

= Ralph d 'Escures =

Ralph d 'Escures (died 20 October 1122) was a medieval Abbot of Séez , Bishop of Rochester and then Archbishop of Canterbury . He studied at the school at the Abbey of Bec . In 1079 he entered the abbey of St Martin at Séez , and became abbot there in 1091 . He was a friend of both Anselm of Canterbury and Gundulf , Bishop of Rochester , whose see , or bishopric , he took over on Gundulf 's death .

Ralph was not chosen archbishop of Canterbury by the chapter of Canterbury alone . His election involved an assembly of the lords and bishops meeting with King Henry I of England . Ralph then received his pallium from Pope Paschal II , rather than travelling to Rome to retrieve it . As archbishop , Ralph was very assertive of the rights of the see of Canterbury and of the liberties of the English church . He claimed authority in Wales and Scotland . Ralph also quarrelled for a time with Pope Paschal II .

Ralph suffered a stroke on 11 July 1119 and was left partially paralysed and unable to speak clearly from that time until his death on 20 October 1122 . A surviving English translation of a sermon delivered by Ralph is preserved in a manuscript in the British Library . The sermon survives in some fifty Latin manuscripts .

= = Early life = =

Ralph was the son of Seffrid d 'Escures and his first wife Rascendis , and a half brother of Seffrid I , Bishop of Chichester from 1125 to 1145 . The surname of de Turbine , by which he is sometimes known in older scholarship , is only attested in the fourteenth century and possibly resulted from confusion with William de Corbeil , Ralph 's successor at Canterbury . Ralph studied at the school at the Abbey of Bec before entering the abbey of St Martin at Séez in 1079 . St. Martin was a house founded by the Montgomery and Bellême families , and was still under their lordship . He became abbot of the house in 1091 , and his election was attended by Anselm , abbot of Bec .

= = Time in England = =

Soon afterwards Ralph paid a visit to England , perhaps to visit Shrewsbury Abbey , which was a daughter house of Séez . He may have been involved in the mediating the surrender of Robert of Bellême at Shrewsbury in 1102 , for some chroniclers state that it was Ralph who delivered the keys of the castle to King Henry I of England . In 1103 he took refuge in England from the demands of Robert of Bellême for homage . Ralph declined to do homage because Pope Urban II had ordered that no clergy could do homage to the laity . Robert was also demanding heavy taxes , and Ralph fled with Serlo , Bishop of Séez , who was also subjected to Robert 's demands . He passed his time in England with his friends Saint Anselm and Gundulf the Bishop of Rochester . He attended the translation of Saint Cuthbert 's remains at Durham , where he was one of examiners of the body , and declared the saint 's remains uncorrupt . In 1106 he visited Anselm at the Abbey of Bec , but probably did not try to assert himself at Séez . After Anselm was elected to the see of Canterbury , Ralph appears to have become part of the archbishop 's household .

In June 1108 Ralph succeeded Gundulf as Bishop of Rochester , having been nominated by Gundulf before his death . Ralph was consecrated on 9 August 1108 . He was at Anselm 's deathbed in April 1109 , and , afterwards , Ralph acted as administrator of the see of Canterbury until 26 April 1114 , when he was chosen Archbishop at Windsor . The king had wanted his doctor , Faricus , who was an Italian and Abbot of Abingdon , but the nobles and the bishops objected to anyone but a Norman being appointed . The bishops also desired someone who was not a monk , or at least not one who was so close to Henry . As a compromise , Ralph was chosen , rather than the secular clergy that the bishops favoured . Although Ralph was a monk and had not served as a royal clerk , he was also a bishop , which seems to have reconciled the other bishops to his selection .

= = Archbishop of Canterbury = =

It is noteworthy that , while Ralph was not chosen by the chapter of Canterbury alone , his election involved an assembly of the magnates and bishops meeting with the king . He was not selected solely by the king , nor solely by the bishops or chapter . Ralph received his pallium from the pope , rather than travelling to Rome to retrieve it . It was only with difficulty , however , that Pope Paschal II was persuaded to grant the pallium , as the papacy was attempting to again assert papal jurisdiction over the English Church . It was Anselm of St Saba who brought the pallium to England , along with letters from Paschal complaining that the English Church was translating bishops from see to see without papal permission , that legates from the papacy were being refused entry to England and that the king was allowing no appeals to be made to the pope over ecclesiastical issues . In 1116 the pope even demanded the payment of Peter 's Pence , a payment direct to the papacy of a penny from every household in England . Ralph , when he took the pallium , professed " fidelity and canonical obedience " to the pope , but did not submit to the papal demands and , in fact , supported King Henry in opposing the pope 's demands .

As archbishop Ralph championed the rights of the see of Canterbury and the English church . He claimed authority in Wales and Scotland , writing to the pope that " the church of Canterbury has not ceased to provide pastoral care for the whole of Britain and Ireland , both as a benevolence and from its rights of primacy . " He advised the bishop of Llandaff that a new Llandaff Cathedral should be built and granted an indulgence to contributors . He even refused to consecrate Thurstan as Archbishop of York because Thurstan would not profess obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury , part of the Canterbury @-@ York dispute . At first , Ralph depended only on the king to demand Thurstan to submit , but later he appealed to the popes to force Thurstan to obey . His refusal brought him into a dispute with the papacy , for Pope Paschal II supported Thurstan . Ralph visited Rome in 1117 , but was unable to obtain an interview with Paschal as the pope had fled the city in front of an invading imperial army . Ralph had taken ill with an ulcer on his face during the trip to Rome and , for a time , it was feared that he would die . He recovered enough to continue on to Rome , however , although it was a fruitless trip . Despite instructions from Paschal 's successors , Gelasius II and Calixtus II , the archbishop continued to refuse to consecrate Thurstan , and Thurstan was still unconsecrated when Ralph died . Thurstan was eventually consecrated at Rheims by Pope Calixtus II in May 1119 , although the issue of primacy remained unresolved .

Although he feuded with York over the primacy , it appears clear that Ralph considered the Investiture Crisis settled in England for , in 1117 while visiting Rome , he took a neutral position as regards the issues between the Pope and the Emperor . In 1115 , however , he refused to consecrate Bernard as Bishop of St David 's in the royal chapel , although Robert of Meulan , the king 's chief counsellor , advocated that the consecration must take place in the royal chapel according to ancient custom . The king did not insist and Ralph won the confrontation . He was also involved in ecclesiastical affairs in Normandy , as he attended the provincial synod , or Council of Rouen , held in 1118 .

= = Final years and legacy = =

Ralph suffered a stroke on 11 July 1119 as he was removing his vestments after celebrating Mass . From then until his death , Ralph was partially paralysed and unable to speak clearly . He was still involved in decision making and , in 1120 , he agreed to King Alexander I of Scotland 's suggestion that Eadmer become the next Bishop of St Andrew 's . Ralph was one of the lords consulted about the remarriage of Henry I to Adeliza of Leuven at London in 1121 . He also successfully asserted his right to celebrate the king 's new marriage , over attempts by Roger of Salisbury to officiate instead . Due to the damage from the stroke , Ralph was unable to perform the ceremony but , when Roger made an attempt to do so , Ralph successfully insisted on choosing the officiant and William Giffard the Bishop of Winchester performed the marriage . Ralph died on 20 October 1122 , at Canterbury . He was buried in the nave of Canterbury Cathedral on 23 October 1122 . His nephew , John , was a clerk under Ralph , and later Ralph appointed him Archdeacon of Canterbury . After Ralph 's death ,

John was elected to the see of Rochester .

Ralph was regarded as a " witty , easygoing " man . The struggle with York , however , along with his illnesses and the effects of the stroke , turned Ralph in his last years into a quarrelsome person . Orderic Vitalis said that he was well educated and well loved by people . Even William of Malmesbury , no lover of ecclesiastics and always ready to find fault with them , could only find fault with him for his occasional lapses into unbecoming frivolity .

Ralph wrote a sermon for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin and it survives in some fifty Latin manuscripts , probably because it was thought to have been written by Anselm of Canterbury , until shown to be Ralph 's in 1927 . A surviving English translation of the sermon is also preserved in the manuscript British Library , Cotton Vespasian D. xiv . The Latin version , which Ralph was a translation of his originally spoken French version , has been edited and published in 1997 . Ralph also had the monks of Christ Church , Canterbury search for documents relating to the privileges of Canterbury and had those documents copied into a manuscript which still survives , BM MS Cotton Cleopatra E. His seal is one of the first to take the usual form for bishop 's seals , with Ralph standing , in full vestments including a mitre , and performing a benediction with his right hand while holding his crosier in his left . The seal took the form of a pointed oval .