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**The Impacts of the Norman Conquest on England**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in  
Literature and Civilization.

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## Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

Date: .....

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Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line at the bottom, positioned to the right of the 'Signature:' label.

## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this piece of work to my cat who stood next to me through the process of writing*

*it,*

*I dedicate it to my family,*

*Finally, I dedicate it to my supportive fiancée.*

## **Acknowledgements**

*I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for my supervisor Mr. Selmi Zakaria, and thank him for the supervision and encouragement. This work would not have been completed without his assistance.*

*Finally, I extend my greetings to all my teachers during the Master courses.*

## **Abstract**

This study aims to shed light on the Norman Conquest of England, the factors that led to this invasion in 1066 and the long term deep influence of the Normans on the development of England. This study is an analytical research. It depended on open-source materials and academic writings which tackled the idea of the Norman Conquest of England and the documents which referred to events of the invasion and the deep impacts which it had on England. Henceforth, this research ultimately analyze whether these changes were a blessing upon England or rather a curse. The results of this study revealed that these impacts which followed the conquest were both of a good nature and a bad one. Nevertheless, these changes have played a role in the emergence of England as a strong nation.

*Keywords:* Norman Conquest, influence, England, development.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**GBD:** Great Domesday Book

**LDB:** Little Domesday Book

# *General Introduction*

## General Introduction

The Duke William “*the Bastard*” of Normandy later known as “*the Conqueror*” was preparing a conquest to invade England and seize the throne in 1066, this would become later known as one of the most momentous events in the history of Europe for it changed England socially, economically and politically forever.

The Norman conquest of England which would later on have drastic impacts on the evolution of Britain as a kingdom began by the time William of Normandy had made a decision that the English throne was his right to be claimed.

Moreover, the Norman Conquest proceeded further more in later years in rebuilding the socio-politico-economic aspects that would reshape England’s development as a kingdom and as a part of the European continent.

The Norman Conquest of England is a significance event in the history of not just England but also the whole world. The Norman rule of England paved way for the development of England to be one of the strongest kingdoms in the world.

The purpose of this dissertation is to shed light on the impacts that the Norman Conquest had carved on England through the radical changes that William had introduced to the English during his reign. These series of changes and new development bestowed upon the English lands and their society after the conquest had been seen by many historians to have some deep lasting effects featured even in our present time.

This dissertation aims to investigate these following questions:

- How did the Norman Conquest begin and what made it successful?
- To what extent was the Norman Conquest a blessing on England?
- What were the outcomes of the Conquest on England?

Hypotheses for the previous questions are formed as following:

- The conquest was the child of broken promises and conflicts that followed the death of King Edward the Confessor when the throne was lingering between three rivalries.
- The success of the conquest was noted through the changes bestowed upon the governing system and laws of England, new Norman customs reshaped the English society at the time socially, culturally, and politically..

## **General Introduction**

- Whether the conquest and its impacts were good or bad on England can be intertwined for as many good things were introduced to England by the Normans, also many brutality and damage was put upon the Anglo-Saxons then.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter paints an image on how the Norman Conquest started and the events that led to its success by shedding light on its origins, happenings and the possibility that made it successful.

The second chapter explores the different changes that the Normans brought on England; the transmutation that happened to the Governing system and the major laws that changed under Norman Rule. In addition, its influence on the society and the reformations that followed the Norman influence on England.

The final chapter discusses the overall of the conquest and its aftermath on England whether it was good, bad or a mixture by analysing its effects on the kingdom in history throughout the long run.

This study is an analytical research. By using an approach depended on open-source materials and academic writings about the Norman Conquest of England and seeking evident documents that concerning its happening.

*Chapter One*  
*The Norman Conquest*  
*of England*

# Chapter One: The Norman Conquest of England

## 1.1. Introduction

Over centuries, the Norman Conquest has been a vast topic of discussion and debate amongst historians for its great impacts and the changes it brought upon both Normandy and England. The conquest came as the final act to a series of disputes that occurred in England after the death of King Edward *the Confessor*. Rivalries grew between three different factions: Harold Godwin Earl of Essex, Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, and William of Normandy who came to be the successor later. Taking this into account, the first chapter of this dissertation aims to provide prelude information about Normandy and England as well as an overview on how the conquest started and the major events that played a role in making 1066 as the beginning of a new age in England.

## 1.2. Normandy's History

By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian Vikings stimulated the establishment of the Duchy of Normandy in 911 in the *Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte*<sup>1</sup> that went between King Charles III "*the Simple*" and the Viking leader Hrólfr Latinised to "Rollo" granting him lands in the northern coast of the kingdom of the Franks thus, the duchy was named according to its Norman Viking settlers (Duchy of Normandy,2006).

These Norman settlers shortly adapted to their new life as they adopted the French language, married to Frankish women and even started converting from the Norse pagan religion to Christianity. However, due to the lack of enough concrete historical evidence stating the means by which Normandy was built into a strong Duchy, most historians assume that under the leadership of Rollo; what began once as simple Norse settlement in Frankia thrived to become a powerful Duchy in Europe (Crouch 1).

### 1.2.1. Rollo's Descendants

By the time Rollo died, the foundations of a Duchy was already built and his descendants carried on strengthening Normandy and spreading the Norman lineage across north-western Europe that reached even to royal families. Figure 1. Shows the Norman dynasty and how actually William the Conqueror is one of his descendants. Thus, the Normans transmuted rapidly from being foreigner settlers to powerful lords in the region.

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<sup>1</sup>- The foundational document of the Duchy of Normandy, establishing Rollo, a Norse warlord and Viking leader, as the first Duke of Normandy in exchange for his loyalty to the king of West Francia.

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By the same token, Crouch indicated that Normandy and especially Rouen was still involved with the Vikings serving as a trading marketplace for the Norsemen raiders who came to sell and trade their plunder there, thus exhibiting that Normandy even by the late 10<sup>th</sup> century did not cut off its Nordic kinship ties yet (30).

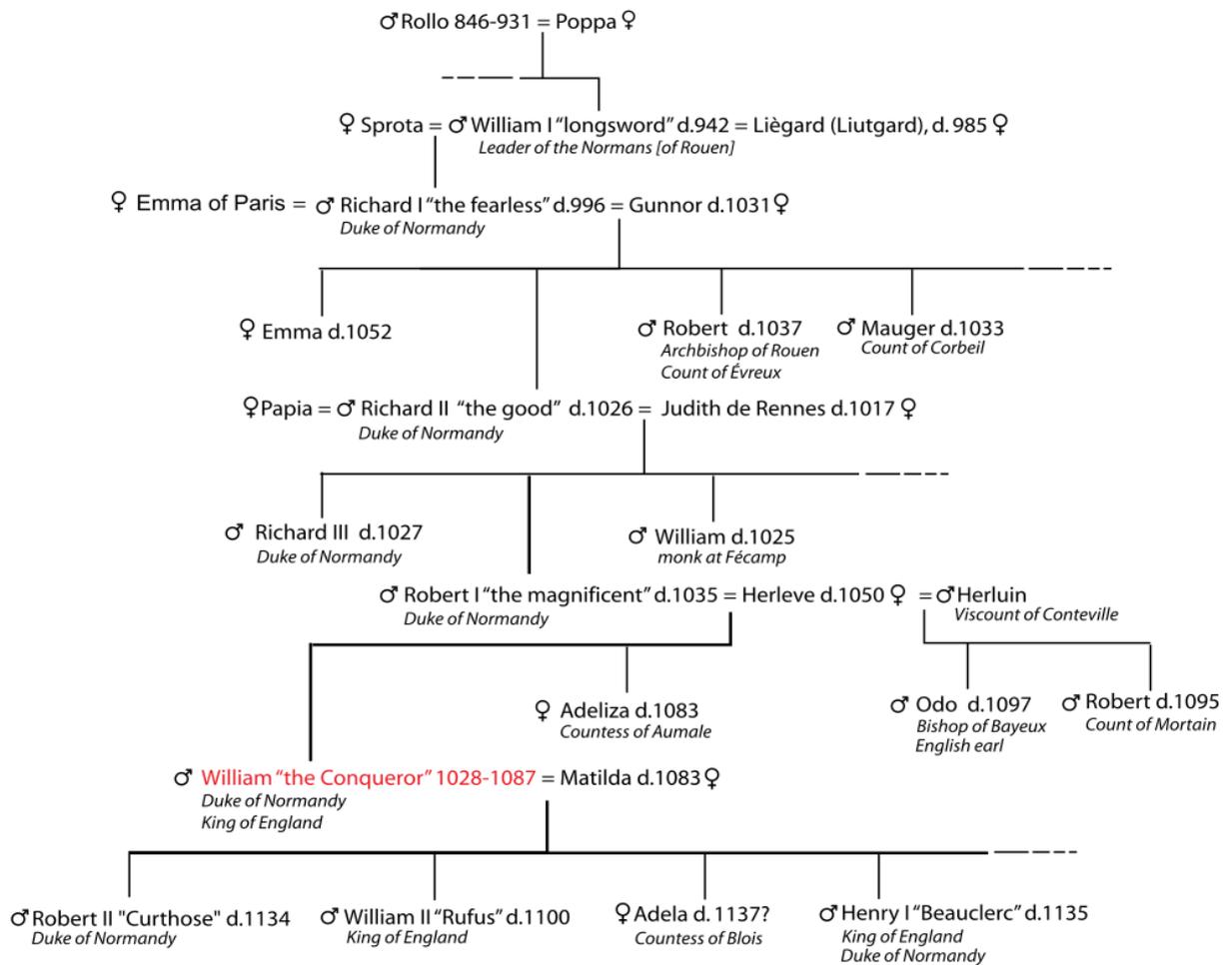


Figure.1.A genealogical chart of the Norman dynasty (adapted from:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chronological\\_tree\\_of\\_William\\_I.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chronological_tree_of_William_I.svg))

### 1.3. Anglo-Norman relations

By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, England was ruled by King Æthelred "the Unready" (966 – 1016) his reign was marked by Danish Viking raids on England around the year 980. Small assemblies of Danish Vikings were raiding the English coastlines over a period of irregular years. They attacked Hampshire, Thanet and Cheshire in 980. And also there were attacks on Devon and Cornwall were raided in 981, in addition to Dorset was also attacked in the following year 982. South-western regions were assaulted again in 988.

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In his book that was published in 2002 under the name *Anglo-Saxon England: Reissue with a new cover (Oxford history of England)*, Stenton stated that these unorganized raids had no fatal significance on England's welfare but rather their magnitude resided in igniting the first diplomatic contact between England and Normandy (375).

Normandy at the time was ruled by Duke Richard I (933-996) who considering himself originally Scandinavian had been welcoming the raiding parties in Normandy. This turn of events grew tension between the English and the Norman "kingdom", a tension that reached far east to the Pope John XV of Rome who encouraged the arrangement of a peaceful treaty between King Æthelred and Duke Richard I that took place in Rouen in 991 where the two sides swore not to aid each other's enemies (Whitelock 960).

However, England's troubles with the Danish Vikings was only beginning as in the same year a large Danish fleet landed south-east of England where a famous battle "Battle of Maldon" was fought between the two sides concluded by Danish victory and English compromising of good offerings to them in return for some peace.

Since then, the Viking raiders kept ravaging through English lands for the following years when in 1000, Normandy ruled by Duke Richard II (996 - 1026) had welcomed a large Viking fleet which had been raiding in England. This, broke the treaty made between Æthelred and Richard's father and was to be rectified with a marriage of king Æthelred to Richard's sister Emma, probably a marriage designed to preserve the English and Norman alliance and expel Vikings from the Norman ports (Hagger 86). This marriage was to mark the one of the first foundational causes for the great conquest as the Norman lineage was to become part of the English royal family, for through Emma the Normans gained weight in England.

Moreover, when the Danish Viking invasion bestowed upon England in 1013 by King Sweyn and his son Cnut, they ravaged the country with a large army of Vikings and even the Anglo-Saxons realized that they were at their mercy. Æthelred knew that this time he had lost the war when he decided to send Queen Emma and his two sons Edward and Alfred to Normandy to assure their safety. When Sweyn declared himself king of England, Æthelred decided to join his family in Normandy (James 171). Later on, when king Sweyn died, Æthelred was invited to reclaim the English throne.

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Throughout the coming years, these were the most notable connections between Normandy and England until the time when England was ruled by Edward “*the Confessor*” (1003 - 1066) cousin to William “*the Conqueror*” (1028 - 1087) who came to rule in Normandy.

### **1.4. Edward the Confessor (1003 – 1066)**

Edward the Confessor is one of the main points to tackle in order to depict how the Norman Conquest started for it is noted that his reign and his death are the prelude to England’s crumbling down and the chaos that eventually led to the Conquest.

Edward was the son of Queen Emma and King Æthelred, he spent most of his life in Normandy where he grew up after fleeing there during the Second Danish Viking Conquest of England. Edward grew under the wing of his uncle Duke Richard of Normandy where he received education and lived amongst the Normans. He returned to England for the first time after the death of his half-brother Harthacnut (from King Cnut’s marriage to Emma). His coronation as King of England in 1042 marked the end of Danish rule in England.

According to *the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Revised Translation. Ed.*, Soon after his coronation, Edward confiscated all of his mother’s (Emma) properties and fortune to himself as an act of vengeance against her for not caring about him and the fact that she married Cnut after Æthelred’s death (Whitelock et al. 107).

Moreover, when Edward came to rule, he was accompanied by several Normans trusted them to assist him but he did not have a powerbase of his own so he sought the support of England’s powerful Earls of whom amongst was Earl of Wessex Godwine; Edward was married to Godwin’s daughter Edith in 1045 that which was a childless marriage that didn’t produce an heir for the throne which after his death competition for chair led eventually to the Norman Conquest.

#### **1.4.1. Edward’s Reign**

Norman presence in England grew more during the reign of the Confessor because he grew up there and was a friend to the Normans that it is estimated that by 1050 half of his royal court and advisors were Normans (Barlow 89).

## **Chapter One: The Norman Conquest of England**

This had raised anger amongst the Anglo-Saxons especially the strong family of Godwin who were seeking to gain a claim on the throne from the hope that Edward and Edith would have a child.

However, according to Mortimer, Edward's reign was peaceful and serenity was bestowed upon England besides the Godwin's troubles he faced when they sought to gain more control over the kingdom (18).

### **1.5. William of Normandy (1028 – 1087)**

Also known as William the bastard, the legend who ruled England and changed its history, he was born in Falaise, Normandy in 1028 and died in 1087. He was duke of Normandy from 1035 and ruled England from 1066 after his successful Norman Conquest. William the Conqueror is considered one of the most genius diplomats and skilled commanders who lived in the middle ages.

#### **1.5.1. William's background**

The line of succession of the Dukes of Normandy progressed systematically for around a century and a half down to the time of William when Normandy had grown in strength and was developed as a strong duchy.

William was the bastard son of Duke Robert I "*the Magnificent*" and a peasant mother Herleva of a lower status. According to historical research, William had two maternal half-brothers through his mother: Odo who became the bishop of Bayeux and Robert later count of Mortain (The British Library).

Nevertheless, he grew under the wings of his father who took great pride in raising him to be a strong military commander and a skilful diplomat in the future. Robert had plans to make William his heir of Normandy. William came to rule in 1035 after Robert's death in a pilgrimage trip<sup>1</sup>.

#### **1.5.2. His early reign**

The ascension of William to rule Normandy after the death of his father was challenged by many nobles and relatives as he was young but his father laid foundations for him to get the necessary support.

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<sup>1</sup>- In his book "*A Pictorial History of France: For the Use of Schools*" that was published in 1861, Samuel Griswold stated that Duke Robert made plans for a trip to Jerusalem to repent for his sins but he fell sick and died on the return trip (67).

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In her book *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* that was published in 1988, Searle indicates that anarchy was spread in Normandy in 1040 during the first years of William's ascension where nobles rebelled and sought to seize lands in Normandy (210).

### **1.5.3. Fortification of Power**

William managed to secure the control of his dukedom by 1047 with the help of his loyal supporters and King Henry I of France as together they put an end to the rebels in the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes (Bates 38).

The duke's struggles didn't end soon as the French King Henry I chose to switch sides against William due to fearing his increasing power. William defeated the French King when he tried to invade Normandy in the Battle of Varaville (1057), and corresponding to many historians this period marked a shift of growing power towards William (Douglas 85).

By 1053, William gained most control of Normandy and sustained his power by marrying Mathilda of Flanders that provided him with strong alliances, and now the Duke's ambitions increased beyond France and his goals were set on England.

### **1.5.4. William's claim to the English Throne**

Before laying foundations to the claim of the conqueror to the English throne, Most Historian argue that by the time William had secured his rule over Normandy, the Norman ascendancy was already high because of Edward's past with Normandy. He had spent his youth amongst the Normans and when he became king in England, he had also employed Normans in his court and this had brought Normandy and England closer than any time before.

Besides the fact that Edward was William's distant cousin, the latter one's nature of the claim according to the revised translation of "the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" by Dorothy Whitelock, mentioning in a short set of lines that William had visited his cousin king Edward in 1051. (120 – 121). And for many historians, it is believed that Edward having no heir had promised to make William his heir

Furthermore, Norman sources claim that Harold Godwin had visited Normandy and was welcomed in William's court where he did swear an oath to support Edward's promise to William.

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### **1.6. The Year of the Conquest**

1066 is considered a crucial important year in the history of England and Normandy. Many scholars argue that the events of 1066 were a turning point that reshaped the future of England and marked a departing point for Medieval England (Trueman 24).

King Edward the Confessor fell ill and died on 5th January of that year after 24 years of reign. The childless marriage of Edward to Edith followed by his death had left a paradox about his line of succession and had paved the way for three different parties who claimed the throne should be theirs.

Eventually this fight for the English throne spread chaos in England and led to the Norman Conquest which would change the course of England's history forever.

#### **1.6.1. Claims to the English Throne**

The question of succession to the throne after Edward has been a puzzling matter controversial statements have been spread amongst scholars and historians. Though, unanimously it is obvious that Edward's reign and death without producing an heir were the triggering causes that led eventually to the Norman Conquest (Cartwright 76).

#### **1.6.2. Harold Godwin's Claim**

Harold Godwin was the earl of Wessex, he was powerful and a rich Anglo-Saxon. His sister was married to King Edward the Confessor which made him his half-brother. And according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Edward entrusted the realm to Harold on his deathbed. ("Avalon Project - The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Eleventh Century").

Furthermore, Harold was favoured by the English and the Witan agreed to appoint him as King of England after Edward's death; one of the main reasons that sparked William's anger and led to him preparing for a conquest.

#### **1.6.3. Harold Hardrada's Claim**

Harold Hardrada was the Viking King of Norway and the descendent of King Cnut the Great who ruled England before. It is said that Hardrada's father Magnus had been promised the throne by Cnut's son, Harthacnut. However, He had almost no support in

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England and was relying on the support of Harold Godwinson's brother Tostig to gain him support in Northern England and seize the throne.

### **1.6.4. William's Claim**

The final contender was Duke William of Normandy who sought to seize the throne, according to William of Jumieges who wrote the Norman History in 1070 stated that since William was a distant cousin to Edward, he promised him the throne and Harold Godwin was a witness on that.

Baxter stated that many scholars claim that the Norman sources urged that Edward have always been determined to make of William his heir, and even had Earl Harold himself swear to support William in that cause (78). Therefore, Edward's death and the big question of succession he left behind was the first consequence that led to the Norman Conquest in 1066.

### **1.6.5. Godwinson's Coronation**

The following day after the burial of Edward the Confessor, Harold Godwinson was made king of England by the Witan, although scholars argue about his coronation being held in Westminster Abbey at the time as there are no approved documentation to confirm that ("Coronations - Westminster Abbey"). Though, shortly after his coronation, Harold's reign was disrupted by threats from Norway where Hardrada was planning to invade England as well as William of Normandy who got enraged upon hearing about Harold's coronation and planning to seize the throne. Thus, his reign was spent trying to prevent their conquests of England.

### **1.6.6. The Norwegian Invasion of England**

On the beginning of September 1066, Harold Hardrada king of Norway had set plans for an invasion of England. He had hopes for the plan to work out as he was being assisted by Tostig, Godwinson's brother who decided to side with Hardrada and betray his Brother to gain more power in England and according to many resources, Harold was associating with Tostig, the English King's brother. Harold and Tostig had met and combined their forces and started raiding in northern England while Godwinson was awaiting for William's arrival in the south (DeVries 252).

### **1.6.7. Battle of Stamford Bridge**

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Upon hearing about Hardrada and Tostig, Harold Godwinson was conflicted between staying in the south and watching out for William's invasion or heading north to fight the Norwegian army. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1066, King Harold of England led his army north to York where the Norwegians were and he took them by surprise in Stamford Bridge.

According to Larsen, The Norwegians stood up in the first moments of the fights but eventually the English overwhelmed them, Harold Hardrada and Tostig were dead marking Harold Godwin's victory in the battle (105). However, Godwinson's troubles didn't end there as in few days later on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1066, news of the Duke William of Normandy landing in England and pillaging in the south reached him.

### **1.7. The Norman Invasion**

In his book *William the Conqueror (Medieval Kings & Queens of England)* that was published in 2001, Bates suggests that during the critical events that followed the death of Edward the Confessor, William focused on assembling his council and nobles in a set of different meetings in order to gain their support for the purpose of invading England (80).

Winning the support of his vassals meant for William securing ships and troops to build an army well-structured for such a great invasion. Furthermore, sources suggest that William of Poitiers the Conqueror's chaplain who chronicled the Norman Conquest of England said that Pope Alexander II supplemented William with the papal banner as a formal approval of the Conquest.

William of Normandy thus, had spent nine months strategizing in preparation for the Conquest. He made sure to have a considerable military force and a sizable fleet befitting of a Conquest. Based on contemporary historians, his army was made of around 8000 men where cavalry was an essential unit in it (Bennett 26).

William of Normandy's sea crossing to England was remarkable though, as all preparations were completed by early August but it is often debated that the winds were not in favour of William to cross the channel until late September 1066.

Huscroft however, suggests that William waited deliberately as he gained intelligence from England, and when he knew that nobody would oppose him when he lands and the right time came when William signalled his fleet to set sail and cross to England on the 28<sup>th</sup> September while Harold was gone north to fight his brother and Hardrada (123).

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### **1.7.1. Landing in England**

William landed on the southern undefended shores of England and cunningly commanded his army to build fortifications in the town of Hastings where it was surrounded by villages and towns he could raid to supply his army. Hastings would be later known for the location of the famous battle of Hastings.

News of William's arrival in England reached King Harold after he had just dealt with the Norwegian invasion. Once again Harold rapidly marched his forces to London to supply for few days before heading out south to face the Normans (Huscroft 124).

Harold reached south in few kilometres close from William's whereabouts on the 13<sup>th</sup> October as he was eager to engage the enemy without further delay, and according to Marren, William's scouts warned the Duke of the English army's presence and tempted him to deploy his army swiftly in a readying position for the battle (99-10).

### **1.7.2. Battle of Hastings**

October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1066 the date that represented more than a simple battle for it represented the date that would change the history of England permanently where two armies stood, Normans facing English and the decisive victory of the Normans in their conquest marked a turning point in history that is still debated nowadays.

Harold took up a defensive position at the start of the battle and William's military experience confidently rushed the English. Very little resources are available to depict the events of the battle correctly, however many resources argue that William's tactics were vital in gaining a decisive win marked by Harold's death being struck by an arrow in the eye according to the Bayeux Tapestry ("1066 and The Norman Conquest").

*Figure 2.* Depicts Harold's death in the Bayeux Tapestry that illustrated the whole significant events of the Norman Conquest and the battle of Hastings. The outcome of Hastings came with a decisive Norman victory marking the success of the conquest, and thus a new dawn was coming upon England.

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*Figure.2. Harold's death depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry (adapted from: <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/death-harold-battle-hastings>)*

### 1.7.3. The Aftermath of the Battle

After his victory in the Hastings, William still had to grasp his control over England and especially London to be crowned as king, so he planned to march to London with his army and along the way he made sure to subdue the Anglo-Saxon towns and impose the Norman presence in England (Huscroft 132).

William's strategy as illustrated in *Figure 3*. Was to isolate the capital London before entering it to assume the royal title. And when no more resistance was facing the Conqueror, the Anglo-Saxons finally gave in to him and arrangements were made for William to be crowned as king of England on Christmas Day of 1066 in the Westminster Abbey (Douglas 217).

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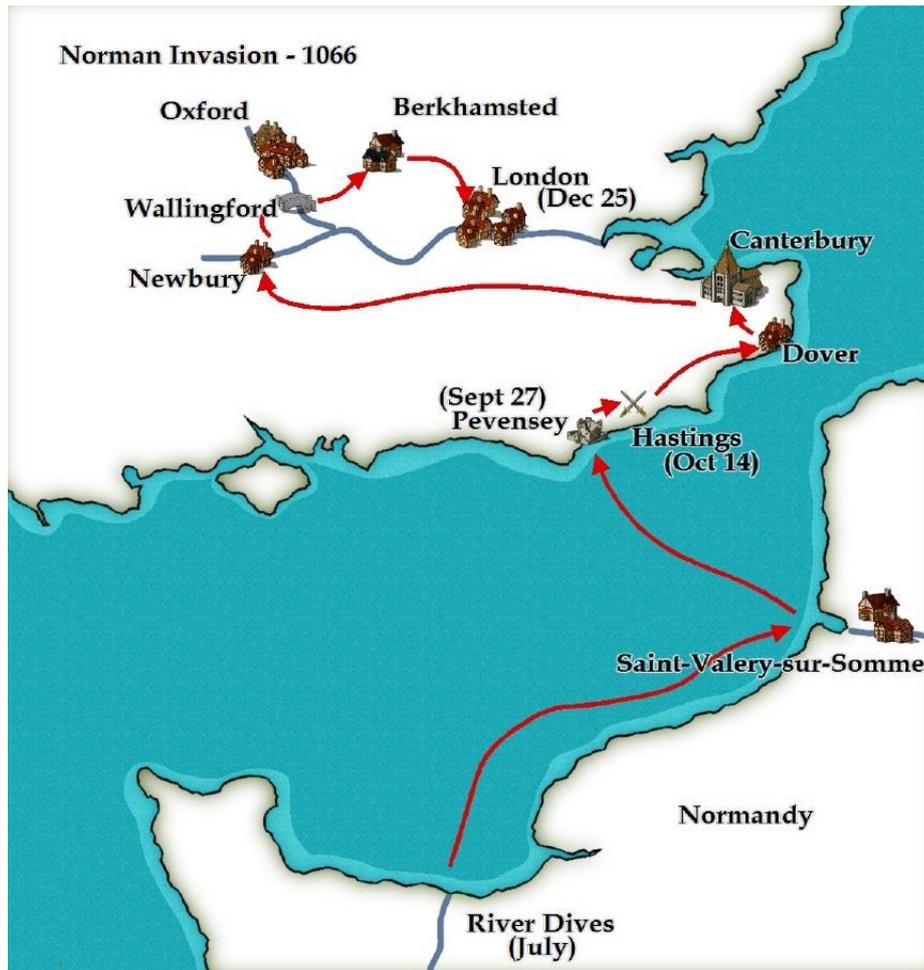


Figure.3. Map that shows the route William and his army took from Normandy to London (adopted from: <https://www.timeref.com/maps/conquest1.htm>)

### 1.7.4. The Consolidation of Power

William's conquest of England was successful, but even after his coronation as king of England, the first few years to come witnessed a variety of rebellions from the northern earls of the country who refused to submit to the new Norman government, and William had to suppress these rebellions in order to claim control over his new kingdom (Huscroft 138).

While the Norman conquest of England in 1066 marked a new era for the English history, its maintenance depended on eliminating the Anglo-Saxon opposition and gaining control over all of England (Douglas 227). William marched through the rebellions of the northern earls from 1067 to 1072 and crushed them into submission just like he did in the south and established the Norman power over England.

## **Chapter One: The Norman Conquest of England**

William also summoned his wife Matilda to England where she was crowned as queen in Westminster in May 1068. Scholars such as Huscroft see this decision as a clever move from William to ensure the Anglo-Saxon submission to the new Norman government (142).

During the first few years, William tried administering the English by the same traditions that Edward the Confessor had done. He started collecting taxes from the English to build castles and pay his soldiers, also he appointed many of his Norman subjects to control different areas of England; two of them were the famous bishop Odo his half-brother who was made Earl of Kent and William Fitz Osbern who was made Earl of Hereford, William trusted them to rule in his absence as he was travelling between England and Normandy most of the times (Douglas 218).

### **1.8. The English Revolts and William's Actions**

Although William the Conqueror was crowned king of England, he was not accepted by all of the English and between the years 1068-1070 many different revolts rose across the country against the Norman rule. To firm his grip over England, William had to show his strength in managing the issues and fully subdue the country to the Norman rule, which he did by gathering his army and marching against the different rebellions that stood against him.

Historians often question the level of cruelty he employed, on a podcast with History Hit, Dr. Marc Morris described the methods that William employed to crush the English rebellions as those of a sadistic maniac. Because the Conqueror did burn and ravage towns all over England and would not rest until all of England was submitted to his rule (History Hit Team).

#### **1.8.1. Rebellion at Exeter**

Some of the first discontent began to rise due to William's imposition of heavy tax on the Anglo-Saxons that led the City of Exeter in the south-west to rise against the Norman rule. Though many resources said that the city was sheltering Gytha, Harold Godwinson's mother who was coordinating with her grandson's in Ireland to support the revolt but not enough historical evidence was strong to connect Godwin's sons attack with the rebellion of Exeter. Nevertheless, upon hearing about this, William took the revolt seriously as he assembled his army and marched towards the city where he besieged it for

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18 days before its surrender. The Conqueror then built a castle there to secure the region from any further troubles.

William's Strategy paid off when Godwinson's sons attacked England from Ireland but were repelled by the City citizens who were disciplined to be loyal to William after the events of Exeter (Golding 39).

### **1.8.2. Revolt of Edwin & Morcar**

Edwin and Morcar were brothers, the former Earl of Mercia and the latter Earl of Northumbria. Although they submitted to William's rule at first and agreed to be his vassals after being promised good deals, their resentments for the King grew more especially after being taken to Normandy as William's "guests" and witnessing his feasts over the success of the Conquest.

Eventually, they started an uprising in the north of England as a response to William's new administration in diminishing the sizes of their lands, the castles he built and his policies of heavy taxation. King William however suppressed the rebellion and built more castles as he went. William's strategies were efficient as he went on suppressing revolts and building castles to maintain control over the different areas of England.

### **1.8.3. The Harrying of the North**

By the winter of 1069, rebellions in the north against the Norman rule were growing in size. First there was the massacre of the Norman appointed Earl of Northumbria in an ambush by the English, then York had fell to chaos against the Normans. And to make matters worse, a kind of a dangerous faction against the Normans was forming: Edgar Aethling (The Confessor's great nephew) showed up with Northern Englishmen to rise against the Conqueror's rule where he allied himself with King Sweyn II of Denmark and attacked York, and by the time William arrived with his army they had already fled the city.

According to the Chronicler Florence of Worcester, William had paid the Danes a big sum of money in order to leave England so he could deal with the rest of the English rebels much easily.

William then to deal with the revolts in the north. He employed a strategy where he attacked every possible resource and food supply that could be useful to the rebels. He

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ruthlessly led his army through north of England ravaging and burning down towns and cities to put an end once and for all to the raising rebellions in the north.

“The Harrying of The North” strategy that William employed was characterized by many scholars as an act of genocide. According to his book *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, the Anglo-Norman chronicler Vitalis stated that William was unstoppable against his enemies full of rage he punished the innocent and the guilty and destroyed homes and food supplies that eventually led to a terrible famine and more than 100.000 people were dead (28). Although the number might be exaggerated, there is no doubt that the harrying of the north had a deeper impact for the years to come although some historians sees it as a mass murder, the Norman resources often claim it was a necessary strategy for William to consolidate his rule according to the time he lived in.

### **1.8.4. Securing the Crown**

To fully secure his rule over England, William had to suppress the Scottish who refused to acknowledge him as king so he launched an invasion on Scotland in the summer of 1072 and marched his army to meet up with the Scottish king Malcolm. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, the strength of William in the field forced Malcolm to submit leading to the Treaty of Abernethy where the Scottish king had to proclaim William as his feudal lord (Whitelock 155).

William’s true power to establish full control over England did not consist only on military expertise but also in his genius management of appointing Normans to work with the English in order to establish a connection between these two peoples of two different cultures. Moreover, the Conquest of England was a total efficient change of government and plenty of other aspects on England thus, marking the end of Anglo-Saxon rule and witnessing the birth of a new Anglo-Norman kingdom that was brought closer to the European continent.

### **1.9. Conclusion**

Even though The Norman Conquest of England was a long process of careful planning and smart strategies by the hands of William the Conqueror, it is still discussed nowadays amongst scholars and historians for all the different changes that were accruing after its accomplishment.

## **Chapter One: The Norman Conquest of England**

Despite William's first years of reign in England being full of revolts combined with all the hardship he faced travelling between England and Normandy as he had to divide his time between them. He counted on his Norman allies to defend and preserve the control in England and Normandy; more importantly he stood up to the challenges and proved to be a cunning leader in the history of all world.

To sum up, the success of the Conquest had deeper impact on the kingdom of England as it was a turning point that unveiled many changes on the social, political and even the economic scale. Whilst the first chapter depicted a whole picture of how the Norman invasion of England happened, the second chapter will explore the different impacts that rebuilt England after the invasion and how much the Normans affected the England kingdom.

***Chapter Two***  
*The Impacts of the  
Norman Conquest on  
England*

## **Chapter Two: The Impacts of the Norman Conquest on England**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The Norman Conquest of England was the masterpiece creation of Duke William of Normandy who became known as William I, King of England. The Conquest's consolidation took time for the Normans as they had to suppress quite a number of revolts that rose against the Conqueror's rule. But through his Military experience and administrative skills, William was able to face the challenges and prove his royal authority on the Anglo-Saxons.

The changes that followed the Conquest were in a way radical and changed many aspects within England that historians nowadays still debate and talk about. The Normans by consolidating their presence in England had transmuted different features that were introduced to the Anglo-Saxons including political changes and diverse cultural facades that changed the English society forever and made it what it is today.

In consequence, the second chapter of this dissertation aims to explore the transmutation that happened to England during the Norman rule on the different political, social and cultural aspects in order to decide whether the Conquest was a blessing or a curse upon England.

### **2.2. Norman Replacement of Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy**

When the Conquest was consolidated and William was crowned as king of England, He tried to be a benevolent ruler and sought the co-existence of Anglo-Norman nobility in his acquired kingdom, but he encountered a lot of resistance from the Anglo-Saxons and after years of dealing with the rebellions he faced, William planned to grasp his full control over the Kingdom by carrying out new policies.

The Conqueror decided to assign his most trusty followers to the lands he acquired. This in consequence meant that a new Norman aristocracy was shading over the old Anglo-Saxon aristocracy which was being replaced for the purpose of aiding the king in controlling England as whole.

After the series of the inevitable rebellions by the English Earls, William abandoned every attempt to welcome the Anglo-Saxon nobility into his own and instead started replacing them with more of his loyal knights and barons who took part in the invasion as a strategy to reward them for their services and gain more of their support.

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According to the Norman Chronicles, the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy was so suppressed whereas by death or exile and as a result by 1086, only about eight percent of the land of England remained in the possession of surviving members of this class.<sup>1</sup>

With that being said, William constructed a pyramid where he was at the top of this pyramid beneath him were his half-brothers, Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain, and going down through this pyramid, there were the most loyal subjects to William who profited from vassalage to the king and had acquired offices in the new kingdom in return for their military services and support to the king in managing the kingdom (Golding 62).

### **2.2.1. The Faith of Anglo-Saxon Nobility**

Many sources state that The Anglo-Saxon nobility after the Norman Conquest slowly diminished by hopeless revolt against the Norman rule that eventually led to the killing or exile of many Anglo-Saxon Earls leaving their lands in the hands of Norman authority. (Clanchy 33)

The few remaining Anglo-Saxon nobles however, realized that their power was to be restrained, reciprocally this made them seek to blend in with the regular society or even working for/under Norman Officials for the hope of living a simple life rather than being exiled or killed like many Earls who tried to oppose the Norman rule.

The results of the Conquest were first notable in the process of eliminating the Anglo-Saxon nobility and reinforcing it with a new Norman aristocracy imported from Normandy. The establishment of a new Norman aristocracy in England after the conquest came with different purposes. On the one hand, it was essential to build a new nobility that supported the Norman authority and did not call for more anarchy. On the other hand, this came to be as a demonstration of the Norman power and came to assist the King's power in ruling over the kingdom without further opposition from the native Anglo-Saxon nobility by introducing a new feudal system to govern the kingdom strictly (Douglas 285).

### **2.3. Introduction of Feudalism in England**

William I, the Conqueror, was a brilliant man. He didn't just want to take over England; he wanted to make sure that the new order would last. To do this, William I came

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<sup>1</sup>- Puryear, Cynthia L., "The effects of the Norman Conquest on Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy" (1976). Honors Theses.

## **Chapter Two: The Impacts of the Norman Conquest on England**

with an idea to revolutionize the way lands were distributed in his Kingdom by granting his Norman followers and knights lands in return for their loyalty and services to him.

### **2.3.1. Definition of Feudalism**

Feudalism, also called the feudal system or feudality is the social, economic, and political system in medieval Western Europe. It was a hierarchical system of power where lords had absolute control over their subjects (Brown 1).

Another definition of feudalism is set in the book “*Feudal Society*” by the French historian Marc Bloch who defined it as a system that bound all the different classes of society by certain legal and military obligations to the higher rank individuals (24).

### **2.3.2. Feudalism in the Norman England**

One of the major important changes that accrued in England after the Conquest was the introduction of new doctrine of feudalism which was manifested in a pyramid alike shape where the King would be at the top and peasants down below at the base as illustrated in *Figure 4*.

The basis of feudalism was the doctrine that the king owned all lands in the kingdom where he would distribute them amongst his loyal subjects who would be called “tenants-in-chief” in return for their military services.

These tenants-in-chief did not possess the land, unlike in the previous Anglo-Saxon type of feudalism, since the king now retained all its ownership. They had to provide the king with knights in his service. These knights in return were provided a portion of land by the tenants-in-chief and at the bottom of this pyramid were the common people who worked on land growing crops and raising animals (Douglas 54).

William I controlled all the lands and all tenants-in-chief could be removed at any time if they did not provide the king with their services. This is considered as one of the most notable achievements of the Norman rule as it changed the forms of ruling in England where the highest council in the kingdom was the Witan which could grant land to the earls and barons. Each area of land was ruled by an earl who had the right to govern free of the king’s control.

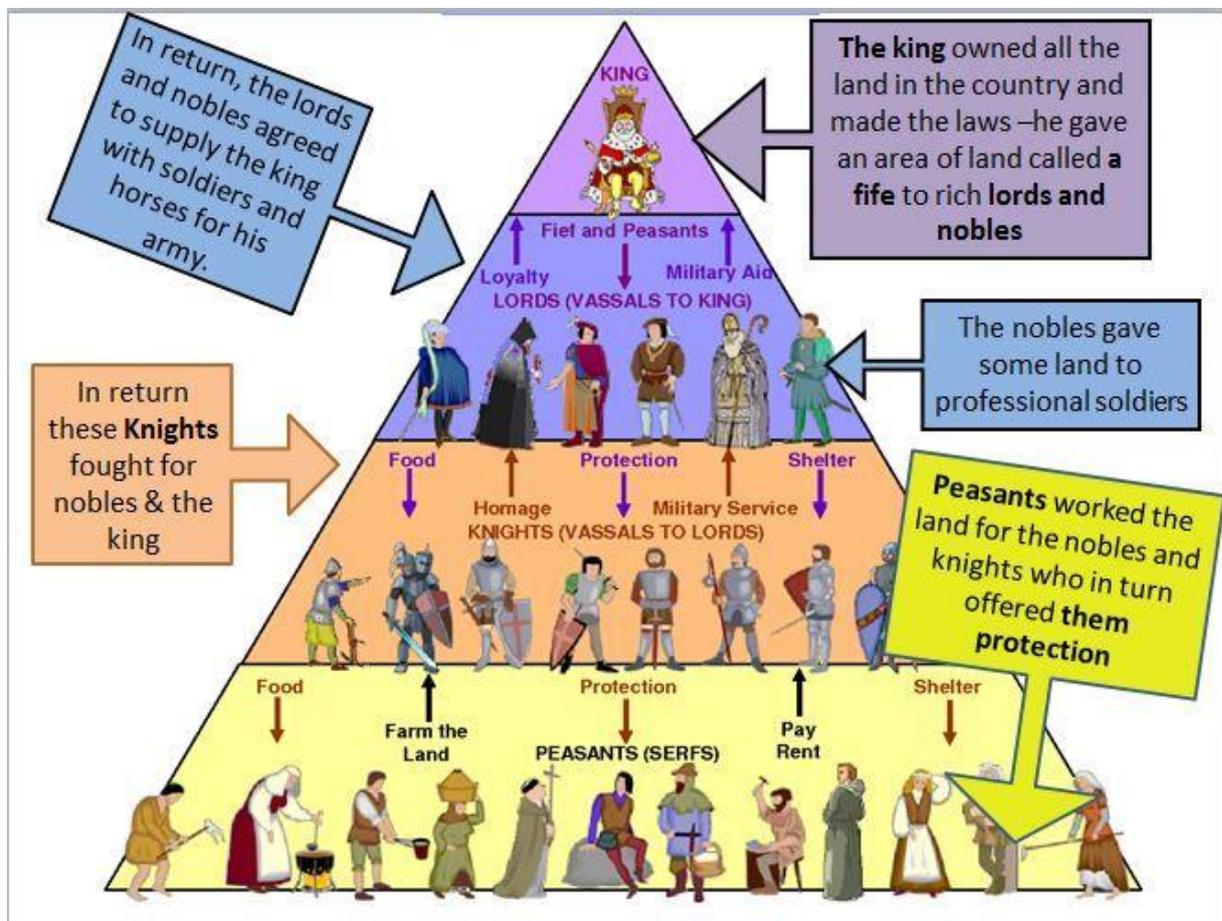
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### 2.3.3. Oath of Salisbury

The decision that William I decided to make on the on 1st August 1086, when he hosted a great gathering at Old Sarum. According to the royal chronicler:

*"His council came to him there, and all the landholding men of any account throughout England, whosoever men they were. And they all bowed to him and became his men, and swore oaths of fealty to him, that they would remain faithful to him against all other men."*<sup>1</sup>

One the one hand, the oath was seen by many historians as a mean to limit the power of the feudal obligations that the vassals held on to. On the other hand, others see this change in the English laws as an intention to reinforce the feudal duties. This point is seen by many



historians as a big impact and change in England after the Conquest (McNeill 15).

**Figure.4.A** pyramid depicting the organization of the Feudal society (adapted from:

<sup>1</sup> - Many historians state that a royal chronicler of William I, witnessed the gathering and wrote about it in the Norman chronicles.

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<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/1040810812958048257>)

Even though that feudalism existed during the Anglo-Saxon rule of England, it became more consolidated, organized and centralized by the Norman kings who reinforced the system of heading a hierarchy of vassals who provided knights to strengthen the military position of the kingdom and the vast building of castles to fortify the new Norman government.

### 2.4.Domesday Book

The Domesday Book is one of the most famous and earliest public records ever created in England, it was commissioned in December 1085 by the order of the Conqueror King William I to serve as a survey that determines the amount of lands and wealth in the country.

This old form of national archive according to its time was an upgraded version of the survey of taxes that the last Anglo-Saxon king Edward the Confessor left, it became divided into two volumes. Volume one, was named the Great Domesday Book (GDB) which was concerned with All 31 County in England, whilst the remaining 3 counties of Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk were surveyed in a very detailed volume two, named the Little Domesday Book (LDB) (Hallam 36).

It is considered a great achievement of the Conqueror as he ordered every piece of record possible on resources and lands in the kingdom, even written about in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that:

*“that there was no single hide nor virgate of land, nor indeed one ox nor one cow nor one pig which was there left out, and not put down in his record ; and all these records were brought to him afterwards.”* (Whitelock et al. 162)

#### 2.4.1. Contents of the Book

The Domesday Book appears to have been holding the names of the majority of land owners in the kingdom within each shire starting with the manor, listing for each its name and its holders and all the available resources in it. The amount of details about the land and its distribution in the kingdom that is stated in the book is vast for the time it was created in it, it also illustrates all kinds of wealth that existed in the kingdom and served to provide the king with great deal of information about his vassals and the lands they were holding.

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Some counties like London, Winchester and other towns were ruled out of the book perhaps due to their tax-free status in addition to other absent towns and churches; it is not apparent why but, historians explain that some lands and especially churches were distinguished from feudal taxation and duties (History Magazine).

With that being said, the Domesday Book employment in the Anglo-Norman England came as a symbol of royal authority that hadn't been seen before in the middle ages. The survey was a demonstration of Norman authority that sought to draw lines of every man's rights and discipline the English who disobeyed the law as whole (Fitzneale 62).

### **2.4.2. The Importance of the Book in History**

The survey can be seen as a powerful ideological tool employed by the Normans to mark a significant revolution in the English systems of land tenure for, the book served as an icon signalling the death of Anglo-Saxon aristocracy and the birth of new Norman authority in the kingdom. Its documentation and the data stored within it serve as a crucial source of historical knowledge and content of Anglo-Norman England. The wide scope of information it contains about the late eleventh-century England whether from a political, social or economic side have been characterized as a unique tool in documenting history as whole and have helped historians to recreate a clearer image of the different structures that shaped Anglo-Norman England into what makes it one of the greatest kingdoms to ever exist (Roffe 5).

## **2.5. Church Reformation**

Prior to the Norman Conquest, the Church in England was largely cut off from developments on that happened in Europe and the papacy in general. In other ways, the Anglo-Saxon church was disorganized in comparison to to the European continent at the time. Nonetheless, during the Norman rule of England, William I thought the English Church was corrupt and pledged to clean it up for the sake of gaining the pope's support and connecting the English church to Rome.

### **2.5.1. Normanisation of Church**

When William I finally gained control of England, his focus turned to normanising the structure of the English church. In 1070 the Norman King chose to appoint Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury to oversee the implementation of his reforms, strategically he

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was aiming to control the church by making Lanfranc who was one of his closest advisors and friends as the ruling Archbishop of the new English church (Barlow 104).

Archbishop Lanfranc assisted greatly in bringing the English Church under one authority that responded to the King himself, unlike during the Anglo-Saxon period where the Church had its own power and authority in the kingdom. To achieve that, most southern bishops were subjected to the control of Canterbury Cathedral all for the purpose of uniting the English Church under one metropolitan.

Waves of purging Anglo-Saxon church leaders and replacing them with Norman bishops all across the kingdom happened at the time. This was done with the purpose of having the church supporting and strengthening the Norman authority in England. As archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc sought to centralize church hierarchy and regulations to help the newly appointed Norman bishops to administer their dioceses by disposing at their services archdeacons and deans who made sure that church laws were conducted correctly (Garmonsway 204).

And just like the feudal system pyramid, the church organization became so organized; the pope was at the top, and at the bottom were the priests who answered to archdeacons and deans that owed their position to the bishops. The bishops in turn were required to swear an oath of obedience to the archbishop of Canterbury. Each of the mentioned units if we might call them so was answering to the higher religious rank, this with the purpose of maintaining a balanced power in the English church away from the corruption it has been on during the Anglo-Saxon period.

Other parts of the church reform were introduced in the regular church councils often held by Lanfranc where several things were called to be changed:<sup>1</sup>

- Prohibition of simony and that means the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices was banned from the English churches.
- Clerical celibacy was promoted and eventually clergy churchmen were banned from marriage.
- Reasserting the authority of church courts in dealing with certain cases such as blasphemy and adultery.

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<sup>1</sup>- In pre-conquest England, many of these aspects were used and dealt with however suited the power of the Churchmen.

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Moreover, amid the Anglo-Saxon period, churches were typically built of wooden structures. However, stone churches, like stone castles, were erected by the Normans with a Romanesque style to demonstrate that they possessed religious power equal to their military might. To this extent, one of the major changes that bestowed the English churches was seen through the Norman constructions of stone churches. Norman churches would have been painted inside with religious art. This gave a clear message about the power of the church in people's lives, and the leaders of the church were replaced by Normans (Hicks 445).

### **2.5.2. Monastic Expansion**

The Norman reforms of the English churches eventually led to an increasing number of monks and nuns increased from about 1000 person to around 5000. And Monasteries were built all across the kingdom with each concluded Norman abbots who took the place of Anglo-Saxon abbots. Historians also estimated that many Monasteries belonged to the Benedictine movement who followed the rules of Saint Benedict<sup>1</sup> (Clanchy 77).

The Normans later on also brought a new strict form of monasteries in England which were the Cluniac Monasteries. These Norman monasteries were established in 1077, by William de Warenne at Lewes in Sussex. Castles were constructed to display the Norman strength and God's blessing, these Cluniac monks lived with strict regulations that changed the religious views within all of England as they started to spread education amongst the English people.

In his book, *England and Its Rulers: 1066 - 1307 (Blackwell Classic Histories of England)* Clanchy states that these reforms in the English church after the conquest was considered as an act of Norman dominance in England and its efforts to bring the English kingdom closer not only to the European continent but also building a tight channel between the English church and the papacy, this link didn't exist during the Anglo-Saxon rule of England (82).

Moreover, the Norman kings made strict reforms to control of the English church eventually led to a strong development in education. Schools were built and the Norman archbishops promoted education to reshape the culture of Anglo-Saxons and teaching the

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<sup>1</sup>- Saint Benedict wrote a book of rules for his monks to follow, under the rules of St. Benedict, monks had to take vows of celibacy, obedience and poverty; they were also vegetarian.

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language of the Conquerors for the purpose of mixing it with the Norman culture and customs.

### **2.6. Changes of the Legal and Governing System**

Despite the fact that the Anglo-Saxons had a complex practical legal system, after 1070 The Normans began to import strict laws from the French legal system that intended to bring the English society in order and centralize the Norman authority in their newly conquered kingdom.

The Normans proceeded to enforce new legislations and laws to govern the English society and bring it to the heels of the new Masters of England and to ensure the loyalty of people to the Norman authority. Punishments against crimes became harsher, new Forest laws were imposed on people and writs became used more properly.

#### **2.6.1. Forest Laws**

The Forest Law was a Norman institution brought over from the continent, but it was widely despised by the locals. The forest law was its own legal system, complete with its own courts and authorities. These courts were in charge of safeguarding and preserving the forests as a royal hunting ground and excluded the common people from accessing it and benefiting from its goods and resources. Those who came to be found trespassing within the forests were punished harshly.

The law was designed to protect the vert (the vegetation of the forest) and the venison (the animals), inhabitants of the forest areas or the villages near forests were forbidden from trespassing into the woods. Of course this was seen as an attempt to preserve the natural resources of the kingdom from excessive needs of agriculture but the law was actually resented by the locals for it meant that they could no longer benefit from forest resources to get food, wood and other assets for their daily needs. On the other hand, many historians see that the forest laws imposed on the English community was merely as a tool designed to serve the pleasure of the monarch and increase the royal treasury income by allowing the elite people to access forests and hunt in return for payment to the king (Golding 102).

#### **2.6.2. Common Laws**

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The Norman conquest of 1066 is considered as one of the turning points in the legal history of the English common law. The conquerors embraced the laws that were existing during the Anglo-Saxon period and worked on reinforcing them to maintain peace in the realm and restrain anarchy from spreading.

During the rule of Norman kings in England, compact centralized institutions were created. Monarch's court was centralized and a kind of a bureaucracy was developed with written records to maintain this centralized government. The Normans did not abandon the Anglo-Saxon laws, some of them survived the reformation and the Norman rulers evolved new customs and rules that served to attain a strong legal system very early on comparing to its time.

Land laws developed early after the Conquest and saw significant proportion of changes in order to manage the tenure system of the country and maintain control over the kingdom. This eventually led to developing centralized institutions such as the King's court "*Curia Regis*"<sup>1</sup>. However, the later generation of Norman rulers in particular Henry II was the main developer of common laws, He introduced judicial courts to impose laws on his kingdom and assist him in managing the economic, crimes and the reinforcement of feudal principals in the Anglo-Norman England (Biancalana 436).

It is safe to say that the Normans had a great impact on the development of laws in England for they structured the basis upon which a high proportion of law aspects from their time gradually emerged and paved the way for the evolution of bureaucracy and a centralized legal system that is widespread through nowadays England.

### **2.7. Social and Cultural Impacts of the Conquest**

The Norman Conquest had many influences on the English kingdom and its population, The conquerors had consolidated their rule over England by participating in the development of language, architecture and other aspects, however some of the changes didn't affect the English population in itself but rather served the purposes of the Normans.

#### **2.7.1. Impacts of the Conquest on Language**

English is one of the world's most widely spoken languages in the world with thirty nations having English as their official language, and more than twenty nation have English as a

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<sup>1</sup>- The Royal council formed of advisers and administrators who served the king and dealt with the business of state in England.

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second language. Being one of the major languages widespread on the planet, English as we know it today was formed from a mixture of dialects, demographic groups and cultural influences like the Norman Conquest which is often seen by scholars as a crucial event in the evolution of the English language.

In England, Latin was the language of the Church and consequently of education and historiography, and it was used to document official records of the government. Meanwhile French was the superior language amongst the aristocracy that was basically formed of Normans who preferred to use French language as the court language. On the other hand, Old English (OE) which was spoken by the previous Anglo-Saxons was spoken and widespread at the time amid the lower class of peasants and the actual English people who were ruled by the Normans (Boxell).

It is generally argued that the Conquest played a major role in the development and transformation of English language and its sound and structure elements. Since the Normans came from France, plenty of dialects and terms from the French language eventually were integrated into the English language and the mixture of both Old English and French eventually led to the emergence of Middle English.

The new ruling class of England indeed spoke French in addition to merchants that came to do business in England, but that didn't change the fact that they had to learn French in order to understand and deal with the conquered population. Moreover, intermarriage between the Normans and the English contributed in preserving a kind of balance between the two languages. Normans learned some English to a certain extent whilst the English population was eventually driven to learn and even borrow from the French language.

The interconnection between the two said languages and the borrowing of French vocabulary or mixing it with the English one led the latter to evolve into what was known as the Middle English, centuries after the conquest, the English as we know of today is derived from the influence of the Norman Conquest of England and to a certain extent, this influence can be seen as a great contribution to the English identity and its social and cultural structures over time.

Scholars often debate the impact of the conquest on the language however, it is often perceived that the conquerors did not change the language but rather contributed in its development. In other words, the Normans participated in deepening and enriching the

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Old English with new vocabulary borrowed from the French language. This which have led to the birth of Middle English. French vocabulary was used to form new words using French affixes and roots. This French linguistic impact that was brought by the Normans became fundamental to the evolution of English lexicon and the emergence of English as a widely spoken and independent language, even a written one which became generations later post-conquest considered as a critical stage in the foundation of English as we know it today (Baker 47).

### **2.7.2. Introduction of Norman Architecture in England**

The introduction of Romanesque architecture in England after the conquest was developed by the Normans all across England. Castles and fortifications were erected in Britain in addition to keeps, monasteries, abbeys, churches, and cathedrals after the conquest by the Norman rulers to keep the kingdom under control and as a sign to demonstrate the Norman strength in the English dominion.

Before the Conquest, Norman architecture influenced the late Anglo-Saxon architecture. Before his death, Edward the Confessor had already connections to Normandy and even brought Norman masons in England to construct buildings like the Westminster Abbey which is considered the first Romanesque building in England.

Following the invasion of England in 1066, Normans carried on a series of fortifications to their conquest by reshaping the English architecture into a Romanesque style with rounded arches that were often combined with cylindrical pillars. This new architecture style was much stronger than the Anglo-Saxon's and for centuries some of the Norman buildings in England still survive today.

The Normans shaped a new concept of architecture in the British Isles that touched not only the military side but also ecclesiastical architecture on the level of rising great cathedrals and churches all over England. Castles occupied by Norman lords and their knights were established around towns as a symbol of Norman power. One of the greatest examples that reflects the Norman impacts on England's architectural aspect is the White Tower of London (illustrated in *Figure.2*) which was described by Impey and Parnell in their book "*The Tower of London: The Official Illustrated History*" as one of the most accomplished palaces in the Eleventh century Europe (16).

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*Figure.5.the White Tower seen from the southeast. (Adapted from:*

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower\\_of\\_London\\_White\\_Tower.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower_of_London_White_Tower.jpg) )

Numerous castles were erected by the Normans all over the English Kingdom some of which still stand as a proof today. Rochester Castle in Kent, Colchester Castle in Essex, Norwich Castle in Norfolk and many other examples of stone castles with a Norman architectural style that had changed the British Isles and the proof of their existence today shows the level of Norman architects' intelligence in mixing a Romanesque style with a Norman touch to fortify their influence over England for centuries.

Moreover, the Norman's new architectural methods transformed England's landscape not only with Castles and fortifications, but also by building new cathedrals, abbeys and churches. Scholars agree on the fact that the Norman Conquest helped in speeding up the process of the development of a hybrid Anglo-Norman architectural style for the bulk of Norman architecture was employed in religious structures such as magnificent cathedrals and churches that could be found across the countryside and towns. The transformation of ecclesiastical architecture in England post-conquest can be notably

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seen in the finesse of St John's Chapel at the London Tower, Durham Cathedral, and Winchester Cathedral (Huscroft 308).

It is logical to say that the Normans were fantastic military and religious architects who did maintain control over the English kingdom and introduced a wave of changes that transformed England and assisted in its development throughout the centuries by reshaping its identity and formulating a stronger Anglo-Norman kingdom.

### **2.7.3. Impacts of the Conquest on the English Society**

It is generally agreed that the Norman Conquest of England had caused destruction and chaos on the English lands during the first years of consolidating the Norman rule. Villages and towns were ravaged as a consequence of the English rebellions and that had left the lower class of society to suffer a lot of losses farming lands were eradicated and many people were killed and the greatest example of this damage is illustrated in the Harrying of the North. However, the Normans proceeded to rebuild towns and villages surrounding the castles that were erected all across the British Isles in order to offer the English community a respectful way of life that was pretty much similar to what they had under Anglo-Saxon rule.

Post-conquest England had more than a hundred towns all across the kingdom and the population was concentrated in the most important ones like: Winchester, York, and London. These towns were inhabited by a great portion of English population which occupied different kind of trades (blacksmithing, pottering, brewing as well as agricultural production).

It is significantly hard to distinguish the changes that occurred amongst the lowest ranks of the English society following the settlement of the Normans and their rule in England. The everyday life of peasants didn't change much, they had the same agricultural jobs of farming lands and providing for the Norman lords like they did during the Anglo-Saxon rule (Loyn 337).

Under the Norman regime, the class of peasants was made of 90 per cent of the population in England and they were divided into different ranks: Freemen were the free peasants *liberi homines* (as called in the Domesday Book), they had the option to hold small portions of land in return for payment to the lord who had offered it to them. Villeins were imposed to work on a lord's lands with no payment but to take a sum of the food they

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produce. A large number of the English population turned out to become Villeins in the Anglo-Norman Kingdom working to provide for themselves and their lords with no payments. Following down the social peasantry scale were the bordars and cottars who were even poorer than villeins and they were given less if no lands at all, they were subjected to hard types of working so they could provide for themselves. Finally at the bottom of the social scale were the slaves who made up about 10 per cent of England's population in 1086 (Huscroft 54).

However, one of the major adjustments that was witnessed during the Anglo-Norman rule on the social scale was the decline of slavery in England. This was seen by many historians as an act of an elevation process of changing the traditions of "slavery" into "servility" in the British lands. The process of eliminating slavery in England was encouraged by the church but for the Normans, it wasn't all a humane engagement, rather it was easier and much more profitable for them to offer peasants lands in return for their hard work than maintaining the costs of owning slaves. The influence of the Norman regime eventually led to the decline of slavery in England and by about 1200 the rate of slavery in Britain was non-existent (Chibnall 191).

Life in the villages did not change much during the Norman rule. Peasants lived in towns and worked on farms to provide for themselves and pay their lords, the difference happened in the social hierarchy that was introduced on the English population. English men, children and women were performing services for their lords and providing food. In addition to that, the Norman customs and culture was slowly connecting with that of the English through language, traditions and intermarriage between Normans and the English, and that eventually produced a new hybrid society that varied in many ways yet still lived in one piece of land, the English kingdom.

Moreover, the status of women declined in Norman England. Unlike during the Anglo-Saxon times when they had rights to own lands and participate in many ways within society, the coming of the Normans and their rule had put an end to that. Women lost many of their rights. A prime example of that was women who inherited lands and were soon married to a man who would take control over their proprietries. The Anglo-Norman England was a masculine society that did not care nor offer women much rights and freedom for it was seen that women could never reach the capabilities of men within their society (Clark 233).

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The Normans aimed to bring order and development to the English society by introducing different changes in the social scale as well as presenting aspects of the European culture in general and the Norman culture specifically to the English. These series of changes that happened during the Norman rule of England were not all a blessing nor all a curse upon the English population, the calamity of adjustments varied but also have proven to be a crucial series of events that reshaped the whole kingdom.

### **2.8. Connecting England to Europe**

One of the most significant influences of the Norman Conquest can be depicted in the fact that England and Normandy were eventually connected, not only that but that in return meant that the English kingdom was brought closer to the European continent more than ever before.

After the consolidation of the Norman rule over the English kingdom, there had been a great development in the relationship between Normandy and England due to the tight connection that lingered between them. England was more than ever involved in the European politics and economics. Throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> century, England and France became intimately connected for the fact that the English monarchs of this time were Normans. England became more exposed to not only French politics, culture and economics but also to the whole European world to the east (Hurlock).

In addition to that, business and trading flourished after the consolidation of Norman power in England due to the previous mentioned connection that was established between England and its eastern neighbouring countries. Trading networks between England and France were prospering that eventually developed with other European nations at the time. This meant that economy in England started to grow. English ports were benefiting from foreign merchants and merchandise and goods from different places were being sold and bought, thus assisting in the growth of wealth in England over time (The National Archives).

The bridge of connection built between England and Europe due to the Norman Conquest also took part in entangling the politics and culture of England with that of Normandy and the rest of Europe in general. This had eventually led to a great deal of changes within England for many cultural and social aspects were adopted, mixed and built on with the English ones to produce a hybrid society and even more a modern kingdom

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befitting to be taking part in the European affairs unlike during the Anglo-Saxon time when the British Isles were isolated to a certain point from the rest of Europe (Cartwright).

### **2.9. Conclusion**

All in all, the conquest had bestowed a great deal of changes and developments upon England. A new social hierarchy was established on all classes of society, a well developed feudal system came to existence that placed all power basically in the hands of the monarch, surveys of land that developed more during the Anglo-Norman period and became considered a great source of documentation in the history of England. Furthermore, religion, language and architecture saw reforms and changes that rebuilt on the existing Anglo-Saxon culture and reshaped it into a modern one at the time.

Although there was evidence of better changes in England due to the Norman Conquest, the fact that there were negative outcomes born from it cannot be hidden either. Both cultures of the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans were intertwined to produce a hybrid society with bilingualism being spread gradually all over the British Isles as well as cultural adoptions and improvements that the Normans took from the Anglo-Saxons and proceeded to build on. However, the lower class of society suffered nevertheless from the changes that happened and were stripped off their true native English identity.

Thus, what makes the Norman Conquest an intriguing historical event that is still debated nowadays is the transformations that touched England during a crucial time in history. In addition to that, there is no doubt that as much as the development of England during the Norman rule came with its fruits and blessings, it also destroyed many of the Anglo-Saxon heritage and reshaped the English identity throughout the decades of its existence. The aftermath of the Conquest on England have been so deep it affected the kingdom both positively and negatively.

*Chapter Three*  
*The Aftermath of*  
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## **Chapter Three: The Aftermath of the Norman Conquest of England**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The Norman conquest of England has been a significant event in history that is still widespread nowadays. Not only that the conquest itself was a masterpiece of brilliant strategizing and planning but also its success eventually led to greater changes in England. These changes have culminated in reshaping the identity of England and mixing the Anglo-Saxon heritage with Norman customs and traditions. The Norman rule of England has changed the course of the kingdom in history, scholars still talk about it nowadays as the event which changed the identity of one of the strongest nations in the history and gave it Norman ties through history.

In this chapter, the light will be shed on whether the conquest was a blessing or a curse upon England based on the many impacts of the conquest which were illustrated in the previous chapter. Moreover, the changes that occurred in England during the Norman rule are still widespread nowadays and a prime example would be the English language that is spoken today. Historians often debate the Norman Conquest impacts were deeply rooted in the English identity.

### **3.2. Importance of the Norman Conquest**

Scholars and historians still debate and analyse the event of the Norman Conquest of England, for it had altered the English identity through history, transforming the customs, laws, language and even political and economic aspects into a strong monarchy that was considered one of the most prestigious kingdoms at the time in all of Europe. That makes the Norman Conquest one of the most important events in history.

The first significant importance of the Conquest can be how its impacts on England had been a great alteration of English history. The conquest had linked the kingdom to Europe and cut its root ties to Vikings. With their ideologies and customs, the Normans had rebuilt what was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom into a powerful Anglo-Norman kingdom all across Europe at the time.

Another importance of the Conquest is seen through the brilliant governing and ruling over the English and introducing the English society to the European inspired Norman customs. The changes which occurred during the Norman rule of England are agreed on by many historians as being a key to the rise of a strong kingdom overtime which had embraced the newly European Norman identity.

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Moreover, England under the Norman rule became more moderate and more involved into the European ways rather than Scandinavian traditions and way of living. The strength of the Norman rulers in imposing their Customs and ways of living in England thus, providing ties to Europe and a more moderate standards that reshaped the kingdom's identity as whole and its English society especially.

Furthermore, historically the Conquest had been debated by scholars as being a critical event in the history of England. The Normans are acknowledged for a big deal of central changes that touched not only the Kingdom as whole but also a reformulation of social, economic and political scales that were highly significant in formulating one of the most sophisticated governmental system in Europe at the time. The conquest is also regarded as important for it changed the English language and culture gradually for good that it still can be seen nowadays.

In addition, the importance of the conquest can be assigned as well to the Norman military brilliance in achieving the victory. In his book *"The History of England from the Norman Conquest to the Death of John (1066-1216)"*, that was originally published in 1905, George Burton Adams illustrates that the firm planning and the strategies that William the Conqueror implemented in his invasion alongside with his great sense of leadership in battle is the biggest contribution to the final results of the Conquest. Thus, making it an important event to study and to analyse the process of its success over the course of history.

It is safe to assume that though being the last successful military invasion of England, the Norman Conquest with all good and bad outcomes that came from underneath it have played a major role not only in the history of England but also through the course of European development eventually.

### **3.3. The Impacts of the Conquest**

The Norman Conquest has been a fiercely debated matter in the English history, there existed Norman sources depicting their right to rule over England whereas there are some English sources like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that describes the Normans harshly. However, the rightness or wrongness of the Conquest became a less concern topic, scholars and historians of the late centuries focus more on the impacts and the influence and the changes that the conquest had brought not on a national scale only but on a

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worldwide scale, for the Norman Conquest was a major deal in building a network of connection between England and the rest of Europe (Clanchy 33).

The changes brought by the Conquest upon England were debated for a long period of time by historians for as much as some of the impacts brought good changes on England and its population, many harsh and bad outcomes followed the Conquest and had radically changed the Kingdom in a short period of time.

While some historians see the Norman Conquest and its impacts as a blessing that boosted the development of England and brought more power to the kingdom, others like the English historian Edward Augustus Freeman saw the Conquest as an unjust radical invasion that destroyed the old English heritage and replaced it with Norman roots. Thus, the impacts brought by the Norman Conquest can be seen both through the good changes and the bad outcomes that followed the Norman rule in England.

### **3.3.1. Good Impacts**

The fruits of the conquest can be seen through the great changes that occurred in England following the year of the Conquest. England had been a divided power amongst Anglo-Saxons who were connected more to the Scandinavian world and its customs. Following the rule of the Normans this changed radically, the kingdom was brought more under the control of Norman monarchs.

The changes that came out of the Norman rule in England on the political scale were illustrated in the previous chapter. England saw the introduction of radical laws that aimed to preserve control and maintain a strong central rule of the Kingdom. The English monarchy under the Normans have seen its highest prestigious forms for that order was restored, the Anglo-Saxon institutions that existed before were also boosted and developed under the Norman rule and this gave the power of kings and the government more recognition and acknowledgement by the English.

#### **3.3.1.1. Impacts on Language**

Furthermore, the revolution brought by the Normans in England worked its way through the introduction of a new language in the nation that was derived from a mixture of old English and the French spoken by the Normans. The Conquest had hastened the process of reviving the use of Latin in governmental business and French became widely

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used amongst the high classes of the social ladder. Eventually on the long run, this led to the emergence of Middle English. A great revolution on the level of language that is still widespread nowadays and many of the vocabulary that is used nowadays in English owes its originality to the Norman Conquest and how it gave birth to a language that is structured with a mixture of French and Old English. Thus, the Norman-French and the Anglo-Saxon that were spoken at the time paved way for the English that is used today and this can be concluded as a positive outcome of the Conquest.

### **3.3.1.2. Evolution of Architecture**

The introduction of castle building by the Normans came out as an extraordinary idea for the English as they never witnessed such huge strong fortifications. The range of architectural revolution that happened in England after 1066 was self-explanatory. Great cathedrals and churches were erected by the Normans that still survive nowadays. This marked a great evolution of architecture in England that is still predominant nowadays and studied by specialists for its complexity and beauty.

An additional positive outcome that is agreed on by many scholars is the fact that due to the Norman Conquest, England broke its connection to the Scandinavian world and became more involved with West European nations. This had opened a new path for the English trade to flourish and the introduction of many European customs and cultural aspects to England through the extensive contact between different peoples.

### **3.3.1.3. Impacts on the Culture**

England's culture was already influenced by Nordic Vikings and with the coming of the Norman Conquest, England became a nation born out of a mixture of Germanic Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman-French cultures and customs. That made the kingdom exceptionally unlike anywhere else on the European continent and contributed massively somewhat to what has become the modern British/English nation.

### **3.3.1.4. A strong governmental system**

Another positive impact of the Conquest is its roots for the formation of a parliamentary system over time in England. Some scholars acknowledge the birth of the

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parliamentary system of the House of the Lords and the House of the Commons from the tenurial system that was adopted in England by the Norman rulers. The creation of a new ruling class who held huge lands from the kings and a common class of people who held smaller portions of lands from the barons down the social scale eventually became involved in the laws that governed the country by dividing a parliamentary system which developed a House consisting of Lords and a House of Commons that the common class had rights to be elected in it (Helen Key).

The Norman's introduction of a modern well-built feudal system of governing eventually helped maintaining a strong authority and a more of a political unity that culminated into the creations of strong historical institutions by the Normans and their descendants in England. This impact is great for it was the one of the first steps into developing a strict and organized governing system that had long term lasting effects not only on the governmental level of England but also the whole world eventually (Brown 187).

In short, the Norman Conquest came to supply England with a vast variety of changes that are seen by some historians as a blessing that bestowed the kingdom and brought it together towards development on different scales. All the previous mentioned impacts have contributed in the creation of a modern England and a strong kingdom at the time. However, there can be no lie that the Conquest also brought horror along with it on the English which varied from deaths to harsh peasant life.

### **3.3.2. Bad Impacts**

As much as some arguments tend to approve of the goodness brought by the Conquest on the English, the bitter fact of this section is that the year 1066 also bestowed massive destruction in England and detached the English from their Anglo-Saxon roots and forced them to unify under a new Anglo-Norman identity.

Some of the English sources that toggle the Norman Conquest have shown feelings of resentment describing the Normans as ruthless invaders. The English chronicler Orderic Vitalis stated in his book "*Historia Ecclesiastica*" that The Norman Conquest of England was a forceful subjugation of the kingdom to William of Normandy and his foreign Norman allies who "robbed" England. This shows that the topic of the Conquest varies between being good and a terrible event in the history of England.

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### **3.3.2.1. The Wipe-out of Anglo-Saxon rulers**

To a certain extent, horrors and the elimination of many Englishmen especially the Anglo-Saxon nobility that was wiped out by the Norman Conquerors and having their land possessions confiscated and given to Norman lords who were loyal to the Norman King. This meant a big win for the Normans and a great development in their wealth while England was slowly being stripped off its Anglo-Saxon identity and the taking over of many lands for the account of new foreign aristocrats who controlled them ruthlessly.

### **3.3.2.2. Norman Ruthlessness**

The English peasants suffered a lot of consequences that followed the Norman invasion of England. Their lands were stripped and some of them even wiped out and destroyed. A prime example of that can be noted in the harrying of the North which left most of North England in ashes and totally obliterated. Great portions of lands, animals and even English population was eliminated in the process of gaining the control of England. The Normans showed their ruthlessness and military power that was used to enforce laws and total control of the kingdom.

The first years of the Conquest and its consolidation had seen many genocides and death. The harrying of the north is a prime example which was reported in the Domesday Book to have resulted in the perishing of great amounts of lands, livestock and about 150,000 people were lost to starvation and on the hands on the Normans. This shows that the natives suffered a lot of losses during the revolts that the English tried against the Normans as the latter proceeded to exterminate any objection against the Norman rule with ruthlessness and cruel military methods which is seen as a negative impact that was born out of the Conquest (Muir 121).

### **3.3.2.3. Imposing the Norman Authority**

Furthermore, when the Normans took over England, they introduced many sections of harsh land laws and ruthless laws against crimes all for the purpose of enhancing the

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King's power and to display the strength of a Norman government. These laws made life harder for the natives and many of them suffered terrible punishments for what was seen as tyrannical laws like the forest laws that were introduced during the time of the Norman rule.

It can be seen that the changes brought by the Normans on the social, political and even economic scale in England was disastrous due to the fact that this massive revolution of what was known as Anglo-Saxon English identity slowly became overridden by Norman customs and cultural aspects that wiped out the roots of the British identity and gave it a more of Norman-French aspects to define it. Language transformed as French words violated the Old English language and became part of it. Also Norman customs and way of living became widespread amongst the natives. All these changes slowly wiped out the Anglo-Saxon aspects and reformed the English identity into a more of Norman-French one. The Conquest thus, can be classified as the major cause of losing the Anglo-Saxon heritage and replacing it with Norman aspects.

It was a harsh world that the Normans imposed on England. The status of Women was less important during the Norman rule than under the Anglo-Saxons. Women in Norman England were stripped out of their rights in inheritance and were merely seen as tools for marriage and gaining land.

Whether or not the Conquest lifted the status of peasants and made their lives better is still questionable. On one aspect, the Normans abolished slavery in England but in return for that, they built a peasant hierarchy scale that had put peasants into harsh obligations of labour in lands for a basic needs as their food, this can basically be noted as the equivalent of slavery but with extra systematic steps.

The Norman Conquest is still seen by many English people as the curse which fell upon England and destroyed its heritage for there is a great deal of account which proves how the British Isles oversaw a radical change in so short time from the Conquest to present day. In the eyes of the English, this change only destroyed the past of what is truly known as the English identity that was replaced by Norman aspects.

### **3.3.2.4. The Norman Yoke**

The term Norman Yoke basically came to represent the idea that England was a free country until the Norman Conquest happened and the oppression of the Normans did strip England of its liberty. The term has been used to argue that the establishment of

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Norman rule in England at 1066 usurped England of its true identity and had destroyed the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon golden age. The supporters of this idea claim that the Norman invasion of England in 1066 was a significant act of tyranny that stripped off the true English identity and replaced its roots with Norman seeds that grew to represent England as a kingdom later on.

Ages after the Norman Conquest, the idea of “Norman Yoke” became linked with claims of how the Anglo-Saxon English nationalism was destroyed by the Normans and the history of England oversaw a change of course from Anglo-Saxon golden age to a Norman one that was foreign for the English.

The Scottish novelist, Sir Walter Scott wrote in his novel “*Ivanhoe*” verses depicting the influence of Normans on changing the identity of what was known as English:

Norman saw on English oak.  
On English neck a Norman yoke;  
Norman spoon to English dish,  
And England ruled as Normans wish;  
Blithe world in England never will be more,  
Till England's rid of all the four (Chap.27, 1819).

Depicting the Normans as foreign usurpers who destroyed the English heritage and stripped off the roots of English identity for it was imagined that during the Anglo-Saxon rule, England saw better days than during the Norman rule.

### 3.4. The Legacy of the Conquerors

Though the Norman Conquest happened a long time ago, the legacy it has left behind and the future that the Normans have paved for England still can be seen in nowadays England as a nation. Many of the different influences that the Normans had on the English years ago can still be notably observed and debated.

The Normans have developed a strict social hierarchy system in England followed by the introduction of a stronger feudal system that was documented in the Domesday Book, in which the king surveyed the whole land to keep account of how much tax every person should pay. The book still survives nowadays and it is considered a brilliant survey tool for the time it was composed in. It offers a glimpse on the ways which the Normans

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sought to extract wealth from England in a very practical way as well as them being a minority who maintained control over a larger number of English population at the time.

Another mark that is left by the Normans which can be easily noted even in nowadays England is particularly the Norman architecture. The castles, cathedrals and churches that were erected by the Conquerors. Impressive building styles that were brought across the channel by Normans with new materials and architectural ideas at the time that represented instruments of power that stamped the iron grip which the Normans have had on the landscape of England, and these architectural styles modernised constructions in England and lasted for many years (“The Legacy of the Norman Conquest”).

The legacy of Normans also is duly noted on the cultural aspect. Norman customs and cultures deeply impacted the English and there was a shift from Anglo-Saxon to French-Norman customs; one of the lasting marks in this aspect can be seen at how Norman-French names replaced the traditional Anglo-Saxon names in addition to fashion which shifted towards a more modernised Norman aspect that had participated in leaving an everlasting mark on England.

With the uprising central governmental system that the Normans imposed in England came major reformations and changes that eventually led to the introduction of many Norman aspects in England that transformed the knowledge historians have of the English society that would not have existed without the conquest. The impacts that the conquest have brought on England were not immediate but grew over time to change the identity of English culture forever that some of the impacts are still existent in today’s England and the English society.

The Bayeux Tapestry is another legacy which the Normans have left behind and that is still existing today to depict the Norman version of the Conquest.

### **3.4.1. The Bayeux Tapestry**

One of the most iconic historical legacy left by the Norman Conquest is the Bayeux Tapestry which is basically a large embroidered piece of art nearly 70 meters long and 50 centimetres in height that tells the tale of the Norman Invasion of 1066. The Tapestry is considered an important medieval work of art and a rich source of historical information concerning the Norman Conquest. The Bayeux Tapestry depicts scenes of how the Norman Invasion of England took place.

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It is considered an important legacy left behind by the Normans as it is considered a remarkable source of information for the period of the Conquest. It is also considered as an exquisite medieval artifact that has inspired many modern political cartoons and embroideries.

The Bayeux Tapestry is currently on permanent display at a museum in the town of Bayeux, in Normandy, and has very rarely been moved. However, the French president announced that it would be loaned to be displayed in the British Museum in 2022 which will be the first time the Tapestry would leave France for after 950 years (“Bayeux Tapestry to Be Displayed in Britain”).

Millions of people nowadays from England and even the United States of America are considered the descendants of Normans. A big example on that theory is that Queen Elizabeth II is considered the descendant of William the Conqueror. It is safe to say that the Normans have left their genetics in a huge amount of nowadays English population and even Americans down the lane of generations. For the Normans, this can be considered one of their greatest legacy and achievement through the course of history.

### **3.5. Debates on the Norman Conquest**

The topic of the Norman Conquest has attracted many eyes, from the Battle of Hastings till the 21<sup>st</sup> century, debates have varied over time and many interpretations were developed on the Norman Conquest. Some historians have seen that it has changed the course of England from an Anglo-Saxon identity to a whole new Norman one. Whilst other historians see that the Norman takeover England was the reason of destroying the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon generations that existed in England before the Conquest.

#### **3.5.1. Pro Anglo-Saxon supporters**

On the one hand, English historians saw that the Norman Conquest of England had wiped out the English nationalism, Edward Augustus Freeman was an English historian who wrote his book “*History of the Norman Conquest*” that was published between 1867 and 1879. Freeman’s work showed great call for English Nationalism and an acknowledgment of the Anglo-Saxon identity of England, wherein he denounced the

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rightness of the Norman Invasion and saw it as the destruction of true English identity that existed in England before the coming of the Normans (Brundage 103).

Historian and author Peter Rex who composed the book *“1066: A New History of the Norman Conquest”* often held the Norman Conquest as a devastating propaganda by Norman regime that eventually wiped out Anglo-Saxon claim on England. These views that refused to acknowledge the righteousness of the Conquest have been widespread by many English nationalists that saw the Anglo-Saxons as the true Englishmen and the invasion of 1066 as a merely radical change that flipped the pages and marked a turning point in the origins of the British Isles over time.

The so called “pro Anglo-Saxons”<sup>1</sup> have always debated the wrongness of the conquest and describe the Norman rule as harsh and brutal one that destroyed the true English spirit of the natives. This is portrayed in the documentary that was released in 2009 under the name *“1066: The Battle for Middle Earth”*, the series that was directed by Justin Hardy illustrates the fate of the nationalist English spirit and the Anglo-Saxon try to survive against the brutality of the Normans and their invasion in 1066 (Wollaston).

Another point that support these theories is the lack of English sources that depicted the events which happened during and post-conquest a part from the famous Anglo-Saxon chronicles. It is said that history is written by the victorious, and the majority of Norman sources that tackled the Conquest is often seen to be diminishing the brutality of the event and the harshness of the Norman regime that eventually changed the course of England’s history.

The Norman Conquest was interpreted by many historians as destructive to the old English kingdom, secondly as the real starting point of English history, vice-versa, and back again. The interpretation of the Conquest as a bad omen that was bestowed upon England have far more support by English medievalist historians who saw it as a wipe out to the true English roots and its Anglo-Saxon origin.

### **3.5.2. Norman Supporters**

On the other hand, another wave of historians see that the Norman Conquest came as a revolution that reshaped England like never before. This second view upon the Norman Conquest glorifies the Norman success and acknowledge the fact that the Norman

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<sup>1</sup>- Historians and all the people who support the Anglo-Saxon rule of England rather than the Norman one.

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existence and rule of England have reshaped and developed a greater kingdom with a motion of great changes that we still see today.

This side of the debate about the Conquest tends to see how the Invasion have changed the English course in history on so many levels despite its side effects on the natives at the time and assisted in creating one of the strongest nations widely known today. The Conquest is seen to have given birth eventually to the famous Magna Carta, great literature and a worldwide kingdom on which the sun never sets.

From another perspective, this side aims to study the bigger picture that came out of the Norman Conquest of England and the great economic, historical, political and cultural changes that followed the Norman rule. Authors like David Douglas and Sir Frank Stenton contributed in the said argument and offered a wider perspective to the 1066 events. From their point of view, the Conquest has boosted the development of England rapidly in the medieval times into becoming a great kingdom. Even though there were some brutal, devastating outcomes on the English, the wider scope resolves on how the Normans actually managed things in England, all of the customs and cultural aspects that they imposed, as well as analysing the fact that through the Normans, England became more attached to Europe and brought them closer. This in itself is seen as a great achievement that the Conquest has bestowed upon England.

The Pro-Norman supporters of the conquest tend to paint an image of how England was built into a new strong kingdom under the Norman rule and all the “miracles” that they introduced to the British Isles were far greater than how things were under Anglo-Saxon rule. In addition to that, this side of historians and scholars who are fascinated by the conquest and its impacts don’t credit the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon rule in England nor give it much importance, because it is seen for them that the Normans brought light to medieval England and helped greatly into advancing the kingdom into one of the strongest nations that exist nowadays.

### **3.6. England without the Norman Conquest**

It is an incredible and almost a complicated question to imagine what England would be like today if the Norman Conquest had failed or never taken place at all. The answer to that has many diverse outcomes for if the invasion wasn’t successful, then England as we know of it today wouldn’t be the same and its development would be in the hands of the Anglo-Saxons who ruled before the Normans.

## **Chapter Three: The Aftermath of the Norman Conquest of England**

The scope of the previously mentioned question is wide for there are a lot of other possibilities of how England and even the United States of America would be today like. Linguistically, English without the influence of French would not exist, thus would have developed entirely different by the hands of the Anglo-Saxons making it sound more Germanic in addition to the different cultural aspects of England which would become definitely something else from how they have developed under the Normans.

Another point that is worth mentioning for the intriguing question is the fact that England's ethnicity would be rather a merged mix between Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons since their long time connection, this would have made England's culture to develop easier than introducing rather a new foreign culture that is the Norman and imposing it on an Anglo-Saxon population.

All of the impacts that have been discussed in this dissertation would have not existed but rather different outcome to the development of England and its place in history. For the whole world would be different than what it is today. England with the outcome of the events that took place in 1066 and the Norman Conquest assisted greatly into unifying the British Isles and connecting the kingdom to Europe which have concluded in making England one of the most influential kingdoms on the world's history.

Nevertheless, the fact that the Normans have had a strong influence on the development of England into the nation it is today cannot be ignored. The Conquest and its aftermaths on the longer path had paved the way for England to rise as a strong kingdom and participate greatly in the development of the whole world.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter was made to analyse the different aspects that followed the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 and the results proved that the rightness or wrongness of the Conquest is no longer a big interest to scholars and historians. Rather it was the amount of positive effects and the negative ones that were brought by the invasion. There are sides who neglect the rightness of the Conquest and describe it as a destructive brutal event that wiped out the true English heritage that was gone with the end of Anglo-Saxon rule in England, and the other side see the Conquest as an event that was historically inevitable, and though it came with bad outcomes to a certain degree, it still has brought a great change to the British kingdom and have helped in the evolution of one of the greatest nations in the world.

### **Chapter Three: The Aftermath of the Norman Conquest of England**

To sum up, the Norman Conquest of England is a crucial event in the history of not only England but also the whole world. An invasion that rebuilt a shattered kingdom into a strong unified one that had planted its roots in Europe. Eventually over the centuries, the Norman descendants have reached even the Americas and contributed into the evolution of the world as whole. To what has been discussed beforehand, the Norman Conquest still cause a controversy due to the time of its happening as well as the lack of huge portion of essential sources to decipher its impacts fully and to unveil the ambiguities of its rightness or wrongness.

# *General Conclusion*

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore how the Norman Conquest took place in history and to investigate the factors that eventually led to its departure and successful reformation of England. This topic is of a great interest in English history, for the Norman Conquest has resulted in a series of long term effects that eventually bestowed a whole transformation upon the English kingdom and its population.

The results of the study have revealed that there are historical factors that validate the rightness of the conquest as being a child of broken promises following the death of Edward the Confessor. However, the events that led to it are still rather intriguing in history for the account of lack of many solid resources and evidence due to the fact that the Conquest took place in a time where writing historical materials was still in its earliest stages in England. Nevertheless, this dissertation painted a vision of its happening and how much brutality, strength and reformations it took to consolidate a new authority over England that would later unite the British Isles as whole under Norman rule.

Another result of the study tackled the ambiguities of whether or not the effects of the invasion were of a positive impact or touched the kingdom and its native population badly through investigating the different impacts that followed the conquest. The findings of this study have shown how England was affected by the Normans and all the reforms and changes they brought with them and a new English identity was being born, one that was greatly influenced by the Normans on the socio-politico-economic scales.

On the whole, this event is a crucial one in history and historians and scholars are still investigating the facts about how it happened and more importantly exploring the many consequences that were bestowed upon England during the Norman rule. The Normans have imposed their authority by introducing strict systems of governing on the Anglo-Saxon natives of England with their Western Europe culture influence thus, connecting the kingdom to Europe after years of being linked to Scandinavians. Moreover, this study has investigated how The Normans have progressively transmuted plenty of aspects both political and cultural which had evolved England's identity and its population into what is today. A prime example of that was the finding that English language has evolved into what it is today thanks to the Norman-French language that was brought by the Normans and eventually infused with old English to develop the language that is spoken widely today in the world.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This dissertation has also attempted to illustrate the deep transformations that occurred on the social scale, the political aspects and the English culture. These findings have shown that the impacts of the conquest on England were a mix of great impacts and worse bad ones and still. Thus, this enhances our understanding of the changes which have reshaped the English identity and participated in its development on the long term.

Further research has unveiled that the topic of the Norman Conquest of England and its impacts is still debated nowadays for its deep effects on the kingdom which can be seen today; some say that the Normans have helped greatly in the development of England while others claim that the Norman Conquest have destroyed the Anglo-Saxon heritage. This matter is recommended for further research to unveil more knowledge about the English identity.

The scope of this research was limited mostly due to the lack of sources and the fact that the English history of 1066 lacks a great deal of solid materials and concrete evidence which would have otherwise assisted into detailing further aspects concerning the Norman Conquest of England generally, and whether or not its impacts destroyed the English heritage by imposing the Norman culture on England. Hence, further research into the account of this said matter would be recommended to acquire more knowledge that would support the claims that state the Conquest as a curse that had fell on England.

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