CARTER, JOHN MARSHALL. The Norman Conquest: Ten Centuries of Interpretation (1975). Directed by: Prof. John H. Beeler.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the historical accounts of the Norman Conquest and its results. A select group of historians and works, primarily English, were investigated, beginning with the chronicles of medieval writers and continuing chronologically to the works of twentieth century historians.

The majority of the texts that were examined pertained to the major problems of the Norman Conquest: the introduction of English feudalism, whether or not the Norman Conquest was an aristocratic revolution, and, how it affected the English church. However, other important areas such as the Conquest's effects on literature, language, economics, and architecture were observed through the "eyes" of past and present historians.

A seconday purpose was to assemble for the student of English medieval history, and particularly the Norman Conquest, a variety of primary and secondary sources.

Each new generation writes its own histories, seeking to add to the existing cache of material or to reinterpret the existing material in the light of the present. The future study of history will be significantly advanced by historiographic surveys of all major historical events.

Professor Wallace K. Ferguson produced an indispensable work for students of the Italian Renaissance, tracing the development of historical thought from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.

Professor Bryce Lyon performed a similar task, if not on as epic a scale, with his essay on the diversity of thought in regard to the history of the origins of the Middle Ages. It was partly the inspiration of these and similar works of historiography, coupled with the knowledge of the lasting importance of the Norman Conquest of England which prompted this study.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST: TEN CENTURIES OF INTERPRETATION

by

John Marshall Carter

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APPROVAL PAGE

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PREFACE

When Professor David C. Douglas or Professor G. O. Sayles talk of the Norman Conquest, they are obviously referring to their country's past. When these and other English medievalists make suggestions to students or scholars in regard to the study of medieval England, there is a feeling of national possessiveness that makes an American wonder if he is not treading upon private property. An American who happens to be a student of the Norman Conquest or other aspects of English medieval history probably has to concede that he is studying the past of a geographical and political entity to which he has many historical ties, but to which he does not really belong.

The Norman Conquest of England was at least the greatest event in English medieval history. However, it should be kept in mind that the effects of that momentous event have had world-wide effects, especially in the areas of the world heavily influenced by English ideas, language, and institutions. There is nothing to gain by again emphasizing the link between England and America, and the cultural debt involved. Yet, does an American student of English medieval history look at that epoch in western civilization from afar or does he justifiably feel a closeness to the wandering tribesman of the fifth century who begat Anglo-Saxon England; does he view the Anglo-Norman civilization totally divorced from national sentiment; or, does he ignore the English historian's national possessiveness and jump headlong into the study of the English medieval past?

A great many Americans have studied the history of medieval England. American scholars such as Professor Charles Homer Haskins and Carl Stephenson have invaluably aided the study of the Norman Conquest and the study of medieval England in general. Were these and other American medievalists doing their intellectual duty by writing English medieval history which had so greatly influenced their own country, or were they merely admirers from afar? Hopefully, they were engaged in the former activity.

The Norman Conquest, like the history of many other watershed periods in history, has a literature all of its own. However, there is no historiographic synthesis which takes into consideration the various interpretations of the Norman Conquest from 1066 to the present. Professor David C. Douglas' work, English Scholars, 1660-1730, has achieved an important place in the history of English historical writing, yet its scope, though thoroughly detailed, is limited to the advances made by "medievalists" in the seventeenth century. Professor C. Warren Hollister, an American, whose historiographic work on the Norman Conquest, The Impact of the Norman Conquest, is a fine job of editing medieval and modern sources on the Conquest, but has a loophole of about a seven-hundred year span in it.

The following essay is a cross-section of the various chroniclers and historians, and, the various interpretations of the effects of the Norman Conquest on England. It is an attempt at presenting a chronologically arranged group of interpretations which span the last ten centuries. Hopefully a general canvas will allow the reader to view, not only the various interpretations of the Norman Conquest, but will also suggest to

the reader, the changing fashions in English historical writing, the importance of the Norman Conquest to the political sphere of English life, and finally, will demonstrate to the reader how the study of the Norman Conquest rose, fell, and was revived over ten centuries.

J.M.C.

CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW - THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS AND BEYOND

The dynastic crisis in England in the second half of the eleventh century culminating with what historians have termed the Norman Conquest, has generated a multitude of historical works during the past ten centuries. Each new generation of students and scholars has interpreted the consequences of the Conquest in a fresh light and under different circumstances. Possibly no other historical topic has been treated so thoroughly and diversely as the event which signalled at least a drastic change in the future growth and development of the English state.

The year 1966 marked the ninth centennial of the battle of Hastings and that birthday was the occasion for a further flood of works on the great battle and its consequences. In order to view the works of scholars from 1066 to the present in a better light, a brief account of events centering around the battle of Hastings might be helpful. The following account of events will in no way live up to the more scholarly and comprehensive studies but, hopefully, it will serve as an instrument of convenience for the reader.

The Hastings confrontation on Saturday, October 14, 1066, was the beginning, not the end of the Norman Conquest of England. The battle itself has been glorified by medieval chroniclers and modern historians alike, but it was in the years directly following the battle that the effects of the Conquest were manifest.

1066 proved to be one of the most revolutionary dates in the history of England. The events that took place during that memorable year have been debated by historians for centuries; among the events between October 14th, 1066 and December 25th, 1066 there occurred the death of the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom and the emergence of a new, revolutionary form of government. Thus, 1066 became a pivotal point in English history. Edward A. Freeman, the author of the most extensive account of the Norman Conquest, emphasized the point of calling 1066 and the Conquest, ". . . the great turning-point in the history of the English nation."[1]

On Thursday, 5 January, 1066 the English king Edward the Confessor died.[2] With this event, the struggle[3] for the throne of England between Harold Godwinson, William, Duke of Normandy, Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, and to a lesser extent, Edgar Atheling,[4] the last blood heir of the old line of English kings, began.

On the next day, Friday, 6 January, 1066, Earl Harold, head of the politically powerful Godwin family, was chosen by the Witan and consecrated at Westminster.[5] The violent tenor of the times called for an Englishman skilled in politics and warfare.[6] The appearance of a great comet even gave a sense of forboding to English society.[7]

Added to the already gloomy picture of the English state with its would-be conquerors in Norway and Normandy, was the landing of King Harold's estranged brother Tostig, the dispossessed Earl of Northumbria,[8] on the Isle of Wight in May of 1066. Tostig's forces were nearly destroyed by Earl Edwin of Mercia's forces and Tostig

took refuge in Scotland. Sometime between his deposition as Earl of Northumbria in the autumn of 1065 and his abortive raid in May of 1066, Tostig made contact with King Harald Hardrada of Norway. Seventeen of Tostig's sixty ships had come from the Orkneys which Hardrada controlled.[9]

In September the first of the two great invasions of 1066 took place. Tostig, probably due to humiliation, joined forces with the Norwegian king, Harald Hardrada. By the 18th of September the Norwegian expedition had reached the mouth of the river Humber.[10] King Harold of England could not reach York before the Norwegian forces had defeated the levies of Earl Edwin of Mercia and the newly-appointed Earl of Northumbria, Morcar, at the Battle of Fulford on 20 September, 1066 and occupied the city. However, five days later on 25 September, King Harold and his forces annihilated the Norwegian army at Stamford Bridge near York. King Harald of Norway and Tostig were both killed in that engagement.[11] The first attempt to wrest the English crown from Harold Godwinson had been thwarted. However, the victory at Stamford Bridge could not long be celebrated. Another contest for the crown of England was less than three weeks away.

William, Duke of Normandy, his feudal cavalry, supplemented by archers and infantry, had waited piously, yet impatiently during the month of September for a favorable wind with which to cross the English Channel. On the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh their prayers were answered. A favorable breeze appeared and the course of English history was dramatically changed.[12] Freeman's turning-point in English history was about to be made, only at a sharper angle.

Duke William's great enterprise of moving approximately 7,000 men and 3,000 horses plus all the war materiel was a feat in itself.[13] The Normans landed at Pevensey on the morning of 28 September, unopposed.[14] They made a fortified camp at Hastings, a few miles away. Much of the time from 28 September until 14 October was spent by the Normans in their camp, since Duke William was extremely cautious until an engagement had been fought.[15]

On 14 October, 1066, Duke William with his multi-national feudal cavalry, supported by archers and infantry, stormed the hill of Senlac, where Battle Abbey now stands, on which was deployed the shield-wall of the huscarles and thegns, plus the fyrd units of the King of the English.[16] Both sides fought courageously in the encounter. The fighting lasted the whole day. But, finally, as dusk began to settle, the Normans became the masters of the field. Even though Duke William had destroyed his arch-enemy Harold Godwinson, he still had to contend with the English populace.

Millions of words have been written about the Battle of Hastings, about feigned flights and such. The late Sir Frank Stenton's brief account of the Norman Conquest has been called the best short study of the effects of the Conquest. However, in the realm of medieval military history the best account of the battle itself is that by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Burne. A more recent account of importance was produced by Professor John Beeler.[17]

The real results of the Norman Conquest of England stem from the various military, administrative, and economic measures employed by William the Conqueror to bring all of England under his control

and to maintain his rule after his coronation in December of 1066. The new King preserved many English institutions that had traditionally proved effective. Yet, some of the methods were new to England.[18]

Much controversy concerning the results of the Conquest has occurred, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The conflicting studies produced by Edward A. Freeman and John Horace Round in the nineteenth century have been called the starting point for the modern study of the effects of the Norman Conquest.[19] But, though specialists like Round, Freeman, and William Stubbs produced indispensable works on the Battle of Hastings and its aftermath, antiquaries of the seventeenth century such as Sir Henry Spelman and Sir William Dugdale actually anticipated much of the nineteenth century work.[20]

Many and varied questions have been asked in regard to the consequences of the Norman settlement of England. A like number of answers have been attempted through the centuries. Probably one of the most important questions that has arisen was the extent to which the Norman invasion changed the institutions of the Anglo-Saxons.

As the study of history became more specialized and institutionalized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, more and more technical monographs appeared on one or more aspects of the greatest event in English medieval history. While the medieval chronicler was primarily interested in reciting the events of the Conquest, the modern scholar, while including the historical narrative, has made an inquiry into the origins and results of the Norman revolution.

William of Poitiers, one of the Conqueror's panegyricists, who wrote a history relating to the Battle of Hastings around 1071, was satisfied with, while giving vivid descriptions of armaments and engagements, his role of narrator.[21] William of Poitiers, Guy of Amiens, who wrote his account of the battle of Hastings in about 1068,[22] Ordericus Vitalis, the Anglo-Norman historian whose chronicle was carried up to 1142,[23] Henry of Huntingdon, whose narrative bridged a gap between 1141 and 1154,[24] and other medieval chroniclers failed to ask how or why, this or that was accomplished; their primary work, however, provided the beginning of the study of the Norman Conquest.

In the thirteenth century, Matthew Paris (1200-1259) produced one of the most important Chronicles for the future study of the Conquest.[25] Drawing heavily from the work of Matthew Paris and Roger of Wendover,[26] Matthew of Westminister produced his Flowers of History[27] in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century histories such as those by John Capgrave[28] and John Hardyng[29] continued the study of the Conquest, yet they were still merely narratives divorced from historical inquiry. Much historical thought and writing tended to view the Norman Conquest as an episode of the immediate past. As a noted author on British historiography remarked:

> There was no general Renaissance purging of antiquarian minds, no general revolutionary conversion to a new way of thinking about the past.[30]

There was a notable stride toward the writing of modern history with the publication of Polydore Vergil's Anglica Historia[31] in 1534 and William Camden's Britannia[32] in 1586.

The completion of the assimilation process of mingling the Normans with the Anglo-Danish populace during the centuries after the Conquest brought about the term Englishman again. The study of the Anglo-Saxon past had deteriorated miserably during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. And, in addition to the need for historical development, a revival of Saxon studies was seriously needed before a meaningful study of the Norman Conquest could be undertaken. Richard Rowland's, or Verstegan, The Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities Concerning the Most Noble and Renowned English Nation proved to be the start of the revival of Saxon studies.[33] With the inauguration of Saxon studies by Rowland in the latter part of the sixteenth century, a large sortie, if not a major engagement, was made toward the development of a study of medieval England.

The seventeenth century saw at least a moderate flowering of Saxon and, in turn, Anglo-Norman studies. In 1629 Sir Henry Spelman began the modern study of English feudalism with his great essay entitled: "Feuds and Tenures by Knight Service."[34]

Later in the seventeenth century Sir William Dugdale, England's first medievalist, continued the work of Spelman. Perhaps his most important work was The Baronage of England,[35] published in 1675, in which he hinted at the revolutionary changes in England made by the Norman Conquest.[36]

Spelman and Dugdale were two of the many seventeenth century antiquaries who helped to popularize the study of the effects of the Norman Conquest. In addition to Spelman and Dugdale, there must be

added the names of Sir William Temple and Dr. Robert Brady: Temple's study of English history between 1051 and 1066[37] was quite in keeping with modern scholarship, while Brady's work begged the English scholarly community to use scientific methods in studying the effects of the Norman Conquest.[38]

The eighteenth century witnessed the casting aside of the study of medieval history. Professor David C. Douglas went so far as to say: "Medieval English scholarship was stifled during the eighteenth century by the deliberate neglect of an Age of Enlightenment.[39] A few good general histories were produced such as David Hume's History of England,[40] but on the whole the eighteenth-century English historians made no progress comparable to the studies produced in the seventeenth century.[41]

The nationalistic and romantic revolutions of the nineteenth century brought with them a tremendous and far-reaching revival of medieval English studies. In the nineteenth century can be found a real beginning of constitutional history. In that realm Sir Henry Ellis, William Stubbs, and Frederick William Maitland may be noted as three of the more important English constitutional historians of that century.

The Norman Conquest was interpreted first as destructive to the old English kingdom, secondly as the real starting point of English history, vice-versa, and back again.

The nineteenth century was the era of the specialist, but many general histories of England were produced by premier historians such as Thomas Babington Macaulary and John Richard Green.

In the realm of post-Conquest study, the name of John Horace Round stands preeminent. With his technical work on English feudalism he advanced the thesis that William the Conqueror and the Normans superimposed a foreign feudalism on the conquered Anglo-Saxons.[42]

The names of Round and Freeman still ring in the ears of students of Anglo-Norman history. Their work, to a large extent, set the stage for modern study, even though they were preceeded by the likes of Spelman and Dugdale. Freeman had advanced the thesis that the Conquest was not a radical change in English history, but a turning point. His answer to the question of whether the Norman Conquest was revolutionary or not heavily favored the latter view. Round, however, argued that the Normans had inaugurated a new type of governmental system and that the antecedents of that system were not to be found in Anglo-Saxon England.

Every English medievalist who has written since Freeman and Round has had either to join one camp or another or, at least, to reckon with the arguments of both. Round's thesis still passes the test of time although it has been attacked vehemently by the twentieth century's neo-Freeman school.

Although the key issue between the followers of Round and the followers of Freeman has been the debate over English feudalism, studies in other areas of the Conquest and its effects, all the while embracing the feudal theme, have been abundant. Sir Frank Stenton, one of the great English medievalists, while adherring to the Round thesis in one study[43] showed some very un-Roundian characteristics in his definitive work on the Anglo-Saxons.[44]

In the realm of English constitutional history, the names of William Stubbs and Frederick William Maitland are particularly important.[45] Both traced the growth of the English constitution from its earliest origins to their own day, and, in turn, both contributed significantly to the study of the legal and constitutional effects of the Norman Conquest.

From the debate over English feudalism began by the works of Freeman and Round, Conquest studies have branched out in all areas. For example, Sir Paul Vinogradoff wrote the definitive work on social life in the century of the Norman Conquest.[46] Many biographies of the Conqueror have been written. Some of the better ones have been those of Stenton, Freeman, Douglas, and Frank Barlow.[47] Almost every aspect of Norman and Anglo-Saxon society before and after the Conquest has been dealt with. But, when historians of the Conquest assume that all has been written about their subject, some new monograph will appear asking new questions or supplying new answers.

In England the Round thesis has been maintained and supported by Stenton, David C. Douglas and others. Professor Douglas has written extensively on William the Conqueror and Normandy and has also contributed some valuable studies on the historiography of the Conquest.[48] Another important summary of the historiography of the Norman Conquest was written by C. Warren Hollister.[49] Freeman's once-forsaken banner has been picked up again by Marjorie Hollings, Eric John, H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles.[50]

The twentieth century has produced some outstanding American scholars of medieval English history, who have significantly added to the wealth of material on the Norman Conquest and its effects. Charles Homer Haskins ranks as probably the greatest American-born medievalist. Haskins range of studies was quite wide; nonetheless, he has contributed two significant works on the Normans.[51]

Medieval military history has witnessed a revival in the second half of the twentieth century. Scholars like C. Warren Hollister, John Beeler, and Michael Powicke, while having much to say about the consequences of the Conquest, have gone off into the direction of interpreting Anglo-Saxon and Norman military institutions.[52] Whereas Hollister and Powicke have approached Anglo-Saxon and Norman military history institutionally, Professor Beeler can claim the definitive work on Anglo-Norman warfare in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Norman Conquest of England remains a complex historical event. Even though monograph after monograph has been written, many questions lack appropriate answers. The names of William of Poitiers, Sir Henry Spelman, John Horace Round and Sir Frank Stenton are just a few of the many scholars who have interpreted the effects of the Conquest. The list, of course, will invariably grow as younger students mature into scholars. Undoubtedly the scholars of the twenty-first century, equipped with the findings of the past, will seek to re-examine the Norman Conquest of England in the light of their day.

CHAPTER I

NOTES

[1]Edward A. Freeman, The Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Its Results, 6 Vols. (Oxford, 1877), I, p. 1.

[2]Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker, eds., Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (London, 1961) the "E" manuscript, p. 149. Douglas cites this date in William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England (Berkeley, California, 1964), p. 396.

[3]Probably the best treatment of the political crisis preceeding the Norman Conquest is Sir Frank Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1947; 2nd edition), pp. 417-426; pp. 533-572. See also David C. Douglas' William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England (Berkeley, California, 1964), pp. 144, 164-180.

[4]Edgar the Atheling was the grandson of Edmund Ironside. His father Edward had been exiled in Hungary and Edgar was born there. Douglas, in William the Conqueror, p. 171, said that Edward was called to England in 1057 as a political alternate to a Norman successor to the English throne. Edward died mysteriously on his way to London leaving Edgar as the legal heir to the crown of England. However, Edgar was a lad in 1066 and was passed over by the Witan in favor of the more experienced Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex.

[5]Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 572. Stenton said that Harold was chosen over Edgar due to the ". . . urgency of the times . . ." referring to the threatened invasions from Norway and Normandy.

[6]Ibid.

[7]The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's account of the comet in April of 1066 gives one a sense of impending doom for the Anglo-Saxons. Halley's Comet was sighted throughout Europe in 1066.

[8]Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 570. Tostig was replaced by Morcar, brother of Edwin, Earl of Mercia, by the king because the Northumbrians had revolted against Tostig's political abuses. See also Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 179.

[9]Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 190.

[10]Ibid., p. 193.

[11]Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 582.

[12]John Beeler, Warfare in England, 1066-1189 (Ithaca, New York, 1966), p. 11.

[13]Ibid., p. 13.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 14.

[16]Michael Powicke in Military Obligation in Medieval England (Oxford, 1962), gives a good description of the offices and duties of huscarle and thegn, pp. 3-5.

[17]Beeler, Warfare in England, pp. 15-25. Alfred H. Burne, The Battlefields of England, (London, 1951).

[18]Ibid., p. 6.

[19]C. Warren Hollister, The Impact of the Norman Conquest (London, 1969), p. 138.

[20]Douglas, English Scholars, 1660-1730 (London, 1939), p. 127.

[21]William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi ducis Normannorum et regis Anglorum, ed. R. Foreville (Paris, 1952). Passages from Williams history are available in translation in English Historical Documents, II, ed. Douglas and G. T. Greenaway (New York, 1953), pp. 226-227.

[22]Guy of Amiens, Carmen De Hastingae Proelio, ed. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz (Oxford, 1972).

[23]Ordericus Vitalis, The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy, 4 Vols. tran. Thomas Forester (London, 1853).

[24]Henry of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum, tran. Thomas Forester (London, 1853).

[25]Matthew Paris, Historia Anglorum, 3 Vols., ed. Sir Frederick Madden (London, 1866-69).

[26]Roger of Wendover, Flowers of History, 2 Vols., tran. J. A. Giles (London, 1849).

[27]Matthew of Westminister, Flowers of History, 2 Vols., tran. C. D. Yonge (London, 1853).

[28]John Capgrave, The Chronicle of England, ed. F. C. Hingeston (London, 1858).

[29]John Hardyng, Chronicle (London, 1812).

[30]T. D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (London, 1950), p. 64.

[31]Polydore Vergil, Anglica Historia: From an Early Translation, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (London, 1968).

[32]William Camden, Britannia (London, 1586).

[33]Kendrick, British Antiquity, p. 116. The essay was first published in 1605.

[34]David C. Douglas, The Norman Conquest and British Historians (Glasgow, 1937), p. 24.

[35]Sir William Dugdale, The Baronage of England (London, 1675).

[36]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 27.

[37]Sir William Temple, "An Introduction to the History of England," Works, 4 Vols (New York, 1968). This essay was originally published in 1695.

[38]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 126.

[39]Ibid., p. 280.

[40]David Hume, History of England (London, 1848). See especially the section on the Norman Conquest, pp. 135-211.

[41]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 273.

[42]John Horace Round, Feudal England (London, 1895), p. 225.

[43]Sir Frank Stenton, The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166 (Oxford, 1961, 2nd edition).

[44]Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1971), 3rd edition).

[45]William Stubbs, The Constitutional History of England, 3 Vols. (Oxford, 1891). Frederick William Maitland, Domesday Book and Beyond (Cambridge, 1897).

[46]Paul Vinogradoff, English Society in the Eleventh Century (Oxford, 1908).

[47]Edward A. Freeman, William the Conqueror (London, 1927, 2nd edition).

Stenton, William the Conqueror and the Rule of the Normans (London, 1908).

Douglas, William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England (Berkeley, California, 1964).

Frank Barlow, William I and the Norman Conquest (Connecticut, 1965).

[48]Douglas, The Norman Achievement, 1050-1100 (Berkeley, California, 1969).

[49]C. Warren Hollister, The Impact of the Norman Conquest (New York, 1969).

[50]Marjorie Hollings, "The Survival of the Five Hide Unit in the Western Midlands," English Historical Review, LXIII (January, 1948), pp. 453-487. Eric John, Land Tenure in Early England: A Discussion of Some Problems (Leicester, 1960). H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Governance of Medieval England: From the Conquest to Magna Carta (Edinburgh, 1963).

[51]Charles Homer Haskins, The Normans in European History (Boston, 1915). Norman Institutions (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1918).

[52]C. Warren Hollister, Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions (Oxford, 1962). Michael Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England (Oxford, 1962). John Beeler, Warfare in England.

CHAPTER II

MEDIEVAL CHRONICLES AND CHRONICLERS (1066 - c. 1230)

To the modern reader the narratives of the medieval chronicler seem dry and demonstrative of an absence of historical ability by the authors. Albeit with imperfect equipment, the medieval chronicler has helped the modern reader better understand the time in which he lived. And, the medieval "historian" has given a contemporary flavor to the period or event about which he has written that a modern historian sometimes fails to do. As Johan Huizinga, the great Dutch medievalist remarked:

> A scientific historian of the Middle Ages, relying first and foremost on official documents, which rarely refer to the passions, except violence and cupidity, occasionally runs the risk of neglecting the difference of tone between the life of the Middle Ages and our own days. Such documents would sometimes make us forget the vehement pathos of medieval life, of which the chroniclers, however defective as to material facts, always keep us in mind.[1]

As important as the documentary evidence is for history, the chronicler has tended to transmit a feeling of the times about which he has written. The chroniclers of the Norman Conquest of England, both Norman and English, gave divergent pictures of the origins, enactment, and consequences of the Conquest by Duke William. Those chroniclers of England in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries performed the spadework for future generations of scholars. Untold numbers of historians have gone to the chronicles of an Ordericus Vitalis or a William of Malmesbury to begin their descriptions of the Conquest of England by the Normans.

The chronicle, in a sense, is a lasting memorial to the event or period which it has described. Of course the Norman chronicle will be a panegyric of Duke William and the English chronicle will be a timid attack on the Conqueror, but both serve as contemporary, or near-contemporary evidence of that great event in English history.

The contemporary historian of the Norman Conquest had little understanding of the past. He was a man who was divorced from the great learning of the educated class of Romans.[2] All of the chroniclers had a religious background, but none could compare to the intelligent studies produced by the early Christian scholars.[3]

The medieval historical writer had a tendency for conjecture that left him open to criticism from modern scholars. The contemporary historian of the Conquest obviously had one goal: to put into a narrative a story of the events that he saw, heard, or about which he had read. The basics were there, but the highly-polished tools of summary and inquiry were not.

The chronicles can be divided into two distinct groups. "Dead" chronicles were prepared by one man, copying earlier texts. "Living" chronicles were produced by one man until his own day and then continued by his successors.[4]

When considering the recorded evidence for the Norman Conquest, it immediately becomes evident that there are two opposing camps of contemporary or near-contemporary historians to consult. The English accounts have been condemned as too brief and unanalytical, whereas the Norman accounts are too biased in favor of the Normans.[5]

The first account to which a student should turn is the only contemporary source for the Battle of Hastings and for some of the immediate consequences of the Norman invasion. Professor Dorothy Whitelock summarized quite correctly that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is the most important source for the history of the immediate consequences of the Norman Conquest.[6]

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has come down to us in seven manuscripts and two fragments. Some of the manuscripts are overlapping in certain passages.[7] The chronicle is a dry and very inconclusive listing of world and English events. Its merit, however, is its strict adherence to chronology. Many events which were included in it would not be cited by the modern historian.

The Anglo-Saxon account of Duke William's coronation on Christmas Day, 1066, was the first account to emphasize William's promise to abide by the laws of the Saxon kings. Archbishop Aldred of York consecrated William king at Westminster, but not until William had promised to rule as his Saxon predecessors had done.[8]

Many historians, particularly those who have been inclined to agree with Edward A. Freeman's "continuity" thesis, have cited this passage as evidence for the survival of Anglo-Saxon laws and customs past 1066.

The Saxon chroniclers do not seem to have been aware of a revolutionary change in landholding. They periodically mention William's parcelling out this earldom or that. For example, the "E" version for the year 1068 stated that King William gave the earldom of Northumberland to Earl Robert.[9]

One thing can certainly be inferred from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in regard to the consequences of the Norman Conquest. The Saxon monkish chroniclers were accutely aware of the ecclesiastical takeover by King William. From their words we can assume that King William made a near-complete ecclesiastical conquest. The "E" version for the year 1070 told of William's ruthlessness in his plunder of the monasteries.[10] The "D" version for the year 1071 gave a similar account.[11]

The Saxon chroniclers never discussed events in detail. Their treatment of events was very capsulized, mere compendia of knowledge. However, one event seems to have startled the chronicler of the "E" version more than any other result of the Norman invasion. The entry in the "E" version for the year 1085 demonstrated that the chronicler had witnessed a revolutionary device in the Norman machinery of government--the Domesday Inquest. The Saxon chronicler told of a threatened invasion from Denmark and how King William brought to England the largest force ever for defense against the Danes. The threat was short-lived, but the cunning Conqueror decided that a thorough knowledge of his English realm would be invaluable in order to prepare a good defense against future attack.[12]

The Saxon chronicler spent far more effort in describing the great survey of William's than with any other effect of the Norman Conquest. We can assume that William's extremely thorough inquest made an indelible impression upon the anonymous chronicler.

The Norman historians writing shortly after 1066 offer an opposite view on most of the key issues related to Duke William's victory at Hastings and its aftermath.

The continental historians, Guy of Amiens, William of Jumieges and William of Poitiers, are in a different category from the Saxon chroniclers. The continental chroniclers wrote literary narratives and their works were completed usually at one sitting.[13] Bishop Guy of Amiens differed from William of Jumieges and William of Poitiers, though, in that his account, which was written about 1068, of the Battle of Hastings was not biased in favor of the Normans.[14] Guy's account was primarily a literary creation of the great battle and it left much to be desired in the realm of economic and political interpretation.

The two most important Norman chroniclers were William of Jumieges and William of Poitiers.[15] In his Gesta Normannorum Ducum, William of Jumieges presented a defense of the conqueror's legal claim to the English throne.[16] William stated that King Edward the Confessor had promised the throne to the Norman duke, and, had further confirmed the promise by sending Harold Godwinson of Wessex to the Duke to swear allegiance to the Norman ruler.[17]

Probably the most important contemporary Norman source for the history of the Norman Conquest was that of William of Poitiers, one of Duke William's chaplains.[18] William was well-qualified to write his history of Duke William. He was a "confidant" at the Duke's court and had witnessed some of the Normans' continental battles.[19] He, like William of Jumieges, was a panegyrist of the Conqueror. Also, like William of Jumieges, he staunchly defended Duke William's legal claim to the English throne.[20]

The Norman writers placed great weight on the legal right by which the Conqueror claimed the throne. It was an invaluable aid to the Conqueror to have surrounding him an air of legality. Even though the Conqueror was beset by many insurrections throughout his reign, the number of insurrections were probably kept in check because the idea of legitimacy and legality had filtered down into the English populace. On the other hand, of the few Englishmen who retained power after 1066, such as Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, most supported the Conqueror rather than a rebellion because he seemed to them to be a winner.

A unique document among medieval contemporary sources is the Bayeux Tapestry. It is a multi-colored piece of stitchwork, nineteen and one-half inches wide and 230 feet long.[21] It is now agreed that the Bayeux Tapestry was executed in the 1070's, probably by English-women supervised by Bishop Odo, the Conqueror's half-brother.[22] It stands alone as the most important pictorial representation of the greatest event in English medieval history.[23]

Because of the extreme differences of opinion expressed by the Norman and English chroniclers in the eleventh century, there is really no completely satisfactory contemporary history of the Conquest and its results.[24] Without a doubt, the most detailed document of the eleventh century to provide information on the effects of William's victory was Domesday Book. However, the survey is not a narrative and is beyond the scope of this study.

With the death of the Conqueror in 1087, the first generation of chroniclers came to an end. The next generation of chroniclers had at

their disposal the great tool of hindsight, as well as some of the historical works produced in the Conqueror's reign.

The twelfth century saw the flowering of monasticism throughout Europe. And, from many of the monks, whose business, among other things was to write of the past, came a goodly number of chronicles. Most of the monkish chroniclers were not hesitant to condemn the actions of any, king or commoner, who interferred with the church.[25]

The chronicler Florence of Worcester, who wrote in the very late eleventh and early twelfth century is a good starting point for the second generation of chroniclers whose works contain precious bits of evidence in regard to the Norman Conquest of England.

Florence began his chronological study of English history, entitled Chronicon ex Chronicis,[26] with the year 446 and carried it up to the year 1118.[27]

Florence's chronicle was continued by John of Worcester and carried to 1138, then continued by Ordericus Vitalis to 1142. Henry of Huntingdon continued the history to 1154, followed by John de Taxter, a monk of Bury St. Edmunds, from 1154 to 1265. From 1265 the chronicle was continued to the twenty-third year of the reign of Edward I, probably by another monk of St. Edmund's.[28] Florence obviously was not overly interested in military history; he devoted only a paragraph to the decisive Battle of Hastings.[29]

In the realm of ecclesiastical matters, though, Florence had more than a little to say. It can be inferred that Florence wrote about an ecclesiastical revolution; that is, a continental replacement of English bishops and other high officials of the church. He noted that on May

23rd, 1070 King William appointed a Norman, Thomas, to be Archbishop of York.[30] In the same passage he noted also that in 1070, the king made his chaplain Wakeline bishop of Winchester and appointed Lanfranc, abbot of Bec, as archbishop of Canterbury.[31] Florence's tone was not one of disgust, but it was easy to trace a thread of dissatisfaction in the passage of his chronicle related to the Norman ecclesiastical takeover.

One is not continuously confronted in every passage of his chronicle with Norman ecclesiastical appointments, but it can be safely assumed from Florence's chronicle, that the effect of the Conquest was far greater in breadth than a lay aristocratic replacement.

Florence, like many of his predecessors and his chronicler successors, was impressed by the administrative innovation of William. He stated that: "King William caused a record to be made through all England of how much land each of his barons held, the number of knight-fees, of ploughs, of villains, and beasts. . . ."[32]

The key phrase in regard to the tenurial revolution in the above passage was Florence's mention of knight's fees. It can be inferred that even a few years after the Conqueror's death this term was one yet unfamiliar to Anglo-Saxon society.

An important passage from Florence that demonstrated the great governmental effect of the Conquest stated that on May 24th, 1086 the Conqueror summoned all of the important lay and ecclesiastical officials to Salisbury. Here, Florence stated that the King, on August 1st, 1086, required the officials of the realm to swear an oath of fealty to him.[33]

Most probably Florence did not have the intellectual expertise to distinguish between the new Norman system and the old English system. But, for the future study of the effects of the Norman Conquest it can be inferred from this statement that Norman feudalism was transplanted to England,[34] but that a truly feudal arrangement, where king and lord are politically equal, never occurred due to the personal power of William the Conqueror,[35] and to the precarious nature of the immediate post-Conquest years.

After a generation of almost near silence, there appeared a great many Anglo-Norman histories.[36] Abroad an Englishman, Ordericus Vitalis, born in 1075 and trained in the monastic life on the continent, synthesized many of the previous accounts of the Norman Conquest in his Historia Ecclesiastica.[37] This work contains much valuable information on the history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Ordericus was sympathetic with the English, but his chief goal was to justify the Norman Conquest.[38] His continental upbringing influenced his pro-Norman point of view.[39]

Even though Ordericus followed the line of his predecessors in adhering to the belief of divine Providence interventing in the affairs of men, his work demonstrated some advance in historical development. Ordericus combined God's intervention with rational explanations for events.[40]

Ordericus, who frequently used the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the works of the Norman chroniclers, demonstrated his pro-Norman sympathies by reiterating the belief in Edward the Confessor's testamentary to Duke William. With profound conviction, Ordericus stated

that there was no doubt that the Confessor had promised the kingdom of England to his kinsman Duke William.[41] Ordericus tried as hard as possible to make William's claim appear legal, but it was impossible to make the claim appear legal to the Englishmen of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Ordericus continued the myth of the feigned flight by the Normans that was begun by William of Poitiers, c. 1071. Ordericus mentioned three flights: the cowardly flight by the Bretons early in the day, and two planned feigned flights by the Normans later in the day.[42]

A very good narrative of English history was produced by a contemporary of Ordericus, Henry of Huntingdon, whose chronicle was carried up to the year 1154.[43] Antonia Gransden called Henry's chronicle: "The most ambitious work of the period, including both past and present history. . . ."[44] Henry's work was an immediate success. There remain twenty-five medieval copies of the Historia Anglorum.[45]

Henry of Huntingdon bluntly tells of a great land division by the Conqueror, at a very early date in his reign. After a trip to Normandy in 1067, the Conqueror returned to England and divided up the English estates among his captains.[46] There is not a trace of vagueness surrounding Henry's statement regarding the land redistribution. The modern reader knows not what lands to which Henry referred, but certainly it was the land which had come under Norman rule after 1066.

Henry of Huntingdon's credibility has been vouched for by a good many modern historians,[47] thus it can be concluded that an extensive land revolution occurred shortly after 1066.

Henry, using Florence of Worcester as one of his authorities, reiterated the assertion that King William had extracted an oath of allegiance from most of the lay and ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief and the undertenants of the newly acquired realm.[48]

With the strong evidence of Florence of Worcester and Henry of Huntingdon in regard to King William's securing homage from both tenant-in-capite and under-tenant, it can be asserted with confidence that William desired consciously to be the absolute authority of the realm. Florence and Henry were not pro-Norman panegyricists like Ordericus or William of Poitiers; therefore, it can safely be concluded that a cataclysmic change in English history occurred with the Conquest by the Normans.

Another contemporary of Ordericus Vitalis and Henry of Huntingdon was William of Malmesbury. William, who was born in 1095, produced a very important work entitled the Chronicle of the Kings of England[49] which traced English history from the Roman occupation to c. 1143.

In the realm of historical writing, William represented a milestone.[50] His works remain of important value to the modern historian. In his introduction, William gave his intention to write an objective account of the reign of William I, a milestone in itself.[51] However, even with William's promise of objectivity, his condemnation of the Anglo-Saxon race made it doubtful that the chronicler would keep his promise. That condemnation of pre-Conquest English society remained in the annals of English history.

William told that on the eve of the Conquest that Anglo-Saxon society has morally and religiously deteriorated.[52] This immorality and

effeminacy had effected all classes of society, from the peasant to, the monarch; from the parish priest to the archbishop. Learning, according to William, had degenerated to a woeful ebb. Prostitution, public drunkenness, and slavery had destroyed a once vital civilization.[53]

William's decadent picture of the Anglo-Saxons on the eve of the Conquest was sharply contrasted with his picture of the invaders. The conquerors of England purged the country of all her immorality and gluttony.[54]

In regard to the ecclesiastical effects of the Norman settlement, William related that the Normans revived religion in England. Churches and monasteries began to appear almost magically as a result of the Conquest.[55]

William of Malmesbury's account of the military effects of the Norman settlement demonstrates the severity with which the Conquerors dealt with the conquered. William stated that between 1066 and 1068 the Conqueror nearly annhilated the county of York, where the last vestiges of rebellion were based.[56] According to William of Malmesbury, the Conqueror's innovative justice was swift and severe.

After William of Malmesbury (d. 1143), many chroniclers, in the latter half of the twelfth century, were content to record mainly local events.[57] Although there were many good accounts which have helped future historians better understand the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard, few chronicles were tracing the steps of English history from the Roman occupation to the twelfth century. Many "living" chronicles flourished, but true historical accounts of general English history were few and far between. Not until the appearance of Roger of Wendover,

Matthew Paris, and the famed St. Albans school of historical writing, would general interpretations of the effects of the Norman Conquest be saved for posterity.

Near the end of the twelfth century English historical writing received a vital infusion from the Benedictine Abbey of St. Albans. This became the center for narrative history and the St. Alban's tradition carried over into the fourteenth century.

One of the first great chroniclers to write at St. Albans was Roger of Wendover. Roger's chronicle, Flores Historiarum was begun shortly after 1204 and was continued until 1234.[58]

Roger explained that the Conqueror placed a heavy hand around the neck of the English church. He assumed that placing the bishoprics and abbeys under military tenure significantly diminished the church's independence.[59] However, the church actually had more independence after 1066 than it had enjoyed in the Anglo-Saxon period, since the church and state had practically been one prior to 1066.[60]

It can be inferred from Roger's Flores that the Norman settlement caused a near dissolution of the Anglo-Saxon nobility. Roger pictured a revolution in which the Saxon aristocrats became virtual slaves after the Norman settlement.[61] Roger spoke of evil customs arising in England after the Conquest, and he stated that the Conqueror's justices were usually the biggest criminals.[62]

Roger of Wendover, a monkish chronicler, was not particularly kind in his remarks about the Normans because he believed that they were seriously encroached upon the church's liberties. However, he did comment favorably on many of the innovations in England which resulted

from the Norman Conquest. He was obviously not interested in economics; he did not mention the Conqueror's survey. He was, of course, primarily interested in church-state relations. Roger's passages implied a man who had been insulted by what he felt to be an encroachment upon the powers of the church by the state.[63]

By the end of the twelfth century, English historical writing was almost near the top of Fortune's wheel. But, Fortuna was about to bring English historiography to a low level. However, before the decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, English historical writing would reach its zenith in the greatest English historian since the Venerable Bede.

The Conquerors from Normandy were seen in much the same light at the end of the twelfth century as they had been at the beginning. The Conquest continued to be viewed as a calamity in English history. Only when a monk, like William of Malmesbury, felt that the Conquest had purged England of her evils, did William I receive any gratitude at all.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

[1]Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (New York, 1954), p. 15.

[2]T. D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (London, 1950), p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 2.

[4]Gransden, Historical Writing in England, p. 29.

[5]Ibid., p. 92.

[6]Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, tran. Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (London, 1961), p. xi.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in English Historical Documents, II, ed. David C. Douglas and G. T. Greenaway (New York, 1953), p. 145.

[9]Ibid., p. 149.

[10]Ibid., p. 151.

[11]Ibid. In regard to the similarities of the "D" and "E" versions, see C. Plummer's Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel.

[12]Ibid., p. 161.

[13]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 94.

[14]Guy of Amiens, Carmen De Hastingae Proelio, ed. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz (Oxford, 1972). See page 29: Bishop Gury did not hesitate to tell of the cowardly retreat by the Norman cavalry, whereas William of Poitiers mentioned only the famed "feigned flight" This translation, the definitive version, suggests that William of Poitiers used Bishop Guy's account, p. 4.

[16] William of Jumieges, Gesta Normannorum Ducum, ed. J. Marx (Societe de l'Histoire de Normandie, 1914).

[16]Ibid., p. 215.

[17]Ibid. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle made no mention of this confrontation between Earl Harold and Duke William, again demonstrating the polarization of Norman and English contemporary accounts.

[18]William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum, ed. Raymond Foreville (Paris, 1952). Professor David C. Douglas, in English Historical Documents, p. 226, suggested that this work was completed in about 1071.

[19]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 100.

[20]English Historical Documents, II, p. 217.

[21]Ibid., p. 232.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 92.

[25]J. J. Bagley, Historical Interpretation: Sources of English Medieval History, 1066-1540 (Baltimore, 1965), p. 37.

[26]Florence of Worcester, Chronicon ex Chronicis, tran. Thomas Forester (London, 1854).

[27]Ibid., p. v.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., p. 170.

[30]Ibid., p. 175.

[31]Ibid., p. 184.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Charles Homer Haskins, Norman Institutions (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1918), p. 59.

[35] William Stubbs, Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History (Oxford, 1890), p. 189.

[36]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 136.

[37]Ordericus Vitalis, The Ecclesiastical of England and Normandy, tran. Thomas Forester (London, 1853).

[38]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 153.

[39]Bagley, Historical Interpretation, p. 14.

[40]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 155.

[41]Ordericus Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, p. 458. See Guy of Amiens' Carmen De Hastingae Proelio, ed. Morton and Muntz, p. 29.

[42]Guy of Amiens, Carmen De Hastingae Proelio, ed. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz., p. 29. Henry of Huntington, Historia Anglorum, tran. Thomas Forester (London, 1853).

[43]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 193.

[44]Ibid., p. 194. Twenty-five copies of a book do not seem a considerable number to the modern student, but it was a tremendous production for the twelfth century. John of Salisbury, the great twelfth-century scholar and contemporary of Henry of Huntingdon left what was then considered a massive library of less than forty volumes to the school at Chartres at his death, C. J. Webb, John of Salisbury (London, 1960), p. 79.

[45]Henry of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum, p. 212.

[46]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 212-13.

[47]Henry of Huntgdon, Historia Anglorum, p. 216.

[48]William of Malmesbury, Chronicle of the Kings of England, tran. J. A. Giles (London, 1847).

[49]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 167.

[50]William of Malmesbury, Chronicle of the Kings of England, p. 250.

[51]Ibid., p. 279. In particular, the Puritans made good use of William's condemnation.

[52]Ibid., p. 279-80.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., pp. 281-283. Of course a great effect of the Conquest was to bring England into the sphere of continental ecclesiastical and military architecture.

[55]Ibid., pp. 282-283.

[56]Bagley, Historical Interpretation, p. 45.

[57]Roger of Wendover, Flowers of History, 2 vols., tran. J. A. Giles (London, 1849). For a long time Roger's chronicle was credited to his more famous successor, Matthew Paris.

[58]Roger of Wendover, p. 338.

[59]English Historical Documents, I, p. 519; p. 551.

[60]Roger of Wendover, p. 349.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

CHAPTER III

MATTHEW PARIS, THE LATER MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE CHRONICLERS (c. 1230-c. 1600)

According to one modern historiographer the appearance of annals was the most significant development in English historical writing in the thirteenth century.[1] And, the St. Albans school of historical writing which began with Roger of Wendover in the late twelfth century, was continued on a greater scale by Matthew Paris during the second quarter of the thirteenth century.

Matthew Paris was born c. 1200, became a monk at St. Albans about 1217, and began a short, but successful life of historical writing which lasted until 1259. His greatest work was the Chronica Majora, but probably the most important in regard to the history of England was his Historia Anglorum, a chronicle of English events from the Conquest to 1253.[2]

In the Historia Anglorum the impressionable passages are those that demean both Harold Godwinson and William the Conqueror alike.[3] Matthew Paris believed King Harold to be a traitor, and, while praising the Conqueror on some points, he accused him of being a tyrant.[4] It can be inferred that Matthew Paris viewed Norman oppression of the church in the same light as he did Anglo-Saxon oppression of the church. However, Paris was not the defender of the papacy, as could be concluded. From Roger of Wendover Matthew Paris elaborated the idea of disliking pope and king alike.[5] Among other

things, because of his attempted objectivity, Matthew Paris may well be the most important source of contemporary, or near-contemporary evidence for the study of the Norman Conquest.

The thirteenth century also witnessed a rise in historical writing at Bury St. Edmund's. St. Edmund's Abbey has not been looked upon as favorably an historical center, but chronicles began appearing there earlier than at St. Albans.[6] The St. Edmund's chronicle was written in the latter part of the thirteenth century and described universal events from the beginning of the world to the first part of the fourteenth century. John de Taxter is the only known writer, his part being from the creation to 1265.[7] Two anonymous writers followed de Taxter, one continuing the chronicle to 1296, and a third carrying the history to 1301.

The St. Edmund's chronicle is quite valuable as contemporary evidence for the reigns of Henry III and Edward I to 1301.[8] The Bury chroniclers had little to say in regard to the immediate results of the Norman Conquest in the thirteenth century continuations. The Conquest was then becoming less a part of the immediate past. However there is one very important passage in the Bury chronicle for the year 1300. The anonymous chronicler had reason to reflect upon the Norman Conquest. And, his opinions on the Conquest are important, for they give to the modern reader a late thirteenth and early fourteenth century opinion of the Norman Conquest and its effects, 234 years after the Battle of Hastings. Judging from the Bury chronicler's words, many Englishmen still viewed the Conquest as a catastrophe. The chronicler in 1300 put much emphasis on William's

acquisition of England by force, not by legal claim.[9] The Bury chronicler also asserted quite conclusively that the Norman Conquest resulted in an aristocratic revolution, disinheriting most of the native land-holders.[10] From this particular chronicle, anyway, we see that it was the Conqueror's prerogative to distribute the conquered land ". . . where, how, and to whom he wished."[11]

The monastic chronicles which had led the field of English historical scholarship during the reign of Henry III were continued during the reign of Edward I,but were quite meager in their handling of world events.[12] An exception to this rule was the fourteenth century chronicle, Flores Historiarum, ascribed to Matthew of Westminister,[13] which accounted world events from the creation to 1327. World events are treated well up to the formation of the Heptarchy, but after that, England was the author's primary concern.[14] The Confessor was upheld as a Saint by Matthew and the Earl of Wessex, Harold, was depicted as a usurper.[15] Like the pro-Norman accounts of William of Jumieges, William of Poitiers, and Ordericus Vitalis, Matthew of Westminister, in the fourteenth century made a claim for the alleged testamentary to Duke William by King Edward the Confessor.

Matthew of Westminister's history of the Conquest was reminiscent of the eleventh and twelfth century accounts because it adhered to the belief that it was God's intervention that spelled doom for the Anglo-Saxons.

There tended to be a general decline in the quality of historical writing in the fourteenth century. The two great schools at St. Albans and St. Edmunds had been centers of English historical

writing in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. While much local history was written, the chronicles of Matthew Paris, John de Taxter, and Matthew of Westminister tended to place English events in their European perspective.

The fourteenth century, with the exception of the Flores Historiarum and a few others, produced no works of history comparable to the developments made at St. Albans in the thirteenth century.

The fourteenth century has been claimed by some modern historians to have been the dawning of the Renaissance. However, as Huizinga noted, the fourteenth and fifteenth century Europeans remained medieval in their conception of life, and, nowhere is this more evident than in the dry narratives produced in those two centuries.[16] The Norman Conquest became an event that happened in a barbarous and dark time in the history of England. With the tendency to overlook the immediate medieval past in favor of a more glamorous classical heritage, the English historians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries inaugurated a "dark age" of English medieval historiography, with its obvious consequences for the study of the Norman Conquest.

The "dark age" of Conquest historiography, with a few exceptions, lasted until the nineteenth century. In attempting to understand how slight the chronicled evidence for the medieval past became it might be helpful to note two chronicles of the first half of the fifteenth century. John Hardyng, in the early fifteenth century,

became one of the earliest secular historians of British history. Hardyng, a soldier as early as his late teens, was born in 1378.[17] His Chronicle was probably completed around 1436 and was continued up to 1464.[18]

Hardyng was one of those English historians who lived during the transition from late medieval to early Renaissance civilization. He was not a scholar and he paid very little attention to detail and chronology. For example, he devoted only a couple of lines to the Battle of Hastings.[19] His not too vivid account of the land redistribution by the Normans was summed up in one line: "The South part of England then he [William I] rode, and dolt it largely unto his menne."[20] However, in his poetic chronicle, Hardyng was a little more thorough in describing his thoughts on the Anglo-Saxon succession problem in 1066. He continued the fourteenth century belief that Harold Godwinson broke his oath to Duke William and usurped the throne of England.[21]

Hardyng obviously had no realistic conception of eleventh century English life or politics. He referred to Harold as a duke, an obvious anachronism. Hardyng, too, had modern notions of the laws of succession in suggesting that the young Edgar was the rightful heir to the throne.[22]

A younger contemporary of Hardyng's who wrote a history of English events to his own time was John Capgrave. He was born in 1393, was educated for the priesthood, and received the Doctor of Divinity degree from Oxford at age 24.[23] Throughout Capgrave's chronicle, attention was focused on the history of the Holy Roman

Empire and the papacy in addition to English events. The most thoroughly treated subject in regard to the Norman Conquest was the deposition of Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury in 1070. Capgrave related how Stigand was removed from office because of his authoritarian rule at Canterbury, his usurpation of the office from his Norman predecessor, Robert of Jumieges, and his reception of the Pallium from an anti-pope.[24] The acts, such as the deposition of Stigand, which would later lend credibility to the Conqueror's alleged alliance with Rome was never more wholeheartedly stated than in the words of Capgrave.

It can be concluded from reviewing some of the passages from a select group of medieval chronicles of the various implications of the Norman Conquest, the medieval historian placed much emphasis on divine intervention in the affairs of men. However, moderns should not condemn the monkish chroniclers for their simplistic piety. With imperfect tools the medieval chronicler laid the groundwork for all future study of the Conquest. From the battle of Hastings until today, the student of the Conquest invariably begins his research by reviewing the works of the contemporary or near-contemporary chronicler. Professor David C. Douglas emphasized the chronicler's role in bringing a contemporary view of the events of the Conquest to modern students:

> The modern student of medieval Britain is in very truth compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, and our knowledge of the early history of Britain may today be very substantially increased by paying reverent attention to the scholars of former centuries who have labored to teach us all.[25]

The transition from medieval to modern was a slow and vague process. There was no distinct break between the medieval and the modern world. The historical narratives of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, though touched with tenets of the Renaissance, remained medieval in their treatment of chronology, their unhesitant conjecture, and their dryness. However, before one puts too much emphasis on the medieval continuity into the modern world, it would be well to remember Huizinga's words:

> The gothic principle prevailed . . . but all these forms and modes were on the wane. A high and strong culture is declining, but at the same time and in the same sphere new things are being born. The tide is turning, the tone of life is about to change.[26]

Even though the chroniclers of Renaissance England tended to be medieval in thought and credulity, a few were equipped with the "humanistic" forms of learning. Humanistic historiography in England was an offshoot of the Italian movement.[27] And, the man who can be termed the leader of the English humanist school of historical writing was an Italian, Polydore Vergil. He was one of the first true critical historians.[28] Vergil was commissioned by the Tudors to write English history their way. In his Anglica Historia, which was first published in 1534, there was included only a few brief passages that related to the Norman Conquest of England.[29] Polydore, the greatest Tudor historian, because of his humanistic background knew little and cared less about the Norman Conquest or the larger scope of the civilization that filled the gap from the end of the Roman world to the sixteenth century.

A contemporary of Vergil's was the Englishman Robert Fabyan. He was a merchant and served as sheriff of London in 1493. One can gather a better picture of the Conquest and some of its effects on England from Fabyan's chronicle than from the better-known work of the Italian, Polydore. Fabyan, in his New Chronicles of England and France,[30] clearly pointed out what can be justifiably inferred as the Norman displacement of the English nobility.[31] Daily, according to Fabyan, the Normans increased their lands and wealth while the Englishmen lost their land just as quickly.[32]

Fabyan also told of the Norman replacement of English ecclesiastics. His description of an ecclesiastical council at Winchester implied an ecclesiastical revolution not too less severe than the aristocratic one.[33]

The sixteenth century witnessed a surge of antiquarian study, such as the researches of John Leland, notably his Itinerary.[34] The sixteenth century in England was concerned with contemporary political and religious issues. To the Tudor age William the Conqueror had always been pro-Monarchy.[35]

The most famous antiquarian of the Elizabethan period was William Camden, whose Britannia first appeared in 1586. Though Camden did not provide a significant account of the Norman Conquest and its effects, his work marked a milestone in English historical writing. Camden recognized that in order to study properly the English past, a knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh was of primary importance.[36] However, the Elizabethan antiquaries like Camden, steeped in Renaissance thought, were more concerned with classical antiquity than with their medieval heritage.[37]

Sir Walter Ralegh's History of the World, written in the latter sixteenth century but first published in 1614, had a medieval style, yet the bulk of his work was devoted to classical subjects or contemporary events. The work contained only two occasional references to the Norman Conquest of England.

From Polydore Vergil's Anglica Historia in 1534 to the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, there was no real study of the constitutional, economic, and political consequences of the Norman Conquest. The so-called Renaissance had become firmly entrenched and it was nowhere more evident than in the scarcity of studies about things medieval. The "dark age" of Conquest study continued.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Norman Conquest was a dim event in an even darker medieval past. The great "re-birth" of classical learning and thought which arose from Italy helped to retard the study of the Norman Conquest as it did other events of the medieval past. England was touched later by the new modes of thought and learning, but by the end of the sixteenth century, the English Renaissance was in full swing. Events in the English medieval past were forsaken by antiquaries who favored the more stylish' classical themes.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

[1]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 318.

[2]Matthew Paris, Chronica Majora and Historia Anglorum, 3 Vols, ed. F. Madden (London, 1852-54).

[3]Ibid., I, pp. 5-8; pp. 7, 8, 12-13.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Gransden, p. 368.

[6]Ibid., p. 380.

[7]The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds, 1212-1301, ed. Antonia Gransden (London, 1964).

[8]Ibid., p. xvii.

[9]Ibid., p. 160.

[10]Ibid., pp. 160-161.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 404; p. 439.

[13]Matthew of Westminister, Flowers of History, tran. C. D. Yonge, 2 Vols (London, 1853).

[14]Gransden, English Historical Writing, p. 441.

[15]Matthew of Westminister, Flowers of History, I, pp. 555-56.

[16]John Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (New York, 1954), p. 335.

[17]John Hardyng, Chronicle (London, 1812), p. iv. Hardyng fought at Shrewsbury and Hamildon Hill

[18]D.N.B., VIII, p. 1247, Col. 2.

[19]Hardyng, Chronicle, p. 234.

[20]Ibid., p. 235.

[21]Ibid., p. 232.

[22]See David C. Douglas, The Norman Achievement, 1050-1100. (California, 1969), pp. 44-50.

[23]John Capgrave, The Chronicle of England, ed. Francis C. Hingeston (London, 1858), pp. xi-x.

[24]Ibid., p. 130.

[25]David C. Douglas, The Norman Conquest and Brisih Historians (Glasgow, 1946), p. 40.

[26]Huizinga, Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 335.

[27]Harry Elmer Barnes, A History of Historical Writing (Oklahoma, 1937), p. 114.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Polydore Vergil, Anglica Historia, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (London, 1968, reprint of the 1534 edition), B.K. VIII, pp. 298-308.

[30]Robert Fabyan, New Chronicles of England and France (London, 1811, reprint of the edition).

[31]Ibid., p. 241.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., p. 242.

[34]John Leland, The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543, Parts IX, X, XI. ed. Lucy T. Smith (London, 1910).

[35]Levi Fox, ed., English Historical Scholarship in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries (London, 1956), p. 57.

[36]William Camden, Brittania (London, 1586).

[37]Fox, English Historical Scholarship, p. 103.

[38]Ibid., p. 99.

[39]Sir Walter Ralegh, History of the World, ed. C. A. Patrides (Philadelphia, 1971, reprint of the 1614 edition).

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEST IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Seventeenth century English historians, with their eyes focused on the history of the English constitution, inaugurated an enthusiasm which resulted in what may have been the genesis of English medieval studies.

A work that was important in the development of Saxon studies was Richard Rowland's Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities Concerning the Most Noble and Renowned English Nation, which was published in 1605.[1] Without a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon civilization, a study of the effects of the Norman Conquest would be unthinkable. Rowland helped to provide a beginning for the study of the Anglo-Saxon past.

In 1629 Sir Henry Spelman began the study of the Norman Conquest and its results with an essay entitled "Feuds and Tenures by Knight Service."[2] Rowland's work was undoubtedly invaluable to Spelman, but it was Spelman who prepared the way for the important studies on the Conquest and English feudalism in the nineteenth century. A few words about the "father" of Conquest studies might be informative.

Henry Spelman was born in the county of Norfolk and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge.[3] He was knighted by King James I who reputedly had a high opinion of Spelman.[4] He was interested

in the law and wanted to study its origin and development.[5] His primary concern became the constitutional consequences of the Norman Conquest. Spelman obviously was aware that the consequences of the Conquest were of the utmost significance.[6] Spelman's monumental essay was the first modern assertion that the Conquest was more than just a turning-point in English history. He viewed the Normans as crafty innovators. Much of his work can be compared favorably to the most modern work on the subject.[7]

With much emphasis on Domesday Book, Sir Henry asserted his thesis in regard to the feudal consequences of the Conquest. He boldly stated that the Anglo-Saxon five-hide unit was replaced by a Norman system of knights' fees. He said that the Saxon hida was replaced by the Norman term carrue [carrucate].[8] In regard to feudal terminology, Spelman insisted that English feudalism had no Anglo-Saxon precedent. The terms tenura, tenentes, tenere, tenendum, feodal [feudal], tenure-in-capite, tenure-in-socage, and Frankalmoign, Spelman claimed, were all part of a new system of military land-tenure brought to England by William the Conqueror and the Normans, although the term socage was of Anglo-Saxon origin.[9]

Spelman's explanation of the differences in thegn and knight are remarkably modern-sounding: "A thane was not properly a title of Dignity, but of Service."[10] He added that the three services expected of a holder of an estate in Anglo-Saxon times were part of the fundamental law of Saxon society, the trinodae (actually spelled trimodae) necessitati, not due to any tenure-in-capite.[11]

Hereditary tenures in England, Sir Henry credited to the innovation of the Conqueror.[12] In almost every area of society, Spelman concluded, the Conquest brought about a marked change.

If Sir Henry Spelman was the father of English medieval studies, particularly of the Norman Conquest, then assuredly his "first-born" was Sir William Dugdale. Dugdale has been called England's first medievalist.[13] His most important work was a manuscript collection called the "Baronage and Historical Account of the Lives and Most Memorable Actions of Our English Nobility," which was published in 1675.[14] Dugdale, like Spelman, was a royalist. Both represent the finest of two-outstanding generations of English historical writing.[15]

In regard to his treatment and interpretation of the Norman Conquest, Dugdale again resembled Spelman. He viewed the Norman Conquest as a revolution in the constitutional history of England. However, unlike Spelman, he pointed out the continuity of one Anglo-Saxon institution beyond 1066. He observed that the officiary earldoms existed in Anglo-Saxon England and were maintained by the Conqueror after 1066.[16] Yet, while demonstrating the continuity of one Saxon institution, Dugdale made his position clear on the general effect of the Conquest—that William the Conqueror enforced his absolute authority over the English.[17]

As in the essay by Sir Henry Spelman, Dugdale reasserted the idea that the Normans broke, almost entirely with Saxon precedent.[18]

If for no other reason, Dugdale's massive history of the earldoms and baronies of England before and after the Conquest by the

Normans helped to understand better the impact of the great aristocratic revolution between 1066 and 1087.

Even though Spelman and Dugdale deserve to be called the greatest scholars of the Norman Conquest up through the seventeenth century, they were by no means alone in their efforts. Men such as Dr. Robert Brady, a physician, were also devoting much time to the work of interpreting the constitutional effects of the Norman Conquest. Brady's Introduction to the Old English History was the first appeal in England for the scientific study of Anglo-Norman history.[19]

As has been observed by Professor Douglas and others, the Norman Conquest has been a part of political propagandists up to our own day. This was never more fully evident than in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The "Saxonists" held that the Norman Conquest was a disaster which nearly annhilated the pre-eminent Saxon culture.[20] Representative of that propagandistic outpouring which centered around the Conquest was a volume that appeared in 1680 entitled: Argumentum Anti-Normannicum.[21] This anonymous work has been attributed to both William Atwood, a Whig barrister, and to Edward Cook.[22] Professor Douglas emphasized the fact that this work appeared when parliamentary opposition to Charles II was reaching its peak.[23]

The thesis of Angumentum Anti-Normannicum was that William I and the Normans did not make an absolute conquest of England.[24] The author stressed the time-honored, yet unprovable, legal claim by William to the English throne.[25] The Whig writer continued his assault on the Conquest by suggesting that Anglo-Saxon landholders continued

to peaceably enjoy their inheritances after 1066, and cited Bishop Wulfston of Worcester as an English ecclesiastical office-holder who "survived" the Conquest.[26]

In the Argumentum Anti-Normannicum one of the first and strongest rebuttals to the thesis that the Norman Conquest was a cataclysmic aristocratic revolution was advanced. This particular work was admirably defended by a host of others.

Sir Matthew Hale's History of the Common Law,[27] written during the reign of Charles II, was similar to the Anti-Normannicum in suggesting that the replacement of Englishmen by Normans did not signify a constitutional change.[28] Sir Matthew attempted to demonstrate that there were many similarities between the laws and customs of England and Normandy. He saw no differences in the land-holding systems of both states.[29] He attributed the similarities to: ". . . a great intercourse between England and Normandy before and long after the Conquest."[30]

The Conquest polemics of the latter seventeenth century dominated English historical scholarship. However, a chronicled account with some demonstration of objectivity was produced by Sir Richard Baker in 1679.[31] Albeit with medieval overtones, Baker wrote that the Conqueror gained complete authority in every estate of the realm.[32]

A history more in keeping with modern scholarship was produced in 1695. Sir William Temple's "An Introduction to the History of England,"[33] even with frequent errors, was the best work on the history of England between 1051 and 1066 up to his own time.[34] Temple was the son of a Master of the Rolls who had served as personal secretary

to Sir Philip Sidney.[35] Sir William was trained at Cambridge, became a parliamentarian during the reign of Charles II, and a consultant to William III from 1688 to 1704.[36]

Sir William insisted that the Conqueror maintained the old Saxon laws and customs but brought some innovations from Normandy.[37] The Conqueror's justices, Temple believed, were Anglo-Saxon copies.[38] He did recognize the courts of Chancery and Exchequer as Norman innovations.[39] Sir William Temple was a Saxonist of the first rank, yet he dealt quite sympathetically with the Conqueror and his companions. Nonetheless, his research contrasted sharply with that of Spelman and Dugdale. In regard to the central question of the introduction of feudalism into England, Sir William insisted that the feudal laws had been introduced into England during the Germanic wanderings of the later Roman Empire.[40]

The great English literary giant, John Milton, produced his History of England in 1670.[41] He leaned heavily on the twelfth-century chronicles of William of Malmesbury. Particularly interesting is Milton's passage on the state of Anglo-Saxon society on the eve of the Norman Conquest. In a portraiture unlike those of many of his contemporaries, Milton told of the illiteracy of the Saxon clergy, the ornateness of the monks, the gluttony and immorality of the Saxon nobility.[42] In essence, Milton described an effiminate culture subdued by a pious, stern, Spartan culture.

The neglect of the Norman Conquest in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was remedied in the seventeenth century by the likes of Spelman, Dugdale, and Temple. In the sixteenth

century the Conqueror had been pro-Tory, but after the Glorious Revolution in 1688 he became the subverter of the English constitution.[43] But, even with the politicizing of the study of the Conquest, great strides were made toward a better understanding of how the Conquest changed the history of England. Unfortunately, the light shed upon the study of the Norman Conquest by the seventeenth-century scholars flickered and all but died in the eighteenth. There was a reaction to the study of medieval history. Between 1730 and 1800 the studies in no way compared to the important researches of the previous seventy years.[44] Professor Douglas' description of medieval studies during the Enlightenment would be hard to improve upon:

> Walpole might amuse himself with a panegyric of Richard III, but he and his like were chiefly concerned to dress up the products of antiquarian research in attractive garb, and to parade the results as a new toy. Even as he studied the past, he jested at those who made it a serious business.[45]

Professor Douglas' words seem very subjective and quite harsh, but after a quick look at eighteenth century historiography, his words ring true. However, without looking too hard, there can be found an exception to the rule. The very "leader" of the English Enlightenment, David Hume, wrote a masterful history of England,[46] in which he included a very illuminating, if error-filled, narrative of the Norman Conquest. Hume pictured the Conquest as a very cataclysmic change in English history. He spoke of an almost total revolution in land-holding after 1066.[47] Hume recognized that the Normans transplanted a fully-flowered French type of feudalism into England.[48] In addition, Hume lauded the Conqueror's introduction of strict justice.[49]

David Hume was one of the first English historians to appreciate the intermingling of the Norman and Anglo-Saxon races and cultures, concluding that a mixture of Saxon, Dane, and Norman became the English.[50]

Oliver Goldsmith was another Englishman in the Age of Reason who viewed the Conquest as a dramatic event in English history.[51] Goldsmith, in a work published in 1764, saw in the Conquest the foundation of the English constitution. He concluded that the Conqueror had salvaged some Saxon institutions after 1066, but because those old customs had also been in Normandy before 1066.[52]

Thus the Conqueror was pictured as the subverter of the English constitution after 1688 and as the founder of the Constitution by Hume and Goldsmith in the eighteenth century.

It is hard put to find many works on the Norman Conquest in the annals of eighteenth century historiography. Aside from the works such as Hume's History of England, the work on Domesday Book by Abraham Farley,[53] and a woefully few others, the Norman Conquest and its effects seem to have been off limits to the eighteenth-century English historians. It seems that the study of the Norman Conquest, and on a greaterscale the study of the Middle Ages, was stifled by the pompous attitudes of English "Enlightened" historians.[54]

NOTES

CHAPTER IV

[1]Levi Fox, English Historical Scholarship in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries (London, 1956), p. 4.

[2]David C. Douglas, The Norman Conquest and British Historians (London, 1937), p. 7. The complete title of the essay was "The Original, Growth, Propagation, and Condition of Feuds and Tenures by Knight-Service in England." The essay was published in Reliquiae Spelmannianae, Bk. II (London, 1723, reprint of the 1695 publication).

[3]Sir Henry Spelman, Reliquiae Spelmannianae (London, 1723), p. 1.

[4]Ibid., p. 2.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Douglas, The Norman Conquest and British Historians, p. 27.

[7]Douglas, English Scholars, 1660-1730 (Glasgow, 1946), p. 127.

[8]Spelman, "Feuds and Tenures by Knight Serice," p. 45.

[9]Ibid., p. 8.

[10]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[11]Ibid., pp. 16-17. The trimodae necessitati were three obligations on a Saxon landholder: military expedition, building and repairing fortifications, and building and repairing bridges.

[12]Ibid., p. 5.

[13]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 25.

[14]Ibid., p. 45. From here on the title will be referred to as The Baronage of England. The work was published again in 1676.

[15]Fox, English Historical Scholarship, p. 74.

[16]Dugdale, The Baronage of England, p. 22.

[17]Ibid., p. vi.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 126.

[20]Ibid., p. 119.

[21]Argumentum Anti-Normannicum, anonymous (London, 1682).

[22]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 122.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Argumentum Anti-Normannicum, p. 4.

[25]Ibid., pp. 13-15.

[26]Ibid., pp. 58-60; p. 95.

[27]Sir Matthew Hale, The History of the Common Law, ed. Charles M. Gray (Chicago, 1971, reprint of the 1739 edition).

[28]Ibid., p. 5.

[29]Ibid., p. 77.

[30]Ibid., p. 83.

[31]Sir Richard Baker, A Chronicle of the Kings of England (London, 1679).

[32]Ibid., p. 226.

[33]Sir William Temple, "An Introduction to the History of England," Works, 4 Vols. (New York, 1968).

[34]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 123.

[35]Temple, Works, I, p. iii.

[36]Ibid., p. iv.

[37]Ibid., p. 127.

[38]Ibid., p. 140.

[39]Ibid., p. 172.

[40]Ibid., p. 142.

[41]John Milton, "The History of Britain," Works (New York, 1932, reprint of the 1695 edition). DNB, XIII, p. 486, Col. 2.

[42]Ibid., p. 315.

[43]Douglas, The Norman Conquest, p. 16.

[44]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 273.

[45]Ibid., p. 275.

[46]David Hume, The History of England: From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688 (London, 1848).

[47]Ibid., p. 210.

[48]Ibid., pp. 210-11. Hume used Spelman's findings in regard to this problem.

[49]Hume, History of England, p. 197.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Oliver Goldsmith, "An History of England in a Series of Letters From a Nobleman to his Son," Works, V, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford, 1966).

[52]Ibid., p. 302.

[53]Abraham Farley, Account of Domesday Book with a View to Its Being Published (London, 1756); Douglas, English Scholars, p. 137.

[54]Douglas, English Scholars, p. 280.

CHAPTER V

THE RENAISSANCE OF MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE CONQUEST IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

With the turning of the nineteenth century, nations and their historians began searching the medieval records for their origins. This nationalistic outlook, with its Romantic overtones, typified the study of history. The Norman Conquest continued to be a subject which was polarized by its historians. One group of English historians held that the Conquest was the beginning of English greatness. Another group believed that the Normans were a detestable race which had destroyed the great Anglo-Saxon culture.[1]

The nineteenth century was, thus, the true beginning point for the scholarly study of the Norman Conquest. With the great strides made in historical research, the Conquest became one of the most popular and most thoroughly researched topics. However, the advances made in Conquest studies did not appear until the second half of the century. While there were important works produced in the first half of the century, many of the histories written were far inferior to the seminal researches of Spelman and Dugdale in the seventeenth century. And, to hamper further the study of the Norman Conquest, that event was still the subject of the political propagandists. But, there was a bonafide effort made by Sharon Turner to write a history of the Anglo-Saxons without politicizing the subject. Turner, without the best equipment, sought

to depict objectively Anglo-Saxon civilization before and after the Conquest.[2] His extensive work was published in 1807.[3] He supplemented that work with his History of England in the Middle Ages in 1825.[4] Turner was one of the first historians of the Conquest to see the advantages of using Norwegian manuscripts for the study of medieval England.[5]

Turner depicted Anglo-Saxon civilization on the eve of the Conquest in a light not dissimilar to that of William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century and John Milton in the seventeenth.[6] To Turner a once vital and cultured civilization had degenerated into a civilization headed by nobles who were ". . . factious and effeminate . . ." and a clergy that was ". . . corrupt and ignorant. . . ."[7] He portrayed the Norman invasion as a moral earthquake that ruined the Saxon aristocracy and enslaved the native populace.[8]

In regard to the institutions of land-holding and thegnage, Turner made a gross contradiction. He saw no connection whatsoever between landholding and personal service in one work,[9] yet in his other history he emphasized that a thegn was obligated to the king for military service.[10]

Turner, like David Hume in the eighteenth century, spoke of the effects of the Norman settlement as revolutionary. He asserted boldly the theory that the Conqueror had doled out the conquered land to his lieutenants.[11] But, even though he used the term aristocratic revolution in regard to knight service, he implied a less cataclysmic event than Hume. He made clear his belief that William the Conqueror made knight service a condition for land

distribution, but followed that with the assertion that the Anglo-Saxons had been accustomed to knight service before 1066.[12]

The clergy, according to Turner, met the same fate as the English lay aristocrats after 1066. Yet he insisted that the ecclesiastical revolution was good for England, since pious, literate Norman ecclesiastics replaced impious, illiterate Saxons.[13]

Turner represented at least a beginning of the modern study of the battle of Hastings and its aftermath. Even with his inaccuracies, his work was prophetic of future studies. Turner's two important works were among the first book-length examinations of English medieval history.

The great English constitutional historian William Stubbs, bishop of Oxford, all but dominated English medieval historiography during the latter half of the nineteenth century. His three-volume constitutional history became a classic.[14] His editing of medieval sources highly illuminated the English past for nineteenth and twentieth century students.[15]

Stubbs pictured an Anglo-Saxon society on the verge of becoming feudal when the Conqueror landed at Pevensey in September of 1066. He said that military obligation was much the same in England prior to 1066 as it was in Normandy, and even went so far as to say that the tenurial systems were identical.[16] To the Regius Professor at Oxford, the Conquest was not cataclysmic in regard to feudalism. The feudal germs were already in Anglo-Saxon England and only needed the impetus provided by the Normans to grow to maturity.[17] However,

what might have been expected, accepting Stubb's view as the correct one, never materialized according to Stubbs. He said that the Conqueror was wise not to duplicate the continental type of feudalism in England.[18] The Conqueror did not want to be a theoretical head of the English kingdom as was his French counterpart. He did not want to be a political equal with his Norman tenants-in-chief.

It can be inferred from Stubb's views on Anglo-Norman feudalism that the Conqueror may have used the continental variety of feudalism as a means with which to govern after 1066, but, that soon after 1066 he checked feudal tendencies as much as possible.

Bishop Stubbs viewed the effect of bringing England into a closer relationship with the continent as one of the most important of the Norman interventions into English history. He credited the Conquest with the introduction of England into the European community.[19]

Bishop Stubbs' disciple and successor as Regius Professor at Oxford, Edward A. Freeman, produced the most extensive account of the Norman phenomenon, The History of the Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Its Results.[20] Freeman, a liberal, patriot, and professor insisted upon the continuity of English institutions.[21] He, like many of his predecessors, treated the Norman Conquest and its results as if they were present politics.[22] An ardent Teutonist, he was one of the first English historians to glorify the house of Godwin and King Harold.[23]

Professor Freeman began his "continuity" thesis by calling the Conquest a turning point in English history. To him the Normans produced no drastic changes. He considered the Norman influence a

mere infusion of Norman ideas, not dissimilar to the Saxon infusion of the fifth century or the Danish infusion of the eleventh.[24] Freeman reiterated Stubbs' views on the gradual development of feudalism in pre-Conquest England, but his attack on those who held that the Conqueror introduced feudalism into England was more ferocious. He attacked that principle by insisting that the Conqueror had gone through the tenants-in-chief to require homage to the crown from sub-tenants, the very negation of a feudal system.[25] Freeman merely rephrased Stubbs' findings but his tone was more offensive. The Conquest, according to the two Regius professors, merely quickened changes that had already begun in Saxon England.[26] The general political consequence was the Romantic breathing of new life by the Normans into the breathless old English institutions.[27]

On the ecclesiastical side, Freeman concluded that the Norman "infusion" brought England under more severe domination by the papacy. Freeman conjured up a great papal bureaucracy bogging down the work of the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics with more frequent visits to England.[28]

The "continuity" thesis had to break down, however, under the factual weight of the aristocratic revolution. Freeman concluded that between 1066 and 1087 the English nobility all but disappeared.[29]

Freeman's extravaganza has to be reckoned with no matter how many inaccuracies modern scholars have found. It was the most representative force in the realm of English medieval studies up to his own day. Not only did he treat of constitutional and political history, but he managed to leave room, in his six thousand or so

pages, for some exposition on the effects of the Conquest in other areas of English life. He concluded that the supplanting of English architecture with the continental style was one of the direct results of the Norman invasion.[30] The result of the Conquest on military architecture, he expounded, was even greater than on ecclesiastical architecture. He added that the introduction of the Norman castle revolutionized warfare for the next two-hundred years after 1066.[31]

Freeman believed wholeheartedly in the lasting greatness of Saxon traditions and institutions. His praise of William the Conqueror stemmed from what he believed to be the Conqueror's wisdom in preserving the old English institutions. He believed that English greatness resulted from the vital "infusions" of Saxon, Danish, and Norman cultures.

The scope and power of Freeman's work is staggering. The sheer labor involved merits applause. However, the Stubbs-Freeman "continuity" thesis nearly crumbled under the weight of the massive assault directed against it by John Horace Round. Not only did Freeman's work on the Norman Conquest conflict with Round, but his background also. Round was a Tory, an aristocrat, and a non-academician. He abhorred the Saxon past and regarded the Norman invasion as the true beginning of English history.[32] Round's work is so important for the present study of the Norman Conquest and English feudalism that Professor C. Warren Hollister has lauded it as the beginning point for modern research on those topics.[33]

Round's revolutionary thesis was forcefully advanced in an essay entitled "The Introduction of Knight Service into England," which was published in 1891 and 1892.[34] His basic thesis still stands. He stated that the Normans introduced into England a system of military land tenure that had no Anglo-Saxon precedent. The Norman knight was entirely different from the Saxon _thegn_. Round paid close attention to the data of _Domesday Book_. He saw in that monumental document the record of a distinct change in English land-holding and military service between 1086 and 1087. The change was evidenced, he felt, by the rearrangement of the Saxon hundred and vill to Norman fiefs and manors.[35]

The _saca_ and _soca_ of the old English tradition was, in a sense, replaced by the feudal institution of _commendatio_ [commendation].[36] The English _thegn_ had been distinguished by status before the Norman invasion, but the Anglo-Norman knight was distinguished by military tenure.[37] The "system" of knight service was fixed arbitrarily by King William. Round's exposition cannot be improved upon on this point:

> I maintain that the extent of that obligation was not determined by his [the knight's] holding, but was fixed in relation to, and expressed in terms of the _constabularia_ of ten knights, the unit of the feudal host. And I, consequently, hold that his military service was in no way derived or developed from that of the Anglo-Saxons, but was arbitrarily fixed by the king, from whom he received his fief, irrespectively both of its size and of all pre-existent arrangements.[38]

Round suggested that the _Cartae Baronum_[39] of 1166 is the best starting point for a study of the origins of English feudalism, since it maintained as its unit of land assessment the Anglo-Saxon

hundred. But, the obvious reason for beginning with the Cartae Baronum, it seems, is that, it can be assumed, if Henry II was making a survey of feudal tenures, then a system of tenures was already in existence.

In summary, John Horace Round implied that the introduction of feudalism was the most important political consequence of the Norman Conquest. It is now eighty-four years since Round made that conclusion, and no one has yet successfully challenged it.

Bishop Stubbs' place in the historical limelight was challenged by another English constitutional historian in the latter nineteenth century. Frederick William Maitland, another legend in English constitutional history, became one of the most ardent defenders of Freeman's "continuity" thesis. Maitland, in constitutional garb, re-advanced the idea that the Norman Conquest did little to alter English institutions. He agreed with Round that the Conqueror arbitrarily fixed knights' fees, and that he paid little attention to the English five-hide unit. Yet, he called knights' fees and five-hide units, elements of a principle. He doubted whether the Normans introduced any new principles into England in 1066.[40]

Professor Maitland went so far as to bewail the staunch insistence on the study of the military aspects of English feudalism. He felt that knight service was only a part of seigneurial justice; and, he attributed seigneurial justice to the rule of the Confessor.[41] Maitland, like Freeman, believed that feudal elements such as military tenure, however premature, were inherent in old English society at least as far back as the reign of Edward the Confessor.

In 1897 an American, James F. Baldwin published his doctoral dissertation entitled: "The Scutage and Knight Service in England."[42] His work stated essentially what Round had advanced in 1891. The importance of his work was not its originality, but it was a demonstration that some aspiring American historians of the medieval England meant to be heard also. The "dean" of American medievalists, Charles Homer Haskins, proved in the first part of the twentieth century that American scholars could add significantly to the wealth of scholarship on the Norman Conquest and its aftermath.

Thus far in chapter five, the historians whose names are synonymous with the study of the effects of the Norman Conquest have been dealt with. However, in order to demonstrate how the non-specialist has treated the subject, a look to some of the general narratives of the nineteenth century might prove helpful. The Conquest and its results as interpreted by two of England's greatest nineteenth century historians will be presented here.

Thomas Babington Macaulay wanted to write a true Whig history of England. His treatment of medieval and early modern England was limited to a few pages in his twelve-volume work. But, the capsulized passages in the first volume enables the modern reader to understand what Macaulay felt were the constitutional results of the Norman invasion.[43]

Macaulay lamented the downfall of the Anglo-Saxons. His harsh elegy criticized King William's rule as tyrannous, yet innovative in that the Conqueror introduced military institutions ". . . closely connected with the institution of property . . .,"

with which he set up his despotic rule.[44] True to Whig fashion Macaulay viewed the Conquest as the destroyer of the first phase of English history, and, the loss of Normandy by King John as the recommencement of English history.[45]

Another prominent nineteenth century English historian, who wrote later in the century, was John Richard Green. Green's academic hero was Edward A. Freeman. He supported Freeman's insistence on calling the great battle of Hastings Senlac,[46] and, he also defended Freeman's assertion that the Anglo-Saxons were protected by a wooden palisade atop Senlac Hill.[47]

Green, like Freeman and Maitland, saw feudal roots in Anglo-Saxon England. The thegns were the English king's warband just as the knights were the Norman Duke's warband.[48]

The most longlasting effect of the Conquest, according to Green, was the aristocratic revolution and the exaction of homage by the conqueror from under-tenant as well as from tenant-in-chief.[49]

The greatest advances ever in English medieval history were made in the latter nineteenth century. The work of Stubbs, Freeman, Round, and others, though contradictory, will remain the signal works on the study of the Norman Conquest and its results.

While many of the historians' works included in this chapter tended to agree with Freeman's interpretation, Round had, of course, numerous supporters in the nineteenth century. His most ardent defenders, however, have been in the twentieth century.

NOTES

CHAPTER V

[1]David C. Douglas, The Norman Conquest and British Historians (London, 1939), p. 9.

[2]Ibid., p. 17.

[3]Sharon Turner, History of the Anglo-Saxons, 2 Vols. (London, 1807).

[4]Sharon Turner, History of England During the Middle Ages, 6 Vols. (London, 1825).

[5]Turner, History of the Anglo-Saxons, I, p. 478.

[6]Turner, History of England During the Middle Ages, I, p. 73.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 104.

[10]Turner, History of the Anglo-Saxons, II, p. 237.

[11]Turner, History of England During the Middle Ages, I, p. 112.

[12]Ibid., p. 132.

[13]Ibid., p. 104.

[14]William Stubbs, The Constitutional History of England: Its Origins and Development, 3 Vols. (Oxford, 1880.

[15]Stubbs, Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History (Oxford, 1890). See also Stubb's Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series, ed. Arthur Hassall (London, 1902).

[16]Stubbs, Constitutional History, I, p. 297.

[17]Ibid., p. 299.

[18]Stubbs, Historical Introductions, p. 112.

[19]Ibid., p. 181.

[20]Edward A. Freeman, History of the Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Its Results, 6 Vols. (Oxford, 1867-1879).

[21]C. Warren Hollister, The Impact of the Norman Conquest (London, 1969), p. 3.

[22]Douglas, The Norman Conquest and British Historians, p. 21.

[23]Ibid., p. 22.

[24]Freeman, Norman Conquest, I, p. 1.

[25]Ibid., V, p. 366.

[26]Ibid., p. 368.

[27]Ibid., p. 334.

[28]Ibid., p. 352.

[29]Ibid., III, p. 504.

[30]Ibid., V, p. 601.

[31]Ibid., p. 646; p. 649.

[32]Hollister, Impact of the Norman Conquest, p. 3.

[33]Ibid., p. 138.

[34]It was included as a chapter in Feudal England: Historical Studies on the XIth and XIIth Centuries (London, 1895), pp. 225-314.

[35]Round, Feudal England, p. viii.

[36]Ibid., p. 34.

[37]Ibid., p. 35.

[38]Ibid., p. 261.

[39]The Cartae Baronum was an inquest made by Henry II in 1166 to curb the feudal tendencies that were growing out of the institution to subinfeudation.

[40]Frederick William Maitland, Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England (Cambridge, 1921), p. 160.

[41]Ibid., p. 258.

[42]James F. Baldwin, The Scutage and Knight Service in England (Chicago, 1897).

[43]Thomas Babington Macaulay, History of England, 12 Vols. (Boston, 1900).

[44]Macaulay, History of England, I, p. 12.

[45]Ibid.

[46]J. R. Green, A Short History of the English People, I (London, 1892), p. 148.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., p. 154.

[49]Ibid., p. 158.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVIVAL CONTINUES: THE CONQUEST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

If the advances made by nineteenth century medievalists are termed "the beginning point for the modern study of the Norman Conquest," then surely the further researches made by a multitude of twentieth-century English and American medievalists must represent the full-flowering of the study of that subject. While many of the nineteenth century works on the Norman Conquest were general surveys covering the political and constitutional history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a large number of shorter, detailed studies appeared. This trend, of course, has been greatly expanded in the twentieth century, due primarily to the dire, yet sometimes overplayed, need for specialization. Nonetheless, the specialized studies of the effects of the Norman Conquest have greatly illuminated the perception of the various aspects of Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Anglo-Norman society and culture.

A narrative history produced in the first quarter of the twentieth century demonstrates the continuity of the Whig interpretation of the Norman Conquest. George Macaulay Trevelyan, wrote a more illustrative history of England than did his great uncle in the nineteenth century. Trevelyan's history, not quite as politicized as Macaulay's, can be included in the Freeman school of interpretation of the Norman epoch in English history. Trevelyan wrote that the Anglo-Saxons had a feudal "system" similar to the continental brand.

He interpreted the justiciary rights of the English magnate, _saca_ and _soca_, _infantheof_ and _homsocne_, as essentially the same as the continental _commendatio_.[1]

The man who succeeded Professor J. B. Bury as Regius Professor of history at Cambridge obviously was not able to see the military implications of feudalism. He treated knight service and justiciary rights as two completely divorced institutions, not as though they were component parts of a whole. Trevelyan also saw the Norman ecclesiastics as feudal magnates, not too subtly disguised as churchmen.[2]

Pre-Conquest England, according to Trevelyan, was a loosely-knit kingdom that lacked a centralizing force until the Norman invaders "hammered" her into a nation.[3] He was not as harsh as Macaulay had been in his condemnation of the Norman revolution, and saw English greatness arise out of the marriage of Norman and English institutions.[4]

In regard to interpretations of the effects of the Norman Conquest, Trevelyan's history signalled the end of the Freeman "continuity" thesis for a while. The Round thesis, that the Normans had drastically changed English history in 1066 by introducing feudalism into England, was firmly entrenched as the interpretation to which most scholars adhered.

Round's staunchest support came in the erudition of Sir Frank Stenton's great work on English feudalism.[5] Stenton's title, _The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166_ was a testamentary of faith to the Round thesis. Stenton saw no pre-feudal institutions in Anglo-Saxon England brought to a full flower by the impetus of a more highly

developed Norman feudalism. Sir Frank remarked that it was senseless to call Saxon England feudal when it had not learned to fight on horseback, had not adopted the private fortress, and had no real conception of typically feudal institutions.[6]

A tremendous amount of effort has been spent on distinguishing the Anglo-Saxon thegn from the Norman knight, in order to prove that there were no feudal precedents in Anglo-Saxon England. Stenton gave one of the best definitions of a thegn's duties. He said that the thegn was obliged to perform military service for his lord because of a personal obligation, not because he had received an estate.[7] He viewed the introduction of feudalism and the redistribution of land by the Normans as the ". . . chief immediate result of the Norman Conquest."[8] This result, he maintained, was completed within a generation after the Battle of Hastings.[9]

In his best-known work, Anglo-Saxon England, Sir Frank presented what has been termed "the best short account of the Norman conquest and its effects." His treatment of the effects on the English church was quite extensive. In this aspect, as in his interpretation of English feudalism, he saw a drastic change from the past, ". . . the prelude to a revolution. . . ."[10] He concluded that the Conquest brought the English church under the influence of foreigners; Lanfranc, he added, effectively unified the church.[11] He pictured the Conqueror as the secular supervisor of the church. The Conqueror, in Normandy and in England, was an ally of the reforming papacy, not its subordinate.[12]

Sir Frank realized that many old English institutions survived the Conquest. However, he believed that this was due to William's

conscious maintenance of those functional institutions. He remarked that the Conqueror retained many old English laws and customs because of their political expediency. By doing this, Stenton added, William I ". . . preserved the constitutional framework of the old English state. . . ."[13]

The twentieth century has been the breeding ground for some great American scholars of the Norman Conquest and medieval history in general. And, one of the greatest American scholars was Professor Charles Homer Haskins. Professor Haskins has studied a varied list of topics in medieval history.[14] In addition to his work on medieval intellectual history, he has contributed significantly to the literature of the Norman Conquest. Haskins basically agreed with the Roundian thesis. However, the scope of Haskins' work on the Conquest centers around the history of Normandy.[15] In his survey of Norman history, the chapter on Normandy and England[16] is fundamental to any study of the Norman Conquest. While surveying the history of the Conquest from William's accession to the completion of the Norman settlement, Haskins made some valuable observations regarding the effects of the settlement. Generally, Haskings maintained, the Norman invasion forever altered English political and cultural life.[17] England, he added, was the recipient of the speech, art, and literature of France, and English law received a heavy dosage of Frankish law and feudal institutions.[18] In regard to the touchy question of English feudalism, Haskins maintained that: "English feudalism was Norman feudalism, in which the barons were weak and the central power strong."[19]

In his more concentrated account of Norman culture and society, Professor Haskins further demonstrated his profound belief in the Norman origins of English feudalism. He stated that the Normans had a fully-grown feudal society, and, that to a certain extent, this feudal structure was superimposed upon the English populace.[20] After the work of such noted medievalists as Stenton and Haskins had reached the scholarly community, it was obvious that the daring Round thesis had been founded on a sturdy base.

Another proponent of the Round thesis has been the great English medievalist, Professor David C. Douglas. He has produced a voluminous amount of work on English feudalism, Norman institutions, a great biography of the Conqueror, and has aided the study of the Conquest invaluably with his works on the historiography of the Norman invasion and its results.

In his biography of the first Norman king of England, Professor Douglas generalized that the Norman invasion significantly altered the courses of both Norman and English history, but that the drastic changes were more acutely felt in England.[21] The primary results of the Conquest, according to Professor Douglas, were the lay and ecclesiastical aristocratic revolutions.[22] He, as many of his predecessors have done, emphasized the totality of the displacement of the old English nobility with Normans. He reminded the reader that the three great battles of 1066, Fulford, Stamford Bridge, and Hastings, and the ensuing uprisings had greatly depleted the English nobility.[23]

Professor Douglas pointed to the cohesiveness that the Norman influence added to the English constitutional structure.. William I,

said Douglas, made sure, however, that English feudalism was not to be a duplicate of continental feudalism, whereby the king would be a theoretical overlord to a group of tenants-in-chief who actually were his political equals. This act was ". . . the greatest effected in England by King William."[24]

Professor Douglas could find little change in rural England after the Norman invasion and he credited the successful maintenance of a stable rural populace to William's genius.[25]

Douglas had concentrated on the Conquest's effects on the lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy of England. He has not treated the general military, economic, and artistic changes effected by Hastings and its aftermath. His summary of Norman successes in the eleventh century published as The Norman Achievement, 1050-1100[26] is a scholarly essay, but the massive detail of the biography of the Conqueror is the crowning achievement of this great scholar.

Helena M. Chew is another English scholar who basically agrees with Round's findings. In her excellent study of the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief,[27] she clarified Round's assertion that the aristocratic revolution brought about by the Conquest was essentially more evident in the ranks of the secular aristocrats than the ecclesiastics. Miss Chew attempted to demonstrate how the Anglo-Norman host was mustered and, in so doing, she emphasized the difference in English feudalism and continental feudalism.[28] She stated that the Conqueror's exaction of allegiance from under-tenants in England negated the cardinal principle of feudalism.[29]

Miss Chew's work is representative of many of the twentieth century interpretations of the Norman Conquest in that it concentrates on one particular aspect of the Conquest.

Professors Stenton, Haskins, Douglas, and Chew did not unflinchingly adhere to Round's thesis, yet they did agree on the original assertion that the Norman Conquest was an aristocratic revolution and that it did introduce feudalism into England. In addition, these and other defenders of the Round thesis, have defended it from attack on fronts never touched upon in depth by Round himself.

While the belief that the Normans introduced feudalism in 1066 has attracted a large following in the twentieth century, the belief in the basic continuity of old English institutions has been espoused by many scholars. The attack on the Round thesis of course began mildly in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but since World War II a full-scale armada has been launched. A moderate attack appeared in 1948 in an article by Marjorie Hollings.[30] In that article Miss Hollings asserted that the old English five-hide unit continued to be the unit of military service in the area around Worcester after 1066.[31] Basing her attack on Round from evidence from only one region, she stated that English feudalism did not appear until the reign of Henry II.[32]

It would seem that Miss Hollings has generalized too far afield by assuming that the advent of English feudalism was delayed by nearly a century (1066-1154) because of the continuance of the five-hide unit in one isolated area. She summed up her belief in the continuance of

the old English military system past 1066 by saying that not only was there no difference in the English military system before or after the Conquest, but that the Normans may have based their military system on the old English system.[33] To borrow an old adage, "methinks the lady doth protest too much."

In another famous, and more heated, attack on the Round thesis,[34] Eric John, in a work entitled Land Tenure in Early England, focused on one particular region and declared that his findings in that region were true for all of post Conquest England.[35]

John suggested that the old English five-hide unit was not the basis for land tenure in Anglo-Saxon England. Instead, he said that the hundred unit was.[36] Since the hundred was a direct multiple of ten, John insisted that it was the hundredal unit rather than Round's constabularia that formed the basis of knight's fees in Anglo-Norman England. He stated that: "Round's argument proves nothing . . ." because, he felt, it was based on not too credable literary evidence.[37]

The most ferocious attack on the Round thesis has come in two volumes by H. G. Richardson and Professor G. O. Sayles.[38] After a scathing and unquestionably unfair attack on Professor William Stubbs, Richardson and Sayles blasted away at the Round thesis and everyone else who has viewed the Conquest as a break, at any point, with Anglo-Saxon precedent. In every phase of English life, they maintained, the Conquest harmed. Their description of the Normans was a complete reversal of what has been taken for granted as "the Norman genius":

> By the inscrutable judgment of God the barbarian conquered on the field of Hastings. The Normans were without learning, without literature, without written law . . . they were ignorant enough to despise the English.[39]

They maintained that the old English institutions continued after 1066 because the barbarian Normans had nothing with which to replace them.[40] Their attack on the belief that the Normans introduced feudalism into England was based on their belief that there was nothing particularly feudal about fighting on horseback or the organization of troops into units of ten.[41] They insisted that the Anglo-Norman military system was based on the five-hide unit.[42]

In regard to the relationship between king and ecclesiastics, Richardson and Sayles saw no break with Anglo-Saxon custom.[43] They asserted that the towns were little influenced.[44] In the realm of literature, they loathed that the Normans had, ". . . destroyed the . . . pre-eminent literature of western Europe."[45]

While some of the arguments advanced by Richardson and Sayles can be deemed valid, the one point that borders on the absurd was their conviction that the Conquest resulted in no drastic aristocratic revolution.[46] To assert this was to proceed through the traffic without heeding the warning signs of evidence that has established quite conclusively that there was an aristocratic revolution after 1066.

It was probably necessary to repudiate the claims of some scholars to fully re-advance the "continuity" thesis, but it would seem that Richardson and Sayles went too far and attacked at times without reason, the researches that have held true for nearly a century. However, their defiant and irreverent arguments have had

a positive effect, in that the scholars who hold opposite views have taken a more thorough look and have re-examined more carefully what was thought for such a long time to be the gospel.

It was obvious that in an essay on the various interpretations of the effects of the Norman Conquest the essayist will have to devote a major portion of space to the debate on the origins of English feudalism. And, it logically follows that an examination of the major work on English feudalism will be inseparably linked to Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Anglo-Norman military institutions. This problem, the military significance of Anglo-Norman feudalism, while being touched upon by nearly every historian of the Conquest and its effects, has not been adequately dealt with until the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Sir Charles Oman included in his great essay, "The Art of War in the Middle Ages," a section on Saxon and Norman military institutions,[47] but, since that time, only a few significant works have appeared.

Two important institutional works appeared in the nineteen-sixties.[48] Both Professor Michael Powicke in Military Obligation in Medieval England, and C. Warren Hollister in Anglo-Saxon Military Instituions, espoused the Round thesis while presenting in their works definition and illumination of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman military institutions. Professor Powicke demonstrated his Roundian leanings when he asserted that the superimposing of Norman magnates on English society, responsible for political as well as military duty,[49] was the chief immediate result of the Norman Conquest. Militarily speaking, Professor Powicke said, "The outcome of the Conquest was the feudal army."[50]

Professor Hollister demonstrated the machinery of the various late Anglo-Saxon military institutions in his chief work. Even though a Round follower, he viewed the use of mercenaries as a continuance of an old English institution. The Anglo-Saxon army, like the Anglo-Norman army, he maintained contained a considerable number of hired soldiers.[51]

Professor Hollister pointed to a fact that was long in need of citing. He stated that the three great battles of 1066, Fulford, Stamford Bridge, and Hastings, were responsible for the Conqueror's victory. Contrary to the opinions of Round and Douglas, Hollister believed that it was bad luck rather than a bad English army that gave the Normans victory.[52] Unfortunately the present work of Hollister illuminates the causes of the English defeat rather than the consequences of that defeat.

Whereas Professors Powicke and Hollister have concerned themselves with the history of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman military institutions, Professor John Beeler, an American and a "direct descendant" of the Haskins line, has produced the only chronological account of English military history from Hastings to the end of Henry II's reign.[53]

Professor Beeler, in his survey of Anglo-Norman warfare in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, entitled Warfare in England, 1066-1189, held basically with the Round thesis. Yet, in the realm of medieval military history, he criticized Round for ". . . his undue emphasis upon the feudal aspects of military service, to the neglect of the non-feudal or extrafeudal elements. . . ."[54] Round's concentration, of

course, was on the feudal host, and he said little in regard to the English fyrd or mercenary bands after 1066. However, on the whole, Professor Beeler is a staunch advocate of the Round thesis.[55]

Professor Beeler re-emphasized a very important immediate military result of the Conquest: the Conqueror's need for a ready military force to defend against outside attack [Danish] as well as to quelch native uprisings.[56] This, it seems, was a key impetus in the makeup of the Anglo-Norman host. Professor Beeler refuted the assertion of Richardson and Sayles that the use of mercenary troops was not intended to supplement the feudal host after 1066, but he did maintain that the old English militia continued as an auxiliary force long after the Norman invasion.[57]

Whereas Professors Powicke and Hollister have demonstrated how and why the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman hosts were mustered, Professor Beeler has shown us what happened in eleventh and twelfth century English warfare once the troops were gathered.

It can be concluded from Warfare in England that the combined forces of the Norman conquerors and the successful deployment of those diverse elements, the feudal cavalry, the archers and infantry, constituted one of the great consequences of the Norman Conquest. Whereas the old English army, primarily infantry supplemented with ill-armed and ill-trained peasant levies, had been doggedly inflexible, the Anglo-Norman armies were ". . . far more flexible, tactically speaking, and could be more readily adapted to all conditions. . . .[58]

As a noted English historian has remarked, "the study of the Norman Conquest has not yet found its Namier." This may well be true,

primarily because of the modern trend toward specialized and institutionalized historical writing. Quite possibly we may never again see the likes of Freeman's opus or even Churchill's great canvas.[59] Yet, during the course of the twentieth century an invaluable wealth of research and re-examination of the older data has taken place. New approaches have been taken. Hundreds of interesting and illuminating monographs have appeared on all aspects of the effects of the Norman Conquest.

Only a select few histories and studies have been presented in this essay. In any study of this nature one leaves himself open to criticism for the simple reason of subjectivety including some histories and overlooking others. However, it is believed that a cross-section of the work produced by historians of the last ten centuries will demonstrate to the reader the importance of the Norman Conquest as an historical and intellectual discipline. On a secondary level, it can be concluded that by looking at the researches produced over the past ten centuries that the Norman Conquest and its effects on English history will continue to be a subject of great disputation.

NOTES

CHAPTER VI

[1]G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (London, 1926).

[2]Ibid., p. 105.

[3]Ibid., p. 126.

[4]Ibid., pp. 123-124.

[5]Frank Stenton, The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066-1166, (Oxford, 1961, 2nd edition).

[6]Ibid., p. 118.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 121.

[9]Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1971, 3rd edition), p. 675.

[10]Ibid., p. 676.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 658.

[13]Ibid.

[14]See Haskins' The Rise of Universities and The Renaissance of the XIIth Century.

[15]Haskins, The Normans in European History (New York, 1915).

[16]Ibid., pp. 53-84.

[17]Ibid., p. 82.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Haskins, Norman Institutions (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1925), p. 5.

[21]David C. Douglas, William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England (Berkeley, California, 1964), p. 265.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 266.

[24]Ibid., p. 275.

[25]Ibid., pp. 310-311.

[26]Douglas, The Norman Achievement, 1050-1100 (Berkeley, California, 1969).

[27]Helena M. Chew, The English Ecclesiastical Tenants-in-Chief and Knight Service: Especially in the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries (Oxford, 1932).

[28]Ibid., p. 2.

[29]Ibid., p. 25.

[30]Marjorie Hollings, "The Survival of the Five Hide Unit in the Western Midlands," English Historical Review, LXIII (October, 1948), pp. 453-487.

[31]Ibid., p. 457.

[32]Ibid., pp. 472-73.

[33]Ibid., p. 486.

[34]Eric John, Land Tenure in Early England: A Discussion of Some Problems (Leicester, 1960).

[35]John's studies of land tenure are limited to Oswaldslow.

[36]Ibid., p. 156.

[37]Ibid., p. 150.

[38]H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Governance of Medieval England: From the Conquest to Magna Carta (Edinburgh, 1963) and Law and Legislation: From Aethelberht to Magna Carta (Edinburgh, 1966).

[39]Richardson and Sayles, Law and Legislation, p. 30.

[40]Ibid., p. 31.

[41]Richardson and Sayles, Governance of Medieval England, p. 91.

[42]Ibid., p. 96.

[43]Ibid., p. 36.

[44]Ibid., p. 50.

[45]Ibid., p. 21.

[46]Ibid., p. 61.

[47]C.W.C. Oman, "The Art of War in the Middle Ages, A.D. 378-1515" (London, 1885). A two-volume work, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages was published in 1924. In 1953 John Beeler revised and edited the 1885 essay (Ithaca, New York).

[48]Michael Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England: A Study in Liberty and Duty (Oxford, 1962); C. Warren Hollister, Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions: On the Eve of the Norman Conquest (Oxford, 1962).

[49]Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England, p. 28.

[50]Ibid., p. 29.

[51]C. Warren Hollister, Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions, p. 1.

[52]Ibid., pp. 149-151.

[53]John Beeler, Warfare in England, 1066-1189 (Ithaca, New York, 1966). Professor Beeler studied under the profound medievalist Carl Stephenson at Cornell University. Professor Stephenson was trained by Professor Haskins at Harvard University.

[54]Beeler, Warfare in England, p. 265.

[55]Ibid., p. 269.

[56]Ibid., p. 297.

[57]Ibid., p. 311.

[58]Ibid., p. 317.

[59]Winston S. Churchill, A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, 4 Vols (London, 1956). See particularly Volume I which contains an admirable history of Anglo-Saxon and Norman England.

CHAPTER VII

SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

While the significance of many of the effects of the Norman Conquest remain in the speculative stage, some of the consequences of that epic event are less subject to historical debate. The central theme of disputation, the introduction of feudalism into England and its many implications, will continue to be a matter of utmost controversy due primarily to the insufficient amount of evidence for the period from 1066 to 1087. The Round thesis still remains intact despite the scholarly assaults of the twentieth-century disciples of the "continuity" thesis. It seems also, that even today, the bulk of the material on the Norman settlement tends to fall into one of the two time-honored camps: that the Conquest represented a drastic change in the history of England, or that it altered little the basic continuity of English institutions. Both schools of thought have presented sound arguments. In many respects both are correct. However, though it appears that the Round thesis has not lost much ground, there has been a great revival of interest in the "continuity" thesis, particularly during the decades of the nineteen-fifties and sixties. Frank Barlow's title, The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042-1216,[1] demonstrates the author's adherence to the continuity thesis. Another recent study that attempted to revive the interest in the Anglo-Saxon achievement was produced by R. R. Darlington entitled The Norman Conquest.[2] In that essay Professor Darlington's Saxonist fervor was

ultimately displayed in: "The essential foundation of the achievement of the twelfth century is the legacy of Anglo-Saxon England."[3]

An effect of the Norman Conquest that has been less subject to debate was the belief that shortly after 1066 an almost total aristocratic revolution took place in England. Even though a minority of historians, like Richardson and Sayles, have tried to play down the aristocratic revolution (they called it a replacement), it seems quite clear from the evidence that the appearance of Normans in nearly all positions of power shortly after 1066 demonstrated a clear break with Anglo-Saxon England.

The effect of the Conquest on the population was drastic. Profesor Dorothy Whitelock has suggested that the native English population was diminished by as much as 20% between 1066 and 1087, when at least 200,000 Normans and French came over to settle in England.[4] C. T. Chevalier reiterated Professor Whitelock's statement in regard to the Conquests' effect on the English population. He emphatically stated that:

> Whether we like it or not, every single Englishman other than a recent immigrant must have Norman blood in his veins, mingled with English in thirty generations, for it has been estimated that by 1087 some 200,000 Normans and Frenchmen had settled in this country, while the native English population had fallen by perhaps 20 per cent to a million and a half.[5]

Professor H. R. Loyn, in an admirable summary of the effects of the Norman invasion said that there occurred after 1066 a complete revolution in the noble ranks.[6] And, one must remember Sir Frank Stenton's words that only two English aristocrats, Thurkill of Arden and Colswein of Lincoln, were holding baronial-size estates in 1086.[7]

In all fairness to H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, it must be admitted that the Norman Conquest resulted in a complete aristocratic revolution.

In the complex realm of economic consequences, some keen observations have been made. Professor Barlow suggested that in regard to estate management, agriculture, and general economic aspects of English life, the Conquest had little, if any, effect.[8] R. Weldon Finn has suggested otherwise. He maintained that the Normans, well aware of the economic exploitability of England, drastically changed the land, the commerce, and the general economic structure.[9] Finn disagreed with the older view of Sir Paul Vinogradoff that the Conquest brought about a marked increase in the value of English land.[10] Finn agreed that the Normans made an economic impact, but he felt that it was not a progressive one. It was not the Norman administrative genius that produced some increases in land value, but the near enslavement of the native cultivators, Finn asserted. A lifelong student of Domesday Book, he pointed to that document for his proof.[11]

Professor Loyn suggested that the Normans ". . . found towns much to their taste . . .," and credited an increase in urban development to the influx of Norman traders and entrepreneurs.[12] Professor Darlington has observed that the Conquest had no effect on the coinage system, except for William I's image on the coin in place of the Confessor's.[13] However, it should be pointed out that Michael Dorley's monograph, The Norman Conquest and the English Coinage, shows that at least 140 moneyers put King Harold II's image on their coins.[14]

Professor Douglas did not take exception to Professor Darlington's conclusions, but he did emphasize that the Conqueror's centralization of the coinages had a vital and lasting effect.[15]

Along with the tumultuous effect of the aristocratic revolution, and in a sense a part of it, was the importation into England of Normanized French and Normanized Latin culture. Professor Loyn put it: "Heavy influence is . . . felt in matters concerning the social organization of the upper class, and in literacy and cultural field - predominately French feudal, literary, and architectural vocabulary. The language of commerce and of town life becomes predominately French."[16] Professor Barlow, of course, lamented the literary and cultural revolution inaugurated by the Norman Conquest.[17] However, Professor Darlington's view of the literary and cultural effects of the Conquest was not as gloomy. He, as many others in the "continuity" thesis, turned once again to that isolated hotbed of discontention, Worcester, as the exception to the rule that French had totally replaced English.[18]

Among the other cultural developments and innovations that resulted from the Norman Conquest, probably the most striking was the appearance in great numbers, after 1066, of castles.[19] It can be validly concluded that the great importation of the castle was one of the greatest innovations of the Norman Conquest.[20] A good short account of the military significance of the castle was produced by Professor John Beeler in 1956, and, among the major works on the English castle, probably the most illuminating was that by Ella S. Armitage.[21]

The most important and far-reaching effect of the Norman Conquest was the coming together of Norman, Anglo-Saxon, and Danish legal principles out of which developed the Common Law. G. W. Keeton, in an excellent synthesis of the effects of the Conquest on the Common Law, credited the Norman legal knowhow with systematically organizing the English legal framework, thus making the ultimate respect for the law possible.[22] In this "centralizing capacity" of the Normans, Keeton saw the key to many of the significant changes effected by the Conquest. He also added that an important and unprecedented factor was introduced to the English court system by the Normans: the feudal court.[23] Also, the introduction of the legal concept of "felony" was a great innovation which emerged before the end of the Conqueror's reign.[24]

Needless to say, the Anglo-Saxons had societal faults. Militarily, their defense system was inadequate and outdated.

Yet, even though the Norman Conquest was a revolutionary occurrance, it should be remembered that many Anglo-Saxon institutions and customs prevailed. And, if that is admitted, it does not necessarily follow that the invaders had nothing with which to replace those institutions that survived the Conquest. It should be credited to the genius of William the Conqueror that he had the foresight to maintain what was functional and to dispense with what was not.[25] The statement that "the Normans are characterized by a capacity for organization" is not an unwarranted generalization of convenience. It is true.[26] The Normans were not imaginative thinkers. They were, however, the people who made other peoples' institutions work more efficiently than the originators themselves.[27] The successful assimilation

of Normans and Anglo-Saxons has to be one of the major accomplishments in English history. As the great English statesman Sir Winston Churchill remarked: ". . . in the future government of England both Norman and Saxon institutions were unconsciously but profoundly blended."[28]

The Norman Conquest has been one of the milestones in English history. It ranks with the Saxon invasion of England in the fifth century, the Christian invasion of England in the late sixth as one of the great watershed periods in English medieval history. The study-ground of the Norman Conquest and its effects has been travelled and retrodden. Yet many points remain disputable, like the present debate over the origins of English feudalism. Many studies of the comparative institutional nature are urgently needed, such as those produced by Professors Charles Petit-Du Taillis and Sidney Painter.[29]

In attempting to understand the effects that the Conquest had on the English-speaking world and its neighbors, the subject has been hotly disputed by chroniclers and historians alike. The Conquest and the Conqueror have been viewed differently by different historians. Professor Douglas' summary of the diverse interpretations of the Conqueror is probably the best capsulized description of the ten-century debate which has highlighted the study of the Norman Conquest and its effects:

> For generations he [William I] has remained, so to speak, a figure in contemporary politics. He has been presented in terms of Whig theory of sectarian fervor, and of modern nationalism. He has been hailed as one of the founders of English greatness, and as the cause of one of the most lamentable of English defeats. He has been pictured as the special enemy of Protestantism, and as one of the most strenuous opponents of the papacy. He has been envisaged as both the author, and also as the subverter of the English constitution.[30]

The Conquest, like the Conqueror, has suffered a similar fate thus far. The medieval English chronicler spoke of it as a disaster. His Norman counterpart took the opposite view. During the English Renaissance, the Conquest, like medieval English history in general, was cast aside until the dawning of English medieval studies in the seventeenth century. After withstanding a brief stifling during the eighteenth century, the Norman Conquest became a great part of the study of medieval England to medievalists in America and Europe as well as in England.

Even though the Norman Conquest has been politicized by medieval chronicler and modern historian alike, often at the expense of objective historical accuracy, this propagandizing of the subject indicates how important the Norman invasion of England has been to scholar and non-academician alike.

Today, with the tendency to view a subjects' worth as being synonymous with its present functionalism, there may be an inclination to disregard what writers of past centuries have said as being outmoded and irrelevant. Yet, the opinions of writers on the Norman Conquest during the past ten centuries have brought us to where we are today. Edward A. Freeman, albeit with many errors, produced a canvas of synthesis on the Norman Conquest in the nineteenth century. Although his work has been repeatedly attacked, it did help to put the Norman Conquest into its European as well as its English perspective. Of course that perfect canvas of the Norman Conquest which would be so vital, not only in giving a twentieth-century synthesis of the invasion of 1066 in its English historical perspective, but also within the

larger context of a world historical perspective, has not yet been produced. But there is no reason for pessimism. The study of the Conquest has mushroomed. It has not declined. That perfect canvas may be just around the corner.

NOTES

CHAPTER VII

[1]Frank Barlow, The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042-1216 (London, 1955).

[2]R. R. Darlington, The Norman Conquest (London, 1963).

[3]Ibid., p. 27.

[4]Dorothy Whitelock, et. al., The Norman Conquest: Its Setting and Impact (London, 1966), p. 2.

[5]Ibid.

[6]H. R. Loyn, The Norman Conquest (London, 1965), p. 171.

[7]Sir Frank Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1971, 3rd edition), p. 626.

[8]Barlow, The Feudal Kingdom of England, p. 107.

[9]R. Welldon Finn, The Norman Conquest and Its Effects on the Economy, 1066-1086 (London, 1970), p. 3.

[10]Ibid., p. 4. See Sir Paul Vinogradoff, English Society in the Eleventh Century (London, 1896), p. 382.

[11]Ibid., p. 5-6.

[12]Loyn, The Norman Conquest, pp. 175-177.

[13]Darlington, The Norman Conquest, p. 9.

[14]Michael Dorley, The Norman Conquest and the English Coinage (London, 1966), p. 11.

[15]David C. Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 304.

[16]Loyn, The Norman Conquest, p. 173.

[17]Barlow, The Feudal Kingdom of England, p. 133.

[18]Darlington, The Norman Conquest, p. 19. The Peterborough Chronicle was continued in English until 1155.

[19]Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 216. There were two castles in Normanized Herefordshire before 1066.

[20]Ibid.

[21]John H. Beeler, "Castles and Strategy in Norman and Early Angevin England," Speculum, XXXXI (1956), pp. 581-601. Ella S. Armitage, The Early Norman Castles of the British Isles (London, 1912).

[22]G. W. Keeton, The Norman Conquest and the Common Law (London, 1966).

[23]Ibid., p. 35.

[24]Ibid., p. 173.

[25]Ibid., p. 201.

[26]Loyn, The Norman Conquest, p. 30.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Winston S. Churchill, A History of the English-Speaking People, I. (London, 1956), p. 137.

[29]Charles Petit-Du Tailis, The Feudal Monarchy in France and England: From the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century (New York, 1964). Sidney Painter, The Rise of the Feudal Monarchies (Ithaca, New York, 1951).

[30]Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 5.

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