

= John of Tours =

John of Tours or John de Villula ( died 1122 ) was a medieval Bishop of Wells in England who moved the diocese seat to Bath . He was a native of Tours and was King William I of England 's doctor before becoming a bishop . After his consecration as bishop , he was either given or purchased Bath Abbey , a rich monastery , and then moved the headquarters of the diocese from Wells , to the abbey . He rebuilt the church at Bath , building a large cathedral that no longer survives . He gave a large library to his cathedral and received the right to hold a fair in Bath . Not noted for his scholarship , he died suddenly in 1122 .

= = Early life = =

A native of Tours , John was an Angevin @-@ French physician to King William I of England , being present at the king 's deathbed in 1087 . William of Malmesbury , the medieval chronicler , called him " a very skilled doctor , not in theoretical knowledge , but in practice . " He had been a priest of Tours before becoming doctor to King William . He seems to have learned his medical skills not in a school , but was considered a skilled doctor . The name " de Villula " first appears in 1691 , and is not a contemporary name . It resulted from a misreading of John 's name in his episcopal profession .

= = Bishop of Bath = =

John was appointed Bishop of Wells in 1088 by King William II " Rufus " , the son and successor to William I. The bishop 's consecration was in July , at Canterbury by Archbishop Lanfranc , the Archbishop of Canterbury . He probably owed his appointment to the king 's desire to honour his father 's physician .

Shortly after his consecration , John bought Bath Abbey 's grounds from the king , as well as the city of Bath itself . Whether John paid Rufus for the town or whether he was given the town as a gift by the king is unclear . The abbey had recently lost its abbot Alfsige , and was according to Domesday Book the owner of large estates in and near the town . It would have been the wealth of the abbey that attracted John to take over the monastery . By acquiring the town of Bath , John also acquired the mint that was in the town . In 1090 he transferred the seat , or administration , of the bishopric to Bath Abbey , probably as an attempt to increase the revenues of his see . Bath was a rich abbey , and Wells had always been a poor diocese . By taking over the abbey , John increased his episcopal revenues . William of Malmesbury portrays the moving of the episcopal seat as motivated by a desire for the lands of the abbey , but it was part of a pattern at the time of moving cathedral seats from small villages to larger towns . When John moved his episcopal seat , he also took over the abbey of Bath as his cathedral chapter , turning his diocese into a bishopric served by monks instead of the canons located at Wells that had previously served the diocese .

John rebuilt the monastic church at Bath , which had been damaged during one of Robert de Mowbray 's rebellions . As rebuilt , it was only surpassed in size by the cathedrals at Ely , Norwich and Winchester . The present Bath Cathedral is not the building that John built , and occupies only a fraction of the space that John 's building encompassed . He also reformed the administration of his diocese , setting up archdeacons and organising a court for hearing ecclesiastical cases . His efforts to reform his diocese led to his cathedral chapter 's complaining of their treatment , which John seems to have ignored . At Wells , he was accused of destroying the community of canons there , which had been created by his predecessor .

In 1092 , he helped with the consecration of Old Sarum Cathedral , although its roof was almost immediately damaged by a storm and required decades of repair . In 1094 , he performed the same service for Battle Abbey . After the accession of King Henry I of England , John received a confirmation of the grant of the city of Bath , paying 500 pounds of silver for the verification . In 1102 , John secured from King Henry the right to hold fairs at Bath on the feast day of the cathedral 's patron saint , Saint Peter . He gave an extensive library to the cathedral at Bath , and eventually the

monks there became reconciled to him . John , however , continued to hold most of the old abbey 's manors himself , rather than using them for the support of the monks .

#### = = Investiture Controversy = =

John was one of the bishops that sided with King William against Anselm of Canterbury at the king 's Whitsun council in 1097 , one of early councils called during the Investiture Controversy in England . During the reign of King Henry I , who succeeded his brother King William in 1100 , John along with Robert Bloet , the Bishop of Lincoln , consecrated abbots who had been invested in office by the king . John attended Anselm 's reforming Council of London in 1102 , which debated and passed decrees to reform the clergy .

#### = = Death and legacy = =

John died in December 1122 and was buried in Bath Cathedral . He suffered a heart attack after dinner and died suddenly . Traditionally the date of his death is given as 29 December .

Under John , the monks of Bath became known for their scholarship , although he was not particularly noted for learning . William of Malmsebury claimed he was generous and affable , although the chronicler acknowledged that the bishop treated the canons of Wells abominably . William also recorded that John was a heavy drinker and not given to self @-@ restraint , but that his health was good and he lived to be old . At first he treated the monks at Bath with contempt and confiscated much of the lands of the abbey for his own use , but in 1106 he restored their lands to them . John 's canons of Wells disliked him because he reduced their income and destroyed some of their buildings as part of the movement of the see to Bath . A layman official of the diocese , Hildebert , was probably John 's brother ; and he held the offices of steward of the diocese and was also the provost of Wells , an inheritable office . John gave much of the revenues of Wells to Hildebert . Another relative , a nephew also named John , was named archdeacon in the diocese .