
GCSE History (8145)

Resource pack for the 2018 specified site, Durham Cathedral Norman England c.1066-c.1100

The purpose of this pack is to provide you with guidance and resources to support your teaching about Durham Cathedral, the 2018 specified site for the historic environment part of Norman England c.1066-c.1100. It is intended as a guide only and you may wish to use other sources of information about Durham Cathedral. The resources are provided to help you develop your students' knowledge and understanding of the specified site. They will not be tested in the examination, as the question targets AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (explaining second order concepts).

General guidance.

The study of the historic environment will focus on a particular site in its historical context and should examine the relationship between a specific site and the key events, features or developments of the period. As a result, when teaching a specified site for the historic environment element, it is useful to think about ways of linking the site to the specified content in Parts 1, 2 and/or 3 of the specification

There is no requirement to visit the specified site as this element of the course is designed to be classroom based.

The study of the historic environment will focus on a particular site in its historical context and should examine the relationship between a specific place and associated historic events and developments.

Students will be expected to answer a question that draws on second order concepts of change, continuity, causation and/or consequence, and to explore them in the context of the specified site and wider events and developments of the period studied. Students should be able to identify key features of the specified site and understand their connection to the wider historical context of the specific historical period. Sites will also illuminate how people lived at the time, how they were governed and their beliefs and values.

The following aspects of the site should be considered:

- location
- function
- the structure
- people connected with the site e.g. the designer, originator and occupants
- design
- how the design reflects the culture, values, fashions of the people at the time
- how important events/developments from the depth study are connected to the site.

Students will be expected to understand the ways in which key features and other aspects of the site are representative of the period studied. In order to do this, students will also need to be aware of how the key features and other aspects of the site have changed from earlier periods. Students will also be expected to understand how key features and other aspects may have changed or stayed the same during the period.

Background Information on Durham Cathedral

Why was the location of Durham important?

The cathedral and castle are located on land formed by a bend in the River Wear where the steep riverbanks on either side formed a natural defence. In Anglo-Saxon times the kingdom of Northumbria had shifting northern borders which sometimes stretched into south-eastern Scotland. Durham was strategically important because it could control this troublesome border with Scotland. It was also well placed to deal quickly with local English rebellions in the North after the Norman Conquest. The Scottish raided northern England at this time and there was also the threat of invasion by the Danes. As a result William the Conqueror ordered a castle to be built at Durham. The castle became the secure stronghold and home of the Bishop of Durham who was given military, and political powers as well as religious authority over the region. It was a wealthy and powerful position, leading one historian to describe it as 'the greatest Marcher lordship in the British Isles.'

Why was a Cathedral built at Durham?

Durham Cathedral was built on the site of an earlier Anglo-Saxon cathedral built by Bishop Aldhun in 995 as a shrine to St Cuthbert (634 – 687). He was a Northumbrian monk with a reputation for Christian holiness who, after his death, had many miracles attributed to him. St Cuthbert's relics were kept on the island of Lindisfarne but because of Viking raids, the monks moved to the mainland in 875 where St Cuthbert's tomb was established at Chester-le-Street in 882. The Danish raids continued so in 995 the monks moved again, this time taking St Cuthbert's relics to Durham which became a place of pilgrimage with a small town growing up around it.

Who were the Bishops of Durham?

The last Anglo-Saxon Bishop of Durham was **Æthelwine**, who became Bishop in 1056 with the support of King Edward, the Confessor, and Tostig, the Earl of Northumbria. However the relationship between Æthelwine and the priests of Durham cathedral was strained because he was an outsider who they resented because they had not been consulted before he was made Bishop. In 1065 the nobles of Northumbria, supported by the Durham Cathedral priests, rose up against the unpopular rule of Earl Tostig. King Edward the Confessor sent his right hand man, Harold Godwinson, who was also Tostig's brother, north to negotiate with the rebels. Harold, keen for peace and unity, realised that this would not be achieved while Tostig ruled in the north so he persuaded King Edward to agree to the rebels' demands. King Edward deposed Tostig who fled abroad but despite his loyalty to Tostig, Æthelwine remained Bishop of Durham.

After the Norman Conquest Æthelwine pledged his loyalty to William the Conqueror at York in 1068 and so remained Bishop of Durham, proving valuable to William as an ambassador to King Malcolm of Scotland. In 1069 William appointed a new Norman Earl of Northumbria, Robert de Comines, to govern the area. Æthelwine warned him about English rebels in the area but de Comines did not listen to the advice and was burned to death in the bishop's house in January 1069. This and the rebellion in the north prompted William to retaliate with the savage 'Harrying of the North'. Æthelwine tried to escape to the island of Lindisfarne with important relics including the body of St Cuthbert but he was caught, imprisoned and died in the winter of 1071.

King William appointed **William Walcher**, a well-educated and spiritual French priest, to replace Æthelwine as Bishop. Walcher wanted to encourage monasticism in the area and established Benedictine monastic communities at Jarrow and Wearmouth. Walcher also began the construction of some monastic buildings at Durham as part of his plan to introduce monks into the Cathedral. Before he could achieve this, some of Walcher's supporters had a violent dispute with the local Northumbrian nobles. Although the Bishop tried to calm the situation, he failed and was killed at Gateshead in May 1080. The nobles besieged the Bishop's Castle at Durham for 4 days which resulted in William the Conqueror sending his half-brother, Odo of Bayeux, north with an army to harry the Northumbrian countryside.

William the Conqueror's next Bishop of Durham was **William of Saint Calais**. He ordered the demolition of the 'white church', which had previously housed St Cuthbert's remains, and the building of a new cathedral at Durham on a grand scale. He was a Benedictine monk and abbot of the Abbey of St Vincent in Le Mans, northern France. William was a good organiser, and very

knowledgeable about the law and the Bible. He set about reforming the existing cathedral priests by offering them a chance to join a new Cathedral Chapter but as this involved abandoning their wives and families only one agreed. St Calais then brought Benedictine monks from Jarrow to be the Cathedral chapter. St Calais gave them a new stricter set of rules based upon those that Archbishop Lanfranc had created at Canterbury. This new cathedral chapter supported the Bishop when he began building a new cathedral at Durham in 1093. William St Calais wanted his new monastic cathedral to be spectacular and admired throughout Western Europe. St Calais died in 1096 but his successor as Bishop, **Ranulf Flambard**, shared the ambitions of his predecessor for the new cathedral.

What influenced the style of Durham Cathedral?

There were several influences on the design of Durham Cathedral including St Peter's Basilica in Rome. The original length of Durham Cathedral and its nave are almost exactly the same as the old St Peter's Basilica while the spiral columns at Durham closely match those around the canopy of St Peter's Shrine. As with many earlier Cathedrals, St Calais wanted to include shrines to saints so the new cathedral housed the bodies of St Cuthbert, and the Venerable Bede (672 – 735), an historian and religious writer. The intersecting arches along the aisles of Durham Cathedral may also have been inspired by the architecture of Islamic Spain. Inside Durham Cathedral the austerity of the first generation of Norman buildings was discarded for more elaborate carving which some would see as a revival of a more Anglo-Saxon style of decoration.

What was special about Durham Cathedral as a building?

The naves of early cathedrals had been roofed in timber. Examples of these flat, painted timber ceilings can be seen at Peterborough Cathedral which was built at roughly the same time as Durham. But at Durham something new was invented which marked a turning point in the history of architecture. The builders used a pointed arch rather than a semi-circular one to span the roof of the nave. This meant that the building could have a much greater height. In turn this allowed larger windows in the part of the church above head height so that these clerestory windows now brought more light into the building. Semi-circular arches limit the area they can span because their height must be proportionate to their width. Pointed arches overcome this problem and allow different spans to rise up to the same height. At Durham there are stone ribs which give extra support to the roof at key points. This allowed the roofing between them to be thinner and lighter yet still helped to transfer the weight of the stone roof down through the walls. This combination of light and height allowed the builders at Durham to create an astonishing monument to the greater glory of God that soared into the sky and was visible for miles around. The stone-ribbed pointed arch that allowed this to happen became an important structural and architectural feature of cathedrals throughout Europe until the 16th century.

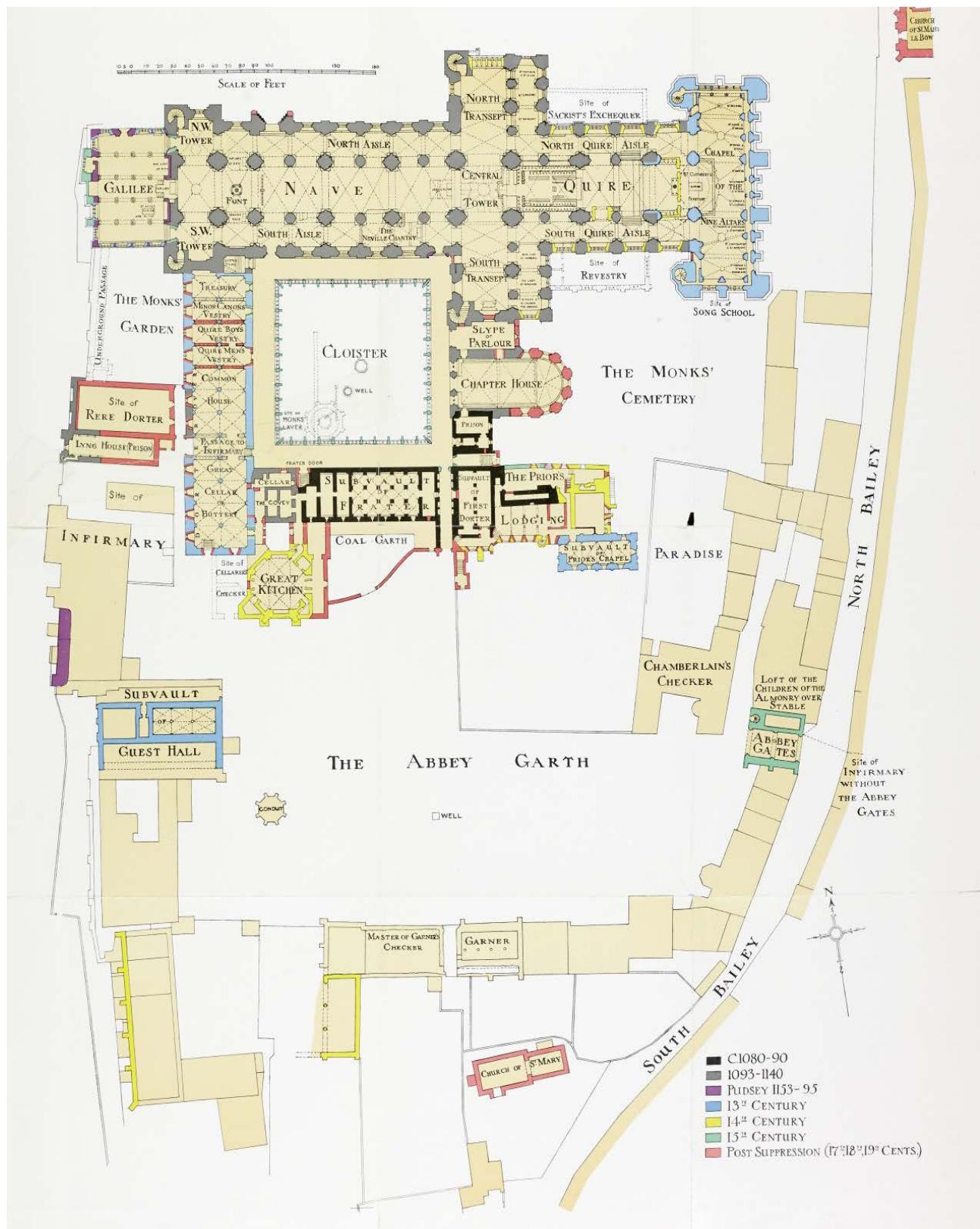
Cathedral Chapter = a group of monks who run and hold services in a cathedral.

Resources

A	A plan of Durham cathedral.
	<i>It shows the different phases of building.</i>
B	A photograph of Durham Cathedral from the north across Palace Green.
	<i>The photograph shows the central tower, nave, Galilee Chapel on the right-hand side and Quire to the left. The cloisters, chapter house and monks' accommodation lay behind the Cathedral.</i>
C	An artist's drawing of Durham Castle.
	<i>The drawing shows the location of Durham Castle and Cathedral on the land formed by a bend in the River Wear. The castle was the accommodation for the Norman Bishop of Durham.</i>
D	A photograph of the nave roof of Durham Cathedral.
	<i>The photograph shows the distinctive stone-ribbed pointed arches in the centre of the aisle which hold up the ceiling and on either side the more traditional semi-circular arches in the walls. This was an important architectural innovation.</i>
E	An artist's impression of the construction of the nave roof.
	<i>The picture shows how the masons would have constructed the roof of the nave.</i>
F	The detail of a manuscripts showing Matthew (F1) and Bishop William St Calais (F2)
	<i>In the Middle Ages monks copied books by hand and illuminated manuscripts with elaborate lettering.</i>
G	A photograph of the Cathedral from the south east.
	<i>This photograph shows Durham Cathedral towering above the River Wear and visible for miles around.</i>
H	A panoramic view of Durham Cathedral and castle
	<i>This shows the close proximity of the 2 buildings.</i>
I	An extract adapted from 'The Social History of the English Medieval Cathedral' by Professor Paul Stollard in 'History Today', (1993).
	<i>This extract describes how the church in England changed after the Norman Conquest. It discusses the role and design of the new cathedrals in bringing about these changes in religion.</i>
J	An extract adapted from 'The Norman World of Art' by Deborah Kahn in 'History Today', (1986).
	<i>This extract considers the Norman conquest and its artistic influence. It describes the way in which Anglo-Saxon and Norman Art came together.</i>
K	An extract adapted from 'English Cathedral communities and reform in the late 10th and the 11th centuries', by Professor Julia Barrow in 'Anglo Norman Durham, 1093 – 1193', (1994).
	<i>The article considers the influence of the Norman conquest on English Cathedral communities. In 1066 there were 4 monastic cathedrals in England, Canterbury, Winchester, Worcester, and Sherborne. By 1133 the majority of English Medieval cathedrals – 10 out of 19 – were served by Benedictine monks.</i>

Durham Cathedral Resources

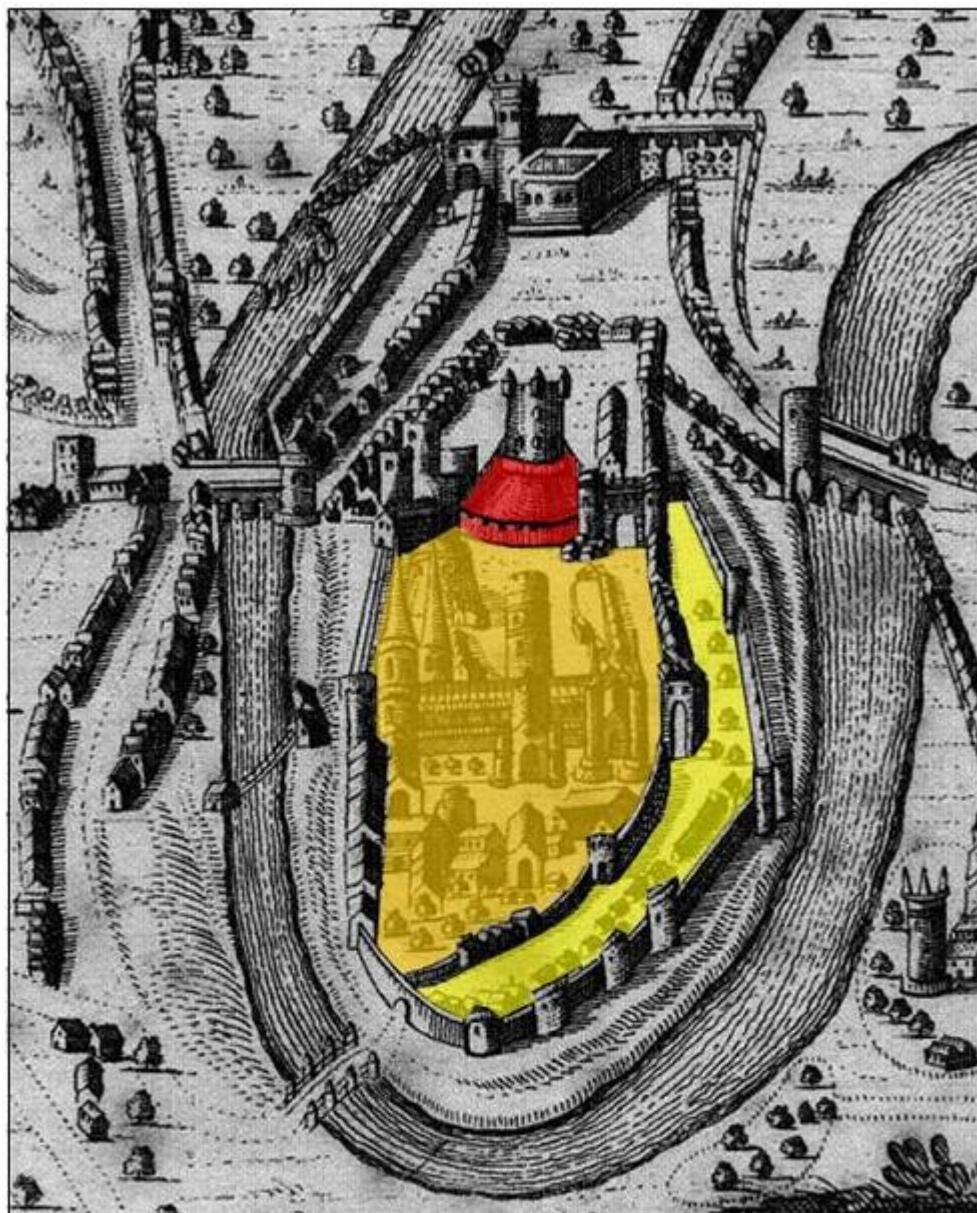
Resource A A Plan of Durham Cathedral.



Resource B A photograph of Durham Cathedral from the north across Palace Green



Resource C An artist's drawing of Durham castle



Outer Bailey



Inner Bailey



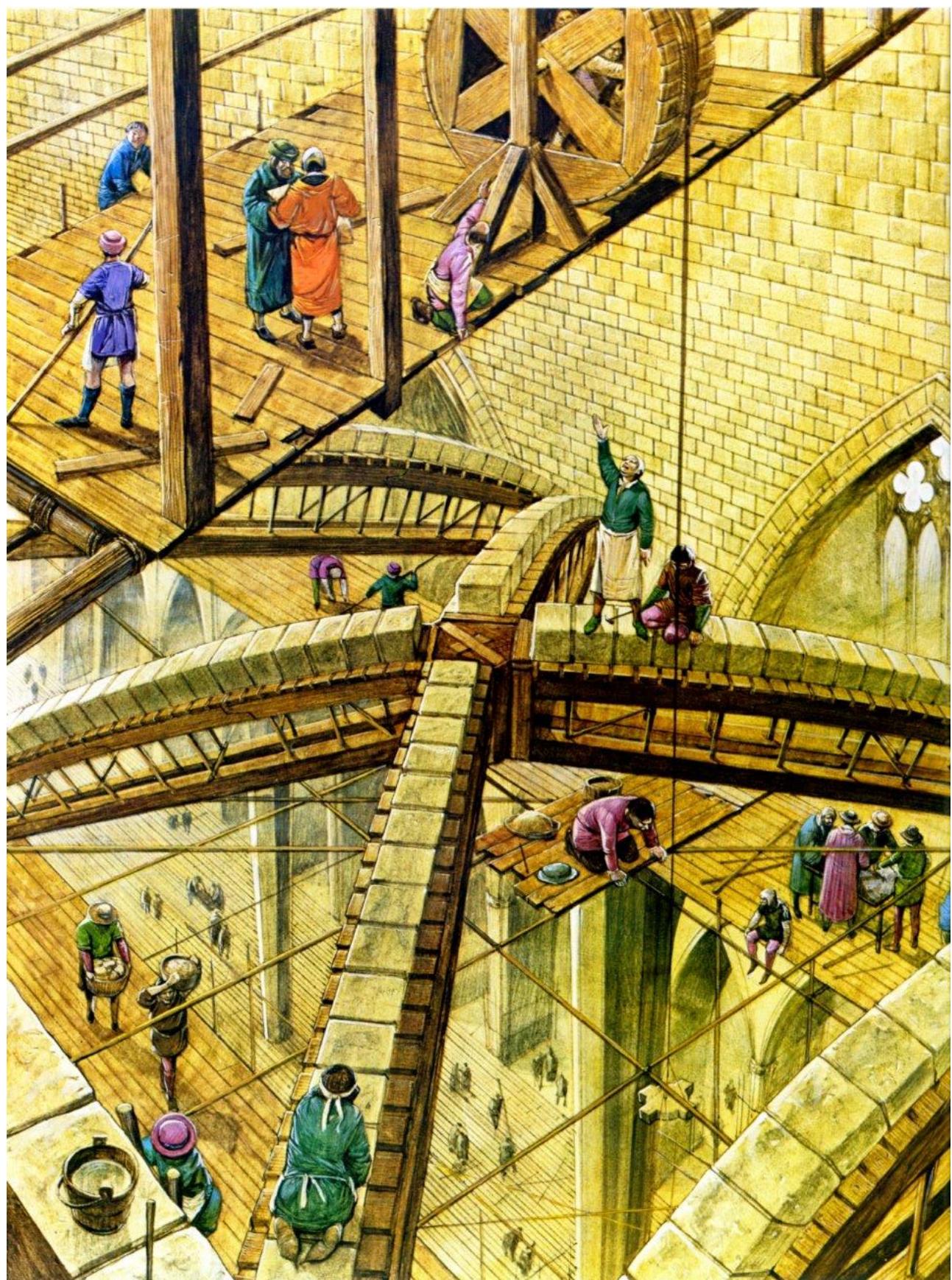
Motte

Resource D A photograph of the nave roof of Durham Cathedral.

It shows the roof held up by stone ribbed pointed arches. On either side the more traditional semi-circular arches support the walls.



Resource E An artist's impression of the construction of a vaulted Cathedral roof.



Resource F1 The detail of a manuscript showing St Matthew as an angel.

The illustration comes from the St Calais Bible produced in Normandy. It was part of a large donation of books Bishop William gave to the monks of his new Benedictine Priory at Durham to establish a library for them.



Resource F2 The detail of a manuscript showing Bishop William St Calais.

Bishop William is shown with Christ above him and below him is a monk, labelled Robert Benjamin, believed to be the artist. Bishop William appears in the initial capital letter 'I'. Bishop William commission this 3 volume set of 'St Augustine's commentary on the Psalms', whilst in Normandy. This is the only known image of Bishop William and was part of the donation he made to the monks' library.



Resource G A photograph of the Cathedral from the south east.



Resource H A panoramic view of Durham Cathedral and castle.



Resource I An extract adapted from 'The Social History of the English Medieval Cathedral' by Professor Paul Stollard in 'History Today', (1993).

Before the Norman Conquest cathedrals were sited in historic centres associated with Saxon saints and tended to be fairly small showing the relatively low significance placed on them at the time. They were places of pilgrimage rather than government, and the site was often more significant than the building. In the second half of the eleventh century the gradual change in the theology and structures of the church led to a reappraisal of the function of the cathedral. Even before the Conquest this had generated new building projects and church reform. Edward the Confessor, for example, was influenced by the fresh ideas in church design already spreading through Normandy, and used them when rebuilding the monastery at Westminster, 1050-1065.

The Conquest accelerated change within the church, by enabling a radical and effective re-organisation of administrative structures, people, and buildings. The church became an integral part of the state, and an essential part of the pacification of the conquered country, with the cathedrals becoming seats of regional government. A series of church councils, the most important being in London in 1075, generated wholesale re-organisation of dioceses. Where necessary this involved moving the cathedrals to centres of population so that they could form a partnership with the civil and military powers. Selsey, Elmham, Dorchester and Sherbourne were considered too unimportant to be the seat of a bishop, and new cathedrals were founded at Chichester, Norwich, Lincoln, and Sarum to replace them. In 1109 the new diocese of Ely was carved out of the enormous area controlled from Lincoln to help stabilise the troublesome fen country, and in 1133 a new diocese was created at Carlisle from part of Durham to strengthen Henry I's claim to the disputed land of Cumbria.

With these new sites came reforming bishops and almost all the existing Saxon ones were removed or encouraged to retire. Many new bishops were Benedictine monks keen to introduce reforms, in the administration of the church, and of the clergy who served the cathedrals. The cathedral chapters at Canterbury, Rochester, and Durham were all re-founded under the Benedictine rule. Each diocese covered a huge area, much larger than that of most Continental cathedrals. The revenue potential was therefore immense and the new bishops were not slow in exploiting their charges to build what they regarded as worthy cathedrals. Cathedrals became much more than just the principal churches of a diocese as it was believed that they had to be grandiose and magnificent to mirror the power of God. As places of worship they needed to reflect the glories of heaven, and enable the worship to be as reverent and as impressive as possible.

The strong links there had been between England and the rest of Europe before the Conquest were strengthened by the introduction of Norman clergy. The idea of the independent nation state did not exist at that time, and the great magnates would have held land in both England and on the Continent. It is therefore not surprising that the most important masons and carpenters had trained in Normandy or beyond. Easier travel led to increasing mobility among master craftsmen in the second half of the eleventh century, and this in turn facilitated the exchange of artistic and technological ideas. In consequence there is great similarity between the new English cathedrals begun in the eleventh century and those being built in Normandy.

Each new cathedral was planned as a whole, the bishops being supremely confident of their own ability to complete entirely new buildings. Although the work of construction was slow, the masterplan was normally in place from the start, and these show a remarkable similarity. There was an aisled nave for the common people, this would have been a vast space, bigger than any other in the city and used as a place of justice, assembly, commerce, entertainment, and refuge, as well as worship. The central crossing provided drama and its flanking transepts could be used for special chapels and to provide light. Further east were the more sacred spaces where the clergy could celebrate the mysteries of the mass.

In the monastic cathedrals the monks' choir was often beneath the crossing, while in those served by priests it was more often just beyond in the eastern arm. The choir would be separated from the

nave by a solid screen, the *pulpitum*, which was often of stone and might be surmounted by a cross or an altar. There would be a tower over the crossing, and if resources were available also two more over the west front. These were to proclaim the glory of God as people arrived to worship. Beyond the choir there were further chapels, including chantry chapels for private masses. Beneath the choir there might be a crypt to be used as a chapel or burial place and which would also provide a safe haven for the relics of the cathedral. Internally, this Norman 'Romanesque' style was based on order, symmetry and proportion. Repetition of simple elements gave an imposing grandeur to the design and equally importantly it speeded up construction. Windows were small, for the worship would be from memory and light was only important as a theological concept.

Around the cathedral church there was the same standardised plan for the cloistral buildings; chapter-house, sacristy, cloisters etc., all enclosing a large open court. As they were often built on new sites, it was easy to ensure adequate space both for the self-contained community of the cathedral and to provide a buffer between the church and the potentially hostile local population. A cathedral was not just a building to be used on particular feast days, but it was also the heart of a settlement in its own right and therefore had to be self-sufficient, with its own agricultural, industrial and trading areas.

Those returning from the first crusades brought back stories of the Eastern Church with its huge buildings and decorative mosaics which would have inspired many craftsmen. There was also technical innovation, perhaps brought back by returning masons who had worked on the great fortresses of the crusader kingdoms. The first examples of the ribbed vault, the pointed arch, and the flying buttress are found in different projects around the country at this time. At Durham, for example, the first ribbed vaults in Europe were built, between 1095 -1100, and concealed flying buttresses were under construction there in the first half of the twelfth century. The architecture of this period is often called 'transitional' providing a link between the 'Romanesque' of the Conquest and the Gothic styles of the thirteenth century.

During the eleventh century the priest had celebrated mass facing the congregation across the altar, but gradually this changed and the priests began to say mass with their backs to the congregation as if leading them in worship. This meant that altars could now be placed against walls and whereas before, carving had been restricted to the front face of the altar, there now developed a tradition of fine carving behind the altar.

Dedications to new 'Norman' saints flourished but some earlier Saxon and Celtic saints were also given increased prominence. This desire for new saints was as much to do with business as theology. The cost of building a cathedral was enormous, so housing the relics of a saint was an immediate financial gain for the cathedral. For example, the shrine of Bishop Hugh of Lincoln, canonised in 1220 only twenty years after his death, became a centre of pilgrimage and a money-making opportunity for the Cathedral.

Resource J An extract adapted from 'The Norman World of Art' by Deborah Kahn in 'History Today', (1986).

The victory of Duke William of Normandy in 1066 cleared the way for an invasion of artistic fashions which were already established on the Continent. But even in the pre-Conquest period England was not entirely cut off from the artistic life of Normandy as during the reign of Edward the Confessor Norman culture and art had already begun to infiltrate. Edward was himself half Norman and had spent part of his childhood in Normandy and when he became King in 1042, he surrounded himself with Norman advisers and maintained certain Norman customs.

A pious man, Edward had been impressed by monastic reforms carried out in Normandy which had important consequences for England. At the time of the Conquest there were twenty-eight monasteries in Normandy including important ones at Bec, Bernay, Jumièges, Mont-Saint-Michel and Saint-Ouen at Rouen. They were built in the monumental early Romanesque style which Edward the Confessor was to copy when building Westminster Abbey. The church at Westminster was even built of Caen stone, a pale fine-grained limestone imported from Normandy, which became one of England's principal building stones after the Conquest.

But the influence was not just one way: certain Anglo-Saxon trends influenced the arts in Normandy. Anglo-Saxon manuscripts were admired on the Continent for their vibrant colours and expressive, vigorous style. Anglo-Saxon draughtsmen had absorbed the style of the Rheims school of manuscript illustration and elaborated on it, making it their own, producing fine line or wash drawings and illuminations rich in pinks and blues with a lavish use of gold. Another characteristic of these paintings was the profuse use of exuberant acanthus foliage painted in elaborate, interwoven border patterns around full-page illuminations. This 'Winchester School' style, as it became known had a strong influence on Norman painting and, to a lesser degree, on sculpture.

Anglo-Saxon artists excelled not only as sculptors and illuminators of books, but also as embroiderers, metalworkers and ivory carvers. There were of course other artistic traditions in England. Scandinavian art gained great popularity, especially during the rule of the Danish king, Cnut (1017-35). None of these artistic traditions died out with the Conquest, but following the political upheaval of 1066 new patrons took control in England and their demands on artists and craftsmen were different from those of the Anglo-Saxons. Duke William placed Norman and other northern French barons as earls and sheriffs, bishops and abbots in all the major seats of power. The main concern of the Duke, and his men was how to maintain military and administrative control in their new country. Architecture became an important tool to achieve that end, and dramatically new building types were introduced.

It is significant that the Conqueror's first action on reaching England was to construct an earth-and-timber castle, followed by a network of castles rapidly built at strategic points across the country. These massive, austere structures must have daunted and intimidated the newly conquered Anglo-Saxon population who had no previous tradition of castle building. Great keeps or donjons were usually tower-like structures, built on artificial earth mounds. They provided living quarters for the lord and his men, a prison in the depths of the basement and a stronghold system and surrounding defences.

Even more important as a means of controlling the local population was the Church and after the Conquest, the Church undertook a huge amount of building. Before 1066 in Normandy churches were of moderate size, but in newly-conquered England, wealth was available which encouraged architecture on a truly grand scale. Anglo-Saxon monasteries and cathedrals were considered by the Normans to be old-fashioned and were soon demolished and replaced with large Romanesque buildings, based on the type which had evolved in Normandy and which continued the trend which had already begun with the building of Westminster Abbey. These buildings usually had apses, with wide, sometimes aisled transepts, a crossing tower, a nave with aisles and often two massive western towers. The internal elevation, generally had 3 tiers (aisles, galleries, clerestories), and

had such massive walls that passages were often threaded through their thickness. The interiors had regular repetitive features including columns, capitals and simple mouldings.

Durham Cathedral is an outstanding examples of this type of building. The church is dramatically situated on high ground, with a river below, so its twin tower facade dominates the massive rock on which it was built. The sombre interior is memorable for the alternating system of round columns incised with geometric patterns and compound piers. Durham Cathedral is important for technical as well as aesthetic reasons. The building, started in 1093 and consecrated in 1133, was rib-vaulted in stone throughout. The introduction of rib-vaulting at Durham opened the way for great architectural advance: the rib reinforced the weak point of the vault and allowed substantial developments in quadripartite and sexpartite vaulting to be made in Normandy and in England.

Following the reorganisation of the church after 1066 monastic life blossomed and intellectual activities were encouraged. Two successive archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, both trained at the powerful Norman abbey of Bec, were scholars of European reputation who helped shape the revival of English intellectual life. Both were more interested in the texts of books than in their illustration but there were changes in manuscript illumination after the Conquest. The sumptuous service and devotional books and bibles of the pre-Conquest period with their magnificent full-page illuminations, were largely replaced by the type of illumination current in the Duchy where ornament was chiefly confined to initials. These were often inhabited by men or monsters, or enriched with foliage. The humans and grotesques were sometimes involved in a violent struggle with occasional detail of specific events, mainly from the Gospels.

Sculpture decorated the inside and outside of many buildings but here too there were marked contrasts in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman approach. Sculpture in Anglo-Saxon England was applied to buildings in a rather haphazard way and carvings were placed at random on wall surfaces while the Norman tradition was one of close connection to the architecture. Another difference between the two sculptural traditions was the type of capital used. At the time of the Conquest, the most popular form of capital in the Normandy was the Corinthian capital with scroll work. Although occasionally employed in England, the most usual English capital form was the plain cushion or cubic type. The capital proved ideal for painting, but sculptures were also adapted to fill the form such as in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, where dragons and other monsters crouching in the shield of the cushion, show what great imagination was used by the artists. In some cases, particularly immediately after the Conquest, Norman carvings in England were indistinguishable from those of the Duchy. The capitals in the crypt of Gloucester Cathedral, or in the castle chapel at Durham, with masks and volutes, and geometric backgrounds, are very similar to examples in Normandy. However, native Anglo-Saxon sculptors also continued to find employment. Their productions, both those which perpetuate old styles and those which attempt to imitate new Norman fashions, are usually designated 'Saxo-Norman overlap' work.

The victory of the Anglo-Norman style in England was assured, but the traditions of Anglo-Saxon art were not completely eclipsed and the legacy of Scandinavian art long remained influential. The Norman Conquest transformed Anglo-Scandinavian England into an Anglo-Norman nation and with that transformation the Romanesque style took root. Even had the Conquest never occurred, Anglo-Saxon art would have eventually given way to the Romanesque style but the process would probably have been much slower. In the event, it was the Norman Conquest which led England to join the artistic life of mainland Europe.

1 volute = spiral shell like pattern.

2 capital = the top of a column.

Resource K An extract adapted from ‘English Cathedral communities and reform in the late 10th and the 11th centuries’, by Professor Julia Barrow in ‘Anglo Norman Durham, 1093 – 1193’, (1994).

Under the Normans, English cathedral communities saw fundamental change and Durham offers an excellent example of this as it underwent various phases of development which demonstrate the changes in English cathedrals at the time. Firstly, from the time of the arrival of the community of St Cuthbert from Lindisfarne in 995 to the end of Bishop Aethelwine in 1071, Durham had a group of priests, some of whom had taken monastic vows. Secondly, Bishop Walcher made the priests adopt a more ordered lifestyle and change the way they worshipped and held services. He built communal living quarters for the priests and placed reforms to the act of worship at the top of his agenda. He ordered the Durham priests to abandon what were considered to be archaic monastic customs which had nothing in common with the practices of the reformed Benedictine houses. Thirdly, under Bishop William of St Calais (1081 to 1096) we see the expulsion of the previous priests from the Cathedral and their replacement with Benedictine monks. A chronicler at the time justified these changes by citing the ‘unclean living’ (i.e. marriage) of the clergy and by the fact that the Lindisfarne community had originally been monastic although he wrongly assumed that they had been Benedictine.

These reforms of Bishops Walcher and William of St Calais were linked because both showed a desire on the part of the higher clergy to catch up with continental developments, and both were meant to make the running of cathedrals more efficient and disciplined, in particular by having regular services and patterns of worship. Benedictine monasticism had a great impact on England with cathedrals which became Benedictine remaining so until the Reformation in the sixteenth century. They were also extremely influential, forming the careers of many late Saxon bishops and provided a model for the conversion of cathedrals such as Durham and Rochester in the late 11th century. The main aim of the Benedictines appears to have been to improve the standard of worship which was overhauled to bring it in line with continental practice. Before the Benedictine reformers Durham priests, for example, were no different from others who had no interest in changing their form of worship.

In England the starting point for reform had been the appointment of Aethelwold as Bishop of Winchester in 963. He assumed that all religious communities had begun with a Benedictine ideal and that they ought to be brought back to a state of ascetic purity. In particular he was opposed to clerical marriage, widespread in late Anglo-Saxon England, which he saw as the pollution of holy places. In his eyes the only form of disciplined celibate manpower available to conduct services consisted of Benedictine monks, so at Winchester the clergy were expelled in 964 and replaced by Benedictine monks. Aethelwold also frequently insisted bishops should be elected from monastic communities. However nationally the process of converting cathedrals to Benedictine monasticism was slow.

Another impact of the introduction of Benedictine monasticism was that there was a much higher degree of literacy and learning than had been found in English churches previously. Winchester was the earliest cathedral to become Benedictine and it possessed the most influential school and scriptorium. Also important as a part of Benedictine monastic life was the devotion to saints, especially monastic saints. Ordinary priests were not uninterested in saints but they tended not to have the educational or liturgical resources to develop cults fully. North of the Tees, however, Benedictine monasticism would suit the community of St Cuthbert, isolated from the south, which had preserved the cult of Cuthbert.

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