

WHY WAS THE NORMAN INVASION MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN THE VIKING/DANISH INVASIONS
ON SUBSEQUENT ENGLISH HISTORY?

by

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Since 1066 England has been lucky enough to escape any successful invasions by her enemies. But before 1067, Anglo-Saxon England ^{was} got invaded three major times, and suffered tremendously each time. The Viking/Danish and Norman invasions of Anglo-Saxon England both left their mark on England, though to differing degrees. Since the Viking and Danish invasions were much more temporary in scope* and in length of occupation, they had much less influence on England than did the Norman occupation that began in 1066. - Good!

The key difference between the two invasions that allowed one to have much more influence on subsequent English culture than the other was that Anglo-Saxon culture was able to reassert its dominance in England after the Viking/Danish invasions, while it failed to do so after the Norman invasion because the Normans were never expelled from England. The Viking attacks and invasions lasted from about 793, the year the great monastery at Lindesfarne was sacked, until about 880, when the "Great Army" of 865 had settled down. However, Vikings continued to rule over part of England ⁱⁿ (the Danelaw) until 954. Then, after a generation of peace, the Danish kings invaded England starting with the battle of Maldon (991), and had conquered all of England by 1016. But by 1042 an Anglo-Saxon (Edward the Confessor) was back on the English throne because the last Danish king of England (Harthacnut) invited the Anglo-Saxon heir to succeed him.

Again, Anglo-Saxon culture was able to reassert itself under Edward since the Danes gave up trying to control England. But, in contrast, the Norman invasion of 1066 was permanent: Anglo-Saxon culture never became dominant again, though it continued to have a major impact on subsequent English history and culture.

The prime reason why Anglo-Saxon culture was able to resist much of the Viking/Danish settlers' culture but wasn't able to resist Norman influence as much was not only due to the Normans' longer stay but also due to the close connection the Normans continued to have with their homeland on the Continent

(Normandy), while in the Viking/Danish invasions the invaders were either cut off from their homeland (the settled Vikings) or gave up (the Danes under Harthacnut).

Since the Norman barons continued routinely to travel back and forth ^{what of period 1016-1042?} *THE ~~THE~~ VIKING INVASION TOOK ONLY HALF OF ENGLAND, THOUGH THE DANISH

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between Normandy and England to watch over their ancestral lands, they continued for many decades after 1066 to regard themselves as Frenchmen, not Englishmen. These Norman barons, ^{not yet! English} since ~~they~~ almost entirely composed the top of the British upperclass, didn't get swallowed up by the vast Anglo-Saxon underclass because they regarded themselves as different in nationality from their subjects. Even with the intermarriage that became common between dispossessed upperclass Anglo-Saxons and the newly arrived Normans, the children of such mixed marriages still had to watch over the family's lands in France and thus still realized their "Norman-ness" (Frenchness) amidst the far greater in number Anglo-Saxon peasants and the dispossessed Anglo-Saxon thegns. Had the Normans lost Normandy in ~~(say)~~ 1070, the Normans in England could have very well been swallowed up by the pervasive Anglo-Saxon culture that would surround them in England in the same way the Franks got swallowed up by the Latinized Celts in Gaul, or the way the Normans themselves were Christianized and "Frenchified" with astonishing speed once they settled down in Normandy.* History could have easily repeated itself on the tiny number of Normans ruling in England if they hadn't continued to think themselves distinct from those they ruled. As it was, the concern about and visits to Normandy allowed the Norman invaders to feel themselves distinct from the Anglo-Saxons they ruled in England, who were otherwise culturally (being Germanic), religiously, and ethnically very similar to their masters. Combine this consciousness of distinctness among the Normans (their composing the elite of society no doubt helped promote this consciousness) with a takeover of England that never ended, the Normans had many more chances to influence subsequent English culture and history ^{THAT} the Vikings and Danes didn't get. Again - Nature of Conquest.

Nature of conquest?

a good point!

How? elaborate

were the Normans Germanic?!

unlike use no conquest

By contrast, the Viking ^D Danish invasions were considerably shorter ^{IN} duration and they (at least for the Viking attacks) lacked homeland support and (in time, as permanent settlers) identification ^{WITH} by the settlers after enough years. The quick conversion of the heathen Vikings to Catholicism was no doubt greatly as-

isted by the fact the (now) settled Vikings lacked contact with and deep concern [* OR CONSIDER HOW THE MONGOLS BECAME AS CHINESE AS THE CHINESE.] Again this doesn't add

with the affairs of their pagan relatives in their homelands in Scandanavia. The Vikings stayed in England all the time, unlike the Norman upperclass, who kept moving back and forth between Normandy and England, and soon the Scandanavian settlers began to become more and more English in outlook. Being surrounded by Anglo-Saxons and their (at least nominal) Christianity, the isolated Vikings

would tend to lose a feeling of being distinct from the Anglo-Saxons since both had similar Germanic cultures, languages, and ethnic stock. Since travel was primitive in medieval Europe the sense of isolation by the ^{people} ~~know~~ settled Vikings from their homelands isn't easily imagined by us moderns today. No doubt these similarities made it easier for Anglo-Saxon missionaries to approach the heathen Vikings and to convert them over to the Anglo-Saxon's Catholicism. Thus already in the religious area the possible influence the pagan Vikings could have had in the long run was being extinguished. Without having this distinct consciousness of being of a different nationality being maintained (as happened with the Normans since they had the money and need to keep having to go to visit and care about what happened in Normandy), soon much of the ^{potential} influence Viking (and Danish) culture could have exerted in England was lost.

In addition, the Danish kings' rulership of England was not only relatively short (from 1016-1042), but also didn't involve a whole turnover of the Anglo-Saxon ruling class as which occurred under William the Conqueror. Many Anglo-Saxon thegns were left still ruling over their lands, though everybody had to shell out tribute to their Danish overlords. Although the Danes were still pagans (the Anglo-Saxon leader at the battle of Maldon said "not needed... it is the heathen that shall fall in the battle"¹), they didn't destroy monasteries and bishoprics like the Viking invasions did. Indeed, the first Danish king passed laws favoring the church in England and when the Normans came, the English church wasn't corrupt and backward as might be expected if one had been recently conquered by a pagan nation and ruled by them for twenty-six years (1016-1042)². Thus, the Danish conquest left much of English religion, culture, and social organ-

Examples?
Multi ones?

where?
why did they settle?

But in what ways did they influence the Ss?
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Differences vs wars?

Difference?

Good!!!

¹Lacy and Jean Smith, The Past Speaks to 1688 (D.C. Heath and Company: Lexington, MA, 1981), p. 8.

²Dorothy Whitelock, The Beginnings of English Society (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, England, 1984), p. 187.

ization intact during its brief lordship over England, being basically content to collect tribute. Of course during its brief lordship over England, ^{or parts of it} some Scandinavian influence in areas heavily settled by Vikings, which were primarily represented in place names, people's names, other language influences, and paganism (which was soon eliminated). But Anglo-Saxon culture again ruled supreme in England under Edward the Confessor. ^{Evidence? How so?} The Normans came in considerably ^{differences in who conquered?} fewer numbers than the Vikings had, but Norman influence was much greater since their conquest was permanent and their culture wasn't swallowed up by the Anglo-Saxons around them because they kept their consciousness of being distinct ("We are upperclass French") from their Anglo-Saxon underclass.

One long-lasting effect occurring from the continental connections of the Normans were the development of unusually sophisticated (for the time and place) government institutions. The king of England had to develop a government that would allow him to spend half or more of his time in France or elsewhere. Thus the king had a chief justiciar to take his place while gone from England to make all decisions except major policy changes, and an exchequer and treasurer to count and ^{KEEP TRACK OF} collect the money needed to wage wars in France. By contrast, the Viking and Danish invasions ^{Please spell it out!} didn't really change England's government structure, ^{PERMANENTLY} because they either didn't take all of England (the Vikings) or else left much of the government structure alone while just interested in

extracting tribute (the Danes). Also, the English government wasn't changed too much because of already existing similarities in governmental structure when the Danes invaded England. Furthermore, they didn't have need for an absentee government that ruled England, being content to collect tribute and to let the English at least some local affairs on their own. By contrast, the Normans had to handle government business in England differently. ^{SINCE THEY HAD TO RUN ENGLAND'S GOVERNMENT, UNLIKE THE DANES,} Even though Norman government in Normandy was a virtual microcosm³ of Anglo-Saxon government before the invasion in 1066, the Normans had to change their government's structure once they ruled England since they didn't spend much time there.

The average Norman king lived like William the Conqueror, who spent half his ³Both had the king and court moving to their food from one of the king's estates to the next. In both the king rules out of his household, and had no specific position functions. Both had the same lower unit of govern-

Normans

Examples?

William of Vikings on A-S gov't? Alfred? Centralization?

reign in France and half in England. Richard the Lionhearted spent hardly six months in England during his 10 year reign. ~~With~~ the king being the center of the administration of medieval government, one had to develop a corps of professional bureaucrats and an effective administrative structure to operate England in the absence of the ruler in order to prevent a complete government collapse from occurring. Thus the major influence the Norman conquest had on English government was directly the result of the Norman kings' concern with Normandy.

Of course, there were a number of similarities between the Viking/Danish invasions and the Norman invasion. Both caused a great deal of destruction, ~~and surprise~~ ^{not needed} although it wasn't until William the Conqueror suppressed revolts in Northern England that he began to catch up with the destruction the Vikings wrecked. And, as the threat of more wars (and internal revolts) normally do, both of the invasions promoted the building of fortifications for defense: the "burghs" of Alfred the Great and the motte and bailey castles of William the Conqueror. Also interestingly, the leaders of the Normans had much of the same ancestry as did the Vikings/Danes who also had successfully invaded England. Many of the Normans--"Norsemen"--were from Scandanavian ethnic stock since Normandy's upperclass was partly descended from their Viking ancestors who took Normandy from the French King in the early 10th century (by 911). The Normans, although "Frenchified" even faster than the Vikings in England were 'anglicized, continued to be very aggressive militarily, like their Viking forefathers. The Vikings were the scourge of Western Europe in the 800's, and the Danes under Cnut (1016-1042) had a virtual empire. The Normans, as Normans and not Vikings, took over Sicily and Southern Italy, served as mercenaries in the Spanish ^{ISH} (Catholic) armies attacking the Moors in Spain, and ^{THEY} composed a large chunk of the Crusades' armies of knights* One could call the Norman invasion of 1066 the Viking** invasion of England that permanently succeeded. Thus similarities definitely existed between the two invasions in the destruction

*Of course, "English" Normans were part of the Crusades' armies since the crusades took place after 1066.

**Discounting Norman intermarriage with the ~~English~~ ^{and French before the invasion} which was common.

that was wrecked (no big surprise here!), in that fortifications were built, in the ethnic similarities and warlike tendencies of the invaders.

This needs a bit more work -

On the other hand, there were some definite dissimilarities in the ^{LIKE THE NORMAN (AND DANISH) CONQUESTS}

all misspelled?

^{THE VIKING INVASION WAS NOT CENTRALLY PLANNED BY A KING OF NATION, BUT RATHER} Viking/Danish, and Norman invasions. ^{transition?} The Scandinavians were pagans, even when the ^{WAS A}

Danish invasions began. In the battle of Maldon, the leader of the Anglo-Saxons ^{VERY SUCCESSFUL RAIDERS WHO CHOSE TO STAY} says of the Danes that ". . . It is the heathen that shall fall in the battle."⁴

Also, English missionaries worked to convert Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries⁵, so they must have been at least mostly pagan when they took over England. The paganism of the Vikings and Danes was not allowed to leave

a permanent stain on England, ^{HOWEVER} with much of the Danelaw being basically Catholic by 954 when the last Danish king was kicked out, although pagan practices were "still being preached against and legislated against in the early eleventh

century."⁶ This religious difference between the pagan vikings and Catholic Anglo-Saxons mattered because the pagan Vikings didn't hesitate to attack

monasteries and bishoprics, which set back English culture since these places were centers of learning. By contrast, the Normans came into England as good staunch Catholics, and, indeed, they condemned the English church for being backward and decadent (like for having the minster system in many areas

instead of the ^{parish} parish system). The resultant ⁱⁿ differences in the religion of the invaders had a major influence on English culture, ~~since the~~ since the Vikings destroyed all the monasteries and half the bishoprics, while the Nor-

mans were content to change the managing of church property over to themselves by replacing Anglo-Saxon prelates ~~with~~ ^{WHEN THE ANGLIO-SAXONS DIED} with Norman ones. Of course, such changes didn't set back England culturally except in the area of writing in the

vernacular Anglo-Saxon. ~~The~~ The French bishops, knowing Latin but no Anglo-Saxon would not work hard to preserve or promote or write in Anglo-Saxon. Anglo-

Saxon would die out as the only western European vernacular written language due to the Norman invasion. ~~The~~ The Normans didn't challenge Christianity as an institution like the pagan Vikings did, although they wished to keep the church's

clergy under close scrutiny. The main contribution to English culture, ^{BESIDES CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS} by the

6/18/10, p. 183

⁴Lacy and Jean Smith, The Past Speaks to 1688 (D.C. Heath and Company: Lexington, MA, 1981), p. 8.

This is much done

Normans was the enormous influence they had on the English language and on the proper names of people and places. Half of the English language has a Latin basis as a result of all the ^{ESSENTIALLY} (modified) French that got into English. The result is that English has two words (often with slightly different shades of meaning) where many languages only have one, which greatly expanded the vocabulary. (No ^{THESE ADDITIONS TO ENGLISH VOCABULARY SHOULD BE} doubt a source of some joy to author who write in English who are always complaining about having thoughts the words available in their language can't express). ^{THE SITUATION COULD BE WORSE.} The ^{ENGLISH} language often has a more eloquent, erudite word from the French, like "assistance," and a more simple, direct term from the Anglo-Saxon, like "help," which both mean basically the same thing. The English language's grammar also got simplified because the Normans, as they learned the language over the centuries, didn't catch on to the subtle points of a Germanic language's complicated syntax. Thus, today, thanks to the Normans, English became an easier language to learn* which no doubt non-native speakers from around the world ^{SHOULD BE} thankful for. ^{with} By contrast, the Viking/Scandinavian influence ^{medieval?} on modern English is much less because the Viking/Danish occupations of England were much shorter in length and because of the greater similarities of the Viking's tongue with Anglo-Saxon than the Norman's French has. For instance, if two languages are relatively similar, the changes involved in blending the two together will be lesser than the changes of two highly different languages being blended together. Of course, since the Norman's French was an Indo-European Language like Norse and Anglo-Saxon were, it wasn't totally alien to Anglo-Saxon, but this Latin-based Romance language differed more from Anglo-Saxon than the Viking's Germanic Norse was. As a result, even if the Viking/Danish conquest of England had been permanent, it couldn't have affected English as much as the Norman's French has. Indeed, most likely the greatest influence the events of 1066 have on us today (at least on our daily lives) is in the way our language and many proper nouns of places and people ^{ARE} different from what it would have been otherwise if Harold had won the battle of Hastings instead of William. Thus in the areas of language influence, ^{WHETHER THE INVASION WAS CENTRALLY PLANNED} and the religion

*Except for all of those wonderful irregular verbs!

Citation?

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of the invaders ^{unclear + partly stated.} (the second of which mattered little in the long run, though was significant to English culture in the short run) these two invasions were different.

How so?!

Another difference, although it is a minor one by comparison, was that the Vikings wiped out all the royal lines in England (of the Heptarchy) except Wessex's, while, by contrast, after the Norman conquest, the son of William the Conqueror, Henry I, sought to unite the two royal lines by marrying Matilda (Edith), who was a descendant of Alfred the Great. By marrying her, Henry I showed himself not to have the same hostility for Anglo-Saxon royalty the Vikings showed. Also by marrying her, Henry I may have also helped a little to reconcile Anglo-Saxons with the new order in England since then his children would then be half Anglo-Saxon. (Similar reconciling marriages were made between the new Norman landowners and the daughters of the dispossessed Anglo-Saxon thegns of the same estate the Norman family took over during or after 1066).

Significance? connection to thesis

Was this one better?

Surely the Normans had more respect for Anglo-Saxon royalty than the Vikings did.

How?

Another difference between the two invasions was that the Viking/Danish invasions involved many more people settling in England than the Norman invasion involved, although ^{WHETHER} this difference ^{EXISTED} is historically debatable. When the Vikings' "Great Army" of 865 settled down to rule in the 880's it surely wouldn't have been bigger than the upperclass Norman army William the Conqueror gathered together to win the battle of Hastings. So the issue comes down to whether the Vikings ever had any heavy settlements (in which relatives, friends, etc. of the men of the "great Army" or of the various raiding parties that chose to stay would dwell with in). The best evidence for heavy settlements, as opposed to the case of a few Viking lords ruling over a vast underclass of Anglo-Saxon peasants, comes with place name changes that occurred in the Danelaw. Place name changes ^{ONLY} occur permanently if the Vikings outnumbered vastly the Anglo-Saxons in some areas of the Danelaw, which certainly appears to be the case for the town of Whitby, for instance. Another more disputable bit of evidence for major Viking settlements were the high numbers of people with Scandinavian names on ninth

This has to do with the invasions - perhaps it should be mentioned earlier

difference in impact?

used

and tenth century legal documents (in particular) concerning land ownership changes, etc. in the Danelaw. Of course, I admit that the names of the conquerors have a high prestige value and ^{DO} become the names of the conquered class ^{INTIME,} which also happened after the Norman invasion, ~~which~~ But according to Stenton ^{6/3}, Anglo-Saxon names continued to be very common among the common people for up to 150 years (the early thirteenth century) after the conquest in 1066. If such a pattern also existed in the Danelaw, then Anglo-Saxon peasants wouldn't have started to rename their children with Scandanavian names until after a like period despite the prestige value. (Tradition rules here when one names your son or daughter to a great extent). ^{WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE A STRANGE NAME TO YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER} Therefore, if high numbers of Scandanavian names show up on legal documents in the Danelaw in the ninth and tenth centuries, this common occurrence of Scandanavian names would be good evidence for a folk migration to the Danelaw, and not just a ruling class of barons thinly scattered among Anglo-Saxon peasants who work the ~~the~~ land. Of course this assumes a similar ^{YES} gap existed among Anglo-Saxon peasants before they start using the high Scandanavian prestige names of the ^{invaders} for their children. ~~Of course, I also admit that~~ legal documents may be giving a biased sample of the ethnic mix of the population since legal documents (especially ones concerning land ownership) ^{WOULD BE} used by the upper class much more, which would consist mostly of lordly Scandanavians in the Danelaw, and mostly miss the (presumably?) Anglo-Saxon peasant majority. But still I think the place name changes are surely good enough evidence that the Viking invasions of England did bring in a large number of settlers, and not just ^{SOLDIERS WHO BECAME} barons who ruled over a number of Anglo-Saxon peasants. Surely many men who settled down in England would ask wives, relatives, friends, etc. to come, at least if the homeland ^{IF IT WAS ONLY NORWAY?} (Norway) was overpopulated. Some "folk migration" probably occurred ^{also} since not all the occupants of even a town like Whitby could be of the aristocratic elite only. Of course, if a large number of ordinary Scandanavians did come to England, this kind of settler would be in decided contrast to the landed elite created by William the Conqueror after the battle of Hastings. No more than a few thousand Norman barons and a few hundred

TAKEN FROM THE WANTED ENEMY?
But were they this?

This would be more clearly discussed.

Norman merchants came to England after the conquest. Certainly no French peasants came over the English Channel to settle in England, while such a folk migration could have happened to the Danelaw to some extent. For instance, there are hints of a ^{such} major migration when Whitelock said: "The kingdoms of Northumbria and East Anglia, and Mercia northeast of the Watling street, received a large immigration of heathen Danish settlers, and all the church organization was dislocated for a time."⁷ Or consider this quote from Stenton: "The Danish immigrants who settled thickly among the Anglian population of the northern midlands brought with them a more primitive form of social organization."⁸ Thus I think there is enough evidence to say that the Norman invasion of a few elite was ^{and more upperclass} considerably smaller (and thus considerably different) than the Viking invasion of the ninth century, which probably didn't have very many nobles in them when they first arrived in England. — *What would this do to their respective impacts on England?*

But despite more Vikings settled in England than Normans, the Norman invasion had much more influence on England ultimately because the Normans maintained a distinct consciousness of themselves as upperclass Frenchmen and not Englishmen due to their ^{MAINTAINING} Continental connections and concerns and because they had much more time to work with than the Scandanavians got since Anglo-Saxon culture reasserted itself against them and took back England from them. And since the Normans maintained their own customs and culture longer, that allowed them (especially since they were of the upperclass) to influence the Anglo-Saxons much more than the Scandanavians could, especially in regards to language. Anglo-Saxon was still Anglo-Saxon after the Scandanavians' two invasions. Anglo-Saxon wasn't still Anglo-Saxon 200 years after the Norman conquest. However, without those Continental connections and the resulting consciousness of being different from the Anglo-Saxons the Normans ruled, the Normans would have been culturally assimilated just as quickly and completely as the Normans lost most of their Germanic culture and language to the Latinized French around them in Normandy. This need to care and watch for Continental lands wasn't the

⁷Dorothy Whitelock, The Beginnings of English Society (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, England, 1984), p. 180.

⁸Doris Mary Stenton, English Society in the Early Middle Ages (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, England, 1981) p. 131

include + awkward

the situation the Scandanavian Vikings were in, who had severed themselves much more from Continental concerns after they had settled down for a number of years on their lands and estates. They didn't have to keep visiting Norway or Denmark to see what shape their landholdings on the Continent were since they (by and large) didn't own any land in their homelands. (That's why they came to England to begin with, at least in part). Not until after the loss of Normandy and their lands there in 1204^(WHICH WAS PERMANENT BY 1214) would the Normans have a strong incentive to stop thinking themselves French and start thinking themselves English. (Inter-marriage with Anglo-Saxons wouldn't reduce their thinking themselves ~~French~~ ^{DISTINCT} much since the offspring of such mixed unions would still be concerned with the ancestral lands in France, even if they were half Anglo-Saxon). Thus, because of a difference of a "raised consciousness" concerning their origin, as well as the length of the period they ruled, the Norman invasion came to have much more influence on subsequent English History than the Viking/Danish invasions did.

This paper is quite good. We like your thesis + you do a good job of proving it. You make several solid observations. The paper does have a couple of flaws, however. Some of your points tend to get buried. Your paragraphs are too long, so your points get lost. Also, the constant use of italics in parenthesis breaks up the flow of the paper. Finally, work on the production of the paper. ~~by~~ your footnotes are difficult to read, as are the comments you've added.

Z.F.S.
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