

Letter From the Director

Dear delegates,

My name is Vivian Gu and it is my honour to be serving as your Director of the Historical Crisis Committee (HCC) on the Norman Conquest of England, 1066. I am currently a senior at Crofton House School, and this will be my fifth, and final, year of Model United Nations. Since attending my first crisis committee in 10th grade, where I fell helplessly in love with the never-ending plot-twists that kept me on my toes, I have never looked back. Along with my two amazing Chairs, Joshua and Daniel, we have worked tirelessly to arrange a weekend of thrilling developments that we hope you will enjoy.

Council, come hither! We have been gathered today to seize the castle for our Duke, William of Normandy. Following the unfortunate death of Edward I of England, we must rise to the occasion and aid our Duke in ascending to the throne, which had been long promised by Edward I. Numerous parties have begun to wage war against Harold I, the elected successor to Edward I, with the intent of usurping him and taking the crown for themselves.

As descendants of Vikings, the blood of conquest courses through our veins! Our ancestors have scoured the Seven Seas and made the world theirs. They have ruled the Earth long before the kingdoms of Europe ever came to be, and so, we shall rule the Earth long after. As our ancestors did before us, and our successors shall after us, let us conquer! England is but a rest on our voyage of vanquishment. When Europe hears the word Normandy, let them tremble with terror.

Let us not fear defeat, for there is no purpose in fearing the improbable. By hook or by crook, we must rise.

À bientôt,

Vivian Gu

HCC Director – CAHSMUN 2020

Committee Description

With the backing of the Norman gentry, this committee has assembled as the force behind William the Conqueror. After Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, rose to the throne, William immediately sought out assistance from the Norman nobility and Church in order to seize the crown for himself. To aid the Duke of Normandy's quest for the crown, this council will execute all necessary means to conquer the obstacles that may stand in their way.

This council will act as advisors, officers, and sponsors to William of Normandy. Split into diverse factions with divided interests, the committee must work to resolve their differences

in hopes of subduing England. Whether it be the means to which they should subjugate England, the funds that should be spent, or the positions of power they each seek to hold during and after the conquest, individuals within the committee will find themselves not only entangled in a multifaceted military conquest, but also in the midst of perplexing political warfare.

Each position within the committee will be interconnected, either through familial bonds or through common goals. Each faction will hold a certain amount of power over the other, and if used correctly, will serve to launch them towards their goal. That being said, the betrayal, ousting, and assassination of members may occur whenever plotted successfully. If a character has been harmed to an extent where they are unable to perform their role, a new one will be dealt to them.

Although the Norman Conquest of England is a historical committee, the events that occurred in our history may not be the ones that occur within this committee. After all, the decisions you make within the committee will dictate your future. Whether you should succeed—or fail—will be up to you.

Overview of Topic - Norman Conquest of England 1066

The Norman aristocracy has long eyed the throne to England, and now, following the death of Edward the Confessor, King of England, the throne remains vacant for their taking. As the son of Ethelred II and Emma, the sister of the former Duke of Normandy, Edward was the cousin of William, the current Duke of Normandy.¹ Seeing these blood ties as an opportunity to seize the throne, William worked to convince—or perhaps coerce—his cousin, Edward, to acknowledge him as the King of England's rightful heir. In 1051, that acknowledgment was allegedly fulfilled.²

However, William was not the only promised heir to the throne—Edward, had used his lack of children to his advantage and gained many diplomatic allies through pledging them the throne upon his death. Amongst these promised heirs was Harold II, the former Earl of Wessex who was elected and crowned King by the English nobility in accordance with Edward's dying wishes. Upon hearing the news, numerous actors began mobilizing to overthrow his rule and take England for themselves, including William of Normandy, Harald III, King of Norway, and Harold II's very own brother, Tostig.³

Taking into account the various opponents who seek to subjugate England and sit upon its throne, the committee will work to out-scheme, out-wit, and out-maneuver all other parties. While fighting against a common enemy, members must also confront the power struggle within Normandy itself, and hopefully, gain rather than lose power. After all, the vicissitudes of politics and warfare spare none.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England>

² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England>

³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Harold-II>

Timeline

Listed below are several significant dates that precede this crisis. These are the assigned dates as agreed upon by most scholars.

900 CE – Vikings, the predecessors of Normans, establish themselves in the lower valley of the Seine River.⁴

911 CE – The King of the Franks, Charles III, cedes the land around the Seine, including what is now known as the city of Rouen to Rollo, the leader of the Vikings in the Treaty of St. Clair-Sur-Epte. This area becomes Normandy.

1002 CE – Emma, sister of Richard II, Duke of Normandy, is set to marry Ethelred II, King of England, who is 20 years her senior, in a political union. The house of Normandy sets their sights on the English throne.⁵

1003 CE – Edward the Confessor, the future heir to the throne of England, is born.

1016 CE – Edward, along with the rest of the English royal family, is exiled to Normandy following the death of Ethelred, during which the Danes took control of England.⁶

1028 CE – William of Normandy, also known as William the Bastard, is born to Richard I of Normandy and his concubine, Herleva.⁷

1041 CE – Edward the Confessor returns to England and inherits the throne as the rightful heir.

1049 CE – William aids his half brother Odo in rising to a bishop of Bayeux and gains favour within the church.

1051 CE – Edward the Confessor allegedly promises the throne to William, Duke of Normandy.

1052 CE – William, Duke of Normandy, marries Matilda, daughter of Baldwin V of Flanders, and consolidates more power through newly formed alliances.

1057-1063 CE – William defeats Norman rebels and seizes control of Normandy. Soon after, William conquers Maine and becomes recognized as the dominant ruler in Northern France.

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Norman-people>

⁵ <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Emma-Of-Normandy/>

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-king-of-England-1002-1066>

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England>

1064-1065 CE – Harold, Earl of Wessex, swears an oath to Duke William after William ransoms him from Guy I, one of William’s vassals.

January 6, 1066 CE – Edward the Confessor passes away, and Harold is elected and crowned by the English nobility as the next King of England.⁸

Historical Analysis

Origin of the Normans

The term Norman is derived from the word Norsemen, which describes the Scandinavian Vikings who had migrated and established themselves throughout Europe between the 9th and 10th centuries. The term, whether it be Norman or Norsemen, was used by early Europeans to indicate the northern direction by which these Vikings arrived. The voyage of these Vikings was fueled by a desire for adventure and conquest, as well as the wish to escape from Harold I of Norway, who had sought to suppress the nobles within his land and consolidate power.⁹

Many of these invaders found a home in Northern France and settled at the mouth of the Seine River. Due to their strength and aptitude for war, by 911 CE, these Vikings eventually coerced Charles III, King of the Franks, otherwise known as Charles the Simple, to cede Frankish land upon which the Vikings established themselves. They carved out a piece of land from this area and termed it “Normandy.” This was arranged in the Treaty of St. Clair-Sur-Epte.¹⁰



⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Harold-II>

⁹ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/scandinavian-history/norsemen/>

¹⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Norman-people>

Figure 1: Normandy in the early settlements of the Vikings¹¹

Upon settling, the Normans assimilated into Francophone culture, abandoning Norse Paganism in favour of Christianity, and used French as their main language of communication. Yet, in spite of all this, the Normans remained true to their roots in their crave for conquest and war. By the onset of the 11th century, the Normans had begun setting their sights upon all of Europe, notably large portions of Italy and the Byzantine Empire.¹²

The Rise of Normandy

Certain traits are often attributed to the Normans: primarily, bloodthirst for conquest, a lack of fear, and unparalleled strength in warfare. From the time of their settlement in Europe, Normans have defeated armies numerous times their size through tactics and deceit.¹³

However, the Norman rise to power within France did not succeed due to violence, but rather through strategic political ploys. Robert I, Duke of Normandy from 1027 to 1035, often known as Robert the Magnificent (or the Devil), launched Normandy into power when he aided Henry I in rising to the Francophone throne, as opposed to Henry's younger brother.¹⁴ Following the death of Robert I in 1035, William, his sole son, rose to dukedom despite being a bastard child. Due to the nature of his birth, William faced countless challenges that often threatened his life. Having risen to dukedom at the age of 7, he had no hold upon the Norman gentry at the time, leading to wars between nobles who desired to exploit the opportunity to achieve more wealth and power. In 1042, William was knighted and given reign over his dukedom.¹⁵ Immediately, he faced frequent rebellions that sought to take his life and his position; however, with the aid of Henry I, King of France, William successfully managed to subdue these revolts.

Having come to terms with his unsteady hold on power, William pursued powerful allies to secure his reign. In 1049, William managed to place his half-brother, Odo, in the position of a bishop in Bayeux, which would go towards aiding his alliance with the papacy.¹⁶ That same year, William confronted Baldwin V, Count of Flanders, and arranged a marriage between himself and Matilda, the daughter of the count.¹⁷ Both parties benefited from the marriage—Baldwin V needed an ally in his rebellion against Henry III, the Holy Roman Emperor, while William gained another powerful, not to mention royal, backing. Indeed, Baldwin V was wedded to Adela of France, who was the sister of Henry I, King of France.

¹¹ <https://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/history/normans/founding-normandy>

¹²

<https://www.medievalchronicles.com/medieval-history/medieval-history-periods/the-normans/the-norman-conquests-of-europe/>

¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Norman-people>

¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-I-duke-of-Normandy>

¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Baldwin-V-count-of-Flanders>

Although the union was, by nature, incestuous, for William and Matilda were related by blood, the advantages of the marriage outweighed the moral culpability.¹⁸

Having formed ties with the papacy on the left and royalty on the right, William, and Normandy itself, secured power and recognition throughout Europe.

The Temptation of the Throne

Born to an Anglo-Saxon father and a Norman mother within the English royal family, Edward the Confessor was bound to have a complicated succession to the throne. Since the marriage of Emma, daughter of Richard I, Duke of Normandy, at the age of 12 to Ethelred II in 1002, the Normans have carefully eyed the English throne. In 1016, following the death of Ethelred II, the Danes invaded and took over England, exiling the royal family to Normandy.¹⁹ In 1041, Edward returned to England and ascended to the throne; at this time, William was 13 while Edward was 36. During the time of Edward's exile in Normandy, William most likely assisted Edward, for, in 1051, Edward allegedly promised to name William the heir to the throne upon his death. By this time, William had already begun his rise to power within Europe.

During his reign, Edward appointed various Norman nobles into positions of power within England to strengthen his ties to Normandy. His actions infuriated various English aristocrats, namely, Godwine, the Earl of Wessex, who arguably held *de facto* control over England. Edward the Confessor eventually married Godwine's daughter, Edith, becoming in-laws with the Earl of Wessex, to stabilize his seat upon the throne. Upon the death of Godwine, Harold, Godwine's son and Edward's brother-in-law, rose to become the most powerful noble in England. Expectedly, in the event of Edward's death, the English nobility wished for Harold to take the crown, for they had long followed Godwine as opposed to Edward.

In 1064, Edward sent Harold to Normandy to authenticate the vow of inheritance Edward made to William in 1051. En route, Harold was captured by Guy I, a vassal of William. William went on to rescue Harold and ransomed him, subsequently prompting Harold to promise to aid William's ascension to the throne.²⁰ This vow went on to be the *jus ad bellum* used by William in his conquest of England.

When Edward passed away in January of 1066, he declared Harold his successor. Immediately, Harold was elected by the English nobility as the next ruler and crowned by the archbishop of York the subsequent morning. However, several parties deemed it unjust and declared war against England to grasp the throne.

One of them was Harald III, King of Norway, who cited an agreement made in 1038 between Magnus I, King of Norway, and Hardicanute (or Harthacnut), King of England, that if either

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/edward_confessor.shtml

²⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England>

king died, the other would rise as his successor.²¹ Harald III deemed that Magnus' right to the throne was unjustly stolen by Edward the Confessor and that it was time to recapture it. Another candidate for the throne was Tostig, the brother of Harold Godwineson and an in-law of William through Baldwin V. Having been exiled from England by his brother, Harold, months before for treason, Tostig was eager to take his revenge in whatever means possible. Finally, William of Normandy claimed legitimacy to the throne due to the promise made by Edward in 1051, as well as the oath made by Harold to him in 1064.

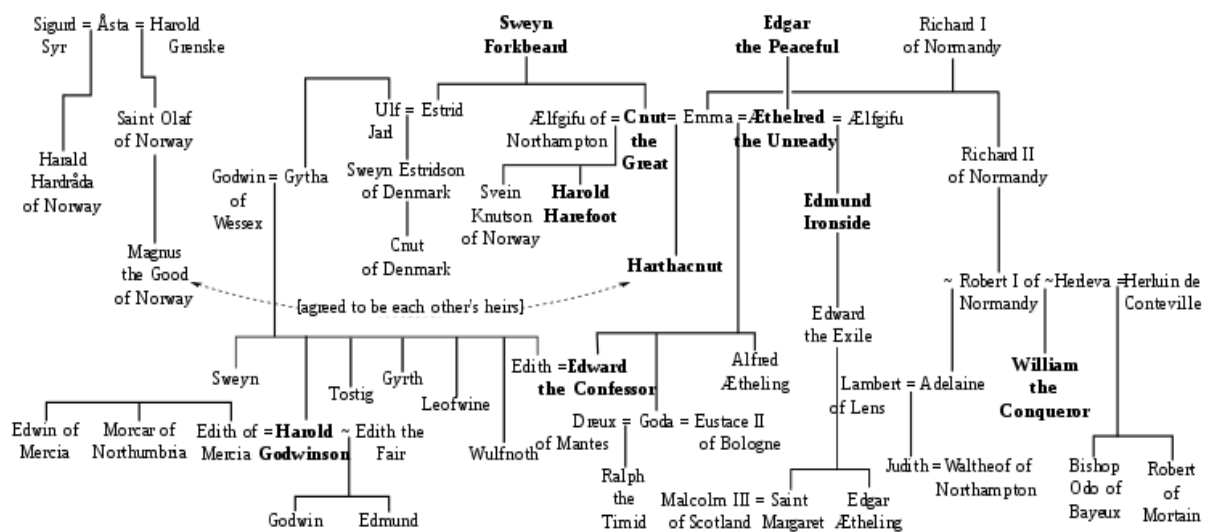


Figure 2: The various relations and claims to the throne²²

Initiating Crisis

The year is 1066, and news has travelled that Edward the Confessor has just passed away while naming Harold Godwineson, now crowned Harold II, as his successor. Tostig Godwineson and Harald III, King of Norway, have both announced their wishes to attain the throne. As the army and council of William of Normandy, you have been called into assembly to determine the course of action that you shall proceed with.

Current Situation

Political Outlook

As it stands, the council of Normandy faces a myriad of obstacles. In terms of the military, the gentry needs more funding from the people to ensure the success of this conquest. There is a pressing lack of weapons and soldiers. As rich as the aristocracy may be, the monetary

²¹ <https://englishhistory.net/vikings/hardicanute/>

²²

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_the_Conqueror#/media/File:Tree_of_William's_struggle_for_England.svg

strain of conquest is one that cannot be undertaken easily. In addition, building an army, in and of itself, is no simple task. Whether it be hiring mercenaries or having the people of Normandy enlist themselves, the council must find a solution.

The council also faces threats from the armies of Tostig and Harald III. Despite having the shared goal of usurping Harold II, determining who takes the throne after him will inevitably result in conflict. This has created a race to seize the crown and outsmart one another.

Stepping away from power in Normandy for the conquest also creates room for internal revolts and hierarchical struggles. The nobles within Normandy all seek power, whether that be internal, through Normandy, or external, through the conquest of other lands. Those within the council ought to be wary of those within and outside of the council.

Technological Outlook

By 1000 CE, slavery in Europe has largely died out, opening the window for new methods of labour.²³ A leading development during this time is the mobilization of horses. The creation of equestrian equipment, such as the horseshoe and the stirrup, allows horses to become an instrument in transport, a tool in agriculture, and most crucially, a weapon of war.

Significantly, this new age of alternative sources of labour also prompts the development of alternative sources of energy. The watermill, first created by the Romans and then introduced to Europe by the Norsemen, begins to disseminate throughout the continent.²⁴ This allows for efficiency in the agricultural sector, increasing the quantity and quality of food production.

During this time, Motte-and-Bailey castles have long been popularized throughout Normandy and Anjou within France. These castles have substantial military strength, while being relatively easy to construct.²⁵

Religious Outlook

Following the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, the Catholic Church has become a powerful entity throughout Europe.²⁶ The papacy is heavily involved in civilian life, and even more so on the political platform. Until 1049, the papacy often fell subordinate to ruling monarchs. Monarchs often vied for control over the papacy to retain control over the people, leading to the subordination of the papacy to monarchs in exchange for protection. However, by 1049, Pope Leo XI introduces a series of reforms to the Council Reims, urging for the independence and liberty of the Church from other institutions within civil society. This initiated a rise in the power of the papacy that limited imperial control.²⁷

²³ <https://www.britannica.com/technology/history-of-technology>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ https://www.ancient.eu/Motte_and_Bailey_Castle/

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/papacy/The-medieval-papacy>

²⁷ Ibid.

Bloc Positions

All members of the council seek to attain more power and wealth. It is important to note that titles are temporary and may change depending on accomplishments, achievements, and deaths.

Additionally, members may belong to more than one category. It is crucial for individuals to determine what best aligns with their personal interests in these circumstances.

The Papacy

Members of the papacy (the Church) wish to extend the control of the Church and gather more funding and alliances. The Church views the emerging conflict as an investment opportunity for expansion. Odo, the half-brother of William, serves a special role as a large financial supporter of the Church and as a linkage to Norman nobility. The Church has the incentive to support William's initiatives as reciprocation for his financial support.

The Military

As experts, advisors and generals hold the most sway in military expeditions and the most military power. They are able to send troops—to a certain extent in alignment with their title—without council approval. They do, however, require constant monetary backing, whether it be from the gentry or the papacy, to continue functioning. They can also seek independent funding outside of the council, although that may prove to be a challenge depending on the method to which they approach it.

The House of Flanders

The House of Flanders has ties to every member involved in this conquest. They are in-laws with the Godwinesons, in-laws with William of Normandy, and in-laws with the royal family of France. However, due to the internal conflict between the Godwinesons, they have found themselves in opposition to the standing ruler of England. Although they have an army of their own and are quite wealthy, they are still recovering from having invested much of their wealth overthrowing Henry III, the Holy Roman Emperor.

The Norman Gentry

The Norman gentry simply wants to conquer more land. Many who have already established themselves within Normandy seek to extend their control, while those who have recently risen to power seek to heighten their standing within Norman society. The Norman gentry are affluent, giving them the ability to fund and accomplish all that is necessary to reach their goal.

Representatives of the Royal Family of France

Despite claiming to be present out of support, citing their debt to Robert I of Normandy, the French Royalty may also be interested in surveilling William, who continues to extend his power. Having failed to invade Normandy in 1054 and 1057 under the reign of Henry I, the royal family may feel threatened by the presence of Normandy. At the same time, with the rise of the newly coronated King Philip I of France, the relationship between William of Normandy and the royal family remains ambiguous at best. It is to be noted that they are in-laws through the House of Flanders.

William, Duke of Normandy

William has a simple goal: to rise to his rightful throne in England as promised by Edward. He will work towards appeasing all parties and shaping the council to his will. Whether the council will submit to his wishes remains an open question.

Further Research

Further research can be conducted to deepen your understanding of the crisis and provide more extensive historical context.

Potential sources have been compiled below.

Videos and Documentaries:

- 1) TED-Ed – How Normans Changed the History of Europe:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owf5Uq4oFps>
- 2) History Matters – 1066 and the Norman Conquest:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_sCOVe1r_g
- 3) BBC Two – A Year to Conquer England:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08h7zl8>

Articles:

- 1) BBC Interactive Articles – 1066 and the Norman Conquest:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks3-ks4-1066/zm3m382>
- 2) Encyclopædia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Norman-Conquest>

Discussion Questions

- 1) What can the council of Normandy do to ensure support from the Norman public?
- 2) How might individuals leverage their blood ties? How do political marriages play into the current situation?

- 3) Who can the council make alliances with? What kind of an alliance would ensure the council's success?
- 4) Which alliances may endanger the council?
- 5) How might the council gather more funds?
- 6) How can the council reach the crown before other parties? Would that be the strategic move?

Works Cited

"1066: A Year to Conquer England." *BBC Two*, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08h7zl8.

Barlow, Frank. "William I." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/William-I-king-of-England#ref7933.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Baldwin V." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Baldwin-V-count-of-Flanders.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Edward." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-king-of-England-1002-1066.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Harold II." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Harold-II.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "History of Europe" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/The-Middle-Ages.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "History of Technology" *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/technology/history-of-technology.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Norman." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Norman-people.

- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Norman Conquest." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 July 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Norman-Conquest#ref258595.
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Papacy." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 July 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/papacy/The-medieval-papacy.
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Robert I." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 July 2019, www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-I-duke-of-Normandy.
- Bates, David. *William the conqueror*. Yale University Press, 2016.
- Brown, R. Allen. "The Norman Conquest." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 17, 1967, pp. 109–130. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3678722.
- Cartwright, Mark. "Motte and Bailey Castle." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 20 Sept. 2019, www.ancient.eu/Motte_and_Bailey_Castle/
- Douglas, David Charles. *William the Conqueror: the Norman impact upon England*. Vol. 1. Univ of California Press, 1964.
- "Emma of Normandy." *Historic UK*, www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Emma-Of-Normandy/.
- "File: Tree of William's Struggle for England.svg." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 16 July 2012, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_the_Conqueror#/media/File:Tree_of_William's_struggle_for_England.svg.
- "The Founding of Normandy." *Durham World Heritage Site*, www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/history/normans/founding-normandy.
- "Hardicanute Facts & Biography: Harthacnut." *English History*, 27 Oct. 2016,

- englishhistory.net/vikings/hardicanute/.
- “History - Edward the Confessor.” *BBC*, BBC,
www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/edward_confessor.shtml.
- “History: British History Timeline.” *BBC*, BBC,
www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/normanbritain_timeline_noflash.shtml.
- “History KS3 / GCSE: 1066 and the Norman Conquest - BBC Teach.” *BBC News*, BBC, 18
 Apr. 2019, www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks3-ks4-1066/zm3m382.
- Loyn, Henry Royston, and Anglo-Saxon England. *The Norman Conquest*. Vol. 88.
 Hutchinson, 1967.
- “Norman Conquests of Europe.” *Norman Conquests of Europe*,
www.medievalchronicles.com/medieval-history/medieval-history-periods/the-normans/the-norman-conquests-of-europe/.
- "Norsemen." *The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th Ed*, Encyclopedia.com, 2019,
[www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/scandinavian-history/norsemen#1E1N](http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/scandinavian-history/norsemen#1E1Norsemen)
 orsemen.
- Oman, Charles. *England before the Norman conquest*. Vol. 1. Рипол Классик, 1924.
- Stenton, Frank Merry. *William the Conqueror and the Rule of the Normans*. Vol. 43. GP
 Putnam's Sons, 1908.
- TED-Ed. “How the Normans Changed the History of Europe - Mark Robinson.” *YouTube*,
 YouTube, 9 Aug. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owf5Uq4oFps.