

# Archbishops and Church Construction

Enquiry: How much did England change during the Norman Conquest?

Ms Dawson



In Anglo-Saxon England, the Church was very wealthy. It owned more of the land in England than anyone else. Senior churchmen, called **Bishops**, ruled over large **estates**. The Church charged the peasants a tax called a **tithe**, which was 1/10<sup>th</sup> of everything that they earned. People feared that they would not get into heaven if they did not obey the Church. So, even though the peasants were poor, they paid these taxes. As well as collecting taxes, there were other things that members of the Church were doing which were criticised. Some priests had more than one job at a time and some other priests sold or gave jobs to their friends or relatives. Some **Priests** also got married and had children, even though this went against Church teachings. These were examples of **corruption**, as the Priests were using their position unfairly to help themselves or their friends.



According to the Catholic Church, the **Pope** was the most important person in Europe. In order for William to be a successful King of England, he would need to reform the church without angering the Pope. When William came over from Normandy, he brought with him a personal friend who was also known to the Pope – Lanfranc. Lanfranc was well-respected and intelligent. As a result, Lanfranc could help William change the Church in England in a way that the Pope supported. William made him the Archbishop of Canterbury - one of the most important jobs in the Church. Lanfranc made several changes, one of which was creating a new church **hierarchy** so that it was clear who everyone needed to obey. At the top of the hierarchy were the **Archbishops and Bishops**. These were important figures who could pass on orders to those below them. The bishops made sure that all other people employed by the Church were loyal. They did this by giving jobs to Normans and getting rid of churchmen who they couldn't trust. An example of this was Archbishop Stigand, who lost his job in 1070. By 1087, there was only one remaining Anglo-Saxon Bishop.



Underneath the Bishops and Archbishops, Lanfranc added in new positions of **Archdeacons and Deans**. These people would help manage the huge numbers of Priests and make sure that they obeyed the Bishops and Archbishops. The Normans created lots of new churches to spread their reforms across the country. New Priests were given jobs to manage these new churches. They also gave the Priests clear rules to follow, to make sure that they were not corrupt. Lanfranc made sure that there were clear and up-to-date copies of all new rules given to all Priests – so there would be no excuses not to obey them. Famously, three **Monks** refused to follow Lanfranc's new rules and were killed.



As well as changing how the Church was run, the Normans pulled down almost every Anglo-Saxon church. These were replaced with new much grander church buildings. They rebuilt wooden churches in stone so that they would last longer. They made the churches large and impressive to demonstrate not just the power of God, but also the power of the Normans. They rebuilt churches in places where there had been rebellions – such as in the town of Ely. These new, large churches served as powerful reminders to those who had rebelled or thought about rebelling. It sent a clear message that the Normans were in charge and planned to stay. They also forced the Anglo-Saxons to build them. By the time William died, they had built many more churches in the Norman style and almost all of the old Anglo-Saxon churches were gone.



# Glossary

**Bishop:** A senior member of the Catholic Church.

**Estate:** A large part of land which people worked on.

**Tithe:** A tax paid to the Church.

**Priest:** A lower down member of the Church, who performs mass in churches.

**Corruption:** Using power to behave dishonestly.

**Hierarchy:** A system which organises people from most to least important.

**Archbishop:** A very senior member of the Catholic Church, worked closely with the King and the Pope.

**Dean:** A member of the Church, helped the Bishops to control the Priests.

**Monk:** A member of the religious community who obeyed strict rules, like not getting married or earning money.



## **Comprehension questions:**

1. What made the Church wealthy in Anglo-Saxon England?
2. In what ways was the Church criticised for being corrupt?
3. Who was the most important person in Europe?
4. Who did William bring to help him re-organise the Church?
5. How did he re-organise the way that the Church was run?
6. What did the Normans change about the way that churches looked?
7. How did they ensure loyalty in the Church?

## **Challenge:**

Why did William need the support of the Pope?



# Extension Question

In what ways did William use Church reform to show the power of the Normans?

Use the sentence starters and key words below to answer this question

Sentence starters:	Key words
<p><i>William used Church reform to show the power of the Normans because...</i></p> <p><i>An example of this was...</i></p> <p><i>This helped them to show their power because...</i></p>	<p>Rebuilt</p> <p>Reminder</p> <p>Rebellion</p> <p>Grand</p> <p>Stone</p>

