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Part II

Space and Society

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KATHERINE WEIKERT

4

Landscape and Settlement

Landscapes are vibrant, active parts of people's lives, and current approaches to their study recognise this agency by stressing that the natural environment interacts dynamically with its inhabitants, rather than viewing land through environmental determinism in which geography alone regulates human actions taking place within particular topographies. When we look to landscapes of the past, we may thus contemplate not only where the land *was*, but also how its location affected the individuals and communities living on it, and, crucially, what it *meant* to them. The landscape into which William of Normandy was born and the one he would then conquer in 1066 were both alive with use and opportunity, buzzing with memory, and full of meaning. From precious venison to everyday pottage, from temporary towers on rocky outcrops to monumental cathedrals, and from haunting barrows to haunted forests, the topographies of eleventh-century England and Normandy not only shaped lives and livelihoods, but they gave meaning to those living within them. The fact that landscape studies tend to be local in nature – almost axiomatically so – makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to generalise about the 'bigger picture' without risking the marginalisation of certain areas. This chapter selects and showcases some of the many aspects of how Norman and English (and later Anglo-Norman) landscapes were viewed and understood in the age of William the Conqueror by exploring three interrelated themes: landscapes in use, landscapes of settlement, and landscapes of meaning and memory.

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Landscapes in Use

The past is no unchanging and stable picturesque landscape, and nowhere is this more evident than in its topography. A landscape is generally characterised by its usage, no matter how 'virgin' it may seem. Popular notions of a static and rural premodern landscape notwithstanding, by the early eleventh century the landscapes of England and Normandy were hardly untouched. Though this perceived chasm between premodern and modern involves a sense of a traumatic break in time contrasting with 'an archaic and stable past', similar ideas concerning an untouched and virgin landscape also existed in the past.[1] We can see this in, for example, medieval narratives about Normandy's tenth-century 'wilderness', as well as in metaphors used in later Cistercian texts. Norman monastic writers pictured both a spiritual and a topographical challenge as they cleared areas to make room for agricultural pursuits, and in the rural landscapes of both England and Normandy, those who controlled the land, and those who worked the land, intensely managed these agricultural landscapes. Agriculture occupied most of the land and people in eleventh-century England and Normandy. Agricultural production was increasing in both places, with labourers using more intensive fertilisation in arable fields, further use of horses and oxen for traction, and lords establishing a growing number of water mills and managed water meadows.[2] This period was also one of climactic warming throughout Europe (from about the year 900), which further benefitted agricultural production. England's agriculture was largely, by this stage, in an open-field system of two or three fields of rotating crops for the manor, worked by the labourers, with two fields planted and the third left fallow, and the peasants of the manor usually possessed a strip or strips of land for their own production. Livestock grazed in the fallow field (whilst simultaneously fertilising it) as well as on a village common. At the same time, western Normandy's *bocage* of smaller enclosures intensified, in contrast to the more open landscape in the central and eastern duchy. With western Norman settlements much less centralised around manors, arable lands were typically managed by a single farm or small village, and the smaller enclosures were fenced by live hedges or trees.[3] Old Norse lexical elements found in Norman place names such as *þveit* ('clearing') and *lundr* ('grove') suggest cleared or wooded places for crops and animals. Wheat, barley, oats, rye, spelt, and legumes were

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the dominant crops that provided the backbone of the common diet, from making bread to brewing ale and pottage.

Meats were also part of that diet, and like grains and crops, they had an impact on the land. Normandy's cattle production was growing in the central Middle Ages thanks to improved agricultural techniques, rural breeding centres, and steady access to the markets in the growing Norman towns and cities.[4] In England, cattle were more frequently seen in the east and north, possibly due not only to environmental factors, but also to variable social and economic reasons. At this point, domesticated chickens became used frequently throughout north-western Europe, with rural and urban dwellers taking equal advantage as the chickens' size and keeping was suitable in cities and the countryside.[5] Sheep remained predominant throughout England as an important asset that was closely managed. Transhumance was practised in many parts of upland England long before the Conquest, such as when sheep were driven from lowland to upland at Wharram Percy in Yorkshire during summers in the earlier medieval period.[6] Yet the central Middle Ages saw an increase of flocks in both southern and western England that were kept on arable clay soils as well as on areas more suitable for pasturage. The growing Flemish cloth industries probably contributed to an increase of flocks on arable land in England from the early eleventh century onwards,[7] with the ports in eastern and south-eastern England offering quick access to the Low Countries. To wit, more people ate mutton in England during this period, indicating butchery when sheep were past a productive age – indeed, flocks were typically managed for their wool, not their meat. Pigs, too, were important resources in this agricultural landscape, and like chickens they were kept in both towns and in the countryside.[8] However, unlike sheep or cattle, pigs offered no by-products other than their piglets, making them, in essence, a single-use resource. Pigs form some of the more prevalent animals in French bone assemblages, and in post-Conquest England more people were eating younger pigs in a way that reflected contemporary preferences in northern France. Arguably, this is one of the few changes in diet resulting directly from the Norman Conquest and its shift in management, if not in an actual surplus, of this porcine asset.[9]

In all cases, though, social, cultural, and religious norms dictated diet and land management for livestock. Recent excavations in Oxford have thus revealed kosher practices in eleventh-century Jewish households with no pigs in the bone assemblages.[10] And whilst sheep would

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become prevalent for wool production in many areas of eleventh-century England, the villagers at Wharram Percy raised them for meat, milk, and fleece: a 'multi-purpose, low-intensity strategy' with 'low returns but also relatively low risk'.[11] Though sheep were an integral part of Norman livestock agriculture during the Conqueror's lifetime, their greatest popularity, archaeologically speaking, can be seen from the fourteenth century onwards.[12] Likewise, the increased use of domesticated chickens can be linked to monastic settlements and tenth-century Benedictine reforms; during fasts, four-legged animals were not allowed for consumption, but chickens were. In short: it was context, as well as cultural norms and regulations, that would dictate livestock management.

Agriculture provided the vast majority of the foodstuff in England and Normandy in the age of William the Conqueror, but people also hunted. Hunting, too, was part of managing a useful landscape, though it was usually practised more for status than need – whilst hunting could supplement a table, it was not a reliable supply of food. For the elites, hunting was both a demonstration of their control of resources and an indication that they had a steady basic food supply which they could supplement with the uncertain outcomes of a hunt: prestige meat such as venison therefore indicated one's status as well as one's food security. England and Normandy's elites primarily hunted for roe, red deer, and fallow deer, usually with hunting dogs, but bone assemblages also tell of falconry with sparrowhawks and goshawks, and of birds caught by hawks such as cranes and herons. Contemporary manuscripts, such as the precious illuminated psalter made for Eleanor of Aquitaine (Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KW 76 F 13), contain images of hunting scenes that capture the imagination of medieval and modern readers alike (Fig. 4.1). The *Bayeux Tapestry* famously depicts William and Harold enjoying a hunt together on horseback with two falcons on their wrists. Textual evidence likewise indicates hunting with birds: the late-tenth-century will of Beorhtric and Ælfswith bequeaths two hawks to the king, and the mid-twelfth-century charters of Walter (III) Giffard record English abbots and noblemen with their own hawks.[13] This pastime evidently was a familiar and comfortable one amongst the socio-political elites on both sides of the Channel.

Hunting shaped the landscape as much as agriculture did, particularly in forests, parks, and enclosures. The Old English term *haga* found in, for example, the charter boundary clause and landscape of

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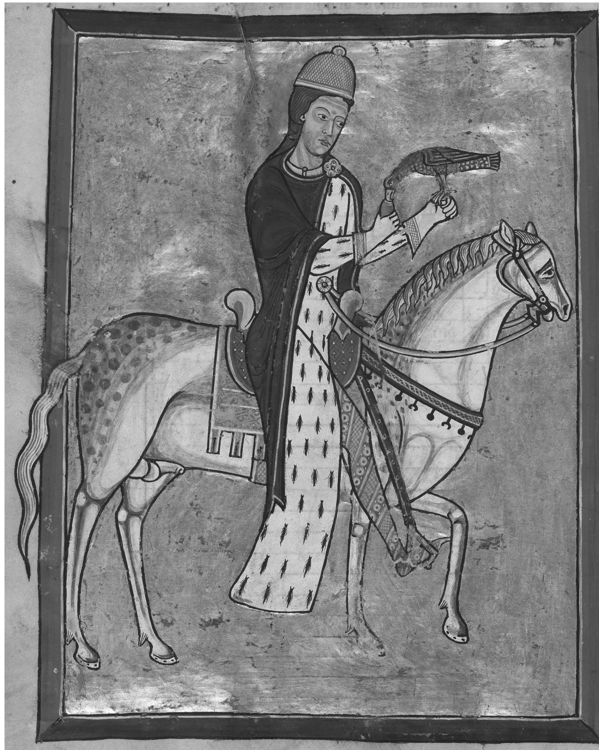

Figure 4.1 A nobleman hunting on horseback with a hawk depicted in the *Eleanor Psalter*, *c.* 1180–85
Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, KW 76F 13, fol. 5v. Reproduced with permission

the tenth-century manor Faccombe Netherton in Hampshire indicates hunting enclosures, frequently with royal associations.[14] The dukes of Normandy also enjoyed their hunting grounds. William of Jumièges has Duke William Longsword hunt wild boar in a 'wilderness' forest in the Seine valley around Jumièges, and the forest of Lillebonne, Seine-Maritime, was a ducal hunting ground from at least the early eleventh century.[15] William the Conqueror enclosed large areas of England as royal forest, including the New Forest, and the Peterborough chronicler complained that he loved the stags as if he were their father.[16] By the close of the eleventh century, Henry Beauclerc could boast to the captured rebel Conan (shortly before throwing him off the tower at Rouen's

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ducal palace) about the land Conan had failed to conquer, including 'a delightful hunting region, well-stocked with beasts of the chase'.[17] But hunting could be destructive to the land, too, and a good lord sought the proper balance: Hugh d'Avranches, earl of Chester, was thus castigated as his excessive hunting and hawking were devastating his lands, 'for he thought more highly of fowlers and hunters than husbandmen or monks'.[18]

Despite scholarly emphasis on forests as the leisurely playgrounds of aristocratic hunters, they were also useful resources in other ways. Good forest management controlled valuable assets, including the deer living therein. Recent research has overturned the long-standing belief that fallow deer were introduced to England by the Normans. Instead, bone assemblages show pre-Conquest fallow deer in England, probably introduced as elite 'founder colonies' such as those at Faccombe Netherton and on the Isle of Wight. The Normans may well have brought yet more fallow deer with them post-1066, but the existing founder colonies continued to be used for stocking deer parks across the kingdom.[19] Deer were not left to roam free, but were managed carefully to keep forests stocked for the hunt. Woodlands were valuable for more than just the prized deer, of course, and wood was a crucial resource used for everything from basketry to building great halls. Evidence of woodland management survives not just in visual and written sources, but also in material form from trees such as oak, hazel, ash, and birch, which were coppiced and pollarded on a cyclical basis to harvest wood and produce charcoal (*collpytte*),[20] wattling, and poles for fencing, palisades, and furniture. Coppicing and pollarding encouraged biodiversity, so these controlled landscapes would often include grazing animals, too.[21] Indeed, woodland management is noted frequently throughout *Domesday Book*, where forest size is quantified regularly by the number of pigs a woodland could support, rather than by its actual acreage. And not one, but three images from early eleventh-century English calendars (London, BL, MS Cotton Julius A VI and London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius B V), show the importance of forest management during June (harvesting of mature wood), September (pannage in a forest; Fig. 4.2), and November (warming by a fire). In Normandy, managed forests are equally evident: for example, William's foundation at Montebourg, Manche had the right to take wood from the ducal forests,[22] and his half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, granted William's monastic foundation of Saint-Étienne de Caen the wagon tax for the transport of wood

Figure 4.2 Forest pannage in September
London, BL, MS Cotton Julius A VI, fol. 7r (detail). Reproduced with permission

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intended for sale at the local market within a fixed radius of the monastery.[23]

Far from being solely founded on land, England and Normandy were both landscapes with significant waterscapes, one being an island and the other with a long and important stretch of coastline, and both containing significant riverine landscapes and estuaries. These landscapes situated within and affected by water were an important part of life. Ports saw traffic across the Channel, as well as to and from Scandinavia, the Low Countries, and further afield. Indeed, throughout the eleventh century (and beyond) the English Channel, the North Atlantic, the Irish Sea, and the North Sea were dynamic highways rather than stable boundaries. In William the Conqueror's day, the River Orne was navigable as far as Caen and the Seine all the way to Paris and beyond, and both were known for their abundance of life, leading Orderic to report that the Seine was 'full of fishes, lap[ping] the wall of Rouen'.[24] These rivers and seas were far from untouched, filling Normandy and England with a bounty only they could provide. They were controlled mostly by monasteries and manors as a way of marking institutional and aristocratic control of the land- and waterscape, and their resources were greatly exploited. In June 1066, William and Matilda gave the nuns of La Trinité de Caen the whales from Dives-sur-Mer in Calvados – whence William was shortly to set sail for England – and fish from Ecouché on the Orne, and some time between 1060 × 66, Count Robert of Eu gave the monks of Jumièges two fishing boats and the right to buy fish in Tréport without paying the *tonlieu*, a tax levied at the local market.[25] The Blackwater Estuary in Essex still contains the extensive remains of several coastal fish weirs at which not only the trapping, but also the processing of fish took place regularly at low tide points.[26] Around the turn of the millennium, there was a sudden increase in saltwater fish consumption, indicating further offshore and possibly deep-water fishing in the seas surrounding Britain and Normandy. Previously, people had eaten more freshwater than sea fish, but freshwater supplies may have been depleted by this point. Combined with a warming period that rendered salt-water cod and herring much sparser, this made fishing further into the seas a necessity, particularly to fulfil Christian fasting needs. Because of this, freshwater fish became a rarity and eating them a part of elite diets, whilst salted cod and dried herring – both preserved ocean

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fish – became a more staple diet item for most.[27] This 'fish event horizon' echoes the 'chicken event horizon' discussed above, and it possibly links to the increasing establishment of fishponds for personal use at aristocratic and monastic sites after the late eleventh century.[28] Watery sites were not just coastal or riverine, but could be connected to inland, man-produced resources, too.

Salt production was yet another important aspect of landscapes filled with, and surrounded by, water. Salt was a key ingredient for preserving perishable produce such as meats in a world without mechanical refrigeration. *Domesday Book* gives an overview of England's salt-producing sites across the south and south-east coasts, in Devon, Dorset, Chester, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. A major salt-production site at Droitwich in Worcestershire further exemplifies the importance of saltworks. Named *Salinae* by the Romans, Droitwich greatly benefited from its location on the briny River Salwarpe in proximity to several Roman roads, subsequently developing into a *wic* (see p.00). After the Conquest, King William enjoyed undivided lordship over wells and pits with a combined value of *c.* £80 per annum – a major industrial and economic undertaking.[29] Droitwich's reach was not just local, but international: other owners of saltworks in the town included the powerful marcher lord Roger de Lacy, St Peter's Abbey, Westminster, as well as Saint-Denis in Paris.[30] In Normandy, too, salt production is evidenced in charters: around 1120, Abbot Hugh of Cerisy-la-Foret wrote to Abbot Gerard of Saint-Wandrille to settle a dispute including the gift of a salt-pan in one of their vills,[31] and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, three generations of Giffards gave salt and salt-pans from near Le Havre to their foundation at Longueville.[32] And when William and Matilda gave La Trinité the whales at Dives-sur-Mer in 1066, they also gifted the nuns the right to salt production in the same place (and via the same charters).[33]

There can be no doubt that the agricultural landscapes of Normandy and England were used intensely in more ways than one. From industry to agriculture to hunting, tabs were kept on how best to use and maintain the land and the sea and whatever they produced. Inevitably, in a hierarchical society those tabs were kept and maintained by the social elite, which included the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as the royal and aristocratic men and women at the top. People existed within the landscapes that they carved out and maintained for themselves and, as more people congregated there, these landscapes in England and

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Normandy became landscapes of settlement, meaning, and memory, especially in the age of William and his Conquest.

Landscape of Settlement

As much as the term 'landscape' fills the imagination with images of rolling idylls, exciting mountains, or deep forests, landscapes also include people, and people tend to gather and band together: both England and Normandy were landscapes of settlements of all sizes. Rural morphology in England is notoriously difficult to date archaeologically, though a general pattern in a central English belt from the Isle of Wight moving northwards in the period *c.* 800–*c.* 1200 shows settlement areas developing into nucleated villages with a central focus or multiple foci, often the parish church, market, or manor.[34] Elsewhere, villages were more dispersed, such as along a road or trackway. The 'one-street plan' often seen in such examples usually features a widened area of the road in the village centre that could house a market. In England's rural environment, larger farmsteads could become manors, and the tenth-century promotion laws stipulated that a *ceorl* ('freeman') could become a *thegn* ('nobility') with the acquisition of a certain amount of land and an estate including a gate, bell-house and church.[35] Manorialisation, the process by which land tenure fell under the auspices of a lord with the creation of a manor (with the manor being an organisational idea as much as a physical building), grew at a steady pace in the tenth through to the twelfth centuries with villages growing up around these manorial centres, as can be seen at, for example, Faccombe Netherton and Raunds in Northamptonshire.[36] In some areas there is indication of planned villages, rather than villages left to organic growth. This is occasionally linked to the Norman Conquest and the insertion of new lordships, though there is also evidence of 'bottom-up' planning from the local population rather than planning imposed 'top-down' from above: rather than focusing solely on lordly initiative, local decision-making must be viewed as an integral part of settlement patterns in this period. And given that there is evidence of village planning both pre- and post-Conquest, the idea that new Norman lordships dramatically changed village morphologies in England becomes something of a red herring.

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Alongside village growth, urban areas were also growing. Major trading ports called *wics* were established and flourished at Hamwic (Southampton), Lundunwic (London), and Gipeswic (Ipswich) from as early as the seventh century, and by the eleventh century the major cities at London, York, Winchester, and Norwich dominated the urban landscape between their trade connections, royal importance, and ecclesiastical legacies: London and Norwich were important ports; Winchester held significant symbolic and royal connotations for the pre-Conquest West-Saxon kings; and Winchester and York held the most wealthy bishopric (the former) and a metropolitan see (the latter). All four had royal mints, drawing economic activity and royal oversight within their walls. With its important trading and merchant activity, London saw the re-establishment of its rights and freedoms by King William in 1067, thus continuing to act as an influential city in its own right. Winchester accommodated the royal treasury after the Conquest until about the mid-twelfth century. Winchester's importance to the West-Saxon kings, the power of its bishop, and the concentration of considerable royal wealth within the area had made it a major centre of power in the eleventh century that manifested itself in its pre- and post-Conquest royal palaces, neither of which survives above ground, and cathedrals, one of which still stands today. York, too, displayed its importance and power in material and spatial form: the site of the last Viking kingdom on the island ending in 954 after the expulsion of Erik Bloodaxe, it was also the site of some of the most vicious post-Conquest fighting during William's Harrying of the North, a scorched-earth fight to suppress rebellion and lay waste to the land.[37] York had not one, but two post-Conquest motte castles that are indicative of a perceived need for strong Norman control.

Despite widespread belief in Normandy's essentially rural character, in the age of William the Conqueror there were towns growing apace as urbanisation increased across north-western Europe. The city of Caen grew at William's specific direction, an initiative that may reflect the need for a strong ducal presence in Lower Normandy after the rebellions of 1046–47: a charter dated 1021 × 25 still calls Caen a 'villa', yet by 1066 it had turned into a 'bourg' managed by a prévôt who, during William's absence, worked from the immense ducal palace overlooking the city.[38] This 'new' city grew exponentially during the mid-eleventh century with its market, port, the dual monasteries founded by William and Matilda, and an administrative centre in its new ducal palace. Although

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little remains above ground save William Rufus's grand Exchequer Hall (Fig. 4.3), a series of excavations of the palace begun under Michel de Boüard in the mid-twentieth century demonstrate the building's former grandeur. The ducal palace was built *c.* 1060, just a few years before (if not indeed contemporary with) William and Matilda's respective foundations of La Trinité and Saint-Étienne: William was marking Caen as *his* city, letting the cityscape speak to his newly secure control of Lower Normandy.[39]

Whilst William's palace and other buildings in Caen served to centre his power in western Normandy, the duchy's primary city remained Rouen. Rouen had been the heart of Normandy since the days of Rollo, and it is just possible that Scandinavians had already established trading places along the River Seine even before 911.[40] In the twelfth century, Orderic could still praise Rouen as a 'fair and populous city, with its ramparts, churches, and town buildings'.[41] Rouen's palace was begun in the earlier eleventh century by Duke Richard II, and is illustrated in all its splendour on the *Bayeux Tapestry*: built from solid stone with columns and blind arcading, it provides the location for William's reception of Harold, the duke sitting on a fine chair with a globe and dog finial on an embroidered cushion. The powerful image is preceded by a scene of Rouen's city walls containing what has been identified as the palace chapel.[42] With the ducal

Figure 4.3 Caen's Exchequer
Image by the author

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demesne and forests largely focused in Upper Normandy and lining the Seine, Rouen with its market and the navigable river remained the unbroken centre of Anglo-Norman administration right up to King John's loss of Normandy in 1204.

Meanwhile, one important difference between England and Normandy in the early eleventh century, though one ultimately brought into alignment, was that Normandy was already a landscape of castles pre-1066. The *Bayeux Tapestry* famously shows William's men building a motte at Hastings upon their arrival across the Channel, but previous scenes also show similar castles at Dinan, Dol, and Rennes in the context of William and Harold's joint campaign in Brittany. Around 400 motte sites have been identified in Lower Normandy alone that date from between the tenth and thirteenth centuries,[43] and though many belonged to great aristocratic families such as the Bellêmes, mottes were not exclusive to the top-tier elites. They also served purposes for less powerful families such as the Taissons, whose cadet branch under Erneis built the short-lived Motte d'Olivet at Grimbosq, essentially a watchtower constructed during a period of tension between Erneis and his older brother Raoul in the rocky, gorge-filled border landscape between Calvados and Orne today called the 'Suisse Normande' (Fig. 4.4).[44]

Figure 4.4 The Orne River in the Suisse Normande
Photo by Vincent Malloy. Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license

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The movement of motte castles as architectural forms and landscape shapers from Normandy to England followed the Normans, with mottes appearing throughout the island in short order as an expression of the conquerors' dominance. By the end of the eleventh century, 500–600 such motte sites were active in England.[45]

Whilst the concept of the motte was thus imported to England from Normandy, that of the hall serving 'as a space and a building' seems to have travelled in the opposite direction, and not long after the Conquest halls used to administer justice as well as to feast and gather were found on either side of the Channel.[46] William Rufus's new hall at Westminster and its parallel in Caen exemplify this. Halls in the loosest form had existed in Normandy from the duchy's early days, with written sources (if not architectural remains) indicating this for the main ducal bases at Bayeux, Cherbourg, Falaise, Fécamp, Lillebonne, Lisieux, Caen, and, of course, Rouen. Still, it was the next generation of newly built and significantly larger halls constructed post-1066 that firmly established the notion of a princely/royal hall in Normandy, perhaps inspired by the pre-Conquest English halls at Cheddar, York, Winchester, and Westminster.[47] The stone castles of Normandy tell a different tale to its mottes and halls. When mottes were exported across the Channel to England, their fates as castles were varied. Most mottes never became stone towers, though a few castles such as London's White Tower, Dover, Lincoln, Norwich, Clifford's Tower (York), and Old Sarum were raised in stone within a generation of the Conquest. Lordly stone towers already existed in pre-Conquest England, such as at St Mary's, Broughton in Lincolnshire and St Mary Bishophill Junior in York.[48] The Normans took this form to a much larger size in post-Conquest England, perhaps partly because by the mid-eleventh century, stone towers in the form of the 'Norman' keep were already somewhat old hat in Continental Europe. The White Tower may well have drawn inspiration from other Norman towers such as that built at Ivry around 1000 and/or the ducal palace at Rouen.[49] As Robert Liddiard sums up concisely, however, the Norman tower keep in post-Conquest England was 'not in any simple sense what already existed in Normandy transplanted anew to England'.[50] These new towers were largely built in prestigious Caen stone imported into England by the Normans. Whilst south-eastern England and north-eastern Normandy are underpinned by the same geology, the prestige of the imported limestone – as well as its pre-Conquest use in monastic

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and secular buildings in the duchy – was a further indication of the imposition of new lordships in England.

Landscapes of Meaning and Memory

Landscapes are more than just passive backdrops to human activity; they are active anchors of memory and history for those living in them. Mark Nuttall coined the term 'memoryscape' to describe a landscape whose places and place names are imbued with memories of the past – perceived, real, and mythical – that are charged with 'significant personal meanings which are often shared by all those who participate in such narratives'.[51] Many of Normandy's modern place names such as Caudebec, Clarbec, Elbeuf, and Harfleur have Old Norse roots, and they arguably reflect a sense of knowledge about the Scandinavian character of the past landscape. Likewise, place names in northern England and Normandy that contain Scandinavian elements such as *bekkr* ('stream'), *búþ* ('temporary dwelling'), *dalr* ('valley'), *haugr*, ('hill or mound'), *þorp* ('village'), *býr* ('dwelling or farmstead'), and *hólmr* ('island') are not simply descriptive in nature, but they overlay knowledge about past and/or current inhabitants on the land.[52] English charter bounds, too, render landscapes into memoryscapes. A charter of Aughton in Wiltshire (itself named after a former female inhabitant: Æffe's *tun*) thus lists a heathen burial place ('haeþenan byrgelsan') on the bounds, as does another for Crondall in Hampshire.[53] 'Heathen burial place' was a frequent marker of barrows in the English landscape, and its use is evocative of an unease about the state of the fitful dead beneath them: these non-Christian burials existed in a 'limbo' beneath the barrows. The narrator in the Old English *The Wife's Lament* is an exiled woman mournfully living in an *eorðscraefe* ('earthen dugout'); according to some interpretations, this woman was not simply exiled, but dead in a barrow. Barrows were liminal places between the dead and the living, life and afterlife(s), and by the eleventh century those buried in them were further marginalised by Christianised burial practices which regulated burial into consecrated grounds. There was an awareness of tumuli as memorials of a past people, and places that were perhaps haunted by those within them, the *pagani* of the past.

Landscapes also say much about the extraordinary and supernatural. When Wace was told that fairies lived in Brecheliant forest in Brittany,

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he went there himself to check but found none.[54] Orderic recorded a ghostly march of dead men and women witnessed by a priest named Walchelin in a place near Lisieux and 'far from human habitation'. Walchelin's haunting vision occurred on 1 January 1091, and its 'inbetweenness' in time and place – between Christmas and Epiphany, between the new year and the old, and in a strange place far away from the realm of man – again reveals a sense of unease, with Walchelin receiving messages from the damned walking the Earth.[55] Writing during the late tenth or early eleventh century, Ælfric noted that witches met at barrows to summon the devil in the guise of the men buried there, though the only English legal record of witchcraft from this period is of a woman accused of such acts and condemned to drowning at London Bridge, with no barrows mentioned.[56] The monstrous in the epic poem *Beowulf* also marked the English psyche, from poetic landscapes to real ones. Grendel's mother dwelled in a subterranean lair representing darkness, dankness, and a distrust of features seen as cold and still (the earth carrying metaphorical associations with evil and death), which are set against the spectacular wooden hall of Heorot.[57] Landscape features called Grendel's pit, Grendel's mere, and even Beowulf's *ham* are found throughout charter bounds, including places in Devon and Wiltshire.[58]

There were also meaningful reuses of the past in the landscape. Roman remains were prominent both in the countryside and in the cities, and they reflected a past in which there was imperial Roman power across most of Britain.[59] These were pasts that were usable in a political present. For instance, in a tenth-century charter fragment, King Æthelstan drew witnesses from Scottish and Welsh *subreguli* at a gathering in Cirencester, which the charter specifically notes had been built by the Romans. Æthelstan harnessed the power of the past imbedded in this land- and cityscape to perform his authority over the other leaders, and there is a chance that his assembly may have been held in the remains of the Roman amphitheatre still visible today to emphasise further this link to Cirencester's past. In fact, archaeological and place-name evidence indicates that outdoor assembly sites frequently include places with Roman connections such as former temples or shrines that linked the past visible in the landscape directly to ideas of authority and governance in the present.[60] The Old English *The Ruin* is generally thought to describe Roman Bath, with a sense of longing for, and identification with, this past visible in ruins: an imagined and

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poetic identification with a Roman past and the English as inheritors of it, much as Æthelstan presented himself in his Cirencester charter. In a landscape filled with notable (and noticeable) man-made features such as Stonehenge, Avebury, and many other stone monuments, *The Ruin* specifically made use of a Roman past to paint the present and (potential) future.[61]

In both England and Normandy, the land and its places could hold memories of the past to be mulled over and remembered in times of transition and/or upheaval. There was a danger, though, in forgetting: as cultures and societies collided and mingled, the inhabited landscape could erase and obscure its past. A charter of the Abbey of Saint-Florent dating from *c.* 1055 thus asked the Duchess Matilda for the return of properties that had been granted by a previous Norman duke: the monks plaintively pleaded with the duchess that 'if by chance any of these [grants] should be unknown to you or yours, you should not suppose that they have ceased to exist, but rather that they have lost their names'.[62] In an ever-changing landscape shifting through Frankish, Scandinavian, and Norman pasts, the ability to hold a name required that name to be used and accepted by the present inhabitants; and when place names changed, the fear of forgetting was not only psychological, but practical. Landscapes of Conquest are significant when we consider the meaning of combining – or imposing – monumental buildings and their meaning in new places. Castles and towers proved an important mark on conquered landscapes, with meanings filtering through Roman, Frankish, English, and Scandinavian traditions into English and, post-1066, Norman hall- and castle-building cultures.

Another aspect of these building campaigns, though, and one where the effects of the Conquest might have been even more painfully acute, were the monumental cathedrals that started to rise in England in lieu of existing churches. Their parallel lies partly in the monumental scale of Edward the Confessor's rebuilding at Westminster Abbey, a 'Norman building in Anglo-Saxon England',[63] but the size and scale of the new Norman cathedrals in England were impressive, if not actually intimidating, and resembled the sudden increase in the size of royal halls. These cathedrals were larger than those constructed in pre-Conquest Normandy, even if their style echoed that seen throughout the Norman duchy. Poignantly, Norman cathedral building often took place at the site of, if not directly atop of, existing English churches. Winchester Cathedral, begun under Bishop Wakelin in 1079, was not only imposed

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over the existing Old Minster, the site of St Swithun's shrine, but also was more than double its size. The new Norman rule must have been painfully clear, and sorrowful to witness, for Winchester's inhabitants watching the Old Minster, their most sacred site, being demolished piece by piece as the Conqueror's new cathedral went up in its place. The form and size of Winchester Cathedral drew inspiration from no less a place than Old St Peter's in Rome along with other significant churches such as at Matilda's foundation at Caen, but also Speyer, Cluny, and perhaps even the new cathedral built simultaneously at Santiago. Winchester was neither English nor Norman, but truly international. Whilst, as Eric Fernie points out, 'bishops could be megalomaniacs with the best of them', William's close association with the royal city, and potentially his imperial ambitions, too, probably drove the cathedral's international referencing, monumental size, and poignant location.[64] At the same time, these monumental buildings could pierce the heart of the conquered people's spiritual landscape and demonstrate in painfully clear physicality that their spiritual home, their Jerusalem, had been recast by the conquerors.

English parish churches, many of which had been founded in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries under the promotion laws, underwent similar changes at a lower, and slower, scale. Churches are found throughout *Domesday Book* and were ubiquitous in the landscape as communal focal points. The 'great rebuilding' of *c.* 1050–1150, with its systematic change from wooden to stone churches throughout England's parishes, was part of a long-term development, however, not a sudden change brought on by the Norman Conquest.[65] This recasting in stone marked key spiritual sites as permanent features in the landscape, and, with the sense of timelessness they gave to spirituality, they were reminders that Christianity had control of time itself. Some of these churches have survived in their early-eleventh century form, including St Laurence in Bradford-on-Avon (Fig. 4.5), whereas others were significantly rebuilt at later stages, as was the case at All Saints, Barrowby in Lincolnshire (whose name reflects the site's Scandinavian past), which was rebuilt from the thirteenth century onwards. Embedded in All Saints' fabric are stones with intricate interlaced work that still betray its origins. Re-use of stone was not uncommon, but placing its decoration outwards to be seen, rather than inwards, means these intricate and delicate carvings reminded later medieval communities of their lost – but not forgotten – pasts.

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Figure 4.5 St Laurence, Bradford-on-Avon.
Image by the author

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