

William II (1087-1100) and his struggle with the Church

- William II was an **irreligious man**, having little respect for the Church.
- Likewise, the Church did not think highly of William. He never married, had a series of mistresses, The Church thought that he dressed and behaved in a manner not suitable for a king. There were even rumours circulating that he was a homosexual.
- In 1075, Pope Gregory had issued a **Papal Dictate** (Dictatus Papae) that said the Pope has authority over all kings and emperors in Europe. It stated that Popes were always right. This brought the **Popes** into **conflict** with the **monarchs** of Europe.
- The **Church** was very **wealthy** and William saw the Church as a solution to his **financial problems**. The Church was heavily taxed, as were the barons. Again, with the help of Ranulf Flambard he began to **exploit vacant bishoprics**. When a bishop died, William would deliberately fail to refill the position. He would then take all the revenues (money) that were paid to that position.
- William the Conqueror had given lands in England to the monastery at Bec in Normandy. In 1093, **Anselm** made a visit to England to view these lands. During this visit, William II named him **Archbishop of Canterbury**. The position had been kept empty since the death of Lanfranc in 1089, during which period William II had confiscated its revenues and stole from its lands.
- **Anselm accepted** the position **reluctantly**. He refused to be consecrated as archbishop until William restored the lands to Canterbury and acknowledged Urban II as the rightful pope against the anti-pope Clement III.
- In fear of death from **an illness**, William agreed to the conditions, and Anselm was invested on 4th December 1093.
- When William **recovered**, however, he demanded from the new archbishop a **sum of money**, which Anselm refused to pay in case people thought it looked like simony (payment for a church position). William, in fact, wanted money for an invasion of Normandy.
- In response to **Anselm's refusal**, William refused to allow Anselm to go to **Rome** to receive the **pallium**--a mantle, the symbol of papal approval of his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury, from Urban II, because the Pope and Anselm might think that William had at last accepted Urban as Pope.
- Anselm claimed that the king had no right to interfere in what was a church matter. Anselm became a major figure in the **investiture controversy**; *i.e.*, over the question as to whether a secular ruler (*e.g.*, emperor or king) or the pope had the right to invest a bishop, with the symbols of his office.
- The argument **continued for two years**. On March 11th, 1095, the English bishops, at the **Synod of Rockingham**, sided with the King against Anselm.
- When the **papal legate brought the pallium** from Rome, Anselm refused to accept it from William, since it would then appear that William was a higher authority than the Pope.
- William permitted **Anselm** to leave for Rome, but on his **departure** he **seized the lands of Canterbury**.
- Anselm attended the **Council of Bari** (Italy) in 1098 and presented his grievances against the King to Urban II.
- In **August 1100**, **William Rufus** died in a hunting accident under suspicious circumstances, and his brother Henry I seized the English throne. In order to gain support from the Church, Henry wanted the backing of **Anselm who returned to England**.