Origin of the Norman Beckett Surname

Date of status report: 24 August 2026

This is a status report about research and analysis into the origin of the Norman Beckett surname. It is a major update from the version dated 15 February 2025 and a minor update from the version dated 13 August 2026. It does not address the origin of the Scottish Ayrshire Becket(t)/Bicket(t) surname which is different.

This document has been produced for the Becket(t)/Bicket(t)/Bichan one-name study at https://bicket.one-name.blog. Feedback will be appreciated. Please write to bicket@one-name.org.

This status report addresses the following:

1. Origin of the Norman Beckett surname: summary 2
2. Summary bases for conclusions 2
3. Current DNA evidence and implications 4
4. Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants 4
5. Scholarly findings concerning surname origins and spelling changes 5
6. The Bec origin issue 6
7. Reasons for using the Bec surname 8
8. Historical findings related to Bec Abbey and Norman England 10
9. The Becs of Norman England 12
10. Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury 12
11. The Norman Bequette branch 13
12. The Proctor-Beckett branch 14
13. Published theories about the origins of the English Beckett surname 15
14. The Bigot surname 17

Annex 1. Norman Beckett genetic branches 18
Annex 2. Location of Bec Abbey 19
Annex 3. The Abbey du Bec and Norman feudal society 21
Annex 4. Significant individuals associated with Bec Abbey and Lanfranc 24
Annex 5. Archbishops of Canterbury (1052-1170) 24
Annex 6. Significant dates 25
Annex 7. About the Lanfranc hagiography 26
Annex 8. Other issues related to Norman Becs 26
Annex 9: Did the surname Beckett originate from the surname Bec? 29
Annex 10: Suggestions for further research 31
Change log 32
References 32

1. Origin of the Norman Beckett surname: summary

It is considered most likely based on current Y-DNA testing, historical information, and scholarly information about surname origins that the English Beckett surname originated at the time of William the Conqueror, and denoted people who accompanied him to England from Normandy and who were associated with Bec Abbey in Normandy, taking on the name of Bec/Bek/Beccet/Beket/Becket to denote that association. As such it would be a locative, or location-associated name, and consequently there are likely to have been many different lineages which adopted that surname, without a genetic connection between them in historical timeframes. Furthermore, surnames for people remaining in Normandy also arose at the time of William the Conqueror, with at least one French lineage taking on the surname Bequette, and then Beckett after going directly to the States. Consequently we can talk both about the English Beckett surname and the Norman Beckett surname, but probably more accurately overall about the Norman Beckett surname.

This view is based in part on circumstantial evidence. But it is our current best assessment using Y-DNA, historical and scholarly evidence, and that evidence is strong.

There is no evidence that the surname Beckett derives from 'beck' meaning sharp beak or stream, as suggested by some sources, except to the extent that Bec Abbey itself was named after a stream.



Figure 1: South side of Bec Abbey, the church and the monks' cells seen from Le Bec-Hellouin (from Wikipedia)

Although this document concerns the origin of the surname Beckett, it does not concern the origin of that specific spelling, or when the spelling Beckett came to predominate. That could be the subject of a separate paper. This document is rather to assess the origin of the surname variants which later significantly coalesced around the spelling Beckett.

2. Summary bases for conclusions

The view about Beckett being a locative surname reflecting an association with Bec Abbey is based on the following, which are explained in more detail in the remaining sections of this document:

- **Y-DNA.** Deep Y-DNA testing of English Becketts has, so far, identified a number of completely independent lineages, i.e., lineages which are not genetically related within historical timeframes, say since 0 CE, and therefore not related within the period when surnames were established. This means realistically that they are cannot be part of a single tree descending from a single person born in the last two thousand years. It rather

means that there must be a different reason for their all having the same surname. For one of these independent lineages, the common ancestor of two different Beckett testers (with their respective trees) is estimated to have been born around 1050, just before the Norman invasion of England. Furthermore, this lineage is in a cluster of Norman lineages. This strongly supports the idea that theirs was a Norman surname established precisely at the time of William the Conqueror, but their two branches (of that joint lineage) descended separately from that point. (See 3 Current DNA evidence and implications.) Family stories for another Beckett lineage say that they came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror, and their DNA results suggest that they were associated with Church courts. (See 12 The Proctor-Beckett branch.)

- **Surnames starting with the Normans.** The Normans were largely responsible for the introduction of surnames both into Normandy and into England, and furthermore these surnames were significantly locative, or location-based. (See 5 Scholarly findings concerning surname origins and spelling changes.)
- **Early occurrences of the surname.** There are no known occurrences of the Beckett surname or of any of its variants prior to William the Conqueror. Bec was the initial spelling most used. The Beckett spelling itself arose much later (See 4 Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants, and 9 The Becs of Norman England.)
- **The Bec origin issue.** There is no known definitive proof about how or where the Bec surname (and its early variants) originated. However, in our view the overwhelming circumstantial evidence is that it indicated an association with the Abbey du Bec in Normandy and the area surrounding it. (See 6 The Bec origin issue.) A related issue is what the reasons might be why different groups of people might choose to identify themselves with the Bec Abbey by using the Bec surname. (See 7 Reasons for using the Bec surname.)
- **Prominent role of Bec Abbey.** Bec Abbey (known as Becce in Latin, pronounced 'Bek-ke') was the most influential religious institution in the Norman kingdom, including in the English church, with several Archbishops of Canterbury coming from there, starting during the reign of William the Conqueror. (See 8 Historical findings related to Bec Abbey and Norman England)
- **Thomas Becket.** Thomas Beket/Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury (1119/20-1170), is the most famous of all people with one of the Becket(t)/Bicket(t) surnames. Thomas was known to be of Norman descent, with his family coming from within two miles of Bec Abbey. His existence is consistent with the view of this document about the origins of the surname. (See 10 Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury.)

It is worth mentioning how incredibly lucky our Y-DNA findings are. To have found two different Big Y testers who are connected genetically just at the time of William the Conqueror is highly unusual given the large number of Beckett branches in the world. If testers are related, it is far more likely that they will be related much later in time. The further evidence cited in this document shows that the Beckett surname (or its variants) could not have happened before William the Conqueror. Consequently the only reasonable conclusion is that the Beckett surname (with its early variants) arose specifically at the time of William the Conqueror. A further piece of luck in finding these two testers is that they had already joined another Y-DNA project which had determined that they were in a Norman lineage. This was more than we could have hoped to determine ourselves in the Becket(t)/Bicket(t)/Bichan one-name study.

In spite of the strength of the evidence within this document, there is little support for this explanation relating to Bec Abbey in existing sources of information about Beckett surname origins. Rather, published sources primarily speculate based on similarities of spellings with other words and names. (See 13 Published theories about the origins of the English Beckett surname.)

3. Current DNA evidence and implications

Big Y DNA testing with Family Tree DNA has demonstrated that there are a number (currently seven) of independent genetic lineages of the Beckett surname which appear to be from the Norman Beckett 'tree'. (See Annex 1. Norman Beckett genetic branches.)

This means that these Beckett lineages cannot be part of a single tree descending from a single man born in the last two thousand years. It rather means that there must be a different reason (or reasons) for their all having the same surname. See Annex 8 (Other issues related to Norman Becs) for further discussion.

For one of these lineages there are two Beckett testers who share a common ancestor with the SNP ('snip') mutation R-FTD9053. Research by administrators in the R1a YP4141 Y-DNA project have determined, based on parallel lineages, that this is a Norman tree. Family Tree DNA estimates that the R-FTD9053 mutation occurred in approximately 1050, which would provide a near perfect explanation for someone born shortly before William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066, who came over to England around the time of William's invasion and who then had two children in England who were the ancestors of the two Beckett branches tested.

Big Y DNA testing of further Becketts has demonstrated that they come from separate lineages completely unrelated to the two testers mentioned above within historical timeframes. The two testers mentioned above come from the largest clade, the 'R' clade, as do three further independent lineages. Outside of the 'R' clade, there are two genetic lineages from the 'I' clade, one from the 'G' clade, and one from the 'E' clade. These results support the idea that there were multiple genetically unrelated lineages which adopted the Bec/Beckett surname, and that there was no genetic kinship between these lineages within historical timeframes, and not for thousands of years.

There are two testers, from the 'I' clade who have a common ancestor probably born in the 1300s, and their lines then branched apart. The Big Y tester from the 'E' clade traces his branch back to northern France in 1719, using the surname spelling Bequette. (See 11 The Norman Bequette branch.)

One of the branches from the 'R' clade came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, according to family history. The DNA results for this branch indicate that its members may have worked in the Church courts. (See 12 The Proctor-Beckett branch.)

Further Big Y tests continue to be organized and processed. The test results when completed will be reflected in future updates to this document.

4. Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants

To talk about the origin of the Beckett surname is, more accurately, to talk about the origin of the surname variants which eventually coalesced around the spelling Beckett.

The earliest use of the surname spelling Beckett (with two 't's) as cited in the major works quoted in 13 (Published theories about the origins of the English Beckett surname) was a single one about 1155 in Danelaw Documents (Lincs), which was an outlier to the range of variants being used then. The next known uses of the surname spelling Beckett were in 1539-43 in the International Genealogical Index, which is only secondary source material.

Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is even earlier than these cited occurrences. Earlier citations of the surnames Bec and Bek are discussed in 9 (The Becs of Norman England).

Our assumption is that Beckett evolved from Bec and Bek (and variant spellings such as Beck and Beke). The name Beckett had to appear from somewhere, and the most reasonable conclusion at present is that it evolved from names like Bec and Bek. The following support this understanding:

- The father of Thomas Becket, Gilbert Becket/Beket was also known as Gilbert Beck when he was sheriff of London. (The spelling of Beck is given in lists of sheriffs of London (e.g. https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/new-history-london/pp889-893); whereas Frank Barlow (fellow of the British Academy) states as a fact in his 1986 book 'Thomas Becket' "By 1120 Gilbert could have been resident for about a decade and his standing is proved by his becoming for a term sheriff of the City." [i])
- George F Black in his book "The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History" (e.g.2022 edition) states in his discussion of surname spelling changes that it is a recognized spelling change to add an 'accretionary t' at the end of surnames.[ii]

See also Annex 9 (Did the surname Beckett originate from the surname Bec?)

A 1967 work on the origin of English surnames lists the names Bec and Beck(e) from Bec-Hellouin in Eure, Normandy as "surnames originating from places in France as are known to survive today".[iii]

P. H. Reaney in his 1967 book "The Origin of English Surnames" says

> The man who says his name was always spelled as it is today is talking rank nonsense. The modern form of very many of our surnames is due to the spelling of some sixteenth- or seventeenth-century parson or clerk, or even to one of later date. It is not a matter of illiteracy in our sense of the word. These parsons who kept the parish registers were men of some education. Their ability to read cannot be questioned, but they had no guide to the spelling of names. It was the printing-press which gradually established a recognized system of spelling. That of Tudor and Stuart England was very different from ours, and the spelling of many of our words is not earlier than Dr Johnson's Dictionary. But there was no recognised spelling for names. A great part of the population was illiterate. Their names were written only at birth or marriage or death, of if they happened to come within the clutches of the law. Then they gave their names orally and the clerk put them into writing as best he could. He wrote them down phonetically, using his own system of spelling, sometimes spelling the same name in different ways at different times, and it is this variation in spelling which often gives us the clue to the real origin and meaning of the surname."[iv]

The surname Bigot existed at the time of William the Conqueror but appears to be unrelated to the surname Beckett. (See 14 The Bigot surname.)

5. Scholarly findings concerning surname origins and spelling changes

The major source of information about surname origins for this document is "The Surnames Handbook: A Guide to Family Name Research in the 21st Century" by Debbie Kennett.[v] It includes the following:

- “No evidence has been found that surnames were in use in England before the Conquest.” (p.17)
- “The reasons for the introduction of surnames are not fully understood but appear to be tied up with the need to prove ownership of land and property for inheritance purposes, the introduction of taxes, and the increasing use of written records during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, all of which required a more precise means of identification than a single unadorned name.” (pp.17-18)
- “The Normans began to use surnames in the first half of the eleventh century. The early Norman surnames were tied up with the feudal system of heritable tenure, and consequently many were toponymics – surnames derived from place-names and landscape features…” (p.20)
- “The Norman Conquest not only changed the course of British history but also introduced an entirely new system of family nomenclature. The new fashion for surnames caught on first among the great landholding families who took their names either from their estate in Normandy or their new lands in England.” (p.23)
- “Locative surnames, and particularly those from French place-names, were the first British surnames to become hereditary.” (p.34)
- “A considerable number of the surnames that were introduced to Britain in the first 200 years after the Conquest were derived from French place-names.” (p.34)
- (Referring to James Holt, “What’s in a Name? Family Nomenclature and the Norman Conquest”) “He concludes that the nomenclature in Normandy was gradually changing in the first half of the eleventh century, and the roots were firmly planted by 1054 when William’s victory at the Battle of Mortemer secured his position as the Duke of Normandy and paved the way for the future conquest of England.” (p.21)
- “During the key period of surname formation very few people were able to read and write. Surnames were recorded in official documents by a clerk or scribe, who spelt a name as he heard it. There was no standardised spelling and there were no convenient reference books or dictionaries that the scribes could consult. Names were spelt inconsistently and it was common to find the same name spelt in a variety of different ways within the same document.” (p.49)
- “The spelling and pronunciation of surnames only started to stabilise in the nineteenth century with the introduction of universal education.” (p.50)
- “It is not uncommon to find that different members of the same family choose to use different spellings of their surname.” (p.51)

Although Debbie Kennet does not appear to mention it in her book, it is also a recognized spelling change to add an ‘accretionary t’ at the end of surnames. This would explain the transition from Becce, Bekke, or Beke to Beket.[vi]

6. The Bec origin issue

We are not aware of any uses of the surname spelling BECKETT until a single one in 1155, and then none again until the 1500s. Bec and its variants (such as Bek and Beck) is rather the original version from which the Beckett version is considered to have evolved. (See 4 Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants, and Annex 9 Did the surname Beckett originate from the surname Bec?)

The question then is how or where the Bec surname itself arose. That this is a recognized issue is documented in Dr Paul Fox's paper entitled "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek". He states, in particular:

- "how Bec fitted in has never been clear." – p1
- "The apparent lack of any connection between early Bec families in Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and elsewhere, was an obstacle to producing a coherent synthesis." - p1.

Dr Fox's solution to the question of the Bec surname is to assert that it represents a single family (the 'Bec kinship network') with nobility connections. He summarizes his work by saying "The conclusion that the English Becs were members of a single family simplified the task of establishing their antecedents in Normandy, a knowledge of whom might suggest reasons for the patronage observed in England." (p10)

Dr Fox does not specify the location where the surname arose, other than by implication by giving examples of Becs from two locations near Fécamp on the Normandy coast. (See Annex 8. Other issues related to Norman Becs.)

Dr Fox has objected strongly to this paper's proposed link to Bec Abbey, e.g., stating "scholars of Becket would not concur that the surname Becket has anything to do with the abbey of Bec".[vii]

The results of our own research and analysis, including Y-DNA results, disagree with Dr Fox's position, and strongly support the Bec Abbey origin idea. The specifics of this are:

- **No "Bec kinship network".** Dr. Fox's analysis requires a kinship network to explain, in part, the patronage that Becs received in England. To-date our testing of Beckett lineages which we consider to be of Norman origin has identified seven different Beckett lineages none of which have any connections to the others within historical timeframes. See Annex 8 (Other issues related to Norman Becs) for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

- **Significance of Bec as a surname.** There is some speculation that the surname Bec may have referred to physical features, in particular a strong nose, but that seems an extreme case of speculation without any known factual basis for multiple genetically unrelated lineages. Rather, as stated in scholarly research in section 5:
    - "Locative surnames, and particularly those from French place-names, were the first British surnames to become hereditary."
    - "A considerable number of the surnames that were introduced to Britain in the first 200 years after the Conquest were derived from French place-names."

  If we then address the possible place-names which could have been the source of the surname Bec, the following are issues to consider:
    - Bec in Normandy meant 'stream', so any location with a stream could have been labelled 'Bec'. There were many so labelled. Dr Fox cites two near Fécamp in connection with his Bec analysis, Bec-aux-Cauchois, and Bec de Mortagne. (See Annex 8 Other issues related to Norman Becs.) Frank Barlow, in his book on Thomas Becket, cites others, such as Le Becbéquet and Le Bec Thomas near Bec Abbey. He also states that there are, or were, no doubt many more.[viii]
    - Locative names were used to indicate where people came from, or were associated with. As such, they would need to be something which would be

recognized as a clear location. Simply being associated with a 'stream' would not be a meaningful location to cite. But Bec Abbey, being the most influential Norman abbey of that time, would be a locative name which would be clearly recognizable.

- **Basis for patronage.** Dr. Fox's paper tries to create an explanation for the fact that there was so much patronage of people named Bec in England, which did not make sense in his view without understanding it to be a strong kinship network with noble connections. However, in our view it makes more sense to understand this patronage as a result of the links with Bec Abbey and with its powerful leaders, including several archbishops of Canterbury. The sections below give more details about the extent of this Bec Abbey power and patronage.

7. Reasons for using the Bec surname

The purpose of this section is to provide insight into why different people might have adopted the surname Bec (or de Bec) around the time of William the Conqueror. This section is speculative, and is not based on evidence as regards specific cases. It is, however, possible that such evidence might be found in the future, either direct or circumstantial, and this section could provide suggestions for research. Since this section was first written, circumstantial support has been found for the suggestion of legal personnel going to England and adopting the Bec/Beckett surname. (See 12 The Proctor-Beckett branch.)

The most obvious reason for people adopting a locative (or location-based) name was that the location was where they held land. However, this would not make much sense in the case of Bec Abbey, because most of that land would probably belong to the Abbey itself. Certainly there might have been some people holding land in that area, and may have therefore been justified in using that locative surname, but the large number of Becs found in England at that time could almost certainly not have been explained by their having land holdings around Bec.

The French word 'de', meaning 'of', in the full surname designation of 'de Bec', does not mean land owner. It means 'of', which can be used in many different contexts. This section explores some of these.

In any case, the ownership of land was generally associated mostly with the nobility, or with the church, such as Bec Abbey itself. The surname Bec was not an aristocratic type of surname [ix]. Most important was the fact that Bec was the most influential abbey in Normandy and in Norman England, and it would clearly have been desirable for many people to associate themselves with it, in particular those who did not have nobility connections of their own. The types of people who might wish to take on the 'de Bec' surname could include the following:

- **People who accompanied the clergy of Bec to England.** A contemporary source documented that "As he [Lanfranc] went to the archbishopric [of Canterbury], many followed him, of whom several he retained those with honors and lands." As stated, some of these became land owners, so would have been recorded in subsequent English records, quite possibly as Becs. The source does not cite who these people were, but they could easily have been any of the following:
    - **The extended families of the monks of Bec.** The same source cited above stated that Lanfranc looked after the parents and brothers of the monks of Bec. These

could have been among those going to England, and who might have taken on the Bec surname.

- **Merchants from Bec and the surrounding area.** By 1077 Bec Abbey had the right to have a town, with its associated market and merchants.[x] These could easily have been some of those accompanying the clergy of Bec to England, or going by themselves later. It is possible that the father of Archbishop Thomas Becket was one of these merchants.
- **Builders and craftsmen from Bec and the surrounding area.** As explained in section 8 (Historical findings related to Bec Abbey and Norman England) Lanfranc from Bec, when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, was responsible for a significant rebuilding of Canterbury, bringing much of the material from overseas. (Part II (Crispin's Hagiography) Para 30). He may well also have brought some of the necessary builders and craftsmen, including from Bec. These people, especially master craftsmen who might go on to work elsewhere, might call themselves Becs.
- **Legal personnel from Bec courts.** Bec Abbey had the right to run its own courts (both the Abbot's Court, and local law courts associated with the town[xi]), and these would have had clerks able to read and write, effectively one of the lowest rungs of the clergy. There would also have been legal practitioners (known later in England as proctors). People with these skills would have been needed in England. Clerks, for example, could be significant figures, e.g. one is cited as holding tithes from a property, meaning 10% of the income of that property.[xii] For an apparent example of legal practitioners going to England, see 12 The Proctor-Beckett branch.
- **The monks of Bec.** There were many monks who came not only to Canterbury but to many other locations which were gifted to Bec Abbey. Some of the cells of monks were small, and there would have been opportunities for monks to become worldly and acquire partners and families. Their immediate families might possibly have taken on the Bec surname. Notably, Bec Abbey was originally founded to reject the corruption that existed throughout much of the church at the time. Nonetheless, it might have been possible for some monks to succumb to these ways when no longer supervised directly by Bec Abbey. (Gilbert Crispin, a contemporary, commented on the worldliness of the Norman secular clergy. "Priests and bishops married freely, carried arms and lived just as laymen did."[xiii])

- **People from lands owned by Bec Abbey.** Bec Abbey became one of the wealthiest church institutions in Normandy and Norman England with extensive holdings both in Normandy and in England. While some of these were priories or had other religious uses, many were effectively business properties for the produce they raised or other value they delivered. The following is from one source concerning the lands in England attached to Bec Abbey:

  > "Amongst the monasteries that acquired property and influence in England none is more famous than the abbey of Bec-Hellouin. In the age of Herluin, Lanfranc, and Anselm it became a spiritual and intellectual centre, constantly called upon to send out monks to other communities. It was in fact a seminary of bishops and abbots, and the mother house of numerous priories in France as well as in England. Lanfranc's policy of bringing monks from Normandy to infuse new life into English monasteries would alone have served to spread its influence, but there were also lay friends of the abbots no less anxious to see monks from Bec settled in Duke William's newly acquired kingdom."[xiv]

"The Abbey of Bec-Hellouin is worth studying for the variety and wealth of its possessions. It colonized an abbey and gradually acquired in England four conventual priories, three or four granges, over twenty manors, and innumerable churches, tithes, and pensions."[xv]

One of the notable locations where Bec Abbey owned land was in south London, where its name lives on in Tooting Bec.[xvi]

People from these lands who could have adopted the surname Bec could have included not only monks but also the main tenants of those lands and possibly local merchants.

- **People who were religious adherents of Bec Abbey, but based elsewhere, and potentially wealthy in their own right.** Bec Abbey was founded as a reformist monastery in large part in rejection of the corruption which was common throughout much of the rest of the church at the time, and Bec emphasized reformist Benedictine principles. Many influential people went to its school. Many went on to major church roles such as bishoprics and abbeys elsewhere, and possibly one pope. It is likely that some had properties of their own, and subsequently could have chosen to identify themselves with Bec rather than with their own properties.

8. Historical findings related to Bec Abbey and Norman England

Wikipedia states the following: "Bec Abbey, formally the Abbey of Our Lady of Bec (French: Abbaye Notre-Dame du Bec), is a Benedictine monastic foundation in the Eure département, in the Bec valley midway between the cities of Rouen and Bernay. It is located in Le Bec Hellouin, Normandy, France, and was the most influential abbey of the 12th-century Anglo-Norman kingdom.

Like all abbeys, Bec maintained annals of the house but uniquely its first abbots also received individual biographies, brought together by the monk of Bec, Milo Crispin. Because of the abbey's cross-Channel influence, these hagiographic lives sometimes disclose historical information of more than local importance."[xvii]

Based on information given below about the importance of Bec Abbey at the time of William the Conqueror, and specifically to William the Conqueror personally, the Wikipedia citation should also refer to Bec Abbey as the most influential abbey of the **11th**-century Anglo-Norman kingdom, and not just of the 12th-century Anglo-Norman kingdom. Lanfranc was originally a monk there, and then the prior at Bec Abbey, second in rank only to its first Abbot Herluin. Lanfranc had a long association with William the Conqueror, both in France before 1066, and as Archbishop of Canterbury starting in 1070. To demonstrate the importance of that relationship, the Wikipedia article about Lanfranc states that "On several occasions when William I was absent from England Lanfranc acted as his viceregent." A further citation from the Lanfranc hagiography (cited below) states "When the glorious King William sojourned in Normandy, Lanfrancus was the prince and guardian of England." (Part II (Crispin's Hagiography) Para 55)

Annex 3 (The Abbey du Bec and Norman Feudal Society) provides additional background on the importance of the Abbey du Bec at the time of William the Conqueror and for approximately a century thereafter, including the particularly close relationship between William the Conqueror and Lanfranc.

The hagiography of Archbishop Lanfranc provides support for the idea that there were many people associated with Bec Abbey who went to England at the time of William the Conqueror. This section provides some citations from that hagiography to demonstrate this finding.

The hagiography of Lanfranc is in Latin, and there is apparently no readily-available English translation. There are many copies of the Latin version available, published much later as part of the Roman Martyrology, organized by the individuals' respective saint's day, which for Lanfranc is 28 May. A list of available sources is provided by Roger Pearse[xviii]. There is an editable text version[xix], subject to the proviso that it is of uncertain quality. The citations below are based on a Google translation of this text, much of which is difficult to understand, but nonetheless there are a number of citations which appear relevant. Further work could validate and improve the translations. (See also Annex 5. About the Lanfranc hagiography.)

The Catholic Church did not come to England with William the Conqueror; there had already been an Archbishop of Canterbury since 597 AD, and there was a well-established ecclesiastical system including abbeys and monasteries. William needed to conquer these as well as the military resistance in the country. The existing Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, Stigand, was apparently not a supporter of William, and it can be assumed that many of the church, including monks, were not either. William eventually (in 1070) had Stigand removed from his post, and appointed Lanfranc in his place. The opposition of existing monks was documented in Lanfranc's hagiography.

Lanfranc clearly brought a number of significant supporters to England with him, such as Gilbert Crispin who was made Abbot of Westminster Abbey. But he would have brought far more with him than that, including monks and their families. Citations which indicate such extended groups accompanying him include these:

- "As he went to the archbishopric, many followed him, of whom several he retained those with honors and lands." (Part II (Crispin's Hagiography) para 32)
- "How kindly and how sufficiently he provided benefits to the needy relatives of his monks." (Part II (Crispin's Hagiography) para 56)
- "But regarding the brothers of his own church how good, how pious, how benevolent he was, it can be inferred to some extent from this that neither their parents or brothers could endure any hardship that afflicted anyone." (Part III (Eadmer's hagiography) para 6)

There are two further significant aspects of Lanfranc's time in England which could have encouraged people associated with Bec Abbey to come. The first was the fact that Lanfranc was responsible for a significant rebuilding of Canterbury, bringing much of the material from overseas. (Part II (Crispin's Hagiography) Para 30). The second was that he regained control of many estates in England which had been under the control of the Archbishop of Canterbury prior to 1066, but which had subsequently been taken over by others. These estates clearly gave him both more resources, and more opportunity for patronage for those who came with him. (Part III (Eadmer's hagiography) Para 17)

A further factor which made Lanfranc particularly important was that he was effectively vice-regent acting for William the Conqueror when the King was abroad, and the King spent most of his later years in Normandy rather than in England.

9. The Becs of Norman England

Section 6 (The Bec origin issue) and this section, and Annex 8 (Other issues related to Norman Becs), largely refer to the article "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek", by Dr Paul A Fox, published in Medieval Prosopography 2003, vol 24, pp 171-193.[xx] Page numbers given below are from this article. This article also raises some issues which are dealt with in Annex 8.

Dr Fox's article is significant because it provides details of many different people with the surname (de) Bec or Bek both in England and in Normandy at the time of William the Conqueror and his sons. It relies on original records in Latin and in French, which we would otherwise not know about. These are the earliest citations of which we are aware for people called Bec and Bek, the descendants of some of which we believe eventually became known as Becketts.

The geographical spread cited of Becs and Beks in England was quite broad, including especially Kent, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire, as well as less frequent citations in many other counties.

Some of the interesting individuals cited were:

- Rudolph de Bec, a knight of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury (formerly abbot of Bec Abbey, and subsequently Saint Anselm) (pp3-4 and 7)
- Hugh de Bec, who provided the royal cross-channel service between Hastings and Normandy ca 1160 (p8)
- William de Bec, "excommunicated by Thomas Becket in May 1169, almost certainly for accepting land from the king which belonged to the Archbishop." (p7)
- Anthony Bek, "bishop palatine of Durham, titular Patriarch of Jerusalem, and friend of Edward I." early 1300s (p1). Also spelled Beck and Beke.

10. Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury

Thomas Becket is the most famous name in the pantheon of Beckets and Becketts. He was the Archbishop of Canterbury who clashed with Henry II, King of England at the time, and was murdered in 1170 by followers of the King.

His name is variously spelled Beket, Becket, or à Becket. The version with 'à' did not appear until 1596, when it was added by Thomas Nashe apparently intended to make Becket into a sort of rustic figure of fun by Protestants. "By the 18th century 'Thomas a Becket' had become the most popular form, probably because it's more 'musical' and simply more pleasing to say, and was used, for example, by Samuel Johnson in his first English Dictionary."[xxi]

Thomas did not call himself Beket or Becket, but rather 'Thomas of London'.[xxii]

We do not have a lineage for Thomas Becket, except that we know that he "was the son of Gilbert and Matilda Beket. Gilbert's father was from Thierville in the lordship of Brionne in Normandy, and was either a small landowner or a petty knight. Matilda was also of Norman descent – her family may have originated near Caen." … "Gilbert began his life as a merchant, perhaps in textiles, but by the 1120s he was living in London and was a property owner, living on the rental income from his properties. He also served as the sheriff of the city at some point."[xxiii] Note that Thierville is approximately 2 miles from Bec Abbey.

Theobold of Bec was also from Thierville. Theobold had been Abbot of Bec, and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury before Thomas. Theobold was considered a supporter of Thomas. While there is no historical proof of a connection between the families before going to England, the circumstances are quite striking.

There are different spellings used for Thomas Becket and his family. Beket appears to have been the more common spelling at the time, but it is now mostly shown as Becket.

We cannot prove that Thomas Becket's family was associated with Bec Abbey, but it is fairly certain that it was Norman and that it came from within two miles of Bec Abbey.[xxiv] It was well enough connected for his father Gilbert to be a sheriff of London. Thomas himself became Lord Chancellor in 1155, i.e., head of the Treasury for all of England, an extremely important position, preceding his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162. Clearly, there was not much differentiation between political and ecclesiastical power.

It is unlikely that there are any Becketts alive today who are genetically related to Thomas Becket within historical timeframes. In particular, there were no known surviving male lines of descent from him, his parents, his siblings or his grandparents through which such a relationship could exist. Thomas himself was not known to have had a wife or any children. He had three named sisters, two of whom married and had children, and one who became an abbess.[xxv] These would not have carried on the male line to further generations, nor likely the surname either. Given the strong evidence cited elsewhere in this document that Becket was a locative (i.e., location-based) name reflecting people who had come to England from Bec Abbey or were otherwise closely associated with it during the time of William the Conqueror, his family would have been but one of a number of such families. He is without any credible related descendants and without any provable genetic links with anyone else.

11. The Norman Bequette branch

Most existing Beckett branches, when they can be traced back to somewhere besides North America, can be traced back to England, and hence may be referred to as English Becketts. However the origin of these Becketts was apparently in Norman France at the time of William the Conqueror, as explained elsewhere in this paper. As explained above in 5 (Scholarly findings concerning surname origins and spelling changes), surnames also started to be used in Normandy at this same time, and with the same emphasis on locative names. It is reasonable to assume that people who moved within Normandy and within France overall would likewise adopt surnames indicating their association with Bec Abbey, without necessarily having ever been part of the movement of people to England.

One of the Becketts who has done the Big Y DNA test is from a French branch which went directly in 1719 from Solre-sur-Sambre to French territory in what is now Illinois. Solre-sur-Sambre is currently in Belgium, just inside the border from France, but it has been part of many different countries or administrations in the past, including France. Solre-sur-Sambre is close to Normandy, but has not been a part of it.

This branch originally spelled its surname Becquet and Bequet. The two 't' version Becquette/Bequette appeared when Spanish became dominant in Missouri. The name change from Bequette to Beckett happened about 100 years ago when our tester's father first started to school. His teacher told him they didn't teach both French and English anymore and he would have to spell his name in English Beckett. Our tester's father had a sister and brother that kept

the Bequette surname and two other brothers who used the surname Beckett. It's all about 'par for the course' for the many name changes our branches experience.

Currently we cannot trace the lineage of this Beckett branch back any further. But it is reasonable to assume that its origin is likewise Norman and associated with Bec Abbey.

12. The Proctor-Beckett branch

One of the Big Y Beckett testers is from a family which understands that it came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror. His Big Y DNA testing results provide some interesting additional information, as described below.

Y-DNA does not prove historical facts, just genetic relationships. So the rest of this is analysis which is consistent with known facts, but not historically proven. It is also consistent with the conclusions of this paper about the origin of the Beckett surname as being a location-specific surname demonstrating an association with Bec Abbey.

It turns out that our tester is in a Proctor-intensive part of the male haplotree. There are 13 Proctors (or Procters) who have done the Big Y test and are all in the same part of the male haplotree as he is. There are several other surnames as well, with two non-Proctors being the closest to him genetically.

A major observation is that there was a single person (possibly with the surname 'Proctor') with the Y-DNA SNP mutation R-FT133975, who was the common ancestor of each one of those Proctors, plus our tester and a few others. FTDNA estimates that this person would have been born around 1300 CE. A simple interpretation of this could have been that our Beckett tester was actually a Proctor, with the Beckett name acquired by the female line or by effective adoption.

However, further analysis revealed a more complex interpretation. 1300 was quite early in terms of surnames being fixed. The next genetically identifiable ancestor of this person with the R-FT133975 mutation had a group of mutations identified by FTDNA as R-JFS0083, and that ancestor was estimated to have been born around 1050, i.e., at the time of William the Conqueror. That sounded too specific to be an accident.

Further research was then made into what 'Proctor' means, or meant. It has changed. Today it is mostly understood to be a member of the teaching staff who monitors examinations. But that was not its earlier meaning. In short, a proctor was the equivalent of a solicitor or attorney in Church courts. The Oxford English Dictionary states that "The earliest known use of the noun proctor is in the Middle English period (1150-1500). OED's earliest evidence for proctor is from 1301."[xxvi] One of the definitions/explanations which is given in Wikipedia is 'A proctor was a legal practitioner in the ecclesiastical and admiralty courts in England. These courts were distinguished from the common law courts and courts of equity because they applied "civil law" derived from Roman law, instead of English common law and equity. Historically, proctors were licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to undertake the duties that were performed in common law courts by attorneys and in the courts of equity by solicitors. Proctors were attached to the Doctors' Commons, which performed a similar function for civil law or "civilian" advocates (the doctors) to that of the Inns of court for barristers. Reforms in the mid-19th century removed the monopoly of the civilian doctors and proctors in the family and admiralty courts, leaving only the ecclesiastical Court of Arches. Later, the Judicature Acts of 1873 and

1875, which created the Supreme Court of Judicature, combined the three roles (proctor, attorney, and solicitor) into the common profession of "solicitor of the Supreme Court".'[xxvii]

This was consistent with the speculation in section 7 (Reasons for using the Bec surname) about legal practitioners from Bec courts going to England at the time of William the Conqueror, and potentially taking on the surname Bec. The clerical and legal skill of such people would also be needed in Norman England. That speculation was made before this Y-DNA tester's results were received. Just as such people could adopt the surname Bec, they could also adopt the surname Proctor to denote the profession they had brought from Normandy to England.

There clearly is a lineage going back to approximately 1050 which had many descendant lineages. One descendant born in approximately 1300 had many further descendant lineages carrying the surname Proctor, and at least one descendant lineage named Beckett. There were also a number of other descendant lineages, based on the surnames of current testers, namely Tatum/Tatom, Perry, Briley, Estes, Stapley, Wright, Nield, Hopkins, Burnett, Ratcliffe, Braswell, and Camm. A few of these are quite possibly the result of illegitimacies or effective adoptions.

How should we interpret all of this? We cannot prove it, but here is one interpretation which seems consistent with the Y-DNA evidence and also with the scholarly evidence and analyses given in this paper. Clerks and legal practitioners from Bec courts went to England at the time of William the Conqueror, in particular to staff the ecclesiastical courts in England, under the control of the Archbishops of Canterbury (several of whom were from Bec Abbey). These people, and their descendants, initially adopted surnames which reflected their Bec association. But profession-related surnames then started to be adopted. The Proctor surname appears to have become established around the 1300s. So it would be easy to understand how someone born in approximately 1300 could adopt the Proctor surname and pass it on to most of his descendants. It is also easy to understand how some descendants, possibly no longer associated with the legal profession, might choose to retain the earlier designation of Bec, which eventually evolved into Beckett.

If this interpretation is correct, then it would mean that the Beckett branch which is related to these Proctor lineages descended from the early legal practitioners from Bec Abbey who went to England at the time of William the Conqueror.

13. Published theories about the origins of the English Beckett surname

Significant sources claiming information about the origins of the English Beckett name are considered here. However, it can be seen that these do not have any historical evidence for their claims, but they are rather speculations based on similarities of spellings with other words and names. They are valuable, however, for the early citations they give of the name or variant/deviant spellings.

The most scholastic published theories and speculations about the origins of the English Beckett surname are probably those from the 2016 **Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland**[xxviii]. It states:

> Beckett
>
> Variants: Beckitt, Becket
>
> Current frequencies: GB 9982, Ireland 551
>
> - GB frequency 1881: 5949

- Main GB location 1881: widespread: esp. Norfolk and Suffolk
- Main Irish location 1847-64: Antrim

1 Norman, English, Irish: nickname from Old French, Middle English beket 'small beak' (a diminutive of Old French bee 'beak or mouth'), perhaps with reference to someone with a small beak-like mouth (compare Beak), though the Middle English word appears to have had a wide range of 'pointed object' applications including 'a corbel', 'a kind of arrow', 'a kind of bird', and 'a kind of fish'.

Early bearers: William Bechet, Beckett, about 1155 in Danelaw Documents (Lincs); Robert Beket, 1176 in Feet of Fines (Berks) Thoma Beket, 1379 in Poll Tax (North Duffield, ER Yorks); Robertus Beket, 1379 in Poll Tax (Burton in Lonsdale, WR Yorks); Johanna Beket, 1381 in Poll Tax (Weasenham, Norfolk); Hugo Beket, 1381 in Poll Tax (Formby, Lancs); Alicia Beket, 1381 in Poll Tax (Plungar, Leics); Johannes Beket, 1381 in Poll Tax (Donnington, Gloucs); Agatha Beket, 1381 in Poll Tax (Hambledon, Hants); Willia. Beckett, 1539 in IGI (Limpsfield, Surrey); Robertus Beckett, 1540 in IGI (Betley, Staffs); Roger Beckett, 1541 in IGI (Ipswich, Suffolk); John Beckett, 1546 in IGI (Margaret Roding. Essex); Jhon. Beckett, 1553 in IGI (Rothwell, WR Yorks).

2 English: locative name from Beckett in Shrivenham (Berks).

Early bearers: [... de] Becote, 1179-80, [... de] Beccote, 1284 in Place-Names of Berks (Berks); John de Beckcote, 1279 in Hundred Rolls (Oxon); John de Beckote, 1351 in Patent Rolls (Berks); Ricardo Becot, 1379 in Poll Tax (Worthington, Leics).

References: Place-Names of Berks, p. 376.

It may be noted that the earliest reference cited is in 1155, i.e., there are no cited instances before William the Conqueror's invasion of 1066. The references do not include Thomas Beket Archbishop of Canterbury or his parents, which should have been before 1155.

It may also be noted that all of the Becketts in the north of Ireland (including in County Antrim) who have been Y-DNA tested as part of the Becket(t)/Bicket(t)/Bichan one-name study are members of the Ayrshire Becket(t)/Bicket(t)/Bichan tree, with one exception, for someone whose great grandfather was known to be illegitimate.

Another important source to note (although from the same publisher with two of the same authors) is the **Dictionary of American Family Names 2nd edition**, 2022[xxix]. This is cited by Ancestry. (Family Search cites the 2003/2006 version of this book.) It reads:

Beckett Surname Meaning: English and Irish (of Norman origin): nickname from Old French Middle English beket 'small beak' (a diminutive of Old French bec 'beak or mouth') perhaps with reference to someone with a small beak-like mouth or a prominent nose (compare Beck) though the Middle English word appears to have had a wide range of applications denoting 'pointed objects' including 'corbel kind of arrow kind of bird' and 'kind of fish'. This surname is also found in Ireland especially in Antrim. English: habitational name from any of the places called Beckett in Berkshire and Devon. The former is named with Old English bēo 'bee' + cot 'cottage shelter'; the latter has as its first element the Old English personal name Bicca. Altered form of Bequette a surname of French origin.

The entry for Beck (referred to above) is more useful. It reads[xxx]:

Beck Surname Meaning: English: topographic name for someone who lived beside a stream from northern Middle English bekke 'stream' (Old Norse bekkr). English (of Norman origin): habitational name from any of various places in northern France named Bec for example Bec Hellouin in Eure named with Old Norman French bec 'stream' from the same Old Norse root as in 1 above. English: from the Middle English personal name Becke (Old English Becca or Beocca) of uncertain origin. English: probably a nickname for someone with a prominent nose from Middle English bek bekke 'beak (of a bird)' (Old French bec). German and Jewish (Ashkenazic): occupational name for a baker a cognate of Becker from (older) South German beck West Yiddish bek 'baker'. Some Jewish bearers of the name claim that it is an acronym of Hebrew ben-kedoshim 'son of martyrs' i.e. a name taken by one whose parents had been martyred for being Jews. The German surname is also found in France (mainly Alsace and Lorraine) Hungary Czechia Slovakia and Croatia. Compare Bek North German and

Dutch: topographic name for someone who lived by a stream from Low German beke Dutch beck ‘stream’. Compare the High German form Bach 1 and Dutch Bek 6.7: Danish and Norwegian: habitational name from a farmstead named Bekk Bæk or Bäck from Old Norse bekkr ‘stream brook’ denoting a farm by a stream.8: Swedish: variant of Bäck (see Back). This surname may also be of German origin (see above).9: Americanized or Germanized form of Polish Rusyn Czech Croatian or Slovenian Bek in the last two languages a cognate of the German name in 5 above.

14. The Bigot surname

The surname Bigot has been mentioned as a possible variant of Beckett, and that it might possibly be connected with the origin of the Beckett surname.

It does not appear that the surnames of Becket and Bigot are related. For example, there is a published list of people who accompanied William on his invasion of England in 1066.[xxxi] This list includes ‘Bigot de Loges’ and ‘Roger Bigot’. There is also a ‘Geoffroi du Bec’, who would appear to be associated with Bec Abbey, so both ‘Bec’ and ‘Bigot’ were being used at the same time.

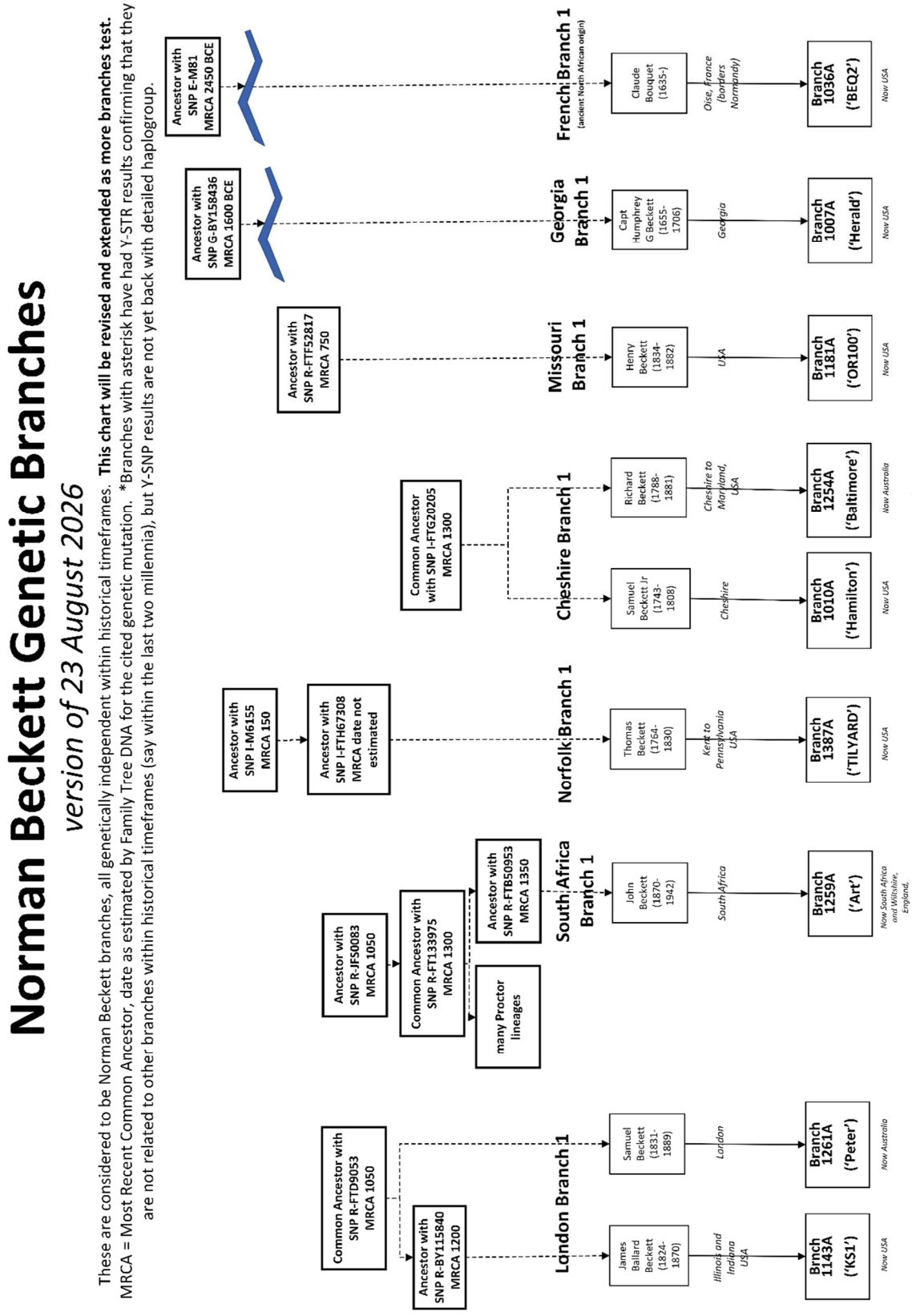
Bigot was a Norman surname, but not from the vicinity of Bec Abbey. One source gives the following information about the Bigot surname:[xxxii]

> BIGOT.
>
> Dept. Calvados.
>
> A full account of Roger Bigot, a great Domesday tenant-in-chief in East Anglia and ancestor of the earls of Norfolk, will be found in the new edition of The Complete Peerage, vol. ix, pp. 575-579.
>
> ... [There are several paragraphs of detail.]
>
> To sum it up, Roger Bigot was a man of Calvados. His lands in Normandy were of but moderate extent and he made the fortunes of himself and his descendants in England, and through the Conquest. One cannot help suspecting that he was enabled to do this by his Norman overlord, Odo bishop of Bayeux, of whom in 1086 he was holding something like twenty manors in Suffolk.

The surname Bigot/Bigod has also been mentioned in other works, but as a surname whose origin is unknown. J.C.Holt stated in the 1981 Stenton Lecture that ‘by the time Matthew wrote in the middle of the thirteenth century the Bigods could have been as much in the dark as we have all been ever since as to what their name really meant.’[xxxiii]

There is at least one Beckett lineage which says it can trace itself back to John Bigott (1540-1579), and then back to France. Rather than indicating something about the origins of the Beckett surname, this name change is perhaps an example of people ‘migrating’ their surname spelling to the more well-known Beckett surname, without any historical link. (This has happened many times in the Ayrshire Becket(t)/Bicket(t) tree.)

Annex 1. Norman Beckett genetic branches



Annex 2. Location of Bec Abbey

Bec Abbey is located in Le Bec-Hellouin, with Hellouin being a reference to the founder of Bec Abbey in 1034, Herluin. It was abandoned in 1791. It was re-established in 1948 by Olivetan monks.[xxxiv]

The name of the abbey derives from the bec, or stream, that runs nearby.[xxxv] However, people taking on the Bec/Becket name as their surname will not credibly have understood themselves to be taking on the surname "stream", but rather the name of the abbey.



Figure 2: Location of Bec Abbey in Normandy, France (Google Maps)

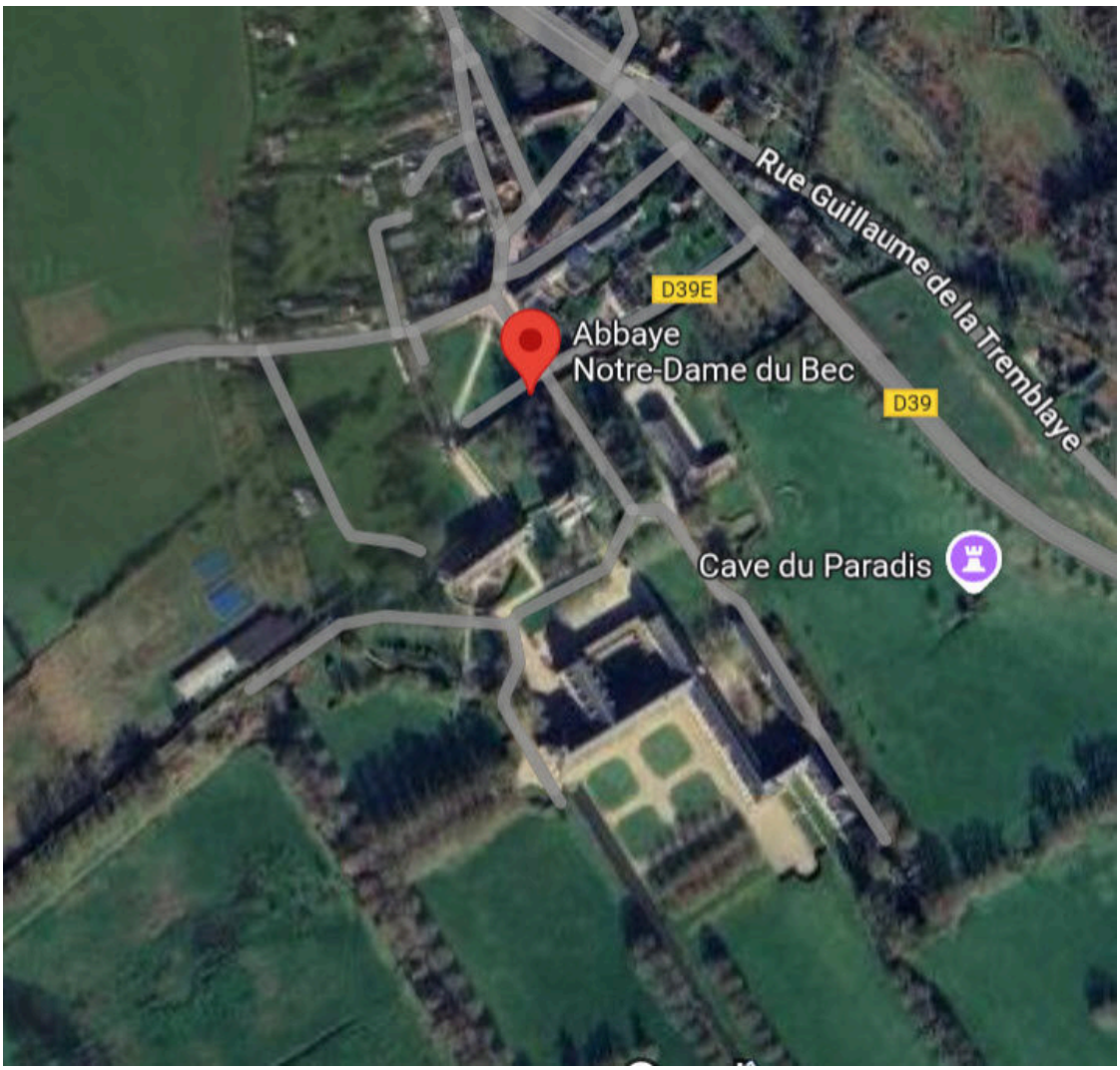


Figure 3: Google Satellite view of Bec Abbey

Annex 3. The Abbey du Bec and Norman feudal society

This annex is based in large part on the booklet 'The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo-Norman State 1034-1136 by Sally N Vaughn.[xxxvi] . It describes some things in definitive terms which some other sources (e.g., Wikipedia) mention but less definitively.

1. Overview of Norman feudal society

It is essential to understand the nature of Norman feudal society so as to understand the role of the Abbey du Bec, and of the people who came from it and the surrounding area.

- Normandy and Norman England had highly feudal societies. There was no 'rule of law' in the sense that we understand it today. It was not a world of chivalry and gallantry as sometimes depicted in books and films.
- The Church was fully part of this feudal society, typically closely intertwined with secular nobility, with senior positions in the clergy (e.g. bishops and abbots) often being members of the nobility.
- Everyone (except the king and pope) owed 'fealty' to people higher up, and sometimes 'sideways'. But there were important varieties of fealty:
    - Service (military, judicial, clerical, prayers)
    - Tithes (=10% of income or agricultural produce)
    - Money (replacing service, over time)
    - Obedience (especially for clergy)
- Nobody was ever secure in their status. You had to fight – figuratively and often literally – to keep what you had. This happened especially when people died and someone new took over, and old relationships (grants of land, etc) were re-assessed by whomever could hope to profit from the reassessment.
- The Normans – descended from Viking raiders – were particularly inclined to fighting and rebellion. This was more common in Normandy where the Norman nobility had concentrations of land, compared to England, where land holdings were often spread out in different places across many different shires, meaning there was less of a clear power base for the Norman nobility there.
- The appointment and consecration of an abbot typically required concurrence from multiple parties: the local nobility and/or the king; the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and the monks of the abbey itself by vote.
- There was repeated tension between the state (kings and nobility) and the Church about whether, and the extent to which, the state should have influence in the affairs of the Church.
- The Church itself had separate hierarchies for the secular clergy (archbishops, bishops with dioceses, and priests with parishes) and for monastic institutions (abbeys, monasteries, etc), and there could be significant tensions between the two.

2. Overview of how the Abbey du Bec fit Into the Norman feudal system

- Abbey du Bec achieved unimaginable importance at the time of Wiliam the Conqueror, and for perhaps 100 years afterwards, due to two particularly talented foreigners – Lanfranc (from Italy) and Anselm (claimed by some to be Italian, but actually from Aosta, a French-speaking area in Savoy). Anselm was later declared a Saint, but

arguably Lanfranc was more important. Both became archbishops of Canterbury after leaving Bec. However, the importance of Bec diminished greatly after their time.

- Abbey du Bec was an independent reformist abbey, which started out poor and stressed Benedictine-type principles. Its 'secret weapon' was the school Lanfranc started which attracted large number of students and monks who later became abbots and bishops throughout Normandy, England, and beyond. Even one future pope (Pope Alexander II) apparently studied there. (After Anselm left, the school appears to have had little impact. Also, other monastic or ecclesiastical institutions started their own schools, including for lay people.)
- The Abbey du Bec closely defended its 'liberties', i.e., its independence from secular and ecclesiastical interference. But those liberties were eventually lost, after the time of Lanfranc and Anselm, and it eventually ceased to be the commanding organization it had once been.

3. Overview of the relationship between Herluin, Lanfranc, and Anselm

The lists of abbots at Bec and of archbishops at Canterbury can be misinterpreted as indicating sequential developments somewhat independent of one another. However, it may be helpful to understand the nature of the relationships between Herluin (who founded the Abbey du Bec), Lanfranc (its first Prior), and Anselm (its second Prior after Lanfranc left, and then second Abbot after Herluin died) because they were all in Bec together at the same time, and Bec would almost certainly not have achieved the importance it did otherwise.

- Herluin founded the Abbey du Bec, but he had little to do with its success except for the happy accident of creating a vehicle for Lanfranc and Anselm to use. Herluin was an illiterate knight who renounced his military role and chose to follow a spiritual life instead. He was unable to find a monastery or other religious place without corruption, so he chose to found his own abbey with just the inheritance from his father. It was close to failure when Lanfranc arrived.
- Lanfranc was an educated scholar from northern Italy who moved to teach first in France and then in Normandy at the cathedral school at Avranches. It is unknown why he then went to the Abbey du Bec, but he started the school there which was to become the basis of both his and Bec's success. He quickly became Prior (second only to the Abbot Herluin), but in reality he took on most of the duties of the Abbot. He subsequently left to become Abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Étienne at Caen in Normandy, because of his unique relationship with Duke William – who subsequently became William the Conqueror. (See more below.) After that, he then became Archbishop of Canterbury working closely with William the Conqueror, and often acting on the kings' behalf when William was in Normandy.
- Anselm was attracted to Bec by Lanfranc's reputation, and soon excelled there. He was elected Prior (replacing Lanfranc) when Lanfranc became Abbot of Saint-Étienne, and then became Abbot of Bec when Herluin died. Bec continued to grow in wealth and fame greatly under his leadership, until he also left to become Archbishop of Canterbury after Lanfranc had died. Anselm is primarily known for subsequently being made a Saint, and for his philosophical and religious works. But he was diligent in working to protect and advance Bec's interests both when at Bec and when in Canterbury. He strongly emphasized the need for obedience from his monks and prior students, many now in high ecclesiastical offices, and they apparently mostly complied.

4. Overview of the relationship between Lanfranc and William the Conqueror

There was clearly a special relationship between Lanfranc and William the Conqueror, as demonstrated by the way that Lanfranc acted as vice-regent in England when William was absent. But how that relationship was established is less obvious, yet easy to understand once explained. This is how Sally N Vaughn describes it:

- Lanfranc earlier in his life had studied under the monk Berengar of Tours. Berenger then became labelled a heretic by Rome because of his views concerning the Eucharist and the sacraments of baptism and marriage. Berenger publicly appealed to Lanfranc in Bec to support him. Lanfranc went to Rome where he apparently took the leading role in attacking Berengar, citing authority rather than logic. As a result, Lanfranc established himself in Rome by the 1050s as a spokesman of orthodoxy, coincidentally at a time when Rome was focused on reform of the type being practiced in Bec.
- Meanwhile Duke William (the future William the Conqueror or William I of England) got into a dispute with Rome, because of his marriage to Matilda, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders. This marriage had been prohibited by Pope Leo IX in 1049, probably because of the closeness of the relationship. But William went ahead with it anyway. Lanfranc apparently strongly supported Rome's position.
- "It was over this issue that Lanfranc first came to William's attention. Because of Lanfranc's outspoken opposition to the ducal marriage, William ordered that Lanfranc be expelled from Bec, exiled from Normandy, and that Bec's nearby manor of Le Parc be burned to the ground. Lanfranc mounted a lame horse – the best that Bec had – and began his journey into exile. 'By chance' he met Duke William on the road, and according to the Bec chroniclers, the crisis was settled miraculously. Lanfranc greeted Duke William with a clever joke, softened his heart, explained his case, and at once taken into Duke William's closest friendship."
- "But the 'miracle' can be explained by subsequent events. For the *Life of Lanfranc* clearly states that Lanfranc almost immediately went to Rome, and the author states two reasons for the journey. The first, and that generally acknowledged by modern historians, is that he was needed to defend orthodoxy against Berengar once more. But the second, largely ignored, is that he went to Rome specifically for the purpose of arguing the Duke's case in front of Pope Nicholas II."
- Pope Nicholas agreed to grant a dispensation to the Norman couple, lift the suspension and interdiction of Normandy, and allow the marriage, on the condition that Duke William endow two monasteries in Normandy, one for men and one for women.
- "The implication in the *Life of Herluin* and the *Life of Lanfranc* is that these events resulted in Lanfranc's becoming chief counsellor to Duke William 'to administer the business of the whole country'."
- "According to William of Poitiers, Duke William 'respected Lanfranc as a father, venerated him as a teacher, confided to him the oversight of ecclesiastical affairs throughout Normandy'."

Lanfranc's subsequent appointment as Abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Étienne put him in charge of this new abbey which had been part of the settlement with Rome.

The fact that Lanfranc, once he became Archbishop of Canterbury, acted as vice-regent for William when William was away from England is more commonly known, and yet further evidence of the strong relationship between the two men.

Annex 4. Significant individuals associated with Bec Abbey and Lanfranc

Name	Lived	Comments
Herluin	c 996-1078	Founded Bec Abbey in 1034
Lanfranc	c 1005/10-1089	Italian jurist who joined Bec Abbey in 1042, became Abbot at Caen in 1063, then became Archbishop of Canterbury (1070-1089)
William the Conqueror, William I of England	c 1028-1087	Informal patron of Bec Abbey; appointed Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury and had him as a trusted advisor and vice-regent when abroad. Spent much of the latter part of his life in Normandy rather than in England.
Anselm (Saint)	c 1033/4-1109	Italian, became Abbot at Bec Abbey, then became Archbishop of Canterbury (1093-1109)
Milo Crispin	?-c 1149	Cantor of Bec Abbey. Wrote the lives/hagiographies of five of its notables including Lanfranc and Theobald.
Gilbert Crispin	c 1055-1117	A monk under Anselm at Bec Abbey; wrote the life of Herluin who founded Bec Abbey. Became Archbishop of Westminster. Apparently a descendant of Milo Crispin.
William Rufus, William II of England	c 1057-1100	Succeeded William the Conqueror
Eadmer of Canterbury	c 1060-c1130	Benedictine monk at Canterbury who wrote one of the hagiographies of Lanfranc
William Thorne	active 1397	Monk of St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury. He wrote the history of the Abbots of St. Augustine's from the foundation to 1397. A short piece by him is part of the hagiography of Lanfranc.

Annex 5. Archbishops of Canterbury (1052-1170)

There have been archbishops of Canterbury since AD 597. However, for the purposes of this document, those of potential interest cover the initial period of Norman England. (The full list is available[xxxvii].) Those who had previously been at Bec Abbey are highlighted in yellow.

Name	From	To	Comments
Stigand	1052	11 April 1070	Archbishop from prior to William's Conquest. Had been concurrently Bishop of Winchester, seat of the royal court. Did not support William being crowned king. Removed ('deprived') on 11 April 1070.
Lanfranc	29 Aug 1070	28 May 1089	Originally an Italian jurist before becoming a Benedictine monk at Bec Abbey, where he eventually became the prior, second in role to the Abbot Herluin. Then became Abbot of St Étienne before coming to England and becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. Close advisor to King William. "Lanfranc accelerated the process of substituting Normans for Englishmen in all preferments of importance; and although his nominees were usually respectable, it

			cannot be said that all of them were better than the men whom they superseded. There was a considerable mixture for this admixture of secular with spiritual aims. By long tradition, the primate was entitled to a leading position in the king's councils, and the interests of the Church demanded that Lanfranc should use his power in a manner not displeasing to the king. On several occasions when William I was absent from England Lanfranc acted as his vicegerent." [xxxviii] He has not been canonised as a saint, but "in the period after the Council of Trent, Lanfranc's name was included in the Roman Martyrology, and in the current edition is commemorated as a 'Blessed' (beatus) on 28 May." This is the basis for his extensive hagiography cited elsewhere in this document.
Vacant	28 May 1089	4 Dec 1093	
Anselm	4 Dec 1093	21 Apr 1109	An Italian. Had studied under Lanfranc at Bec before becoming Prior then Abbot of Bec. Later canonised as St Anselm.
vacant	21 Apr 1109	26 Apr 1114	
Ralph d'Escures	26 Apr 1114	2 Oct 1122	Studied at the school at Bec Abbey. Had been Abbot of Séez in France before becoming Bishop of Rochester, then Archbishop of Canterbury.
William de Corbeil	18 Feb 1123	21 Nov 1136	Born in Corbeil, France (not in Normandy). Little is known of his life.
Vacant	21 Nov 1136	8 Jan 1139	
Theobald of Bec	8 Jan 1139	18 Apr 1161	A Norman. Had been Abbot of Bec. (Also known as Tedbald)
vacant	18 Apr 1161	3 Jun 1162	
Thomas Becket	3 Jun 1162	29 Dec 1170	Previously Lord Chancellor (i.e., Treasurer) of England

Annex 6. Significant dates

Year	Event
1034	Bec Abbey in Normandy founded by Herluin
1035	William becomes the Duke of Normandy, William II of Normandy
1042	Lanfranc joins Bec Abbey
1063	Lanfranc becomes Abbot of Caen, France
1066	William invades and conquers England, becomes King William I of England
1070	Lanfranc becomes Archbishop of Canterbury
1086	Domesday Book completed (not including Winchester or City of London)
1087	King William I dies; succeeded by son William Rufus, who becomes King William II
1089	Lanfranc dies
...	

1162	Thomas Beket becomes Archbishop of Canterbury
1170	Thomas Beket murdered

Annex 7. About the Lanfranc hagiography

The Lanfranc hagiography (or religious biography) in Latin is included in the Acta Sanctorum, which is 'an encyclopedic text in 68 folio volumes of documents examining the lives of Christian saints, in essence a critical hagiography, organised by the saints' feast days.'[xxxix] Lanfranc is included under 28 May together with many saints and 'blessed' people, and his is towards the end. There are four different sections to his hagiography:

I. An introduction dated 1889 (6 paras)
II. The life of Lanfranc as told by Milo Crispin of Bec Abbey (60 paras)
III. The life of Lanfranc as told by Eadmer of Canterbury (18 paras)
IV. 'Anti-Lanfrancus', an explanation of his conflict with monks by William Thorne, an Augustinian monk writing around 1397 (8 paras)

Annex 8. Other issues related to Norman Becs

This annex, section 6 (The Bec origin issue) and section 9 (The Becs of Norman England), are largely based on the article "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek", by Dr Paul A Fox, published in Medieval Prosopography 2003, vol 24, pp 171-193.[xl] Page numbers given below are from this article.

The main issues raised by Dr Fox's article are addressed in Section 6 The Bec origin issue. This annex discusses three further issues which are raised by the article.

1. Nobility vs Cleric

- Dr Fox considers it essential for the Becs to have had some links to nobility to have achieved the patronage they had in England. He states "Although the Norman nobility were closely bound by blood ties, the extent to which the Bec associates formed a tangible extended family group would be remarkable unless Bec was a noble family and a part of that network." (p10)
- The surname Beket, at least, is not considered one which would be used by the nobility. Frank Barlow in his book on Thomas Becket states "Whatever the original meaning of Beket, it was not an aristocratic type of surname."[xli]
- Our research, with its conclusion that the Abbey du Bec was the key factor, does not rely on nobility connections, but rather on ecclesiastical connections which were of particular significance for the Abbey du Bec, with the major connections of its leaders with William the Conqueror and in the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

2. Multiple Becs and the basis for location surnames

- In addition to the Bec of Bec Abbey, Dr Fox identifies two additional Becs associated with people named Bec, namely Bec-aux-Cauchois, and Bec de Mortagne, both of which are minor locations near to Fécamp, on the Normandy coast. (See figure 4.)

Although Dr Fox does not state it explicitly, a possible interpretation is that these people called Bec are being named after those locations called Bec.

- Such an interpretation could be problematical for the origin of the Bec surname. However, it can be observed that location-based surnames are almost always based on a significant location name which could be expected to be recognized by other people at the time. For example, Matthew de Mortagne was the lord of Bec de Mortagne, but was not called Matthew de Bec. (p3). Furthermore, the word 'bec' denotes a stream, and would not be a significant location designator, any more than 'stream' is unique in English. It would only be in the context of the abbey named Bec that the word becomes meaningful as a locative surname.

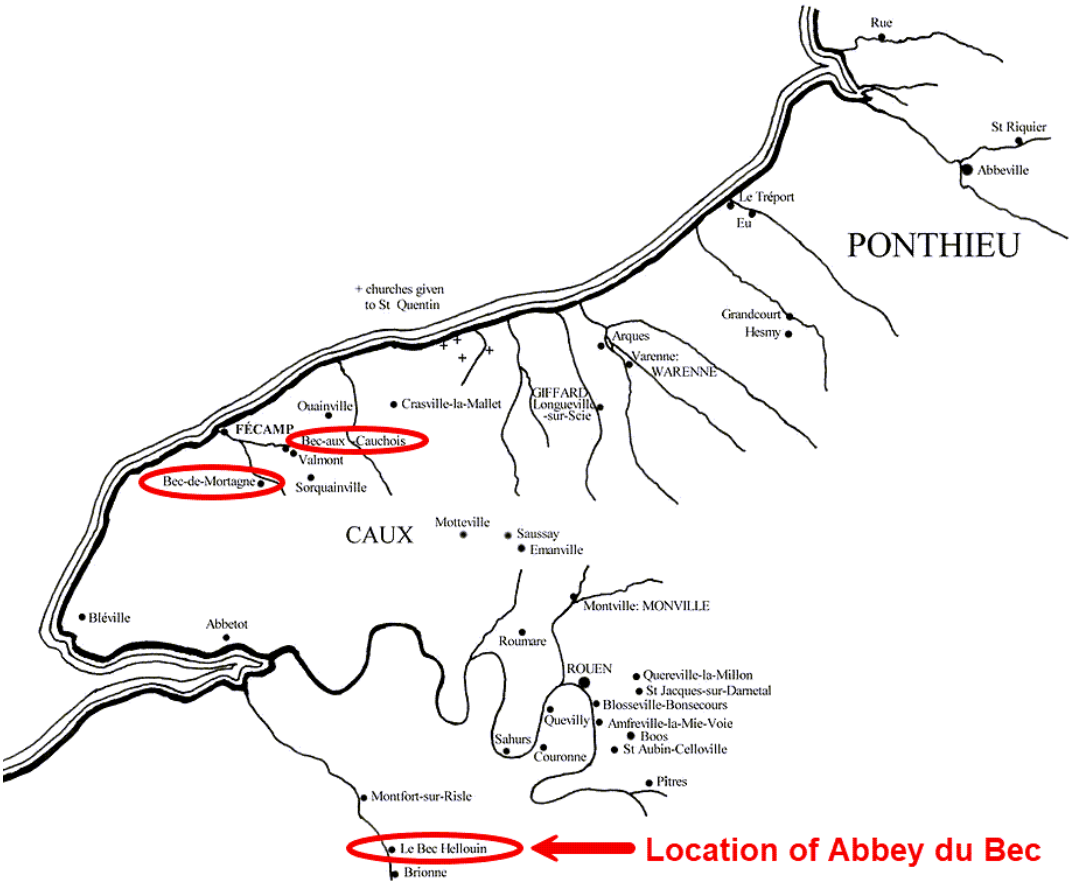


Figure 4: Normandy map from Dr Paul Fox article - annotated

3. Bec and Beckett lineages and Y-DNA

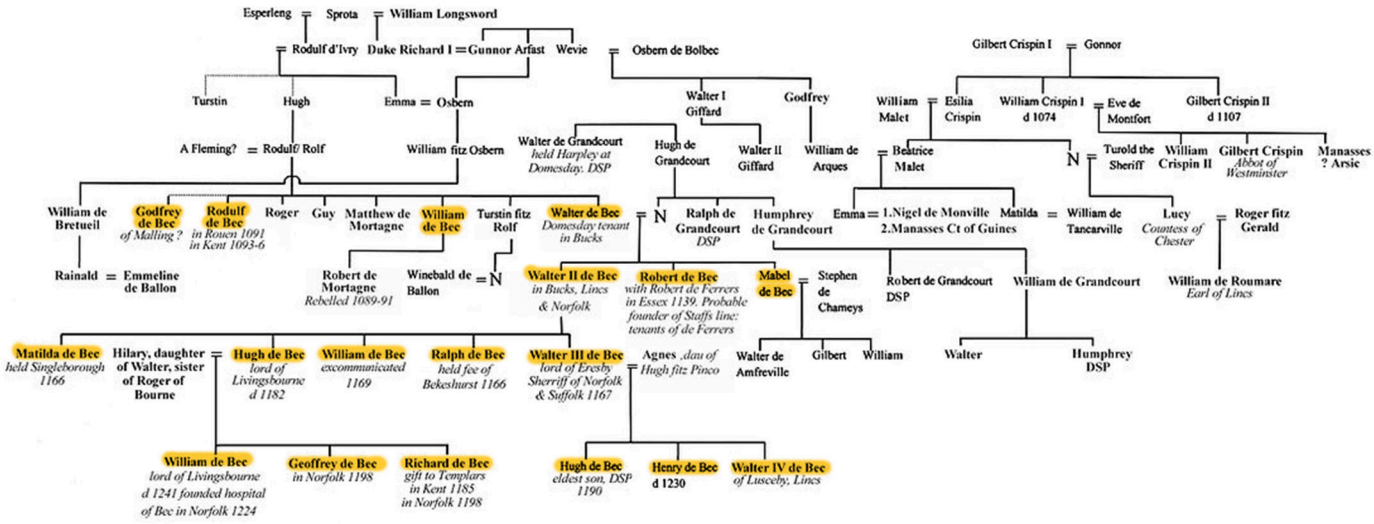
This section considers the issue of Bec and Beckett lineages in the context of Y-DNA. It particularly considers the claims of Dr Paul Fox that the Bec surname reflected a 'Bec kinship group'.

The main purpose of this section is to consider whether the Y-DNA testing of Becketts conducted by the Becket(t)/Bicket(t) one-name study is relevant to the question of the origin of the Bec surname. A key issue in this discussion is whether people with the Beckett surname are descended from people with the Bec surname. If this is the case, then the Beckett Y-DNA

testing can be assessed for its implications. If it is not the case, then the Beckett Y-DNA testing is irrelevant for discussing that issue.

Annex 9 (Did the surname Beckett originate with the surname Bec?) directly addresses this issue. Our conclusion is that the surname Beckett (and its variants) definitely did originate with the surname Bec (and its variants), and that at least some people who currently have the surname Beckett are descended from people who previously had the surname Bec or its variants. (It is always possible that some people with the surname Beckett today acquired the surname in other ways, e.g., via adoptions or illegitimacies. But that should not explain the origin of ALL people currently having the Beckett surname.)

What are the Y-DNA testing implications of Dr Fox's proposals? Figure 5 (reproduced from his article) shows the genetic relationships that Dr Fox proposes.



5: Bec Family Tree from Dr Paul Fox: The Rise of the House of Bek - highlighted

In this diagram, all individuals with the surname designation 'de Bec' are directly descended from a single male (Rudolph/Rolf) and furthermore all male de Becs in subsequent generations are descended via the male line from him. Therefore, all direct-line male descendants of any of these male de Becs will share the signature Y-DNA SNP mutations which Rudolph/Rolf carried. This will necessarily show up in detailed Y-DNA SNP testing of any of those male descendants regardless of how many generations or millennia later they are tested. Furthermore, it will be possible to estimate the time that those mutations arose as being around the time of William the Conqueror, because Rudolph/Rolf's grown children were active a few decades after the conquest of England.

Our Y-DNA SNP testing of seven different lineages currently using the Beckett surname has demonstrated that none of them are connected genetically within a historical timeframe, say within the last two millennia. There is one lineage which has two different branches connected at the time of William the Conqueror, so these could possibly represent descendants of Rudolph/Rolf. However, that leaves six other genetically independent branches of Becketts without explanation. One or two, a perhaps even a few more, could possibly represent alternative lines of descent, e.g. through illegitimacies or adoptions, but it is highly unlikely that all seven could be so explained. We have, indeed, removed two lineages from our analysis which we now know to have acquired the Beckett surname within just the past few centuries.

(For comparison, the Ayrshire Bicket(t)/Becket(t) tree currently has 28 different branches all genetically connected from approximately 1200. Only one Ayrshire branch has been identified which experienced an illegitimacy several generations ago and is therefore not genetically connected.)

However, the existence of independent Norman Beckett genetic lineages is fully consistent with the conclusion of this paper, namely that Bec was a locative name, meaning that anyone with a connection to that location could adopt it. This paper furthermore concludes that the only credible candidate for such a location was Bec Abbey, because it was the only 'Bec' location which was well known and would be useful as a surname, whereas 'Bec' in any other context just meant 'stream'.

Annex 9: Did the surname Beckett originate from the surname Bec?

There are many variants of the surname Bec, such as de Bec, Bek, Beck, and Beke. There are also many variants of the surname Beckett, such as Becket and Beket. It is clear that the surname Bec existed at the time of William the Conqueror, but there are no known instances of the surname Beckett (or its variants) until a single occurrence in 1155, and then none until the 1500s. (See 4 Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants).

As cited in Section 4, the father of Archbishop Thomas Beket is recorded as having the surname spellings Beck and Beket, which demonstrates that the shift from Bec variants to Beckett variants did happen. That section also cites the known addition of an 'accretionary t' at the end of a surname as one of the known ways of surname evolution.

This demonstrates that it is both understandable, and observed, for Bec and its variants to change to Beckett and its variants, over time. However, it does not mean that everyone using the surname Bec and its variants will change the spelling of their surname to Beckett and its variants. It is something which can happen, but it is not necessary to happen.

It is also possible to query where the surname Beckett would have come from, if it did not originate with Bec and its variants. There is no credible suggestion as to where else a surname with such wide distribution would have originated.

The British 19th Century Surname Atlas is a CD-ROM with statistics and maps for all of the 400,000+ surnames listed in the 1881 census of Great Britain.[xlii] It shows that there were the following number of occurrences of most of these surnames:

Surname	Count	%
Bec	0	0.00%
Beck	7,001	51.51%
Becket	605	4.45%
Beckett	5,974	43.95%
Bek	7	0.05%
Beke	5	0.04%
Beket	1	0.01%
Total	13,593	100.00%

Clearly, Beck and Beckett have the most occurrences by far. There were no occurrences of the original spelling of Bec, and virtually none of Bek, Beke, and Beket.

Figures 6 and 7 show the distribution of these surnames in 1881. Their respective areas of highest distribution largely overlap, especially in the northwest of England, although this was also where the major centres of Liverpool and Manchester were located. Notably they also overlap in Norfolk. They are both also missing any meaningful distribution in areas such as Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, southwest England, Wales and Scotland.

While these distribution maps do not prove a linkage between the surnames Beck and Beckett, they are nonetheless consistent with the view that Beckett was an easy spelling migration from Beck wherever the Beck surname occurred.

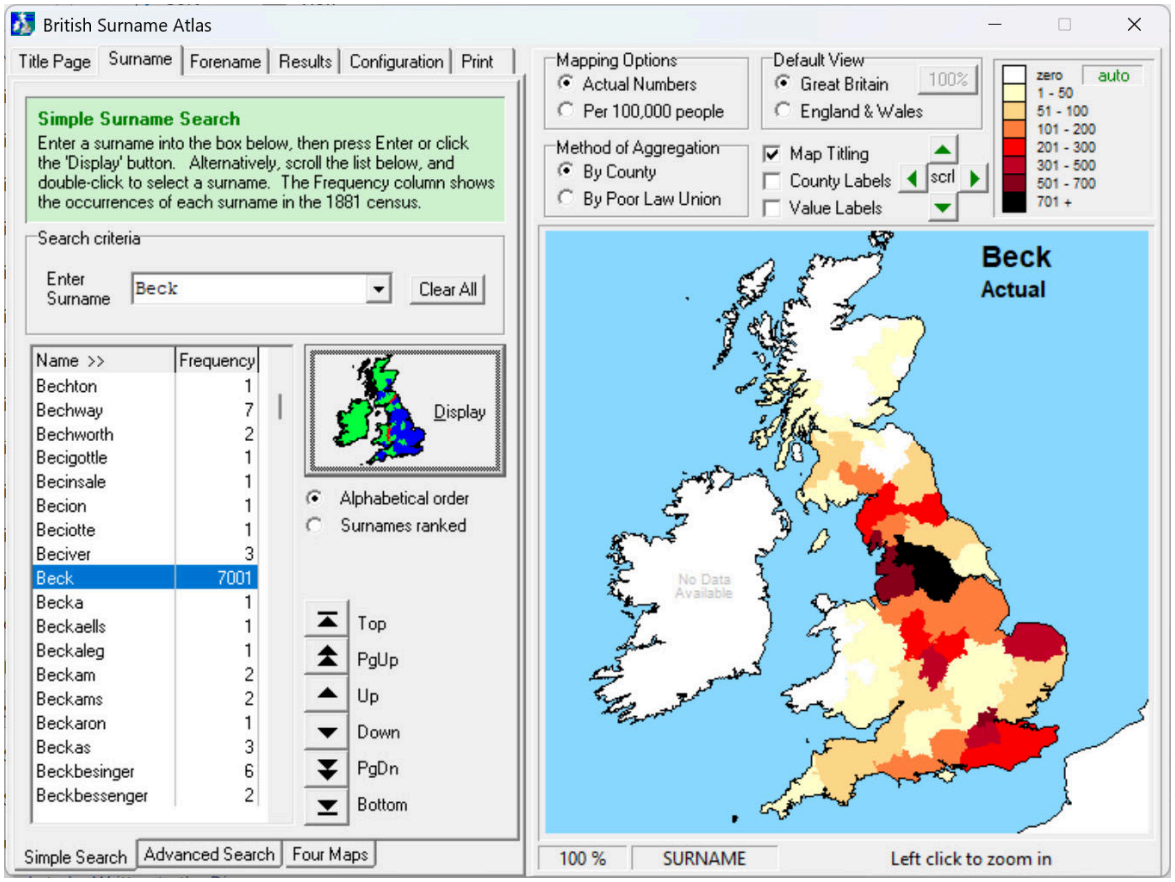


Figure 6: Distribution of the Beck surname in the 1881 census from the British 19th Century Surname Atlas

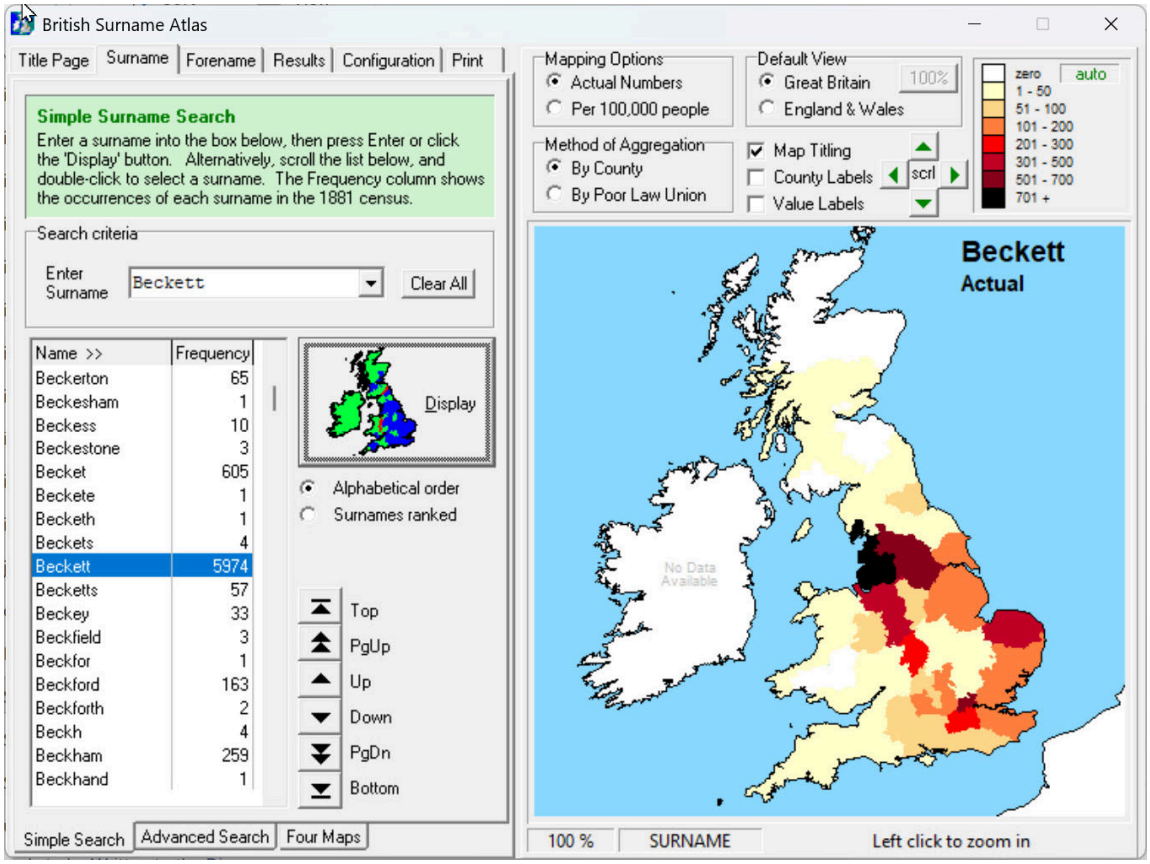


Figure 7: Distribution of the Beckett surname in the 1881 census from the British 19th Century Surname Atlas

Annex 10: Suggestions for further research

- Continuing to obtain Y-DNA testers for further Beckett branches, to identify further independent branches, and to determine how some branches will be parts of the same lineages having diverged before good historical records existed for them.
- Perhaps performing Y-DNA testing of some Beck lineages, to see if they link genetically with any of the Beckett lineages. Given the expected high number of lineages of both Becks and Becketts, however, it may take considerable testing to achieve this objective.
- Performing further research on the Beck surname, to try to identify lines which may have changed their surname spelling to Beckett, e.g., where records of Becks cease, and those of Becketts begin.

Change log

24 08 2026	The main reason for this update was to reflect further Y-DNA results. One lineage was removed, which we now know to have had an illegitimacy in the 1800s. Also, the results and analysis of the Proctor-Beckett branch were added. - Major sections added (with references from elsewhere) o Section 12: The Proctor-Beckett branch - Minor editorial corrections

13 08 2026	The main reasons for this update were to reflect (1) additional Y-DNA testing; (2) the article "The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137"; and (3) the article "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek".
	- Change log added
	- Major sections added
	  o Section 6: The Bec origin issue
	  o Section 8: The Becs of Norman England
	  o Annex 1: Norman Beckett genetic branches
	  o Annex 3: The Abbey du Bec and Norman feudal society
	  o Annex 8: Other issues related to Norman Becs
	  o Annex 9: Did the surname Beckett originate from the surname Bec?
	  o Annex 10: Suggestions for further research
	- Significant updates
	  o Edited and combined Section 4: Current knowledge about early occurrences of the surname and its variants, and Section 11: Fluid surname spellings into Section 4.
	- Minor corrections e.g.
	  o References to numbers of DNA testers (should be higher)
	  o Bighot surname still exists (section 14)
	- Edits not changing the substance of the paper

15 02 2025	Final version before change log was added

References

[i] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p.15
[ii] "The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History", by George F. Black, 2022, Birlinn General, p.4
[iii] "The Origin of English Surnames" by P. H. Reaney, 1967, Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.70-71
[iv] "The Origin of English Surnames", by P. H. Reaney, 1967, Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.25
[v] "The Surnames Handbook: A Guide to Family Name Research in the 21st Century" by Debbie Kennett, 2012, The History Press.
[vi] "The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History", by George F. Black, 2022, Birlinn General, p.4
[vii] Personal communication dated 2 August 2026
[viii] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p.12
[ix] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p.12
[x] The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137, by Sally N Vaughn, 1981, The Boydell Press, ISBN 0 85115 140 X, p 36, digitized in 2022 by the Internet Archive
[xi] The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137, by Sally N Vaughn, 1981, The Boydell Press, ISBN 0 85115 140 X, p 36, digitized in 2022 by the Internet Archive
[xii] The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137, by Sally N Vaughn, 1981, The Boydell Press, ISBN 0 85115 140 X, p 35, digitized in 2022 by the Internet Archive

[xiii] The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137, by Sally N Vaughn, 1981, The Boydell Press, ISBN 0 85115 140 X, p 4, digitized in 2022 by the Internet Archive
[xiv] The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec, by Marjorie Morgan, Oxford at the Clendon Press, 1946, p10, accessed on the Internet Archive on 7 August 2026
[xv] The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec, by Marjorie Morgan, Oxford at the Clendon Press, 1946, p3, accessed on the Internet Archive on 7 August 2026
[xvi] "Upper Tooting, or Tooting Bec (for centuries administered as part of Streatham), appears as a manor held by the Abbey of Hellouin Bec, in Normandy, thus acquiring the "Bec" in its name.", from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tooting, viewed on 12 August 2026
[xvii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bec_Abbey, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xviii] https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2012/06/19/volumes-of-the-acta-sanctorum-online/, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xix] https://www.heiligenlexikon.de/ActaSanctorum/28.Mai.html, viewed on 28 Oct 2024
[xx] "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek", by Dr Paul A Fox, published in Medieval Prosopography 2003, vol 24, pp 171-193, downloaded 1 May 2026 from www.drpaulfoxfsa.com/house-of-bek.
[xxi] https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/research/thomas-a-becket-study/, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxii] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p.12
[xxiii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Becket, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxiv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Becket, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxv] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp.13-14
[xxvi] https://www.oed.com/dictionary/proctor_n1?tl=true, accessed on 2026 08 23
[xxvii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proctor, accessed on 2026 08 23
[xxviii] "The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland", by Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, and Peter McClure, 2016, Oxford University Press
[xxix] "Dictionary of American Family Names 2nd edition", by Patrick Hanks, Simon Lenarčič, and Peter McClure, 2022, Oxford University Press, cited by Ancestry.co.uk at https://www.ancestry.co.uk/name-origin?surname=beckett on 14 Dec 2024.
[xxx] "Dictionary of American Family Names 2nd edition", by Patrick Hanks, Simon Lenarčič, and Peter McClure, 2022, Oxford University Press, cited by Ancestry.co.uk at https://www.ancestry.co.uk/name-origin?surname=beck on 14 Dec 2024.
[xxxi] http://www.robertsewell.ca/dives.html, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxxii] "The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families", by Lewis C Loyd, 1951, The Harleian Society, pp.14-15
[xxxiii] "What's in a name? Family nomenclature and the Norman Conquest", by J. C. Holt, 1982, University of Reading, p.17
[xxxiv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bec_Abbey, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxxv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bec_Abbey, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxxvi] The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo -Norman State 1034-1137, by Sally N Vaughn, 1981, The Boydell Press, ISBN 0 85115 140 X, digitized in 2022 by the Internet Archive
[xxxvii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_archbishops_of_Canterbury, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxxviii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lanfranc#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDavis1911-4, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xxxix] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acta_Sanctorum, viewed on 14 Dec 2024
[xl] "A study of kinship and patronage: the rise of the House of Bek", by Dr Paul A Fox, published in Medieval Prosopography 2003, vol 24, pp 171-193, downloaded 1 May 2026 from www.drpaulfoxfsa.com/house-of-bek.
[xli] "Thomas Becket" by Frank Barlow, 1986, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p.12
[xlii] Archer Software's British 19th Century Surname Atlas, ISDN 0-9545622-0-8, 2003