

THE NORMAN CONQUEST WAS A GOOD THING FOR THE ANGLO-SAXONS

Historic Royal Palaces

argue about: THE NORMANS

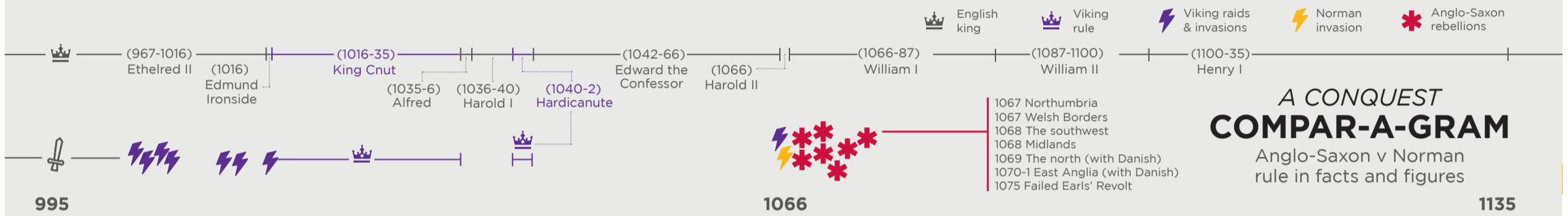
argue about: THE NORMANS

The Norman conquest was a **good thing** for the Anglo-Saxons

What do you think? Use the evidence in this trail to explore the impact of the Norman conquest on the Anglo-Saxons. Then take a side and argue your case!

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- 1 Register your first thoughts
 AGREE
 DISAGREE
 UNSURE...
 Reason / comment
- 2 Investigate
 Examine physical and written evidence from the Norman and Anglo-Saxon eras in this trail. Use it's:
 - information bank
 - map of the Tower's Norman remains
 - contemporary written accounts
- 3 Take a side
 Weigh the evidence and decide the factors you find most persuasive.
- 4 Argue your case!
 Engage others in a debate. Justify your view with reasons and consider others' counter-arguments.



demographics

Population (approx)
2,000,000



WHERE DO PEOPLE LIVE?
 countryside 90%
 towns 10%

foreign relations



Scandinavian influence looms largest. Fortified towns ('burhs') are established as a form of defence against Danish invaders.

social hierarchy

KING
 Anglo-Saxon descendant Edward takes the throne in 1042 after 26 years of rule by Danish kings.

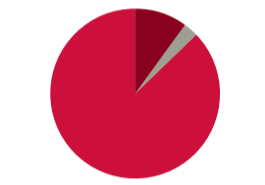
EARLS
 Chief advisers to Edward own vast areas of land and act as king's agents. Just five earls control all of England in 1065.

THEGNS
 Landowning class who carry out duties for king, such as collecting taxes.

PEASANT CLASSES
Ceorls - Mostly very poor peasant farmers who paid rent while working on thegn land. 'Free' in the sense they aren't anyone's property.

Thralls (or slaves)
 Slavery is widely practiced. Thralls are treated as property by their owners. They can be sold and beaten, even branded.

Anglo-Saxon women have the legal right to own land and property.



% OF POPULATION
 royalty & landowners 3%
 thralls 10%*
 ceorls 87%
 *perhaps as high as 30%

economy & trade

By 1065, England is one of Europe's wealthiest kingdoms. It boasts trusted coinage. Wool is England's main industry and export. Trading partners include Scandinavia and mainland Europe.

London

A growing, thriving city of more than 10,000 people, London is probably the country's biggest trading hub.

Evidence of traders from Germany, France, Normandy and Flanders.

social hierarchy

KING
 William I becomes the first Norman king in December 1066.

TENNANTS-IN-CHIEF
 Nearly all Anglo-Saxon lords lose their lands. William I distributes it among a loyal Norman aristocracy. Some English lords fall into poverty.

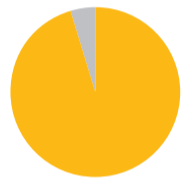
UNDER-TENNANTS
 Landholding vassals and knights owe military service to the king.

PEASANT CLASSES
Freemen - Free peasants who pay rent to the lord for their land. Increased taxes causes number to fall significantly from 1066-86 and many become villeins.

Villeins - Work on the lord's land for no pay. No freedom, eg, cannot leave the village.

Thralls (or slaves)
 William I bans the slave trade. By 1087 the number of slaves falls by 25%. By the early 12th century, slavery ceases in England.

Women lose the right to own land and property.



LANDHOLDING ARISTOCRACY
 All land is owned by the king. By 1087:
 Normans >95%
 Anglo-Saxons <5%

economy & trade

Trade with Europe increases, including wool and cloth trade with Flanders. Raw material exports increase. A period of economic growth begins from the late 1190s and continues for 150 years.

London

In 1067, William I grants London a charter allowing it to run its own affairs.

Like all English towns, London grows steadily. Guilds are set up from 1130, including weavers, cloth workers and butchers.

demographics

More than **100,000** lose their lives as a result of the Norman conquest, and particularly due to William I's 'Harrying of the North' in 1069 (see source G on reverse).

Women lose the right to own land and property.

foreign relations



Norman rule strengthens economic and cultural ties with mainland Europe. It provides security from further invasion.

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

NORMAN ENGLAND

YOUR IDEAS

Record your notes, ideas and evidence. You might also chart what you believe are the most significant reasons to argue for/against the proposition.

not so much ← The Norman conquest was a good thing for the Anglo-Saxons → definitely

at the time short term longer term

□ — □ — □

1 BEFORE THE NORMANS



Ravens' Arch

Find a traffic-free place to stop near this arched gateway near Ravens' Lodgings.

Today, the city surrounds this fortress on all sides. But in 1065, London was a few miles down river toward Westminster. It was England's biggest city and an international trading hub.

The river helped London establish its trading links. But it also left this area of the country vulnerable to foreign invaders. Anglo-Saxon London was attacked and sacked many times and its citizens were particularly alert to Viking raids.

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

- 1 Review the Anglo-Saxon 'social hierarchy' (see reverse), then read **source A**. From what social class might this perspective have been written?
- 2 Look at **source I**. Place an X near your current location. Had you stood here in Anglo-Saxon times, who or what might you have seen?

2 WILLIAM CONQUERS LONDON



Roman City Wall

Find the ruins near the southeast corner of the White Tower (on your right as you approach the entrance staircase).

This is a surviving part of the Roman City Wall. After his victory at Hastings, William planted his troops outside London's wall to try to secure the country's most important city. When the citizens of London at last submitted to William, his first thought was to build a castle here.

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

- 1 Read the information board next to the ruin. What were the benefits of positioning a castle here?

It probably functioned as a 'Great Hall' - an all-purpose space for meeting and receiving guests, dining and entertaining.

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

- 1 Explore the room and use the signage to discover some of the original Norman features of this room.

- 2 Read **sources C, E and G**. How do you think William viewed the Anglo-Saxons? What do you think he was trying to achieve and why?

5 CULTURES MINGLE



White Tower, first floor

Follow the route until you reach the Chapel of St John. It's a place of worship, so kindly remain quiet.

This is one of the finest surviving examples of Norman ecclesiastical architecture in England. It's also a sure sign this tower was intended for royal use.

The fact every major church in England was rebuilt following the Norman conquest can be seen as evidence of the importance of religion to the Normans.

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

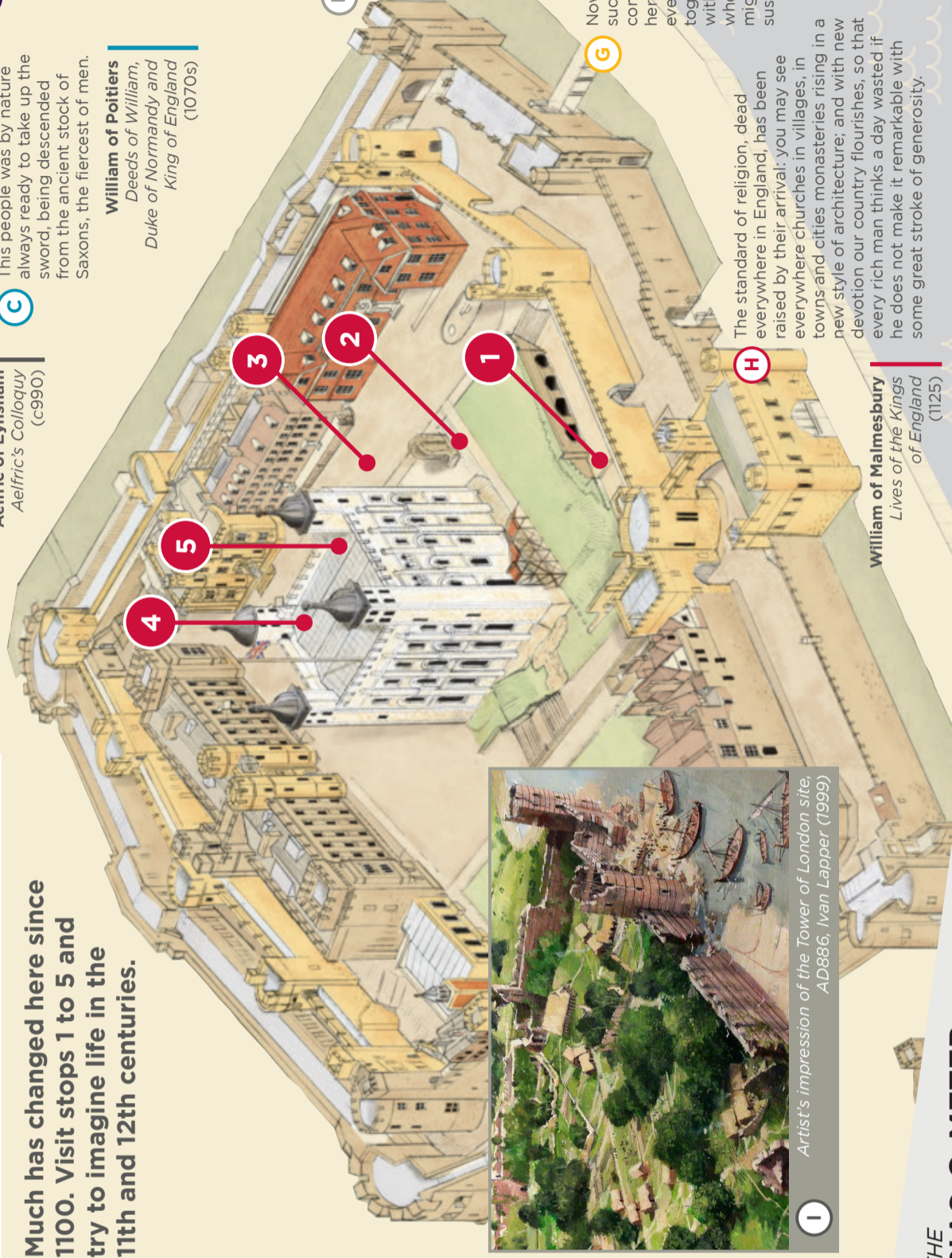
- 1 What evidence is there that this chapel was part of the original Norman construction?

- 2 Look at **sources F and H**. How far do you think Norman attitudes, culture and customs influenced Anglo-Saxon life?

Notes:

EXPLORE THE NORMAN TOWER

Much has changed here since 1100. Visit stops 1 to 5 and try to imagine life in the 11th and 12th centuries.



A I go out at daybreak, goading the oxen to the field, and I join them to the plough; no winter is so harsh that I would dare to lurk at home for fear of my master ... Throughout the whole day I must plough a full acre or more ... I must fill the stall of the oxen with hay, supply them with water and carry their dung outside. Oh! Oh! The work is hard. Yes, the work is hard because I am not free.

Aelfric of Eynsham
Aelfric's Colloquy
(c990)

C This people was by nature always ready to take up the sword, being descended from the ancient stock of Saxons, the fiercest of men.

William of Poitiers
Deeds of William, Duke of Normandy and King of England
(1070s)

B [William was] received peacefully, and 'the citizens [of London].... burst out in waves from every gate to welcome him.

D [They surrendered] out of necessity, after most of the damage had been done - and it was a great piece of folly that they had not done it earlier ... They gave hostages and swore oaths to [William] and he promised them that he would be a gracious lord.

E Also he was a very stern and violent man, so that no one dared do anything contrary to his will ... Amongst other things the good security he made in this country is not to be forgotten - so that any honest man could travel over his kingdom without injury with his bosom full of gold; and no one dared strike another, however much wrong he had done him.

Multiple authors
Anglo-Saxon Chronicles

F After England had begun to have Norman lords the English no longer suffered from outsiders that which they had suffered at their own hands; in this respect they found foreigners treated them better than they had themselves.

Lawrence of Durham
Life of S. Brigid
(1130s)

G Nowhere else had William shown such cruelty... In his anger he commanded that all crops and herds, chattels and food of every kind should be brought together and burned to ashes with consuming fire, so that the whole region north of the Humber might be stripped of all means of sustenance.

Orderic Vitalis
Historia Ecclesiastica
(mid-1100s)

H The standard of religion, dead everywhere in England, has been raised by their arrival; you may see everywhere churches in villages, in towns and cities monasteries rising in a new style of architecture; and with new devotion our country flourishes, so that every rich man thinks a day wasted if he does not make it remarkable with some great stroke of generosity.

William of Malmesbury
Lives of the Kings of England
(1125)

WILLIAM OF POITIERS
(c1020-90)
William I's Norman chaplain wrote an unfinished life of William I, the *Gesta Guillelmi* (Deeds of William). It was written in praise of his master and saw all William's actions as justifiable.

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY
(c1095 - c1143)
A Benedictine monk with a Norman father and English mother born in Wiltshire. He wrote *Gesta regum Anglorum* (Lives of the Kings of England) alongside a history of the post-conquest church in England. Both were completed by 1120. Tended to favour the English.

LAWRENCE OF DURHAM
(c1100-1154)
Born in Essex, he soon went as a monk to Durham. He wrote poetry and prose, including an account of the life of the Irish Saint Brigid. Durham's bishop resided in the town's Norman castle. At first Lawrence was simply a monk, but he later joined bishop's court.

AELFRIC OF EYNSHAM
(c955 - c1010)
An English abbot who was a prolific writer on the bible and lives of saints. He wrote *Aelfric's Colloquy* as an aid to students learning Latin. It's filled with invented characters discussing their occupations. It's thought the parts helped students engage in role-playing lessons.

ORDERIC VITALIS
(c1075 - c1142)
A monk with Anglo-Norman parentage like William of Malmesbury. He used 'William Poitiers' work, so there was a tendency to praise William I. He balanced an understanding of the English desire for 'liberty' from Norman rule with an appreciation of Norman society's benefits.

ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLES
Series of chronicles written by multiple authors at a number of different sites from the 9th century into the 12th. It varies within itself and different versions don't agree. An excellent overview of the period from monks who did not share the same devotion to the king as Anglo-Norman chroniclers.

USEFUL

PRO-NORMAN

PRO-ENGLISH

NOT SO USEFUL