

Public Abstract

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Title:THE KINGDOM OF THE ENGLISH IS OF GOD: THE EFFECTS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST ON THE CULT OF THE SAINTS IN ENGLAND

This thesis looks at the process of saint-making in England after the Norman Conquest, examining both new saints whose cults were accepted and potential saints who did not succeed in becoming officially canonized. There has been less scholarly attention on these failed cults than those cults that succeeded, most likely because of lack of documentation and the assumption that these cults were less relevant to the religious experience of those who frequented them. In chapter one, I survey the Anglo-Saxon cult of the saints before the Norman Conquest, to show how the Anglo-Saxon cult of the saints was tied to English ethnic and national identity. In chapter two, I discuss the reaction of William of Normandy to the Anglo-Saxon cult of the saints and their roles as figures of ethnic and national English pride. Because William of Normandy came as the legitimate heir of Edward the Confessor, he viewed himself as heir to these Anglo-Saxon royal saints. In chapter three, I discuss three new, post-Conquest cults whose saints were officially papally canonized in post-Conquest Anglo-Norman society: Sts. Edward the Confessor, Margaret of Scotland, and Thomas Becket. In chapter four, I discuss three new, post-Conquest cults who were never officially papally canonized: Waltheof, Matilda of Scotland, and William of Norwich. I find that after the Norman Conquest, saint-making was a way to help consolidate the power of the Anglo-Norman royal line. Thus, my thesis presents a fuller picture of political and religious life in the central medieval period.