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Warfare and Violence

‘The whole nation (*gens*) is familiar with war’, observed William of Malmesbury of the Normans, ‘and hardly knows how to live without fighting’.¹ As early as the 1070s, William the Conqueror’s encomiast William of Poitiers was boasting that ‘Norman knights possess Apulia, have conquered Sicily, defend Constantinople, and strike fear into Babylon’.² Indeed, to Anglo-Norman chroniclers looking back from the 1120s and 1130s at the remarkable extent of conquests in England and Wales, southern Italy, Sicily and the Levant it seemed that the Normans had a unique aptitude for war, a perception of which lay at the heart of what R.H.C. Davis famously termed ‘the Norman myth’.³ As the Cistercian abbot and historian Ailred of Rievaulx has Walter Espec, the leading commander of the Anglo-Norman army confronting the Scots at the battle of the Standard in 1138 tell his men, ‘Why should we despair of victory, when victory has been given to our race (*gens noster*) by the Almighty as if in fief (*quasi in feudum*)?’⁴ Yet in reality, by the reign of William the Conqueror there was little to distinguish the Norman way in war from that practiced by neighbouring principalities in northern France. The descendants of Rollo had long assimilated the military institutions, equipment and methods of fighting and fortification of the Franks, and the Bayeux Tapestry offers vivid witness to the central importance of heavy cavalry and castles to this way in warfare.⁵ As crucially, the Normans had also assimilated the military ethos of the Frankish warrior elite and the conventions governing hostilities and conduct in warfare. Other than linguistically and by their marshalling by regional units, an observer at Hastings would have found it hard to differentiate the Normans from the Bretons, Manceaux, Flemings, French, Aquitanians and others in William’s hybrid army of conquest, and it was little wonder that to the Anglo-Saxons, the invaders of 1066 were simply ‘Franci’ - Frenchmen.⁶

¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Rodney M. Thomson and Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998-1999), i, pp. 460-1.

² William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and trans. Ralph C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 156-7.

³ Ralph C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976); Nicholas Webber, ‘England and the Norman Myth’, in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. Julia S. Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 211-28.

⁴ *Aelredi Rievallensis Relatio de Standardo*, in *Chronicles and memorials of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard*, ed. Richard Howlett, 4 vols (London: Longman, 1884-1889), iii, p. 185.

⁵ For military organization in Normandy see Mark Hagger, *Norman Rule in Normandy, 911-1144* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017), pp. 612-85; John France, ‘The Importance of the Bayeux Tapestry for the History of War’, in *The Bayeux Tapestry. Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. Pierre Bouet, Brian Levy and Francois Neveux (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2004), pp. 289-300.

⁶ Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 32-35.

This fusion had important consequences. On the one hand, the Normans had little or no military advantages against their opponents in northern France whose armies, tactics and use of fortifications were essentially the same. On the other, the Norman conquests in Britain, southern Italy, Sicily and beyond can be understood as part of a wider diaspora of an aggressive warrior aristocracy expanding from a central core region of France and the German lands to the peripheries of Europe, facilitated by the superior military technology of heavily armoured cavalry, castles and crossbows.⁷ The nature and degree of such superiority, however, differed significantly between theatres of war. Save for elite retainers in the military households of leaders, the Welsh and Scots were particularly vulnerable in open combat with mail-clad knights supported by missilemen because of their general lack of defensive armour.⁸ Against guerrilla tactics in wooded, marshy, or mountainous terrain, however, heavy cavalry were much less effective, and in Wales such asymmetrical warfare frustrated total conquest and restricted Norman occupation largely to the lowlands and coastal regions. In southern Italy and Sicily, the slow pace of Norman conquest reflected the challenges posed by numerous fortifications and well-defended towns,⁹ though their effectiveness as heavy cavalry and skill in battle secured major victories at Civitate in 1053 over a papal coalition led by Leo IX, at Cerami in 1063 over the Muslims of Sicily, and at Dyrrachium in 1081 over the Byzantines.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was naval power that allowed the Normans to capture key port cities such as Bari in 1071, Palermo in 1072 and Syracuse in 1085, and to expand their power further into the Mediterranean.¹¹

Equally, Hastings cannot be seen as the inevitable victory of superior Norman arms and organization.¹² Though they fought predominantly on foot, the weapons and armour of the Anglo-Saxon military elite differed little from that of their Norman adversaries.¹³ For

⁷ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 60-84.

⁸ For important revisionism on Welsh military capacity, see Sean Davies, *War and Society in Medieval Wales, 633-1283* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), especially pp. 85-142.

⁹ Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000); George Theotokis, 'The Norman Invasion of Sicily, 1061-1072: Numbers and Military Tactics', *War in History*, 17 (2010), 381-402.

¹⁰ George Theotokis, *Warfare in the Norman Mediterranean* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020); idem., *Norman Campaigns in the Balkans: 1081 – 1108* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014).

¹¹ Matthew Bennett, 'Norman Naval Activity in the Mediterranean, c. 1060-c. 1108', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xv (1993), 41-58; Charles D. Stanton, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp. 27-66; John Gillingham, 'An Age of Expansion, c. 1020-1204', in *Medieval Warfare. A History*, ed. Maurice Keen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 59-88 at p. 65.

¹² Matthew Strickland, 'Military Technology and Conquest: the Anomaly of Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 19 (1997), 353-82.

¹³ Thom Richardson and Robert C. Woosnam-Savage, 'The Armour and Weapons of the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans', in *1066 in Perspective*, ed. David Bates (Leeds: Royal Armouries Museum, 2018), pp. 48-78; and

much of the long battle, Harold's closely ordered defensive formation proved highly effective against the charges of the Norman horsemen and the Normans only narrowly averted disaster when part of William's army broke in flight, believing him to have been slain.¹⁴ An important recent re-assessment of the battlefield has shown just how strong Harold's defensive position was, but he had not intended to fight a defensive battle.¹⁵ Harold had lost many of his best men at Fulford Gate and Stamford Bridge and he is said to have marched against William before half of his army had assembled.¹⁶ His attempt to take William by surprise, as he had done with success against Harald Hardraada at Stamford Bridge, may well have been intended to offset such disadvantages. As it was, William proved the better general, and his near continuous campaigning from 1047 stood in contrast to the more limited fighting experience of English armies between 1035 and 1066: 'peace and prosperity had made their state vulnerable'.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the extraordinary strategic circumstances of 1066 and the exceptional size and quality of William's army of invasion must be considered in any judgment on the capacity of the military institutions of late Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁸ As king, William deployed Anglo-Saxon troops in his continental campaigns as early as 1073, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* recorded their role in the subjugation of Maine in 1073 with evident pride.¹⁹ He equally made use of Anglo-Saxon naval forces to blockade the rebel fastness of the Isle of Ely in 1071 and in support of his march into Scotland in 1072.²⁰ Yet the Conquest witnessed a marked decline in the significance of naval power: William was unable to pose any maritime challenge to Danish fleets, thereby allowing them 'strategic initiative and unfettered freedom of movement', nor even in defensive terms is there any record of

Matthew Bennett, 'The Myth of the Military Supremacy of Knightly Cavalry', in *Armies, Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1998), pp. 304-316

¹⁴ The best in-depth analysis of the campaign and battle remains Michael K. Lawson, *The Battle of Hastings* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003).

¹⁵ John Gillingham, '1066 and Warfare: the Context and Place (Senlac) of the battle of Hastings', in *1066 in Perspective*, pp. 109-22.

¹⁶ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. and trans. Reginald R. Darlington and Patrick McGurk, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-), ii, pp. 604-5.

¹⁷ Stephen Baxter, 'The Limits of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', *Der Frühmittelalterliche Staat - Europäische Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Pohl, and Veronika Wieser (Vienna: 2009), pp. 503-14 at pp. 509-10, 'the English were not' "match fit" in 1066'.

¹⁸ JW, ii, pp. 604-5; Richard Abels, 'From Alfred to Harold II: the Military Failure of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in *The Normans and their Adversaries at War: Essays in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, ed. Richard Abels and Bernard Bachrach (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), p. 15-30.

¹⁹ ASC, E, 1073; Craig M. Nakashian, 'The Use and Impact of the English Levied Soldiers in Anglo-Norman England', *Comitatus*, 37 (2006), 1-31.

²⁰ For an important contextual discussion, John O. Prestwich, *The Place of War in English History, 1066-1214* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), pp. 27-40, 'Sea Power'.

William mustering the fleet on the south coast off Sandwich or the Isle of Wight, as his royal predecessors had often done as standard response to such threats.²¹

Justifying William's Wars

The primary duty of every medieval ruler was to ensure peace and justice within their realm by suppressing lawlessness and rebellion, and to defend it against external threat. The *rex pacificus* was one who brought such peace by successful warfare, a notion encapsulated in the *laudes regiae* chanted before William as king of England at solemn crown-wearings: 'To the most serene William, the great and peace-giving King, crowned by God, life and victory (*magno et pacific regi vita et victoria*)'.²² So too in Normandy, William of Poitiers stressed that as soon as he had reached his majority, young Duke William 'especially prohibited slaughter, fire and pillage', curbing 'private' warfare between rival nobles within the duchy and thereby protecting the Church, the poor and the weak.²³ Indeed, throughout his *Gesta Guillelmi*, Poitiers was anxious to stress that all of William's wars, 'whether conquering in external wars or suppressing sedition, rapine and brigandage' were in accordance with the Church's teaching on the *ius ad bellum* as articulated by St Augustine and subsequent canonists, and that he never 'undertook a war where justice was lacking'.²⁴

Even in a war of defence against King Henry I of France's invasions of Normandy in 1053, 1054 and 1057, Poitiers felt it necessary to claim – perhaps with a degree of truth – that William was reluctant to bear arms against his feudal overlord or to 'engage in battle with his army when the king was present, unless as a last resort'.²⁵ When the Conqueror carried war into the lands of the French king, it was usually in response to raiding into Normandy as in 1078-9 and 1087. Conversely, what were in reality aggressive wars of invasion could be justified on the grounds of inheritance and the recovery of lost rights (*rebus repetitis*).²⁶ In

²¹ Nicholas J. Hooper, 'Some Observations on the Navy in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992) p. 17-26; Nicholas M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea. A Naval History of Britain, 660-1649* (London: Penguin, 1997), pp. 36-39 at p. 38.

²² Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), pp. 178-9; David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 249-50.

²³ *GG*, pp. 8-9.

²⁴ *GG*, pp. pp. 80-1; Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 16-39.

²⁵ *GG*, pp. 50-1, and pp. 18-19. For such scruples, see Matthew Strickland, 'Henry I and the Battle of the Two Kings: Brémule, 1119', in *Normandy and its Neighbours, 900-1250. Essays For David Bates*, ed. David Crouch and Kathleen Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 77-116 at pp. 90-4

²⁶ Russell, *The Just War*, pp. 18-19, and cf *GG* pp.108-9, where William is made to say of Harold, 'he will fight for fear of losing the things he has wrongly seized (*rapina*)'.

regard to Maine, Poitiers noted how ‘William, who had more than one right (*iure multiplici*) to succeed Herbert, took to arms so that he could recover what had been snatched from him in this way’, and falsely claimed that Norman dukes had long been its overlords.²⁷ Norman writers were at still greater pains to show that William’s claim to the throne of England was just and unimpeachable, though William of Poitiers made the revealing comment that William held England ‘both by hereditary designation confirmed by the oath of the English, and by right of conquest (*iure belli*)’.²⁸ He casts the battle of Hastings as a judicial duel, an ordeal by combat in which God decided the right of William’s cause, and noted that the Normans attacked first, just as ‘when orators are engaged in a lawsuit about theft, he who prosecutes the crime makes the first speech’.²⁹ Nevertheless, cognisant of how bloody the battle would be, Poitiers claims that to avoid the slaughter of so many fellow Christians, Duke William had offered to settle his dispute with Harold by arbitration or if he refused that, by single combat.³⁰ It is most unlikely that in the circumstances Duke William ever did so, although such challenges were a common diplomatic tactic to assert legal and moral probity, made in the knowledge that they would invariably be refused.³¹

Papal blessing for the invasion of England had been a major diplomatic coup for Duke William,³² and was all the more resonant given that in 1063 Alexander II had sent Count Roger of Sicily a papal banner to sanctify his invasion of Muslim Sicily as a holy war, and had also gave papal sanction to the expedition, which included Normans and French, that took the city of Barbastro from the Muslims in 1064/5.³³ Poitiers protested that William’s motive was ‘not so much to increase his own power and glory as to reform Christian observance in those regions’.³⁴ Yet the proclaiming of meritorious wars not against pagans but against fellow Christians remained very controversial, and the need to impose a Penitential Ordinance on William’s forces through the papal legate Ermenfrid of Sion in 1067

²⁷ *GG*, pp. 60-1.

²⁸ *GG*, pp. 150-1. On William’s claims, George Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure, 1066-1166* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1-45.

²⁹ *GG*, pp. 128-9.

³⁰ *GG*, pp. 120-23.

³¹ Stephen D. White, ‘Proposing the Ordeal and Avoiding It: Strategy and Power in Western French Litigation, 1050-1110’, in *Cultures of Power. Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 89-123;.

³² Catherine Morton, ‘Pope Alexander II and the Norman Conquest’, *Latomus*, 34 (1975), 362-82; David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 221-23.

³³ Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 118-47. Alberto Ferreiro, ‘The Siege of Barbastro, 1064–65: A Reassessment’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 9 (1983), 129–44.

³⁴ *GG*, pp. 108-9.

revealed that the great bloodshed at Hastings was an embarrassment to the papacy.³⁵ Equally, William of Poitiers' repeated stress on the Ciceronian doctrine that it was right to kill a tyrant belied a deep unease at the fact that Harold had been an anointed Christian ruler.³⁶ Gregory VII later reminded William of the criticism he had endured when still a cardinal concerning the 'almost infamous charge of having lent my aid in bringing about so great a sacrifice of human life'.³⁷ Nevertheless, in his struggle with the German Emperor Henry IV Gregory himself no less controversially further developed doctrines of spiritually meritorious war against erring Christians for those warriors in the service of the papacy, and it was in such a context that Anselm of Lucca, one of Gregory's intellectual circle, even sought the aid – though in vain – of King William when imperial armies had driven Gregory from Rome in 1084.³⁸

Hostilities within Normandy and Their Limitation

Ecclesiastical writers such as William of Jumièges, William of Poitiers and Orderic Vitalis may have exaggerated the extent to which Duke William's minority was a period of violent instability and distorted the nature of localized hostilities between predatory aristocratic kin groups, fighting over lands and the castle which controlled them: despite the absence of a strong secular authority to enforce peace, forms of dispute settlement between warring nobles might place checks on hostilities and vendettas were not always the main driving force behind such warfare.³⁹ Nevertheless, the internal hostilities in the 1030s and 1040s, as well as during Robert Curthose's rule as duke of Normandy, undoubtedly reflected the aristocracy's readiness to pursue their quarrels through force of arms as of right.⁴⁰ William, however, took significant steps to restrict what William of Poitiers called '*bella*

³⁵ Herbert E. J. Cowdrey, 'Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion and the Penitential Ordinance following the Battle of Hastings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 20 (1969), 225-42.

³⁶ *GG*, pp.138-9. Poitiers makes the same justification for the duke's wars against Geoffrey Martel (*GG*, pp. 26-7, 50-51).

³⁷ Elizabeth van Houts, 'The Norman Conquest through European Eyes', *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 832-53, at 850-51.

³⁸ Herbert E. J. Cowdrey, 'Gregory VII and the Bearing of Arms', in *Montjoie. Studies in Crusade history in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer*, ed. Benjamin Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith, and Rudolf Hiestand (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), pp. 21-35; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 460 and n.34.

³⁹ Stephen. D. White, *Feuding and Peace-making in Eleventh-century France* (Routledge: 2005); Matthew Bennett, 'Violence in Eleventh-century Normandy: Feud, Warfare and Politics', in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 126-140.

⁴⁰ Dominique Barthélemy, 'Feudal War in Tenth-Century France', in *Vengeance in the Middle Ages. Emotion, Religion and Feud*, ed. Susanna A. Throop and Paul Hyams (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 105-114; and for general context Warren. C. Brown, *Violence in Medieval Europe*, (Harlow, Longman, 2011), pp. 99-134.

domestica’ not only to fulfil his duties as a Christian ruler, but to redirect the acquisitive aggression of his nobles against Normandy’s enemies beyond the duchy.

In 1047, he presided over an ecclesiastical council near Caen which promulgated the Truce of God, which prohibited fighting between Wednesday evening and Monday morning, as well as during important religious festivals, and subsequent councils at Lisieux in 1064 and Lillebonne in 1080 renewed this legislation.⁴¹ The Truce had developed in the 1020s from the earlier Peace of God movement originating in southern France from 989, in which a series of regional assemblies convened by bishops legislated against attacks on the persons or property of peasants, merchants, churchmen and all who did not actively bear arms (the *inermes*).⁴² Though often regarded as an early articulation of non-combatant immunity, these strictures were aimed only at warring nobles, and oaths to keep the Peace of God, such as that drawn up in 1023 by Bishop Warin of Beauvais, indicate legitimate rulers were exempt: in licit war to enforce peace or quell rebellion, the peasants of dissident lords could be targeted by those with rightful authority.⁴³ In the same way the duke was not bound by the constraints on violence imposed by the Truce of God when on an expedition. The *Miracles of St Audoin* noted nonetheless that as a result of the proclamation of the Truce, ‘everyone rejoiced, and especially the peasantry’⁴⁴

William subsequently prohibited the mechanisms of open warfare within the duchy. The *Consuetudines et Justicie*, drawn up for William Rufus and Robert Curthose in 1091 as a statement of ducal rights in Normandy from the time of their father, imposed significant restrictions on the building of castles and forbade anyone involved in a dispute over lands to burn houses or mills, take booty, or ‘to carry a banner, wear a hauberk, sound a horn or issue a challenge after which they might lay ambushes’.⁴⁵ Enmities, however, might still be pursued between individuals and property distrained, but no attacks were to be made on anyone when at the ducal court or the ducal host, or when travelling to and from them, nor

⁴¹ Michel De Bouärd, ‘Sur les origines de la trêve de Dieu en Normandie’, *Annales de Normandie*, 9 (1959), 169-89; Herbert E. Cowdrey, ‘The Peace and the Truce of God in the Eleventh Century’, *Past and Present*, 46 (1970), 42-67; Hagger, *Norman Rule in Normandy*, pp. 443-4.

⁴² *The Peace of God. Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 327-8, 332-4; Geoffrey Koziol, *The Peace of God* (Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, 2018).

⁴³ *The Peace of God*, ed. Head and Landes, p. 334; John Gillingham, ‘Cultures of Conquest: Warfare and Enslavement in Britain Before and After 1066’, in *Conquests in Eleventh Century England: 1016, 1066*, ed. Laura Ashe and Emily M. Ward (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), pp. 165-82, at p. 180.

⁴⁴ *Miracula S. Audoeni*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, August, vol. IV, pp. 834-5.

⁴⁵ For the text, Charles H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), pp. 281-84, clauses 4, 6, 8; Hagger, *Norman Rule in Normandy*, 441-56.

were ambushes to be set for anyone within the ducal forests.⁴⁶ Such legislation reflects the spate of just such ambushes, night attacks and assassinations by nobles against their rivals recorded taking place in the 1030s and 1040s, and in 1075 William further restricted feuds by decreeing that only the father or son of someone slain could take vengeance.⁴⁷ Such feuding and its mechanisms find parallels with revenge killings in turbulent eleventh-century Northumbria before and after 1066.⁴⁸ By contrast, when internal warfare once more broke out in Normandy during the rule of Robert Curthose, such acts of murder, mutilation or stealth killing are notable by their general absence, and may have been viewed increasingly by the Anglo-Norman nobility as unacceptable conduct.⁴⁹

Rebellion

The restriction on fortifications and the assertion in the *Consuetudines* of the duke's right to take the castles of nobles into his hands when need arose equally reflected William's concern to guard against rebellion, whose suppression accounted for much of the warfare waged by William and his sons.⁵⁰ Rebellion might take a variety of forms from armed protest which sought the redress of grievances (usually over inheritance of lands, castles or rights) to attempts at regime change, as in 1047, 1054 and 1075, which might even aim to kill the ruler, while in Maine and in England, resistance to conquest was regarded by Norman rulers as rebellion. Of all rebellions faced by William, the most divisive was that of his eldest son Robert, alienated by his father's continuing refusal to grant him any devolved rule even though he had been recognized as heir to Normandy and Maine.⁵¹ Robert found ready support from the sons of some of the greatest Norman lords who looked to the heir as a

⁴⁶ *Consuetudines*, clauses 2, 3, 7. On such enmities and their legal status if publicly proclaimed, see Robert Bartlett, 'Mortal Enmities': The Legal Aspect of Hostility in the Middle Ages', in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, ed. Belle S. Tuten and Tracy L. Billado (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 197-212.

⁴⁷ Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, p. 278.

⁴⁸ Richard A. Fletcher, *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 2003); pp. 121-22, 187-93.

⁴⁹ John Gillingham, '1066 and the Introduction of Chivalry into England', in John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century. Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. 209-31, at pp. 211-14.

⁵⁰ *Consuetudines*, clause 4; and on this right in general, Charles Coulson, 'Rendability and Castellation in Medieval France', *Château Gaillard*, 6 (1973), 59-67. For the role of castles in rebellion, Matthew Strickland, 'Military Technology and Political Resistance: Castles, Fleets and the Changing Face of Comital Rebellion in England and Normandy, c. 1026-1087', in *"The Making of Europe": Essays in Honour of Robert Bartlett*, ed. John Hudson and Sally Crumplin (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 145-83.

⁵¹ William Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (c. 1050-1134)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 71-98; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 396-404, 455-7, 484-903; Georges Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society. North-western France in the Twelfth Century', in Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, ed. Cynthia Postan (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp. 112-22.

source of patronage and likewise sought endowment and devolved authority from their own fathers, causing a generational rift within the nobility and damaging cross-generational bonds of loyalty to the duke: as Orderic has William bitterly complain, Robert had ‘lured away my young knights, whom I have educated and invested with arms’, while Queen Mathilda’s support for her son caused further conflict within William’s family.⁵² Yet Robert did not seek to supplant or kill his father: at the siege of Gerberoi in 1079, Robert unhorsed and wounded King William, but according to the Worcester Chronicle, ‘as soon as Robert recognized William’s voice, he quickly dismounted and ordered his father to remount his horse and in this way allowed him to leave’.⁵³ Nevertheless, despite the intervention of the Norman magnates fearful of punishment of their wayward sons, reconciliation between the Conqueror and Robert proved fleeting, and with far-reaching consequences Robert was still in revolt against his father when in 1087 the dying William made his succession arrangements.⁵⁴

In Normandy, rebellion of nobles was rendered particularly dangerous by the proximity of hostile neighbours, anxious to foment internal unrest: the counts of Anjou supported insurrections in Maine, while the kings of France supplied military aid to a series of rebels, including Count William of Arques in 1053-4, Ralph de Gael at Dol in 1076, and Robert Curthose in 1078-9 and 1087. Rebels might be given use of castles close to the Norman border from which to launch destabilizing raids into the duchy, as Robert had from Gerberoi in the Beauvaisis, aided by an elite French garrison.⁵⁵ In 1074, King Philip offered Edgar Aetheling the castle of Montreuil, then the Capetians’ only toe-hold on the French coast, ‘so he could do daily harm to those who were not his friends’, with his naval forces, but en route from Scotland Edgar’s fleet was destroyed by storms.⁵⁶

So too in Britain, Anglo-Saxon rebellions were assisted by Malcolm III, king of Scots, who gave refuge to Edgar Aetheling and other dissidents, and Welsh princes assisted insurgents on the borders such as Eadric the Wild, just as they had given aid to rebel earls of Mercia before the Conquest.⁵⁷ Their direct military aid was less effective than that of France or Anjou, but far greater danger was posed to William by the intervention of powerful Danish armies, whether in actuality, as in 1069-70, or threatened, as in the case of the fleet of 200

⁵² Orderic, iii, pp. 110-113, 102-105.

⁵³ JW, iii, pp. 30-3; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp. 86-89.

⁵⁴ Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp. 91-101.

⁵⁵ Orderic, ii, pp. 358-61, iii, pp.108-111; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 399-401.

⁵⁶ *ASC*, D, 1074.

⁵⁷ Nicholas J. Hooper, ‘Edgar the Aetheling: Anglo-Saxon Prince, Rebel and Crusader’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 14 (1985) pp. 197-214; Karen L. Maud, ‘The Welsh Family Alliances of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia and his Family in the Mid-Eleventh Century’, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 11 (1989), pp. 181-190.

Danish ships which was to have supported the rising of the earls in 1075, but whose delay proved fatal to the rebellion. William was fortunate that the commitment of the Danes in 1069-70 to invasion – unlike that of the Norwegians in 1066 - was sufficiently equivocal that he could purchase their withdrawal, and that the wealth of England permitted him to do so.

As duke, William's treatment of rebellious kinsmen and magnates reflected a notable degree of leniency and the aversion to the execution or mutilation of those of noble blood.⁵⁸ The principal punishments were banishment and the loss of lands, which were readily reversible.⁵⁹ By contrast, before 1066 in Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia dynastic rivals and defeated political opponents were habitually slain or mutilated.⁶⁰ In Anglo-Saxon England, such conduct had been particularly prominent during the reigns of Aethelred II, Cnut and Harold Harefoot, but the accession of Edward the Confessor had marked a note change, with those falling from grace only suffering banishment.⁶¹ In the early years of his rule, William equally displayed notable clemency to Anglo-Saxon leaders who had taken up arms against him after submitting in 1066, and his forbearance towards Edgar Aetheling, despite his repeated shifts in allegiance, was remarkable. The great crisis of 1069-70 led to a hardening of his attitude, and some of the principal leaders of the last resistance on the Isle of Ely in 1071 suffered life imprisonment.⁶² William's commanders showed greater severity in their suppression of the 'revolt of the earls' in 1075, mutilating some of the rebels, but though Earl Roger of Hereford, son of William Fitz Osbern, was imprisoned for life, only Earl Waltheof suffered execution, having betrayed William's trust once too often.⁶³ Nevertheless, the danger of creating political martyrs was demonstrated by the rapid emergence of a saint cult around his tomb at Crowland.⁶⁴

Warfare in Northern France

⁵⁸ Gillingham, '1066 and the Introduction of Chivalry into England', pp. 214-17..

⁵⁹ Lucien Musset, 'Autour des modalités juridiques de l'expansion normande au XIe siècle: le droit d'exil', in *Autour du pouvoir ducal normand, Xe-XIIIe siècles*, ed. Lucien Musset, Jean-Michel Bouvris and Jean-Marie Maillefer (Caen, 1985), pp. 45-59.

⁶⁰ Gillingham, '1066 and the Introduction of Chivalry', pp. 31-55; John Gillingham, 'Killing and Mutilating Political Enemies in the British Isles from the Late Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century: a Comparative Study', *Britain and Ireland, 900-1300. Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, ed. B. Smith (Cambridge, 1999), 114-34.

⁶¹ Matthew Strickland, 'Rebellion, Resistance and Restoration: Strategies of Limited Violence in Late Anglo-Saxon England, 1042-1066', *Journal of Global Intellectual History* (forthcoming).

⁶² Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 54-7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-65.

⁶⁴ Emma Mason, 'Invoking Earl Waltheof', in *The English and their legacy: 900 – 1200*, ed. David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp. 185-204.

Duke William found himself very much on the defensive for much of the 1050s, and survived dangerous invasion attempts by King Henry I and his allies more by the quality of his generalship and that of his commanders than by any inherent superiority of Norman arms. Expansion to the south of the duchy was slow, piecemeal and strongly contested. It was only the fortuitous deaths of both Geoffrey Martel of Anjou and King Henry I of France in 1060 that had allowed William finally to achieve the conquest of Maine and to launch his invasion of England. By the 1070s, however, even with the great resources of his English kingdom to draw on, William again found himself largely on the defensive and he was to suffer a number of significant military reverses, notably at Dol in 1076, Gerberoi in 1079, and Sainte-Suzanne c. 1084-5.

These defeats reflected the dominance of siege warfare. Though the proliferation of castles across much of France during the later tenth and early eleventh century was a complex phenomenon not always driven by military factors, they played a key role in both achieving and resisting territorial conquest.⁶⁵ The defences even of earth and timber castles might be formidable,⁶⁶ while siege technology remained limited: mention is made of battering rams, mining and probably some form of stone-throwing artillery such as mangonels.⁶⁷ Blockade thus remained the most common form of siege, enforced by the construction of one or more siege or 'counter-castles' – William built four at each of the sieges of Domfront c. 1051 and of Rémalard in 1078 - whose garrisons were tasked with preventing the besieged from any sorties or from being re-supplied.⁶⁸ Such blockades might last many months, even years; William's siege of Brionne may have lasted from 1047 to c. 1049. Besieging forces were vulnerable to attack by sallies from a besieged garrison, such as when Robert Curthose inflicted a humiliating defeat on his father at Gerberoi in 1079, or as at the siege of Sainte-Suzanne they might suffer unsustainable attrition in knights killed or captured. It may have been the threat of being caught between a powerful garrison and a French army under Philip I that caused William's precipitous retreat from Dol in 1076, when according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* he 'lost there both men and horses and incalculable treasure'.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Oliver Creighton, *Early European Castles. Aristocracy and Authority, AD 800-1200* (London: Bristol Classic Press, 2012), especially pp. 25-49; Peter Purton, *A History of the Early Medieval Siege, c. 450-1200* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), pp. 155-208, and for Normandy, pp.160-3.

⁶⁶ Robert Higham, *Timber Castles* (London, 1992).

⁶⁷ Purton, *The Early Medieval Siege*, pp.160-3.

⁶⁸ *GG*, pp. 36; Orderic, ii, pp. 360-1; Jacques Le Maho, 'Fortifications de siège et "contre-châteaux" en Normandie (XIe-XIIIe s.)', *Château Gaillard*, 19 (2000), 181-90.

⁶⁹ *ASC*, D, E, 1076.

In the 1050s, William had effectively countered invasion by a strategy of aggressive defence, closely shadowing the enemy, hampering attempts to gain supplies by attacking foragers and, while avoiding the risks of pitched battle, defeating smaller units in detail when the opportunity arose, as at Varaville in 1057.⁷⁰ Such was the way of war counselled by the late fourth-century Roman author Vegetius, whose *De Re Militari* was known to William of Poitiers and perhaps also to Conqueror, though its principles distilled military wisdom that might equally have been gained by experience or passed on orally within a martial elite whose profession was warfare.⁷¹ As Vegetius noted, ‘it is preferable to subdue an enemy by famine, raids and terror than in battle where fortune tends to have more influence than bravery’.⁷² William’s offensive campaigns on the southern frontiers of the duchy and his reduction of Maine, finally achieved in 1063, further demonstrated his recognition that command of logistics lay at the heart of successful warfare, and these were precisely the methods used in the duke’s campaigns to gain Le Mans:

‘This was his chosen way of attack: to strike fear...by frequent, lengthy expeditions in that territory, to lay waste the vines, fields and domains, to capture fortified places all around and put garrisons in them wherever it was desirable; finally to attack the region relentlessly with a great multitude of troubles.’⁷³

Battle might indeed yield spectacular gains: William’s great rival Geoffrey Martel had made extensive territorial gains for Anjou by his defeat and capture first of William VI of Poitou at Mont Couer in 1033 and then of Theobald count of Blois at Nouy in 1043.⁷⁴ Yet many factors made the outcome of battle uncertain, while defeat could prove catastrophic. Vegetius did not, however, teach that battle should always be avoided at all costs, and in 1066, William’s strategic situation and dangerously extended lines of supply across the Channel made seeking a decisive battle with Harold a necessity. William was victorious in the only two major battles he fought, but his skill as a general lay in also knowing when to withdraw in good order.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Gillingham, ‘William the Bastard at War’, pp. 143-160.

⁷¹ Christopher Allmand, *The De Re Militari of Vegetius. The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); *GG*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

⁷² Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, trans. P. Milner (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2nd edn, 1996), Bk III: 3, p. 67, and BK III:26, p. 116.

⁷³ *GG*, pp. 60-1.

⁷⁴ *GG*, p. 20 n.3 and p. 22 n.3 for further references.

⁷⁵ Gillingham, ‘William the Bastard at War’, pp.143-60.

Maine was won not by a great victory in battle, but by a war of siege and attrition, for unlike the Anglo-Saxons, the Manceaux and their allies were able to deploy castles in defence and rebellion against the Normans, while Le Mans, the strategic as well as political key to control of Maine, retained its formidable late-Roman defences.⁷⁶ William's experiences at Le Mans may well have informed his strategy in 1066 towards London, which had put up a fierce resistance against the Danish armies of Svein and Cnut, and instead of direct assault he compelled its submission by a wide encircling march which devastated the surrounding countryside.⁷⁷ From 1066, William's ability to sustain the conquests of both Maine and England simultaneously despite recurrent resistance testified to both his skill as a warleader, the abilities of his regional commanders, and the extensive resources in money, troops and materiel on which he was able to draw.

Castles and Conquests

Orderic Vitalis correctly observed that it was the Anglo-Saxons' lack of castles that proved the decisive factor in the Normans' ability to overcome resistance after 1066.⁷⁸ While some Anglo-Saxon nobles had fortified residences, there is no evidence of any being used to resist the forces of occupation, and the defences of Norman castles were on a different scale.⁷⁹ William's campaigns from 1066 to 1071 to subdue England were marked by the construction of castles in most major towns, a process paralleled by his nobles' widespread castle-building.⁸⁰ As territorial conquest and the distribution of lands proceeded, compact lordships were created around many key fortifications, with a lord's military tenants providing castle-guard as well as service in the host.⁸¹ Castles were far more than simply military bases; as seigneurial residences they were potent symbols of authority and status, centres of honorial lordship or royal administration, and the nuclei for new townships and

⁷⁶ *The Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1992-1995), ii, pp. 150-51 and n.43.

⁷⁷ Edward Impey, 'William the Conqueror and the Capture of London in 1066', in *1066 in Perspective*, pp. 35-47.

⁷⁸ Orderic, ii, pp.218-19.

⁷⁹ Ann Williams, 'A Bell-House and a Burh-Geat: Lordly Residences in England before the Norman Conquest', in *Anglo-Norman Castles*, ed. Robert Liddiard (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 23-40.

⁸⁰ Reginald Allen Brown, *English Castles* (repr. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004); idem., *Castles, Conquest and Charters* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989); Matthew Bennett, *Campaigns of the Norman Conquest* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2001).

⁸¹ Richard Eales, 'Castles and Borders in England after 1066', *Chateau Gaillard*, 26 (2014), 149-57.

colonization.⁸² Yet in the early years of the conquest, castles were crucial in protecting a comparatively small number of invaders from a hostile population, while in offensive terms they served as bases for mounted forces to dominate localities. Strategically, they assisted William and his commanders to contain regional rebellions, while their garrisons could be brought together to form effective field forces.

The Normans' rapid penetration into Wales still more sharply revealed the vulnerability of the Welsh to the invaders' offensive use of castles; thus, for instance, in only the brief period between 1066 and his death in 1071, William Fitz Osbern had established a network of castles radiating from his base at Hereford, extending north to Wigmore, west to Clifford on the Wye, south-west to Ewyas Harold, Monmouth and as far at Chepstow in Gwent.⁸³ As in southern Italy, conquest was furthered by exploiting divisions and internal rivalries within a deeply fragmented polity, by initial service as allies to native rulers who were then supplanted, by marriage into local dynasties to acquire lands by inheritance or simply by forcible annexation of territory.⁸⁴

By contrast, the Conqueror's remarkable expedition into south Wales in 1081 combined a pilgrimage to St David's with a royal progress in a peaceful show of strength which achieved a lasting détente with the Welsh princes and gained the release of many captives.⁸⁵ Likewise, the projection of overwhelming power to secure hegemony rather than direct conquest was from the outset Norman policy towards Scotland, and in 1072 the Conqueror deployed a combined fleet and land army to compel the submission of Malcolm III not on the borders of Northumbria but deep into Scotia at Abernethy on the Tay estuary.⁸⁶ Subsequently, a successful policy to project overlordship and 'soft power' through Anglo-Norman political and cultural influence was pursued through the military backing of a number of Malcolm III's sons, brought up at the English court, in their bids for the Scottish throne, beginning in 1093 with Duncan II, who had been surrendered as a hostage to William the Conqueror but released and knighted by William Rufus in 1087, followed by Edgar (r. 1097-1107), Alexander (r. 1107-1124) and David (r. 1124-1153).⁸⁷

⁸² Norman Pounds, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales. A Social and Political History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

⁸³ Max Liebermann, *The Medieval March of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 109, 143-8, 170, 260.

⁸⁴ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) pp. 61-7.

⁸⁵ *ASC*, E, 1081; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 430-32.

⁸⁶ *ASC*, E, 1072.

⁸⁷ Richard Oram, *Domination and Lordship. Scotland, 1070-1230* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

Conduct

On the eve of 1066, warfare in Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia and eastern Europe beyond the German Ostmark still continued to be characterized by the ruthless treatment of the defeated: enemy warriors were generally killed without quarter in combat or executed on capture, while women and children were enslaved, and any who might hinder the effective transport of this human booty, such as the old, sick or very young were put to the sword.⁸⁸ By contrast, in Normandy as in Frankia, the enslaving of captives in wars between fellow Franks or other Christians had become regarded as unacceptable, resulting in a significant amelioration in the treatment of women and children in wartime.⁸⁹ For all its violence, the Norman conquest thus did not result in the enslavement of defeated Anglo-Saxons.⁹⁰ From at least the ninth century, moreover, changing patterns of warfare resulting from the implosion of the Carolingian empire. had equally led to a growing reluctance to slaughter those defeated in battle: engagements might still be bloody, but warriors who surrendered might could now do so with honour and in the reasonable expectation that their lives would be spared for ransom.⁹¹

It was thus ironic that the chivalric customs of the Franco-Norman aristocracy were introduced into England in the wake of the exceptionally bloody battle of Hastings, fought with a savagery unseen in any of William's battles in Normandy: Harold and his brothers were slain together with many other nobles and warriors, the Normans had engaged in a fierce pursuit of the routed Anglo-Saxons, and no prisoners are recorded as being taken. The best William of Poitiers could do was to stress William's great clemency in permitting the burial of the fallen enemy, even though as 'rebels' they did not merit such a concession.⁹²

⁸⁸ Matthew Strickland, 'Slaughter, Slavery or Ransom? The Impact of the Conquest on Conduct in Warfare', *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Carola Hicks (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), pp. 41-60; David Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800-1200* (Leiden, 2009).

⁸⁹ John Gillingham, 'Christian Warriors and the Enslavement of Fellow Christians', *Chevalerie et christianisme au XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, ed. Martin Aurell and Catalina Girbea (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011), pp. 237-56; idem., 'Women, Children and the Profits of War', *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds and Susan Johns (London, 2012), pp. 61-74;

⁹⁰ Gillingham, 'Warfare and Enslavement', pp. 167-8.

⁹¹ Matthew Strickland, 'Killing or Clemency? Changing Attitudes to Conduct in War in Eleventh and Twelfth-Century Britain and France', *Krieg im Mittelalter*, ed. Hans-Henning Kortüm (Academie Verlag, Berlin, 2001), pp. 93-122.

⁹² GG, pp. 142-3; John Gillingham, "Holding to the Rules of War (*Bellica Iura Tenentes*)": Right Conduct Before, During, and after Battle in North-Western Europe in the Eleventh Century', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 29 (2007) pp. 1-16.

In setting penances for the plundering of churches and ‘adulteries or rapes or fornications’, the Penitential Ordinance of 1067 acknowledged the robbery and sexual violence that had accompanied the progress of William’s army. It stipulated, however, that the coronation of William on Christmas Day 1066 marked a critical change in the legitimacy of acts of violence; thereafter, killing by any in his army was to be atoned for by the same penance as for wilful homicide, unless ‘the person killed or struck was in arms against the king’.⁹³ Around 1067, William issued strict disciplinary edicts for his forces prohibiting murder, rape and plunder, as well as banning prostitutes and curbing drunkenness to help prevent quarrels among his own troops.⁹⁴ Yet given the circumstances of frequent campaigning by an alien army of occupation, Poitiers’ claim that ‘women were safe from violence which passionate men often inflict’ can only have been a pious fiction.⁹⁵

The nadir of violence, however, was to come when instead of restraining their conduct, William ordered his soldiers to engage in killing, arson and plunder in the infamous ‘Harrying of the North’, a desperate response to ‘the greatest crisis of his life’ when he faced a major Anglo-Saxon rising supported by a powerful Danish invasion force, coinciding with a serious rebellion in Maine.⁹⁶ Systematically ravaging Yorkshire and other northern shires, his forces slew all they could find and, by destroying crops, livestock and agricultural infrastructure, deliberately created a terrible famine.⁹⁷ Assessments of the impact as revealed by Domesday Book have differed, but a ‘maximalist’ estimate is that the county of Yorkshire alone shows a deficit of more than 150,000 people and 80,000 oxen.⁹⁸ Other counties, including Cheshire and Staffordshire reveal extensive damage from William’s campaign that winter, and chroniclers convey the terrible human suffering involved.⁹⁹

William’s actions in 1069-70 must be assessed not simply in terms ‘of conduct in war but of political punishment for rebellion’, and as an expression of royal anger – the *ira*

⁹³ Ordinance, c. 8, 9, 10 and 11. The Ordinance is printed in Cowdrey, ‘The Penitential Ordinance’, pp. 241-2, and, with revisions, in Morton, ‘Alexander II and the Norman Conquest’, pp. 381-2, with a translation in Reginald A. Brown, *The Norman Conquest* (London: Arnold, 1984), pp. 156-7, whose numbering of clauses is followed here.

⁹⁴ *GG*, pp. 158-61.

⁹⁵ *GG*, pp. 158-9; Elisabeth van Houts, ‘Women and Fear in 1066’, in *1066 in Perspective*, pp. 176-86.

⁹⁶ David Bates, ‘Writing about William the Conqueror’, in *1066 in Perspective*, pp. 238-53, at p. 247.

⁹⁷ Orderic, ii, pp. 232-33; D. M. Palliser, ‘Domesday Book and the “Harrying of the North”’, *Northern History*, 29 (1993), 1-23.

⁹⁸ John J. N. Palmer, ‘War and Domesday Waste’, in *Armies, Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France*, ed. M. Strickland (Stamford, 1998), 256-75, at p. 273

⁹⁹ Stephen Matthews, ‘Ravaging and Resistance in the North-West: William the Conqueror’s Campaign in Cheshire 1069-70’, *Northern History*, 40 (2003), 53-70; Oliver Creighton, ‘1066 and the Landscape’, in *1066 in Perspective*, pp. 213-237, at 217-19, with map.

regis.¹⁰⁰ Earlier Anglo-Saxon kings had deployed ravaging against their own subjects as a disciplinary measure, but on a far smaller scale: Harthacnut, for instance, had Worcester ravaged and burned in 1041 because its citizens had killed two royal housecarls collecting an unpopular tax.¹⁰¹ Yet in the magnitude of its destruction, the Harrying had no any parallel in contemporary warfare between the territorial princes of Frankia, and for comparable ruthlessness, one has to look back to Charlemagne's brutal repression between 795 to 798 of the conquered Saxons, marked by what an eminent biographer of Charlemagne has recently called 'pathological devastations and burnings'.¹⁰² William, claiming to rule by hereditary right and as Edward's kinsman, no doubt justified his harshness as the lawful suppression of insurrection against an anointed king. Yet as with the punitive campaign subsequently carried out between Tyne and Tees in 1080 by Bishop Odo in reprisal for the murder of Bishop Walcher of Durham, the implementation of such brutal measures were undertaken by Norman and French forces, many of them mercenaries, who may well have viewed the Anglo-Saxons not only as rebels but, through a colonial gaze, as barbarians who were not deserving of any restraint in conduct.¹⁰³

It is fitting to leave the last word to Orderic Vitalis, reacting indignantly to a (now lost) passage of the *Gesta Guillelmi* in which William of Poitiers had evidently sought to justify the devastation of the north: 'I would rather lament the griefs and sufferings of the wretched people than make a vain attempt to flatter the perpetrator of such infamy... Moreover, I declare that assuredly, such brutal slaughter cannot remain unpunished. For the almighty Judge... will weigh the deeds of all men in fair balance, and as a just avenger will punish wrongdoing'.¹⁰⁴ Orderic had little doubt that whatever the justice of his conquest, William's actions had gravely imperilled his soul.

¹⁰⁰ Bates, 'Writing about William the Conqueror', p. 247; David Bates, 'Anger, Emotion and a Biography of William the Conqueror', *Gender and Historiography. Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds and Susan Johns (London: 2012), pp. 21-34.

¹⁰¹ *ASC*, C, D, 1041; *JW*, ii, pp. 532-3.

¹⁰² Janet Nelson, *King and Emperor. A New Life of Charlemagne* (London: Penguin, 2017), pp. 322-27.

¹⁰³ William Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 94-9; Thomas, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 249-51.

¹⁰⁴ Orderic, ii, pp. 232-3.