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After making use of a feigned retreat from the battlefield, William was able to surround Harold and his men with archers, who fired their arrows up into the sky causing one to go straight through Harold Godwinson's eye, ending the Saxon chapter of British history

Quotes taken from Sharon Turner's 'History of the Anglo-Saxons' Book II (1841)

William escaped unhurt. But the slaughter of his Normans had been great.

His victory was splendid; but if Harold had not fallen, it would have contributed very little to gain the crown of England. It was the death of Harold which gave William the sceptre. The

force of England was unconquered. A small portion of it only

had been exerted and if Harold had survived, or any other heir

at all competent to the crisis, William would have earned no more from his victory than the privilege of fighting another battle with diminished strength.

When he landed in England,

he came with all his power. The fleet of the Anglo-Saxons was

afterwards ready to cut off further succour, if such could have

been raised for him in Normandy; and it is probable, that if

by the fall of Harold, England had not been suddenly left without a chief, the battle of Hastings would have been to William but a scene of brilliant glory, speedily followed by a melancholy catastrophe.

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In great revolutions much is effected by active talents ; but perhaps more by that arrangement of events over which man has no control. It was Wilham's intention to have sailed a month sooner than he appeared. If his wishes had been fulfilled, he would have invaded Harold before the king of Norway, and would perhaps have shared his fate. For if the English king, with the disadvantages of a loss and desertion of his veteran troops, of new levies, of an inferior force, and an overweening presumption, was yet able to balance the conflict with William's most concentrated, select, and skilfully exerted strength until night was closing; if the victory was only decided by his casual death, how different would have been the issue, if Harold had met him with the troops which he marched against

the Norwegians? But Providence had ordained that a new dynasty should give new manners, new connections, and new fortunes to the English nation.

Events were therefore so made to follow, that all the talents of Harold, and the force of England, should not avail against the vicissitudes intended. While Harold's fleet watched the ocean, the adverse wind kept William in port.

This fleet was dispersed by its stores failing; and at the same time the invasion of the king of Norway compelled Harold to leave his coast unguarded, and to hurry his soldiers to the north of the island. In this critical interval, while Harold was so occupied by land, and before his fleet had got revictualled, the winds became auspicious to William, and he landed in safety.

Immediately after this, the Saxon fleet was enabled to sail. Harold had in the mean time conquered the Norwegians; but this very event, which seemed to insure the fate of William, became his safety. It inflated Harold's mind so as to disgust his own soldiery, and to rush to a decisive conflict in contempt

of
his adversary, before he was prepared to meet him.

When the
battle had begun, the abilities of Harold, and the bravery of
his
countrymen, seemed again likely to ruin the hopes of his
great
competitor. The death of Harold then terminated the
contest,
while William, who had been in as much danger as Harold,
was
not penetrated by a single weapon.

But it was ordained by the Supreme Director of events, that
England should no longer remain insulated from the rest of
Europe; but, should, for its own benefit and the
improvement of
mankind, become connected with the affairs of the
continent.

The Anglo-Saxon dynasty was therefore terminated; and a
sovereign, with great continental possessions, was led to the
English throne. By the consequences of this revolution, Eng
land acquired that interest and established that influence in
the
transactions and fortunes of its neighbours, which have
continued
to the present day, with equal advantages to its inhabitants
and
to Europe.

Wiki on William

March on London

William may have hoped the English would surrender following his victory, but they did not. Instead, some of the English clergy and magnates nominated Edgar the Ætheling as king, though their support for Edgar was only lukewarm.

After waiting a short while, William secured [Dover](#), parts of Kent, and [Canterbury](#), while also sending a force to capture [Winchester](#), where the royal treasury was.^[94] These captures secured William's rear areas and his line of retreat to Normandy, if that was needed.^[2]

William then marched to [Southwark](#), across the [Thames](#) from London, which he reached in late November. Next, he led his forces around the south and west of London, burning along the way.

He finally crossed the Thames at [Wallingford](#) in early December. Stigand submitted to William there, and when the duke moved on to [Berkhamsted](#) soon afterwards, Edgar the Ætheling, Morcar, Edwin, and Ealdred also submitted. William then sent forces into London to construct a castle; [he was crowned at Westminster Abbey](#) on Christmas Day 1066

Changes to England

As part of his efforts to secure England, William ordered many castles, [keeps](#), and [mottes](#) built – among them the central keep of the [Tower of London](#), the [White Tower](#). These fortifications allowed Normans to retreat into safety when threatened with rebellion and allowed garrisons to be protected while they occupied the countryside. The early castles were simple earth and timber constructions, later replaced with stone structures.[\[128\]](#)

At first, most of the newly settled Normans kept household [knights](#) and did not settle their retainers with [fiefs](#) of their own, but gradually these household knights came to be granted lands of their own, a process known as [subinfeudation](#). William also required his newly created magnates to contribute fixed quotas of knights towards not only military campaigns but also castle garrisons. This method of organising the military forces was a departure from the pre-Conquest English practice of basing military service on territorial units such as the [hide](#).[\[129\]](#)

By William's death, after weathering a series of rebellions, most of the native Anglo-Saxon aristocracy had been replaced by Norman and other continental magnates. Not all of the Normans who accompanied William in the initial conquest acquired large amounts of land in England. Some appear to have been

reluctant to take up lands in a kingdom that did not always appear pacified.

Although some of the newly rich Normans in England came from William's close family or from the upper Norman nobility, others were from relatively humble backgrounds.[\[130\]](#) William granted some lands to his continental followers from the holdings of one or more specific Englishmen; at other times, he granted a compact grouping of lands previously held by many different Englishmen to one Norman follower, often to allow for the consolidation of lands around a strategically placed castle.[\[131\]](#)

The medieval chronicler [William of Malmesbury](#) says that the king also seized and depopulated many miles of land (36 parishes), turning it into the royal [New Forest](#) to support his enthusiastic enjoyment of hunting. Modern historians have concluded that the New Forest depopulation was greatly exaggerated. Most of the New Forest comprises poor agricultural lands, and archaeological and geographic studies have shown that it was likely sparsely settled when it was turned into a [royal forest](#).[\[132\]](#) William was known for his love of hunting, and he introduced the forest law into areas of the country, regulating who could hunt and what could be hunted.[\[133\]](#)

[William's Legacy](#)

The impact on England of William's conquest was profound; changes in the Church, aristocracy, culture, and language of the country have persisted into modern times. The Conquest brought the kingdom into closer contact with France and forged ties that lasted throughout the Middle Ages. Another consequence of William's invasion was the sundering of the formerly close ties between England and Scandinavia.

William's government blended elements of the English and Norman systems into a new one that laid the foundations of the later medieval English kingdom.

[145] How abrupt and far-reaching the changes were is still a matter of debate among historians, with some such as [Richard Southern](#) claiming that the Conquest was the single most radical change in European history between the Fall of Rome and the 20th century. Others, such as H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, see the changes as much less radical.

[146] The historian Eleanor Searle describes William's invasion as "a plan that no ruler but a Scandinavian would have considered".[147]

William's reign has caused historical controversy since before his death. William of Poitiers wrote glowingly of William's reign and its benefits, but the obituary notice for William in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* condemns William in harsh terms.[146] During the reign of Queen [Elizabeth I](#), Archbishop [Matthew Parker](#) saw

the Conquest as having corrupted a purer English Church, which Parker attempted to restore.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, some historians and lawyers saw William's reign as imposing a "[Norman yoke](#)" on the native Anglo-Saxons, an argument that continued during the 19th century with further elaborations along nationalistic lines. These controversies have led to William being seen by some historians either as one of the creators of England's greatness or as inflicting one of the greatest defeats in English history. Others have viewed him as an enemy of the English constitution, or alternatively as its creator