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# Miter and Sword: Fighting Norman Bishops and Clergy

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**Miter and Sword: Fighting Norman Bishops and Clergy**

by

Timothy R. Martin

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

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## Abstract

This thesis examines Norman bishops and abbots, and their involvement in warfare, either as armed combatants, or commanders of military forces in Normandy, and later in England after William the Conquerors invasion in 1066. While it focuses primarily on the roles of the secular bishops, other relevant accounts of martial feats by other Norman militant clergy are also introduced where appropriate.

The foundation for the use of justified force and later the sanctioned use of violence by these militant secular clergy is explored to better understand the rationale perceived by the clergy when acting as 'soldiers of God.' The use of religious imagery, sacred writings and text, and the incorporation of militant metaphors, the Church prayers and hagiographies of militant saints, provided a background for a tradition of militancy that formed not only with the secular bishops, but, perhaps more importantly, monastic communities that were often the destination for repentant knights and nobles raised in a warrior society. This provided an outlet for transforming the martial spirit of warriors into spiritual weapons, thereby promoting the militant expression that was found in monastic communities.

The collapse of the Carolingian Empire and the lack thereafter of centralized authority elevated the Church to the role of peace maker, however churchmen in the former Capetian kingdoms were ill equipped to enforce the peace and turned to local secular rulers who utilized force to gain adherence to proclamations set forth by the Peace of God in the late tenth century and Truce of God movements in the early to mid-eleventh century. Normandy, under the dukes, however had no need to enact such measures due to strong centralized control and established institutions within the duchy.

Finally, the Norman secular bishops were an extension of ducal power and highlighted the domination the dukes held over the Church. While encouraging Church and monastic reforms within their lands, the dukes continued a policy of lay investiture in stark contrast to the Gregorian reforms that were being implemented. The accounts selected of Norman bishops participating in combat or leading troops as military commanders show a natural progression of a tradition that was discouraged by reformers but embraced by secular rulers and bishops.

### **Acknowledgment**

I would like to thank the many people who over the course of this these past few years have encouraged me to continue with my studies, listened to countless hours of ‘Norman’ and Church history, and offered their support, and understanding, as I completed this thesis.

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Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Sherry Nagle for encouraging me onwards toward completion of this thesis through her unflagging support and engaging me in impromptu conversation about all things medieval that lasted hours on end. My thanks to my family for their never-ending support and encouragement, especially my father, William, my mother Rose Mary, and my sister, Kristine. Above all, I want to thank my children: Ian, Tristen, and Gabriel, who have, since their births, inspired me to better my life, and follow my dreams. I love you boys!

### **The Whole Armor of God**

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness;

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—(Ephesians 6:10-18).

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## Introduction

Since the beginning of the Christian faith during the time of the Roman Empire, the early fathers of the Church tried to deliver Christ's message to their fellow Christians, that of faith, hope, love, forgiveness, and a philosophy of pacifism. However, since the time of Paul of Tarsus conversion to Christianity sometime during the early first century CE, there have been those Church leaders who viewed the world not only as a spiritual battle ground against evil and Satan, but a physical one as equally important in the service of God. Paul's writings to his fellow Christians' incorporates several military metaphors throughout his epistles, such as donning the armor of God, brandishing the sword of the spirit, and taking up the shield of faith,<sup>1</sup> all of which were designed to reaffirm the beliefs and teaching of Christ and strengthen his follow Christians' resolve. While it is common to assume these references were meant for secular lords and earthly kings, this thesis will demonstrate that ecclesiastics, especially later Norman bishops, were not unknown on the battlefield.

After Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 313 CE with the issuance of the Edict of Milan, Christianity spread throughout Roman society due in part to the inclusion of Christians in the military and its organizational resemblance between the Church hierarchy and Roman legions. Subsequently with Christianity being acknowledged as the official state religion in 380 CE, Christians were once again openly serving in the military and participating in combat. In truth, early Christian writers showed no aversion to Christians serving as soldiers in the Roman

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 6:10-18.

armies or soldiers in general, and there were legions comprising entirely of Christian soldiers<sup>2</sup> who served in the Roman army, side-by-side with bishops and priests, who accompanied the army in camp and on campaign. With the conversion to Christianity, Roman society and the military also incorporated the Christian ideas on warfare, intolerance of pagan (especially polytheistic) religions, and overt hostility against heretical views on orthodox Christian beliefs during the late Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

After the ‘barbarian’ encroachments in the fifth century and redistribution of the various invading peoples throughout the western half of the empire and its eventual collapse, Europe saw the rise of the Merovingian (fifth-eighth centuries CE) and Carolingian empires (eighth-ninth centuries CE), and the creation of two separate kingdoms: West Francia (France) and East Francia (Germany) after Charlemagne’s death in 814 CE. It was during the eighth and ninth centuries, that West Francia’s lands and ecclesiastical communities were devastated and displaced by seaborne raiders from the north, known as ‘Vikings.’

In 911 CE, a Viking chieftain named Rollo was granted a stretch of land in the former Carolingian kingdom of Neustria by Charles III the Simple as outlined in the ‘Treaty of St-Clair-

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<sup>2</sup> The Thundering Legion and the Theban legion, and are several accounts recorded for both legions. In 172 CE, the twelfth legion led by Marcus Aurelius, was surrounded by enemies, hemmed in by the geography of the land, and cut off from water. Accordingly, the Christian soldiers of the twelfth legion were requested to pray to God for relief and water for the parched Roman army. As a result, or their prayers, it began to rain, quenching the thirst of the legions, and a storm ensued that wreaked havoc against the enemy forces surrounding the legions. After that the Marcus Aurelius was said to have renamed the twelfth legion to the Thundering legion for the effects their prayers had on delivering the legions from their enemies. Another account was of the Theban legion, is the story of that entire Roman legion having converted to Christianity and later its soldiers martyred. However, there is some debate about if it was entire legion or a single cohort that was ‘decimated’ at the command of the Roman Emperor Maximian (285-305 CE) for not participating in a sacrifice in honor of the Roman Emperor(s).

<sup>3</sup> See H. A. Drake, “Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance,” *Past & Present* 153 (Nov. 1996): 3-36.

sur-Epte'.<sup>4</sup> In time Rollo and his descendants, the *northmanni* or north men, later to be known as Normans, would secure almost the entirety of the ecclesiastical province of Rouen through a combination of political maneuvering and conquest, and gave rise to what would be known as Normandy. The Norman dukes<sup>5</sup> who controlled the duchy from 911-1204 inherited a land that had been wracked by Viking raids, its churches and monasteries abandoned or destroyed, the secular clergy and monks driven out, and its sacred holy relics displaced and dispersed among the other northern kingdoms. Over the course of the following two centuries, the Norman dukes would reconstitute the secular clergy and monastic communities within the duchy, through lay investiture of bishops and affirming elections of abbots of monastic communities, members of the ducal family and leading aristocratic families transformed the Norman church into an extension of centralized ducal power and control. Understanding how this transformation occurred and the role that the Norman episcopate played in securing and propagating ducal power are vital to understanding how the role of the bishops as warriors, defenders of territory, and dispensers of ducal and later royal power developed.

At the head of this centralization and projection of ducal power within Normandy were the ecclesiastical involvement and leadership of the archbishops of Rouen, their suffrage bishops,<sup>6</sup> and the abbots in charge of the numerous monastic communities throughout the duchy. Through them, their family ties (by blood and through marriage) to other powerful Norman

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<sup>4</sup> Dudo of St. Quentin, *History of the Normans*, trans. and intro, by Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 48-50.

<sup>5</sup> For ease of reading and to provide continuity throughout this work, the title of duke will be used in reference to the rulers of Normandy.

<sup>6</sup> A bishop who is subordinate to an archbishop within the same ecclesiastical province. Within Normandy the ecclesiastical province of Rouen included the archbishopric of Rouen and the six suffrage bishoprics: Avranches, Bayeux, Coutances, Evreux, Lisieux, and Sees.

families, and ultimately to the ducal family itself, these ecclesiastics were placed strategically in geographical and militarily important regions of the duchy. Raised as sons of a ruling noble ‘warrior’ aristocracy, these bishops received the same training as other knights.<sup>7</sup> Taught from birth how to fight, ride, hunt, and lead men, these Norman bishops were equally proficient<sup>8</sup> preaching from the pulpit, administrating their dioceses, leading the construction of their bishoprics’ cathedrals, or smiting their foes either in God’s name or in the duke’s and later after 1066, in the king’s name. The scope of this thesis includes numerous examples and accounts of bishops and other ecclesiastics in Normandy as well as in England, who have taken up arms while fulfilling their duties as members of the aristocracy at the behest of their worldly lords, the Norman duke’s or English king’s. Their position within the Church hierarchy did not relieve them of their responsibilities or that of their families, of the expectation of fully supporting the duke’s agenda.

The hagiographies of militant clergy such as Saint Germanus of Auxerre (378-448 CE), Saint Gerald of Aurillac (855-909 CE), and the warlike Turpin, archbishop of Rheims<sup>9</sup> from *The Song of Roland*, give reference to their roles as military leaders and to their individual fighting prowess. In addition, there are examples of bishops acting as secular lords and participating in martial endeavors, such as Odo who was both the bishop of Bayeux and the earl of Kent (1036-1097 CE); Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury (1101-1171 CE); and

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<sup>7</sup> Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 151-152.

<sup>8</sup> Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister, Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1987), 24-29, 74-76.

<sup>9</sup> A fictitious bishop, modelled after a real-life bishop of Rheims, mentioned as one of the warriors, a companion of Roland, fighting and dying alongside him as told in the epic poem *The Song of Roland*.

Geoffrey of Montbray, bishop of Coutance (c. 1048-1093 CE). These men are used here to highlight a contingent of fighting bishops and they provide us a glimpse into their dual roles as men of God and members of the ruling aristocracy of their society in fulfillment of oaths and obligations taken to liege lords. It was not as uncommon as one might believe during this period to see clergy among the combatants either in support roles, directly in charge of military forces, or taking up arms to fight in the thick of the battles. For when called upon these shepherds defended their flocks as these various examples and accounts will demonstrate they were involved with fighting, the warfare being waged, and the armies being led.

### **Literature Review**

There are six main primary sources utilized in this thesis. First is Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ecclesiastical History), which provides a detailed chronological account and general history of Normandy and England, from the birth of Christ until the time of the Anarchy in England during the reign of King Stephen in the twelfth century.<sup>10</sup> Orderic, whose work is known as one of the premier sources for Norman and English history during the period covered by this thesis, was born in England and later became a Norman monk residing at the abbey of Saint Evroult. Second, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (*The History of the English Bishops*),<sup>11</sup> written in c. 1125, is a historical accounting of English bishoprics and monasteries from c. 600 until the early twelfth century. It also gives insight into reforms and later the transformations of the English and Norman religious community into that

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<sup>10</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall. Oxford Medieval Texts. 6 vol. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-1990).

<sup>11</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, Vol. I: Text and Translation, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007); William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*. Vol. II: Introduction and Commentary. R. M. Thomson. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

of an Anglo-Norman episcopate after the Norman conquest of England in 1066. Third, *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* of Guy, Bishop of Amiens,<sup>12</sup> is a near contemporary account written within a year after William the Conqueror was crowned king of the English on Christmas Day 1066. It provides an account of the invasion of England by a non-Norman writer and is considered a ‘French’ account of the events, namely due to the details provided by Guy of the French participants in the campaign. The Fourth source, the *Gesta Guillelmi (The Deeds of William)* by William of Poitiers,<sup>13</sup> is a biography detailing William the Conqueror’s effort and the corresponding events that transpired during the period just prior to 1066 and culminated with the successful invasion of England and William the Conqueror sitting on the English throne. William of Poitiers was a former knight turned secular clerk, who would eventually obtain a chaplain position within the household of William the Conqueror and was in a unique position to offer insight through his writings on combat and martial endeavors. Source five, the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumieges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni (*The Deeds of the Norman Dukes*),<sup>14</sup> describes the history of the dukes of Normandy until Henry I (c. 1068-1135). This work is set up as a chronicle, detailing the founding of the dukes from the establishment of the duchy. It has had several different authors, each continuing and injecting new information and thoughts into the narrative. The final source, Rodulfus Glaber’s *Opera*,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Guy, Bishop of Amiens, *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and trans. R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts, ed. and trans., *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumieges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni. Oxford Medieval Texts. 2 vol. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992-1995).

<sup>15</sup> Rodulfus Glaber, *Opera*, ed. and trans. John France, Neithard Bulst, and Paul Reynolds. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

gives an account of the life of William of Dijon, the Italian monastic reformer who began the task of reforming Norman monasticism under Duke Richard II (?-1026) of Normandy. Glaber, a monk, who recorded contemporary events as an historian, offers insights and opinions that are more personal in nature. Glaber's account records political and ecclesiastical events in the northern lands of Francia, particularly noting the events surrounding William of Dijon's ecclesiastical career in Normandy and his role in reforming the Norman monastery at Fecamp between 1001-1031.

Ten secondary sources regarding Normandy that the roles of these 'fighting bishops' and their interaction with monastic reform and ecclesiastical history within Normandy, and later to include England after 1066. These cover the tenth through twelfth century and are especially pivotal in this thesis as reference works. In 1982 David Bates published *Normandy Before 1066*<sup>16</sup> and provided an in-depth study into Norman institutions prior to 1066. Bates provides a new, reevaluated description of the inner workings of the ducal family and its integration within the Norman ecclesiastical institutions. *William the Conqueror*,<sup>17</sup> by David Douglas, has long been the standard work on the life and career of Duke William II, and as such goes into detail on William's role and influence on the Church within Normandy and in England. The work is important to understanding how William viewed and utilized 'his' bishops and other ecclesiastic leaders. In a PhD dissertation presented to the University of Glasgow, Daniel Gerrard's work titled 'The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England c. 900-1200,'<sup>18</sup> is

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<sup>16</sup> David Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact on England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Gerrard, "The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England c. 900-1200" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2011).

a comprehensive study into English and later Anglo-Norman clerical involvement in warfare, mirroring the same period as this thesis. Though English in focus, Gerrard's work can be seen describing something more of the norm for ecclesiastics at this time across Normandy and offers a better understanding of the role of these 'militant' bishops and members of the clergy. Written in 2011, the work provides a detailed bibliography of recent scholarly work on the topic. *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England 1000-1250*<sup>19</sup> published in 2016 by Craig Nakanshian, gives a more exact account of individual Norman and Anglo-Norman bishops such as Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, and their military role in 'English' history from the eleventh through thirteen centuries. Nakanshian's book covers what society thought about bishops and warfare and presents insight into the actual reality of the bishop's role in the prosecution of war under a liege lord's directive. *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*,<sup>20</sup> by Katherine Smith, studies the relationship between the monastic community and its transformation from that of a pacifistic regimen to an overt militaristic body of 'soldiers of Christ.' Utilizing hagiography, litanies, and symbolic representations of saints battling the enemies of God, she portrays the fighting spirit that the monastic community mimicked, not only due to its aristocratic patronage, but also from the influx of returning, battle weary noble warriors into the monastic community. Furthermore, Smith provides an extensive list of resources found in the books bibliography. *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300*<sup>21</sup> helps to tie together the

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<sup>19</sup> Craig M. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England 1000-1250: Theory and Reality* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion vol. XXXVII (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Leonie V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: Space, Gender and Social Pressure*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion vol. XXXIII (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).



importance that Norman society placed on its religious institutions and that of the ruling families.

This work provides a general overview of the aspects that helped shape the importance and identity that religion and religious communities played in defining Norman religious life.

*Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*<sup>22</sup> provides an overview of monastic reform spurred on by Church reformers and promoted by the Norman aristocracy. Cassandra Potts outlines the influence that the Norman ducal family played in appointments of bishops, abbots and other clerical positions, dictating the direction and composition of the ecclesiastical institutions within Normandy. Finally, Gerd Tellenbach's work, published in 1988 and translated into English in 1993 by Timothy Reuter, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*<sup>23</sup> is a critical work that surveys the Christian church during the time researched for this thesis. It provides general knowledge of the Church and Christians, their beliefs, and progression of religious practices. With regards to the development of the Church as an institution, it examines the shifting nature of the politics within the Church and the resulting schism's that ensued, the function of ecclesiastic institutions immediately before and during the time of Church and monastic reforms, and the Church's relationship with the rest of Western European society are explored.

A collection of secondary sources provides basic information on Normandy and outlines the development of institutions within duchy between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, principally that of the Church. Within these sources, the accounts of militant clergy and medieval

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<sup>22</sup> Cassandra Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion vol. XI (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. Timothy Reuter. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

society's perception of these individuals are researched. Jorg Peltzer's *Canon Law, Careers and Conquest*<sup>24</sup> provides a detailed study of secular and ecclesiastical politics within the Norman sphere of influence between 1060 and 1230. Peltzer's comparative study between Norman and Angevin episcopal institutions, gives a description of the seven Norman dioceses: the archdiocese of Rouen, and its six-corresponding suffrage diocese of Evreux, Lisieux, Sees, Bayeux, Coutances, and Avranches. While Everett U. Crosby's *The King's Bishops*<sup>25</sup> and Eleanor Searle's *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 840-1066*,<sup>26</sup> detail how the leading Norman families were tied to the ducal family. Both Crosby's and Searle's accounts describe the alliances between the dukes and the newly formed Norman aristocracy, and the effects and benefits of ducal appointments to ecclesiastical positions, but most importantly the appointments of bishops, that fueled the political arena. Searle's work gives a thorough understanding of the family dynamics, and traces not only the ducal ancestral lineage, but other leading Norman families who have blood ties to the ducal family as well. These specific family relationships as identified by Searle, transformed the Norman religious community into a repository for ducal family members and relations.

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<sup>24</sup> Jorg Peltzer, *Canon Law, Careers and Conquest: Episcopal Elections in Normandy and Greater Anjou, c.1140-c.1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Everett U. Crosby, *The King's Bishops: The Politics of Patronage in England and Normandy, 1066-1216* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 840-1066* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

In their studies, *Imagining the Sacred Past* by Samantha Herrick<sup>27</sup> and *The Normans in their Histories* by Emily Albu,<sup>28</sup> these authors show how the Normans, through their writings and selection of specific myths, progressed from their pagan origins to becoming Christian warriors. Norman writers utilized various methods to legitimize their claims, i.e., hagiography of local saints, the creation of a ‘past’ that included ancestors and associated legends, and histories of the Norman people, specifically that of the ruling dukes. *History and Community* by Leah Shopkow<sup>29</sup> points out that these writings were the work of clerics and a clear majority were monks. What these three works provide is how Norman historical writings and traditions were prepared and for whom. Most monastic communities were recipients of ducal patronage, and often the abbots of private houses that were founded, had close family ties to the Norman aristocracy. How the militant or fighting Norman bishops were portrayed, and how they were perceived by the dukes and other leading Norman families, was just as important as the facts and the deeds associated with them during their lifetimes as pointed out by Herrick, Albu, and Shopkow.

In *Soldiers of Christ*,<sup>30</sup> a collection of short histories and hagiographies that detailed the lives of early Christian bishops and saints demonstrated their roles as ‘soldiers of Christ.’ Edited by Thomas Noble and Thomas Head, *Soldiers of Christ* exemplified the militancy these bishops and saints by exhibiting their involvement in physical and spiritual combat. *Soldier Saints and*

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<sup>27</sup> Samantha Kahn Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Emily Albu, *The Normans in Their Histories: Propaganda, Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints’ Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

*Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* by John Damon,<sup>31</sup> focuses on Anglo-Saxon and English saints and bishops identifying several fighting clerics who shared the same militant qualities as those saints mentioned in *Soldiers of Christ*. In both works, it is worth mentioning that aside from the physical combat that several of the individuals were recorded to have participated in, they were equally involved in spiritual combat as well.

Though this thesis is primarily concerned with the martial roles of Norman bishops and other ecclesiastics, these authors present the importance of the ‘spiritual battle’ waged by these individuals. Deploying the weapons of God, the bishops’ and monks’ heavenly arsenal of prayers, sermons, litanies, parading of sacred relics, performing ritual ceremonies in preparation of battle, and accompanying troops into combat, all show how these ecclesiastics were depicted and deemed ‘soldiers of Christ.’ The bishops and saints identified in *Soldiers of Christ* were often members of the region’s aristocracy of which, a clear majority had also served in the military while simultaneously holding the office of bishop or frequently, a combination of all three positions. As these two works suggest, the bishops were merely continuing a tradition of militancy that was viewed with acceptance and assimilated by the Norman bishops in their conversion to Christianity.

*Religion and the Conduct of War c.300-c.1215* written by David Bachrach,<sup>32</sup> goes further in-depth into the importance of religion and its contributions toward war efforts. Again, the focus is on the bishops their roles as leaders within the armies during campaigns and their status as soldiers of Christ or *milites Christi* on and off the battlefield. Bachrach portrays that the bishops

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<sup>31</sup> John Edward Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c.300-c.1215* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).

were the main spiritual source for directing and advising Christian armies in the religious rituals, ceremonies, and penitential efforts to beseech their patron saint's intercessions on their behalf to guarantee victory. Though more focused on the ceremonial and ritual aspects that religion plays regarding warfare during this period, it gives a unique perspective on how important the bishops were and how religion was perceived by Christian armies. Bachrach singles out Adhemar, bishop of Le Puy (1045-1098), a proponent of the Gregorian reforms in southern France was the papal legate representing Pope Urban II during the first crusade. As one of its commanders, Adhemar personally led knights into battle and performed traditional priestly duties while campaigning with the armies in the Levant. Though he portrays these fighting bishops as violating Church canons, and maybe somewhat of an anomaly, the study's foundation is critical in understanding that clerics did march off to war, and that they did have a role to play regarding military operations. Bachrach provides an immersive understanding of how the role of the cleric corresponded with that of medieval society's expectation of clerics in time of war. The *Peace of God*, edited by Thomas Head and Richard Landes,<sup>33</sup> follows the conception of the peace movements throughout France around the year 1000 CE under Peace of God proclamations, and later its transformation into the Truce of God. This work provides the understanding for the rise of these peace movements by the bishops in the face of incessant warfare, and the lack of centralized royal power.

The influence of the Church, which was led by local bishops, who were often members of the region's nobility, became pivotal in restraining the rampant fighting between knights and the pillaging of Church lands and the peasantry. Several examples show that it was the bishop,

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<sup>33</sup> *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, eds. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

backed by abbots and sacred relics, preaching a warning of eternal damnation for violators, that most often compelled the local warlords and knights into submission. Throughout the book, the close relationship between bishops, local rulers, and the utilization of spiritual authority mixed with secular power is examined. In one section, the editors explain why the Truce of God did not take root in the northern lands until the mid-Eleventh century, particularly Normandy, or in England, after the invasion in 1066, where it was never introduced, as it was supplanted by the Kings Peace there.

Along with several articles that were referenced, three articles give a more complete understanding and view of the role that the clergy played in Norman society: “The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest” by David Douglas, found in the *Cambridge Historical Journal*; “The Norman Empire and the Secular Clergy, 1066-1204” written by David Spear for *The Journal of British Studies*; and “Henry II and the Norman Bishops” by Jorg Peltzer in *The English Historical Review*.<sup>34</sup> Douglas and Spear’s articles deal with the political transformation of the Norman episcopate that coincided with the duchy’s development, while Peltzer produces information of the importance of the bishops within Henry II’s inner circle. Pelzer’s article examines the relationship that the Norman bishops had with Henry II during his reign and the importance of the Norman bishoprics strategic positions in Normandy, the availability of military resources from owed knight service, and Henry’s ready access of funds from the Norman domain.

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<sup>34</sup> David Douglas, “The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* 13 (1957): 101-115; David S. Spear, “The Norman Empire and the Secular Clergy, 1066-1204,” *The Journal of British Studies* 21 (Spring 1982): 1-10; and Jorg Peltzer, “Henry II and the Norman Bishops,” *The English Historical Review* 484 (Nov. 2004): 1202-1229.

The articles lend themselves to the thesis due to the time frame covered, from pre-Gregorian church reforms up to and including those that had been implemented within the Norman controlled lands in Northern Europe. Each of the articles provides a glimpse into the development of the bishoprics and monastic communities as well, how they each adapted and changed to the growing separation between temporal and spiritual powers that came with the reforms, and their response to traditional responsibilities and duties that came with being a member of the ruling Norman aristocracy.

Finally, the last two articles “The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/1050-1097)” by David Bates in *Speculum* and “Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093” written by John Le Patourel published in *The English Historical Review*,<sup>35</sup> illuminate the career of the two Norman bishops who are of paramount relevance to this thesis. Each of the articles breaks down the careers of two of the named Norman bishops who accompany William the Conqueror on his conquest of England in 1066 and participation in the battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066. Odo, William’s half-brother is prominently displayed on the Bayeux Tapestry leading troops into battle, mounted on a horse, donning armor, and wielding a club or horseman’s mace.

Through several primary sources written about the Battle of Hastings and the conquest of England, Odo’s participation in battle is well documented as a Norman bishop and later in his dual role as the earl of Kent. Odo, along with Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, are prime examples as pointed out by Douglas and Le Patourel, of bishops exercising secular powers: suppressing

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<sup>35</sup> David R. Bates, “The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097),” *Speculum* 50 (Jan. 1975): 1-20; John Le Patourel, “Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093,” *The English Historical Review* 234 (May 1944): 129-161.

revolts within England; providing for the defense of the newly conquered kingdom against incursions from other northern kingdoms such as the Danes and Norse; handling judiciary functions; and ultimately ruling England *de facto* while William is, on occasion, back in Normandy. Also, of interest is that both Douglas and Le Patourel point out the close connection that both Odo and Geoffrey have with the ducal family, and that they reaffirm the traditional expectations of Norman bishops to behave like warriors when called upon and to support the agenda of the Norman dukes.

The last thirty years have seen significant scholarly work on reinterpreting the role of the Church within Normandy and the importance of the monastic reforms that were initiated by Duke Richard II when he installed William of Volpiano in 1001 as abbot of the Abbey of Fecamp. The research conducted by Herrick,<sup>36</sup> Potts, Smith, and Hicks<sup>37</sup> on the role of Norman ecclesiastical institutions, their relationship with the ruling aristocracy, and Norman society in general, shows a shift in recent research away from a strictly ducal prerogative, to a more collaborative effort involving the infusion of reforming monks and abbots into the Norman monastic communities.

While many works still rely on histories that chronicle the military events and resulting changes incurred, these and other recent works show a more societal view that the Normans placed upon religion. By observing the restoration of the Church hierarchy, the formation of new monastic houses, and the reestablishment of former religious communities within the devastated

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<sup>36</sup> Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997); Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011); Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).



ecclesiastical province of Rouen, the research selected illustrates the importance and the far-reaching implications that religion had on the Norman society. How the dukes effectively imposed and managed Gregorian reforms in regard to ecclesiastical institutions, which facilitated the expansion of ducal authority within lands under the Norman sphere of influence. Granted that the nobility and their exploits still dominate the written record, they also show the gradual transformation of the Church, and more specifically the monastery's pacifistic views on warfare toward an overwhelming militant fervor against the enemies of God and against internal as well as external enemies of the dukes.

One possible explanation for this more inclusive social history is the release of several different edited primary sources from the Oxford Medieval Text series that were referenced during preparation of this thesis: Rodulfus Glaber's *Opera* (1989, reprinted 2002); William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (vol. I and II 2007), *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (Vol. I 1998 and vol. II 1999), and *Historia Novella* (1998, reprint 2006); *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* of Guy Bishop of Amiens (1999, reprinted 2007); Henry of Huntingdon's *The History of the English People 1000-1154* (2002); *The Gesta Guillelmi* of William of Poitiers (1998, reprinted 2006); and *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumieges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni (Vol. I 1992, vol. II 1995, both reprinted 2003). The commentary that accompanies the source with modern editing, now give a more in depth understanding on how Norman historians tailored their historical works to promote their patrons in a positive manner. What was once believed to be myth and legends, can be now properly deduced as political propaganda,<sup>38</sup> however these works remain vital for they contain inferences to actual dates and

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<sup>38</sup> Shopkow, *History and Community* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997); Emily Albu, *The Normans in Their Histories* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).

contemporary events, bearing witness to what the authors, who were majority monks, perceived to be important or noteworthy in regard to ecclesiastic matters or interactions with regional rulers and the nobility.

Continuing research into the roles that the English bishops and the Church play in promoting militant clergy, has dramatically increased within the last ten years as witnessed by several works<sup>39</sup> on this specific topic alone. Based on the research presented with regard to the development of the Norman fighting clergy, one can infer that the Norman ‘French’ bishops and other clergy participated in physical combat, led troops into battle and, for all practical purposes, acted as secular lords.<sup>40</sup>

### **Chapter Outline**

This thesis examines the role of the Norman ‘French’ and later Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics and their role as military leaders in the fifth through twelfth centuries. Norman bishops, abbots, monks, and the aging warriors who retired to the various Norman religious communities are analyzed within the framework of acceptable Norman societal views that were often in conflict with canon law, and, in the best of times, often treated indifferently by their secular, aristocratic peers.

Chapter I provides a brief overview on the justification of the use of violence, and often sanctioned warfare that members of the clergy were often involved with. Though the Christian message of peace and pacifism was thought to exemplify their beliefs, many acknowledged that

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<sup>39</sup> Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England 1000-1250* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016); Daniel Gerrard, “The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England c. 900-1200” (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2011) to reference a select few works.

<sup>40</sup> See Jordan N. Becker, “Warrior Bishops: The Development of the Fighting Clergy under the Ottonians in the Tenth Century” (Undergraduate Honors Theses, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2016).

this ideal was in stark contrast to the reality of the violent world that they lived in. Relying on the teachings from Saint Paul, scripture, sacred imagery, early Church history, and the hagiographies of the saints who were perceived as soldiers of Christ, as well as the works from Church patriarchs who promoted or incorporated martial terms and exploits, these armed clergy had a long history of precedence to fight for Christ. To protect their faith from external threats as well as internal heretical threats, some Christian ecclesiastical leaders, mainly the secular bishops, took a more aggressive stance and actively participated in armed combat, in addition to spiritual warfare, to protect and in the case of the crusades, some may say promote and expand Christianity.

After the disappearance of effective centralized rule created by the dissolution of the Carolingian empire and inadequate governing of the Capetian kings that followed, it was the bishops who arose to provide direction and stability in the fragmented, violent, and chaotic former Carolingian lands now ruled by local warlords and counts. Under the guise of the Peace of God and the Truce of God movements, bishops in southern France began an effort to curb the violence. While efforts in the south of France provided an atmosphere more conducive for the Church to guide such movements, in the northern reaches of France, the effort was slow to take hold, only introduced after being sanctioned by the ruling nobles in those lands. The conclusion for Chapter I is summarized in understanding the limited and controlled implementation of these movements in Normandy.

Chapter II goes into depth on how 'blood' relationships with the ducal family influenced the Church hierarchy and the monastic communities within Normandy, allowing it to expand its authority and enforce ducal policy through these institutions. Through family connections, ducal

appointments and nominations to various ecclesiastical positions of members of the Norman aristocracy, known as lay investitures, the ducal family promoted loyal and trusted immediate family members and extended relations to key strategic positions within Norman ecclesiastic institutions and land holdings. Though religious in nature, these bishoprics provided important administrative and military centers for the duchy, and as such those bishops appointed to those positions by the Norman dukes, were expected to perform their duties as secular lords and members of the Norman aristocracy. This chapter also outlines the role that the Norman aristocracy played with assisting in the recovery and advancement of the Church's growth, and especially in the recovery of monastic communities after the devastation of the previous century's Viking raids prior to the founding of the duchy by Rollo c. 911. The conclusion of the chapter details the scope of the many key positions that were filled in Normandy, and after 1066 in England, and how those appointed benefitted from close blood relations to the ducal family or with the leading Norman families.

Chapter III provides examples of these Norman 'fighting bishops' and lists several instances through primary sources, that show that in addition to their roles as bishops,<sup>41</sup> these individuals also performed as secular lords who functioned as commanders of armies, led punitive raids, provided for the defense of lands under their control, held castles, and provided arms, armor, and in addition, as members of the ruling aristocracy, knight service as well for the dukes. As members of aristocracy, the Norman 'French' bishops appointed in both Normandy and England acted in proper accordance with the perceived responsibilities like that of other noble born members of the duchy as well as those of other northern European lands, i.e., German

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<sup>41</sup> Other accounts will include abbots and monks that also participated in combat roles.

bishops. It was not out of the ordinary for bishops in these northern lands to be seen acting like other members of the ruling families or knightly class. Chapter III concludes with an examination on the reliance that the dukes of Normandy and kings of England placed on their bishops to assist in waging war by providing men, money, and material to them when called upon.

Chapter IV reviews how these chapters demonstrate the foundation and justification of the militant bishops in Norman society between the tenth and twelfth centuries. That contrary to the Christian beliefs and views on peace and pacifism, the Norman bishops were a continuation of a tradition of armed clergy, which has been documented and supported by Church teachings, sacred imagery, and hagiography since the early foundations of the Christian church. The Norman bishops, either belonging to the ducal family itself, as a member of one of the ruling Norman families with ties to the ducal family, or a family member who was held in high regard by the dukes, often times shared the same upbringing that the other male members of their respective households received including: fighting techniques, hunting, horsemanship, and how to wage war. Because of this similar lifestyle raised in a warrior society, it was not only functional, but desirable that these Norman bishops hold dual obligations, one to the Church for their bishopric and the other, probably as important if not more so, to their liege lord. Moreover, these chapters demonstrate that these Norman bishops provided more loyalty to the dukes than to any papal legit who proceeded from Rome. In the end, this thesis broadens the understanding of the role that the Norman bishop assumed as a spiritual and secular leader whether in France or England and the tradition of being an armed and active participant in combat as *militia Christi* ‘soldiers of Christ.’

Furthermore, it was the Norman dukes influence over and domination of the secular clergy through lay investiture, marriages, and alliances between the ducal family and other leading Norman noble families that enabled them to control the duchy, and later after 1066 the English church as well. The Norman kings continued a practice of lay investiture of key Norman bishops to the decimated bishoprics of England that were emptied by William the Conqueror, which allowed for complete control and realignment of the English church towards a more continental or French style of Church and monastic reform shortly after the conquest of England by William. During this transformation of the English church, the tradition of a militant secular clergy continued in England, often times combining the duties of a secular lord with their roles as religious leaders.

## **Chapter I: The Norman Bishops: A Tradition of Armed Combatants**

### **Introduction**

Bishops, abbots, priest, and other ecclesiastics are often perceived as pacifist and promoters of peace through the teachings and beliefs of early Christians. In practice, however, they were oftentimes anything but peaceful. Clerical violence and participation in combat by secular clergy was a common occurrence by the Middle Ages and were displayed in a variety of ways within sacred texts, imagery, prayers, contemporary accounts in chronicles and histories, and within the hagiographies of these soldiers of Christ, in addition to other sources as well.<sup>1</sup> The Church, seeking relief from unchecked violence and loss of their lands, initiated peace movements under the Peace of God and afterwards the Truce of God to halt these attacks against the clergy and the poor. While the Peace of God and the Truce of God were more effective in the south of France, in Normandy, where the duke's power was more centralized, there was no need for the Truce of God.

### **Justification and Sanctioned Warfare and Violence**

The Norman clergy, regular and secular,<sup>2</sup> continued to act according to what at the time was a common occurrence throughout Europe: participation of ecclesiastics in armed combat and leadership in military endeavors. Clergy from Normandy and, after Hastings in 1066,<sup>3</sup> Anglo-Norman clergy would be called upon at first by William I, king of England, and later subsequent English kings, to act on their behalf to lead raids and punitive expeditions. They were also left in

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<sup>1</sup> Paul's letters and teachings within the Bible give several examples of martial terminology that he uses as a metaphor for Christian ideals.

<sup>2</sup> Secular clergy consist of archbishops, bishops, deacons, archdeacons, priest and the like who do not belong to a religious order such as canons, monks, and friars.

<sup>3</sup> Battle of Hastings 14 October 1066.

charge of managing the defenses of territory under their control such as Walcher, bishop of Durham (? -1080) and earl of Northumbria;<sup>4</sup> Thurstan, archbishop of York (c. 1070-1140), who defended the northern reaches of England from Scottish incursion during the Battle of the Standard in 1138;<sup>5</sup> Odo, bishop of Bayeux (c. 1036-1097) acting as the earl of Kent; and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances (? -1093), who governed England while William the Conquer was in Normandy. What it documents is that these fighting clergy, especially the bishops, followed a practice where they behaved more like knights and warriors than spiritual guides for Christians. If bishops who were often secular lords as well, could don armor, weapon in hand and march at the head of armies to do physical battle against the earthly enemies of God, then Norman monks some of whom wore armor as well, emulating knights and warriors could battle the devil in a much loftier arena, the spiritual realm, and wage war in perpetual battle on behalf of all Christendom. Their belief in the power of prayer, sacred relics, and the acknowledgement of outward signs and visions believed to have been sent by God were powerful weapons in the monk's arsenal. Prayers offered by soldiers, secular lords, or clerics who beseeched God for his intercession on behalf of Christian soldiers going into battle were not only welcomed, but highly sought after as a necessity to lift the morale of the soldiers and assure the Christian forces of victory.<sup>6</sup> These prayers were not only for victory over a mortal enemy, but at least equally if not more importantly for the spiritual battle against the devil and his legions of demons for the Christians' immortal soul. Though not a unique practice nor or exclusive to Norman military

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<sup>4</sup> William E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and Its Transformation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 124-142.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 394, 465.

<sup>6</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, trans. J. L. Creed (New York: Clarendon Press, 1984), ch. 44.



leaders or clergy, to pray for victory and the destruction of one's enemies, it does seem to be at odds with the message that Christ preached, that of peace and turning the other cheek.<sup>7</sup>

Several of the early jurists of the Christian church speak on the righteousness of just war, the authority to wage it, and how to conduct it: Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in *The City of God*<sup>8</sup> written sometime around 413-426; Saint Ambrose's (c. 340-397) treatise *On the Duty of the Clergy*<sup>9</sup> in c. 391; and Bernard of Clairvaux's (1090-1153) treatise in support of the knights Templar the *Order of the Temple: In Praise of the New Knighthood*.<sup>10</sup> Though at first these writings may seem counter to the founding Christian beliefs of peace and pacifism, Augustine and Ambrose seemed to take a positive stand on Christians using justifiable force and showed no aversion to service in the military,<sup>11</sup> and Bernard clearly saw a need for a militant branch or 'order' of Christendom that could enforce God's will on earth and to subdue evil in the world.<sup>12</sup>

The aversion of Christians waging war upon fellow Christians was a pressing concern for leaders who sought legitimacy for their military enterprises. Even William the Conqueror, as duke of Normandy, understood the necessity of seeking papal approval to wage war against Harold Godwinson and the English.<sup>13</sup> William of Poitiers and Orderic Vitalis both note that

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:39.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson, intro. G. R. Evans (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> St. Ambrose, *On the Duty of the Clergy*, trans. H. De Romestin (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood: A Treatise on the Knights Templar and the Holy Places of Jerusalem*, trans. Conrad Greenia OCSO, intro. Malcolm Barber, Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 19 B (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, "Letter to Boniface; #189," <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102189.htm>; Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, ch. 28; 134, ch. 29; 139-142.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, 33-35.

<sup>13</sup> Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 66-67.

Duke William sent envoys to Rome to seek approval from Pope Alexander II and he presented the duke with a papal banner as an outward sign of the sanction violence against a Christian kingdom.<sup>14</sup> This visual symbol of authority was to be presented at the head of Duke William's invading forces in hopes of having two effects: that the local English populace William would encounter would refuse to fight against an army sanctioned by God to dispose of a usurper and that fighting men from Europe would be enticed to join his venture without reservation.

Stories of militant archbishops, bishops, and clergy can be found side-by-side with soldiers and secular lords who took up arms: Saint Germanus of Auxerre (c. 378-448) as recorded by Constantius of Lyon (c. 410- c. 490s) in *The Life of St. Germanus of Auxerre*,<sup>15</sup> fought a mixed force of Pict and Saxon warriors near St. Albans in what was referred to as the Alleluia Battle. In c. 429 Archbishop Turpin, from *The Song of Roland*, dressed in armor and, wielding spear and sword, rode a horse and struck down enemies, cleaving them in half from head to torso.<sup>16</sup> Odo, bishop of Bayeux (c. 1025-1097) and half-brother of William the Conqueror (c. 1028-1087), as depicted on the Bayeux tapestry is shown armored, wielding a mace while charging into the thick of the fighting, leading men into battle at Hastings.<sup>17</sup> Henry of Blois (c. 1098-1171), grandson of William the Conqueror, while serving as the bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, led forces under his older brother, Stephen of Blois

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<sup>14</sup> William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi*, 104-105; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii, 142-143; and for an opposing view on presentation of a papal banner to William the Conqueror read Catherine Morton, "Pope Alexander II and the Norman Conquest," *Societe d'Etudes Latines de Bruxelles* (Avril-Juin 1975), 362-382.

<sup>15</sup> Constantius of Lyon, "*de Vita Germani*," *Soldiers of Christ*, 75-106.

<sup>16</sup> "*The Song of Roland*," trans. Robert Harrison (New York: Signet Classics, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Bridgeford, *1066: The Hidden History in the Bayeux Tapestry* (New York: Walker & Company, 2004), 139-141.

(c. 1092-1154), king of England during the siege of Winchester in 1141. Some monks and holy men went so far as to transform themselves into an image of a knight, taking on the worldly appearance of a warrior in the battle against the devil. *Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050- 1250* by Katherine Smith shows that between the years 1050-1250 there were eighteen recorded accounts of these *milites Christi* or soldiers of Christ<sup>18</sup> who were in various monastic hagiographies she examined donning real armor for spiritual battle.

On 27 November 1095, during the council of Clermont, Pope Urban II (c. 1042-1099) reached out to the masses gathered in a nearby field to relay the plight of fellow Christians in the holy land who suffered at the hands of the Turks.<sup>19</sup> Reacting on a request from the Byzantine emperor Alexius I (1057-1118) for western soldiers and knights to fight the Turks, Urban's speech had the desired effect of invigorating the militant fervor of the western warrior class, and released the so-called soldiers of Saint Peter<sup>20</sup> on the Turks to do what society had bred them for: to fight and wage war, by turning their martial urges outwardly toward the Turks and not against

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<sup>18</sup> Katherine Allen Smith, "Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050-1250," *Speculum*, Vol. 83, no.3 (July 2008): 573-574.

<sup>19</sup> The battle of Manzikert took place on Friday, 26 August 1071, between the Byzantine Empire and Seljuk Turks. Riley-Smith, The Byzantine defeat is often considered the turning point in the fortunes of the Byzantine Empire and would be the catalyst for Byzantine emperor Alexius I to seek military aide from the western popes against further encroachments by the Turks. A Byzantine delegation arrived in Piacenza, Italy, in March 1095 requesting help against the Turks, and later in November 1095, in Clermont, France, Pope Urban II gives his speech. Urban's request would culminate in the launching of the first crusade in 1096.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas F. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, updated student ed. (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 7-11; Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History, The Roots of Conflict between Christianity and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 32-39; S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, ed. *The Crusades: A Reader*. Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures: VIII, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Peterborough: Broadview Press, Ltd., 2003), 39-47.

fellow Christians. Urban's speech that day was recorded by several individuals,<sup>21</sup> each presenting a somewhat different perspective on the proclamation in that field outside Clermont. What is interesting is the use of military terminology by Urban, as recorded by other attending ecclesiastics and individuals who wrote later following the speech.<sup>22</sup> Robert the Monk (c. 1055-1122) recorded that the Franks and particularly the knights were enticed to action "more than to other nations the Lord has given the military spirit, courage, agile bodies, and the bravery to strike down those who resist you." Baldric of Dol (c. 1050-1130) spoke of the soldiers of Christ and "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh...and for it is better [for you] to die in battle...and go forth and brandish the sword, like dauntless warriors, against Amaley," and Guibert de Nogent (c. 1055-1124) told of how Christ will be the "standard-bearer and inseparable forerunner" for those soldiers taking on the emblem "[for] the soldiery of God."<sup>23</sup>

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1158), a Cistercian monk who preached for the second crusade (1147-1149) and offered support to his friend, Hugues de Payns (c. 1071-1136) the first Grand Master of the Knights Templar, defended the Knights Templar's use of violence in his treatise the *Order of the Temple: De laude novae militiae*. In his influential argument to justify through religion the right to kill or use violence against the Muslims, Bernard justified the Templar's role in a just war concept and developed the theological basis for crusading and crusader knights. *De laude novae militiae*, literally "In Praise of the New Knighthood," describes

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<sup>21</sup> Fulcher of Chartres, Robert the Monk, Balderic of Dol, Guibert de Nogent, an anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*, and Urban II.

<sup>22</sup> It is believed that Guibert de Nogent, Robert the Monk and the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* attended the council, and that Fulcher of Chartres and Balderic of Dol may have been in attendance or had recorded the accounts from other participants returning from the council.

<sup>23</sup> S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, ed. *The Crusades: A Reader*, 44-47.

Bernard's views on the sacredness and justified fighting and killing for God, which was in this case against the Turks or Muslims, proved to be imperative in the recapture of the Holy Land and, ultimately, heretical sects and pagans as well. Bernard assured knights that dying or inflicting death for Christ's sake was not a sin and that they would receive forgiveness for their sins in the form of indulgences.

This, I repeat, is a new kind of knighthood and one unknown in ages past. It indefatigably wages a twofold combat, against flesh and blood and against a spiritual host of evil in the heavens...And when war is waged by spiritual strength against vices or demons, this, too, is nothing remarkable, though I consider it praiseworthy, for the world is full of monks. But for a man powerfully to gird himself with both swords and nobly mark his belt... Truly a fearless knight and secure on every side is he whose soul is protected by the armor of faith just as his body is protected by armor of steel. Doubly armed, surely, he need fear neither demons nor men.<sup>24</sup>

The Christian knight served the Lord when he killed pagans, infidels or Turks, who were indistinguishable from one another as unbelievers or non-Christians; the knight killed to avenge Christ and to promote Christianity and to purge the world of evil and evildoers, which would later be turned toward other Christians as well. Bernard ultimately justified the slaying of these enemies of Christendom and God:

Yet this is not to say that the pagans are to be slaughtered when there is any other way of preventing them from harassing and persecuting the faithful; but only that now it seems better to destroy them than to allow the rod of sinners to continue to be raised over the lot of the righteous, lest perchance the righteous set their hands to iniquity.<sup>25</sup>

Countering the argument that no Christian should kill, Bernard restated his defense of the use of force: "Let both swords of the faithful fall upon the necks of the foe to the destruction of every

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<sup>24</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, 33-34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

lofty thing lifting itself up against the knowledge of God which is the Christian faith...”<sup>26</sup> In *Five Books on Consideration: Advise to a Pope*, Bernard clearly made a distinction between the clergy and the secular use of arms where he drew a clear line on clerical use of force, and advised Pope Eugenius III (1088-1153) that the “spiritual sword should be drawn by the hand of the priest, the material sword by the hand of the knight, but clearly at the bidding of the priest and at the command of the emperor.”<sup>27</sup> For Bernard and Hugh of Payns, this dilemma concerning clerical violence, wielding weapons and donning armor, was resolved by the Knights Templars, as warrior-monks.

### **Prayers and Sacred Writings: Spiritual Weapons**

It was Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in 378 CE who provided the first recorded Christian prayer for victory: “Turn, O Lord, and raise the standards of your faith. No military eagles, nor flight of birds here lead the army but your name Lord Jesus and your worship.”<sup>28</sup> In book 1 of *De Officiis Ministrorum*, “On the Duties of the Clergy,” Ambrose, in chapters 29, 35, and 40, wrote on who had the right to enact violence in a just war, how to and why to wage war, as well as the role that the clergy should play. As the monastic revival began to take hold and spread throughout Western Europe in the tenth century, monks, who were called upon to utilize their greatest weapon, prayer, began to incorporate more militant terminology into their liturgy and sensationalize the militancy of biblical heroes with their writings. Katherine Smith, in her book

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>27</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advise to a Pope*. trans. John D. Anderson and Elizabeth T. Kennan. Cistercian Fathers Series n. 37: The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, vol.13 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 118.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Clemons and Kathleen Hughes, ed., “The Ethic of War in Old English,” *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 269-82, at 270. 44 De Fide, II.xvi.141-2, a prayer for Gratian fighting the Goths, cited by J. E. Cross.

*War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, provides an in-depth examination of this transformation of the monastic community from monks into soldiers of Christ.<sup>29</sup> One reason for the increased militancy of these spiritual reinforcements was the retirement of aging warriors and leading members of the aristocracy to monastic communities, who at the end of their lives had taken vows and yet imposed on warriors ethos that had governed their lives and aristocratic society upon the monastic communities that they now serve.<sup>30</sup> The influx of these individuals with similar upbringings (fighting skills, hunting, hawking, learning how to lead men in battle, and honing their skills towards a life of combat)<sup>31</sup> influenced how these prayers were written and how their devotion to God was expressed. Although these warriors were injured, infirmed, or exhausted from the warfare of the age, and could no longer serve on the battlefields as frontline combatants, it did not mean that their fight had to end. The energy and passion for fighting that was honed by these warriors from combat was redirected into the spiritual war against the devil and his hordes of demons by utilizing the power of prayer and devotional writings, as exemplified by earlier militant hagiographies of saints and bishops, and sacred images and relics.

The use of relics by Christians and pagans alike to seal oaths, confirms agreements, or garner support for a specific undertaking was a continuation of a practice that was seen even in Roman times<sup>32</sup> by Roman legions preparing for battle or reciting the army's oath of loyalty to the emperor as seen with the imperial cult. Bishops, priest, and in particular monks, lead processions

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<sup>29</sup> Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion vol. 37 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-57.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph and Frances Gies, *Life in a Medieval Castle* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 166-174; Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 293-299.

<sup>32</sup> Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 7-9.

accompanied by relics of saints at the head of advancing armies or to initiate ceremonies that were to protect soldiers and to defeat their enemies in battle.<sup>33</sup> William of Poitiers records an account of how Duke William II of Normandy, brought the relics of Saint Valery of Luxeuil to the Norman port of departure prior to the invasion of England to calm the winds and sea, and to ensure safe passage for his ships carrying his troops and horses.<sup>34</sup> Even the objects carried or worn by saints such as swords or lances, boasted an impression of holiness. Martial weapons once used by these soldiers of Christ, were seen as an extension of the saint themselves and conferred an aura of sacredness about them when called into action.<sup>35</sup>

As early as the third century, the writings on the *Life of St. Antony* by Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296-373), depict several temptations by demons and their rebukes by Saint Antony (c. 251-356) as he traversed the Egyptian wilderness. For early monks, Saint Antony's physical and spiritual warfare against a horde of demons in a cave, and God's subsequent assistance and power over the demons, destroying them, is one aspect of this militant fervor that can be referenced in monastic history.<sup>36</sup> In England Guthlac (673-714), an Anglo-Saxon warrior, gives up his royal heritage and trappings upon being shown by the Holy Spirit what rewards awaited him in heaven if he became a *miles Christi*.<sup>37</sup> The transformation from a secular to a spiritual warrior, which led him to lead a life of a hermit, is recorded in Felix of Croyland's, the

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>34</sup> William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, 108-113.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, 176-179.

<sup>36</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, "The Life of Saint Anthony," *The Golden Legend or Live of the Saints*. trans. William Caxton, 1st ed. 1483, vol. 2, ed. by F.S. Ellis (1900 reprinted 1922, 1931), 100. Medieval Sourcebook. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume2.asp#Anthony>.

<sup>37</sup> Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors*, 62-64, 75-81.



*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*.<sup>38</sup> During his life as a hermit, Guthlac deploys his spiritual weapons, songs and prayers to God when confronted by spiritual and seemingly physical peril, presented as demons in disguise. Felix's account of Guthlac's spiritual battles contain all the weaponry and pageantry of that of a heroic warrior figure, depicting these battles in words and imagery as if they were actual physical battles taking place.<sup>39</sup>

In the article "Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter," the use of a daily devotional book called a psalter, which included the Book of Psalms, calendars for the days of the saints and other daily hymns and prayers for Christians, Kathleen Openshaw skillfully shows that psalters were frequently illustrated with images of saintly warriors locked in spiritual combat, particularly apostles and other biblical heroes battling against hell's legions of demons and devils. These daily devotional books, which she refers to as "weapons in the battle fought daily by soldiers of God"<sup>40</sup> of good versus evil in a spiritual battle waged by monks, were an important instrument in defeating the spiritual temptations that plagued medieval Christians in their everyday lives. In a reference to a St. Alban's psalter, which included a collection of similes attributed to Saint Anselm (1033-1109), there is a distinct and direct connection to military terms that were used in metaphors to show how these soldiers of God should dress and properly prepare for battle. "In the Anselmian text, not only is every item of a soldier's military dress and equipment allegorized as a spiritual weapon, but so too is his

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<sup>38</sup> Felix of Croyland, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

<sup>39</sup> Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors*, 75-77.

<sup>40</sup> Kathleen M. Openshaw, "Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 1 (1993): 34.

horse. The writer states that as each and every soldier fights his enemy with a horse, so the spiritual combatant should use his body against the Devil.”<sup>41</sup> In the Bible, Paul the Apostle makes use of several metaphors comparing Christianity and faith with that of the Roman legions and military terminology of the period, for example the breastplate of faith and love, helmet of salvation,<sup>42</sup> and the armour of righteousness.<sup>43</sup>

The belief by Christian soldiers and ecclesiastics that through their collective prayers, God influenced the outcome of battles can be found in the accounts of the Roman twelfth ‘Thundering’ legion in c. 174 CE;<sup>44</sup> throughout the first crusade;<sup>45</sup> and during the battle of Hastings in 1066 by William the Conqueror and the Norman forces.<sup>46</sup> David Bachrach points out the importance of these prayers, as defense against their enemies, to reduce the apprehension of soldiers going into battle concerned for the fate of their souls when facing other Christian soldiers in battle, and to assure them a place in heaven if they died in combat for Christ in warfare sanctioned by the Church.<sup>47</sup>

Along with prayers and devotional writings, the use of imagery played an important part in ancient and medieval military tactics of the time: flags, pennants, colors of uniforms, shield

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

<sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:4-7.

<sup>44</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, updated ed., trans. C. F. Cruse (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 161-162.

<sup>45</sup> Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 114, 119.

<sup>46</sup> Wace, *Roman de Rou*, trans. by Glyn S. Burgess, notes by Glyn S. Burgess and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), 173; William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and trans. R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 125.

<sup>47</sup> Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 106-107, 118.

markings, and various symbols to designate units all helped to identify friend and foe in the confusion of battle and enabled commanders to control and assess the battle. More importantly though, it allowed soldiers on the field of battle to easily recognize important leaders. William of Poitiers (c. 1020-1090) mentions how William the Conqueror, during the battle of Hastings had to remove his helmet to reassure panicked Norman troops that he was not dead.<sup>48</sup> What is commonly referred to as heraldry and displayed on the shields and banners of nobles, knights, and ecclesiastic members as well did not, however, originate until the mid-twelfth century.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, an early account of Christian imagery and its incorporation in battle is seen during the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 CE, which eventually led to the conversion of Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337) to Christianity in the later years of his life.<sup>50</sup> Constantine would later issue the Edict of Milan in 313 declaring religious tolerance within the empire for Christians. Lactantius (c. 250-c. 325), an advisor to Constantine, gave an account of God's intervention on behalf of Constantine in *Divinae institutiones* and described how in a dream God had instructed Constantine to have his soldiers paint the Chi-Rho symbol on their shields prior to the start of the battle.<sup>51</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340) recorded the vision from God that Constantine reportedly had the night before the battle and again later in the early morning:

He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, conquer by this. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his

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<sup>48</sup> William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1-13.

<sup>50</sup> Similar stories of God's intervention on behalf of Roman soldiers who prayed for victory over enemies or succor are recorded in the accounts of the twelfth Thundering legion in c. 172 CE.

<sup>51</sup> J. F. Matthews and Donald MacGillivray Nicol, "Constantine I: Roman Emperor," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Constantine-I-Roman-emperor#ref384509>.

whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle... then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies... Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid with gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this, the symbol of the Savior's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P (rho) being intersected by X (chi) in its center: and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period.<sup>52</sup>

The progression of the militancy of the secular clergy and religious communities which incorporated violent, militant imagery, prayers for victory, the roles in battle that the clergy played, and the transformation of religious writings from a pacifistic beginning to a more aggressive, militant, doctrine in the Middle Ages, have shown that ecclesiastics did in fact believe that they were in a spiritual battle as real as any worldly battlefield. The metaphors used by Christians to relay their belief, faith, trust, and strength of conviction in a sense of righteousness into military and martial terminology, were put forth to allow those who were conducting the physical battle on earth for God to see the clergy as equals or at least a significant force of power in the battle against God's enemies. The terminology enabled those who had seen physical battle and those who were waging the spiritual battle, common ground to continue the fight and provided an outlet for part of their aggressive nature in the name of God.

### **The Development of the Peace of God and Truce of God in France**

The development of the *Pax Dei* (Peace of God), which originated in the southern regions of France late in the tenth century, grew out of a need to curb the increasing violence that was occurring in society against the unarmed clergy and the poor, ecclesiastical lands, and property.

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<sup>52</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 347-381; Paul Halsall, "Eusebius: The Conversion of Constantine" Medieval Sourcebook [<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/conv-const.asp>]. Chapter XXXI; R. Gerberding and J. H. Moran Cruz, *Medieval Worlds* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 55.

Bishops, abbots, and other clergy gathered to discuss these and other injuries at some of the first ecclesiastic councils or synods held at Le Puy in 975 and Charroux in 989.<sup>53</sup> Later along with the leading ecclesiastics in the region, monks as well as secular rulers such as counts and local war lords of the region, met to stem the incessant fighting that was occurring not only in the region of Aquitaine, but also throughout all of France. What started as a local call for peace and protection of property from uncontrolled knights, specifically the mounted warriors, transformed into a general peace movement that encompassed most of the southern regions of France. The cessation of the violence that was directed by these rampant knights toward the laity and clergy, and those who worked the lands and property which were controlled by these ecclesiastics, as well as the return of seized Church property, was at the root of this popular peace movement. This desire for a return to a more orderly way of life eventually spread throughout much of France and led to an understanding between local lords and ecclesiastical leaders regarding the behavior of knights and punishments that could be administered either by ecclesiastical leaders or secular lords for violation of these peace proclamations. These efforts would spread throughout Europe slowly, taking hold in the southern regions first and having a more profound and lasting effect in the northern regions under the guise of the Truce of God, with its articles expressly limiting the uncontrolled or unsanctioned violence and combat. Perhaps the most critical use of the *Treuga Dei* (Truce of God) was the secular rulers' preference and need to rein in blood feuds among the

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<sup>53</sup> H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Peace and Truce of God in the Eleventh Century," *Past & Present*, No. 46 (Feb. 1970): 42-44. However, Christian Lauranson-Rosaz in his article "Peace from the Mountains: The Auvergnat Origins of the Peace of God," *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 104-134, points to an even earlier date and more specific geographical location. That he agrees with the general acknowledgement of the start of the peace councils at Le Puy 975 and Charroux in 989, he believes that earlier assemblies attended by clergy and the poor of the diocese at a more localized level, led by the local bishop, were in fact the serving the same principles in action even though they were not by name called councils.

lower aristocracy that were devastating the region.<sup>54</sup> The Peace of God and Truce of God, which is first recorded in 1027 at the council of Elne-Toulouges,<sup>55</sup> would together, as part of a general peace movement throughout France in various forms and effectiveness, enabled those secular leaders who were stronger and utilized more centralized control over their lands, eventually displace the Church as the keepers of the peace and dispensers of justice.

At the synod of Le Puy under Guy of Anjou, bishop of Le Puy (c. 934-c. 993-995), the question of how to keep the peace within his lands was asked of the local knights and peasants who resided there to stop the general lawlessness and bring some sort of cessation to the violence that was prevalent during this time. At the synod of Charroux, specific acts of violence were recorded and denounced by Gunbald (?–c. 998), archbishop of Bordeaux, and publicly decried throughout the diocese by the bishops. To protect the clergy and the poor of the diocese, the Church along with these peace decrees used the only available means it had at the time, prayer and oaths that had been sworn upon sacred relics of saints that were triumphantly paraded at the start of the councils and synods by attending monks.<sup>56</sup> However, these protections did not extend to those clergy who were armed for combat and who looked for all outward appearances like a warrior or knight. In the following degree issued by Archbishop Gunbald, it is clearly laid out in the third section that “If anyone attacks, seizes, or beats a priest, deacon, or any other clergyman,

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<sup>54</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon, foreword M. M. Postan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 400-401, 408-420; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21-23.

<sup>55</sup> *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 7-9, 334-335.

<sup>56</sup> Rodulfus Glaber, *Opera*, 194-195.

who is not bearing arms (shield, sword, coat of mail, or helmet) ...”<sup>57</sup> inferred that some clergy did travel armed, and special prohibitions were enacted to deal with these individuals specifically. In the extremes, the bishops might enforce compliance through their ultimate spiritual weapons, namely excommunication and interdict. The following is the decree issued in 989 at the synod of Charroux by Archbishop Gunbald, cursing those who would violate the provisions of this Peace of God:

Following the example of my predecessors, I, Gunbald, Archbishop of Bordeaux, called together the bishops of my diocese in a synod at Charroux...and we, assembled there in the name of God, made the following decrees:

1. Anathema against those who break into churches. If anyone breaks into or robs a church, he shall be anathema unless he makes satisfaction.
2. Anathema against those who rob the poor. If anyone robs a peasant or any other poor person of a sheep, ox, ass, cow, goat, or pig, he shall be anathema unless he makes satisfaction.
3. Anathema against those who injure clergymen. If anyone attacks, seizes, or beats a priest, deacon, or any other clergyman, who is not bearing arms (shield, sword, coat of mail, or helmet), but is going peacefully or staying in the house, the sacrilegious person shall be excommunicated and cut off from the Church, unless he makes satisfaction, or less the bishop discovers that the clergyman brought it upon himself by his own fault.<sup>58</sup>

As the decree pointed out, its main purpose was to protect members of the clergy and church property; it included a provision to protect the poor and their property as well. However, even if the bishop did impose such drastic sanctions on specific individuals or over certain regions, the act itself was futile. The only way that the imposing bishop could enforce such measures was with the assistance and support of local lords who could protect those mentioned within the decrees and forcibly impose the sanctions or punish the violators. Due to the lack of strong

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<sup>57</sup> Head and Landes, ed., *The Peace of God*, 327-328.

<sup>58</sup> Brian Tierney, *The Middle Ages, Volume I: Sources of Medieval History*, Fifth ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992), 136-137.

centralized royal authority, often it was the local count, the ruling duke, or a powerful warlord whom the bishops turned to for enforcement of these oaths of peace.<sup>59</sup>

As these synods began to expand beyond the borders of Aquitaine, possibly six or so recorded by the year 1000 CE, and over twenty during the first quarter of the eleventh century,<sup>60</sup> and gained popularity among the poor and ecclesiastics, they grew into a general peace movement mobilizing all three orders of society: those who *orant* (pray), *pugnaunt* (fight), and *laborant* (work).<sup>61</sup> By the early part of the eleventh century secular rulers took note. While often supporting the movements within their own sphere of control to influence the local clergy and in turn the poor, these local rulers used the peace movements to their advantage, working within the movement to stabilize their authority, legitimize their use of force as peace keepers sanctioned by the bishops, and supplanting their nominal liege lord's roles as protectors and adjudicators of justice.<sup>62</sup> As more local churches and ecclesiastical lands came under the direct protection of the stronger secular leaders,<sup>63</sup> the dukes and counts particularly in regions in Southern France began to take a more active approach to daily violent occurrences within those ecclesiastic lands under their protection, where they tried to curb such violence imposing their will.

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<sup>59</sup> Head and Landes, *The Peace of God*, 3-4. In 975 Guy of Anjou, bishop of Le Puy called upon his nephews, the counts of Gevaudan and Brioude to force compliance from the attendants of a council to keep the oaths of peace.

<sup>60</sup> Head and Landes, *The Peace of God*, 6-7.

<sup>61</sup> Georges Duby, *The Three Orders. Feudal Society Imagined*. trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 1,5,13, 134-139. Duby theorizes that the idea was one that was a common perception among ecclesiastics but was not fully expressed as a 'term or system' until its use by Bishop Gerard of Cambrai c. 1023 and Bishop Adalbero of Laon around the same time.

<sup>62</sup> Hans-Werner Goetz, "Protection of the Church, Defense of the Law, and Reform: On the Purposes and Character of the Peace of God, 989-1038," *The Peace of God*, 259-261.

<sup>63</sup> due to the slowly diminishing lack of power to halt the decline and ineffectiveness of Capetian royal authority



### **The Development of the Truce of God in Normandy**

Normandy's first encounter with the peace movements began initially with little or no support from the Norman dukes or the corresponding Norman bishops. Unlike the southern lands of France, where the Church had become the premier instigator of the peace movements, supported by its popularity with the peasants, and secular rulers, Normandy in contrast had strong centralized control under the dukes, with effective judicial administration.

In 1041-1042 the Cluny trained monk, Richard (970-1046), abbot of St. Vanne of Verdun attempted to implement the Truce of God but was unsuccessful.<sup>64</sup> As with the decrees issued by bishops in the south of France, the composition usually enacted prohibitions against private warfare, specified periods when fighting was forbidden, and provided exemptions for secular lords to defend themselves and their lands.<sup>65</sup> Richard's efforts seemed to have fallen on deaf ears and failed to take hold in Normandy at this time. One reason that seems the most plausible for the initial failure of the Truce of God was Duke William's I domination over the Church in Normandy and the monastic community. William's policy of investiture of ducal family members to ecclesiastical positions ensured him of an unprecedented level of ducal control over a clear majority of the ecclesiastical province of Rouen. (See Figure 1.1)

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<sup>64</sup> Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 43-44; Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843-1180*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 199-206.

<sup>65</sup> Head and Landes, *The Peace of God*, document 7, 334-335.

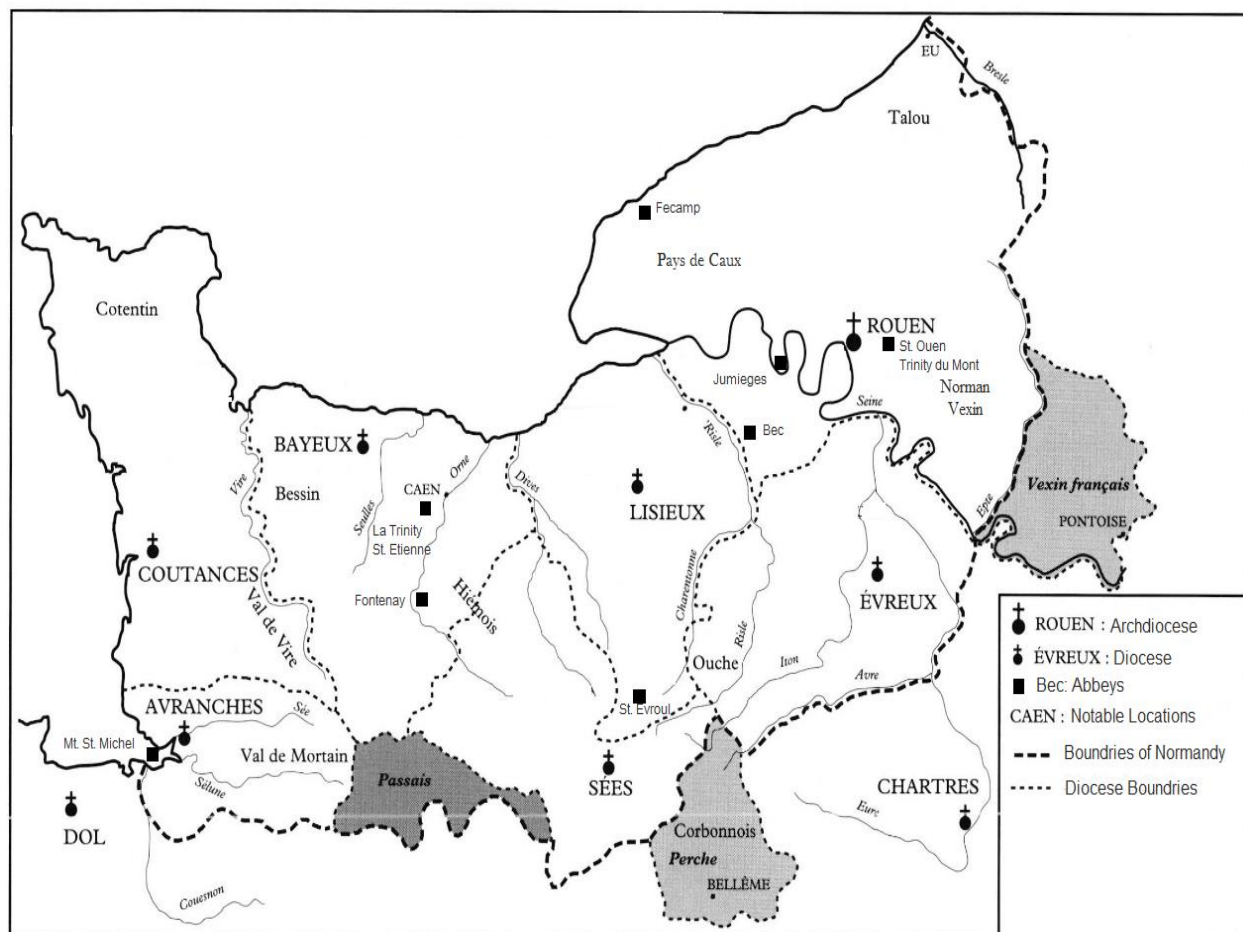


Figure 1.1: Diocese of Normandy<sup>66</sup>

It would not be until after the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes in 1047 that William would endorse the Truce of God at an ecclesiastical council held in October 1047 in Caen,<sup>67</sup> which was overseen by William and two other members of the ducal family, namely Mauger, his uncle, the archbishop of Rouen, and his older cousin Nicholas, abbot of St. Ouen.<sup>68</sup> While this council appeared to incorporate many of the prohibitions against violence and unchecked aggression as

<sup>66</sup> Adapted from Pierre Bouet and François Neveux, *Les diocèses normands aux XIe et XIIe siècles* (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen: 1995).

<sup>67</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, book IV, vol. II, 298-299.

<sup>68</sup> Felice Lifshitz, *The Norman Conquest of Pious Neustria: Historiographic Discourse and Saintly Relics 684-1090* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995), 192-195.

other degrees proclaimed, this council however made it clear that William was exempt from the tenants of the council concerning the use of force and violence throughout his lands.<sup>69</sup> In fact William, after the council in Caen 1047, held regular ecclesiastical councils within the duchy as remarked by David Bates, who list nine such councils between 1050-1080.<sup>70</sup> William would continue holding ecclesiastic councils in England after 1066, and would begin a program of reform to mirror the Church and monastic communities in Normandy. With the newly conquered kingdom of England, William began a deliberate policy of replacing native English clergy with appointments of Norman ‘French’ bishops and ecclesiastics from the continent, replacing all but two English bishops with new investitures.<sup>71</sup> Building on reforms that had begun in the tenth century in the English monastic communities,<sup>72</sup> William, and later his successors, would promote these changes through the appointments of monks to the positions of bishops and even the primacy of the archbishopric of Canterbury.<sup>73</sup> (See Figure 1.2)

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<sup>69</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, book IV, vol. ii, 316.

<sup>70</sup> David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (London: Longmen Group Limited, 1982), 199; these councils would have been attended by William: Brionne 1050, Lisieux 1054, Caen 1061, Rouen 1063, Lisieux 1064, Rouen 1070, 1072, and 1074, and Lillebonne 1080; and Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 130-133.

<sup>71</sup> Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 395-402.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 398-399.

<sup>73</sup> Lanfranc (1005-1089); Anselm (1033-1109); and Theobald, (c. 1090-1161) were all former abbots of Bec in Normandy that later served as archbishops of Canterbury in England.

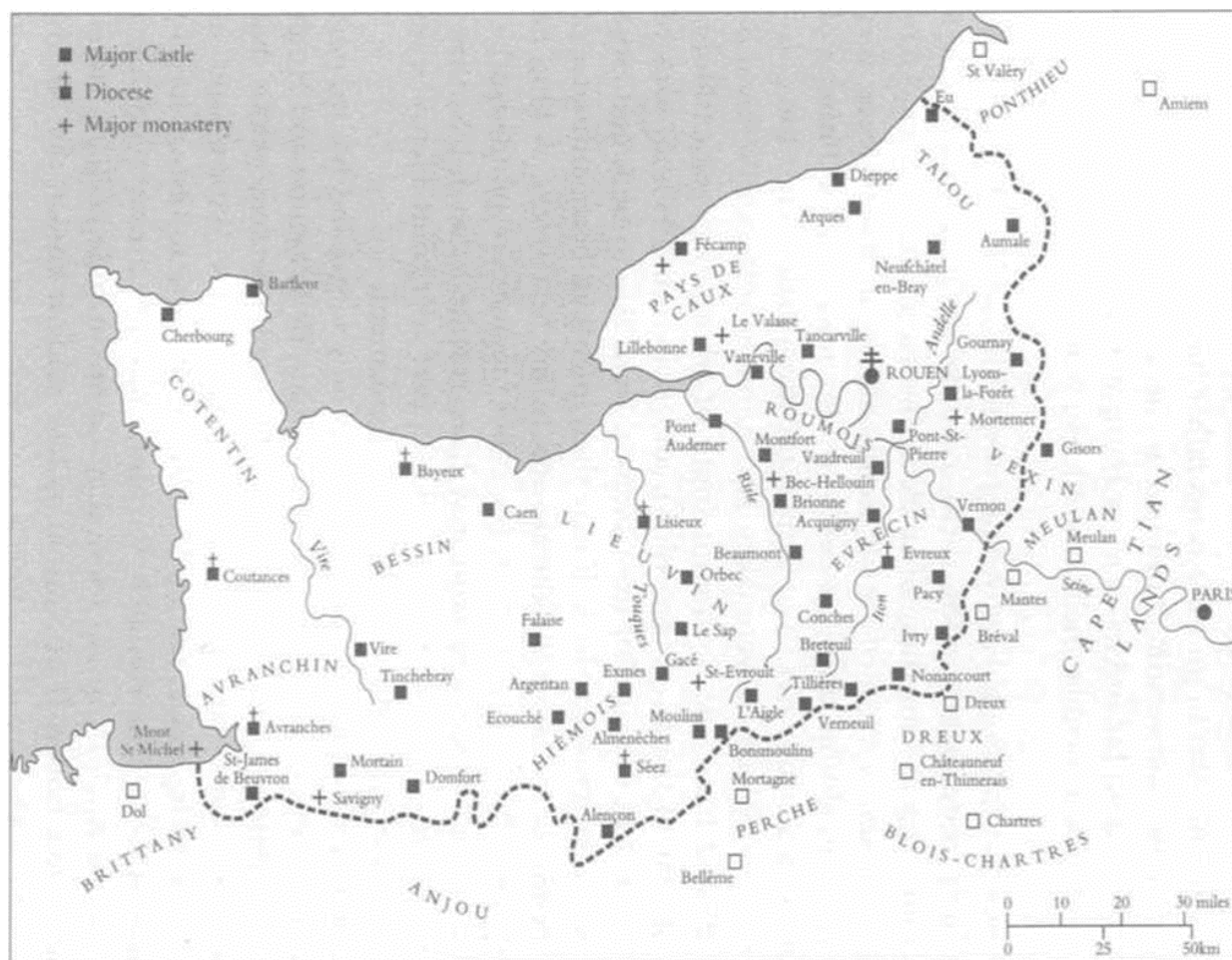


Figure 1.2: Ecclesiastical Normandy<sup>74</sup>

In addition to the effective use of the Church to pacify the newly won kingdom, William exploited the well-established English administrative units, the counties (shires), and the hundred, administrative units of local government that provided for the collection of the geld (taxes), held localized judiciary functions, and setting the amount of knight service owed to the king after its implementation throughout England, to include Church and monastic communities as well.<sup>75</sup> To enforce Norman policies and to expand Norman authority into and throughout

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.worldhistory.biz/ancient-history/66697-the-rebellion-of-1088.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 149-159.

England, the county and its corresponding court, was overseen by a royal official, the sheriff, an official who continued from earlier English traditions, but which the Normans assimilated into the newly evolving monarchy. The sheriff after the Battle of Hastings, was one of the most important royal officials under the new monarchy, and under William they were soon to eclipse the power and authority of the English earls. The sheriff, empowered by the Norman kings, expanded on the authority that the old English sheriff had possessed under Edward and Harold, the revamped sheriff now was the ranking Norman official between the counties and the king, as such the sheriff garrisoned the king's castles; presided as the chief judicial official of the hundredth court; called out the general levy and acted as its military commander; was the enforcer of the king's peace; collected taxes; and oversaw the maintenance of the royal demesne.<sup>76</sup> In Normandy, these officials resembled what were known as a vicomte, and they possessed considerable power. Installed in ducal castles, the vicomtes in Normandy exercised the power of the dukes, enforced their policies, collected taxes, kept the peace, and summoned soldiers and knights with the full authority of the dukes.<sup>77</sup> As with the English clergy, William had replaced nearly all English sheriffs from Edward's and Harold's reigns by 1072, installing Norman followers to the position's as royal officials.<sup>78</sup> While Morris concludes in this article '*The Office of Sheriff in the Early Norman Period*,' that these newly installed officials served for life and were answerable only to the king.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> W. A. Morris, "The Office of Sheriff in the Early Norman Period," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 33, no. 130 (April 1918): 158-166.

<sup>77</sup> William Alfred Morris, *The Medieval Sheriff to 1300*. (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1969), 41-56; Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 45-60.

<sup>78</sup> W. A. Morris, "The Office of Sheriff in the Early Norman Period," 147-148.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 150, 173-174.

William as duke of Normandy and later as king of England is a prime example of a leader who controlled the Church within his lands. In Normandy, it was advantageous for him to enforce the provisions found in the Truce of God through secular means while supporting Church decisions in Norman lands that strengthened ducal authority and control. While across the English Channel in England, William had no need of the Truce of God, having sole control over both the Church and land, providing for “the good security of his country,”<sup>80</sup> where the king's peace is instituted in lieu of the Truce of God. While still supporting monastic and Church reforms in both England and Normandy, William had no intention of diverging from his prerogative of lay investiture, utilizing ‘his’ bishops in secular roles as military commanders, or as agents of the crown to project royal authority as Chapter III demonstrates.

## **Conclusion**

Norman secular clergy were a continuation of a long history of militancy within Christianity that was supported by Paul the Apostle in his writings since the first century CE and other ecclesiastics such as Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose, and Bernard of Clairvaux who continued to write on the justification on the use of force, and how violence and warfare were sanctified if used while protecting the Church or fighting on behalf of God. These militant saints and bishops were often referred to as *milites Christi* or soldiers of Christ, and led armies into battle, wore armor, wielded weapons, and participated in physical combat, and seemed more like knights or secular lords than clergy. Examples of sacred imagery, writings, prayers, and hagiographies have shown that the secular clergy and monastic communities both participated in

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<sup>80</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *The History of the English People 1000-1154*, trans. and intro. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31-33; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. trans. Michael Swanton (New York: Routledge, 1996), 219-220.; William of Poitiers, *The Deeds of William*, 160-161, 180-183.

martial endeavors, physically and spiritually. While these militant secular clergy wore the trappings of a warrior, monks and other religious members took efforts to project an image of themselves as warriors of Christ. The transformation of the monastic communities to a more aggressive and militant approach to spiritual battle was due to the once worldly lives of some of its members, former knights and nobles of the aristocracy of a warrior-based society. In Normandy, were the early peace movements, such as the Peace of God and Truce of God lacked support unlike the lands in Southern France, the Normans had no need of the Truce of God. Domination of the Church and strong centralized control of the institution within the duchy enabled the dukes, along with the leading Norman families to better govern their realm than those in the south.

## **Chapter II: Norman Secular Clergy and Their Ducal Family Ties**

### **Introduction**

The importance of relationships and alliances between the ducal family and with the Norman aristocracy played a pivotal part in the dukes' policies for expanding their control and authority over the duchy. The founding of new monastic communities and reestablishment of abandoned sites in the aftermath of the Viking invasions enabled the dukes to fill these positions with individuals who supported the dukes and provided the catalyst for Gregorian reforms, if limited in nature, that would take place during their rule. Key appointments of ducal family members and relations to bishoprics and positions within monastic communities in the form of lay investitures provided leadership and loyalty in secular and ecclesiastic holdings within Normandy and helped the dukes dominate the Church within Normandy and after the invasion of England in 1066 as well.

### **The Norman Dukes and 'Their' Church**

The Church in Norman affairs during the period between Rollo (911-928) and William the Conqueror (1027-1087) played a crucial role in the deployment and advancement of power for the leading Norman families and that of the ducal family itself. The Norman aristocracy provided the Church with members for its ranks and ensured that the aristocracy, specifically the ducal family, remained in control of these key positions. These bonds were developed through donations of wealth, land, and more importantly, direct appointments to various ecclesiastical positions of ducal family members and their supporters. Hence, the dukes of Normandy expanded their influence within the duchy, which solidified their rule by intertwining positions inside the Church hierarchy with these close ducal family ties.



In 911 CE Charles III the Simple (879-929) granted Rollo control over a portion of the former Carolingian kingdom of Neustria, which incorporated much of the former ecclesiastical province of Rouen,<sup>1</sup> an area later known as Normandy so named for the *northmanni* or north man who settled the region through the Treaty of St-Clair-sur-Epte.<sup>2</sup> Rollo, who is sometimes referred to as the first duke of Normandy,<sup>3</sup> was the first in a line of successors who would rule Normandy from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries. Rollo and his subsequent heirs would expand and control the Church, which would evolve into an increasingly vital institution within the Norman realms. Rollo received a territory that had been devastated during the last two centuries by Viking and Norse raiders; a period of time saw many of the region's ecclesiastical centers and relics damaged, destroyed, or abandoned. Though the Norse incursion may have played a significant part in the demise of the region and displacement of clergy and relics, Dr. Cassandra Potts points out that other Frankish rulers such Hugh the Great (898-956) also contributed to this plight.<sup>4</sup> Of the seven dioceses within Normandy at the time of Rollo's conversion to Christianity in 911 or 912, only two are known to have residing bishops within the corresponding sees along with the metropolitan archbishopric of Rouen.<sup>5</sup> The monasteries fared

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<sup>1</sup> David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (London: Longman House, 1982), xi-xii.; Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 9-12.

<sup>2</sup> Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 20-47.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars still debate on first use of the title of count and duke to describe the rulers of Normandy. I will use the title of duke to keep uniformity throughout the paper and to avoid confusion. I however, tend to believe that the title of count was used previously to acknowledge the rulers of Normandy prior to that of the title of duke.

<sup>4</sup> Cassandra Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, vol. 11, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 16-17, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 11-12; Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 20. See appendix B and C for a more detailed description of sitting bishops in Normandy between 911-1204.

little better, with some twenty out of forty-five active sites prior to the Viking and Norse invasions never being mentioned in later records.<sup>6</sup> It is from these ashes that the Norman aristocracy and the ducal family began to assert their influence by utilizing the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy to expand their power base throughout the duchy. Rollo, baptized into the Christian faith began to reestablish some of the monasteries that had been affected by the incursions during the previous centuries, making donations and grants to the monastic community of St. Ouen and by recalling bishops and clergy that had taken up residency in Rouen or in other northern realms to where they had fled in advance of the raids.<sup>7</sup>

Rollo's descendants played an important role in supporting and reestablishing the Church and monasteries within Normandy. Supporting ecclesiastical and monastic reforms, enacted through the papacy that addressed simony, clerical marriages, and lay investiture, which would later be known as Gregorian reforms (1050-1080), the dukes were able to cultivate a positive relationship with reforming popes, bishops, and monastic leaders. In support of these efforts, Duke Richard II (978-1026) looked outside of Normandy toward Italy to find the individuals needed to implement the desired reforms. The Cluny trained Italian monks William of Volpiano (962-1031) and his nephew John of Ravenna (died 1079), and later under William the Conqueror, the Italian Lanfranc (1005-1089), provided the catalyst for the resurgence of Norman monastic reform and learning.<sup>8</sup> During his reign as duke of Normandy and later as king of England, William presided over councils and synods held in Caen, Lisieux, Rouen, and

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<sup>6</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Chibnall, *The Normans*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and Their Myths* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 42-43.

Lillebonne mandating attendance of the clergy.<sup>9</sup> During these councils, the issues of simony, the celibacy of the clergy, and concerns with local priest charging for delivering rites to their parishioners were often addressed. For example, during the council of Lillebonne held in 1080, William dealt with an accusation of a priest who had married<sup>10</sup> and earlier in 1054/1055 during the council of Lisieux, William had archbishop Mauger deposed for his connection to a failed rebellion within the duchy.<sup>11</sup>

### **Family and Lay Investiture**

A continuing source of contention, however, was the duke's hold on the appointment of and lay investiture of members of the ducal family-or anyone deemed fit to the vacant bishoprics and his influence on the appointment of family relations to various monastic postings. Rulers at this time still invoked their claims to rule by divine right, as sanctioned by God. However, Church reformers often would argue that it was the bishops, specifically the bishop of Rome, the pope, who ultimately was God's representative on earth. A ritual of lay investiture, when temporal rulers would transfer the symbols<sup>12</sup> of the office of bishop, namely the ring and crosier to the newly appointed bishops, was to reformers unacceptable.<sup>13</sup> The belief was that the ruler

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<sup>9</sup> David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 130-132. [Caen 1047, Lisieux 1054/1055, Rouen 1063, Lisieux 1064, Rouen 1066, and Lillebonne 1080.]

<sup>10</sup> Mark Hagger, "Secular Law and Customs in Ducal Normandy, c. 1000-1144," *Speculum* 85 (2010): 848-849.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 130-132.

<sup>12</sup> The bishops ring symbolized the marriage of the bishop with his see; the crosier, shepherds hook to guide and protect his lay flock; the miter, a hat that shows his position of authority within the see; and the pallium, an outer garment hung around the shoulders to hang in front of the bishop, to show his fidelity to Christ.

<sup>13</sup> Maureen C. Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 2-6.

bestowed the power of the office and therefore could take it away, in theory making the ruler, i.e. the dukes, the direct benefactor of the bishop or abbot, not the pope or archbishop. Rulers often influenced the election or appointed members of the ruling, noble, or aristocratic families to claim their right by ancient customs, as practiced by the Carolingians. Even Pope Gregory VII (1020-1085), who during his tenure as pope began an arduous task of reforming the Church, had to grudgingly support this right due to the political atmosphere at the time and the lack of support from secular rulers and the bishops. What Gregory did support was the Norman's, specifically William's view on clerical celibacy,<sup>14</sup> prohibition of simony, the separation between secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the reinstatement of the ecclesiastical hierarchy within the Church in the form of the office of the archdeacon and the archidiaconate.<sup>15</sup> All of which William supported, with the understanding that he would not tolerate any outside interference concerning the internal workings of his lands that would jeopardize his rule. On two separate occasions William rebuffed the primacy of the Church within his lands over his rights, in one instance William learned that the disgraced Robert of Grandmesnil (died c. 1082), former abbot of St. Evroul, was returning to Normandy with two papal legates and a demand from Pope Nicholas II (990/995-1061) to be reinstated as abbot. However, upon learning of the delegation, Duke William agreed to receive the legates but threatened to hang Robert from the highest oak tree if he came before him.<sup>16</sup> The other was Williams's censorship of correspondence between the English clergy and Rome, along with travel restrictions pertaining to ecclesiastics to and from

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<sup>14</sup> Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe*, 165-167. Even so, Orderic Vitalis tells a story of how outrages priest wives and/or concubines attack and throw stones at John of Avranches, archbishop of Rouen who tried to enforce Pope Gregory VII's prohibition on clerical marriage.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 122-123.

<sup>16</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 114.

the English Kingdom in the years following the invasion. Though William agreed to continue to pay Peter's penance to Rome from his English possessions, he refused to be collared as a vassal state of Rome.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the Gregorian reforms, the Norman dukes were accustomed to investing family members to ecclesiastical positions and the practice continued afterwards as well. Robert, count of Evreux, the son of Duke Richard I (932-996), was appointed as archbishop of Rouen (989-1037)<sup>18</sup> while continuing to hold his secular title. Two sons of count Rodulf (945-1015), the half-brother of Richard I, obtained bishoprics. Hugh became bishop of Bayeux (1011-1049), and John received the bishopric of Avranches (1060-1070), John is later appointed archbishop of Rouen (1070-1079). Hugh, grandson of Richard I and son of Count William of Eu, was bishop of Lisieux from 1049-1077. Richard III's son, Nicholas, was abbot of St. Ouen (1034-1092); Mauger<sup>19</sup> held the archbishopric of Rouen from 1037-1054; and Richard I's aunt, Beatrice, was abbess of Montivilliers in 1035. William the Conquerors' half-brother Odo was made bishop of Bayeux between 1049-1090 and additionally held the title of the earl of Kent; Cecilia, a daughter of William the Conqueror, is recorded in 1112 as being the abbess of Holy Trinity in Caen.<sup>20</sup> Other grandchildren and great grandchildren of William the Conqueror held various ecclesiastical positions in England after the invasion in 1066, such as Henry of Blois (1101-1171), abbot of Glastonbury (1126-1171) and bishop of Winchester (1129-1171), who held both

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<sup>17</sup> Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 336-342.

<sup>18</sup> David Douglas, "The Earliest Norman Counts," *The English Historical Review* 61, no. 240 (May 1946): 132-133, 152.

<sup>19</sup> The son of Richard II and half-brother of Richard III.

<sup>20</sup> Leonie V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: Space, Gender and Social Pressure* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 115.

positions until his death with a special dispensation granted by papacy.<sup>21</sup> Gervase, an abbot of Westminster (1137-1157), and Henry I's daughter Matilda, became abbess of Montivilliers in the twelfth century.<sup>22</sup>

The Church did, nevertheless, see some benefits for this infringement on their desired freedom by the Norman dukes. The ducal family and the ruling aristocracy of Normandy provided these newly founded or reestablished churches and monasteries endowments and grants of lands, rights and freedoms to collect taxes and tolls within their boundaries from those who inhabited their lands. The influx of child oblates from the ruling families and the restoration of tithes to support these institutions also benefitted ecclesiastical institutions still recovering from the devastation suffered at the hands of Vikings. In addition to these financial gains, the Church garnered a sense of security and protection not so much from raiders and brigands, but from the depredations of land, wealth and fighting men by other leading Norman families. Monasteries such as Fecamp and Bec, would become centers of learning, drawing intellectuals from around Europe to reside within their walls. The Rule of St. Benedict would be used throughout Normandy to affect solidarity and uniformity within the monastic communities to the benefit of the dukes. Even though the dukes often acted in favor of placing private religious houses and parish churches under their protection, it was often the dukes themselves who were the most serious violators of ecclesiastical lands. It was not unheard of that in times of crisis or when beneficial for the dukes, that they would utilize these lands as dowers or as benefices for other notable members of the ruling Norman aristocracy, to form alliances between families, or to

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<sup>21</sup> Chibnall, *The Normans*, 152-154.

<sup>22</sup> Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, 115.

shore up land holdings and consolidate territory that centered on ancestral homes or ducal centers of control.

### **Family and Friends**

The dukes wanted individuals who they could trust, to support them and their claims within their lands, to uphold the laws and customs of the dukes, to defend the territory if needed, and to expand the influence and power of the duke. Therefore, the dukes employed powerful nobles, who were often related by marriage and blood and reinforced these nobles and their families by granting or appointing titles, lands and privileges that were normally reserved for the ducal family or from the duke's demesne. These privileges tended to solidify ancestral lands and holdings to include castles, churches, monasteries, and episcopal sees as they became vacant, spreading the dukes influence through a variety of means including economic, political, ecclesiastical revival and monastic reforms. The dukes were not going to entrust these important positions that often-controlled vast swaths of land within Normandy to strangers; they were going to give them to relatives.

Families tied to the dukes, such as the Beaumont's, Tosny's, and Montgomery's built private monasteries or gave lavish donations in land and wealth to family sponsored churches and religious houses. Hurluin, vicomte of Conteville,<sup>23</sup> later the founder and abbot of the monastery at Bec supported the abbey of Grestain,<sup>24</sup> While Church reformers argued against such deliberate demonstration of customary rights, there was little they often could do to counter these private establishments, as they were typically outside the reach of the normal Church

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<sup>23</sup> Husband of Herleve the mother of William the Conqueror.

<sup>24</sup> Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, 136.

hierarchy, and later consolidated by the dukes and placed under their explicated protection. As Orderic Vitalis wrote “inspired by the piety of their princes...Each magnate would have thought himself beneath contempt if he had not supported clerks and monks on his estate for the service of God.”<sup>25</sup> R. H. C. Davis points out that there were five monasteries before 1000 in Normandy and ten founded prior to 1035, all of which were tied to the ducal family and their relations. Afterwards between 1035 and 1066, the number of monasteries had expanded to approximately thirty due to the religious fervor of the aristocracy, the primary founders of these new religious communities and their chance to expand and consolidate their own influence.<sup>26</sup> Close supporters of the dukes, Goscelin, vicomte of Rouen and his wife Emmeline founded two abbeys during the reign of Duke Robert I the Magnificent (1000-1035), St. Amand and Trinite du Mont both in Rouen, and Roger of Tosny founded the abbey of Conches.<sup>27</sup> Lesceline, countess of Eu, wife of Richard II half-brother William, founded St. Pierre sur Dives in 1045. William Fitz Osbern<sup>28</sup> founded two abbeys.<sup>29</sup> Potts points out that the leading families of the Norman aristocracy often related by blood to the dukes, built these private religious houses during times of ducal strength and strong centralized control. These families often would install a member of their own family as abbot or abbess of the newly founded or in some cases reestablished religious communities. Not only did these families reap the spiritual reward of having their own private priests,

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<sup>25</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 105.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, *The Normans*, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 107-109.

<sup>28</sup> Fitz Osbern's father, Herfast, was the brother of the duchess Gunnor, wife of Duke Richard I, and his mother Emma, was the daughter of Count Rodulf, the half-brother of Richard I.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-117.



chaplains, abbots and priors associated with their names and lands, there were financial gains from donations and fees associated with the various application of religious rites. Aging warriors, often elderly family members tired of the incessant fighting and blood shed, searched for solace and sought forgiveness for innumerable former deeds in life and salvation as they retired to the family founded monastery. At the end of life, family members enjoyed a designated burial site for their eternal rest, awaiting judgement day and monasteries benefited from death bed contributions and donations of land or wealth from the dying repentant.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these direct ties to the ducal family, several of the leading Norman families and relations added leverage to the expansion of ducal power throughout Normandy and, after the invasion eventually England as well. Loose or distant ties to the ducal family served to spread the reforms sought after by the papacy, and supported by the dukes, regarding ecclesiastical institutions within Normandy and England. Relatives such as Humphrey of Vieilles (died 1050),<sup>31</sup> built the abbey of St. Pierre of Preaux in 1034. The count of Evreux, Richard, son of William the Conqueror's great uncle Robert, archbishop of Rouen, had built the monastery of St. Sauveur.<sup>32</sup> William the Conqueror's half-brother, Robert, count of Mortain,<sup>33</sup> founded the abbey of Grestain in 1050. While the dukes supported these changes, most importantly within monasteries, they never relinquished total control or the ability to exercise their customary rights within their realm to confirm monastic appointments.

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<sup>30</sup> Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 117.

<sup>31</sup> Founder of the Beaumont's and the first cousin of Richard II.

<sup>32</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity*, 112-113.

<sup>33</sup> The brother of bishop Odo of Bayeux was the son of Herleve, William's mother and her husband Hurlin vicomte of Conteville.

During this time, along with ducal appointments and investitures of various family members, relations, and leading Norman nobles to ecclesiastical vacancies, it was common that these individuals also held separate and distinct secular titles and lands. Many of these leading families tried, some successfully, to attach ecclesiastical tithes and benefices that would be passed on to the heads of these leading Norman families and would attempt to transfer Church lands to allodium. Even those of the lower clergy, the priest and deacons, tried to pass along their ecclesiastical benefices to their offspring as a form of inheritance.<sup>34</sup> These lands, once free from ecclesiastical control, would become part of a family's ancestral lands or patrimony. The abbey of St. Evroult founded in 1050 by William Giroie and supported by endowments from two Norman families, the Giroies and Grandmesnil is one such example. After being blinded and mutilated for supporting the wrong lord in a power struggle, William Giroie entered the abbey of Bec-Hellouin, donating his patrimony to the abbey. As the Norman dukes expanded their influence into the region, the newly founded abbey came under ducal control and lands donated to Bec by William Giroie were transferred to St. Evroult.<sup>35</sup> These private churches and monastic communities that were founded by these members would remain outside the control of the bishops, seeking and obtaining ducal protection releasing them from control of the local bishop.

Duke William, and after December 1066 King William, continued the policy of lay investiture within his newly conquered kingdom of England. The removal of the English clergy and the replacement by Norman ecclesiastics, slowly brought the Church in England in line with

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<sup>34</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, *The Normans in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), 164.

<sup>35</sup> Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996), 18-22.

the reforms taking place in Normandy under Williams's ever watchful eye. The continued appointment of family relations, close ducal supporters, monastic and Church reformers to the newly vacant English ecclesiastical positions ensured that William and his successors would remain firmly in control of all aspects of clerical life in Normandy and England as well. The Norman dukes were able to expand their political influence through the close coordination and investiture of key blood relations to monastic and Church positions, marriages between ducal family members and other leading Norman families that brought them within the sphere of ducal influence and strengthened alliances, land grants or endowments that solidified the lands around the supporting aristocracy's ancestral lands, consolidating monastic and Church holdings within Normandy. It is because of these close blood ties between the ducal family and the Norman aristocracy and their policy of investiture to ecclesiastical position, that the dukes of Normandy would control and reform the Church within Normandy to tailor to their needs and promote the duke's agenda.

### **Conclusion**

The Norman duke's ability to invest family and members of the Norman aristocracy to key ecclesiastical positions within the duchy of Normandy and later the kingdom of England, resulted in the ducal and aristocratic domination of the Church and religious communities, controlling the Gregorian reforms that were initiated by the dukes. The Norman bishops, raised and promoted from the warrior aristocracy of Normandy, were instrumental in securing the duchy for the dukes and enforcing their policies. Along with the Norman noble families, who were connected to the ducal family through marriage or alliance, the Church in Normandy was essentially populated by family members and individuals who supported the dukes and their rule.

Though the dukes supported the Gregorian reforms, especially those that involved simony and clerical marriages, they did not tolerate outside interference concerning matters within the Norman lands. The dukes continued practice of lay investiture and the militant tendencies of the secular clergy, though both prohibited by canon law, were of little concern to the papacy, for as long as the Norman dukes supported the Church and monastic reforms, the popes would not intervene.

## Chapter III: Soldiers of God: Norman Fighting Bishops

### Introduction

From the founding of the duchy under Rollo in 911 CE, Norman secular clergy have played a prominent role in the military exploits of the dukes. Norman bishops and individual monks and abbots performed knightly service, defended Norman lands, held castles under the duke's authority, and accompanied the dukes while participating in military campaigns either as combatants or spiritual advisors. This practice of armed militant clergy continued in England after William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066 where their importance and authority further expanded, blurring the lines between their function as secular lords and their ecclesiastical offices.

### Early Obligations

Rollo's acquisition of the lands surrounding Rouen and subsequent expansion by his son William Longsword (c. 893-942)<sup>1</sup> brought a majority of what would become Normandy under ducal control prior to 1066. The dukes, now concentrated on solidifying their political and military gains in the region, began the process of reintegrating the displaced Church hierarchy and reestablished the devastated monastic communities within their lands. Due to the number of these vacant bishoprics, the dukes could with relative ease address this issue with investiture of family relations and selected members from the leading Norman families. Monastic communities, which were founded exclusively by the dukes prior to 1034, and installed with reform-minded abbots, once again began to appear throughout the duchy. Though some religious

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<sup>1</sup> Flodoard of Reims, *Annals*, xx-xxi, 23; Dudo of St. Quentin, *History of the Normans*, trans. and intro. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 68-70; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, 8-9, 265; Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 3-15. Bates lays out the expansion in three land grants, dated 911, 924, and 933.

communities were founded and sponsored by the Norman aristocracy, they too also came under ducal protection and eventual control. Because of these close connection with the ducal household, the dukes benefitted two-fold, by appointing family relations and members of the aristocracy to vacant ecclesiastical and monastic positions, the dukes controlled virtually all aspects of Church and monastic reforms in their lands, and, in addition, the dukes could rely on these individuals to provide for the defense and administration of their bishoprics, and acting as secular rulers, perform knightly service owed to the duke.

Norman bishops along with other secular lords and monastic communities were expected to provide knights who would fight when called upon by the Norman dukes, or other members of the aristocracy acting on behalf of the duke's authority, such as the vicomte and comte.<sup>2</sup>

Bishoprics and monastic communities provided knights as was agreed upon, who were utilized for manning the duke's castles, escort duties, and in times of military operations. Though as Chibnall points out that secular lords and bishops were expected to contribute more while the monasteries were often not exempt.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it was not only to the dukes alone did bishops and lay lords owed this knightly service Chibnall and Haskins both refer to service owed to the king of France by Norman lords and bishops.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the watch and ward obligations, abbots and bishops were known to have contributed horses, arms, armor, and, in preparation for

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<sup>2</sup> Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 252-253; Marjorie Chibnall, "Military Service in Normandy Before 1066," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1983), 56-77. Patourel and Chibnall believe that a form of feudalism as it concerns knight service was present in Normandy prior to 1066, as monasteries and bishoprics were already providing set numbers of knights, and days of service to the dukes. However, Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, 8-24; and "Knight-Service in Normandy in the Eleventh Century," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 22, no. 88 (Oct 1907), 636-649, gives a much later date of c. 1047 and limits the extent of the what services was provided to the dukes.

<sup>3</sup> Chibnall, "Military Service in Normandy before 1066," 72-73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 68; Dudo, *History of the Normans*, 168-169, 182.

the invasion of England in 1066, ships to the dukes. In her article “The Ship List of William the Conqueror,” Elisabeth M.C. van Houts points out the contribution of knights and ships made by several ecclesiastics: Odo, bishop of Bayeux, 100 ships; Nicholas, abbot of St Ouen, 15 ships and 100 knights; and Remigius, a monk of Fecamp, 1 ship 20 knights.<sup>5</sup> Van Houts points out that these were requests made by Duke William beyond what was typically owed by tradition as recorded by Wace.<sup>6</sup>

Norman bishop with their knights often followed the dukes while on campaign, such as Odo, bishop of Bayeux, fighting near Bray and the pays de Caux as recorded by Orderic Vitalis.<sup>7</sup> And in some instances, bishops partook in private warfare and constructing fortifications during the early beginnings of the duchy, Yves, bishop of Seez, was said to have waged a campaign against the family of Sorong in 1047. Archbishop Robert of Rouen, Bishops Hugh of Bayeux<sup>8</sup> and later Geoffrey of Coutance,<sup>9</sup> would each construct fortifications during their careers. Though after the defeat of the rebellious Norman nobles led by William Talou<sup>10</sup> at Battle of Mortemer in 1054, William the Conqueror would be able to project his ducal authority

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<sup>5</sup> Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, “The Ship List of William the Conqueror,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 10, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987), Appendix 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-166; See also Elisabeth M. C. van Houts ed., “The *Brevis Relatio de Guillelmo Nobilissimo Comite Normannorum*,” Written by a Monk of Battle Abbey, Historical commentary by Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, *Royal Historical Study Camden Fifth Series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5-48; and Wace, *Roman de Rou*, 162-163.

<sup>7</sup> Gerrard, “The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England,” 37; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, book IV, 87.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas, “The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest,” 104; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, book III.

<sup>9</sup> Dennis, “The Career of Geoffrey de Montbray, Bishop of Coutances (1048-1093),” 175.

<sup>10</sup> Brother of Mauger, archbishop of Rouen, both excelled for their part in a rebellion against Duke William.

throughout Normandy with the assistance of the newly invested nobles from the confiscated lands of the rebels, thereby limiting the raising of castles and fortifications without his approval and enforcing his right to occupy them.

These early secular bishops, members of a ruling warrior class were incorporated into Norman society to facilitate not only the expansion of Normandy as a territory, but to consolidate the ducal authority as well. During the reign of Duke Robert I the Magnificent 1027-1035, new prominent families such as Montgomery, Count Alan III of Brittany (c. 997-1040), and Osbern (?-1040), brother-in-law of Duke Richard I, rose to power to replace rebelling family members and Norman nobles ousted by the duke, creating a new aristocracy and an opportunity to replace secular clergy that had supported the revolt.<sup>11</sup> Duke Robert I looked outside of Normandy to the monastic communities of Italy, to replace suspect clergy and reconstitute recently reestablished religious communities throughout Norman lands.

It is was during William the Conqueror's tenure as duke however, that saw the transformation of the positions of the secular bishops, members of powerful families, as agents of Church reform; extensions of ducal authority; and in their role during invasion of England, the duke's military leaders. Though Douglas refers to these warrior bishops and other members of the Norman episcopate as "crude and violent in a crude and violent age,"<sup>12</sup> it was exactly these type of men William wanted on his venture into England.

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<sup>11</sup> Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 32-38.

<sup>12</sup>Douglas, "The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest," 115.



### **Fighting Clergy in England during William the Conqueror's Reign**

Outfitted in armor and wielding a club or mace during the Battle of Hastings, fought on 14 October 1066, Odo, bishop of Bayeux as depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry is a prime example of a militant Norman bishop.<sup>13</sup> Perceived more as a secular lord or knight that led Norman forces into battle with William the Conqueror against the English King, Harold Godwinson (c. 1022-1066), Odo was a key figure in ruling Normandy under his half-brother, along with Geoffrey, bishop of Coutance.

Odo is mentioned several times throughout contemporary accounts as being first and foremost a warrior and administrator while in England after 1066. He is seen as supportive of reforms with regards to his bishopric in Normandy and he enriches his cathedral with the spoils of the conquest, and yet is at times condemned by his peers as being too worldly in mannerism and for his fondness of a secular life style. In 1067 he was granted the earldom of Kent in England by William the Conqueror and became one of the richest and most powerful men in the kingdom. Odo is one of the few Norman clergy mentioned as accompanying William into combat and is recorded in several sources: *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, the *Gesta Guillelmi*, the *Carmen de Hastinage Proelio*, and depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry. Throughout his stay in England, Odo was constantly involved in leading troops personally into combat or marshalling forces to deal with significant rebellions in England as they arose. In 1067, Odo was one of the commanders of the Norman forces, along with Bishop Geoffrey, who drove off Eustace II of Boulogne (c. 1015-c.1087), lifting the siege of Dover.<sup>14</sup> During an uprising of English barons in

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<sup>13</sup> Gerrard, "The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England," 37, 105n.

<sup>14</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 204.

1075, Odo, Geoffrey, along with Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester (1008-1095), and Abbot Aethelwig of Evesham defeated the forces of Roger of Hereford.<sup>15</sup> After what is referred to as the "Harrying of the North,"<sup>16</sup> by William between 1069-1070, in 1080 Odo was in the north of the kingdom, devastating the lands around Northumbria, punishing the local English nobility for their role in the murder of Walcher, bishop of Durham, and earl of Northumbria.<sup>17</sup>

Geoffrey, bishop of Coutance, was another military commander and important personality in England within William's kingdom. Mentioned by William of Poitiers as accompanying the Norman invasion forces in 1066, Geoffrey is portrayed as providing for the spiritual needs of the troops,<sup>18</sup> while Orderic Vitalis states that he fought in the battle.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, during his stay in England he was often utilized as a military commander, leading troops and quashing rebellions along with other ecclesiastic leaders and royal officials. In addition to helping Odo deal with Eustace II in 1067, Bishop Geoffrey led a relief force to break the siege of Montacute in 1069 and mutilated the prisoners. Later in 1075, Geoffrey is accused again of mutilating prisoners after a failed revolt of the English barons in 1075.<sup>20</sup> While Odo and Geoffrey are two of the most documented figures during the initial years of William's rule, they

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<sup>15</sup> Le Patourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray," 151; Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 145-146.

<sup>16</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, as punishment for assisting an Anglo-Danish uprising in the north centered on York.

<sup>17</sup> Kapelle, *Norman Conquest of the North*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 267.

<sup>20</sup> Gerrard, "The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and other Clergy in England," 39; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 204, 316.

both fall out of favor with the English crown when they decide to support Robert Curthose, duke of Normandy, militarily and politically over William Rufus for control over England in 1088.<sup>21</sup>

Other instances of militant clergy are known as well, Remigius, a monk from Fecamp, is said to have led knights from the abbey personally at the Battle of Hastings and was later rewarded by William for his military exploits and martial prowess.<sup>22</sup> Turol, abbot of Peterborough, supplied knights and participated in the campaign against Roger of Hereford.<sup>23</sup> In 1075, Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, as previously mentioned led forces in conjunction with Bishops Odo and Geoffrey against revolting nobles.<sup>24</sup>

### **Anglo-Norman Accounts**

While the warfare in England did not cease after the death of William the Conqueror in 1087, the role of the secular clergy was slowly transformed during his reign and continued so, thereafter resulting in fewer instances of secular bishops or other ecclesiastical participating in fighting or in command of troops. Even so, there was still clerical involvement under the Norman kings of England such as Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who oversaw the defense of the kingdom during a rebellion in 1075, and along with William Rufus, besieged the port city of Pevensey in 1095,<sup>25</sup> and Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who was entrusted with the defense of Canterbury and the surrounding coast by William Rufus in 1095 and as a result for

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<sup>21</sup> Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 263-281.

<sup>22</sup> Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 133, 136-137.

<sup>23</sup> C. Warren Hollister, *The Military Organization of Norman England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 60-61.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 118-119.; William of Malmesbury, *Pontificum Anglorum*, 285; Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North*, 132.

<sup>25</sup> Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 144-145, 152-153; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 316-17.

went meeting a papal legit after being summoned because of his secular duties as directed by the king. Anselm writes in his letters that he has been charged by the king while he is away to “guard Canterbury...guarding the coast...command the knights and foot-soldiers.”<sup>26</sup> It seems that even the saintly Anselm was not exempt from military service. At the Battle of the Standard in 1138, it was Archbishop Thurstan of York and Bishop Ralph of Orkney who raised the local forces and set out to battle the Scots;<sup>27</sup> and during the Anarchy, Stephen of Blois (? -1154), who had usurped the English crown, depended on his brother, Henry, bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury (1096-1171), to lead forces against the Empress Matilda (1102-1167). Several instances have Henry leading forces: Battle of Lincoln in 1141; and at the siege of his own see of Winchester, where he eventually launched an assault on the retreating forces.

By the mid-twelfth century, however, the instances of the involvement of the secular clergy in actual physical warfare, or even commanding troops, diminished. With the implementation of the Gregorian reforms, the separation between the Church and secular rulers was transforming the roles of each. The jurisdiction of the royal and ecclesiastical courts was more profound, especially cases concerning conflicts regarding the nobility and the Church or the right to hear capital offenses. The secular clergy and monks were more often than not, educated in monastic communities and appointed by the papacy, thereby limiting the influence of lay investiture within the Church and monasteries. Though the Church still controlled vast amounts of property throughout Christendom, its leaders and the Church hierarchy, were now accountably to a more influential and astute papacy, no longer holding their lands as vassals of

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<sup>26</sup> Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 165-166; Barlow, *William Rufus*, 348-351.

<sup>27</sup> Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 191-195; Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 142-143.

secular lords. Along with the development and empowerment of royal officials, such as the sheriff, chancellor, and a host of other clerical positions, these once militant bishops were transformed into peace makers and royal officials employed by the crown.

### **Conclusion**

Prominent Norman ecclesiastical individuals such as Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Geoffrey, bishop of Coutance, the Archbishops Lanfranc and Anslem, all held military commands at one point in their religious careers under either the Norman dukes or Norman kings of England. Several others like Henry, bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury, Remigius, a monk of Fecamp, who was to later be invested by William the Conqueror to the bishopric of Lincoln for his military exploits at the battle of Hastings and, Turolde, abbot of Peterborough along with others previously mentioned, participated in physical combat armed for battle. With the replacement of the English clergy by Norman 'French' clergy starting with William the Conqueror and continuing under successive Norman kings of England, the role of the armed militant clergy was slowly phased out by changes enacted by the Gregorian reforms. While holding a position of dominance and authority under William, the clergy were assigned to the confines of a more traditionally viewed role, that as peace makers and spiritual advisors.

## Chapter IV: Conclusion

The basis for militant clergy had their roots in Biblical scriptures as preached by Paul the Apostle. Supporters of a militant form of Christianity believed that even Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane had not shown his disapproval of force or violence, when he mentioned to Peter, “Put your Sword back in its place,”<sup>1</sup> and that there was a time and place to use justified warfare and sanctioned violence to do good in the world and defend the Church. Early fathers of the Church such as Saint Augustine of Hippo<sup>2</sup> and Saint Ambrose,<sup>3</sup> and later Bernard of Clairvaux writing on behalf of the Knights Templars during the crusades, justified the use of force and its correct application in the service of God.<sup>4</sup> With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, the Church became a source of stability with its familiar hierarchy and ritual ceremonies, reminiscent of the Roman Empire. After the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire and the inefficiency of the Capetian kingdoms, and lack of centralized control, society looked to the Church to maintain the peace.

Unable to stop the incessant warfare taking place, local bishops begin to issue peace decree’s trying to limit the violence directed toward the Church and poor. While in the south of France, these movements referred to the Peace of God and the Truce of God,<sup>5</sup> were readily

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 26:52.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 33; Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson, intro. G. R. Evans (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> St. Ambrose, *On the Duty of the Clergy*, trans. H. De Romestin (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> See above, 36-37; Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood: A Treatise on the Knights Templar and the Holy Places of Jerusalem*, trans. Conrad Greenia OCSO, intro. Malcolm Barber, Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 19 B (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Cowdrey, “The Peace and Truce of God in the Eleventh Century,” 42-44.

excepted, in the northern realms such as Normandy, they were resisted until the mid-eleventh century.<sup>6</sup> The Norman dukes, along with the other northern rulers, had their power more centralized, and had established institutions that provided for dealing with breaches of the peace through strong ducal authority and domination over their realms. There was no need for the Truce of God. In Normandy, it was only after Duke William had subjugated the rebellious nobles of his realm that he allowed for the Truce of God to be proclaimed in his lands, and it was only then because it advanced his own policies.<sup>7</sup> It was due to his domination of the Church and integration of the Norman aristocracy into the Church that allowed him to approve of the reforms of the Church within his lands and continue with the investiture of family members to key ecclesiastical positions without papal interference.

William's secular bishops and monastic communities were a product of deliberate infusion of militant ideology that had permeated the Church since the third century. Sacred images, militant rhetoric, litanies, and prayers offered to God for victory not only over the devil, but over earthly enemies of the Church as well, were the weapons of choice deployed to engage these foes. Hagiographies of saintly warriors waging spiritual and physical battles with forces aligned against the Church and God and traditions of acknowledging these individuals as soldiers of God, influenced these Norman secular clergy who were raised in a warrior society since birth.<sup>8</sup> What William accomplished with these secular fighting bishops was to place them in a

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<sup>6</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, book IV, vol. II, 298-299.

<sup>7</sup> Lifshitz, *The Norman Conquest of Pious Neustria*, 192-195.

<sup>8</sup> Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble*, 151-152.

position of authority both as secular and ecclesiastical lords that he could reap the benefits from controlling the Church and shaping it to his will.

The Norman dukes were largely successful in expanding their influence throughout the duchy and advancing their agendas due to their domination of the secular clergy and aristocracy by members of the ducal family, and through ties of marriage with other prominent nobles.<sup>9</sup> By the use of lay investiture, the dukes appointed family members to positions within the bishoprics and in the case of the monastic communities, influenced the votes of the community and ultimately confirm the duke's choice of abbot.<sup>10</sup> Though the dukes were supporters of reform within the Church and the monastic communities, they were very clear that they would not tolerate outside interference, even from the papacy, in regard to what the dukes believed was their privilege to invest their choice of individuals to positions within the Church and religious communities within Norman controlled lands.<sup>11</sup>

The dukes of Normandy and later the Norman kings of England, secure in their complete control of the Church and monastic communities within their lands, were able to use the secular clergy to their full advantage not only as ecclesiastical leaders, but as secular lords as well. Norman bishops acting as secular lords, occupied key strategic positions, led campaigns of conquest and reprisal, and at times even engaged in personal combat as well.<sup>12</sup> Norman bishops

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<sup>9</sup> Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, 136; Davis, *The Normans*, 42; Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, 105-109.

<sup>10</sup> See above, 63-66.

<sup>11</sup> See above, 60-61; Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe*, 165-167; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 336-342.

<sup>12</sup> See above, 52-54, 60-61.



such as Odo of Bayeux, Geoffrey of Coutances, Wulfstan of Worcester,<sup>13</sup> Henry, bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury, and the archbishops Lanfranc<sup>14</sup> and Anselm,<sup>15</sup> were praised for their roles in combat and renowned as military leaders in England after the invasion in 1066 and the turbulent years that followed, as the Norman kings fought to pacify their newly conquered lands. And there were other accounts of ecclesiastics fighting and leading troops as well, which included Aethelwig, abbot of Evesham, Remigius, a monk of Fecamp, Tuold, abbot of Peterborough, the Archbishop Thurstan of York, and Bishop Ralph of Orkney.<sup>16</sup>

With the military conquest of England by the Normans and the crowning of William as king of the English on 25 December 1066, the replacement of the existing English ecclesiastic hierarchy commenced.<sup>17</sup> William and subsequent Norman kings of England would transform the English secular clergy and steer it toward a more Norman or continental European style of Church and monastic reform, rewarding vassals by investing them with lands and titles from Church property, and supplanting the native English clergy with Norman and French bishops, and monks, to replace the vacant bishoprics and implementing Gregorian reforms within the monastic communities.<sup>18</sup> With the reforms, and a stronger more assertive papacy back in Rome, the Church gained more independence and separation from the crown, allowing for a return to its

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<sup>13</sup> See above, 71-74; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 204; Le Patourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray," 151; Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 145-146.

<sup>14</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 316-17; Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 144-145, 152-153.

<sup>15</sup> Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 165-166; Barlow, *William Rufus*, 348-351.

<sup>16</sup> Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 142-143; Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 191-195.

<sup>17</sup> See above, 66.

<sup>18</sup> See above, 51.

more traditional role of peace makers and protectors of the poor.<sup>19</sup> In England, the clergy became instrumental in the administration of the kingdom, fulfilling many of the clerical duties of the royal court and acting as spiritual and political advisors.<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that the secular clergy, when called upon by temporal rulers or when the situation dictated, could and did respond as secular lords either leading troops into combat and participating in martial feats of arms, or as commanders, directing military forces offensively or providing for the defense of strategically important regions within their sphere of control. These militant clergymen were not overtly condemned by peers and society, nor censured by Church leaders for violating cannon laws as participants in military endeavors, but rather applauded for taking an active role in martial endeavors defending Christianity or in support of a legitimate ruler. What often times was condemned, was the secular clergy's affinity toward a worldly approach toward combat, being seen more as a knight or mounted warrior than a religious leader. Bishops and other ecclesiastics donning armor, using swords and lances, relishing in personal combat, and seizing bounty were seen as violating their true calling as ecclesiastics, caught up in the trappings of secular lords and ridiculed for such behavior.<sup>21</sup>

What made these Norman militant clergy stand out was their close relationship at first to the ducal family and then after 1066, the Norman kings of England as well, and how the dukes of Normandy and the kings of England relied so heavily on their secular clergy to perform the duties normally reserved for secular lords.<sup>22</sup> As this thesis points out, the secular clergy of

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<sup>19</sup> See above, 66-67.

<sup>20</sup> See above, 75.

<sup>21</sup> See above, 46.

<sup>22</sup> See above, 54.

Normandy were following a long Church tradition of active involvement in martial affairs, starting with the teachings of the Paul the Apostle, the history of martial achievements by the saints as soldiers of Christ, and the role of the secular clergy defending Christendom against spiritual and physical attacks.<sup>23</sup> These showed a common consensus that the clergy could use force and violence if deployed in defense of God and the Church, and perhaps more importantly, in defense of their secular lords and lands.

Some questions still remain about the role of the militant secular clergy in Normandy and later in England after the invasion in 1066. For instance, were these individuals such as Odo of Bayeux, Geoffrey of Coutances, and Henry of Winchester invested with their bishoprics strictly due to their direct ties to the ruling family or was it something more?<sup>24</sup> Something that these specific men could offer to the benefit of the dukes of Normandy or kings of England such as fighting men, finances, land, or political clout? Why with the implementation of the Gregorian reforms in England, did the gradual separation between the Church and royal household led to a less prominent role for secular clergy with regards to military affairs? Were their duties as defenders of the realms and their secular lords striped away or were they adjudicated to another royal official? Finally, the secular clergy's role as military leaders in affiliation with the English sheriff or Norman vicomte needs to be explored to better understand their relationship to one another during combat operations and campaigns.

In respect to the research presented, the Norman secular clergy followed a long-standing precedent of militancy within the Church which had developed since its founding during the first

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<sup>23</sup> See above, 7-8, 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> See above, 63, 74-75.

century CE and has shown that it was not only a widely excepted practice but was more often than not praised by secular rulers and society as well. That the relationships explored in regard to the appointment of relatives and members of the leading Norman families to key ecclesiastic positions within Normandy, and later in England, has shown that the majority of the power was held by the ducal family. And in addition, the information provided throughout this work contributes to an in depth understanding of how these militant secular Norman clergy acting as secular lords as well, were utilized by the Norman dukes, and later the Norman kings of England, to expand their power base, institute Church and monastic reforms, and dominate the ecclesiastical institutions with in their realms.

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### Appendix A: Papacy 10th-13th Century

Roman Popes		Antipopes	
Pope	Dates of Pontificate	Antipope	Dates of Pontificate
Sergius III	904-911		
Anastasius III	911-913		
Lando	913-914		
John X	914-928		
Leo VI	928		
Stephen VII or VIII	929-931		
John XI	931-935		
Leo VII	936-939		
Stephen VIII or IX	939-942		
Marinus II	942-946		
Agapetus II	946-955		
John XII	955-964		
Leo VIII	963-965		
Benedict V	964-966		
John XIII	965-972		
Benedict VI	973-974	Boniface VII	974
Benedict VII	974-983		
John XIV	983-984	Boniface VII	984-985
John X or XVI	985-996		
Gregory V	996-999		
Sylvester II	999-1003	John XVI or XVII	997-998
John XVII or XVIII	1003		
John XVIII or XIX	1004-1009		
Sergius IV	1009-1012		
Benedict VIII	1012-1024		
John XIX or XX	1024-1032		
Benedict IX	1031-1044		
Sylvester III	1045	Gregory VI	1012
Benedict IX	1045		
Gregory VI	1045-1046		
Clement II	1046-1047		
Benedict IX	1047-1048		
Damasus II	1048		

### Papacy 10th-13th Century

Roman Popes		Antipopes	
Pope	Dates of Pontificate	Antipope	Dates of Pontificate
Leo IX	1049-1054		
Victor II	1055-1057		
Stephen IX or X	1057-1058	Benedict X	1058-1059
Nicholas II	1059-1061		
Alexander II	1061-1073	Honorius II	1061-1072
Gregory VII	1073-1085		
Victor III	1086-1087	Clement III	1080-1100
Urban II	1088-1099		
Paschal II	1099-1118	Theodoric	1100-1102
Gelasius II	1118-1119	Albert/Aleric	1002
Calixtus II	1119-1124	Sylvester IV	1105-1111
Honorius II	1124-1130	Gregory VIII	1118-1121
Innocent II	1130-1143	Celestine II	1124
Celestine II	1143-1144	Anacletus II	1130-1138
Lucius II	1144-1145		
Eugenius III	1145-1153	Victor IV	1138
Anastasius IV	1153-1154		
Adrian IV	1154-1159		
Alexander III	1159-1181	Victor IV	1159-1164
Lucius III	1181-1185	Paschal III	1164-1168
Urban III	1185-1187	Calixtus III	1168-1178
Gregory VIII	1187		
Clement III	1187-1191	Innocent III	1179-1180
Celestine III	1191-1198		
Innocent III	1198-1216		

### Appendix B: Archbishopric of Rouen

Franco	911-919
Gonthard	919-942
Hugh de Tosny	942-989
<b>Robert, count of Evreux</b>	<b>889/990-1037</b>
<b>Mauger, count of Arques</b>	<b>1037-1055</b>
Maurilius	1055-1067
<b>John of Ivry</b>	<b>1067-1078</b>
William bonne Ame	1079-1110
Geoffrey Brito	1111-1128
Hugh	1129-1164/1165
Rotrou	1164/1165-1184
Walter of Coutances	1184-1208

\* Individuals in **bold** are direct members of the ducal family.



### Appendix C: Bishoprics of Normandy

<b>Avranches</b>		<b>Coutances</b>	
Norgod	c.990-1017/1018	Theodoric	911
Maugis	1022-1026	Herbert	?
Hugo	1028-1060	Algerund	?
<b>John of Ivry</b>	<b>1060-1067</b>	Gilbert	?
Michael	1068-1094	Hugh	989-1025
Turgis	1094-1134	Herbert	1025-1026
Richard of Beaufou	1134-1142	Robert	1026-1048
Richard Subligny	1142-1153	Geoffrey of Montbray	1049-1093
<b>Herbert</b>	<b>1154-1161</b>	Raoul	1093-1110
Achard of St. Victor	1162-1171	Roger	1114-1023
Richard of Coutances	1171-1182	Richard of Brix	1124-1131
William Bureau	1182-1195	Algase	1132-1151
William of Chemille	1196-1198	Richard of Bohon	1151-1179
William Tollerment	1199-1210	William of Tournebu	1184-1202
		Vivien of L'Estang	1202-1208
<b>Bayeux</b>			
Henricus	927-933		
Richard	?		
Hugo	965		
Raoul of Avranches	986-1006		
<b>Hugh of Ivry</b>	<b>1011/1015-1049</b>		
<b>Odo, earl of Kent</b>	<b>1049-1097</b>		
<b>Tuold of Envermeu</b>	<b>1097-1106</b>		
Richard of Dover	1107-1133		
Richard of Gloucester	1135-1141		
Phillippe of Harcourt	1142-1163		
Henri	1163-1205		

\* Individuals in **bold** are direct members of the ducal family.

### Bishoprics of Normandy

#### Evreux

Hugh	933
Guiscard	954-970
Gerard	970-1011
Gilbert	1012-1014
William Flertel	1046-1066
Baldwin	1066-1070
Gilbert of Arques	1071-1112
Audin of Bayeux	1113-1139
Rotrou of Warwick	1139-1165
Gilles of Perche	1170-1179
Jean	1180-1192
Garin of Cierrey	1193-1201
Robert of Roye	1201-1203
Lucas	1203-1220

#### Lisieux

Roger	985-1022
Robert	1022-1025
Herbert	1026-1049
<b>Hugh of Eu</b>	<b>1049-1077</b>
Gilbert Maminot	1077-1101
Fulcher	1101-1103
Thomas	?
John	1107-1141
Arnulf of Lisieux	1141-1181
Raoul of Varneville	1182-1191
William of Ruffiere	1192-1201
Jordain of Houmet	1202-1216

#### Sees

Ives of Belleme	
Gerad	1091

\* Individuals in **bold** are direct members of the ducal family.