

= Ralph de Luffa =

Ralph de Luffa (or Ralph Luffa , and the first name is sometimes spelled Ralf ; died 1123) was an English bishop of Chichester , from 1091 to 1123 . He built extensively on his cathedral as well as being praised by contemporary writers as an exemplary bishop . He took little part in the Investiture Crisis which took place in England during his episcopate . Although at one point he refused to allow his diocese to be taxed by King Henry I of England , Luffa remained on good terms with the two kings of England he served .

= = Bishop = =

Luffa was consecrated on 6 January 1091 by Thomas , the Archbishop of York . He was consecrated at York as the See of Canterbury was vacant at the time . Luffa had previously been a chaplain for King William II of England , nicknamed " Rufus " , and was also the king 's friend . This information comes from the medieval writer Orderic Vitalis , but there is no other confirmation that he was a royal servant . He also served Rufus as a judge , and the historian Norman Cantor calls him a justiciar for Rufus , but the historian Francis West , who studied the justiciar 's office , notes that his one of appearance as a royal judge concerns his diocese , and that Luffa probably was mentioned only because he was expected to enforce the decision .

During the crisis between the king and Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury in 1095 and 1096 , Luffa managed to support Anselm while retaining the king 's respect . Under King Henry I , William 's younger brother and successor , Luffa took little part in the Investiture Crisis in England . In 1106 , Luffa did sign a letter to Anselm written by William Giffard Bishop of Winchester @-@ elect that begged the archbishop to return to England from his exile .

Luffa gained King Henry 's respect because Luffa was the lone bishop to resist Henry 's financial extortion from the clergy . As part of this dispute , Luffa ordered that all church services be discontinued and the church doors in his diocese be blocked with thorns . It was during Luffa 's tenure of the see that the first disputes between the bishop and Battle Abbey started , although they were not large . During Luffa 's episcopate , he and the abbey disputed over the right of the bishop to be entertained by the abbey and the requirement that the abbot attend the diocesan councils . The dispute only reached its climax during the episcopate of Hilary of Chichester , who was Bishop of Chichester from 1147 to 1169 . Luffa also supported Anselm 's attempts to assert Canterbury 's primacy over the Archbishop of York in 1108 and 1109 .

William of Malmesbury had high praise for Luffa 's actions as bishop , where he is said to have toured his diocese three times a year on preaching tours . He also allowed only freely given gifts from his flock , avoiding all appearance of extorting donations . He was also praised by contemporaries for his diligence in seeking worthy candidates for the priesthood . William of Malmesbury also praised Luffa 's piety .

= = Cathedral builder = =

Traditionally Luffa is held to have begun the building of Chichester Cathedral , the eastern section of which was dedicated in 1108 . However , this view has been challenged by the art historian R. D. H. Gem , who argues that because of the conservative nature of the architecture it was more probably begun under Luffa 's predecessor , Stigand , who was bishop from 1070 to 1087 , and who oversaw the transfer of the seat of the bishopric from Selsey to Chichester . Most historians still incline to the belief that Luffa began the cathedral construction , however .

After his cathedral church was burned down in 1114 , Luffa managed to secure King Henry I 's financial help in rebuilding the church . Besides the rebuilding , Luffa built a Lady Chapel , which still remains . Other work still extant in the cathedral are the arcades , the exteriors of the clerestory and those galleries that are unvaulted . The art historian George Zarnecki has argued that the rood screen in the cathedral also dates from Luffa 's episcopate . Two panels from this work still survive , and depict the meeting of Jesus with Mary and Martha at Bethany as well as the miracle where

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead . The scenes show some resemblance to works in Hildesheim and Cologne , and this resemblance may mean that Luffa was from Germany , or hired sculptors from there .

= = Death and legacy = =

On Luffa 's deathbed , he gave away all his belongings , including his sheets and underclothes . He died on 14 December 1123 . Contemporary records report that he had a great awareness of his responsibilities as a bishop . Six documents of Luffa 's survive , besides his profession of obedience .