

Introductory lecture

Contexts: Political and Ecclesiastical

England and Normandy



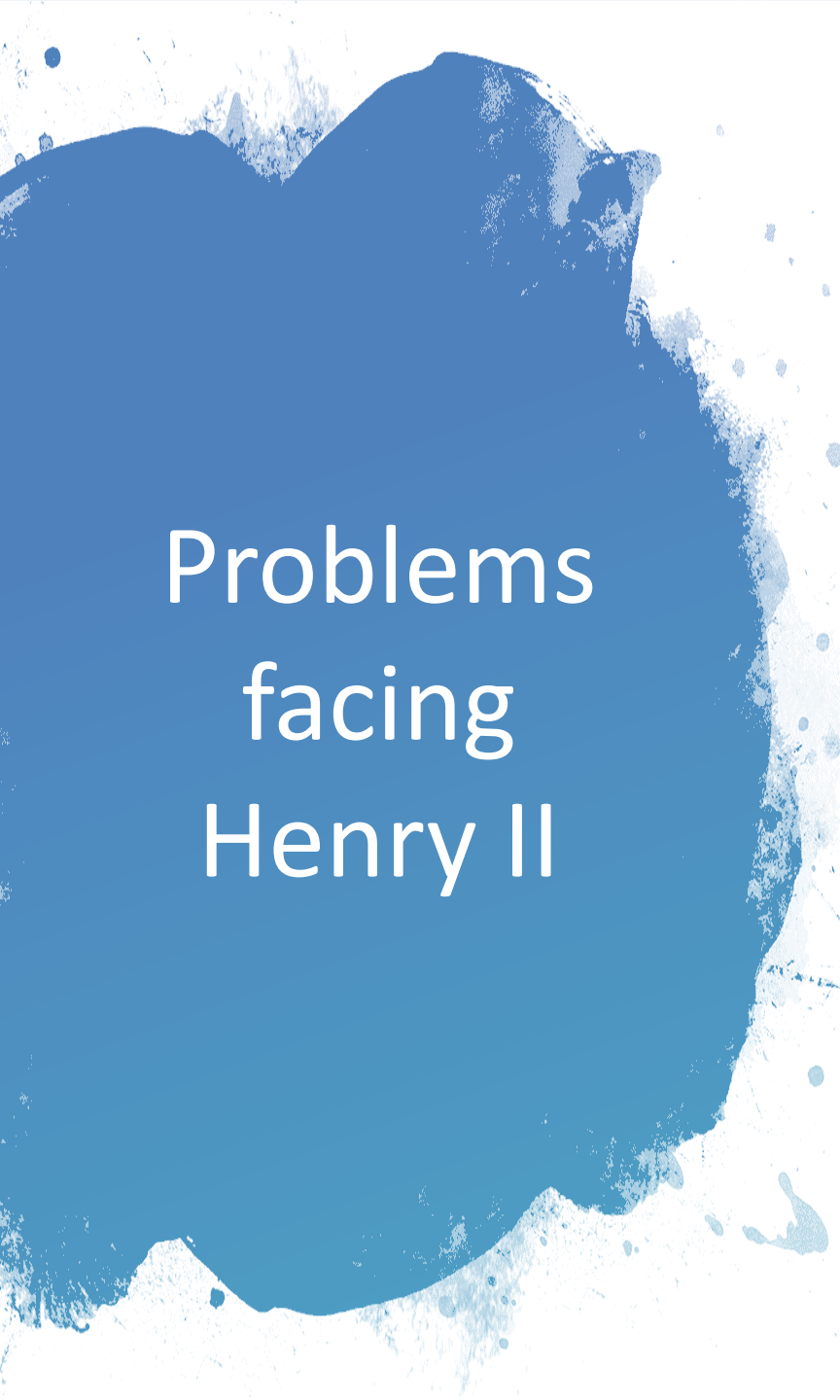


Political events 1066-1154

- Conquest of England 1066
- England and Normandy separate 1086-1106
- Civil War or Anarchy 1135-1154
- 1154 Succession of Henry II – also count of Anjou, duke of Aquitaine in the right of his wife



Henry II ruled vast territories stretching from the Pyrenees to the borders with Scotland – which brought huge challenges of governing.

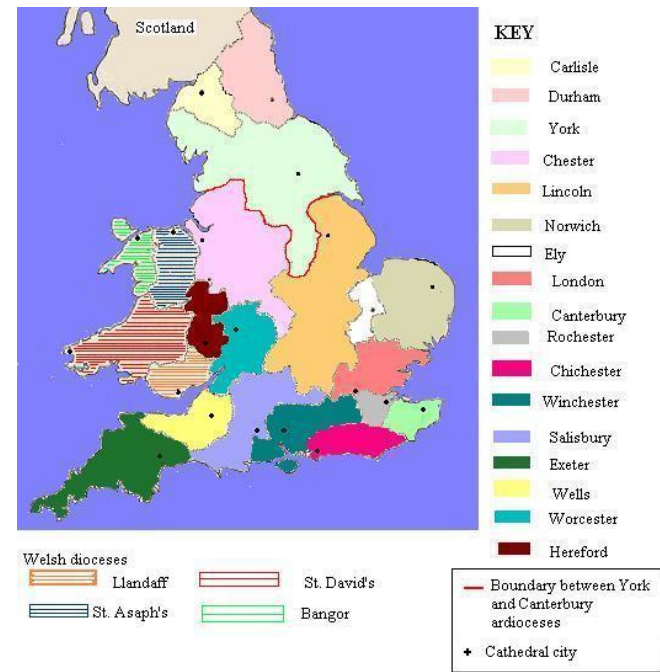


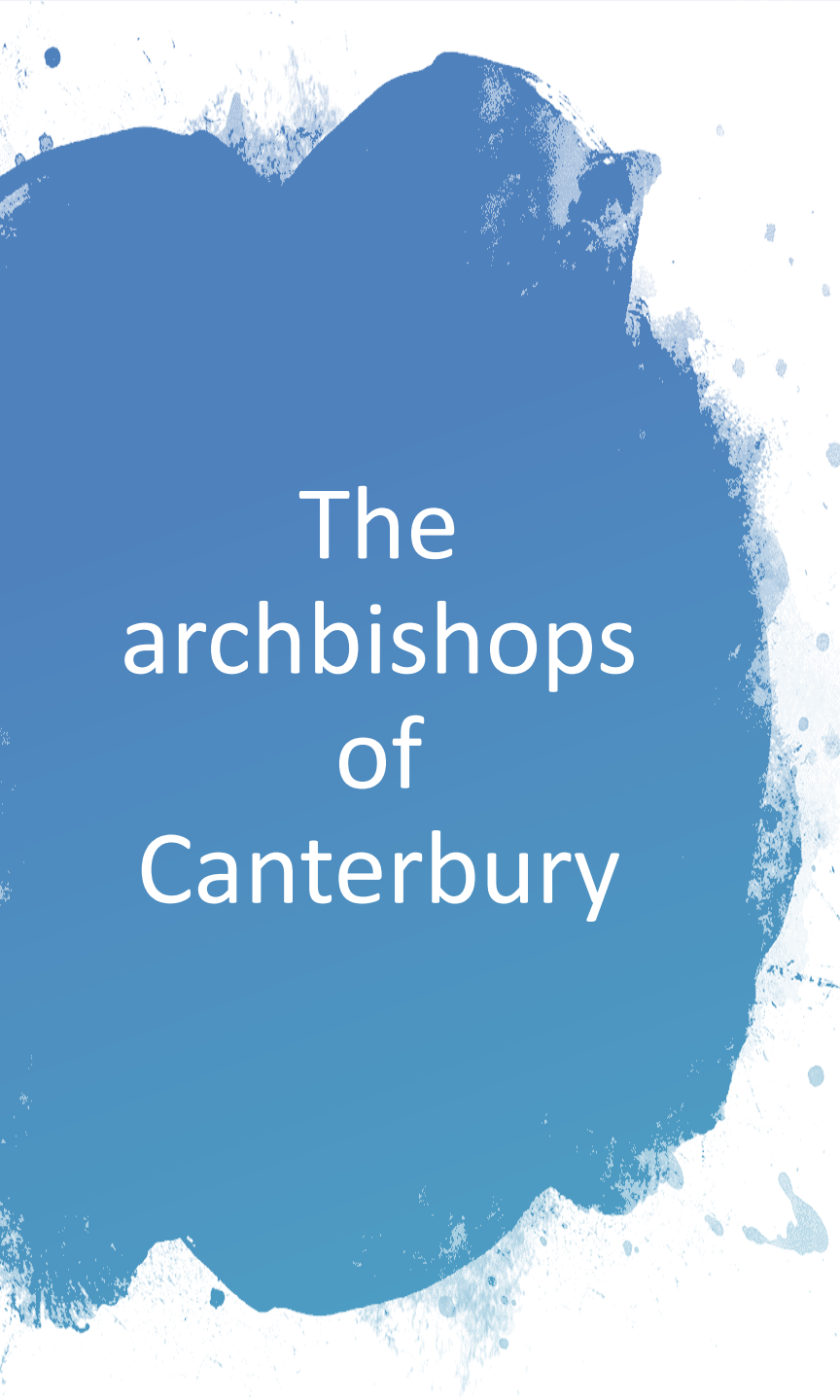
Problems facing Henry II

- Severe disruption in the operation of government
- Private war
- Tenurial insecurity
- SO: needs to reconstruct, restore, and rebuild, royal authority
- Looks back to the time of Henry I
- This is the political context for Thomas Becket

Church and State in England

- Southern Province = Canterbury: 14
- Northern Province = York: 3
- 10 out of 17 were monastic [Canterbury, Bath, Winchester, Rochester, Worcester, Norwich, Ely, Coventry, Durham, Carlisle]





The archbishops of Canterbury

Stigand (- 1070)

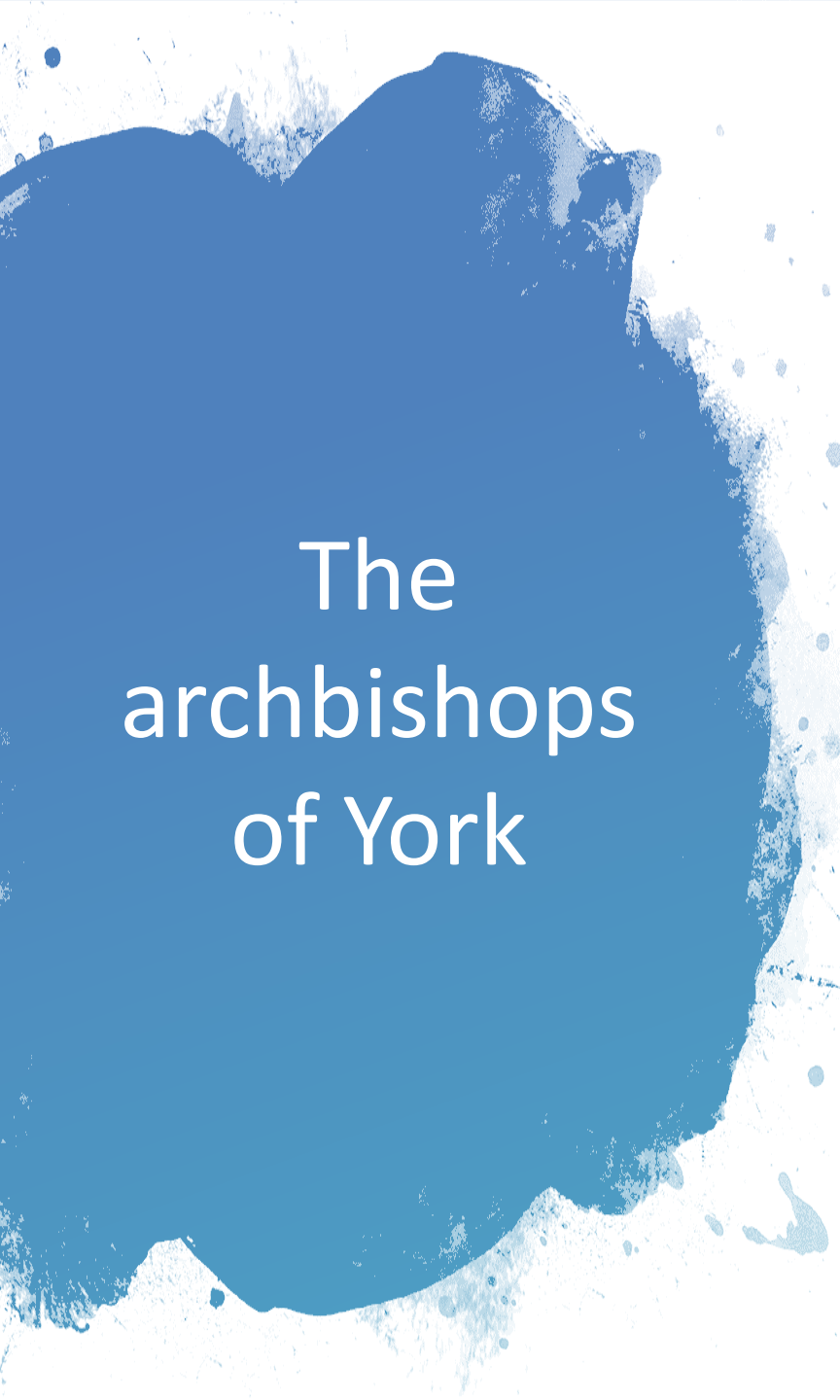
Lanfranc (1070-89)

Anselm (1093-
1109)

Ralph d'Escures
(1114-22)

William of Corbeil
(1133-36)

Theobald of Bec
(1138-61)



The archbishops of York

- Ealdred (- 1069)
- Thomas I (1070-1100)
- Gerard (1100-1108)
- Thomas II (1109-14)
- Thurstan (1114-40)
- William fitz Herbert
1143-47 (and 1153-4)
- Henry Murdac
(1147-53)



Points of tension

- Political role of (arch)bishops e.g. Lanfranc
- Emergence of papal reform and the growth of papal monarchy
- Need to clarify relationship between local churches and the papacy
- Conflicting loyalties
- Investiture
- Clerical justice



The emergence of the new monastic orders

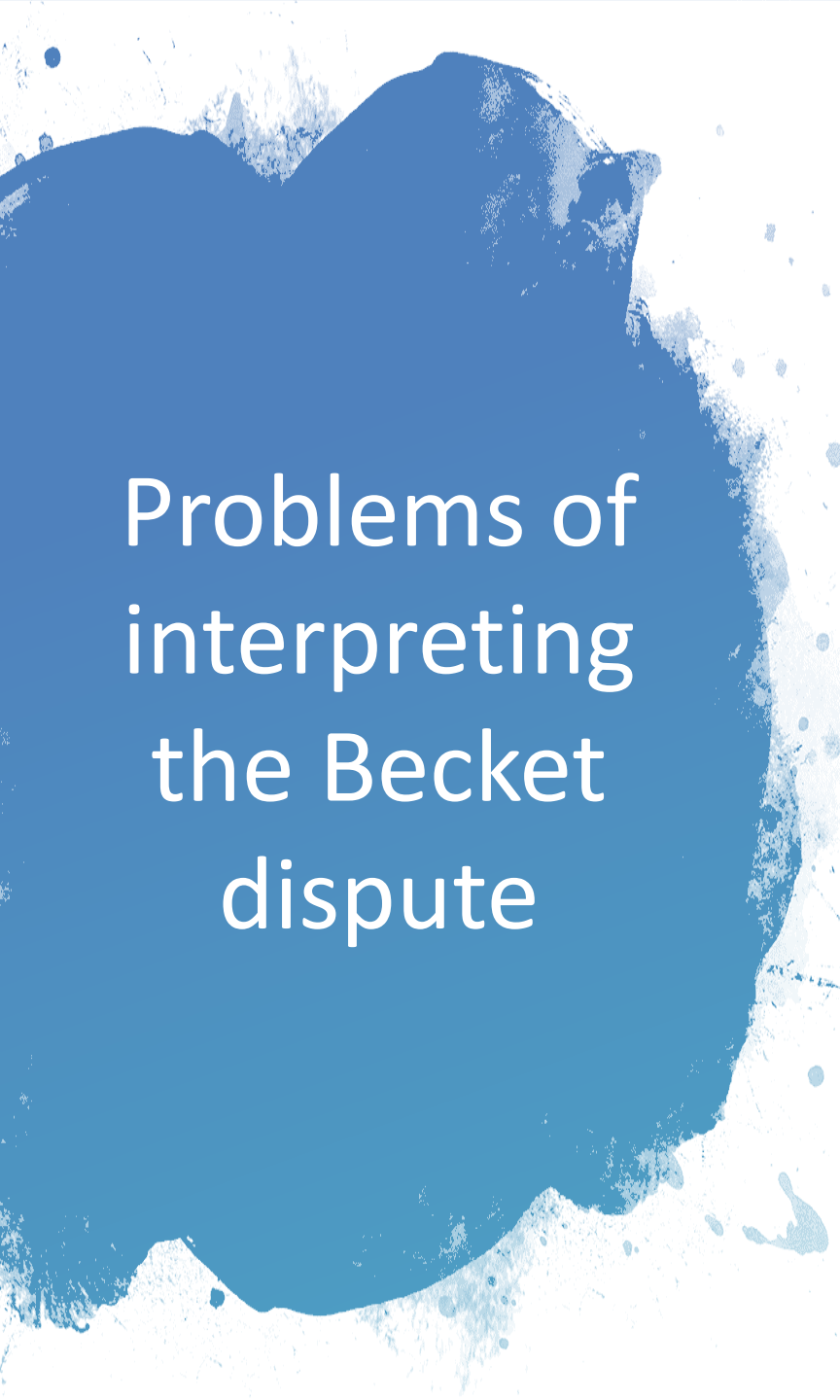
- Many new monastic houses founded.
- Growth of new monastic orders
- Most successful of these was the Cistercian Order, which grew from one monastery, Cîteaux, founded in 1098, to a congregation of over 350 by the middle of the twelfth century.
- How might this be relevant?



Local points of tension

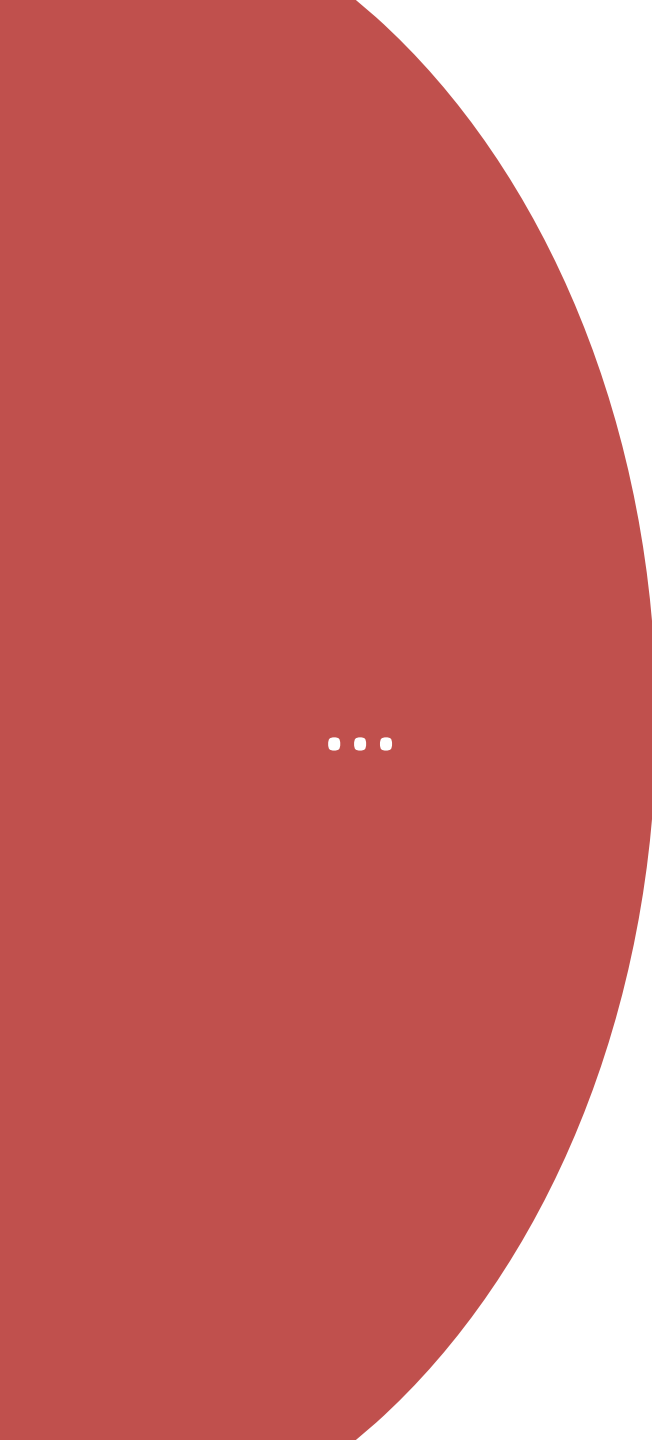
The Canterbury / York dispute





Problems of interpreting the Becket dispute

- Sources: It is well documented in contemporary lives of Thomas, chronicles, letters
- We need to be aware of the positioning of the sources (i.e. bias)
- Heroes and villains
- Why did the dispute escalate and end in murder?



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- How far were Henry's plans (and Thomas's reactions) revolutionary, or traditional?
 - What governed the attitudes of the bishops?
 - Did Becket's murder have any effect on royal authority?
 - How has post-Reformation history and historiography affected interpretations?
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