthelwig of Evesham (1075).[8]

[6] C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955); F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Marjorie Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
[7] Kenneth Tiller, "Anglo-Norman Historiography and Henry of Huntingdon's Translation of 'The Battle of Brunanburh,'" *Studies in Philology* 109, no.3 (2012): 173–91; Radosław Kotecki, Jacek Maciejewski, and John S. Ott, *Between Sword and Prayer: Warfare and Medieval Clergy in Cultural Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
[8] C.M. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000–1250: Theory and Reality* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2023); Daniel M.G. Gerrard, *The Church at War: The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and Other Clergy in England, c. 900-1200* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

Nineteenth-century novelists and historians created nationalist and romantic narratives around William's reign. The romantic rebellion, for instance, became a recurring theme in popular stories describing local experiences living under William's mighty rule. Charles Kingsley's work (1866), in particular, brought renewed attention to Hereward the Wake's rebellion at Ely Monastery.[9] Edward Augustus Freeman followed Kingsley (1867), publishing the first standard academic history of the Norman Conquest.[10] At the end of the 1800s, historians revised earlier narratives with academic studies based on documentary evidence to produce a nuanced interpretation of William's reign. [11] Early twentieth-century historians applied literary sources to further analyze social, economic, and political events.[12] These historians reanalyzed records using new methods and included violent ecclesiastics in their histories.[13] Published in 1963, David Knowles conducted a comprehensive survey of England's medieval monastic orders, giving special attention to implanting Norman abbots by Lanfranc and William.[14] Marjorie Chibnall and Henry Loyn further illuminated the conquest's local impact.[15] In the same manner, Loyn, Chibnall, Bates, and other historians changed the historical emphasis, moving it

[9] Charles Kingsley, *Hereward the Wake* (New York: Co-operative Publication Society, 1898).
[10] E.A. Freeman, *A Short History of the Norman Conquest of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908); J.H. Round, "Text of the Northamptonshire Domesday" in *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, ed. Ryland Adkins and H.A. Doubleday (London: University of London Press, 1902).
[11] F.M. Stenton, "St. Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest," *The English Historical Review* 37, no. 146 (1922): 225-235; F.M. Stenton, *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon* (London: University College Press, 1913).
[12] F.M. Stenton, H. Frowde, H.P.R. Finberg, James Townsend, Laurence Williams, R.R. Darlington, V.H. Galbraith, and more set the foundation for David Bates, David Knowles, Frank Barlow, H.R. Loyn, Marjorie Chibnall, Robert Bartlett, and others.
[13] D.J.A. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and Their English Possessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); David Knowles, "Essays in Monastic History 1066–1215: II. The Norman Plantation." *The Downside Review* 49, no. 3 (1931): 441–56; David Knowles, "Essays in Monastic History: V. The Cathedral Monasteries." *Downside Review* 51, no. 1 (1933): 73–96.
[14] David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*; Frank Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (London: Longmans, 1979).
[15] Frank Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A Constitutional History* (London: Longmans, 1963); Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Church*; H.R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154* (Harlow: Longmans, 2000); H.R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (London: Longmans, 1962); Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1166* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

away from aristocratic classes.[16] In the case of Loyn, he wrote books on high medieval church history, while Chibnall focused on unfolding the political and legal histories of Anglo-Norman England. These reinterpretations of William's conquest offer valuable insights into the political climate of William's rule. In the twentieth century's second half, social scientists likewise developed alternative techniques to create a complex understanding of historical diversity. Thus, allowing historians to contextualize the Normans' conquests in world history.[17] In 2000, Bartlett and Loyn highlighted the common experience of oppression in the *English Church (940–1154)* and *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings (1075–1225)*[18] and expanded on the work of Chibnall, Bates, and Knowles. These works by contemporary historians emphasize global perspectives, diverse experiences, and comparative studies to understand human behavior.

The two fundamental investigations contributing to the analysis of medieval church warfare are David Gerrard's *The Church at War: The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and Other Clergy in England, c. 900-1200* and Craig Nakasian's *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000–1250: Theory and Reality*. Published in 2016, they detail the warlike actions of bishops by focusing on figures such as Bishops Odo of Bayeux, Geoffrey of Coutances, and Wulfstan of Worcester. Gerrard and Nakashian refer to Abbot Brand of Peterborough strengthening Hereward's rebellion and likewise mentioned Æthelwig's actions as Evesham's

[16] *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest* ed. Tom Licence, David Bates, Debby Banham, M.C. van Houts, Henry Parkes, Michael Gullick, Sarah Foot, et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014); David Bates, "Normandy and England after 1066," *English Historical Review* 104, no. 413 (1989): 851-80; Mark Hagger, "The Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani: Litigation and History at St. Albans," *Historical Research* 81, no. 213 (2008): 373-98.
[17] Brian Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain* (New York: St. Martin, 1994); R. Eales and R. Sharpe, *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066-1109* (Bloomsbury Academic, 1995); Sally Dickson, "The Family of Æthelwig, abbot of Evesham 1058-78 and Acting Justiciar of the Mercian Province," *Midland History* 49, no 1 (2024): 3–32.
[18] F. Tinti and D.A. Woodman, *Constructing History Across the Norman Conquest: Worcester, 1050-1150* (York: York Medieval, 2022); *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Anne Curry (London: Hambledon, 1994); H.R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154*; K.L. Shirley, *The Secular Jurisdiction of Monasteries in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England* (Rochester: Boydell, 2004); Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

abbot against the earl's rebellion. Gerrard and Nakashian likewise extracted and collected the work of earlier historians who mentioned belligerent ecclesiastics in studies of Norman rule. Historians have focused on bishops because they rule cathedrals in cities and represent the church's presence to peasants and aristocrats. Unlike other studies, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the actions of abbots in monasteries within military operations in the early Anglo-Norman period (1066-1089).

Sources

This investigation uses two types of primary evidence: chronicles and Anglo-Norman histories. Norman domination sparked historical writing from fading Anglo-Saxons and rising Normans. During the Norman control of England, for instance, the unique local tradition of chronicle writing ended.[19] Chronicles written by monks offer a direct view of common experiences. The largest part of the chronicles disappeared; even so, high medieval monks created chronicles and histories built using older chronicles.[20] Historians, biographers, and writers developed the history of their patron monasteries using the same chronicles.[21] In addition, Abbots used this history as legal evidence, entertainment, and scholarship. Historical studies flourished in the Anglo-Norman period as natives sought to preserve local heritage and settlers'

[19] H.R. Luard, *Annales Monastici* (London: Longmans, 1864). These chronicles remain untranslated.
[20] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. All the primary material in this investigation utilized primary sources unavailable to modern historians. The chronicle of John and Florence arose as an excellent example because of its concise and succinct style. The author named this text *Chronica ex Chronicae.*
[21] Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); Christopher Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2004); Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents* (London: Routledge, 2002). "Peterborough Chronicle" and "Worcester Chronicle" compose *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. The Worcester Chronicle in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is separate from *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*.

descendants, likewise desired to know their property.[22] Bishop Wulfstan, in particular, worked to preserve local records.[23]

Abbots and the Norman Conquest (1066)

The role of monasteries in warfare becomes plain when examining abbots involvement in the events surrounding 1066. King Harold of England and Duke William of Normandy summoned religious officials in their territories to finance and aid their invasion and defense of England. Monasteries backing the military was unsurprising and unexceptional. King Harold ordered monasteries to prepare local defenses, safeguard wealth, and reinforce his military defense. Norman monasteries reinforced William's preparation to conquer England in Normandy, during the Spring and Summer of 1066. William's merging of a Norman custom for individual loyalty with a local custom of legal devotion later reshaped the political landscape.[24]

Monasteries remained independent, Benedictine-style, between the diminishing of Viking authority and the early twelfth-century arrival of Cluniac monasticism.[25] These rural ecclesiastical communities remained separate, except for their loose affiliations with aristocrats through patronage and with bishops through promotion. The separation between cathedrals and monasteries increased with late-tenth-century Benedictine reforms emphasizing the celibate and contemplative nature of monasticism.[26] In the eleventh century, reformed monasteries produced

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[22] William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*; William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England from the Earliest Period to the Reign of King Stephen,* trans. J.A. Giles (Project Gutenberg, 2015); William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: Text and Translation*, trans. Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[23] Tinti and Woodman, *Constructing History Across the Norman Conquest.* Laura Cleaver and Andrea Worm, *Writing History in the Anglo-Norman World: Manuscripts, Makers and Readers, 1066-1250* (Woodbridge: York University Press, 2022).
[24] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 100-127.
[25] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 31-57. Knowles states King William tried to get the Cluniacs to come to England, and the monks refused because of William's venality.
[26] Loyn, *The English Church, 940–1154*, 5, 87-103.

bishops, which further reinforced monastic cathedrals. Monks ordained in the episcopate became the primary religious contrast between the continent and the Anglo-Saxon Church.[27] In England, monks who became bishops intertwined cathedrals in cities and abbots governing monasteries in low-populated areas. For example, an impressive number of monks from Glastonbury became bishops.[28]

The monasteries of Glastonbury, Peterborough, Æthelny, and Ely consolidated to create fenland communities a century before William's rule.[29] In the late tenth century, anti-monastic sentiment threatened the abbots' and monks' relationships with the aristocracy.[30] Despite Cnut's interruption of regal succession in Wessex in the early eleventh century, the relationship between the monarchy and monasteries continued.[31] Earlier, Cnut's Danish invasion disturbed regular church business.[32] In these dangerous circumstances, stabilized monasteries arose as impressive influences. Local monasteries endured interruptions in regular assemblies. This continuity arose through the earlier Danish conquest of England; Cnut and his wife, Emma, devoted themselves to religion.[33] For instance, Cnut established two monasteries at St. Benet of Holmes and Bury St.

[27] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 14, 28. Burton argues the Normans had suspicions about certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon practice. However, they accepted and even strengthened some of these practices. One such practice was the monastic cathedral.
[28] There remains no reason to assume that Glastonbury was unique other than William of Malmesbury, preserving their narrative and experiences, writing *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*.
[29] These monasteries are situated in the Wessex fenland, serving as a refuge for the English during invasions due to the natural defenses.
[30] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 53-56. Anti-monastic sentiment following king Edgar's death (959-975) and king Æthelred's wars (978-1013).
[31] Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Church*.
[32] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 5. Burton wrote how King Cnut (1016-1033) sought the support of the church for political reasons. As a conqueror, he wanted to strengthen and legitimize his position by gaining the church's endorsement as a protector of the monastic order. To achieve this, he gave lands to various monastic institutions, including the Old Minster at Winchester, Bury St. Edmunds, and Sherborne. Additionally, he helped secure benefactions for Canterbury, Abingdon, Evesham, and New Minster (Winchester).
[33] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 57-82.

Edmunds, following the traditional religious style of the Royal House of Wessex.[34] In addition, Edward the Confessor restored and sponsored Westminster and St. Mary's Abbey (1065). Church councils excluded secular nobles from participating in electing official positions,[35] although kings influenced monasteries through patronage, appointing abbots, and promoting monks.[36] Nobles guided monasteries by placing vestigial heirs in them and cathedrals.[37] Overall, the king continued to influence monasteries.

Further illustrating the ecclesiastical bond with the noble houses in Wessex is the tradition of the wealthiest abbots with Æthel-prefixed names. These names appear multiple times in this study.[38] In the pre-conquest period, one's name both expressed their legitimacy to rule and proximity to Wessex's highest family.[39] Æthelny Monastery is an example of this. Æthelny acquired the name when Alfred the Great from the royal house of Wessex stayed on that property while retreating to the Fens from invading Vikings.[40] As early medieval England faded, this tradition expanded to include alternatives of the Æthel-prefix.[41] For example, two of the abbots who aided Harold during the 1066 campaign were the brother of King Harold, Ælfwig of New Minster, and Ælfwold of St. Benet of Holme. Another prominent example includes Æthelnoth, Glastonbury's final abbot appointed before William's rule. The last example, Abbot Æthelwig,

[34] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 69. Knowles states Cnut continued creating and maintaining monasteries while appointing family and allies to abbacies.
[35] Loyn, *The English Church, 940–1154*.
[36] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*; Knowles, "Essays in Monastic History: V. The Cathedral Monasteries," *Downside Review*; Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 65; R.R. Darlington, "Ecclesiastical Reform in the Late Old English Period," *The English Historical Review* 51, no. 203 (1936), 385–428; William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*.
[37] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 83.
[38] Emphasizing the Æthel-prefix emphasizes the relationship of the king and monasteries.
[39] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*. Stenton's best work prevails in his study of the names of places in Anglo-Saxon England.
[40] Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, 243. Alfred the Great is the most famous Anglo-Saxon King of England, although his name, unlike his predecessors and successors, did not have the Æthel-prefix.
[41] These abbots aided Harold 1066: Ælfwig, abbot of New Minster and King Harold's brother, and Ælfwold, abbot of St. Benet of Holme.

arose as the primary Anglo-Saxon monastic Norman collaborator. Nobles benefited from his nominal connection with Wessex royalty.[42]

Repeated donations allowed England's monarchy to foster valuable political connections with the monasteries in Wessex.[43] During the eleventh century, Danish invaders continued this profitable relationship linking royalty and monasteries.[44] The relationship between kings and Bury St. Edmund's abbots illustrates how English monarchs and nobility influenced abbots in pre-conquest England.[45] The suffix "bury" refers to a town fortified by Anglo-Saxons against a Viking attack. Cnut appointing the first Viking abbot (1044) of St. Edmunds signals the end of the Viking period.[46] After Cnut took power, this king spent his childhood with William in Normandy. Edward the Confessor, the final Wessex-born king, strengthened the relationship between Normandy and England. For instance, King Edward favored Normans when he required a personal doctor and granted the abbacy of Bury to Baldwin, a man with remarkable medical skills from St. Denis.[47]

Monasteries Preparing for Invasion and Defense (January-September 1066)

Earlier monarchs' close alliance with monasteries facilitated King Harold's preparations. Harold sent letters delegating others to prepare for the upcoming Norman storm (Summer 1066).

[42] Loyn, *The English Church, 940–1154*.
[43] Loyn, *The English Church, 940–1154*.
[44] Barlow, *The English Church, 1000–1066: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Church*.
[45] Antonia Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmund, 1182-1256: Samson of Tottington to Edmund of Walpole* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007); David Bates, "The Abbey and the Norman Conquest: an unusual case?" in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, 5-21 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014); V.H. Galbraith, "The East Anglian See and the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds," *The English Historical Review* 40, no. 158 (1925): 222–28; Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*.
[46] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 69-71.
[47] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 249, 74.32.

He ordered Abbot Ælfwold, for example, to protect the nearest coast.[48] St. Benets of Holme connected to Harold through Godwin's close political relationship with King Cnut, the monastery's founder.[49] Here, King Harold used abbots in ancillary roles. The abbots filled a reserved position, first intended for the secular aristocracy. Harold trusted an unfamiliar abbot to secure his tenants. Likewise, Ælfwold followed the order of Harold.[50]

A key figure in England's national defense at Hastings, Ælfwold, was not alone in his efforts. The final generation of Anglo-Saxon monasteries filled the role of addressing local needs following 1066. For instance, these monasteries served as protected repositories for portable wealth and providers of charity for displaced populations. Anglo-Saxons trusted the monasteries, viewing them as secure sanctuaries for their wealth, as stealing from God's representatives remained unacceptable. Aristocratic families produced future monks and abbots, further strengthening the ties between the nobility and the monastic population. By settling in low-population areas, abbots improved the security for their monastery.[51] This strategy worked in William's early reign when Normans avoided sparse regions where abbots built monasteries.

As the Duke of Normandy, William scattered and dispersed his Norman vassals and organized an array of clients across English cities. In particular, William built this client network alongside his wars of reconquests. During William's youth, other French invaded when William's father died, leaving him the sole heir to Normandy. While entering maturity, William mastered

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[48] Johanne of Oxnede, *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes* (London: Longmans, 1859), 269: "Huic etiam a rege Haraldo marina committebatur custodia; qua de causa a Willelmo Conqueestore postea non parva sustinuit discrimina."
[49] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 104. Godwin is King Harold's father and the Earl of Wessex.
[50] Gerrard, *The Church at War,* 33-4; Stenton, "St. Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest." Gerrard and Stenton relate how a late chronicler claimed that Abbot Ælfwold of St. Benet's of Holme was given the responsibility by King Harold to protect the sea. Gerrard states, although the evidence is not conclusive, there is no apparent reason to challenge Barlow's assertion that Anglo-Saxon abbots led their thegns into the Battle of Hastings.
[51] Knowles*, Monastic Order in England*, 103; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 200.

the art of war with his military. In addition, William created a vast network of vassals. This relationship was symbiotic between property owners, such as Duke William, and service providers among the nobility, monasteries, and cathedrals. The economic base at this time remained on land.[52] William developed a complex web of patrons and contributors, such as Abbot Remigius, Bishop Odo, and William of Coutances. This constellation of allies arose in William's early adulthood as a powerful force. As an example, Remigius, as Fécamp's abbot, became William's client in preparing the military in northern Normandy near Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme (1066).[53]

Fécamp persisted as a wealthy monastery with subordinate houses populating Northern France and Southern England.[54] These subordinate monasteries Eased William's invasion of England.[55] Under these circumstances, Fécamp's subordinate house near Pevensey facilitated the conquest of England.[56] Remigius commanded Norman soldiers throughout William's conquest, serving as a vassal for William.[57] By investing extensive funds in monasteries, William expected this aid from his clients. Likewise, monks who contributed to invading England sought promotion. William followed service by rewarding Remigius, placing the abbot in a prominent bishopric.[58] During William's later reign, the pope accused King William of practicing lay investiture because he promoted Remigius; Archbishop Lanfranc insisted on Remigius' preservation based on his wisdom and talent.

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[52] Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*.
[53] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 28, 41-2.
[54] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 100.
[55] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 83.
[56] William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi by William of Poitiers,* ed. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998), xxiv-xxv, 120-1.
[57] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 103.
[58] William appointed Remigius to the diocese of Kent (1066). Odo, the King's half-brother and Bishop of Bayeux, became Earl of Kent.

Abbots Attending the Battle of Hastings (October 1066)

Enough evidence survives to place Remigius with William during his invasion of England.[59] Indeed, more Norman monks and abbots fought on Hastings' battlefield; but the evidence remains circumstantial.[60] The number of ecclesiastical appointments from the same group of Norman houses in William's early reign points to other participants in the conquest. Harold likewise called on the abbots Leofric of Peterborough, Ælfwold of St. Benet's of Holme, and Ælfwig of New Minster. Peterborough and New Minster's involvement in Harold's campaign against invaders is well-documented in monastic chronicles (October 1066).[61] The death of Aluric, a monk from Ramsey, at Hastings suggests Abbot Æthelsig of Ramsey and St. Augustine's likewise attended.[62]

Ramsey's chronicle recorded one of their monks dying in battle at Hastings in 1066.[63] In addition, Ramsey's abbot, Æthelwig, advised King Harold to confront Norway's king.[64] The Hyde Abbey Chronicle placed Harold's brother, an abbot, in combat, but was unclear on his participation.[65] Likewise, Peterborough's Chronicle confirmed this by naming King Harold's

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[59] Gerrard, *Church at War,* 34. Gerrard states that Remigius was rewarded with a bishopric for his efforts in organizing the invasion. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England,* 136–9; William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 473.
[60] *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy, Bishop of Amiens*, ed Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
[61] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 22. Burton states Abbot Aelfwig of New Minster, Winchester, died at the battle of Hastings.
[62] Barlow, *The English Church, 1000–1066: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, 17n; *Domesday,* ed. Abraham Farley (New York: Young, 1887).
[63] *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis*, ed. W.D. Macray (London: Longmans, 1886), 79-8: "Ille igitur quem vis fati jam impulit in ruinam cum exercitu ei superbe occurens, et, punga commissa hostibus diutius probe resistens, tandem, sagittarum imbre circa se ruente, oculo, ut fertur, primo vulneratus, statim cum Girth et Lefwino fratribus suis consulibus gladio ictus occubuit."
[64] *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis*, 179: "Cui quum Haraldus, propter imparitatem forsitan copiae militaris, obviare siddimularet, sanctus Edwaerdus praedictum abbatem Ailsium, cujus commendationis causa haec interserimus, per visum admonuit, ut regem Haroldum ad invandos hostes ab eo missus amiaret, triumphum ei victoriae certissime compromittens."
[65] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 103.

brothers, who died alongside him. Despite the later chronicle's silence on Ælfwig's status as an abbot, complementary evidence backs up his attendance. Ramsey's chronicle, for example, mentioned the brother of Harold, Ælfwig.[66] The chroniclers created two types of records by refusing to portray monks as violent. Chronicles and historians observed abbots, for instance, engaging in auxiliary military roles. The monks who wrote the chronicles in monasteries restrain themselves from describing fellow monastics committing violence. The consistency of chronicles contrasts with the varying twelfth-century writers, as tone depended on their patron and audience. In the eleventh century, these sources portrayed abbots accompanying, reinforcing, and consenting to those who committed violence. For example, *the Peterborough Chronicle* and William of Poitiers documented abbots participating in the defense and invasion of England.[67] After Leofric's death, a new abbatial election began.[68] Thus, an abbot's presence at military conflicts was standard.[69]

London Resisting Norman Rule (November 1066)

After the defeat at Hastings, the residual Anglo-Saxon army limped back to London and organized resistance. William harried between Hastings and London (September and October 1066). The remaining aristocracy, bishops, and abbots submitted when William promised top ecclesiastical officials to reign under the laws of Edward the Confessor.[70] No monastic consensus

[66] *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis*, 179; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 198. Multiple chronicles record the attendance of King Harold's brothers; however, sources may have assumed Harold's brother's attendance at the Battle of Hastings.
[67] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* 103-4.
[68] Gerrard, *Church at War,* 33. Abbot Leofric fell ill during the campaign and returned to Peterborough. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 198.
[69] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 22.
[70] *Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* ed. Thomas Walsingham, H.T. Riley, and Matthew Paris (Longmans, Green, 1867), 49; Gerrard, *Church at War,* 34; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 170–171; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 199; William, *The Gesta Guillelmi,* 162–3.

arose, and the abbots decided for themselves. Brand of Peterborough, for example, contacted Edgar the Ætheling, the last remaining descendent of Wessex royalty (November 1066).

Before William's coronation, Abbot Brand met Edgar Ætheling to confirm his abbacy and recognize Edgar as the most eligible King of England.[71] William learned of this plot after Archbishop Ealdred of York coronated him King of England on Christmas at Westminster (1066).[72] King William forced Brand to pay a large sum of gold. In return, William confirmed Brand's appointment and Peterborough's monastic land.[73] William built a relationship with the local church by confirming Wulfric's appointment to New Minster's abbacy.[74] In addition, confirming Brand and Wulfric's abbacy with Peterborough and New Minster illustrates William's willingness to forgive local ecclesiastical rebels. While navigating for Normandy, following his victory, William captured important Anglo-Saxon hostages (1067). William took hostages to fortify the Anglo-Saxon submission and undermine any possible rebellious movements.[75] *The Peterborough Chronicle,* in particular, recorded the hostages as Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury and Abbot Æthelnoth of Glastonbury alongside Earls Edwin, Morcar, Waltheof, and Edgar the Ætheling.[76]

The monastic commitment to royal patronage explains the abbot of Peterborough's plan to contact Edgar. While preparing for invasion, Harold ordered abbots without personal or

[71] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 22; Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 27.
[72] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 23. Chibnall states Abbot Brand paid fifty gold pieces to William.
[73] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 199.
[74] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 22. Burton asserts the earliest casualties were followed by Anglo-Saxons, possibly due to their alliance with the cause of the last Anglo-Saxon king. As a result, the abbacy remained vacant for at least two years before a monk named Wulfric from the house was finally allowed to succeed. However, his reign was short-lived as he was deposed less than a year later.
[75] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 200.
[76] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 103-6; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 199.

professional relationships.[77] Local Anglo-Saxon abbots followed traditional royal institutions, not the individual king. This close relationship between monasteries and the monarchy continued into the Anglo-Norman period. In addition, William emphasized his personal relationships with the abbots of Normandy. William began his relationship with Fécamp in his youth and enlisted the abbot's cooperation when necessary. Throughout his reign, William of Normandy and Remigius of Fécamp sustained a relationship that benefited the political ambitions of both men. After 1066, King William oversaw the merging of the emphasis on personal relationships and allegiance to royalty.[78] William rewarded fellow Normans for reinforcing and assisting in the conquest of England.

Conclusion

The abbatial experiences illustrate the standard for measuring the monastic role in warfare at the outset of William's reign in 1066. In the first six months of 1066, Harold and William mobilized the monasteries to prepare the invasion and defense of England. In the second half of 1066, abbots attended, confirmed, reinforced military operations. Anglo-Saxon abbots joined London's resistance of William until the Anglo-Saxon elite submitted to the Normans outside London at Berkhamsted. At the end of 1066, William signaled monastic influence by taking an abbot .

Four Local Abbots (1067-1070)

A wide range of reactions occurred after William's invasion. Abbatial experiences differed first from nobility, and then from bishops. Throughout the medieval age, survival

[77] Harold Godwinson, the last king of Anglo-Saxon England, endured for one year. He spent no time touring monasteries or holding assemblies.
[78] Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135* (Rochester: Boydell, 1998).

continued to be the distinguishing experience between ecclesiastical and aristocratic experiences. No records of Normans executing abbots or bishops exists, but various sources describe his violent treatment of the nobility and peasant classes.[79] Monasteries occupied remote areas and bishops populated urban centers. This maintained the abbots autonomy from bishops and fellow monastics. In addition, less than a century before, benedictine reforms emphasized celibacy, contemplation, and independence. Thus, abbots became less involved in political affairs.[80]

Abbots had different experiences and reactions to England's conquest. These four abbots correspond to the variety of monastic responses (1067-1070): Æthelwig of St. Augustine's and Ramsey, Ealdred of Abingdon, Frederic of St. Albans, and Sihtric of Tavistock. Each abbot exhibited different interests and goals and thus suffered different consequences. Abbots Æthelwig and Sihtric established themselves as abbots before William's invasion, while Frederic and Ealdred became abbots in 1066. Æthelwig and Sihtric fled their monasteries, while Ealdred and Frederic submitted to Normans to represent the interests of their monastery. Æthelwig and Sihtric left their monasteries to serve another secular leader while Normans forced Ealdred and Frederic from their abbacy.[81] Frederic, Sihtric, Æthelwig, and Ealdred represent the spectrum of abbatial conduct from William's coronation to his northern campaign. William's early reign shows a mix of altruism and disinterest towards monasteries.[82] Independent and varied responses characterized abbatial reactions between 1067 and 1069. Anglo-Saxon abbots either surrendered

[79] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 48-53.
[80] H.R. Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest."
[81] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 71. Chibnall asserts abbots or bishops who decided not to join the rebellion eventually visited the king's court and reconciled with him. This process likely included paying homage and pledging their loyalty.
[82] Between coronating William on Christmas and promoting Lanfranc to the archbishopric of Canterbury.

to Norman rule, profited from the chaos, fled England, resisted the encroaching Normans, or even sponsored local uprisings.[83]

Æthelsig of St. Augustine's and Ramsey Abandoning his Monasteries (1043-1066)

Abbot Æthelsig of Ramsey and St. Augustine made an important political move by vacating his offices in 1067. It remains unclear what happened to Æthelwig after he left monastic life. Two conflicting accounts of Abbot Æthelsig's departures have emerged. One narrative suggests Æthelsig fled the monasteries to Kent with Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, to join the local rebellion. William's reinforcement of Kent in 1066 suggests an immediate rebellion and a lack of Norman power.[84] In contrast, *Ramsey's Chronicle* claims this abbot fled to find aid from Danish armies. Domesday defends this contention by detailing Æthelsig's ambassadorial visit to Denmark for King Edward the Confessor. Developing the dual possibilities of Æthelwig's travels expands the political actions of abbots during the immediate aftermath of Hastings and William's coronation. [85]

Ealdred of Abingdon Submitting to Normans (1066-1071)

Abbots Ealdred and Æthelwig underwent different experiences: Æthelwig abandoned his tenants, while Ealdred's tenants deserted him (1070). Not capitulating endangered Abbot Sihtric of Tavistock; yet, as Ealdred discovered, compliance did not safeguard Abingdon's safety. After surrendering, the Normans continued to inflict harm on the peasants and confiscate property.[86]

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[83] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest."
[84] Before leaving for Normandy (1067), William appointed Remigius, abbot of Fécamp, to a bishopric in Kent and Odo, bishop of Bayeux, to the earldom of Kent.
[85] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 168; Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 104. *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis.*
[86] These include the failed London resistance (1066), the siege of Exeter (1068), rebellion against Robert (1069), and Harrying of the North (1070).

Abbots in Ealdred's position, by submitting to the invaders, confirmed their property, their tenants' safety, and honored God's choices. The aspects of deciding to yield to Norman rule were complex and multifaceted. In Anglo-Saxon England, for example, the coronation and anointing with divine oil emphasized God's approval. In addition, Abingdon had experienced a vast ancient history dating back to the seventh century, which the abbot protected.[87] The coronation and threat of violence motivated abbots to yield to invading French.

Norman harassment of Anglo-Saxons fueled rebellious pursuits, leading to complicated and volatile disorder.[88] This included monasteries. The plundering of Abingdon's ornaments, for instance, occurred before William accelerated the conquest (1070). Abbot Ealdred remained allied with the invaders despite these abuses. William relied on Ealdred. The abbot secured a political prisoner, Bishop Æthelwine Durham, until the prisoners's death the following winter. King William used the abbots as wardens and the monasteries as prisons for political opponents. William's trust of Ealdred remains a puzzling choice. The king imprisoned Abbot Ealdred following Bishop Æthelwine's imprisoning at Abingdon.[89] William eliminated Abbot Ealdred because Abingdon's tenants resisted Norman control and traveled to Ely.[90] Along with deposing Abbot Ealdred, William imprisoned him at Wallingford Castle.[91] Archbishop Lanfranc alongside this king later judged Ealdred in a public court (1070).[92] In church councils, William and

[87] F.M. Stenton, *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon,* (London: University College Press, 1913), 13.
[88] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 103.
[89] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 208; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 177.
[90] James Townsend, *A History of Abingdon*, (London: Frowde, 1910), 12-13; *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Longmans, 1968) 484-6, 494.
[91] *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, 486: "In illorum etiam dominum, id est, abbatem Ealdredum […] regis inimicitia est perlata, adeo ut absque dilatione, ejus praecepto, apud castellum Walingafordense in captione poneretur. Aliquanto autem post tempore a praedicto loco eductus ut manu Wintoniensis episcopi Walchelini servandus committitur." Later, William imprisoned the Norman Bishop Walkelin of Winchester at Wallingford.
[92] Gerrard, *Church at War*, 79. Gerrard states Abbot Ealdred of Abingdon's men switched sides and joined the king's enemies. It is believed that the abbot had no knowledge or involvement in their defection.

Lanfranc removed, imprisoned, and isolated abbots inside trusted monasteries. The enaction of royal justice legitimized William as a king and furthered his influence. Thus, rebellious abbots created openings for Nomans to legitimize themselves through monastic discipline.

Sihtric of Tavistock Joining a Pirate Gang (1042-1069)

Abbot Ealdred protected his territory from chaotic violence; in contrast, Abbots Sihtric and Æthelwig exploited the chaos inherent in conquest to leave the monastic order.[93] Æthelwig helped the Anglo-Saxon resistance while Sihtric took up piracy. After 1066, a period of disorder and turbulence began. Traditional enemies profited from the downfall of the Anglo-Saxon government. This included pirates with the sons of King Harold from Ireland, Scotland's king harboring the defeated nobility, Eadric attacking Hereford from the forests of Wales, and Abbot Sihtric.[94] Sihtric indeed stole a donation intended for Horton from King Edward's relative.[95] Following defeat, King Harold's descendents navigated each year with pirates from Ireland and assaulted Bedford Bay, near Tavistock (1067-1069).[96] The association between Harold's heirs and Abbot Sihtric with pirates in the same location opens up the possibility the abbot and princes joined the same group of sea-faring criminals.[97]

Frederic of St. Albans, Resisting the Normans (1066–1077)

Æthelsig, Sihtric, Ealdred, and Frederic secured influence in England before its conquest by overseeing wealthy monasteries; for example, Frederic became a close friend of King

[93] H.P.R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).
[94] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester,* 171.
[95] William, *Gesta Pontificium Anglorum*, 319, 95.6. Eadwulf donated to Horton Abbey upon his death. William of Malmesbury reports that Abbot Sihtric took "gift and giver" for himself.
[96] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 206. Harold's sons attacked Bristol Bay, near Tavistock, in 1067.
[97] William, *Gesta Pontificium Anglorum,* 319, 95.6. Abbot Sihtric of Tavistock became a pirate.

Edward.[98] Frederic and Ealdred became abbots during Harold's reign.[99] St. Albans' abbot, Frederic, acquired roles following the invasion. Frederic expresses these other roles by organizing his vassals' protection from incoming Norman warriors, "as if an imminent storm of the sea."[100] Frederic ordered tenants to lock doors and board windows. This diligent abbot likewise created a call and response for the gate and instituted a night watch.

When violence failed, Normans introduced subtle methods for acquiring monastic property by breaking contracts and intimidation. Frederic yielded to William and leased land to a Norman abbot (1067-1069), Geoffrey of Westminster. This agreement followed the abbot of Westminster's addition of an extra forest to the contract.[101] At this meeting, Westminster's abbot remained unpunished because of his familiarity with William.[102] William, after the abbot confronted the king with his corruption, committed to altering royal policies on monastic possessions, signaling benevolent intentions towards the Anglo-Saxons. In contrast, William deprived St. Albans of property on the pretext of requiring military aid, prompting chronicles to accuse William of not changing his policies.[103] Frederic's struggle against the unstoppable Normans includes the encroachment on monastic land and, in time, imposing Norman abbots.[104] While the ruling Normans continued their oppression, rebellious groups chose Frederic to lead because this abbot, connected with the old nobility, performed charity for the English and

[98] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti*, 44: "Erat namque diligens, prudens, et fidelis, et pio Regi Edwardo amicissimus."
[99] One effect of William's rule denied business under King Harold was illegitimate.
[100] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani* (London: Longmans, 1867), 42: "quasi imminente in mari tempestate."
[101] Hagger, "The Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani: Litigation and History at St. Albans."
[102] King William dismissed Frederic's opposition at the Westminster meeting.
[103] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 44: "autem novo Rege Willelmo sibi rebelles, qui adhuc restabant edmandi in Anglia, praestitit dictus Abbas Frethericus refugium, adminiculum, favorem, et auxilium, nobilibus Angliae, et praeipue praelatis, injuras vastas tolerantibus."
[104] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 41-53; Gerrard, *Church at War*, 34. The northern English chose Abbot Ealdred as their leader. The southerners chose Abbot Frederic of St. Albans. However, their unity was quickly neutralized by William's smooth words and generous promises.

resisted William's harshness.[105] King William negotiated peace with Abbot Frederic and swore an oath at Berkhamsted.[106] The peace continued for a brief period; still, the abbot and king remained belligerent enemies.[107]

Normans targeted Frederic because he aided those who resisted Norman rule.[108] Frederic's resistance to foreign rule furthered ecclesiastical militarization (after 1070).[109] Then, identifying Frederic as a rebel, William took possession of his monastic lands[110] and gave the land of defeated Anglo-Saxon nobles to Normans within his service.[111] After Frederic retreated from his monastery for safety to the Monastery of Ely, Lanfranc appointed his nephew Paul as abbot St. Albans.

Conclusion

The wide range of abbatial reactions to the Norman Conquest reflected the period's (1066-1070) political climate. Monasteries had no interconnecting or corporate culture to bind them. Thus, abbots made independent decisions. Æthelsig and Sihtric abandoned their abbacy to join an alternative secular leader. Æthelsig departed from the monasteries to offer counsel to the rebellion, while Sihtric opted to join a criminal organization. Ealdred and Frederic, in contrast, submitted to the invaders while representing their interests. William and Lanfranc eliminated the abbots when their loyalty to the Normans became uncertain. Frederic fled to Ely, while Ealdred

[105] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 41: "Cnutoni Regi fuit consanguineus."
[106] Berkhamsted was the traditional location for submission.
[107] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 47: "Occurrerunt igitur Angli memorati […] in regimine et ducatu Abbatis Fretherici, praesente Archiepiscopo Lanfranco, Rex, pro bono pacis."
[108] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 104.
[109] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 156-7, 168.
[110] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 47: "Coepit igitur Rex vehementer sibi timere, ne totum regnum […] etiam trucidatus."
[111] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 51: "Rex igitur Willelmus, de morte Abbatis Fretherici certificatus, caenobium Sancti Albani vacans in manu sua tenuit, et, extirpatis sylvis et depauperatis hominibus, oppressit."

became a prisoner. Outside the monasteries and cathedrals, the Anglo-Saxon rebellion's immediate threat delayed implanting Norman ecclesiastical figures.[112] The static gap of inaction between the Battle of Hastings and Harrying of the North signals the unique status of monasteries as a protected class. The removal of Anglo-Saxon abbots was gradual.[113] William started eliminating bishops and abbots, seizing monastic wealth, and importing Norman ecclesiastics, which signaled his designation of monasteries as a threat. Geography maintained the relationship between rebellions and monasteries. Incidentally, monks settled in rural areas to find spiritual peace, and rebellious Anglo-Saxons populated similar forests and unpopulated regions. Ealdred of Abingdon and Frederic of St. Albans represented the monastic opposition against Norman control.[114]

Monasteries and Rebellion (1070-1075)

The Harrying of the North arose from the Norman reaction to native resistance sparked by a large Danish army invading in England's North.[115] The Danish military met Anglo-Saxon nobles who had retreated from their ancestral homes in Winter 1069-1070. To protect William's new kingdom from invasion, the king marched north for York to organize war against the northern population.[116] War on the continent, in particular, involved knights waging warfare on peasant populations. Contemporary military leaders became proficient and practiced harrying during the wars in France and England. This diminished their property and created distrust in the

[112] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 5. Chibnall notes the takeover of the aristocracy and then the slightly slower taking over of church appointments by continental bishops and abbots.
[113] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 23. Burton describes removal of the Anglo-Saxon rulers of religious houses as gradual rather than drastic.
[114] *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, 482: "Tunc duo rubrogati sunt, Haroldus comes scilicet in regem Anglorum; et Ealdredus hactenus exteriorum praeposituram Abbendoniae agens, inibi in abbatem monachorum." Both Frederic and Ealdred became abbots in Harold's reign.
[115] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 48-53; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 173-4. Sweyn of Denmark sailed the Humber to York.
[116] *The Chronicle of John of Worcester* emphasizes the novelty of William's reign as a subtle critique.

security provided by their lord. Likewise, William's Norman campaign against Northumbria involved decimating peasants and their possessions.[117] Famine arose as the immediate impact, while the North of England remained weakened throughout the Anglo-Norman period.[118]

Famine was not the sole effect of the Harrying of the North. The spring of 1070 inaugurated an unambiguous shift in King William's policy that led him to militarize the monasteries. For instance, King William deposed Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury (1052-1070), and appointed Lanfranc (1070-1089) during an Easter court in 1070. At the start of William's middle reign, replacing local abbots accelerated the conquest of England. King William and the archbishop hosted a series of councils where they deposed abbots and bishops. Next, the king ordered vassals to seize monastic wealth.[119] William and Archbishop Lanfranc then implanted Norman abbots in concert with deposing rebellious native abbots. In addition, they replaced compliant and collaborative abbots after their peaceful death.[120] After 1070, the rebellions that survived the longest aggregated and concentrated power in a specific place. The rapid elimination of abbots transferred monasteries into William's hands until he appointed a new abbot. The last recorded death of an abbot in 1085 appointed before Norman rule illustrates the transition speed from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics during William's reign. No Anglo-Saxon rose to a position of power in the Anglo-Norman church. To contrast this domination, Hereward and the earls' rebellion arose as challenges for Norman leaders.[121]

[117] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 50.
[118] Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, 319.
[119] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 113.
[120] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 111.
[121] Hereward rebelled at Ely (1070-71). Earl Ralph and Roger rebelled against William in Hereford and Norwich (1075).

The Danish army and local rebels found refuge from York in Ely's monastery in the Fens, where Hereward retained allies, including Abbot Brand in Peterborough. In response, the king besieged Ely in 1070-1071. The role of Peterborough and Ely during the first rebellion contrasted with the alliances of the abbot of Evesham during the second rebellion in 1075. In particular, Lanfranc of Canterbury, Æthelwig of Abingdon, Wulfric of Worcester, and Odo of Bayeux opposed this rebellion of earls. The enhanced focus on individual abbots arose from a Norman emphasis on personal relationships.

Lanfranc Militarizing Monasteries (1070-1089)

The Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman power transfer began by eliminating the local aristocracy at Hastings. After the Danish army arrived in 1069, William harried the north, removed Archbishop Stigand, appointed Lanfranc, then seized local wealth deposited in the monasteries.[122] These actions built a successful working relationship between King William and the archbishop, each advocating for their interests while respecting their partner's authority.[123] Earlier, as abbot of Bec, Lanfranc attained the pope's favor for the Norman Conquest.[124] In addition, Lanfranc consecrated bishops on King William's orders; in particular, William allowed the church to accumulate wealth and Lanfranc to hold church land "like the king has his."[125]

[122] "Annales De Witonia" in *Annales Monastici,* 29: *"*Stigandum acrchiepiscopum et alios plures episcopos et abbates degradeverunt, assensu et voluntate Willelmi regis." "Annales de Waverleia" in *Annales Monastici,* 191: "Deposito Stigando apostata." *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani,* ed. Thomas Walsingham (London: Longmans, 1863), 45: "Primo igitur Stigandum Archiepisopum-papali persuasu libentius-perpetuo carceri mancipavit et merito."
[123] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 22.
[124] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 47: "Archiepiscopus igitur, Papali animatus at armatus favore, et regali, omnes Rei rebellious, tam praelatos quam magnates, potenter expugnatos, alisit." "Annales De Wintonia," 2, 29: "Stigandus, qui dudum archiepiscopus, jussu regis captus et in Wintoniae oppido positus est."
[125] "Acts of Lanfranc." Lanfranc consecrated bishops for King William; "iubente rege" for the bishopric of Durham; "Petente rege"for the bishopric of Dublin. 289: "consuetudines suas ita liberas terra marique habere, sicut rex habet suas."

This symbiotic relationship formed through the exchange of authority and exercised itself when eliminating native abbots and seizing monastic wealth. Lanfranc and William started deposing, removing, and imprisoning abbots in 1070.[126] For example, Lanfranc deposed Æthelnoth, Glastonbury's abbot (1070), and Wulfketel, the abbot of Croyland (1085), in a council in Gloucester.[127] Lanfranc confined Æthelnoth in Canterbury after his removal from office and imprisoned Wulfketel in Glastonbury.[128]

Lanfranc facilitated William's introduction of military service to monasteries, including imprisoning political rivals and implanting knights.[129] St. Albans' abbot claimed England's conquest resulted from the ecclesiastical endorsement given upon the invading Normans.[130] For example, William forced English monasteries to lease land for pledged service to knights. This resulted in the continuous surveilling and suppressing of local abbots while reinforcing the foreign abbot's authority. In addition, scattering military populations in rural areas raised King William's influence.[131] The military benefits of knights and monastic resources thus aided William's extended conquest.

William ordered the removal of monastic wealth in 1070 upon receiving advice from those at the frontline on the connection between monasteries and rebellious groups. King William directed vassals to search monasteries for wealth from deposited by now-deceased local nobles in the preparations for 1066. William's belief in a relationship between monasteries and

[126] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 156; Gerrard, *Church at War*, 79.
[127] "Acts of Lanfranc," 289.
[128] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 156.
[129] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 173, 157.
[130] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 49; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 5. Chibnall notes the take over aristocracy and the slightly slower taking over of church appointments by continental bishops and abbots.
[131] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*.

rebellion motivated the purposeful seizure of wealth.[132] Normans compounded this act by seizing control of both property leased to Anglo-Saxons for a fixed period (three deaths or generations) and land owned by monasteries.[133]

Hereward Plundering Peterborough from Ely (1070)

Upon William's arrival, the Anglo-Saxon army moved to the Fens and Ely monastery.[134] The region presented an intricate web of marshlands, lakes, and flooded valleys. Locals used this complex geography to hide from foreigners, who relied on local guides. This compelled William to build a bridge to march Norman troops into Ely. When confidence in forcing Normans out of England faded, as each rebellion failed, the Danes negotiated with King William and left.[135] The departure of the Danish army weakened Hereward's rebellion. Afterward, the desperate Englishmen turned to Hereward at Ely and joined other rebellions that challenged Norman oppression. The rebellion intensified when exiles, such as Hereward, returned after William's invasion. Hereward associated himself with his uncle Brand, the abbot of Peterborough, after Normans murdered his kin for property. Rebellious armies frequented Peterborough, while Brand remained abbot.[136] Likewise, Frederic of St. Albans maintained a relationship with the rebellious

[132] *Peterborough Chronicle*, trans. H.A. Rositzke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 1070: "the king had all monasteries sacked." "Annales de Dunstaplia" in *Annales Monastici,* 3, 12: *"*Rex Willelmus monasteria totius Angliae perscrutatur, et pecuniam a divitibus ibi depositam abstulit, et in thesauris suis reposuit." "Annales de Bermundeseia" in *Annales Monastici,* 2, 424: "Willelmus rex monasteria totius Angliae perscrutari." "Annales de Wintonia," 2, 29: "Stigandum archiepiscopum et alios plures episcopos et abbates degradaverunt, assensu et voluntate Willelmi regis." *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 45-6: "Verum etiam multum illi dissimilis, Rex Wolstani, Episcopi Wigorniensis, et Walteri, Episcopi Herefordensis, et Fretherici Abbatis Sancti Albani, maneria, praedia, domos, et possessiones, devestavit."

[133] Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*. The confiscation of monastic wealth in 1070 resulted in meaningful gaps in the legal documents of twelfth-century Anglo-Norman monasteries, which resulted in creating forged documents. The legal consequences to the Norman Conquest was one motivation to create the monastic and abbatial hitories used in this investigation.

[134] In the event of an English invasion, this location was traditionally used as a retreat.

[135] King Swein came to terms with King William. The Danish abandoned Hereward with the plunder of Peterborough at Ely (1070).

[136] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 28.

natives closest to him. William accused Ealdred of doing the same. During Brand's abbacy, Peterborough remained prominent for Anglo-Saxons while this abbot sponsored his nephew, Hereward. After Brand's death, Hereward moved to Ely.

After the inflammatory events of 1070s, the number of rebellious Ely residents expanded. This included the regular population of monastics, peasants, the Danish military, and the local aristocracy. After the largest Anglo-Saxon defeat in 1070, the surviving knights dragged themselves towards the Fens.[137] Earls Edwin and Morcar fled William's court just before the king's opinion turned.[138] As mentioned before, Frederic joined the rebellion following William's retaliation against the abbot, who endorsed the insurrection opposing Norman rule. Rebellious peasants congregated at Ely, such as the tenants of Abingdon. Multiple political exiles from every grade connected with Danish soldiers and the regular monastic population. This created unusual day-to-day circumstances, where soldiers ate alongside church members.[139] Despite contrasting interests and values, the group continued to resist Norman rule. The monastery's relationship with rebellion in time became unsustainable. In 1071, Ely's monks betrayed the uprising and showed the foreigners how to enter their hidden monastery; though, the monks warned the army of Danes, Hereward, and the Normans of their betrayal.[140]

Ely became rebellious with a unified goal: reversing the recent conquest. William's opportunity to inject Norman influence into Peterborough arose when the monastery's last Anglo-Saxon abbot, Brand, died (1069). Lanfranc moved the militaristic Turold to Peterborough.

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[137] *Liber Eliensis*, ed. D.J. Stewart (London: Impendesis Societatis, 1848.), 102, 225.
[138] *Liber Eliensis,* 227, 103; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 117; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 207.

[139] *Liber Eliensis,* 224-228, 102-106.
[140] Knowles*, Monastic Order in England*, 105.

Turold came to England with William under Abbot Remigius and embraced Norman warrior culture. Turold styled himself as a knight and surrounded himself with warriors. William reinforced this militarized behavior. The new abbot leased land to a large population of combatants for military services. Turold of Fécamp, Malmesbury, and Peterborough maintained his status as one of the greatest militaristic ecclesiastics. Anglo-Saxon resistance ensured Turold continued living as a warrior.

Politics divided Ely's monks based on whom the Peterborough monks warned.[141] The monks informed the rebels of the incumbent Norman abbot's imminent arrival. In contrast, an individual monk of Peterborough, Yware, warned this new abbot of Hereward's plans to plunder. To begin, Hereward's plundering army used fire to enter the East Bolhithe Gate, which burned Peterborough.[142] Then, the Danish army alongside Hereward plundered the hidden items with help inside Peterborough. The outlaws packed portable wealth into boats, and the Danes drove out every monk but one.[143] Traveling as far as Denmark, other monks followed the relics of saints. The rest fled into the countryside and returned once Turold arrived with a large group of knights. Afterward, the Anglo-Norman church sympathized with the victims of the raid on Peterborough. Indeed, Bishop Æthelric excommunicated those who contributed. A later section will examine Turold's rebuilding of the monastery and leasing monastic properties to knights.

Serlo's Abbacy at Gloucester (1072-1104)

The short-term effects of the Norman Conquest devastated England. More shocking circumstances happened to one of the least documented abbots, Serlo. When King William

[141] *Peterborough Chronicle*, 1070.
[142] All burned except for one house.
[143] Except the ill Leofwine the Tall, who remained in the monastery infirmary.

appointed Serlo, a mere three monks lived in Gloucester.[144] No records describe the mass depopulating event and it remains probable that the invading army damaged Gloucester. Upon appointing a Norman abbot, multiple monasteries experienced a purposeful exodus of monastics, including Peterborough and St. Augustine's. The chronicle of Tewkesbury exists as the record of Serlo's accession and death.[145] Serlo and Gloucester proved influential in their own time. Normans trusted Serlo with the responsibility of imprisoning Winchcombe's abbot.[146] In addition, Serlo buried the last recorded native abbot in England from a small monastery near Gloucester.[147] William then appointed a monk recommended by Serlo to became Pershore's abbot.[148]

Paul Transforming St. Albans (1077-1093)

In the 1070s, King William implanted a second wave of abbots, such as Serlo, who did not contribute to the William's invasion in 1066.[149] As William eliminated the remaining Anglo-Saxon abbots or they died, the king replaced them by importing Norman allies. Lanfranc appointed his travel companion and nephew to the abbacy of St. Albans.[150] The former abbot, Frederic, had fled to save the monastery from further degradation.[151] Paul shared Lanfranc's dismissive views on the perceived primitive native religion.[152] The reforms of the new abbot

[144] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 447, 155.1-2.
[145] "Annales Monasterii de Theokesberia" in *Annales Monastici,* 1, 43-4.
[146] Thomas of Marlborough, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, ed. J.E. Sayers and Leslie Watkiss, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 158: "Rex etiam Willelmus tollens abbatem Wincelcumbensem, Godricum nomine, fecit constitui in captiuitate apud Gloecestre moxque huic abbat Ageluuio suam abbatiam commisit, quam fere per tres annos quasi propriam in cunctis gubernando seruauit." Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 22.
[147] This abbot died in Pershore (1085).
[148] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester,* 184.
[149] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 75.
[150] Lanfranc and Paul traveled to Rome after the former became archbishop of Canterbury.
[151] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 46, 51; William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 481, 179.2; *The Monastic Order in England,* 124.
[152] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest."

included destroying, disregarding, and degrading church property.[153] William of Malmesbury's description of Abbot Paul of St. Alban's rule juxtaposes other primary sources that mourned the loss of local traditions and relics.[154] The Normans devalued the native saints, rituals, and beliefs.[155] For example, Paul burned the saints' relics to test their true power[156] and destroyed the graves of earlier abbots.[157] The incumbent Norman abbot imposed new rituals that dictated the everyday lives for the monks.[158] In a later passage, William wrote, "St. Albans reached its zenith of religious observance, thanks to Abbot Paul, with the encouragement from Archbishop Lanfranc."[159] In Paul's abbacy, he reformed his monastery according to Norman standards. Likewise, Paul reclaimed land seized during the age of Frederic.[160]

Æthelwig Collaborating with Normans (1058-1077)

Just as with Serlo and Paul, the monasteries favored by King William flourished. During William's early reign, he tolerated compliant and obedient abbots. Evesham attained aid from Normans. Evesham's abbot populated an exclusive group of powerful Anglo-Saxons. In William's middle reign, Æthelwig strengthened the Normans in their conquest while providing charity to victims.[161] Abbot Æthelwig placed his faith in King William and was well received at court.[162] The reasons behind William's association with and trust of Æthelwig have various possibilities. In late Anglo-Saxon England, Æthelwig and Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester worked

[153] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain,* 168.
[154] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 52, 62-6.
[155] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 157.
[156] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 62.
[157] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 52.
[158] *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 51.
[159] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 481, 179.2.
[160] L.F.R. Williams, *History of the Abbey of St. Albans* (London: Longmans, 1917).
[161] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 113.
[162] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 155: "iste tamen abbas Ageluuius confidens in Domino ad eum accessit."

together in law, religion, and war. One reason was Æthelwig's connection to the earlier administration, superior administrative skills, and immediate submission. During King Edward's last seven years, Æthelwig had served as Worcester's bishop before administering Evesham Monastery.[163] In 1072, William summoned Æthelwig to Clarendon with the five knights Æthelwig owed the king.[164] The abbot became a councilor and close friend of King Edward. In governing Evesham, Æthelwig saw Edward more than once. Abbot Æthelwig's exceptional administrative capabilities led to his promotion to Abbot of Evesham.[165] Later, Æthelwig kept Normans from stealing the monastery's property.[166] This monastery lacks evidence of Norman encroachment, which plagued other monasteries.[167] Lanfranc called upon Evesham's abbot to regain land for Christ's Church.[168] In addition, this abbot loaned money and advised Wulfstan, the succeeding bishop of Worcester,[169] including two gold bars during Wulfstan's legal battle with Thomas, the archbishop of York. Æthelwig's advice and funds assisted the bishop's

[163] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 155: "Biuente autem isto Dei cultore rege Æduuardo septem annis abbas Ageluuius huic loco preerat."
[164] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 27; Dickson, "The Family of Æthelwig, Abbot of Evesham 1058–78 and Acting Justiciar of the Mercian Province," *Midland History* 49, no. 1 (2024), 3-32. Æthelwig's name designated him as related to Wessex royalty.
[165] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, section 151: "quendam de suis monachum elegit ad id officium honestis moribus ualde probatum, tam generis nobilitate quam diuina lege ac seculari prudentia pluimum ualentem."
[166] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 151: "Misit quoque eum cum quibusfam fratribus et honorabilibus secularibus personis ad regen Æduuardum."
[167] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 156: "plures itaque abbatie alieque ecclesie terras et possessiones illo tempore Normannis inuadentibus perdiderunt, set ipse Dei nutu non solum nullas perdidit set maioribus opibus et honoribus abbatiam istam multipliciter adauxit."
[168] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 158: "Nam quadam uice uocatus ab archiepiscopo Lanfranco, quasdam terras diu ablatas Cantuariensi ecclesie Christi ipse iudex et testis adquisiuit."
[169] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*.

success.[170] The connection to Edward the Confessor's reign and unique abilities impressed William.[171]

The benefits of collaboration improved Evesham. Æthelwig's impression motivated King William to place the abbot in charge of seven shires and further trusted the abbot to administer Winchcombe until William found a suitable replacement.[172] When the new abbot died, William returned the monastery to Æthelwig.[173] Next, Evesham enhanced in power during Æthelwig's abbacy and held authority over courts and Norman lords.[174] Æthelwig furthermore provided food and shelter to Northern England from Yorkshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and Derbyshire.[175]

The Revolt of the Earls (1075)

Abbot Æthelwig of Evesham did more than charity. Æthelwig of Evesham became active during the Norman offensive against the rebellion at Hereford. The military campaigns against rebelling earls illustrate Æthelwig's significance for William's conquering of England.[176] Indeed, William relied on ecclesiastical and alternative military leaders during this rebellion.[177] During

[170] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 158: "Ad hanc rem defendam duas marcas auri abbas sibi accomodauit et unam dedit, et ita, Deo opitulante et abbate uerbo et opere consilium et opem ferente, libertatem ecclesie sue seruauit."
[171] R.R. Darlington, "Æthelwig, Abbot of Evesham," *The English Historical Review* 48, no. 189 (1934), 1–22; J.C. Jennings, "The Writings of Prior Dominic of Evesham," *The English Historical Review* 77, no. 303 (1962), 298–304.
[172] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain*, 136; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 62. Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 156: "Et quoniam rex sapiens cognouerat eum uirum prudentem, pene omnes huius gentis homines seculari sapientia precellentem, commisit ei curam istarum partium terre, uidelicet Wirecestrescire, Glouecestrescire, Oxenefordscire et Wareuuikescire, Herefordschire, Stafordscire, Shrobscire, ita ut omnium huius patrie consilia atque iudicia fere in eo penderent."
[173] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 158: "Deinde rex donauit illam cuidam abbati Galando nomine, et, eo post modicum tempus ex quo eam accepit defuncto, iterum isti abbati Ageluuio committitur, qua longo tempore postea uti propria dominabatur," the appointment and quick death of Galadus, Abbot of Winchcombe.
[174] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 34. William orders Æthelwig to meet him with the knights at Abingdon.
[175] Thomas, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, 159: "Pater quoque pauperum, iudex uiduarum, pupillorum, orphanorum, peregrinorum, omnium miserorum consolator erat piissimus, elemosinas largifluas ubicumque pergebat fecit distribui benigniter omnibus."
[176] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 103-106.
[177] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 75.

William's middle reign, two earls broke their loyalty to Normandy as descendants of Anglo-Saxon and Normans. Earl Roger and Ralph produced the Anglo-Saxons' last gasp of rebellion.[178] These earls found ancestors in Normandy and England. The two earls came to rule the individual shires their families controlled. During the conquest, King William rewarded their endorsement of England's conquest with the earldom of their fathers. Ralph of Norfolk married Emma, the daughter of the king's second-in-command, William Fitz Osborn. By tradition, this insurrection began at this wedding; the dissenting earls enticed earls, bishops, and abbots to join the uprising. Afterward, the earl left his new wife from Norfolk and sailed to Denmark. Ralph's wife's stay in Norfolk became an impressive part of Ralph's voyage. After a prolonged siege, Emma defended Norfolk for three months. Ralph arrived from Denmark late, with two hundred ships, before the couple retreated to their French land in Brittany.[179] Historians remain unaware of what happened to Ralph and Emma.

William's removal and imprisonment of church figures at Ely in 1070 contrasted ecclesiastical alliances with Normans during 1075. The refusal to aid rebelling Anglo-Saxons and acceptance to finance the offense signifies the enhanced influence of the Normans on separate monasteries. Ralph's retreat occurred because churchmen became involved in the Norman offense against the two rebelling earls. In the Norman military offensive of 1075, the bishop of Bayeux, Odo and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, employed the church as a military power.[180]

[178] After this rebellion, internal resistance to William's reign came from fellow Normans.
[179] Gerrard, *Church at War*, 39-40: "Norwich was besieged and eventually taken, though on this occasion the vanquished were allowed to withdraw."
[180] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 178.

Æthelwig's involvement in this rebellion signals the power shift. Worcester's bishop and Evesham's abbot remained integral to William's response.[181]

William Punishing Wulfketel and Waltheof

Æthelwig's collaboration with the Norman settlers is juxtaposed to the Anglo-Saxon pride of Abbot Wulfketel of Croyland (1061-1095). Lanfranc deposed Wulfketel for burying Earl Waltheof at Croyland. Waltheof's fidelity had waffled between invaders and natives. King William, for example, included Waltheof among the group of hostages taken in 1067.[182] After achieving prominence at the battle in York in 1069, Waltheof and a small set of natives regained peace with the king.[183] Then, the earls requested Waltheof's aid in 1075. Later, Waltheof betrayed them to William's representative in England.[184] William trusted Waltheof's protests of innocence before William charged him with treason and ordered Waltheof's death.[185] Abbot Wulfketel moved Waltheof's body to his monastery.[186] A crowd followed the deceased earl to Croyland, where they gave him an honorable internment in the chapter house.[187] Without stating whether the transporter got the king's permission, the Peterborough and Worcester chronicles depict Wulfketel moving Waltheof's corpse.[188] Afterwards, William questioned the earl and

[181] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 178. Wulfstan and Æthelwig enlisted Worcestershire's sheriff and Walter de Lacy to prevent Roger from meeting Ralph.
[182] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 1067.
[183] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 1070.
[184] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 178-9.
[185] *Peterborough Chronicle*, 1076; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 179; "Annales De Witonia," 2, 32. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 23; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Oxford: Boydell, 1996). Orderic Vitalis suggests the wife of Waltheof, Judith, influenced King William's leniency and his decision to allow Waltheof's burial in Croyland.
[186] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 182.4-6; Rofee, "The Historia Croylandensis: A Plea for Reassessment," *The English Historical Review* 110, no. 435 1995, 93–108. Anglo-Normans viewed Waltheof's execution and hailed him as a martyr as an innocent man.
[187] Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ch. 15; *Peterborough Chronicle*, 1076; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 179.
[188] *Peterborough Chronicle*, 1075; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 1074.

abbot's sentence and delayed punishing them. The consequences of burying Waltheof resulted in Wulfketel of Croyland's deposition and imprisonment in Glastonbury from 1082 until Wulfketel's death in 1089.[189]

Conclusion

Disposing and imprisoning resistant abbots thus became a precedent in William's middle reign. In 1070, William began by replacing Stigand with Lanfranc as archbishop of Canterbury, the highest ecclesiastical position and seized portable wealth and documents to fill urban treasuries. Lanfranc then moved Turold to Peterborough,[190] though, before the abbot's arrival, Hereward raided Peterborough as the rebel commander of Ely's uprising. Reinforcing monastic effort's in the Anglo-Saxon rebellions of 1070 contrasts the abbatial alliance with Normans in 1075. Overall, implanted foreign abbots reformed Anglo-Saxon monks and monasteries to Norman standards.

Four Foreign Abbots (1066-1089)

The Norman Conquest and Harrying of the North accelerated monastic militarization. Normans eliminated abbots in battle and then in court. After placing allied Normans in abbacies, they made and organized property contracts with native abbots, reformed monastic culture, and accelerated William's conquest. Securing Norman supremacy enhanced abbatial power, authority, and jurisdiction.

The cases described above illuminate the clearest examples of King William facilitating the abuse of allied abbots. When Frederic remained abbot, Geoffrey of Westminster intruded on

[189] "Acts of Lanfranc," 290-291.
[190] Lanfranc also removed Geoffrey of Winchester (1070); see below.

St. Albans' monastic properties. This shows King William's favor for external abbots and disregard for Anglo-Saxon protests. Second, the imposition of knights on monastic lands is apparent in Turold's abbacy. Archbishop Lanfranc's reforms displaced Geoffrey as Westminster's abbot and promoted Turold to the abbacy of Peterborough in 1070. The promotion and reinforcement of Turold signals William's endorsement of militaristic abbots. Before 1070, Lanfranc arose qualified, educated, and capable. The archbishop worked towards imposing a single rule onto monasteries. As the archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc spent more time and effort with monasteries than his predecessor, Stigand, or successor, Anselm. Last, William created precedents in the early and central parts of his reign against resistant and rebellious natives. In Lanfranc's final years, these precedents facilitated the infamous abuses of the abbots of Glastonbury (Thurstan in 1083) and St. Augustine's (Wido in 1089) at the start of their reigns.[191]

William introduced a new method of influence through this change in purpose. The power of monasteries depended on their relationship with William. For instance, William began dispensing monastic land for pledged services to new abbots.[192] In addition, settled knights degraded monastic property (for example, Frederic of St. Albans, Ealdred of Abingdon, and Wulfketel of Croyland). Knights leasing land from monasteries owed service to King William through allied abbots (such as Paul of St. Albans, Æthelwig of Evesham, and Turold of Peterborough,). William placed the knights into monasteries and removed the abbots. William and Lanfranc established a pattern of eradicating, removing, and excluding recalcitrant. The king

[191] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest."
[192] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 169. Chibnall notes that in Anglo-Norman England, tenants and vassals were refusing to acknowledge their duties towards a newly appointed abbot, as well as questioning the authority of his court.

and archbishop expanded this elimination procedure to include Geoffrey and Thurstan, two maleficent, recalcitrant, and venal abbots from the four described in this final section.

The experiences of these four abbots (Wido, Thurstan, Turold, and Geoffrey) illuminate the results of implanting Normans to fight against rebelling Anglo-Saxons.[193] Twelfth-century historians viewed Thurstan's crimes as a symbolic representation of the Norman reaction to resistant monks.[194] In addition, the concepts of freedom from oppression and self-determination motivated local monks to resist. Elevated expectations and depressed experiences pushed monks in the wealthiest monasteries to resist and protest Norman abbots. At Peterborough and St. Augustine's, resistance expressed itself through the exit and flight of monks to nearby churches.[195] This happened to Turold (1070) and later Wido (1089).

Geoffrey's Abbacy at Westminster (1066-1070)

Flete's *History of Westminster* remains the sole narrative of Geoffrey's rule as the abbot of Westminster (1066-1070).[196] Before the conquest, Geoffrey served as abbot of Jumièges.[197] Geoffrey's appointment and deposition as Westminster's abbot coincided with the coronating of William and Lanfranc's promotion to the archbishopric of Canterbury.[198] Abbot Geoffrey's swift appointment hinted that Jumièges' monks contributed to invading Britain; but no evidence of his attendance survived. Flete recorded Geoffrey engaging with Frederic at St. Albans to further

[193] Knowles, "Essays in Monastic History 1066–1215: II. The Norman Plantation." Nicole Marafioti, "Secular and Ecclesiastical Justice in Late Anglo-Saxon England," *Speculum* 94, no. 3 (2019), 774–805.
[194] Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History,* 52: "I could relate many such instances, if they would edify the reader's mind; but such subjects are by no means agreeable, and, therefore, without dwelling on them, I gladly employ my pen on other matters."
[195] Both after the first Norman abbot arrives.
[196] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J.A. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 84.
[197] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, 84: "quondam abbas sancti Petri de Gymeges in Normania."
[198] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, 84: *"*iste primo de genere Normanorum per ipsum regem Willelmum conquestorem introdoctus est."

Norman rule.[199] The documentary record of Geoffrey provides no sign of the predatory methods displayed in other monastic and abbatial histories. With fewer records than Peterborough's narrative,[200] this investigation has explored Geoffrey's encroachment on monasteries from an Anglo-Saxon position.[201] In particular, Frederic and Geoffrey began negotiating a specific lease agreement; Geoffrey then claimed the Bruteite forest with Aldenham Manor in a council with King William. When the twenty-year lease ended, Aldenham and the forest remained with Westminster.

Geoffrey's quick appointment by William mirrors the archbishop's swift removal and exile of Geoffrey in 1070.[202] Lanfranc's immediate deposition and exile of Abbot Geoffrey signaled the tone for Lanfranc's rule as archbishop. Occurring as part of Lanfranc's reforms, the close timing of his accession and the abbot's sentence back to Jumièges illustrate Lanfranc's authority. William's earlier relationship with Geoffrey makes it probable that William refused to depose his vassal.[203] After Geoffrey's deposition, the abbot returned to his monastery in Jumiéges as a monk. Thus, Lanfranc deposed and cleaned up two abbots: Geoffrey and Thurstan that William had appointed. By deposing Geoffrey, Lanfranc asserted his power in his relationship between the monasteries and William. Abbots in the first wave became used to committing violence and aiding William's extended conquest. Normans appointed abbots such as

[199] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, 84: "quarto anno sui regiminis certis ex causis veris et legitimis."
[200] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 114.
[201] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey,* 84: "Qualiter Abbas Westmonasterii manerium de Aldenham per praedictum Abbate sibi ad tempus affirmatum Regis praedicti fretus adjutorio, pro perpetuo sibi fallaciter usurpavit." *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani,* 41-53.
[202] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, 84: "ab eodem rege et archiepiscopo Cantuariae Lanfranco correctus est."
[203] Geoffrey's involvement in the campaign (1066) and William's aid in acquiring the forest adjacent to Aldenham Manor.

Turold and Geoffrey because they helped William's efforts. As the examination below reveals, this did not diminish the successive Norman abbots' potential for internal violence.[204]

After Geoffrey's elimination, William and Lanfranc appointed Bernay's abbot, Vitalis. Bernay was close with Fécamp, which also sustained a close relationship with the conquest. Lanfranc's appointment of Vitalis to Westminster occurred in 1073,[205] 1077,[206] or 1076.[207] Chroniclers and historians emphasized Vitalis as Westminster's first Norman abbot, not Geoffrey. Over the course of Vitalis' abbacy, Westminster became eminent in administering the Anglo-Norman church. The monastery's central location strengthened Westminster as a meeting place. William, for example, signaled his trust in Geoffrey when he deposed and imprisoned Bishop Æthelwig in Westminster.[208]

Turold Militarizing Malmesbury and Peterborough (1067-1098)

Turold's career, from Malmesbury to Peterborough, illustrates how King William used militarized monasteries, such as Malmesbury, as the focused offensive (Peterborough) against native rebellions (Ely).[209] William placed Norman collaborators and contributors to William's

[204] Thurstan commanded his knights to assault the monks (1083). Lanfranc was granted permission by Wido to brutally suppress any resistance from the monks within the monastery (1089). Following Lanfranc's death the same year, Wido removed the Anglo-Saxon monks from his monastery.
[205] Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, 84: "Vitalis, quondam abbas de Berneges in Mornannia, in abbatem Westmonasterii creatus est, vocante eum Willelmo rege conquestore post depositionem Galfridi praedicti,"; cf. *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis*, 204: "ego Vitalis abbas."
[206] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 212-213.
[207] "Annales de Wittonia," 2, 193.
[208] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 202.
[209] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 105, 111, 114, 118. Gerrard, *Church at War,* 39, 69, 141, 146, 233, 253, 271: "Abbot Turold of Peterborough is the best-known militant abbot of the Conqueror's reign." Round, "The Domesday Survey," 282. When William established the military quotas which bishops and abbots had to provide, he made Peterborough Abbey responsible for supplying sixty knights. This number was only equaled by three bishoprics and surpassed by none.

invasion in vacant abbacies.[210] In particular, Normans undermined resistant Anglo-Saxon abbots and used Norman abbots against rebellious Anglo-Saxons. Last, Domesday shows the long-term economic effects of Turold's rule.[211] Thus, evidence for how the King of England, with Lanfranc's help, mobilized the monasteries to combat native rebellion.[212] As a monk of Fécamp, Turold followed Abbot Remigius to England William and Lanfranc removed Malmesbury's last native abbot, Brithric, to make space for Turold .[213] Afterwards, King William later atoned for this abuse by appointing Brihtric as Burton's abbot.[214] Turold built a reputation for militarist reactions over his four years as Malmesbury's abbot. William's bias for the Malmesbury's tenants and monks influenced his writing; but the king and Archbishop Lanfranc appointed Turold to Peterborough because of this reputation. In addition, Turold's relationship with the Malmesbury monks was another motivation behind Turold's transfer.[215] Turold's movement occurred as part of the archbishop's broader reform of monasteries.[216] Besides being one of the top monasteries in England, this promotion illustrates Lanfranc and William validating Turold.[217] The incumbent arrived late to a burned monastery, accompanied by a swarm of Norman knights.

[210] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 29. Chibnall relates how William may have initially requested the larger abbeys to contribute to the funding of his extensive army, especially if they were located in vulnerable regions. He likely would have asked for a clear military commitment from an abbot either during their submission to the king and swearing of fealty, or when their successor was appointed. The act of churchmen performing homage, when it was required, was seen as a new practice in England, which was credited to King William by Eadmer.
[211] Round, "The Domesday Survey," 282. The religious houses constantly faced problems because of the enfeoffment of military tenants during the Norman Conquest.
[212] Kevin L. Shirley, *The Secular Jurisdiction of Monasteries in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England*, 21. William secularized the monasteries to conquer England.
[213] Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066; a constitutional history,* 118n.
[214] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 23, 28. William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 629, 264.2: "Later, realizing that he had done wrong, and sorry that he had been conned by an ambitious man (Turold) in a hurry, William made up for the exiled Brihtric's loss by giving him Burton Abbey."
[215] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, 115.
[216] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 28.
[217] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 1070, 1067.

Turold leased land to knights and backed the offensive against Ely and Hereward.[218] William of Malmesbury wrote on the career of Turold:[219]

> This same Turold, who was treating his subjects like a tyrant, was moved by the king to Peterborough, a wealthy abbey, […]. 'by the splendor of God,' said the king, 'he behaves more like a knight than an abbot; I will find him someone who can stand up to his attacks on equal-terms. He can try out his martial courage and practice fighting there.'

Turold's aggressive methods had devastating consequences for one of the richest monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England. A famous review of William's domain, Domesday (1086), documented Turold of Peterborough's enfeoffed knights as the largest group of warriors with an abbot as their lord.[220] In particular, Turold leased plots to knights at a lower rate than before the conquest.[221] Peterborough monastery provided sixty knights, but Ramsey, a more prosperous monastery, only four.[222] William charged the wealthiest monastery, Glastonbury, with sixty and then reduced the quota to forty.[223] Domesday recorded Æthelwig of Evesham's quota as five.[224]

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[218] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest," 102; Gerrard, *Church at War*, 75, 140. Gerrard describes the knights in the households of English prelates during William the Conqueror's reign, as evidenced, shows that this was a new development in response to rebellions or potential invasions. Round, "The Domesday Survey," 282. Round states that during the Domesday Survey, the knights who had come with Abbot Turold were present.

[219] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 629, 264.2.

[220] Round, "The Domesday Survey," 282: "but, over and above all this, the Frenchmen had to be provided for."; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 205.

[221] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest," 100.

[222] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain,* 168. the maintenance of military households was both costly and disruptive.

[223] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, 712.

[224] Gerrard, *Church at War*, 39. Gerrard notes during this period, there is a widely cited writ, initially emphasized by Round, which demands that Abbot Æthelwig of Evesham appear in person at Clarendon's king's court accompanied by five knights.

Wiliam's imposition of military service on monasteries to combat resistance and rebellions facilitated Turold's decision to lease property at a minimal rate.[225]

Turold remained a soldier throughout his abbacies,[226] and reinforced William's military.[227] Turold failed to capture Hereward. In addition, Hereward seized and ransomed Turold during the siege of Ely (1070-1071).[228] Turold constructed a new castle and monastery in Peterborough to avoid isolating his focus on the rebellious Anglo-Saxons.[229] Peterborough's churches reinstated their church services within a week of Turold's arrival. They then began constructing a monastery and church.[230] Construction projects, ongoing military operations, and leasing land at a lower rate created generational economic degradation.[231] The king imprisoned Bishop Æthelric in Peterborough and Westminster.[232]

Thurstan's Massacring the Monks of Glastonbury (1083)

When recording the massacre during Abbot Thurstan of Glastonbury's reign (1082-1083 and 1087-1096), duplicate phrases and a sequence of events link the chronicles through Anglo-Norman histories.[233] Twelfth-century historians emphasized the shocking and unprecedented nature of this event, which unsettled medieval societies. Examining Thurstan and his actions in

[225] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, 105.
[226] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain,* 156.
[227] Loyn, "Abbots of English Monasteries in the Period Following the Norman Conquest," 99.
[228] Gerrard, *Church at War*, 141. Gerrard asserts Turold was unable to defeat Hereward, even when the king had managed to conquer Ely itself. The abbot found himself in a position where he had to lead a royal army (exercitum rege) against Hereward. It was only after Hereward captured Turold and demanded a ransom that Turold decided to take more permanent defensive measures. He established a castle and granted monastery estates to many knights, with the condition that they assist in capturing Hereward.
[229] Round, "The Domesday Survey," 1, 313; William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 629, 264; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 205.
[230] D.C. Douglas, "The Norman Conquest and English Feudalism," *The Economic History Review* 9, no. 2 (1939), 128–43.
[231] Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain,* 168. Domesday and other historical records confirm the existence of extensive devastation and looting.
[232] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester,* 209.
[233] There remain untranslated and erroneous chronicles that recorded the event in *Annales Monastici*.

context, contemporary scholars describe how the military assisted new abbots in instituting their powers. Burton highlights the reliability of the narrative, the impact of the changes introduced by Norman abbots, and the appalling quality of the incident.[234] Loyn focuses on the monks' experiences, while Golding underscores the connection between maintaining military households and Abbot Thurstan.[235]

Thurstan's abbacy (1082-1083 and 1087-1096) seen through the lens of twelfth-century historians such as Henry of Huntingdon, Orderic Vitalis, and William of Malmesbury, offers unique insights beyond the chronicles. By examining documented lost sources, these historians record Thurstan's misrule as one of the specific consequences of the rule of Normans. While offering a nuanced perspective, William tailored his writing to suit the matter and audience.

William of Malmesbury's descriptions varied by patron and focus.[236] The author downplays the king's role in the *Chronicle of the Kings of England*,[237] but highlighted the king's venality in the *Deeds of the English Bishops* with a similar brevity.[238] In *The Antiquities of Glastonbury,* William details the monks and their agency, including their use of weapons and resistance against knights. The author's comprehensive description, sourced from documentary

[234] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 24. Burton wrote about the incident resulting in the loss of three monks' lives and eighteen others injured. Burton explains how, if this were the sole surviving account, we might disregard it as an exaggerated effort by an Anglo-Saxon nationalist to undermine the Normans. However, due to his behavior, Thurstan was deposed by the king and sent back to Caen.
[235] Loyn, *The English Church 940–1154,* 77. Loyn highlights instances of tension that occasionally led to violent outbreaks. One notable example is the incident at St. Augustine's Canterbury, but the most notorious one occurred at Glastonbury. Golding, *Conquest and Colonization: The Normans in Britain,* 168. Golding recounts an incident at Glastonbury Abbey in 1083 where the Norman abbot resorted to the use of soldiers to quell the protest of English monks who were objecting to his imposition of new liturgical practices.
[236] William of Malmesbury wrote the *Deeds of the English Kings.* First, then in the *Deeds of the English Bishops*, and the *Antiquities of Glastonbury*.
[237] William, *Chronicle of the Kings of England,* 303, 329n.: "There was a disgraceful contention between the abbat of Glastonbury and his monks; so that after the altercation they came to blows."
[238] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 2, 91.3-5: "He (Thurstan) had been made Abbot of the monastery by the gift of the elder King William."

evidence and his own experience, is a testament to his writings' historical depth and breadth. Towards the end of William's life, he wrote in Glastonbury to further enhance his account's credibility and comprehensiveness.[239] Among twelfth-century sources, William's history of Glastonbury Monastery stands out as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and contextual.[240] William of Malmesbury developed multiple chronicles to describe the confrontation between Thurstan's knights and Glastonbury's monks. Anglo-Norman historians placed the massacre in the narratives of early Norman brutality in William's reign. At Glastonbury, later in life, he added earlier accounts with earlier versions of the narrative: *the Peterborough Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of Florence of Worcester*.

Sources related to William's description mention that "blood flowed from the altar to the steps and from the steps to the ground." This statement underscores the monks' devotion, knights' aggression, and sanctity of the church.[241] William of Malmesbury incorporated this phrase into his accounts using the *Peterborough Chronicle*.[242] In addition, several unique characteristics have been found in Peterborough's chronicle and Glastonbury's history.[243] John and Florence of Worcester's chronicle aligns with that of William's history of Glastonbury in

[239] William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, 78: "For it is said that the tares of discord were sown between the abbot and his convent, the cause of the dissension being imputed to the needlessness of the abbot, who, at the same time as he removed many ancient and favored customs from the convent, changed certain practices according to the custom of his own country. Although he had been frequently questioned about these in private and had been rebuked publicly concerning them, he merely pretended to correct his mistakes and by no means abandoned his bold obstinacy."
[240] William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury,* 77-79.
[241] William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, 78: "Flowing down from the altar to the steps and from the steps to the ground, struck those unhappy men with the terror of divine vengeance."
[242] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 214-215: "and wounded many therein; so that the blood came from the altar upon the steps, and from the steps on the floor." *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon,* ed. G. Bell (London: Bohn, 1909), 215: "and eighteen others were wounded, so that the blood ran down the steps of the sanctuary, on the floor of the church."
[243] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 214-215; William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, 78. Both sources document the obedience of the monks, the dispute regarding ritual, Thurstan's reprimand of the monks, the ongoing argument, the suddenness of the attack, the sealing of the church door by the monks, and the blood flowing down the steps.

aspects missing from Peterborough's description.[244] The elements present in each account connect these traditions.[245] This conflict appeared as a stark example of a dispute between foreign and local ecclesiastics.

Æthelnoth emerged as a prominent figure and became abbot at Glastonbury between 1053 and 1077).[246] Before, during, and after William's reign, Glastonbury remained the wealthiest monastery in England. Æthelnoth's participation in the formal submission of the local nobility at Berkhamsted (December 1066) led William to detain this abbot. William moreover accused Æthelnoth of associating with the rebellious Anglo-Saxons, leading to his deposition by Lanfranc at a general council in London in 1077. After this, Æthelnoth's prison became Canterbury.[247] After Æthelnoth's removal, William appointed Thurstan, the abbot of Caen and Lanfranc's successor, as Glastonbury's abbot.[248] King William remained in control of Glastonbury during the five-year vacancy between 1077 and 1082.

The final straw on the camel's back appeared at Glastonbury when the new Norman abbot changed the chants. The monks disputed Thurstan's bribery, ritual modifications, and

[244] John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 183; William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, 78. Both sources document King William's appointment of Thurstan, a conflict regarding Gregorian chants, the monks' defense, the injuries suffered by the soldiers, Thurstan's exile, payment, his eventual return, and his death. The chronicle of Worcester originated as a distinct work from John of Worcester's chronicle.
[245] "Annales Monasterii de Theokesberia," 2, 43; "Annales de Waverleia," 2, 194; "Annales de Witonia," 2, 33; *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon,* 215; John and Florence, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester,* 183; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 214-215; William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* 2, 91.3-5; *Chronicle of the Kings of England,* 303, 329n.; William, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury,* 78. These sources agree on the following events of Thurstan's reign, describing him as malevolent. During this time, Thurstan launched an attack on the monks, causing them to seek refuge in the church. The soldiers pursued the monks and even fired upon them, resulting in the tragic loss of lives. William, in addition, mentions an incident involving a pierced cross.
[246] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 22-3; "Acts of Lanfranc," 289.
[247] "Eadmer's letter to Glastonbury," in *Memorials of Saint Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury,* ed. William Stubbs (London: Longmans, 1874), 420.
[248] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 62. Chibnall states there is no evidence suggesting that abbeys and bishoprics were intentionally left vacant. However, it is worth noting that during William's reign, the king would usually take charge of them instead of the diocesan bishop when they were without an occupant.

rigorous standards. After challenging Thurstan, those inside barricaded themselves in the monastery. The abbot gathered nearby knights and then headed to the church. Facing off against the fighters breaching the rear entrance, the dissenters inside wielded religious objects. One group of warriors fired crossbows and bows from the upper floor, hitting the central altar, crucifixes within the monks' hands, and crosses hung on the church's walls. After the second Norman group attacked, the victims sought divine intervention at the podium. Bolts and arrows pierced the cross from above and blood streamed from the altar downward.[249] The Glastonbury knights killed three monks, while injuring the rest. After Thurstan's trial of the attack, Archbishop Lanfranc exiled Thurstan to his home monastery in Caen. The king and archbishop then imprisoned and isolated the eighteen Anglo-Saxon survivors.

When high-ranking abbacies became vacant, William took control of revenue before choosing a successor. In 1087, King William Rufus sold the abbacy of Glastonbury to Thurstan for five hundred pounds of silver. Upon returning, Thurstan refused to continue building the projects that began in the first part of his abbacy. Thurstan depleted the monastery's wealth by selling land to wealthy Norman aristocrats to finance his lavish lifestyle.[250] At the time the abbot passed in 1096, William of Malmesbury noted the suitability, righteousness, and appropriateness of his extended distance from the monastery. The next abbot sought to move on from this tragedy by destroying Thurstan's incomplete church and choosing another site for the Roman-styled church.

[249] This scene highlights the intense juxtaposition of violence in sacred spaces.
[250] William, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 2, 91.3: "squandered lands and monies to finance malpractices of his [Thurstan] gluttonous retinue."

Measures taken during William's earlier reign assisted Thurstan's massacre during the king's later reign. To enhance the Normans' dominance over local monks, William and Lanfranc used formulated strategies to remove Thurstan's predecessor. The force of knights assisted first-generation French abbots in establishing authority within monasteries. This involved militarizing the monasteries, which led to a forceful response to internal resistance from the native monks. Once the soldiers implemented the changes of foreign abbots, Normans asserted their supremacy over subordinate monastic communities. During William's reign, militarizing monasteries reflected the challenges and tensions that arose when consolidating Norman authority over the native population.

Wido Repressing Monastic Protest at St. Augustine's (1089)

Abbot Wido of St. Augustine's rule (1089-1099) began with dissent. While blocking the archbishop and abbot's entrance, the monks of St. Augustine protested Lanfranc's appointment of their new abbot, Wido.[251] Earlier the same year, a monk had admitted a desire to murder Abbot Wido. In the final stage after Lanfranc's death (Summer 1089), St. Augustine's clergy rebelled alongside Canterbury residents. The monastic resistance at Canterbury was unique because it arose as the seat of the archbishopric of Canterbury. Lanfranc involved himself in the monastic protests until his death later that year. In addition, Lanfranc imprisoned two ecclesiastical figures in this city. Canterbury held as prisoners Odo, bishop of Bayeux, earl of Kent, and William's half-brother, alongside Æthelnoth, abbot of Glastonbury.

The rebellious monks stood resolute and responded with one voice to protest Wido's promotion (1089).[252] Lanfranc met their lofty demands with twenty years of practical experience

[251] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 23; Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 116.
[252] "Acts of Lanfranc," 291: "qui unianimiter animati responderunit, se illi nec uelle subesse, nec illum suscipere."

as archbishop. The exodus of monks occurred when Lanfranc and Wido came to terms with the dissenting monks secured inside the monastery. Archbishop Lanfranc then led Wido through a vacant church and began performing the installation ceremony in an empty church. Outside, the subversive monks fled from their new abbot. Lanfranc seized Prior Ælfwin, who instigated the resistance, and isolated the dissenters in prison from their fellow monks. Then, Lanfranc placed Ælfwin in iron chains and confined the rest of the monks to Canterbury. Lanfranc captured the remnants at St. Mildred's church, deposed, imprisoned, and separated these resistant monks in various monasteries.

Within the same year, Columba, a monk, confessed a wish to kill Wido. Lanfranc ordered the whipping of Columba naked in public. Canterbury's citizens viewed the deposing and ritualistic removal of his monastic cloak. Last, at the head of a mob, Lanfranc drove Columba from Canterbury.[253] The dissent continued within the monastery. Lanfranc's death provoked the third stage of open rebellion against Wido among the people of Canterbury. This last act of resistance, involving civilians, intensified the Norman response. Wido escaped, and the bishops of Winchester and Rochester restored the strict order once maintained by Lanfranc. By deposing, imprisoning, and isolating twenty-four monks in monasteries across Britain, Wido eliminated resistant monks using procedures developed by King William and Archbishop Lanfranc.

Conclusion

Norman rule over Anglo-Saxon monasteries enriched the power and authority of Norman abbots. Militarizing monasteries, for example, empowered foreign abbots to govern natives. This facilitated the abuses of Turold, Geoffrey, Thurstan, and Wido. In addition, knights empowered

[253] The punishment of any member of the Church in public shocked contemporaries.

Norman rule over local monks. These maleficent abbots employed this authority and struck back against interference. Norman exploitation inside and outside monasteries spread their influences and heightened the loyalty of current subjects, monks, or tenants. In particular, William's legal and judicial policies reinforced and protected the actions of first-generation French abbots. Policies and procedures for imprisoning abbots in monasteries extended to last-generation native monks. Despite deposing and imprisoning individual abbots for resistant behavior, the scattering of monks throughout England served different purposes. King William's different treatment of resistant monks and violent abbots remains a striking characteristic of William's monastic policies.

William and Lanfranc empowered the ability of the first Norman abbatial settlers to subjugate last-generation Anglo-Saxon monks. Monastic militarization enhanced the power of abbots. The relations between the first settler Norman Abbots and local monks remained tense throughout William's reign. The Normans disturbed the monastic social order. Sharp changes in personnel led to reforms to daily life and rituals. William alongside Lanfranc enhanced and expanded on the monasteries relationship with violence and the military.[254] William's monastic reinforcement of England's conquest placed new burdens on abbots and monks.

The knights protected the actions of the four abbots (Turold, Geoffrey, Wido, and Thurstan), who undermined the power of native monks. Turold's multiple abbacies at Malmesbury and Peterborough (1070-1098) highlight the militarizing of monasteries against rebellions, while Geoffrey's brief abbacy at Westminster (1066-1070), in particular, shows how monastic legal disputes favored King William's allies. In Geoffrey's abbacy, he spread Norman

[254] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain,* 76-7. Burton discusses the tensions that arose from personnel changes, emphasizing that these tensions were more pronounced in monasteries compared to the secular church.

influence and authority as Turold reinforced the conquered territory. In contrast, the abbots of Glastonbury (Thurstan) and St. Augustine's (Wido) became notorious for eventful retributions, but Geoffrey and Turold never became known for a single event. Thurstan ordered his knights to attack his monks, while Wido suppressed internal subversion. The king and Archbishop Thurstan exiled Thurstan for his crimes, although he was allowed to return to the abbacy in Glastonbury (1087-1096). As abbot, Wido suffered (1089-1099) no penalties despite punishing the monks for protesting three separate times. Lanfranc deposed Geoffrey, then Thurstan. Together, Turold and Wido remained abbots. William and Lanfranc introduced and facilitated the violent response for each of these abbots.

William's systematic preference for Normans in court combined with brutal crimes established the toxic corporate ideology of the new lords of England, which centered on their shared Norman heritage. Local abbots' and monks' further degradation reinforced this ideology. Lanfranc isolating victims of violent crimes in separate institutions created a paradoxical outcome: the simultaneous distribution and silencing of the victims' narrative, depending on the abbot acting as warden. The independent nature of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries intensified this variation.

Evaluation

To conclude, abbots reacted in various ways to William's coronation on December 25, 1066. Submission or abandonment arose as the two primary results of the Norman Conquest for abbots. Ecclesiastics, who submitted to the incumbent king and Normans, secured traditional

rights and confirmed property.[255] Others, in contrast, abandoned their cathedrals and monasteries in favor of voyaging to and connecting with alternative secular figures.[256]

In the chaos of 1066, William traveled to his Norman lands to block intrusions from known enemies. When not asserting his rule over his property, William hunted for local rebellions, negotiated contracts with monasteries, and met with military allies to dispense property. William's military subordinates extended Norman authority from urban castles far from the monasteries. Likewise, the new king appointed a subsection of the allied population to the abbacies of native monasteries.[257] The first Norman settler abbots were militaristic, because of their involvement in the conquest. The abundant sources of the king's violent methods in controlling unwilling peasants and aristocratic populations, overshadowed his conduct with locals. Once William began his reign in England, incursions from common enemies delayed his authority.

The year 1070 separates William's early and middle reigns as King of England. Next, the king ordered a search for and seized wealth within the monasteries.[258] Last, King William and Archbishop Lanfranc began investing time and energy in creating procedures to remove resistant local ecclesiastics.[259] Normans settled on land from non-compliant and uncooperative monasteries for military use. St. Alban's resistance to Normans resulted in Westminster and William's military allies occupying monastic property.[260] Archbishop Lanfranc initiated the

[255] Such as Brand of Peterborough and Wulfric of New Minster.
[256] For example, Æthelwig with Danish or rebels and Sihtric with pirates.
[257] William placed Turold in Malmesbury and Geoffrey in Westminster.
[258] Anglo-Saxons deposited this wealth before the campaigns of 1066.
[259] Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England,* 30. Norman abbots, some of whom brought large contingents of household knights, replaced English abbots in many houses within a few years.
[260] The next Anglo-Norman abbot of St. Albans, Paul, worked towards reforming, reclaiming land, and regularizing the monastery to Norman standards

restructuring, regularizing, and adapting Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical policies, procedures, and practices to continental standards. Lanfranc's reforms prompted the transfer or elimination of Norman abbots.[261]

Lanfranc and William militarizing the monasteries strengthened the longer Norman Conquest and enhanced the powers of the multiple waves of foreign abbots implanted by the king. In the 1070s, Lanfranc eliminated opposing native abbots by deposition and imprisonment. The Normans faced unwilling abbots helping the rebels, such as Frederic, or monks protesting their abbot's behavior. In the 1080s, Lanfranc applied this punishment to two groups of monks who resisted their abbot.[262] Lanfranc refused to prescribe corporal punishments to rebellious monastics until the last year of his life. After Lanfranc's death, Abbot Wido and two bishops punished twenty-five monks to protest Wido's corruption.

Further research explores monasteries as corporate bodies, studies decision variations, and highlights these changes. An analysis of Domesday can expand this thesis. A comparison of the interrelationship between cathedrals and bishops illuminates the Anglo-Norman changes to existing Anglo-Saxon structures, underscoring the transformative nature of this period. In the Anglo-Norman period, abbots began as uncoordinated bodies of individuals in monasteries. Among the abbots, Normans on foreign land bonded together. Twelfth-century monasteries created a reservoir of literature while asserting their legal rights against encroachment, marking a shift in their role and influence. Another research question concerns how geography facilitates relationships between religious isolationists and rebellious groups. Exploring the Fens and other geographies for rebellions and monasteries will illustrate the geographic influence during social

[261] Lanfranc moved Turold to Peterborough and exiled Geoffrey of Westminster.
[262] Lanfranc deposed, imprisoned, and separated resistant monks at Glastonbury (1083) and Canterbury (1089).

disruptions. Last, the individual figures discussed above are ripe research opportunities and have further primary and secondary sources to explore.

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