English Castle Architecture: A Dualism Between Functionalism and Symbolism

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July 2020

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Architectural History

ABSTRACT

In 1066, Duke William of Normandy changed England's political—and physical—landscape forever when his Conquest swept across the nation and as his builders began a new and ambitious campaign of castle construction. Colchester Castle represents the dual nature of these castles in post-Conquest Britain, being a building with both a military function and a symbolic role as the Normans asserted their control over the country and quelled the Anglo-Saxon population. Intended to help neutralize internal military threats, Colchester and the similar Tower of London also helped establish not only William's right to rule but his determination to remain in possession of the newly conquered lands. As works of architecture, their layouts reveal similar rectangular proportions and nearly unique apsidal projections and each utilized proximity to Roman ruins to appropriate their ancient symbolic authority as well as to strengthen their final physical design. Moreover, both were deliberately situated in a key strategic location to maximize the Norman civic presence while consolidating their military hold over a subjugated nation as can be seen in the intense interest focused upon them through the ages.

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Introduction

In 1066, Duke William of Normandy changed England's political—and physical—landscape forever when his Conquest swept across the nation and as his builders began a new and ambitious campaign of castle construction. Colchester Castle represents the dual nature of these castles in post-Conquest Britain, a functional building with both military and residential uses balanced with an important symbolic role as the Normans asserted their control over the country and quelled the Anglo-Saxon population. Intended to aid in neutralizing internal military threats, Colchester and the architecturally similar Tower of London also helped establish not only William's right to rule but his determination to remain in possession of the newly conquered lands. Both were deliberately situated in a key strategic location to maximize the Norman civic presence while consolidating their military hold over a subjugated nation as can be seen in the intense interest focused upon them through the ages.

This paper seeks to add to the understanding of post-Conquest English architecture by further examining nuances in the roles a castle could play in the medieval Norman landscape, whether functional or symbolic. Military functionalism certainly represents a major component of a castle's historical niche, but how did William's placement of these monumental structures impact their design? A closer look at the Colchester and London sites will reveal how he incorporated existing Roman ruins to both physically strengthen the castle and symbolically tie his regime to the original imperial builders. Other key military elements must also be considered, as each occupied a strategic location for defense against local opposition as well as an impressive warning to broadcast his power against foreign threats. Thus, it will be demonstrated how

elements of ancient and local history as well as immediate and future political needs helped shape the final architectural forms.

The second consideration explores the residential function, asking how these enormous castles fit into William's larger plan to establish his reign over medieval England. Beyond the symbolic offering as a palace fit for a king, the buildings themselves reflect the Conqueror's status as legitimate heir to Edward the Confessor, complete with the necessary room to house his royal court. As will be seen, the castle became a stronghold with trusted, loyal stewards for governing troubled regions, as well as a physical showcase for impressing touring dignitaries and intimidating rebellious subjects. The private usage aspect cannot be ignored, particularly given the importance of Christianity in the medieval world, so what role did the chapel play for its architects and users? Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester, acknowledged as castle designer, placed the chapel prominently in an apsidal projection in both Colchester and the Tower of London (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2), clearly displayed for the outside world.

If exact details of the chapels' personal use cannot be discovered, William's piety at least found outlet in a wave of ecclesiastical construction, often in conjunction with his new castles. Certainly, he worked closely with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in his expanded domain, including holding his coronation in London on Christmas Day 1066. Symbolism permeated his reign, whether appropriating a Christian holy feast day to mark its beginning or forging links with the ancient Romans to help bolster his claim to the English throne. How could the distant past inform and impact the greater political context he sought to create through the Conquest? The final chapter of this paper will examine his utilization of symbolism to endorse his right to rule, particularly focusing on

William's reuse of material gathered from the Roman ruins found in each site and his skill in connecting that past to his own future in England.

To demonstrate the functional and symbolic aspects existing in Anglo-Norman castles after the Conquest, this paper explored the rich trove of literature pertaining to Colchester Castle and the Tower of London. Researching this background must span the contemporaneous accounts as well as the available historical records and archaeological surveys, and even reach into the distant Roman past. One essential source for the ancient past centers on the Roman historian Tactius (56-117 AD) and his *The Annals of Imperial Rome* which figures prominently in both medieval and more modern scholarship. William of Poitiers (c. 1020-1090), a contemporary biographer who penned *The Gesta Gvillelmi* as a detailed history of the Conquest, drew on it by using Roman precedents to help justify a Norman claim to the English throne.[1] While ascribing noble characteristics to the Conqueror, William of Poitiers describes the enemy after Hastings in intractable terms, declaring, "For this people was by nature always ready to take up the sword, being descended from the ancient stock of Saxons, the fiercest of men. They would never have been driven back except by irresistible force."[2]

His successor, Ordericus Vitalis (1075-c. 1142), used *Gesta Gvillelmi* in his own comprehensive work, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*), although arguably giving a more balanced view of the real impact on the

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[1] William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Gvillelmi [i.e. Guillelmi] of William of Poitiers*, edited and translated by R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), xx.

[2] William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Gvillelmi*, 139.

native population from the brutal tactics and ravages of the invading Norman forces.[3]

Curiously, both biographers may have accessed a visual record of the crucial Battle of

Hastings in the form of the Bayeux Tapestry, believed to be commissioned by the

Conqueror's half-brother, Odo (1036-1097), originally Bishop of Bayeux, later Earl of

Essex. Technically not a (woven) tapestry but an embroidered panel, it chronicles the

events surrounding the Battle in vivid colors across its 240 feet by 20-inch surface.

Despite its French name and home in the Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy, the highly

detailed embroidery was worked in England by English seamstresses over approximately

a two-year period. A work of propaganda much like that of William of Poitiers, it depicts

the conquering Normans in glorious heroic terms but also provides unique and invaluable

records of details, including some castle architecture (Fig. 3).[4]

In the eighteenth century, Philip Morant (1770-1777) provided some of the

earliest surveys of Colchester Castle in his two volume *The History and Antiquities of

Colchester* (published 1744) as well as the sweeping overview *The History and

Antiquities of the County of Essex* (published 1763-1768).[5] George Vertue (1684-1756), a

London-based artist renowned for his portraiture and art history, also provided important

architectural illustrations for the *Vetusta Monumenta*,[6] a major folio of monuments

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[3] William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Gvillelmi*, xxxv.

[4] Charles H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 1973), 6. http://www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/

[5] Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the Most Ancient Town and Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex* (London: Bowyer, 1748).

[6] Full title: *Vetusta monumenta quae ad Rerum Britanicarum memoriam conservandam Societas Antiquariorum Londini sumptu suo edenda curavit*, published at irregular intervals between 1718 and 1906 by the Society of Antiquaries of London.

produced in seven volumes by the Society of Antiquaries of London (SAL). Both Morant and Vertue highlighted the Roman connections, with the latter adding to his engraving: "Colchester Castle, the Romans' most secure fortress" (Fig. 4).[7] Later generations of scholars looked beyond the impact of its Roman past, including Ella Sophia Armitage (1841-1931), a leading voice in the change from an Anglo-Saxon to a Norman attribution for the castle's date with her seminal work, *The Early Norman Castles of the British Isles*, published in 1912. She wryly acknowledged the overriding Norman influence, as Colchester and the Tower of London were "built by a king [William the Conqueror] who had reached a position of power and wealth beyond that of any neighbouring sovereign."[8]

John Horace Round (1854-1928), also investigating Colchester in this period, wrote his own *The History and Antiquities of Colchester Castle* (1892) which examined both its medieval history and physical attributes, particularly tracing the genealogical ownership as well as its architecture.[9] While Armitage and Round concentrated on the Norman heritage, three other historians contributed to the Roman scholarship produced at this time: R. E. Mortimer Wheeler (1854-1876), Henry E. Laver (1829-1917) and (his son) Philip G. Laver (1866-1941). However, their work focused more closely on the archaeological surveys they conducted at Colchester, providing physical evidence as they recorded their finds. Working with the Essex Society for Archeology and History

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[7] Society of Antiquaries of London, *Vetusta monumenta*, 35-36. https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol1plates35-36-colchester-castle.

[8] Ella Sophia Armitage, *Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* (New York: Dutton, 1912), 32.

[9] John Horace Round, *The History and Antiquities of Colchester Castle* (Colchester: Benham & Co., 1882). His own genealogical background included family connections to James Round, who as then owner of Colchester Castle, allowed the researcher easy access to the many records kept at the Castle. He would also write *Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Study of the Anarchy* (London: Longmans & Green, 1892) and translate portions of the *Domesday Book* concerning Essex.

(founded 1852), their published works would include H. Laver's *Colchester: A Short History of the Town, Etc*. (1892) and journal articles such as his "The Destruction of Camulodunum by Boadicea."[10] Numerous archaeological reports were published, but Wheeler and P. Laver's "Roman Colchester" in *The Journal of Roman Studies*[11] in 1919 provides an important touchstone of archaeological development to date for the next generation of excavators and historians.

Twentieth century scholarship divided its focus roughly between ongoing archaeological work on the Roman aspects and explorations of the medieval origins and roles of Colchester Castle and the Tower of London. In 1965, the Colchester Archaeological Trust formed to further organize and preserve the Roman heritage of the area, supporting historians such as Philip Crummy and Paul J. Drury who continue the work of Wheeler and the Lavers. Both have written extensively about the site, including Crummy's *In Search of Colchester's Past* (1984), and *City of Victory: Story of Colchester—Britain's First Roman Town* (1997)[12] and Drury's numerous journal articles, such as "The Temple of Claudius at Colchester Reconsidered" and "Aspects of the

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[10] Henry E. Laver, *Colchester: A Short History of the Town, Etc*. (Colchester, UK: Benham & Co., 1892) and "The Destruction of Camulodunum by Boadicea," *Archaeological Journal* 64, no. 1 (1907): 210-216.

[11] R. E. Mortimer Wheeler and Philip G. Laver, "Roman Colchester," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 9 (1919): 139-169.

[12] Philip Crummy, *In Search of Colchester's Past* (Colchester Archaeological Report. Colchester, UK: Vineyard Press, 1984); *City of Victory: Story of Colchester—Britain's First Roman Town* (Colchester Archaeological Report. London: Council for British Archaeology: 1997). See also: *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester* (Colchester Archaeological Report Vol. 1. London: Council for British Archaeology: 1981); "Colchester Castle: The Castle that Eudo Built," *The Colchester Archaeologist*, 7 (1994): 1-7; "Colchester: The Roman Fortress and the Development of the Colonia," *Britannia* 8, (1977): 65-105; and "The Temples of Roman Colchester." *British Archaeological Reports* 77 (1980): 243-248.

Origins and Development of Colchester Castle." [13] More recently, David Radford and Adrian Gascoyne published *Colchester, Fortress of the War God: An Archaeological Assessment* for a comprehensive view of its Roman roots and history through the late medieval period.[14]

Thus, the work of Armitage and Round considering Colchester's medieval roots has not been neglected and modern scholars studying the site produce work which complements the Roman aspects. Indeed, Crummy's work specifically addresses this area in his *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester* (1981) and "Colchester: The Castle that Eudo Built" (1994). Drury also examines the Conqueror's influence in the afore-mentioned "Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle" (1982). However, this branch of medieval study also often broadens its approach to incorporate material from other sites constructed as part of the Conqueror's castle building campaign. In particular, the Tower of London as a contemporaneous—and similar—Norman fortification can be seen in works such as Peter Berridge's "Colchester Castle: 'Some Tyme Stronge and Statelye, as the Ruynes do Shewe'" in *Castles and the Anglo-Norman World: Proceedings of a Conference Held at Norwich Castle in 2012* (2016) and Philip Dixon's "The Influence of the White Tower on the Great Towers of the Twelfth Century" in *The White Tower* (2018).

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[13] Paul J. Drury, "The Temple of Claudius at Colchester Reconsidered," *Britannia* 15 (1984): 7-50 and "Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle'" *The Archaeological Journal* 139, no. 1 (1982): 302-419.

[14] David Radford and Adrian Gascoyne, *Colchester, Fortress of the War God: An Archaeological Assessment* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013).

Other works such as John Goodall's *The English Castle, 1066-1650* (2011), Colin Platt's *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (1982), and Adrian Pettifer's *English Castles: A Guide by Counties* (1995) provide overarching surveys while dedicating chapters to Colchester and the Tower of London. In the same way, R. Allen Brown's *Allen Brown's English Castles* (1976) and O. H. Creighton's *Castles and Landscapes* (2002) add sections for these castles, helping to fill in the larger picture of Norman fortifications. With the exception of Goodall, these works tend to examine castles as a form of military architecture, with features wholly pragmatic in their design. Finally, a range of works are available which address specific areas of interest including architectural elements, military purposes, and symbolic uses. Among these are Abigail Wheatley's *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (2004), Eric Fernie's "Saxons, Normans and their Buildings" in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1998* (1999), and Charles Coulson's "Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture" (1979). T.A. Heslop's "Constantine and Helena: The Roman in English Romanesque" in *Architecture and Interpretation: Essays for Eric Fernie* (2012) also provides a valuable analysis on Colchester Castle's later symbolic connections to Saint Helena and her son, Emperor Constantine. This historiographical survey reveals the rich source material available to scholars studying Colchester Castle in depth as regards its military functions and symbolic roles for the Normans in post-Conquest Britain. Earlier works on English castle architecture framed the discussion in terms of military history, and analyzed the physical remains as remnants of a violent medieval past. Coulson's article spurred later scholars to utilize symbolic analyses as a way to reframe the discussion of the English castle, and explore how their medieval builders viewed and conceptualized the idea of the castle.

After synthesizing material gathered in the above research, this paper can move to specifically examine Colchester Castle and the Tower of London with a view to their architecture and history. Then, their military functionalism can be explored in the first chapter to see how William's personal history and experiences impacted design and construction of these immense fortresses. His familiarity with wartime strategy and siege campaigns on the European mainland informed the defensive measures put into place, but the need to build strongholds for governing in a conquered and still hostile nation must also be considered. As Jeremy Ashbee notes in *The White Tower*, historians understand the violence of this era and its contribution "to the design of great towers, making them enormously solid, with complex internal layouts of partition walls, narrow passages, and spiral stairs to impede an attacker."[15]

While the important military value of castles cannot be denied, Colchester and the Tower were intended to be livable structures, catering to the residential needs of the users as will be shown in the second chapter. At Colchester, the great hall and the chapel reveal especially useful examples of non-military functionalism, and its architecture reflects the expectations of the ruler inhabiting it, including as living quarters for the lord himself or his steward. Beyond such royal prerogatives, guests and emissaries must be entertained and impressed in lavishly appropriate fashion, with ordinary accommodation found for the innumerable staff necessary to run such a complex establishment. The buildings and grounds themselves were adapted and shaped to suit its changing requirements through

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[15] Jeremy Ashbee, "The Function of the White Tower Under the Normans," in *The White Tower*, ed. Edward Impey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 125.

the centuries, often obscuring or even destroying original details and layouts, and challenging attempts to piece together coherent historical accounts.

Connections to the Roman past form the basis for the third chapter, as both sites drew on Roman foundations to create symbolic connections to the power and authority of that ancient empire. Colchester particularly utilizes its imperial origins to tie the Norman medieval present with the ancient Roman past, both in recreating historical parallels and appropriating the physical ruins for construction. Military functionalism alone cannot fully explain the reason for choosing the Colchester site, but an analysis of its symbolic role as a stand-in for ancient Roman power can aid in understanding the more subtle nuances behind the planner's reasoning. As the Tower of London also incorporates original Roman walls, its symbolic nature underpins Norman authority in the capital city. Taken together, these impressive edifices become a symbol of power for subjugated citizens as well as continental visitors—a history lesson in stone.

Finally, the concluding section evaluates the evidence presented in the entire paper and suggests further directions of study for medieval architecture in this transitional period from Anglo-Saxon to Norman rule. The dualism between functionalism and symbolism provides a meaningful framework for the study of Norman castle architecture, as the Conqueror's driving motivation to construct formidable deterrents to native rebellions took form both physically and emblematically.

Description of the Castles:

Colchester

Located along the southeastern coast of England, the county of Essex today can be reached in about an hour's ride by automobile from London (Fig. 5). This location near the sea put any medieval town at risk of Danish raids, and Colchester's strategic positioning on the River Colne highlights its importance. Colchester Castle stands in the oldest part of the town which began life as a Roman colony and sits close enough to the river to guard against attacks coming inland (Fig. 6). Construction began in the early 1070s, thus this castle represents one of the earliest architectural works created by the Duke of Normandy in his newly acquired realm.[16] Little survives today of the original exterior defenses, apart from the keep itself. Earthworks around the castle probably included ditches, as well as ramparts made from the excavated earth. Relatively easy to create and maintain, these earthen embankments surrounded the castle on all sides, an outer defensive ring to repel attackers.

The keep itself dominates the local landscape, measuring 151 ft by 110 ft in area, making it the largest keep in Europe.[17] Its famous cousin, the White Tower of London, measures only about 118 ft by 105 ft in area, being itself the second-largest in England. Colchester's exterior makes extensive use of the local Roman brick, mixed with septaria (a type of compacted clay) rubble (Fig. 7). This re-use of the Roman materials made

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[16] Peter Berridge, "Colchester Castle: 'Some Tyme Stronge and Statelye, as the Ruynes do Shewe," in *Castles and the Anglo-Norman World: Proceedings of a Conference Held at Norwich Castle in 2012,* ed. John Davies, Angela Riley, Jean-Marie Levesque, and Charlotte Lapiche (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016), 55.

[17] John Goodall, *The English Castle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 79.

Colchester a popular topic of study among castle historians, seen as a political tool used in legitimizing the reign of a foreign king. However, a more prosaic reason for repurposing the brick may lay in the simple fact that suitable stone cannot be found locally.[18] Broader than it is tall, the keep's plan forms a rectangle laid along a north-south direction, with a projected apse in the southeastern corner.[19]

Along the eastern side of the building especially, there can be seen the remains of battlements at the first story height (Fig. 8). Differences in crenellation found here indicates two separate periods of construction, possibly influenced by the renewed threat of Danish raids.[20] While impossible to precisely date, the length of the separation period between its two phases of crenellation construction may indicate a longer pause than can be expected from an immediate attack. Therefore, a tentative timeline from this theory places the end of the first construction period to the mid-1080s, with construction resumed in the early 1090s.[21]

The original number of floors and exactly what height the original structure reached is unknown, and hotly contested. Some scholars believe the keep only ever stood at two stories high, as it does today.[22] Others say that a third or even fourth floor is

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[18] David Radford and Adrian Gascoyne, *Colchester, Fortress of the War God: An Archaeological Assessment* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), 369.

[19] Berridge, "Colchester Castle," 55.

[20] Adrian Pettifer, *English Castles: A Guide by Counties* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 72.

[21] Philip Dixon, "The Influence of the White Tower on the Great Towers of the Twelfth Century," in *The White Tower*, ed. Edward Impey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 252.

[22] Ibid.

probable, given the size in area, and its close relation in plan and in date to the White Tower.[23]

Such debate is not without reason, as views of the interior plan grow complicated without certain knowledge of the number of stories. The lower floors are better documented, revealing that its foundations rest on the Roman podium of the Temple of Claudius which raised Colchester's entrance floor to a substantial height.[24] A wooden staircase led to the front door, but unlike other castles, the entrance did not exist on the first floor or second story of the building, as the podium raised the height of the first story. This entrance floor lacked fireplaces or garderobes and was arranged in a simple four-room layout (Fig. 9). A spiral staircase immediately opened to one side of the entrance, while straight ahead lay a small entryway for receiving guests. The staircase can be seen as a point of defense against intruders, as the spiraling design slowed down access to the upper stories, where the private apartments were located. Possibly, the entrance floor was used for storage and the floor immediately above contained a hall with two fireplaces and two garderobes, as well as a private inner room on the eastern side.[25]

At this point, the interior plan becomes more complicated. Paul Drury suggests that the hall on the first floor most likely would have been double-height, while another hallway or room would be added above the eastern room (Fig. 10).[26] Doubling the height

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[23] Paul Drury, "Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle," *Archaeological Journal* 139 (1983): 320-322. See also, Dixon, "The Influence," 245-246.

[24] Dixon, "The Influence," 245.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Drury, "Aspects of the Origins," 321-322.

of hall would certainly have impressed visitors, but this proposed model struggles to identify how one reached these third-story rooms. The main staircase was built in the western side of the keep—on the other side of the supposedly open hall. In the same way, the chapel in the southeastern apse would have been located on a different floor from the great hall, limiting easy access to what would have been an essential area for religious use. Philip Dixon's model eliminates the double-height ceiling, instead arguing that the private royal apartments were placed in the second floor (the missing third story), while the constable's rooms took up the first floor (Fig. 11).[27]

On 10 March 1683, a local ironmonger named John Wheeley signed a renewable one-year demolition agreement which would destroy many valuable architectural clues to resolving this issue, merely in hopes of re-selling its materials. Morant describes the devastation: "The tops of the towers and walls were forced down with screws, or blown up with gunpowder, and thrown upon the heads of the arched vaults below in such great weights, and with so great violence, as to break one of the finest of them."[28] Unfortunately for Wheeley, these exposed vaults were filled with sand by the Norman builders, and its removal meant he needed to cut through a 30-foot wall on the north-east corner to allow access for his carts.[29] Fortunately for history, he finally conceded defeat

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[27] Dixon, "The Influence," 247.

[28] Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the Most Ancient Town and Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex* (London: Bowyer, 1748), 7.

[29] R. E. M. Wheeler, "The Vaults under Colchester Castle: A Further Note," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 10 (1920): 87.

and abandoned the project, but not before extracting some seven tons of material destined for bridge projects in the town.[30]

Although Wheeley purchased the castle outright on 9 May 1683, financial ruin over this project lead him to sell the property and on 21 June 1727 Mary Webster acquired it for her son-in-law, Charles Gray, the Member of Parliament for Colchester.[31] Although serving as a royal gaol earlier in its history, it again became a prison in 1691 as Gray enlarged the sub-crypt for a 'house of correction' which stayed in operation until 1835. He also installed windows and created 'Gray's Study' above the north-west tower in 1746, as well as a dome situated above the great staircase constructed in 1760.[32] This work added to the confusion of the interior layout, and his restoration made significant—poorly documented—alterations to the structure, thus only the first two floors can now be clearly studied.[33]

The layout described here becomes essential to grounding the discussion of Colchester Castle as a site of both military and symbolic importance, since both the exterior and the interior show signs of this dual nature. The exterior included massive earthworks for defense, while its sheer size deterred easy capture. Choice of building material can be seen as both practical and symbolic, since the use of brick and stone wards off attacks by the simplest medieval weapon of choice—fire—as a wooden castle

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[30] John Horace Round, "Some Documents Relating to Colchester Castle," *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society (Series 2)* 3 (1889): 151. Round discovered cartage bills for five installments of stone dated between November 1697 and August 1698 as well as corresponding payment for stones.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Drury, "Aspects of the Origins," 408.

[33] Ibid., 307.

can be burned to the ground, but not a stone one. On the other hand, the re-use of the

Roman brick connects the Norman authority to the conquering ancient Romans, who also

came from across the sea to rule Britain. Once military authority has been firmly

established, the castle itself remains as a potent and highly visible reminder of the ruler's

power, embedded in the local landscape, and noted both regionally and nationally as a

Norman monument.

Colchester's interior plan demonstrates this same dual nature as military defense

demands a systematic tailored layout designed to deter and delay intruders as well as

sustaining its defending garrison, while still serving as an impressive royal residence and

governing center. Its entrance floor historically remained a storage bay essential for the

effective management of military assets such as weapons and common goods and

foodstuffs for its occupants. In the advent of besiegement, its upper floors had limited—

and defensible—access to private apartments for the more important residents and guests,

enabling separation from any potential enemies. At the same time, its lavish use of space

meant suitable luxury could be employed to impress visitors, particularly for the

receiving and entertaining of important guests. Eudo Dapifer, its steward, was

"effectively governor of Colchester" and a powerful man controlling territory in

Normandy and England until his death in 1120, using the castle to both defend the king's

military interests and overawe visitors with royal power.[34]

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[34] Philip Crummy, "Colchester Castle: The Castle that Eudo Built," *The Colchester Archaeologist*, 7 (1994), 2.

The Tower of London

Arguably William the Conqueror's most famous building project, the Tower of London, constructed circa 1078-1100, has been used as a prison, a royal residence, an armory, and currently a storage place and showcase for the British Crown Jewels. However, he ordered two early castles in London, repeating a pattern which had served him well in the past, a divide-and-conquer arrangement which placed the fortifications on opposing sides of the target city. Little remains of the western city edge fortress beyond an archaeological survey of its foundations, but the eastern edge site contains the Tower of London (Fig. 12).[35] Edward Impey, in the introductory chapter to *The White Tower*, stresses the importance of this arrangement, declaring, "Just as William the Conqueror's possession of London secured his possession of England, so the building of his London castles secured his possession of the city."[36]

Although without Colchester's extensive temple foundation, the Tower possesses its own imperial Roman roots dating to the same first-century campaigns when the settlement of Londinium grew to replace Colchester as largest settlement. Its superior location straddling the River Thames so near the sea enticed the Romans to build the first (wooden) London Bridge in 43 AD and Claudius would eventually make it capital of the province.[37] Tacitus also tied the fates of the two cities when, following the sacking of Colchester by Boudicca's forces in 60 AD, Roman governor Suetonius arrived on the

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[35] Edward Impey, "London's Early Castles and the Context of Their Creation," in *The White Tower,* ed. Edward Impey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 19-20.

[36] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 15.

[37] Ralph Merrifield, *A Handbook to Roman London* (London: Guildhall Museum, 1973), 5-6.

scene and "his numerical inferiority . . . decided him to sacrifice the single city of Londinium to save the province as a whole."[38] Ultimately, this "sacrifice" meant that "those who stayed because they were women, or old, or attached to the place, were slaughtered by the enemy."[39] Swift Roman retribution successfully quelled the native rebellion and both cities were quickly rebuilt with substantial defensive improvements to forestall future attacks.

Much like Suetonius, and despite his quick succession to the throne in 1066, Duke William remained wary of rebellious local Englishmen, especially the old guard of Anglo-Saxon noblemen. His seat of power would not rest in the traditional halls of Westminster, located "on a low-lying site sandwiched between the abbey and banks of the Thames" but on "a conspicuously elevated structure that loomed over the Thames estuary as an unmistakable feature to river traffic entering the capital from continental Europe."[40] After consolidating his hold on power, the earlier western fortification seems to have been abandoned in favor of the more comfortable Westminster location once belonging to his predecessor, Edward the Confessor. This new, more powerful position sent a clear warning to the native Anglo-Saxon population and to visitors of the British Isles: the Conqueror intended to stay, and he had the military strength to defend his control of London, and of the country as a whole.

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[38] Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, 319.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Oliver H. Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes* (London: Continuum, 2002), 138.

The eastern edge site grew into the familiar Tower of London, and its keep, called the White Tower, remains largely untouched since the eleventh century. An additional floor was added in the fourteenth century, but otherwise the walls and rooms have not been remodeled or altered in a significant way. Credit for its design and construction often falls to Gundulf, (c. 1024-1108), a Norman native of Rouen, who moved to Canterbury in 1070. His contribution, in fact, lends to the date of construction, as he was appointed bishop of Rochester in 1075 and consecrated in 1077, per the *Textus Roffensis* (the "Tome of Rochester," c. 1122-1124) which describes the construction of the great tower with William the Conqueror.[41] Gundulf does not appear to have an engineering or architectural background, instead excelling as an ecclesiastical administrator, and most likely, became swept up in the rapid expansion of Norman control that occurred in England in the two decades following the Conquest itself.[42]

Whether it was he or the Conqueror who designed the actual keep is unknown, but the *Textus Roffensis* seems to imply that both collaborated on London's most famous castle. In the weeks before his coronation on Christmas Eve in 1066, Duke William probably established the earliest part of the Tower of London, however, construction really began in 1078. Placement of this site on the eastern side of the city contrasts with Colchester's location which commands a central place within the town. Both sites, however, utilize a strong strategic location directly beside a major river. In London, due to its importance as the nation's capital, he created two castles at opposite ends of the city

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[41] Roland Harris, "The Structural History of the White Tower, 1066-1200," in *The White Tower*, ed. Edward Impey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 44.

[42] Ibid.

to divide the internal threat and command an even stronger defense of the area (Fig. 13). This strategy was not new for the Conqueror, as he split Saint-James de Beuvron in Manche between two castles in 1064, as well as Exeter (Devon, England) in 1068.[43] Why he did not choose this tactic for Colchester probably relates to the relative size of the two, as the market town was much smaller than the capital city, thus warranting less attention and control than needed over the London natives.

London's eastern castle also takes advantage of a corner of the original Roman walls, which surrounded the ancient settlement of Londinium. Unlike Colchester's extensive ruins, the White Tower site proved to contain few reusable remnants for its own construction work. Instead, the most substantial traces of Roman activity constituted the surviving walls from the original colony. Boudicca's revolt in 60-61 AD showcased the deficiencies of the city's military defenses, resulting in a flurry of construction for additional walls to strengthen the existing fortifications. In the area of Tower Hill, masonry walls were also built on the inside edge of the river, and traces of these can still be seen today immediately adjacent to the castle (Fig. 14)—although even in the Conqueror's time would likely have been in poor repair due to erosion from the Thames. As at Colchester, designers placed the building very deliberately within the Roman walls, clearly signaling to the population the castle's inclusion in the city, regardless of the foreign nature and brute intimidation of the structure. On a more practical note, it also "offered a fortress half ready-made."[44]

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[43] Harris, "The Structural History," 29.

[44] Ibid., 19.

This fortress sat within an enclosure about half a hectare (1.25 acres) wide, with the definition of the Roman walls on the south and east sides and a rampart on the other two sides. Presumably, a gate into London must have existed, but on which side of the site remains unclear. Without a motte, the early phase of the castle—before the construction of the tower keep, between 1066 and 1076—was the most popular form of castle, called a ringwork. A ringwork essentially comprises a motte-and-bailey castle without the motte, or in other words, simply an enclosure marked on all sides by earthen or wooden defenses. The White Tower's construction transformed this ringwork into a tower keep castle, a form of construction associated in Normandy with the ducal family. In addition, at an early twelfth century date, the castle possibly included an outer bailey— a defensible courtyard outside of the established definitions of the walls and ramparts. Documents from c. 1128 relating to Dermanus provide evidence of such an outer bailey, called alternately "the priest of St Peters" and the "priest of the Tower," implying that a church not only served the castle but lay within its grounds.[45]

Obviously, this eastern location represents a military intrusion—not only sitting opposite another western castle, squeezing the city between them, but the castle itself may have jutted beyond its defenses to take up additional space. Its existence has been debated, given only documentary allusions to the bailey rather than archaeological evidence, but accepting its existence simultaneously raises the intriguing question of its extent. Impey suggests that the bailey ran along Chicke Lane westwards across the northern end of what later became Tower Hill, before turning south towards the cemetery

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[45] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 20.

(Fig. 15).[46] This proposed outline of the bailey encompasses a sizeable amount of land, incidentally including within it the church of St Peters to exploit the power of London as a critical center of the old Anglo-Saxon regime.

Although, along with Colchester, the White Tower stands as a prototype great tower for those following it, this edifice also endures as undoubtedly the grandest of the Norman tower keeps (Fig. 2). The Tower measures about 118 ft by 105 ft in area, making it second only to Colchester in size. Its walls rise 90 ft high from ground level to battlements, and the turrets on the corners rise even higher. Its walls are 15 ft thick at the base, narrowing to 11 ft at the top.[47] Its impact on subdued Londoners perhaps explains why the keep itself became synonymous with the whole castle. This claim is further evidenced by the enlargement of the site over time – as early as 1190, less than a century after it was finished, another bailey was added to west, further encroaching upon the city.[48]

As at Colchester, the Tower keep's plan follows a rectangular design with projecting apse, but here unquestionably rises four stories tall. Around 1080, the initial building phase halted, being resumed about 1090 as evidenced mainly by observations of material changes, particularly in the mortar between the stones which alters slightly at 23 meters above the ground and around the projecting apse housing St John's chapel. Mortar between stonework can be difficult to date largely due to the repointing efforts of later

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[46] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 22.

[47] Allen Brown, *English Castles,* 44.

[48] Pettifer, *English Castles*, 151.

generations, but where the original mortar survives it occurs until approximately halfway up the first story (Fig. 16). This original mortar consists mainly of limestone compound containing a large percentage of tiny bivalve shells, however, above 23 meters these shells virtually disappear to be replaced by quantities of unburnt chalk.[49] Given the site's proposed timeline, this indicated pause does not end before the death of the Conqueror in 1087—so, also like at Colchester, the Conqueror did not live to see this ambitious castle completed.

Another major change can be found in the sudden lack of ashlar masonry in a band around the same 23-meter height, where carefully dressed ashlar changes first to sub-ashlar blocks laid in precise courses, then to less-carefully-laid rubble masonry. On the interior, this change produces some bizarre effects, as in the northwest and southwest spiral stairs which begin at the first floor—about 1.8 meters up from floor level, the stone walls change from precisely-cut blocks of stone to rubble masonry. Such illogical breaks in the masonry type, not tied to changes in story or string-courses, speaks to an abrupt pause in the normal flow of construction, and when it pauses halfway through a story, it is too high to add battlements, as happened at Colchester. Given the overall harmony of the design, it seems less likely to indicate a long-term pause in construction, but points more generally to the ordinary minor complications associated with any building project such as a change of master mason or the unavailability of desired materials.[50]

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[49] Harris, "The Structural History," 30-31.

[50] Ibid., 38.

Entrance into the keep, both in the eleventh century and in modern times, can be found on the first floor (the second story, by American convention). Inside, the keep is divided by a cross-wall into two sections, with another subdivision dividing the apsidal interior from the main blocks, in which is housed the famous St John's chapel. St John's chapel was originally a double story room, located on the principal floor along with the royal apartments. It contains circular columns arranged in a semicircle around the room with side aisles forming an ambulatory just outside the columned space (Fig. 17).[51] The double height of the ceiling no longer exists, though, because a third story was inserted at this level. All but two of the windows were enlarged in the seventeenth century by British architect Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723), but above the main entrance at gallery level, those two original Norman windows do survive. The grand and spacious interior of the White Tower, with its lavish use of window space adding to its airy feeling, reflects the nature of the castle as a place for the Norman conqueror to entertain guests and accommodate the royal family.

As his Anglo-Saxon contemporaries lacked familiarity with the tower keep, the colossal examples of Colchester and the Tower of London served to showcase Norman strength and invulnerability with their enormous stone keeps dominating the urban landscape. Since the ancient historical background played a role in helping intimidate the local population into accepting the new reign, each deserves a closer examination of its own merits. In Norman-controlled England, the castle served both a military role as a formidable structure designed to prevent native rebellions from occurring, and their

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[51] Pettifer, *English Castles*, 153.

materials and locations served a symbolic role explicitly connecting Norman rule with Roman authority.

Chapter One: The Military Functionalism Approach to Castle Architecture

The English castle, traditionally, belongs to the realm of military scholarship. Multiple scholars, most notably historian R. Allen Brown, explicitly connect castles to their function as a military structure.[52] Its defensive—and offensive—features frequently find use in a feudal society where a knightly class and a well-trained noble elite express profound admiration of warfare. Ironically, one such example of admiration can be found in the afore-mentioned Bayeux Tapestry with its cartoon-style—but comprehensively detailed—depiction of events surrounding the Battle of Hastings. Thus, a brief and general overview of medieval warfare allows better understanding of the elements of defense the designers incorporated into a castle such as Colchester to deter attacks.

Obviously, Hastings was a battle in the conventional military sense of armed men (some on horseback) in an open setting trying to kill each other in the name of their leaders—here, King Harold and Duke William of Normandy.[53] The highly stylized battle scenes in the Tapestry show men armed with lances and spears which could be thrown or used to repeatedly stab, as well as maces, a formidable type of iron club[54], and the fearsome Norse battle axes with a curved blade wielded with two hands. Of course, swords and shields figure prominently, with broad double-blade swords and the preferred diamond/kite style shield which could be overlapped by infantry to form the classic

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[52] R. Allen Brown, *English Castles* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1976), 121.

[53] John Beeler, "The Composition of Anglo-Norman Armies," *Speculum* 40, no. 3 (July 1965): 404. Beeler stresses the diverse background of these soldiers as William drew on his nobles for customary service of knights, allies pledging support, and hired mercenaries from Flanders, Breton, and elsewhere. This varying range of dedication and loyalty to William and Harold may have seriously impacted the outcome of the Battle.

[54] P. F. Thorne, "Clubs and Maces in the Bayeux Tapestry," *History Today* 32, no. 10 (October 1982): 48-50.

shield-wall formation. Archers, armed with the short bow, could inflict serious damage to unprotected flesh, but both hauberks, a chain-mail type armored tunic, and the shields were used for protection (Figs. 18-22).[55]

These Tapestry scenes reflect the common conception of medieval warfare as grand open battles fought by valiant knights and loyal serfs for the honor and glory of their liege lords in the chivalric tradition. However, common reality for Duke William looked a bit different considering his personal experiences of 1047-1060, fourteen years of virtually uninterrupted warfare where he sought to counter rebellious nobles and reclaim territory in Normandy.[56] In continental Europe, warfare also featured sieges involving complex logistics, sophisticated tactics, and impressive castle architecture. For example, during this period, Guy of Burgundy, having lost the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes in the summer of 1047 to his cousin William, escaped to the fortified castle at Brionne (Fig. 23). While Val-ès-Dunes itself played out with conventional knights and calvary charges, William would besiege Brionne for nearly three years before the garrison surrendered.[57]

Offensive siege tactics usually began with the formal demand for surrender of the target and a blockade to isolate the defenders from supplies and reinforcements, followed by attempts to suborn key opponents, destroy defender morale with propaganda and

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[55] Gibbs-Smith, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 7.

[56] David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 53. See also David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (Stroud, UK: Tempus Publishing, 2016).

[57] Ibid., 54-55. Douglas also notes that William may have been cut off from his capital at Rouen during this time of rebellion and may not have reasserted his rule there until after Guy's exile in 1060. Certainly, William could not have failed to understand the critical need to have loyal men in key holdings, strong fortifications against sieges, and control of the capital.

starve them into submission.[58] Direct physical action would also be employed to

undermine important outer walls (known as mining or sapping), storming defensive

positions, and the use of siege engines to inflict serious damage to the infrastructure.[59]

Defenders, surrounded by massive castle architecture, resisted by stockpiling supplies

and weapons, often stripping the surrounding area of provisions which might have

sustained their attackers and emerging to conduct lightning quick raids to disconcert the

enemy. These sorties could target men and equipment, inflict damage on siege engines

and enemy fortifications, and identify key objectives for their own orchestrated

counterattacks.[60]

Objectively, and particularly when set against the large numbers of infantry men,

archers, specialized sappers, and support for the siege engines needed to sustain both

castle garrison and besieger forces, the mounted knight formed a relatively tiny

proportion of the necessary manpower. Bernard S. Bachrach notes, "The heavily armored

knight on horseback, so often erroneously highlighted in textbooks as the medieval 'tank'

had at best a minor role to play in siege warfare."[61] He devotes more time to siege

warfare directed toward specific European cities as opposed to those against castles,

which "were of little significance except where they served as part of an in-depth

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[58] Robert Liddiard, *Castles in Context: Power, Symbolism, and Landscape* (Windgather Press, 2005), 85-86.

[59] Bernard S Bachrach, "Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance," *The Journal of Military History* 58, no. 1 (Jan 1994): 125. For more details of the costs and logistics necessary for the use of siege engines see also David S. Bachrach, "The Military Administration of England: The Royal Artillery (1216-1272)," *The Journal of Military History* 68, no. 4 (October 2004): 1083-1104.

[60] Ibid. See also Liddiard, *Castles in Context*, 86-89.

[61] Bachrach, "Medieval Siege Warfare," 126.

defensive system which had been developed in order to control substantial territorial expanses."[62] Just such a defensive system developed to serve William's post-Conquest military aims while his invasion was directed against the Anglo-Saxon nation and placed substantial territory under his rule.

Two broad categories describe the techniques used by armies in the field looking to conquer such territories: long-range attacks and close-combat attacks. Long-range attacks included siege engines—artillery machines such the mangonel, a form of early trebuchet which catapulted stones and other missiles into the walls surrounding the castle (Fig. 24).[63] The mangonel used a massive wooden frame with a single armature pulled down and held by braided horsehair or sinew. After the armature's cup or sling was loaded with a stone missile, it would be released to strike a crossbeam and catapult the load toward the target.[64] Such machinery required not only extensive labor and tricky logistics for transport to the site, but skilled staff to maintain and fire it, given the torsion forces involved in their operation. The often-targeted keep, which stood at the heart of a castle's defenses, required stout walls to repel these enormous war machines, particularly

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[62] Bachrach, "Medieval Siege Warfare," 126. Bachrach associated the focus on European cities with their greater development on Roman foundations as urban centers and numerous connections via the Roman road system. London had such a road system, but not the more advanced fortifications of cities on the continental mainland.

[63] Brown, *English Castles,* 125-128. Brown also notes that the trebuchet itself debuted in the later twelfth century, but gunpowder did not arrive in England until at least the thirteenth century.

[64] Peter Purton, "The Myth of the Mangonel Torsion Artillery in the Middle Ages," *Arms & Armour* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 81.

with the stronger and more accurate later models of traction and counter-weight trebuchets.[65]

Of close combat weapons, the most formidable was the battering ram—a tree trunk stripped of its branches, held up on strong supports, and used to batter down walls or gates. This intimidating, yet mechanically simple, technology came with some risk to operate as every moment a knight or foot soldier spent exposed could mean death from above.[66] Ditches and ramparts also made the work of positioning siege engines closer to the target much more difficult. Another common method of such attacks, especially against stone walls, was mining or sapping, when the enemy dug a tunnel underneath the wall to pile firewood directly below the masonry. After setting the wood alight, the fire would cause the tunnel to cave in and undermine the wall above.[67] Fire figured heavily in the attacker's arsenal but was particularly effective against wooden defenses and timber castles.[68] Colchester, with its stone walls, was relatively fireproof in an above ground attack, and its earthwork defenses were less susceptible to mining.

An example of an English siege might provide a more helpful picture of this style of warfare. William of Corbeil (1070-1136), Archbishop of Canterbury, acting under the approval of King Henry I, son of the Conqueror, established Rochester Castle in 1127

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[65] W. T. S. Tarver, "The Traction Trebuchet: A Reconstruction of an Early Medieval Siege Engine," *Technology and Culture* 36, no. 1 (January 1995): 139-140. Tarver emphasizes the inherent danger in such siege engines due to the high level of energy being manipulated and machine failures or operator errors could be catastrophic. See also Chevedden, Paul E. "The Invention of the Counterweight Trebuchet: A Study in Cultural Diffusion." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 71-116.

[66] Brown, *English Castles,* 130.

[67] Francois Matarasso, *The English Castle* (London: Caxton Editions, 1993), 99-100.

[68] Brown, *English Castles,* 130.

(Fig. 25). Nearly a century later in 1215, the Magna Carta conflict swept the castle into a siege after barons rebelling against King John I took the fortress as a stronghold.[69] John captured the town and destroyed its Medway bridge in a bid to prevent reinforcements and help coming from London, then directed his great siege towers and mangonels to attack the castle. When round-the-clock bombardment failed to breach its defenses, John sent sappers to undermine the outer wall.[70] Moving forward, the fat from forty butchered pigs was then used to fuel the fires undermining the walls of the keep itself.[71] The southern corner of the keep crashed down, yet the defenders still held the remaining portion of the castle—due to its strong interior stone walls—for a few days before finally surrendering.[72]

This example shows just how strong English castles needed to be simply to withstand medieval warfare, even when fought without gunpowder weapons. Colchester's keep, like that at Rochester, necessarily incorporated strong defenses into its design, although as a royal castle it was probably intended to defend against rebel barons, not protect them. Despite being forced into signing the Magna Carta that same year, John marshalled his armies to contain the contentious barons who, in turn, sought allies from King Philip of France, and his son, Prince Louis. Now reinforced under the terms of the Magna Carta, Colchester found itself under siege in January 1216 by John's own men, led by Savory de Meuleon, but diplomacy rather than military force ended this encounter

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[69]Pettifer, *English Castles*, 153.

[70]Goodall, *The English Castle,* 169.

[71]Brown, *English Castles,* 130.

[72] Matarasso, *The English Castle*, 101.

the following March.[73] Whichever side of power that the castle intended to protect, defense remained the crucial element which could lead to success or defeat in a battle.

While entire books can be written on medieval warfare, only a brief mention can be made here, yet the discussion of attack and defense remains vital in understanding why English castles are traditionally considered primarily as military objects. Certainly, Colchester Castle's location atop the ruins of the temple of Claudius was intentionally chosen as a suitable (and enormous) site on which an effective military base could be placed. This reality cannot be ignored, but it cannot have been the only reason for its choice, and the Roman associations of the site will be explored later in this thesis. Moreover, the castle's strength as a military structure depended on the strength of impressively thick stone walls which could protect it from the siege technology of the era. Colchester may have relied on traditional castle fortifications yet was by no means a typical castle of the period.

Contemporaneous castles, those known from the earliest days of William's Conquest such as found at Pevensey and Hastings, were motte and bailey castles, quickly constructed with timber and earthworks using unskilled laborers under the direction of the builders. An English coastal port in Sussex with the ruins of a Roman fortress, Pevensey (Fig. 26) was chosen by William to land his forces 28 September 1066 before

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[73]A. P. Baggs, Beryl Board, Philip Crummy, Claude Dove, Shirley Durgan, N. R. Goose, R. B. Pugh, Pamela Studd and C. C. Thornton, "Castle," in *A History of the County of Essex, Volume 9: The Borough of Colchester,* edited by Janet Cooper and C R Elrington, (London: Victoria County History, 1994), 241-248. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9/pp241-248, accessed January 23, 2020.

the Battle of Hastings.[74] The Bayeux Tapestry shows his men digging a motte with the inscription "ISTE JUSSIT UT FODERETUR CASTELLUM AT HESTENGA CEASTRA" (Fig. 22), but confusion arises over the site's location. "Hestenga," the name of a local Anglo-Saxon tribe,[75] has long been thought to correspond with Hastings, but Trevor Rowley suggests it refers to Pevensey, as the suffix "ceastra" will normally be associated with Roman fortifications (e.g., Manchester, Doncaster).[76] William did build at Hastings (Fig. 27), and figures in this panel appear to be warriors building a castle, but Goodall notes it "would be the only campaign castle known to be constructed with a motte."[77]

A motte and bailey castle, as the name suggests, forms two parts: the motte, a keep raised high on a natural or artificial mound of earth, and the bailey, a large, enclosed outer courtyard surrounded by a ditch and wooden palisade.[78] The Normans nobility honed their building skills in France since the days of Charlemagne, enabling William to quickly and efficiently construct these fortifications, also known as *chateaux,* in his mission to win the English crown. These *chateaux* were legally authorized, but their popularity may owe more to the *chateaux adulterin* or unlawful version found in

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[74] Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan, *The Anglo-Saxon World* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), 401-492.

[75] Jack R. Armstrong, *A History of Sussex* (Sussex, UK: Phillimore, 1971), 39. While connected specifically to the modern area of Hastings, William could certainly confirm the close proximity of Pevensey. See also Combes, Pamela and Malcolm Lyne, "Hastings, Haestingaceaster and Haestingaport: A Question of Identity," *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 133 (1995): 213–224.

[76] Trevor Rowley, *The Man Behind the Bayeux Tapestry: Odo, William the Conqueror's Half-Brother*. (Stroud, UK: The History Press, 2013), 74. No Roman fortifications have been found near Hastings, although such evidence may have been lost to coastal erosion or changes over the ages.

[77] Goodall, *The English Castle*, 58.

[78] Ibid., 107-108.

revolutions.[79] In either case, overrunning entrenched defenders would prove difficult, and successful garrisons could reinforce the structure against future attacks by replacing the original timber frameworks with stone.[80]

A motte, also known as a dongio or donjon, originated as a timber tower on the earthen mound, sometimes raised on stilts to leave more room to maneuver at ground level.[81] The bailey's earthwork defenses formed outer layers of defense, with a variety of walls, palisades, and ditches that enclosed and protected the motte. If the bailey failed, attackers then must climb the defended motte, in turn topped by a keep, the most heavily defended structure, as it was the last line of defense. A motte's earthwork foundation provided necessary height to help repel invaders, a tactical advantage in the absence of airborne assault forces.[82] Even siege engines such as the mangonel and trebuchet needed to be enlarged and strengthened to cope with the added height dimension of such motte fortifications. Unfortunately for many of these typical castle keeps, the primary building material tended to be readily available wooden timbers which were naturally vulnerable to fire.[83]

One of the answers to the problems of the first generation of castle-building was the transition from wooden to stone castles. Stone is not only fireproof, but more durable

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[79]Michel Bur, "The Social Influence of the Motte-and-Bailey Castle," *Scientific American* 248, no. 5 (May 1983): 134-135. If the "revolution" was successful and became the ruling power, the "unlawful" label would not necessarily still apply. As John Harington in the 16th century declared, "Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason? / For if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

[80] King, D.J. *The Castle in England and Wales*. London: Croom Helm, 1988), 48.

[81]Brown, *English Castles,* 115.

[82] Brian Hope-Taylor, "Norman Castles," *Scientific American* 198, no. 3 (March 1958): 42-43.

[83] Ibid., 134.

overall—both crucial qualities in a military architecture. Stone construction began to see extensive use over the English landscape, but much of this newer generation simply replaced ailing wooden defenses with stronger stone ones. Colchester Castle can be identified as one of only three great stone tower keeps in England dating to William's lifetime, and constructed originally from stone.[84] These include Chepstow Castle in Wales, begun in 1067, which deserves a separate analysis outside of this thesis, as it is smaller and not located within England (Fig. 28). Its original owner, William fitz Osbern (c.1020-1071), a relative of Duke William, appear to have had major input in the design of this Welsh castle.[85]

However, the tower keep at Colchester and the one at the Tower of London both served as major designs attributed to Duke William and Bishop Gundulf, so these two castles are often singled out for comparison due to their size and similar ground plans and similar patronage. Great stone tower keeps were largely reserved for the wealthiest, most prominent figures, as the plan type originated with the ducal family in Normandy. They would have struck fear and awe in the hearts of the native Anglo-Saxon population, who had not seen this form of building before the advent of the Norman invasion.[86] These keeps resemble the traditional motte on a grander scale – as mentioned earlier, both Colchester Castle and the Tower of London are the largest examples of castle keeps in England, while Chepstow was one of the first Norman castles built in stone in Wales. It is

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[84] Brian Hope-Taylor, "Norman Castles," 77.

[85] Brown, *English Castles,* 45.

[86] Colin Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (New York: Scribner, 1982), 1-3.

this choice, over the more militarily practical motte and bailey, which often makes Colchester a relevant example for proponents of the symbolic castle ideal.[87]

Colchester and the White Tower at London share characteristics found in no other castles in England—even Chepstow does not compare, as it sprawls across the limestone cliffs. [88] The discovery of a select few other European examples with similar plans, however, especially Ivry-la-Bataille in Normandy, France, challenges the idea that Colchester and the White Tower are entirely unique (Fig. 29). Ivry-la-Bataille's exact dates are uncertain, but it was completed at least as early as 1040.[89] Peter Berridge posits that Ivry-la-Bataille, which stood as a finished site before the Conquest, may have served as a model for William when planning and establishing his great tower keeps in England.[90] Dixon suggests the tower at Rouen, the capital of Normandy, as another possible influence, as it would have been over a hundred years older in 1066.[91] Colchester, then, does participate in a larger tradition of castle-building than previously thought, although its location on the Roman podium, its patchwork stone-and-brick appearance, and its massive size separate it from even these examples.

Its status as a great tower keep puts Colchester into a network of regional and national defenses along with the White Tower and the motte and bailey castles which were Norman favorites following the Conquest. The true number of English castles

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[87] Goodall, *The English Castle*, 77-79.

[88] Berridge, "Colchester Castle," 56.

[89] Goodall, *The English Castle*, 79.

[90] Berridge, "Colchester Castle," 56.

[91] Dixon, "The Influence," 240.

established during William's reign is unknown—at a conservative estimate, we can be sure of at least 200 castles, many of which only survive in earthen mounds or documentary records.[92] These castles mark the lands given as rewards for those who took part in the battles and have some connection to the William himself. Large swathes of territory were given to these Norman conquerors: the Conqueror distributed more than 90% of England's wealth and land to only around 70 individuals.[93] These individuals then took their parcels of land and further divided them amongst feudal lords lower on the social hierarchy, who built more earth and timber castles and provided smaller revenues by way of knights who pledge military service for their lord.[94]

Along Colchester's northern defenses, archaeological evidence suggests that the Anglo-Saxon owners of these conquered lands lost earlier houses that were almost certainly destroyed to make room for the embankments. Creighton, while decrying the lack of documentary records, confirms that sites such as Winchester and Oxford Castle uphold this claim, noting, "Although there is thus abundant evidence that domestic dwellings were swept aside to make way for royal castles, their peripheral positions within late Saxon townscapes usually argues against any previous high-status activity on their sites."[95] He does acknowledge Colchester's atypical status, continuing, "[It] occupies a central position . . . raised on the immense podium of the classical temple of Claudius Caesar, while the bailey defences (sic) caused High Street to be diverted,

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[92] Dixon, "The Influence," 243.

[93] Goodall, *The English Castle*, 67-68.

[94] Bur, "The Social Influence of the Motte-and-Bailey Castle," 135.

[95] Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes*, 148.

probably causing the clearance of houses."[96] William's bestowing of these properties was unlikely to be entirely altruistic, as he placed key loyal supporters whom he could trust in positions of power.

The military nature of English castle architecture, then, is an important facet of their existence. Colchester Castle and the White Tower are unique examples of this claim, considering their status as two of the three tower keeps built during William's reign and shortly after the Norman Conquest. These structures also served as ways to suppress and control the local Anglo-Saxon population, a purpose easily suited by Colchester's impressive size. The White Tower, too, presented a formidable obstacle to anyone thinking to wage war against William. Even the average motte and bailey castle was an impressive piece of defensive engineering, designed to repel the most sophisticated attacks of the day. Colchester Castle, as seen above in the Introduction, goes one step further in castle architecture evolution, to become a truly monumental structure fit to defend—and represent—a king.

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[96] Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes*, 148-149.

Chapter Two: The Residential Aspects of a Castle

The military aspect of a castle sums up its purpose very neatly: the fortified residence of a lord designed with defense in mind, and to that end, comfort is thrown out in favor of stone walls, ditches, and battlements. Yet, this simplistic picture of a castle fails to tell the whole story since it virtually ignores the important aspect of residential use. For one thing, a castle rarely functions solely as a military base, and over the centuries, Colchester Castle has served as governmental center and residence for its steward and, increasingly in later periods, as a prison and then county jail.[97] Moreover, several factors cannot be entirely accounted to the purely military perspective, so this section will examine in closer detail the residential and chapel aspects to analyze this bigger picture of an English castle within its domestic setting, use and purposes. By far, the great hall reflects the most important non-military component in the sense of visibility and public interaction—where the resident entertained guests, received visitors, and conducted important business.

Even in the pre-Conquest Middle Ages, the great hall of a medieval English building served as an administrative and judicial place within the household. For example, the Old English epic saga *Beowulf* (c. 975-1025) revolves around the attacks of the beast Grendel upon the mead hall of the Danish king, Hrothgar. Beowulf, the foreign hero, arrives to slay the beast and strikes a deal with Hrothgar over a feasting table. The formalized maneuvering between king and hero being described here reveals the central role the hall plays for both receiving important visitors and negotiating diplomatic

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[97] Adrian Pettifer, *English Castles*, 72.

government business.[98] As *Beowulf* probably originated (or was at least written down) sometime between 975-1025, its roots precede the Conquest,[99] yet clearly indicates the vital importance of the great hall in a royal residence in this era.[100]

The importance of such a hall—that the king needed to call upon the services of a hero to defend it—shown so clearly in the poem, did not decline after the Conquest and continued to be an important addition to secular architecture. The Bayeux Tapestry also supports the continuing centrality of the great hall in English architecture, even to the point of showcasing the details. Dixon wryly points out that "whenever fighting takes place, the tapestry displays motte and bailey earthworks. Whenever justice or decision is displayed, the frame displays a hall."[101] Edward the Confessor appears in the Tapestry at both Winchester and Westminster, each time in a large central hall, and his death-bed rests in an upper chamber while his body is later taken out from the ground floor (Figs. 30 and 31). Harold appears feasting with his nobles in Bosham, using the upper room/hall of a large building with a columned arcade reminiscent of classical Rome (Fig. 32).[102] Moreover, William's own palace at Rouen in Normandy, depicted in another panel, boasted a great hall where he received Harold (Fig. 33).

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[98] Malcolm M. Brennan, "Hrothgar's Government," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 84, no. 1 (January 1985): 8-9.

[99] Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007), xv.

[100] Anthony Quiney, "Hall or Chamber? That Is the Question. The Use of Rooms in Post-Conquest Houses," *Architectural History* 42 (1999): 27.

[101] Dixon, "The Influence," 256.

[102] Gibbs-Smith, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 18.

Colchester, as mentioned above, certainly boasted such a great hall, and although its specific details have been widely disputed, no doubt remains that it existed (Figs. 10 and 11). The rooms on the entrance/ground floor seem largely created for storage, and the main stairway just off the main entrance led directly to the hall upstairs. Dixon puts forth the theory that there were two halls – the one of the first floor, which we have evidence for, and another on the now-demolished second floor.[103] The lower hall gave the steward, Eudo Dapifer, his personal meeting hall for his guests, while the main stairway could bypass Dapifer's rooms entirely and ascend to another hall for his master, the king, when the royal court came to visit.[104] This model for Colchester's interior is speculative, without any surviving remains of the second floor (if, indeed, there was a third story to the structure at any point).

However, Dixon's model raises another question: what would be the military advantage to such an arrangement? Setting the king's apartments on the topmost floor would be advantageous as these highest rooms would be the last reached by enemy attackers on foot. Yet, this advantage would be lost if siege engines were brought to bear and targeted the keep. Furthermore, if the steward lived in the castle most of the time, why would the king's apartments be separated from his most prominent servant's apartments in such a manner? Instead, Dixon's model suggests that socially and spatially, the steward's position within the castle must be situated lower than that of the king.[105] Rather than be relegated to quarters outside of the castle, the king is given a significant

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[103] Dixon, "The Influence," 246.

[104] Ibid., 247.

[105] Ibid.

portion of the interior space—an entire floor for his own use. Separate living quarters for both owner and steward strongly emphasizes their respective roles and relationship, particularly as the hall itself represented such an important space within the typical English domestic building.[106]

William and his Norman successors required this lavish appropriation of hall space, given the size of his own royal court and the need to receive guests from other noble courts on state occasions. C. Warren Hollister declares, "At such palatial residences as these, the early Norman kings would surround themselves on the great Christian feast days with all their household officials and major landholders, lay and ecclesiastical."[107] Aside from these huge festivals with compulsory attendance, the number of participants in William's itinerant court fluctuated by location, with local nobles and temporary followers added to the core group of administrators, officials, and trusted advisors.[108] The royal household itself would also include close family, with historian Ralph V. Turner calculating, "The total number of Anglo-Norman royal children is at least twenty-eight legitimate and twenty-three, probably more, illegitimate offspring."[109]

As Duke, William's royal household or *domus* consisted mainly of warriors, those seeking fortune and glory by participating in his military campaigns. Later, two factions emerged: the *domus regis*, 'the king's house' and essentially the staff necessary to run the

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[106] Quiney, "Hall or Chamber?," 28.

[107] C. Warren Hollister, "Courtly Culture and Courtly Style in the Anglo-Norman World," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 2.

[108] Ibid., 3.

[109] Ralph V. Turner, "The Children of Anglo-Norman Royalty and Their Upbringing," *Medieval Prosopography* 11, no.2 (Autumn 1990): 18.

household, and the *familias regis*, 'the king's family' including military men kept as retainers and companions.[110] As King, William's household posed new problems since he was obliged to travel between holdings in Normandy and England, and historians use records to track the participants and locations. In turn, those records were being expanded by documents associated with his castle-building campaign and general government management, a factor now being tamed using computer databases. A fiscal picture comes into focus, where "kings created corporate clients who were obliged to pay them cash and who might be relied upon to support their activities" and royal visits provided economic stimulus for the locals.[111]

Royal lodgings at the Tower of London were an even more complex arrangement, as it acted as the seat of power within the capital city and more likely to include petitioners and emissaries from other courts on government business. A constable held the White Tower while the royal family travelled and lived elsewhere, but the city's importance meant much space remained exclusively for the use of the king and his guests. Albeit over a century after William's reign, relatively early in the Tower of London's history, King Henry III (1207-1272) undertook massive construction projects in order enlarge the private rooms for the royal family and their distinguished guests. As early as 1171-1172, the only Pipe Roll for King Henry I refers to additional residences located within the inner bailey of the fortress which stood separate from the White

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[110] Hagger, Mark. *Norman Rule in Normandy, 911-1144*. Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 612-613.

[111] Stephanie Mooers Christlelow, "A Moveable Feast? Itineration and the Centralization of Government under Henry I," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 189-190. Christlelow provides insights in the households of William I and II as background and contrast to that of Henry I.

Tower's private rooms, though there is little solid evidence for what this early accommodation looked like. It also mentions that in 1172-1173, money was spent on the Tower itself.[112] These subsequent changes obscure the original building design, making it difficult to pinpoint details.

William's London architecture set the stage for his reign, impressing the Anglo-Saxon population with the change in rulership, but later generations responded to different challenges. As Simon Thurley points out, "Throughout the whole period 1216 to 1327, royal visits to the Tower [of London] were almost always connected with either shows of authority or a need for a safe haven. The royal lodgings… needed to impress with their strength externally and their magnificence internally…"[113] As such, Henry III's additions, especially the Wakefield Tower begun in 1220 (demolished in 1776—today, in its place, stands the Lanthorn Tower), endeavored to make reality an up-to-date accommodation for the king in the principal fortress in all of England. Wakefield Tower first saw use in 1236, when Henry III withdrew to its apartments to calm down after a contentious meeting with the magnates in London. According to the chronicler Matthew Paris (1200-1259), the magnates refused to attend to the king in the Tower, probably for fear of possible traps within the fortress. This suggests the internal layout changed to suit the perceived needs of the current ruler, rather than remaining static and true to the original design.

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[112] Howard Colvin, *History of the King's Works,* vol. 2 (Ministry of Works: London, 1951), 708.

[113] Simon Thurley, "Royal Lodgings at The Tower of London 1216-1327." *Architectural History*, vol. 38 (1995), 36-37.

The other most important non-military space within the castle's structure is the chapel, which also serves as its most important religious space. A subtle difference of nomenclature exists between "chapel" and "church" beyond the simple change in size from the smaller personal chapel and the larger public church. Nicholas Orme explains, "The word 'chapel' is a medieval coinage, derived from the *capella* or 'little cloak' of St Martin. . . first applied to the church where the cloak was displayed" and later used for smaller self-identified ecclesiastical institutions.[114] Moreover, the chapel could be part of a larger church where space was set aside for a specific worship area or an intentionally created independent building, as well as the private chamber within a castle or wealthy home created by the owner. Depending on the importance of their users and the number of people being served, chapels could have their own permanent staff or be under the control of local churches.[115]

The chapels at Colchester and the White Tower fill a prominent niche in physical form as their distinctive appearance immediately draws attention to those visiting the site. The projecting apse in both plans breaks apart the strict rectangular form that the keep otherwise takes (Fig. 39).[116] From a military standpoint, this semi-circular apse actually strengthens the structure as the rounded tower deflects incoming missiles, therefore lessening any impact on the masonry. Some castles, such as Pevensey (constructed 1066), utilize these rounded towers on every corner of the keep (Fig. 26), but Colchester does

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[114] Nicholas Orme, "Church and Chapel in Medieval England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1995): 76.

[115] Ibid. Orme makes clear that these chapels existed even before the Conquest, as independent Anglo-Saxons chapels were found in England before William's arrival.
[116] Berridge, "Colchester Castle," 61.

not take advantage of this feature. Instead, it breaks its rectangular form only for the chapel within, leaving the other three corners untouched. Apsidal projections often signify a chapel within that area of the structure, which is another reason why Dixon's model is plausible. John Crook, writing within the same edited anthology, notes on St John's Chapel that "it is unlikely that such an apsidal plan could have been intended for any room other than a chapel."[117] Due to the similarities between Colchester and the White Tower, such a comparison is justifiable. Colchester's damaged upper story also invites more controversy over the existence of its chapel, but the White Tower comparison strengthens the idea of its existence.

Dixon's model invokes a separate chapel on each floor, including one for the king on the now-nonexistent third story, tweaking the model of fellow historian, Philip Crummy, who suggested a common chapel created on the second floor.[118] Drury also questions placement of the chapel solely on the third story, positing a corresponding place on the floor below to serve another function for the steward. Thus, on the entrance floor and below, the southeastern apse becomes a sub-crypt, as evidenced by human remains found in both Wheeley's demolition attempt and a 1977 archaeological excavation.[119] Berridge considers denying the existence of such a chapel in the absence of physical evidence since the original hypothesis was based on comparisons with an 1882 survey of the (complete) Tower of London. Working from 1903 to 1922 to repair

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[117] John Crook, "St John's Chapel," in *The White Tower*, ed. Edward Impey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 96.

[118] Crummy, "Colchester Castle," 6.

[119] Drury, "Aspects of the Origins," 319.

the roof and evaluate the site at Colchester, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Construction of England discovered six internal pilasters in the main apse, and, per Berridge, assumed they served as a functional counterpart to the one found in the Tower.[120]

Chapels are such an important consideration in a castle's design that the Tower of London contains two, St. John's Chapel within the keep and the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula on the grounds. St Peter ad Vincula serves as the parish church and did not open until 1510, so it merely highlights the growing religious needs for subsequent generations. St. John's Chapel, however, appears to have been in the original design of the White Tower, as the apsidal projection forms part of the foundations of the entire structure. Design of the chapel is typical for Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical architecture of the eleventh century: it resembles the choir of a great church with its apse-and-ambulatory design, without of course any radial chapels or clerestory.[121]

These two rooms within the castle represent only a small example of the complexities found within the castle. Military function can answer certain questions but cannot fully explain all original developments in castle conception and design. Examination of the hall and the chapel alone reveals flaws in the solely functional mode describing English castle architecture. Both push against the definition of military structure, as they served a much larger purpose in their space as (luxurious) residential quarters and use for religious rites. Moreover, as an administrative and social space

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[120] Berridge, "Colchester Castle," 61. See also, Dixon, "The Influence," 246 and Goodall, *The English Castle*, 79.

[121] Crook, "St John's Chapel," 96.

within the English castle, they expose a greater complexity than can be explained as a simple instrument of war. For example, the chapel in Colchester breaks the regular exterior plan apart with its projection from the main structure, which represents not a military advantage but the importance of religion. While the exterior of the castle has largely pointed to military concerns, a closer look at the interior begins to introduce other ways of looking at a castle's design.

Chapter Three: Symbolic Approach to Castles

A castle in post-Conquest Britain represents much more than a military building or residence, so functionalism in either context can only explain part of a castle's history. Symbolic re-use of older Roman ruins provided castle designer with a legitimate, tangible connection to the glorious classical past upheld as ideal forms. Colchester Castle, and to a lesser extent the Tower of London, provide exceptional examples of symbolic re-use falling within three loose categories in the medieval world, and especially in England: casual re-use, functional re-use, and iconic re-use.[122] Defining these categories will give a useful basis to proceed with the examination of the castles themselves.

The first two categories tend to be broader and/or more general, although they can be applied in situations which conserve the original material and link it to its setting. Casual re-use refers to the re-use of older stone in new medieval contexts, without any consideration for the original purpose of the stone. A common example would be taking limestone blocks from an ancient edifice and turning them to lime mortar to be used in other buildings or for repair. As the buildings remaining after the fall of Roman began to deteriorate, locals might easily appropriate portable materials to reuse in their own construction. A brick is a brick, and stacking paving stones collected from a Roman road will still build a wall to enclose livestock for example. Later, conservation efforts might sacrifice common elements like those paving stones to help repairs on a Roman wall to blend more easily than modern materials.

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[122] David Stocker, "Rubbish Recycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire," *Stone: Quarrying and Building in England*, ed. David Parsons (Gloucestershire, UK: Phillimore, 1990), 84.

Functional re-use alludes to an architectural feature re-used within the medieval context in the same manner as the original context—a doorway from an ancient structure might be re-used in the medieval structure as a doorway, or a column capital as a column capital. Again, a door is a door if your humble hut needs a lintel—and you can find one in the ruins. Obviously, this re-use category will be less general than casual re-use, as the project being undertaken will require specific elements—a doorway cannot become a window. Functional re-use might explain the re-use of the temple foundations in newer medieval castle at Colchester, but another interesting way to interpret William's decision is the last category, iconic re-use.

Here, specifics—whether they have been interpreted correctly or not—determine the use for materials. An iconic re-use means only a certain example of earlier architecture (or sculpture) will work in its new medieval context, due to the associations evoked by that piece of architecture. For example, when rebuilding a church, original materials would be used purposefully—stones from an altar would not be used in a path but in the new altar to highlight their perceived sacred value. Through this interpretative lens, William deliberately chose his site in the town of Colchester to incorporate the ruins of the Temple to the Divine Claudius as an undoubtedly grand (iconic) symbol of imperial Roman. However, problems can arise if the history of site has been misinterpreted or incorrect meanings assigned to the individual elements.[123]

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[123] This also helps explain later problems when the Colchester site was mistakenly associated with St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine. At one time, it was claimed that she was the daughter of King Coel who had given his name to Colchester—association with such a famous saint would have lent considerable prestige to Colchester if it had been true.

Iconic re-use can also be referred to as spolia. *Spolia* especially refers to a "violent removal from a violated source, a rape of the classical past."[124] Dale Kinney uses this term to flesh out a meaningful discussion on influences of the classical past in medieval culture, and analyzing the impact of removing physical Roman objects for their re-use. In such contexts, the objects might be intended to evoke associations with the classical past or even Christianizing their "pagan" roots, rather than simply referring to a lack of technology for quarrying their own stone. Iconic re-use figures heavily in this section, although still allowing for the possibility of casual or functional re-use of stone within English medieval architecture.

Now it would be useful to step away from the physical structure itself and to remember its context. Certainly, Colchester's location on the ruins of a Roman temple provided numerous military advantages as well as ample space for a royal palace, yet the castle cannot be seen with a purely functional rationale. The obvious symbolism of seizing the remains of a Roman structure and re-using its foundations for a monument to Norman control still needs to be analyzed, to make clear its implications in the role of post-conflict propaganda. This view of Colchester Castle provides an ideal example of how symbolic meanings also play a major role in the design and the perception of an English castle in its physical setting and contemporaneous era. While multiple symbolic meanings are attached to Colchester Castle, the most widely discussed associations are with the temple of Claudius.

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[124] Dale Kinney, "Roman Architectural Spolia," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 145, no. 2 (June 2001), 138.

Tacitus, the ancient Roman historian recounts the story of the temple of Claudius in his *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, noting its placement at Camulodunum, the Latin name of Colchester. Ostensibly erected to memorialize the Emperor Claudius by the Roman ex-soldiers who settled the area in the first century, Tacitus declared it "a blatant stronghold of alien rule, and its observances were a pretext to make the natives appointed as its priests drain the whole country dry."[125] This era, overseen by the infamous Emperor Nero (37-68 AD), was marked with the harsh, blood-thirsty rule of Roman invaders, whose superior weapons and organized military tactics quickly subdued the native population despite some pockets of stubborn resistance. Around 61 AD, forces led by the British Celtic Iceni Queen Boudicca burned the towns of Colchester, London, and St. Albans and inflicted severe losses on the Roman troops. In this uprising, Gaius Suetonius suppressed the rebellion and managed to regain control of the province.[126] One reason for the easy burning of Camulodunum at least, may lie at the feet of its own settlers, who, Tacitus notes, were "thinking of amenities rather than needs" and neglected to pay for the construction of walls around the colony.[127]

Later colonists rectified this deficiency, rebuilding and enlarging the temple from 80 to 100 AD, including further construction of masonry buildings and substantial walls to encircle the site (Fig. 40). Although damaged by fire around the year 200, the complex flourished through the reign of Emperor Constantine (c. 272-337), eventually falling into disuse and decay by the sixth century. These would become the ruins utilized by the

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[125]Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1956), 318.

[126] Tacitus, "Annals," 317-319.

[127] Ibid. 318.

conquering Normans in building their own stronghold in alien and hostile territory, a tacit

appropriation of the local cultural history concerning both the earlier Celtic natives and

Roman overlords, as well their Anglo-Saxon successors.

They pierced this wall with five openings, only one of which survives today – the

Balkerne Gate (Fig. 40), which became forgotten and bricked over later in the Middle

Ages. The Balkerne Gate may have been a standalone triumphal arch leading into the

colony, constructed at the foundation of the colony around 50 AD. However, the other

gates built into the post-Boudiccan Roman wall, may have represented pedestrian or

commercial openings, allowing the colonists to walk inside or draw wagons or other carts

into the city.[128] Colchester Castle stands on the northern edge of this old colony, its lands

bordering on one side of the old Roman wall which no longer survives.

Creighton notes that in addition to the proximity to the old Roman walls, some

Anglo-Saxon property may have been destroyed to make room for the castle's subsidiary

buildings and walls.[129] He also notes that the streets around the keep needed to be

reworked: "[It] occupies a central position . . . raised on the immense podium of the

classical temple of Claudius Caesar, while the bailey defences (sic) caused High Street to

be diverted, probably causing the clearance of houses."[130] Destruction of Anglo-Saxon

property as well as appropriation of Roman ruins for the purpose of this gargantuan

Norman construction would clearly have made a profound statement of authority to the

local population. The castle's location near these walls is a significant part of the castle

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[128] Baggs, et al, *History of the County of Essex*, 248-251.

[129] Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes* (London: Continuum, 2002), 148.

[130] Ibid., 148-149.

keep—it is symbolically located within the Roman walls and incorporates material from them, appropriating the town's ancient history for its own purposes. Essentially, to symbolically fit William's Norman legacy into Colchester as a stone castle, the town's Roman and Anglo-Saxon legacy had to be physically destroyed to make room.

Further note should be made of the context in which the Tower was created, for London at the time of the Conquest may have been much smaller than today's city, but some familiar landmarks did exist just outside of its main Roman walls. Westminster Abbey, where William had been crowned in 1066, stood upriver from it and deserves special mention as a pre-existing example of Anglo-Saxon architecture (Fig. 34). Edward the Confessor, Duke William's predecessor and a half-Norman himself, began construction on the abbey in 1042, as a royal burial church.[131] Westminster Hall, 240 ft long by 90 ft high, was certainly large enough to meet the needs of most rulers, and stands as one of the largest medieval halls in all of Europe.[132] Edward the Confessor lies buried beneath the abbey, and while William was (technically) the first foreigner to be crowned king there, every coronation since has taken place within its precincts so its importance to English royal history cannot be overestimated.

Another early Norman castle also existed on the western edge of the city (Fig. 41), on the other side of St Paul's Cathedral, but unfortunately, like other royal palaces of the time, was not as heavily fortified, so perhaps William preferred to seat his authority in a stronger fortress. The pre-1087 cathedral within the city of London and the palace and

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[131] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 26.

[132] Pettifer, *English Castles*, 150.

abbey at Westminster together outweighed the political importance of most major landmarks within the city of London at the time, and the western castle situated nearer to St Paul's Cathedral may have lost some of its own distinction as a power base in the local area. Impey suggests that, while Westminster's growing importance for the royal family ended up usurping any importance the other castle may have enjoyed as a power base, this usurpation, if anything, increased the later importance of the Tower of London.[133]

Given Norman examples of appropriate ducal residences before 1066 found at Le Mans, Caen, and Rouen, the Conqueror may have simply constructed the Tower in a manner which fit his idea of what a royal fortress and residence should look like—and where it could take best advantage of the city's terrain and history.[134] Symbolically, the palace at Westminster and the Tower of London occupy distinct yet complementary roles: one, a great palace of inherited royal prestige, the other a great fortress of seized royal prerogative guaranteeing a Conqueror's right to rule.

Adrian Pettifer's *English Castles*, concurs, as he declares of the city between Edward the Confessor and Henry VIII, "Although the Tower of London could accommodate the royal entourage, most kings found Westminster more congenial than the volatile city of London."[135] The Thames provided an easily accessible avenue for travel with its omnipresent barges, bypassing the perils of the city streets, especially for the new rulers whose Norman presence was not as widely and fondly embraced as

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[133] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 26.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Pettifer, *English Castles,* 150.

William of Poitier's (1020-90) extravagant praise might otherwise suggest. Moreover, the royal entourage became even more overtly Norman as the William's supporters and courtiers were granted land and power in the newly subjugated England.[136] Use of the phrase "volatile city" to describe London also speaks volumes—the native population of early post-Conquest London likely did not whole-heartedly support the construction of these new major castles.[137]

Nonetheless, the royal entourage inhabiting the old Westminster palace and the new Tower of London were Norman as was Westminster's builder, Edward the Confessor, so some connections must exist between them as they cooperated to form a complementary force controlling the city. One such architectural connection may exist in similarities found in the blind arcading along the façade of both the buildings, although this stylistic affinity may be merely superficial or even accidental (Figs. 2 and 34). Unfortunately, much of the original fabric of Westminster Palace dating to William, especially the hall, does not survive, with the earliest surviving elements dated to his son, William II (r. 1087-1100), commonly known as William Rufus.

Blind arcading can be traced to numerous local buildings in England, and the west elevation of the undercroft for nearby Westminster Abbey's dormitory range, dating to the late 1060s-early 1070s, exhibits similar arcading albeit on a smaller scale.[138] This date stands earlier than that for the façade of the White Tower which was completed as

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[136] Goodall, English Castles, 67-68.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Harris, "The Structural History," 39.

late as 1100. The north elevation of nearby Westminster Hall (dating to the 1090s) forms another example completed before the end construction date of the White Tower.

However, the arches of the blind arcade found on the Tower frame the upper windows in a way that these local examples do not, so Impey proposes the styling found on St Étienne in Caen, Normandy makes a more convincing parallel (Fig. 42).[139] He cites the importation of stone from Caen for use within the White Tower keep to support his theory, as William founded the city and Caen served as his capital in Normandy. Further, Lanfranc's cathedral at Canterbury also displays such blind arcading, with major similarities found between the designs of St Étienne and Canterbury. The former contains arches in the clerestory with an average span of 3.6 meters, comparable to those at the White Tower which span an average of 3.78 meters.[140]

So, the comparison between Caen, Canterbury, and the Tower of the London should not be dismissed out of hand, and the Conqueror more than probably drew on a Norman architectural vocabulary in order to decorate the façade of the White Tower. This foreign vocabulary intentionally distinguishes his works as the creations of a foreign ruler, as his Norman favorites at court would well have noticed and his English subjects recognized as alien.

One thing can be certain, the placement of the great tower keep on the bank of the Thames gave it a major tactical advantage in controlling the city. Its location ensured surveillance of all traffic travelling upstream into the city, indeed, presenting a show of

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

armed force to arriving ships. A similar strategy was used at Rouen, the ancient ducal

capital, where a tenth-century tower stood in an analogous position on the southeastern

edge of the city overlooking the banks of the River Seine. Rouen's tower proved

especially advantageous as the greatest military danger for the city came from the

riverine approaches upstream.[141] The Thames brought beneficial trade upstream from the

English Channel, and as one of the first major sights for ships entering the city, the Tower

proved to be a formidable show of strength for arrivals. This consideration of London's

skyline takes on new meaning under a symbolic approach: the intimidation tactics

provided an unambiguous message to the Norman court entering the country and the

English public living in the castle's shadow, a message of William's utter commitment to

ensuring that England remained a Norman vassalage permanently.

The White Tower functions as a powerful example of Norman strength within the

capital and principal city of Anglo-Saxon England. This great tower keep, in its

architecture and its connection to Westminster, reveals a building meant to convey a

formidable presence of foreign authority within London just after the Conquest. As one

of two castles within London, the White Tower gained prominence thanks to its direct

symbolic opposition and physical juxtaposition with the most powerful surviving

example of Edward the Confessor's architecture. Yet, Westminster's abbey and hall

should not be underestimated when exploring the role of the White Tower—the royal

burial church served as a political counter-balance against the invader's equally royal

fortress, and its role in the coronation of William was just a touchstone in its long history

of political importance. In the end, the Tower of London served as an unrepentant and

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[141] Impey, "London's Early Castles," 26.

indominable emblem of Norman authority, stamping the rule of the Conqueror over the city and over the country of England as a whole.

Overall, English castle architecture cannot be taken in simplistic terms of functional or symbolic, but blends both together. Colchester Castle represents such a blending as its physical structure reveals concrete military and residential functional aspects, yet considerable symbolism has been woven into its impressive design. Its earthworks and heavy masonry walls function as defenses in war, and the lavish rooms and chapel are certainly fit for a king. Yet, this story of the castle would be incomplete without recognizing the symbolic meanings embedded in the site which reveal hidden facets of its architecture. These symbolic and functional natures work together in the English castle to reveal a monumental form of architecture which effectively serves its purpose as an assertion of Norman control over a conquered country and a method for quelling the Anglo-Saxon population.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis seeks to examine nuances in the understanding castle architecture in post-Conquest England through analysis of the functional and symbolic roles found against their medieval Norman backdrop. In traditional castle scholarship, military functionalism featured heavily simply due to its essential purpose in defending territory against enemies, but William took great care when placing them within their urban setting. His builders made the best use of that space when they constructed these enormous edifices, whether considering tactical advantages, residential comfort, or political impact. The Colchester and London sites incorporated extant ruins when creating the physical form, but they also symbolically associated his reign with that of the original Roman empire builders. Moreover, his use of key strategic locations guarded against those locals who might oppose him while sending a clear message of his intentions to counter larger threats that might be launched from outside Britain. In manipulating the history of these sites to align with his political ambitions, he created a powerful additional layer of psychological defense over the castle fortifications.

When considering residential functions, William fit the buildings to match a conception of royal status and prestige equal or even surpassing that of any other continental nation save his native Normandy. Being acknowledged heir to Edward the Confessor—and destroying Harold to claim that throne—influenced his plans to build castles literally fit for a king. Such buildings required room to accommodate the fluctuating numbers of people who composed this enhanced royal court, and the necessary style and size to impress both locals and visitors. At the same time, he would reward faithful service with these strongholds entrusted to loyal men as stewards

guarding his interests in conquered lands. Nor did he ignore the crucial role religion

played in medieval life, maintaining close mutual ties to the Church in political matters

and spiritual needs.

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Figure 1: Colchester Castle, eleventh century. Photograph by author.

Figure 2: White Tower, part of the Tower of London, eleventh century. Photograph by author.

Figure 3: An example of a Norman castle from the Bayeux Tapestry. Norman soldiers throw lances at the defenses of Dinan Castle, Brittany; Duke Conan, its owner, can be seen passing the keys in surrender on the end of a lance. Image via Wikimedia Commons; image in the public domain.
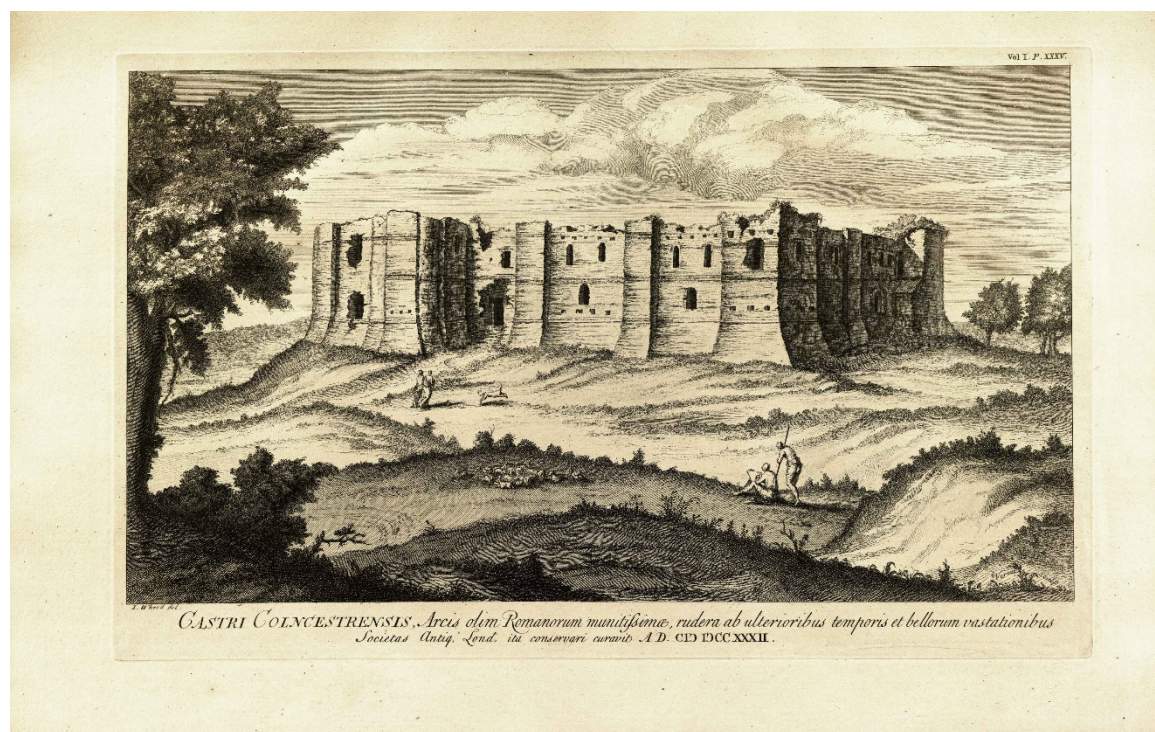
Figure 4: Vertue's engraving of Colchester Castle. Image via Vetusta Monumenta (Society of Antiquaries of London: 1732).

Figure 5: Map of the County of Essex, with the town of Colchester enlarged in the corner. Map done by John Speed, 1610. Image via Wikimedia Commons, image in the public domain.

Fig. 1.   Colchester: The castle in relation to the medieval town; after Crummy 1981, Figs. 42, 44, and 63. The Castle bailey is taken from Figure 41 below. 1, St Peter's church; 2, St Martin's church; 3, All Saints' church; 4, St Nicholas's church; 4a, St Helen's chapel; 5, Holy Trinity church; 6, St Mary-at-the-walls church; 7, St Runwald's church; 8, St James's church; 9, St Giles's church.
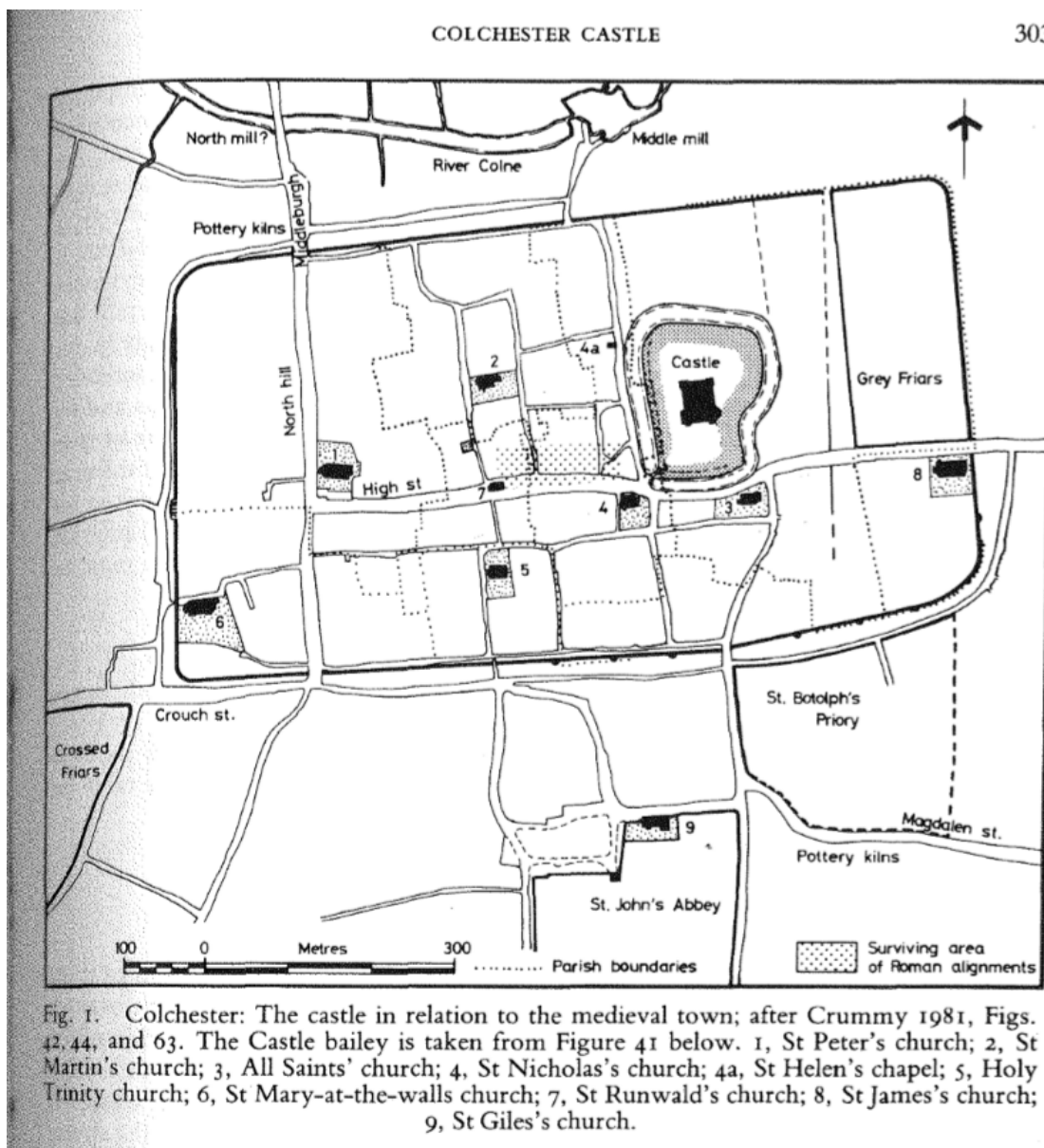
Figure 6: Plan of the Roman colony at the center of Colchester. Taken from Drury, 1982.

Figure 7: Photo of the entrance to Colchester Castle's keep. Note the mottled brick-and-stone walls. Image by author.

COLCHESTER CASTLE KEEP   South Elevation, 1933

Fig. 8.   Colchester castle: Sectional elevation of the south face of the keep, based on a drawing
by K. C. Scarff dated March 1933 (blocked embrasures marked 'E').
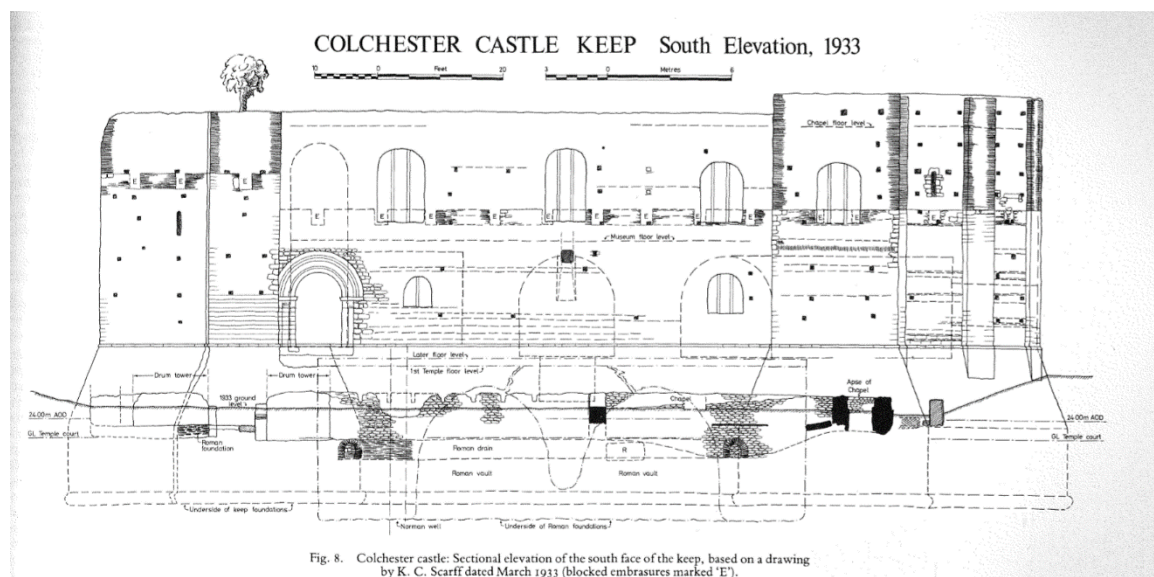
Figure 8: Elevation drawing of the south face of Colchester's keep. Note the battlements along the bottom edge of the upper windows. Image via Drury, 1982.
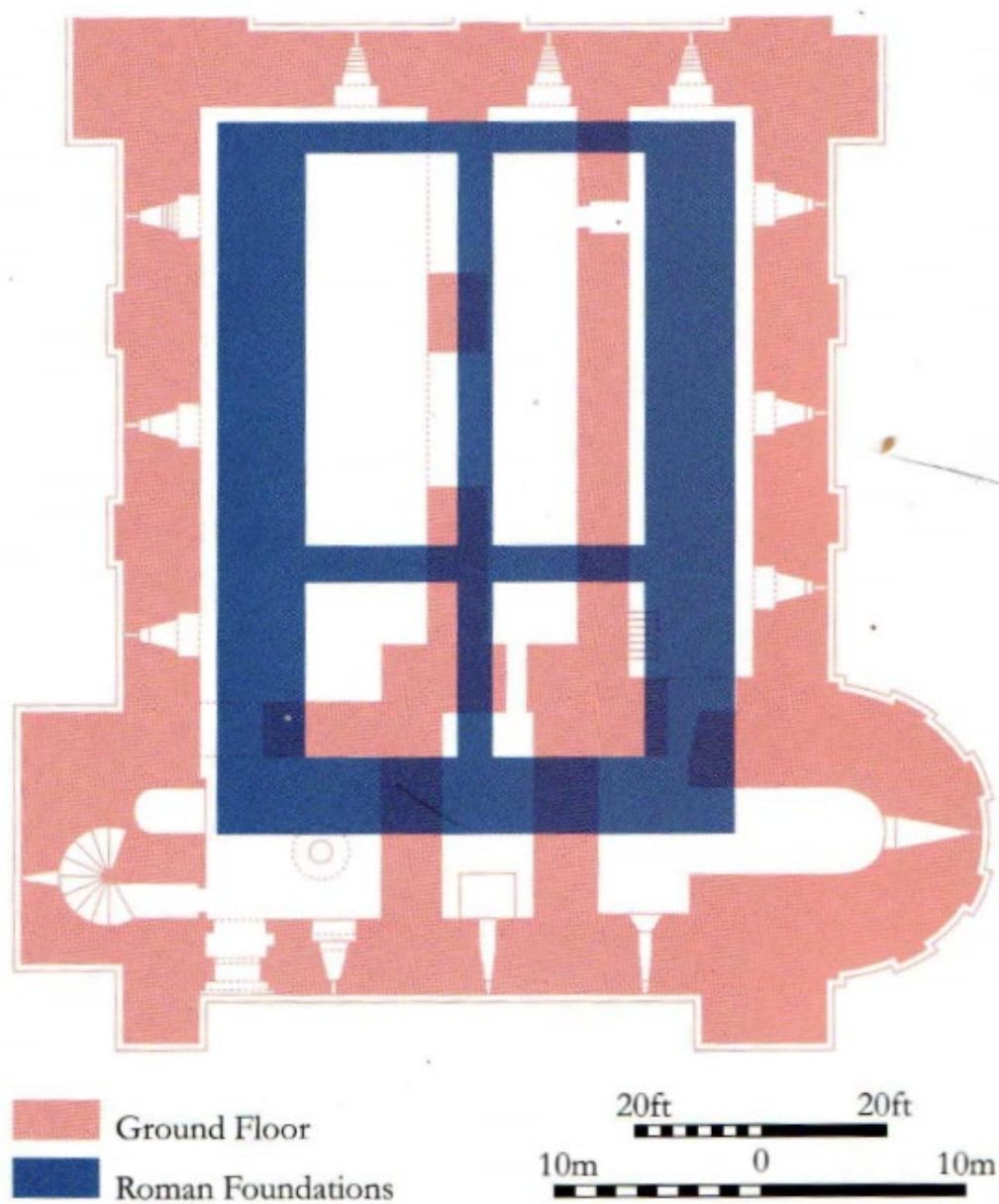
Figure 9: Plan of Colchester Castle's keep (marked out in pink), with the Roman foundations marked in blue. Image taken from Goodall, 2011.
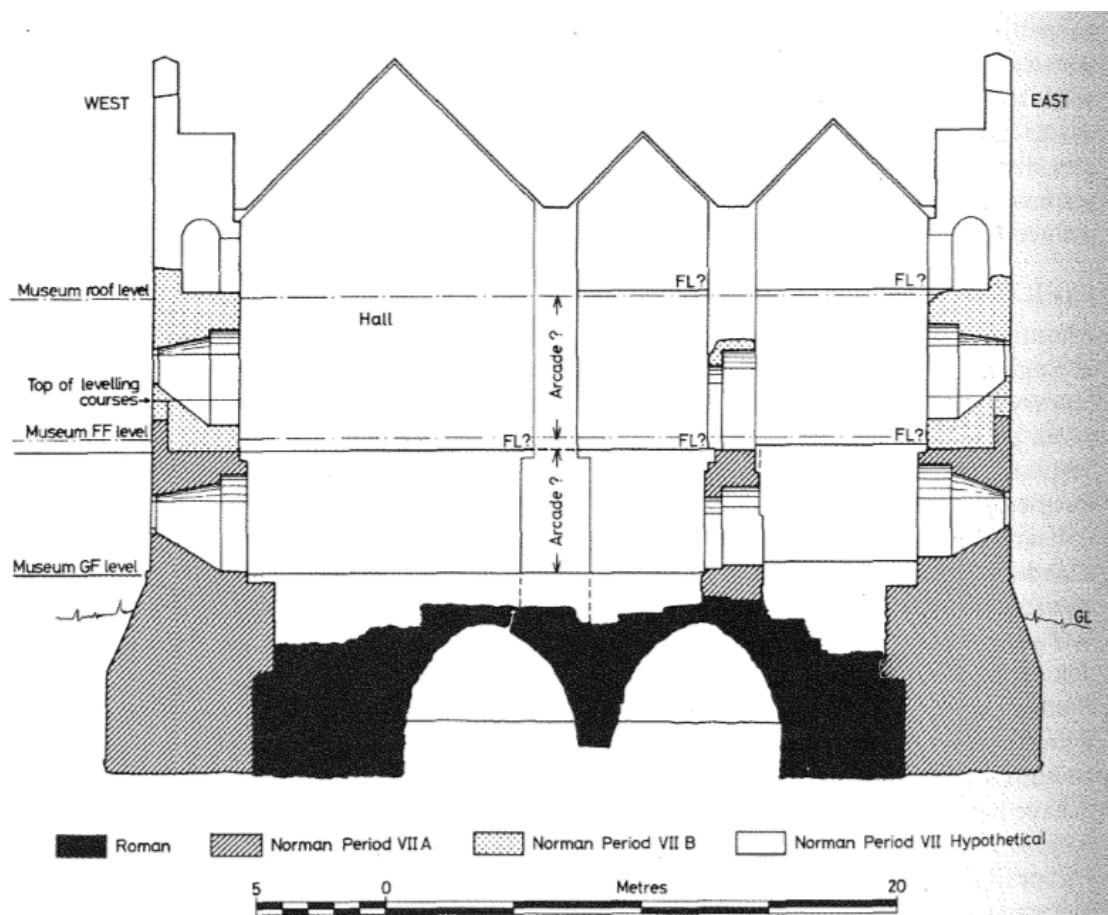
Fig. 39. Colchester castle: Reconstructed section through the keep, to show the structural sequence.

Figure 10: The proposed interior of Colchester Castle. Image taken from Drury, 1982.

196 The arrangements at Colchester probably were intended to provide a hall and chamber with a chapel reached from either room, on two floor levels, for Eudo and for the king. Notice that the backstair gave access to the hall, and not as commonly to the chamber: this suggests that it was seen as providing an entrance to the royal apartments above, and less to the lower hall.
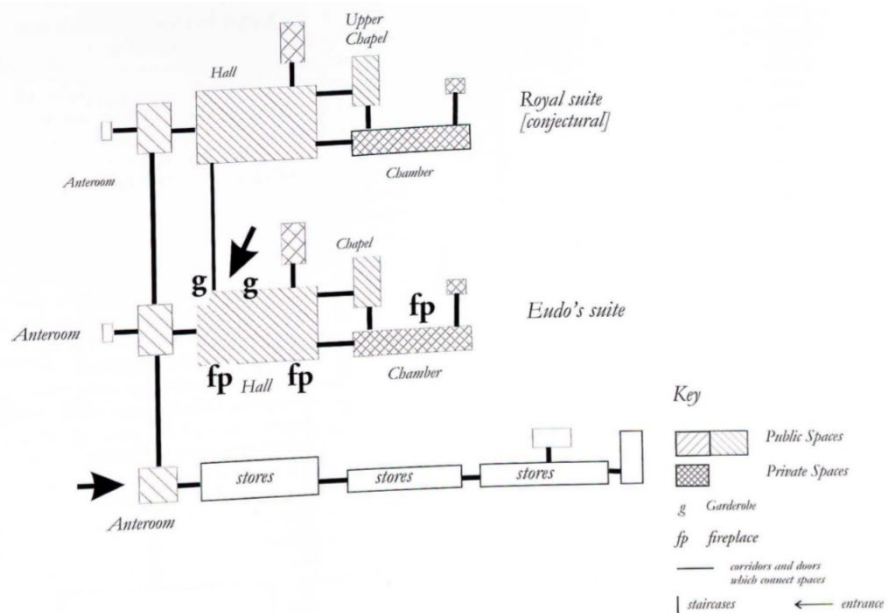
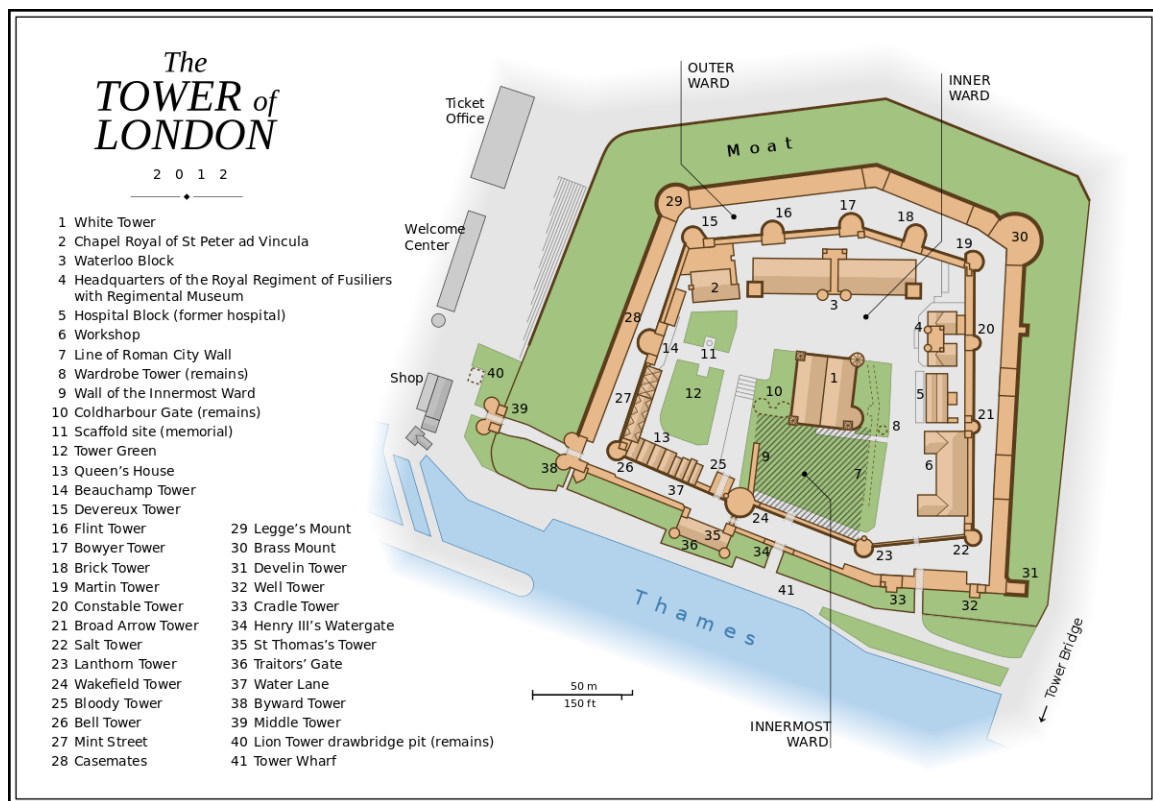*Figure 11: Proposed interior for the keep at Colchester Castle. Image taken from Dixon, 2007.*

The
TOWER *of*
LONDON
2 0 1 2

1 White Tower
2 Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula
3 Waterloo Block
4 Headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers with Regimental Museum
5 Hospital Block (former hospital)
6 Workshop
7 Line of Roman City Wall
8 Wardrobe Tower (remains)
9 Wall of the Innermost Ward
10 Coldharbour Gate (remains)
11 Scaffold site (memorial)
12 Tower Green
13 Queen's House
14 Beauchamp Tower
15 Devereux Tower
16 Flint Tower
17 Bowyer Tower
18 Brick Tower
19 Martin Tower
20 Constable Tower
21 Broad Arrow Tower
22 Salt Tower
23 Lanthorn Tower
24 Wakefield Tower
25 Bloody Tower
26 Bell Tower
27 Mint Street
28 Casemates

29 Legge's Mount
30 Brass Mount
31 Develin Tower
32 Well Tower
33 Cradle Tower
34 Henry III's Watergate
35 St Thomas's Tower
36 Traitors' Gate
37 Water Lane
38 Byward Tower
39 Middle Tower
40 Lion Tower drawbridge pit (remains)
41 Tower Wharf

OUTER WARD

INNER WARD

Moat

Ticket Office

Welcome Center

Shop

Thames

Tower Bridge

INNERMOST WARD

50 m
150 ft

Figure 12: Map showing the layout of the modern-day Tower of London and its proximity to the Thames. Map by Thoroe, via Wikimedia Commons.
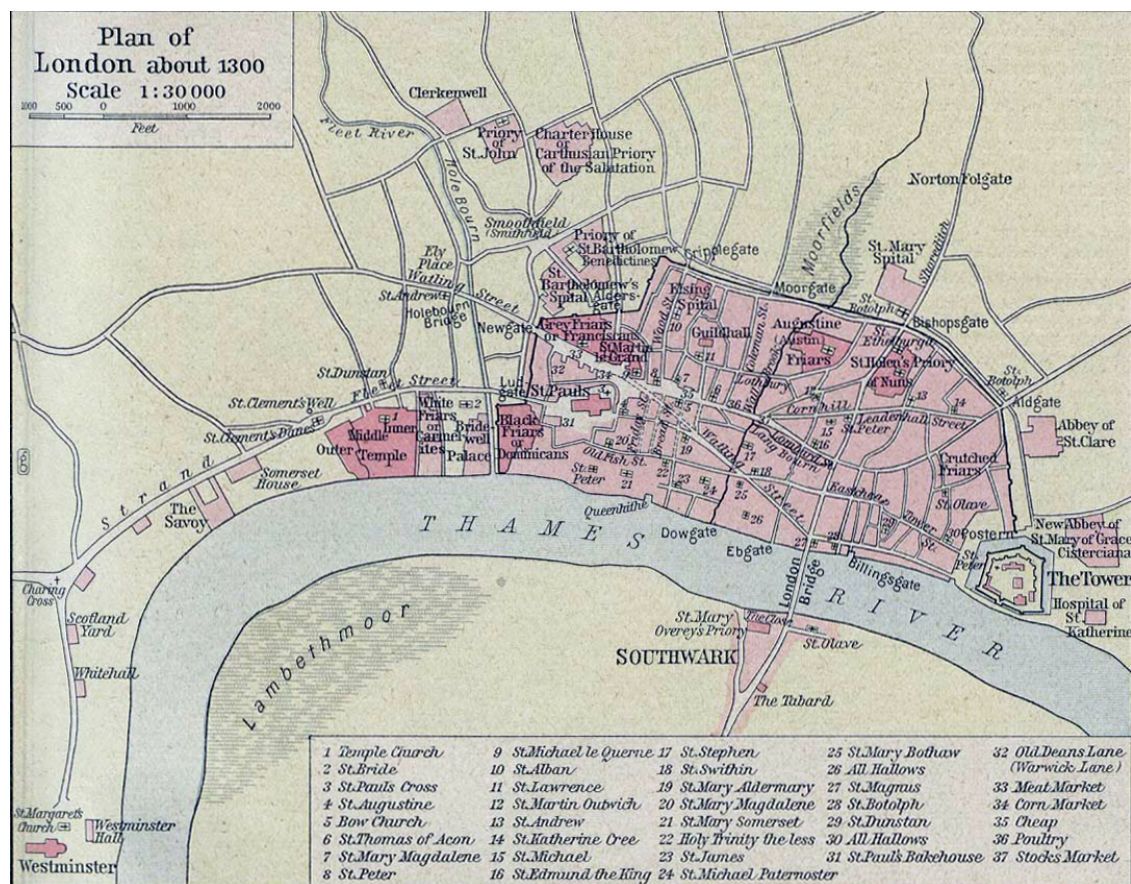
Figure 13: Map of what London may have looked like in 1300, done by William Shepherd. Note the Tower of London in the bottom right corner of the map, by the River Thames. The western castle is not marked, but its location would have been immediately to the northwest of St Paul's Cathedral (#3 in the key). Image in the public domain.

Figure 14: Part of the Roman walls making up part of the Tower of London complex. Image in the public domain.

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9 The defences of the early castle on the Tower site and related topographical details as they may have existed *circa* 1080. The inner bailey and the course of its defences are known or inferred from archaeological evidence and assumed to be those of 1066. Documentary evidence suggests that an outer bailey was created at the same time or very soon after, and that it covered an area more or less coextensive with what later became the intramural area of the Tower Liberties. Note that the courses of the Lorteburn (at least to the north of All Hallows), of Chicke Lane and of the streets to the north and west are those they are understood to have followed *circa* 1270, and that the plans of All Hallows and St Peter's are indicative only. The outer edge of the Tower's late thirteenth-century defences, the outer edge of the existing moat and the river's edge are shown for scale and orientation.
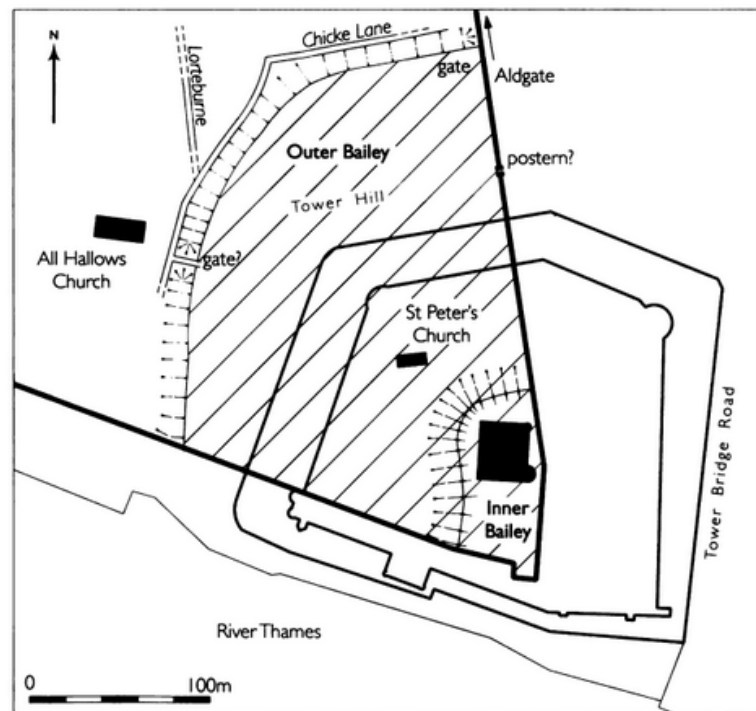
Figure 15: Proposed outer bailey for the Tower of London. Image via Impey, 2008.
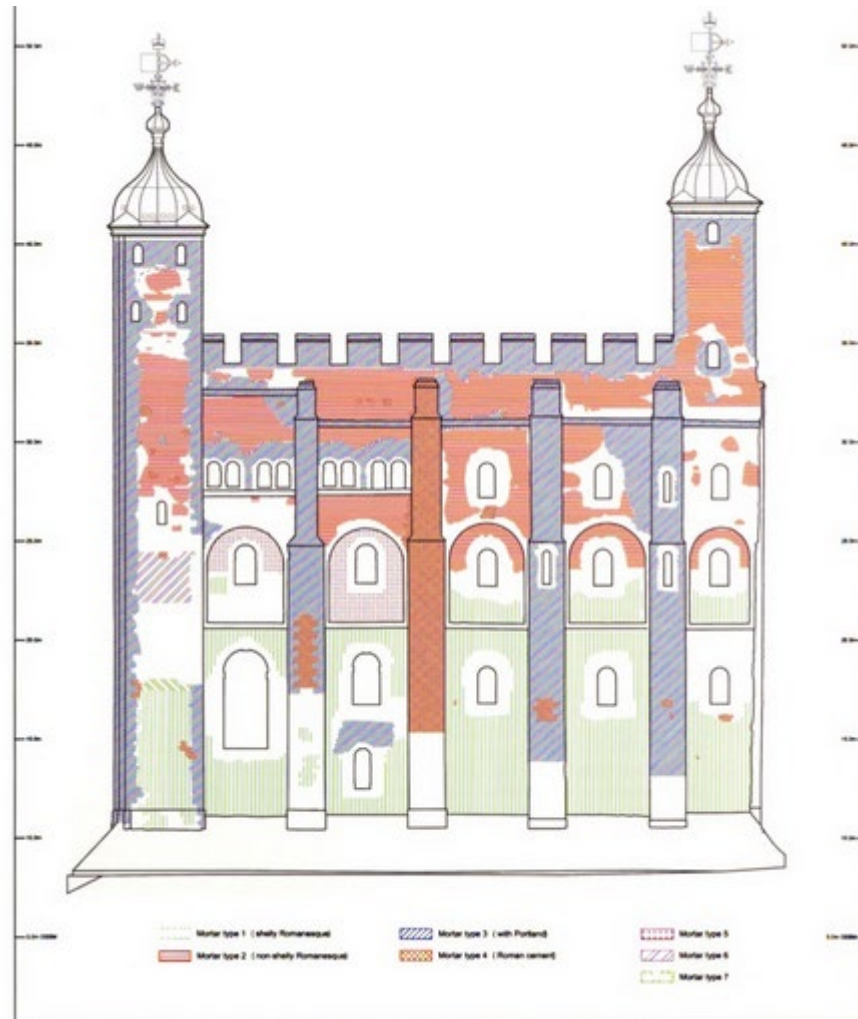
Figure 16: Illustration of the change in mortar in the White Tower. The earlier mortar is marked in green, the later composition in red. Image via Impey, 2008.

Figure 17: Photograph of the interior of St John's Chapel, in the White Tower. Image via Wikimedia Commons user Samuel Taylor Greer.

Figure 18: Scene 53 in the Bayeux Tapestry. The text reads, "Here, English and French fell at the same time in battle." Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 19: Scene 52 in the Bayeux Tapestry. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 20: Scene 52 in the Bayeux Tapestry. The text reads, "Here fell Leofwine and Gyrth, brothers of King Harold." Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 21: Scene 55 in the Bayeux Tapestry. The text reads, "Here is Duke William." Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 22: Scene 45 in the Bayeux Tapestry. The text reads, "He ordered that a motte should be dug at Hastings." Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 23: Brionne, as it stands today. Photograph by Stanzilla, via Wikimedia Commons.
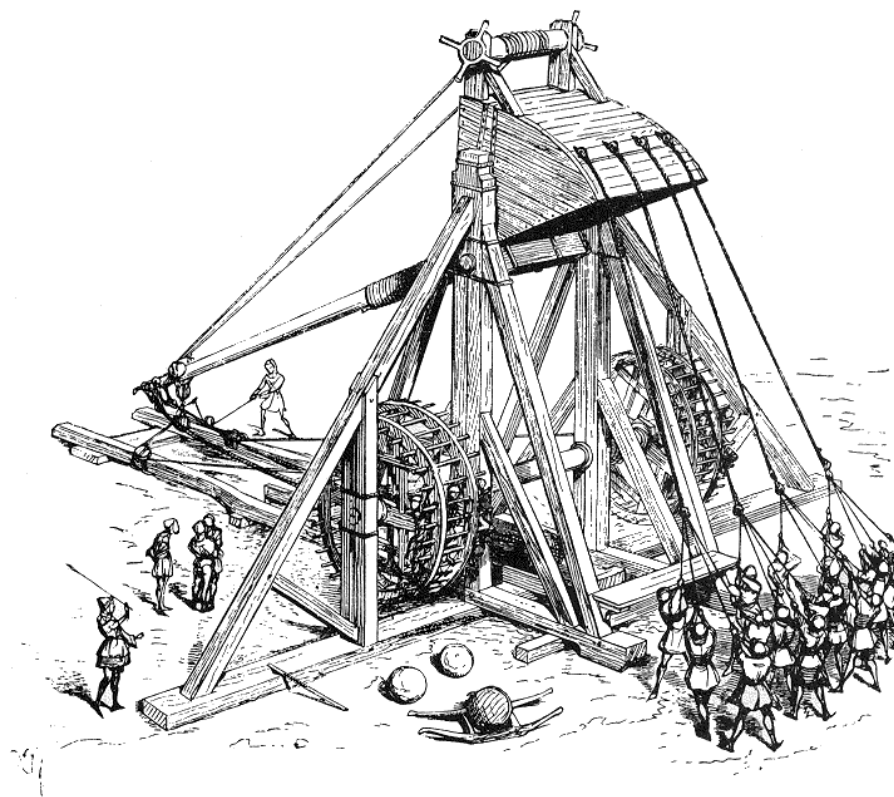
Figure 24: Diagram of a mangonel, via Viollet le Duc, 1858. Image in the public domain.
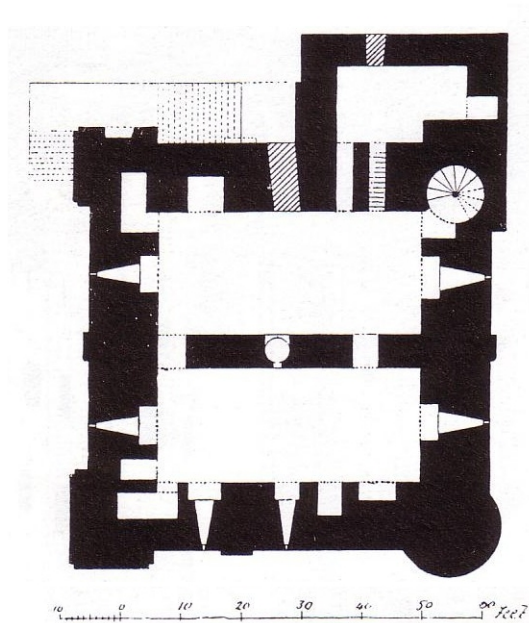
Figure 25: Plan of Rochester Castle's keep. MacGibbon and Ross, The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to Eighteenth Centuries, 1887. Image in the public domain.

Figure 26: Map of Pevensey Castle, which shows the keep with rounded projections in multiple places. Image in the public domain.

Figure 27: Close up of the scene at Hastings in the Bayeux Tapestry. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.
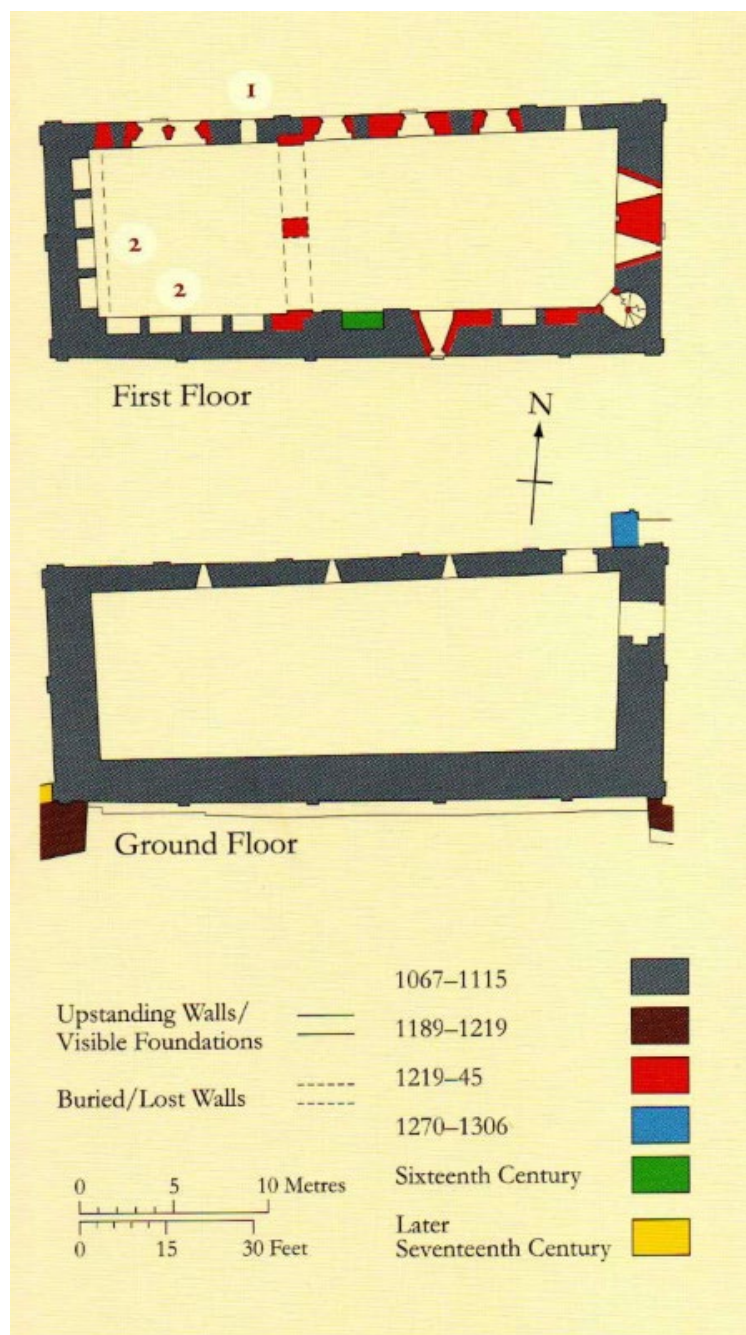
Figure 28: The ground floor and first floor of Chepstow Castle, Wales. Image via Goodall, 2011.
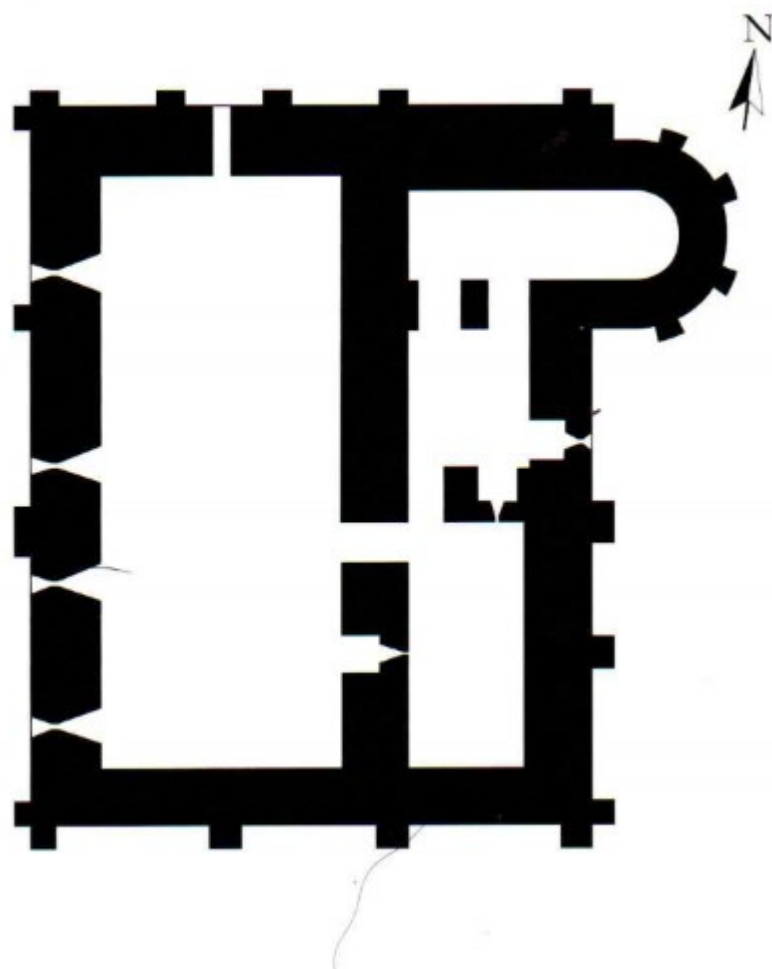
The Great Tower of Ivry la Bataille, Normandy

Figure 29: Ground floor plan of Ivry la Bataille, Normandy. Image via Goodall, 2011.

Figure 30: Scene 27-28 in the Bayeux Tapestry. Edward the Confessor lies on his deathbed at Winchester. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 31: Scene 26 in the Bayeux Tapestry. Edward the Confessor is taken to his burial place in Westminster Abbey. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 32: Scenes 2-3 in the Bayeux Tapestry, in which Harold and his knights arrive at Bosham Church. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 33: Scene 21 in the Bayeux Tapestry. Text reads, "Here Duke William comes with Harold to his palace." Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 34: Westminster Abbey, a close-up view of scene 26. Image in the public domain.

Figure 35: Scene 26 in the Bayeux Tapestry, in which Harold is crowned King of the English. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 36: Scene 15 in the Bayeux Tapestry, where an anonymous cleric and Aelfgyva appear near the meeting between William and Harold. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 37: Bishop Odo blesses the food at Hastings. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.
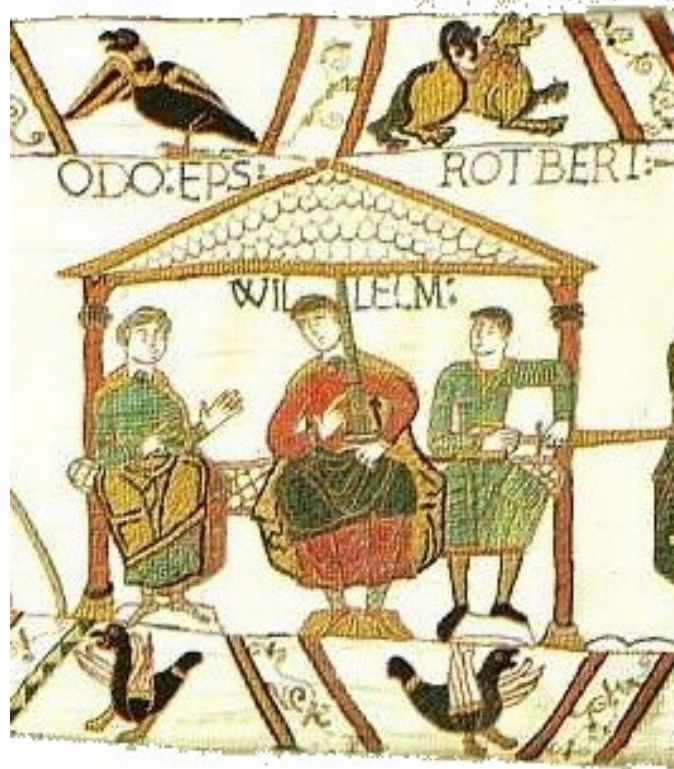
Figure 38: Bishop Odo sits with William and Robert. Image by Ulrich Harsh, via Wikimedia Commons.
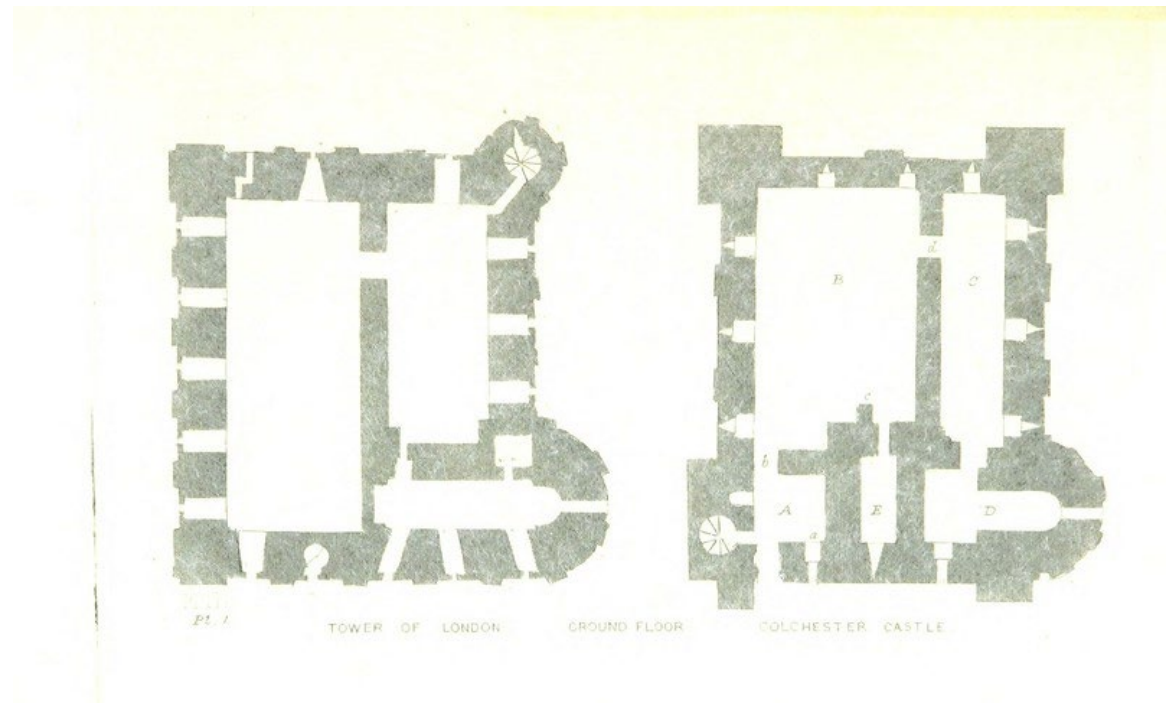
Figure 39: Comparison of the ground floor of Colchester Castle and Tower of London. Image in the public domain, via the British Library's Flickr.

Figure 40: Balkerne Gate, one of the only surviving pieces of Colchester's Roman walls. Photo via Wikimedia Commons user Carole Raddato.

10　The likely extent and boundaries of the western fortification, which, it is suggested, was created in 1066–7 and administered as a royal castle until *circa* 1087. Numbers indicate points at which the part-natural, part-artificial watercourse that is taken to have been its eastern ditch has been identified archaeologically, with the precise location drawn in where the information is available. Marked in a dotted line to the west are the possible limits of a second fortified area, later known as the 'old bailey', which in the early years may have been considered as part of the same complex. To the east, a second additional area may have lain between the main ditch and the approximate line of modern Godliman Street. Indications of the modern street pattern and the position of the existing cathedral are given for orientation.
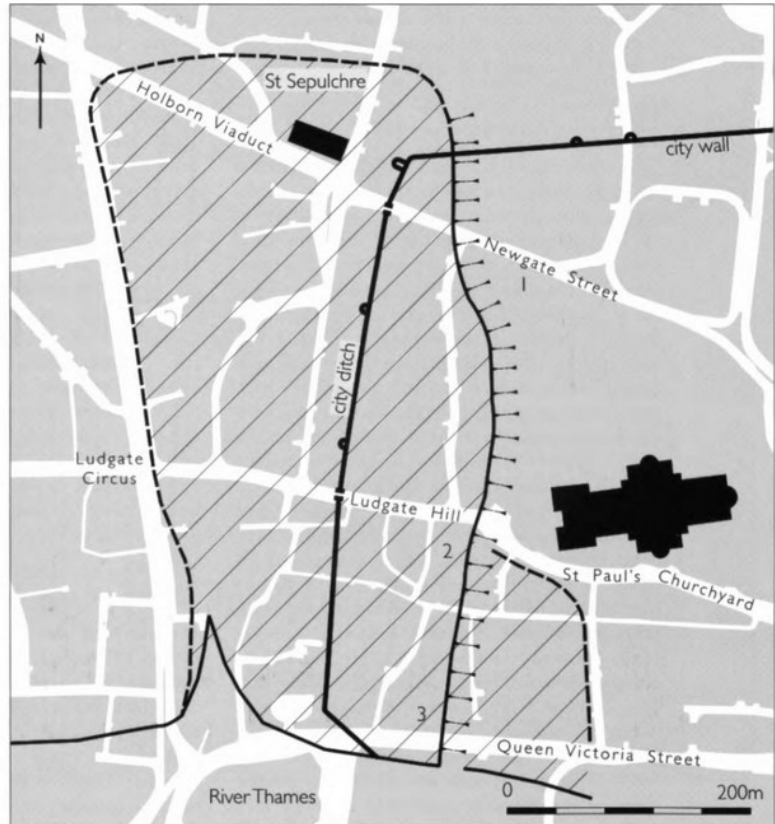
Figure 41: Proposed location of the western castle in London, which no longer exists. St Paul's Cathedral can be seen to one side. Image via Dixon, 2008.

Figure 42: Photograph of St Étienne. Image by Urban, via Wikimedia Commons.