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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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The 11th century has been seen as marking a number of important turning points, with the 'mutation feodale' around the year 1000, which has played a major role in French historical thinking (eg Barthélemy 2009; Bisson 1994; Bonnassie 1991; Bourin and Parisse 1999), the end of the Scandinavian incursions (Lawson 1993; Rumble 1994), new monastic orders and reform of the Church (Barrow 2015; Lawrence 2015), and important stages in the development of rural landscapes and towns (Rippon 2009; Astill 2009), but none of these movements and trends have exercised such a grip on the imagination of the English as the Norman Conquest. Within weeks of the battle of Hastings different narratives of the events were being constructed (van Houts 1997). Did the Conquest mark the rightful succession to his inheritance by a new king, after judgement by battle and after receiving the consent of the English people? Was the outcome of the battle a punishment for the moral degeneration of the English, and in particular the failure of King Harold to keep his oath of loyalty to William? Was Harold a tragic figure, a much admired hero who made a single error of judgement that cost him his kingdom and his life? In later centuries radicals talked of a Norman yoke, which had been imposed on the English by alien lords, and 19th-century nationalist historians could emphasise the German traditions of freedom that inspired the growth of parliamentary government: some regarded feudal institutions as intrusions brought to England by an essentially French aristocracy (Chibnall 1999). It has been a matter of national pride, or at least a point of comparison with most of continental Europe, that there has been no successful invasion of England since 1066. The date is part of the common heritage, and references to the Bayeux tapestry are made in popular art, including cartoons and advertisements. Every detail of the episode is debated: was King Harold struck in the eye by a Norman arrow? What was the precise location of the battle of Hastings? Who designed and embroidered the Bayeux tapestry? (Clarke 2013; see also Lewis, this volume). The story of the battle

and its rival interpretations are so deeply embedded in the English historical consciousness, that archaeologists might be daunted by approaching an event which has been claimed so fully both by academic historians and popular mythology.

Nonetheless, archaeology has much to contribute to our understanding of the Norman Conquest. Indeed, archaeologists are capable of making a far more profound contribution than simply dancing to the historians' tune, or merely illustrating and embellishing the documentary record (as has occasionally been bemoaned: eg Austin 1990, in which medieval archaeologists were encouraged to reject the agendas of historians). As this volume reveals, many of the insights provided by archaeology relate to developments that have left little or no trace in the written records, so that archaeology can provide entirely new insights into the period which have no connection with political events. Certainly, castle building, the foundation of religious houses and local churches were expressions of the power of lordship exercised by particular families who are well represented in the documentary record, such as FitzOsbern, Lacy and Redvers (see Lilley, and McClain, this volume), but the archaeological perspective also allows us to escape from a world dominated by the great men familiar from the documents. Moreover, archaeology provides a perspective on the wider cultural and social context, as reflected in, for example, material culture, evidence for environmental change, transformations in settlements and landscapes, and technical innovations.

Exploration of the wider context of the Conquest, is not, it should be emphasised, simply a consequence of the difficulties archaeologists face in tracing short-term change. Admittedly, attempts to assign pottery, churches or changes in pollen sequences, for example, to one side of the Conquest or the other have tended to prove difficult, if not impossible (eg Gem 1988; Jervis 2013, 456; Creighton and Rippon, this volume), but it would be an exaggeration to state that the Norman Conquest was archaeologically invisible. We can point to spectacular new structures such as the White Tower in the Tower of London (Impey 2008), or Durham Cathedral (Reilly 1996), which were not just buildings in a new style, but statements about the power and wealth of a new regime. The structural remains from the town houses cleared away in the wake of the Norman invasions to make space for castle building in such places as Oxford and Winchester, provide further evidence of the impact of the Conquest (see Fradley, this volume). Similar destructive effects of castle construction

on rural settlements, cemeteries and churches have been identified, at places such as Eaton Socon (Bedfordshire) (Addyman 1965) and Trowbridge (Wiltshire) (Graham and Davies 1993, 71–74; see also, Craig-Atkins, this volume). There were subtle changes in burial customs after the Conquest, with the cessation of the use of special cemeteries for executed criminals, and the growth of the custom of interring infants near the church wall, sometimes in the wake of the abandonment of the churches concerned (see Craig-Atkins 2014, and this volume). Yet, as we will see, while the Norman Conquest was unquestionably a decisive political event that had major ramifications for both England and Normandy, to make sense of it requires understanding of broader social, economic, religious and political trajectories, which archaeology is especially well placed to elucidate as the contributions to this volume reveal. This chapter outlines the broader 11th-century context of the Norman Conquest, and discusses the issues that historians and archaeologists have addressed to set the scene for the chapters that follow.

THE HISTORY OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

The context for the Norman Conquest of England lies in larger and longer term trends, over the period c900 to c1150. One development was the formation of new states in succession to the Carolingian Empire. While on a smaller scale, an Empire continued to function in the 10th and 11th centuries in the eastern and southern lands, with bases in such provinces as Saxony (north Germany) and Swabia (south Germany), and from cities such as Pavia (Italy) (Bisson 2009). But everywhere territorial principalities were being built on the foundations furnished by the duchies and counties of the west, in, for example, Anjou, Catalonia, Brittany, Burgundy, Flanders and, of course, Normandy, and in the south in Spoleto and Tuscany. City states were emerging in Italy, and entirely new political formations beyond the former frontiers of the Empire, in Denmark, Hungary, Poland and England. The new rulers of these small states took over the powers and functions of kings, and minted money, collected taxes, held courts, appointed clergy, summoned armies, built fortresses and founded towns (Wickham 2010). They seemed aggressive to their own subjects as they asserted their power, and they troubled their neighbours because they tended to expand beyond their traditional boundaries. The

kings of Wessex developed their powers as they had built their own monarchy by taking over the ruins of rival kingdoms, and recovering territory from the Scandinavian invaders, mainly in the period 870−930, but they were influenced by Carolingian kingship even after the curtailment of that ambitious political venture (Dumville 1992; Reuter 2003).

The English state achieved an unusual degree of control of its provinces in such matters as law enforcement, tax collection and the control of currency. The central government was represented in each shire by an administrator, and communication between the king and his subjects was achieved through writs (Campbell 2000; Reuter 2003). The making of Domesday Book in 1086 is often cited as an outstanding example of the efficiency of the English state. The king was advised to carry out a survey of the resources of the kingdom, and using the device of the inquest, local people were required to provide information in response to a standard questionnaire. The data about lands, tenants and values were then digested centrally and entered into books which henceforth enjoyed a reputation for accuracy and authority (Sawyer 1985; Roffe 2000; Harvey 2014). No other state in Europe at that time could have contemplated assembling information in such a thorough fashion. England could be conquered if the invaders could capture London and Winchester and thereby gain control of the centralised system of government that connected the king and his advisers to the local communities. It was a profitable country for its ruler because direct taxes could deliver large sums of money with speed and efficiency, and the landed estate belonging to the rulers was larger and more valuable than could be found in most continental kingdoms and principalities (Campbell 2000).

For continental historians, especially those working in France, the 10th and 11th centuries, and in particular the years around the celebrated year 1000, were marked by the emergence of a vigorous and wealthy aristocracy, occupying the ranks of the hierarchy below the counts and dukes who had become the inheritors of the power of the Carolingians. The new aristocrats, emboldened by gaps in the local exercise of authority, seized lands, built or occupied castles, took over the courts and law enforcement, dominated the Church and its lands, and exploited the local population with demands for money and labour, compelling them to mill their corn and press their wine in the lord's machines, for which tolls were levied (Bourin and Parisse 1999; Barthélemy 2009). The English nobility, even when the monarchy was shaken by Danish conquest and dynastic changes in the first

half of the 11th century, could not behave in such an independent fashion as their continental counterparts, and they exercised their considerable influence and authority in the context of a centralised state (Baxter 2007). On both sides of the English Channel a prominent role was occupied by the lesser aristocracy. On the continent the milites were making a transition from serving as soldiers, in which role they gained a reputation for undisciplined violence, to the possession of minor landed estates, while the Anglo-Saxon thegns served both kings and nobles as administrators, and gained lands and prestigious residences. They held property in towns, and this perhaps helped to give them a reputation as upstart commoners who advanced themselves through money (Fleming 1993).

The 11th century saw a process of economic development affecting all sections of society. New towns were founded and old centres expanded, and they became not just the nodal points for local, regional and international trade, but also centres for manufacture. Industries which had previously been located in the countryside, such as the weaving of cloth, were increasingly concentrated in urban centres. Only in England, thanks to the compiling of Domesday Book, can the percentage of the population living in towns be calculated, admittedly with some difficulties. Nonetheless, we can assert with some confidence that about 10 per cent of the population of England had an urban base in 1086 (Holt 2000, 103−104). We have no precise comparative figures, but towns were larger and more numerous in Flanders and northern Italy, so the townspeople there probably represented a rather higher proportion of the whole population. Historical tradition assigns the origin of English towns to the state policy of building a network of fortifications against the Danes at the end of the 9th and beginning of the 10th century, and the similar measures taken by the Danes (Astill 2009, 262−263), though the largest town, London, owed its existence to the flow of trade across the North Sea, and its network of communications by river and road with southern and midland England. On the continent more varied explanations are given for the genesis of towns, and the great churches are assigned a place alongside rulers and nobles in encouraging and planning towns (Verhulst 1999). Everywhere the success of a town depended on attracting a sufficient number of traders and artisans, and the choice of site in relation to transport by road and water was necessary to ensure a thriving urban community.

In the countryside England and the continent experienced parallel but not identical tendencies. Slaves were freed and settled on the land; rents and services were imposed on a section of the peasantry, though in England a fully developed form of servility with marriage fines and other payments and obligations developed after 1150. At the same time communities of free peasants survived, who enjoyed some self-government, and took initiatives such as building their own churches and mills (Bonnassie 1991; Stocker and Everson 2006). In England the free peasants paid rents to lords, but the sums could be token payments. Free and unfree alike experienced, at least in some regions, the processes of the nucleation of villages, and the formation of open fields (Jones and Page 2006; Renes 2010).

It is widely acknowledged that these developments were under way in the 11th century, but the origins are much debated, and the extent to which they continued after 1100 is unclear. It can be assumed that production was increasing, to keep the towns supplied with food and raw materials, and that peasants aimed for a surplus that could be exchanged or sold to pay rents and leave at least a small fund for acquiring goods that could not be grown or made in the village (Wickham 2010, 529-551). The countryside was being carved up into ever smaller units of lordship or cultivation, in a movement called encellulement by a French historian – each cell (unit of land) was being more intensively exploited by the cultivating peasants, and by the Church and the lords who squeezed what they could from land and people (Fossier 1982; Faith 1997, 153–177). The supply of money, and its use by the whole population, had increased in the 10th century and the German mines continued to produce a great deal in the early 11th, at a time when towns and trade grew. This abundance aided the English rulers in collecting huge sums of Danegeld, but supplies diminished around the middle of the century (Spufford 1988, 92–98).

The 11th century saw a number of movements of peoples in which the migration of aristocrats and townspeople across the English Channel was just a small part. Turks were moving into Asia Minor, disturbing the Mediterranean world, and north African Almoravids were arriving in Spain in response to the early stages of the reconquest movement which encouraged a flow of Christian settlers into the former Arab territories in the centre of the country (O'Callaghan 2013). Scandinavians were still on the move in the north Atlantic, beginning to occupy Greenland and landing on the eastern

coast of north America (Arneborg 2008; Wallace 2008), as well as undertaking their last invasion of England in the early years of the century (Lawson 1993). Norman rulers took over Sicily and parts of southern Italy, and they were prominent among the 'Franks' who at the end of the century invaded and established settlements in Palestine (Loud and Metcalfe 2002).

The Church was troubled by many of these developments. With the fragmentation of the Carolingian empire local elites threatened to use ecclesiastical offices and properties for their own profit. Monastic houses, which later had a strong influence on the papacy, re-established the independence of ecclesiastical institutions, and ultimately the Church as a whole was able to reform itself and renegotiate its relations with the secular powers. Groups of new monastic communities emerged within the Benedictine tradition, and at the end of the 11th century new monastic orders were being founded (Lawrence 2015). Local churches which had been built as private assets attached to lords' residences became more independent parish churches, and large number of church buildings were being constructed (Gem 1988; Blair 2005, 422–425).

Before 1066 England was in touch with the continent; its kings were influenced by the Carolingian tradition, and the same long term movements, such as urban growth, drew England into the European mainstream. English monasteries were reformed in the late 10th century, though the subsequent papal reform movement had a limited effect (Cubitt 1997). After 1066 the incoming aristocracy were recruited from Normandy and other parts of north-western France, and were French speaking, and used a different vocabulary to describe their ranks and institutions. Their style of operation reflected the ruthlessness and violence which had characterised the 'feudal mutation' on the continent, and in many parts of England the Conquest was not a matter of a distant battle and an unknown new king, but was marked by the seizure of land, forced marriage for women with land, and demands for money (Williams 1995). Relations on the Welsh border, already uneasy, were exploited by newcomers who carved out new lordships in the south of the country (Davies 2000).

NORMANDY

Normandy had many links with England long before 1066, most famously through intermarriage between the ruling families, but also in such mundane matters as the trade contacts between the town of Rouen and English ports. Normandy differed from its neighbours in northern France, but there is much debate about its special character. The ruling families traced their origins to the group of Viking migrants who had settled at the mouth of the Seine in the 10th century. The Scandinavian personal names of the aristocracy continuing into the early 11th century indicate one legacy from that colonisation, as also do the scatter of Norse place-names which are still in use. Compared with other lands in the diaspora of Scandinavians in the early Middle Ages, their settlement has left little evidence in the form of artefacts, burials, sculpture, runic inscriptions, or characteristically Scandinavian institutions (Renaud 2008), although that does not mean that it was entirely lacking in a Scandinavian heritage (Abrams 2012). On the other hand, Normandy could be seen, not as a Viking colony, but as one of a number of successor states that took over some of the traditions of the defunct Carolingian empire under the rule of counts and dukes. In the case of Normandy the counts of Rouen later acquired the title of Dukes of Normandy. By the 11th century, in spite of its relative political independence, it was still part of the kingdom of France, and the dukes and their subjects spoke French (Bates 1982).

The aristocracy who appear in written records in the early 11th century were in possession of considerable resources, as they ruled over compact territories from castles, drew wealth from extensive lands and urban settlements, had often founded or reformed a nearby monastic house, and were supported by an entourage of lesser nobles who adopted a military style of life. They had the capacity for political independence, and could fight private wars (Crouch 2002). These people needed to be persuaded or forced to accept the superior lordship of the dukes. The dukes had the advantage of the resources and powers inherited from the Carolingian state, including royal revenues, ducal castles, the right to mint coins, a judicial system, and a structure of local government based on pagi (pays) and the dioceses of the Church. They developed their authority by defending the Norman boundaries and sometimes extending territory in conflict with rivals in territories such as Anjou, Brittany and Maine. They won the support of the bishops and the monasteries that they created,

endowed and reformed. They used written documents in government (after a gap in the use of writing in the 10th century), and promoted the cults of local saints (Crouch 2002).

The ruling house tended to be internally quarrelsome, partly because dukes took concubines and produced children from different partners, thus promoting rivalries between half brothers. But family and kinship could work to the advantage of the unity of the state, because the leading aristocratic families had intermarried, formed webs of kinship, and could regard themselves as a noble community (Searle 1988). The dukes were also aided by a sense of Norman identity, which has been described as a myth because it was deliberately promoted on the basis of illusions about the past. No matter that it was partly fictitious, the important point was that the idea was believed, and bound the leaders of Norman society together (Loud 1982; Webber 2005). The duchy also benefitted from the general economic growth of the 11th century, which could have been to the advantage of the free peasantry (who had organised a rebellion at the end of the 10th century), and certainly enriched Rouen merchants whose trade increased as more wine from the Île de France was carried down the river. The expansion of the Rouen economy encouraged a Jewish community to settle in the town.

One version of the history of Normandy is that it pursued its destiny through a continuous process of unification and expansion, but a more plausible version is that Norman unity was a short-term creation of duke William II (later the Conqueror) who fought off dangerous rivals among the aristocracy, winning a famous victory at Val ès Dunes in 1047 with the help of the king of France, Henry I. In the 1050s William grasped the opportunity to bring the aristocracy on to his side, and accept his superior lordship. It was on the basis of those alliances that he was able to assemble an effective force to invade England in 1066 (Searle 1988). In many ways Normandy had developed in parallel with England in the 10th and 11th centuries. Both dynasties of rulers owed much to Carolingian ideas of kingship, and both were influenced by Scandinavian colonisation. Both had seen the development of a central authority (royal in England, ducal in Normandy), and both sets of rulers had experienced challenges from the nobility in the mid-11th century. The countries shared some common religious trends, having reformed their monasteries, and many smaller local churches were being founded or rebuilt (Webber 2005). The ruling aristocracies participated in an elite culture of waging war, hunting and feasting, as depicted on the Bayeux tapestry. In spite of these similarities,

the two countries still had their own distinctive ways of life, which made for an uneasy relationship between Normans and English when they came into close proximity after 1066.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF 11TH-CENTURY ENGLAND

The period c900–c1150 has a stronger profile as a distinct period among archaeologists than historians, as there are a number of developments in landscape, settlement and material culture that span that period, many of which are related to broader trends across the continent. For example, the period is characterised by the mass production of wheel-thrown pottery in the nascent towns of eastern England, such as St Neots (Cambridgeshire), Torksey, Stamford (Lincolnshire) and Thetford (Norfolk). These industries, which were clearly influence by continental forms of manufacture, spanned the Conquest, but while different phases of production have been identified, there is nothing to suggest that 1066 had any notable impact on them, and their wares were widely distributed across 11th-century England (Hinton 2005, 160–161; Perry in press). Similarly, existing styles of non-ferrous dress accessories continued to be manufactured and used after the Conquest. The main transformations that can be identified seem unrelated to the impact of the Conquest, but, rather, reflect the increasing differentiation of urban and rural identities. Brooch styles worn in London had more in common with those from other urban centres of north-western Europe than with rural styles in England (see Weetch, this volume). Whatever the disruptions arising from political events, the material evidence points to the continuation of the work of craftsmen and the routines of urban life (see Ten Harkel, this volume). The Bayeux Tapestry was commissioned and conceived in Normandy or Brittany, but was executed in England, famous for high levels of skill in embroidery and which clearly had continued to be highly regarded (see Lewis, this volume). Finally, archaeozoological evidence has revealed that a large-scale fishing industry developed around the year 1000 in northern Europe, which involved carrying thousands of preserved herring into the North Sea, with implications for maritime settlements, ship building and changes in consumption, especially in towns (Barrett et al 2004).

Urban life experienced some disruptions in the wake on the Conquest, including the destruction of houses when castles were built (see Fradley, this volume), the replanning of streets around them (Lilley, this volume), and the increased prevalence of diseases such as leprosy (see Roffey, this volume). Nonetheless, on the whole, the trajectory of urban development was one of continuity. The invaders clearly regarded the towns as key locales in the newly conquered territory, and they continued to use them as administrative centres, and built castles within or adjacent to the defences. Towns such as Southampton (Hampshire), Norwich (Norfolk) and Wallingford (Oxfordshire) received settlers from northern France. Changes in social practices and mentalities can sometimes be extracted from the archaeology. For example, in the French quarter of Southampton which accommodated migrants from Normandy, the types of pottery, including greater quantities of glazed wares, suggest the different tastes and even the domestic behaviour, of the newcomers (Jervis et al, this volume). In some towns the French parts of the settlements left their mark on the street plan (see Lilley, this volume). Initially the castles loomed over the townscape, discouraging rebellion and reminding the inhabitants of the new regime, but later they were used for the routines of administration and could be seen as a positive contribution to strengthening the town's defences. Perhaps local people came to regard them as less threatening, as is apparent from Welsh attitudes towards their urban castles in later centuries (Evans 2012).

Rural settlements and landscapes were undergoing especially dynamic changes in the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, as this period seems to have marked an important formative stage in the growth of nucleated villages and the open fields in the central province between Somerset and Northumberland, accompanied by the proliferation of non-nucleated settlements in the west and south-east. The nucleated villages and their accompanying open fields which came to dominate the rural landscape of the central province were once associated with documented political events, such as the Danish settlement of the late 9th century in the north east, or the conquest of the midland and northern counties by the kings of Wessex in the early 10th (eg Lewis et al 2000, 182–184; Jones and Page 2006, 10–11). The villages of Yorkshire were thought to have acquired their regular plans when they were re-established after William's 'harrying' of the north in 1071 (discussed in McClain, this volume). However, archaeological approaches have reclaimed the subject, and the process of

nucleation is now generally seen as a long-term evolutionary process in which peasants and their lords responded to the variety of social, economic and cultural tendencies in different regions (Jones and Page 2006). Pollen samples from the south suggest that the balance of vegetation did not change greatly (at least in wooded areas), although there is limited evidence to suggest intensification of agricultural activity around the time of the Conquest, as, for example, at Beckford (Worcestershire) where increased alluviation suggests more ploughing around 1100 (Greig and Colledge 1988; 2005; see also Creighton and Rippon, this volume). Animal bone assemblages show that in the midlands sheep numbers were increasing, which may reflect the advance of open fields, large fallow areas were available for grazing by sheep (Sykes 2007, 28–34). All of this would be compatible with assumptions on the continent that this was an age of population growth, which saw a process of 'cerealisation' as production was focussed on grain (Hoffmann 2014, 114–117, 155–174). Such developments were progressing in the long term, with little obvious connection with political changes ensuing from the Norman Conquest. Certainly, isolated events in the wake of the 'harrowing' of the North, or the depredations inflicted on the route between Hastings and London, may have disrupted agricultural activities, while they may have been accelerated where a new lord insisted that estate revenues be increased, but the overall effects of these local events probably cancelled each other out.

Parks had been created before the Conquest, and a few are recorded in Domesday Book, but they increased subsequently, and had a long term influence on the rural settlement pattern as their survival prevented the colonisation of large areas by villages and fields (Liddiard 2003; Mileson 2009). The species of deer that was especially well suited to parks, fallow deer, seem to have appeared for the first time after the Conquest (Sykes and Carden 2011). Forest law was also new in post-Conquest England, and may have developed in England rather than being transposed from the continent (Green 2013). Anglo-Saxon rulers took steps to protect their hunting reserves, so while the law was new the policy had existed earlier. Laws had some consequences in inhibiting the later clearance of woodland, though often the purpose of the imposition of the forest law was not to prevent the expansion of farm land but to enable royal officials to collect revenue from those who removed vegetation.

Lesser lords of local importance surrounded their houses with banks and ditches, constructed timber buildings in long ranges, and sometimes made their mark on their neighbourhood by building tall stone towers (see Gardiner, and Shapland, this volume). Local churches (later to become parish churches), were patronised by lords both before and after the Conquest, knowing that their builders would gain admiration for their services to religion and their display of resources. They also commissioned memorial sculptures, which enhanced the appearance of the religious buildings, and raised the profile of their families (McClain, this volume). But these developments were continuations of pre-existing practices. We no longer accept the simple application of the terms 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Norman' to church buildings, as architectural studies have revealed many churches where supposedly English and Norman building techniques and architectural embellishments overlapped. It now appears that English and Norman masons may well have worked side by side (Fernie 1987; 1994; Gem 1988) producing structures that were a testament to the creative fusion which was present in early Norman England. Many churches were constructed in stone to replace earlier timber churches during the 11th century, a process that had begun in the decades leading up to the Conquest, which continued to c1100 and was 'architecturally enriched' by the Conquest (Blair 2005, 411–425).

The Norman Conquest was but one influence on the Anglo-Saxon Church. Ecclesiastical life in 11th-century England was at least partly influenced by developments in the Empire, which saw new methods of organising the clergy, new liturgies and new buildings to accommodate them, which led to changes in major churches in the archdiocese of York before the Norman Conquest (Everson and Stocker, this volume). Nevertheless, although there had been programmes of church building before the Conquest, cathedral construction proceeded on a large scale, sometimes on new sites as at Lincoln, and sometimes replacing existing and usually smaller buildings (Reilly 1996). The Archbishop of Canterbury led the way in founding new hospitals for housing lepers, which demonstrated the charitable function of the Church, and impressed observers with large new buildings (see Roffey, this volume). The monumental scale of the cathedrals and castles may have helped the economy by generating employment for building workers, but they had a primary aim of demonstrating the standing of the new regime (see chapters by Ten Harkel, and Fradley, this volume).

CONCLUSIONS

Invasions and migrations periodically fade from view in the approaches of archaeologists, who are sometimes more inclined to look for evidence of elite emulation or trade to account for changes in the archaeological record (Anthony 1990). However, when it comes to the Norman Conquest we can be sure that there really was an invasion in the late 11th century, and this had a profound impact on Anglo-Saxon England at all levels of society. This Conquest is unquestionably visible in the archaeological record, and many of the chapters in this volume discuss evidence that demonstrates this. At the same time, however, the Conquest needs to be set within a longer-term perspective, which archaeology is well placed to bring. The volume also makes it clear that we should be cautious of generalisation about England as a whole, not least because of the distinctiveness of its various regional cultures, which endured. Regional diversity in, for example, styles of dress, ecclesiastical architecture and funerary monumentation can be identified. Eastern England was distinctive for its larger towns and close trading ties with the near continent, while the North had its own characteristics before the destructive invasion and the imposition of new lordships. The events in the years after 1066 reinforced the special features of the regions, and the incomers were aware of the distinctiveness of their localities, which was expressed for example in their church building and varieties of memorial sculpture.

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