Imagining the medieval face of battle:
the 'Malfosse' incident and the Battle of Hastings, 1066–1200

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Modern historians of war seek to study and to re-create the experience of battle in order to know, as well as possible, 'what it was like' to be in battle.[1] There are two strategies they employ in this endeavour. First, they examine the sources to understand and to explain what happened and why, in ways which may not reflect the experience of combatants because of the chaos of war and the limits of what an individual can perceive in the moment of conflict. Second, they imagine how the combatants experienced battle, and attempt to recreate this experience in narrative form. Although these strategies diverge in their objectives, the two together contribute to a more full picture of the history of battles and wars. Historians regularly take this pairing of approaches to gain a wider understanding of war and warfare both on and off the battlefield.[2] We find this this sophisticated—and seemingly modern[3]—interplay of enquiries into the past in the work of historians who wrote in the second half of the twelfth century. Two writers imagined the face of a battle over a century in their past, one in which the English king Harold was killed and Duke William of Normandy took the throne of England: the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

The article examines the medieval reporting of the 'Malfosse' incident, a quasi-legendary episode in the battle with a high death toll, that peaked in its importance in two twelfth-century narratives: the vernacular *Roman de Rou* of Wace in Normandy, and the Latin *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* in England.[4] The episode is significant because their retelling renders it a new emotional locus of the battle's tragedy. Suspicious of earlier moralizing explanations for the incident, they were fascinated by the combatants' experience of the battle, and they deployed narrative strategies to recreate it. Their historical preoccupations generated a new way of writing about the Battle of Hastings: one in which they attempted to generate empathy by encouraging imagined participation in the past.

Their empathetic interest is evident in three related features of their versions of the incident: first, the combatants' innocence, ignorance and blindness; second, the replacement of agency with futility and accident; third, their efforts to situate the reader in the past by recreating the sensory experience of the encounter. What merits attention in their accounts is the persistence of compassion—with an unceasing sensitivity to human disaster—as a point of entry into understanding the battle. A personal interest in human experience, if at times latent, had always been present in Norman Conquest narratives, beginning with the Bayeux Tapestry;[5] now, one hundred years later, it emerged more manifest in poetry and prose: both points need to be reintegrated into our understanding of the battle's true legacy.

The intensity of the two chroniclers' fascination has gone unremarked in studies of the medieval remembrance of Hastings. Their narratives of the incident embody the affective drive to embrace emotions in order to achieve understanding, instead of rejecting them in a stoic fashion. Views propounding a 'naturalistic spirit' gained momentum in the eleventh and twelfth

centuries, wherein the human body was not exclusively a fallen or weak vessel, but one intimately connected with its rational and spiritual aspects, and an entity in which emotions could effect positive change.[6] Human compassion was not viewed with suspicion or contempt.[7] Research into emotions in the Middle Ages has begun to illuminate how these ideas worked. As Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy have recently reminded us, 'medieval Christians increasingly sought to experience suffering'; and they argue that only a history of experience can illuminate medieval sensibilities.[8]

The Malfosse incident, a composite of earlier episodes, became the emotional focal point for two narratives of a battle that ended more than a century ago. Wace claimed that not only did many English die in the pit, but also 'at no time in the day did as many Normans die as perished in the fosse, as those who saw the dead said'.[9] The Battle chronicler wrote more about the Malfosse incident than about the entirety of the rest of the battle. The Battle of Hastings troubled both of them because it was an unexpected, inexplicable turn of events that caught combatants unawares, with sweeping loss of life. In reading their sources, they were struck by a gruesome composite picture: descriptions of the landscape, corpses mangled and disfigured beyond recognition, a dramatic plunge.

The new and distinctive element in their written accounts of the Malfosse incident is the preoccupation with the nature of the combatants' encounter. Concentrating less on describing the landscape, the chroniclers wrote more of how the pit figured into direct experience: they personified it or described how the humans in battle perceived it—or failed to. They knew the world was real, not textual, and it was this reality they sought to imitate: they made narrative, stylistic and structural choices precisely because of narrative's capacity to express and convey true feeling.[10] The Norman Conquest and the Battle of Hastings had been illustrated in wall hangings and tapestries, and explained by many historians in England and Normandy: what remained was to show in words overt concern for those who fought in the battle.

What was the Malfosse incident? The term refers to a ditch where large numbers of combatants—mostly Normans, but also English—supposedly fell to their deaths during the battle.[11] Sources contemporary to the battle, and those written up to eighty years later, differ about the nature of the incident or incidents. Within several years of the battle, William of Poitiers described (and the Bayeux Tapestry depicted) an episode with these characteristics; two generations later, Anglo-Norman writers Orderic Vitalis and his contemporaries did as well. They describe the mass tumble in difficult terrain (variants include a ditch or an obscured structure) variously as occurring during the confusion and breaking of ranks after Harold's death, during a feigned retreat by the Normans, or during a Norman advance late in the day. Some narratives detail separate episodes involving the challenging terrain, in which piled bodies were trampled.[12]

The Malfosse incident has long been a mystery for historians of the Norman Conquest, who have been sceptical of its veracity and puzzled by the way in which it was rewritten in the generations succeeding the battle. Jim Bradbury observed that the Battle chronicler wrote more about the Malfosse incident than the rest of the battle, remarking that this odd narrative choice

requires some explanation: he attributed it to local gossip.[13] M. K. Lawson commented on the difficulty of discerning whether Wace's remarks reflect 'authentic tradition' or 'a muddled reflection of statements about ditches' in his earlier sources.[14] R. Allen Brown found the incident enigmatic, but concluded that it was clearly a literary construct, and that it did not matter as far as the outcome of the battle was concerned.[15] In the nineteenth century, Edward Augustus Freeman observed that the Malfosse incident was 'the last scene of the battle, and no scene impressed itself more deeply on the minds of the descendants of the victors'.[16] But this impression is only evident after a hundred years had passed.

The incident is a core element of narratives of the Battle of Hastings, but the fully developed story emerged only a century after the Battle of Hastings. These versions appear in two chronicles: Wace's *Roman de Rou,* the epic poem in Anglo-Norman French commissioned by King Henry II of England, and then the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, written by a monk of Battle Abbey who knew Wace's *Roman de Rou.* The Battle chronicler coined the famous term 'Malfosse'—or 'evil ditch'—to name the place for the calamity. According to Wace and the Battle chronicler, the Norman cavalry, absorbed in the fighting, failed to notice an obscured ditch in the battlefield. The Normans toppled into the ditch—in Wace, forced backwards by the English forces; in the Battle Chronicle, pursuing them—and a number of the English plummeted in as well. The many victims were trampled and crushed beyond recognition; and the spectacle was terrifying to those who observed it and survived.

The core passages are worth setting out here, as we will return to them frequently for comparison. Wace wrote of Malfosse:

> In the fields there was a ditch. It was behind the Normans, who had passed round the side of it; they had taken no notice of it. The English pressed the Normans so much, and shoved and pushed them so hard that they forced them back into the ditch, causing men and horses to kick helplessly. You would have seen many men falling, some tumbling on top of others, stumbling and falling flat on their faces, unable to get up. A good number of the English, whom the Normans pulled down with them, died.[17]

In the Battle chronicler's version,

> a final disaster revealed itself to [the eyes of] all. Lamentably, just where the fighting was going on, and stretching for a considerable distance, an immense ditch yawned. It may have been a natural cleft in the earth or perhaps it had been hollowed out by storms. But in this waste ground it was overgrown with brambles and thistles, and could scarcely be presented to the eyes in time; and it engulfed great numbers, especially of the Normans pursuing the English. For when they, unknowing, came galloping on, their terrific impetus carried them headlong down into it, and they died tragically, pounded to pieces. This deep pit has been named for the accident, and today it is called *Malfosse*.[18]

These twelfth-century writers crafted their versions of the story not from new information, but by recombining several elements in their earlier sources for the battle—including the word 'fossa' or 'ditch', the unfavourable ground, piles of bodies, and trampling horses—and by imagining what it was like to be there. The way in which they did so offers insight into the thoughts and reasoning of historians writing at one hundred years' remove from the battle. Writing at a distance from the religious, cultural and political preoccupations of the authors of their sources, they approached a familiar story with a new set of questions and concerns. They sought to involve themselves and their readers imaginatively and empathetically in the past.

Explanation, Experience and the Malfosse Incident after a Century: Wace's *Roman de Rou* and the Chronicle of Battle Abbey

Wace wrote the *Roman de Brut* in the 1140s and 1150s, and then the *Roman de Rou* in the 1160s and 1170s in honour of his patron Henry II.[19] Despite the king's potential interest in glorifying his insular and Norman heritage, Wace's goals differed: he was interested in the past not only as something useful to a monarch, but as something lived.[20] Wace was a writer of the cross-Channel realm: born on the island of Jersey, he studied in Caen in Normandy[21] and travelled to England at least once, possibly more often.[22] He had a keen interest the political, religious and historical concerns of people in England. He knew well the works of English historians Eadmer of Canterbury and William of Malmesbury, as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth's venture into Britain's legendary history, *De gestis Britonum*. Three religious poems (dating to the 1130s and 1140s) by Wace survive, all of which share connections with England. Bishop Henry of Blois may even have been the patron of his poem *Conception Nostre Dame*, which engaged directly with the contemporary debates surrounding English revival of the feast of Mary's conception.[23] He has lately been described as an 'innovator'[24] because he wrote to make the past accessible, narrating both hagiography and history in ways that a diverse audience would understand.

His *Roman de Rou*, a vernacular Anglo-Norman epic poem, follows the history of the Norman rulers beginning with Rollo in the tenth century going up through the death of King Henry I of England, where it remained unfinished. Wace appears to have written the poem in chronological order: he claimed that he began writing the *Roman de Rou* in 1160; by the 1170s, he was writing about the Norman Conquest.[25] It includes a lengthy account of the Battle of Hastings, which Eley and Bennett described as the 'centre of gravity' of the entire poem.[26] For information about the battle, Wace relied principally on Orderic's redaction of *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the *Brevis Relatio*, William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guillelmi*, and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.[27]

The Battle Chronicle, for which Wace's *Roman de Rou* was a key source for the Malfosse incident, was written by the monks at Battle Abbey, William I's first ecclesiastical foundation in England on the site of the Battle of Hastings. The Chronicle comprises two chronicles, one long and one short; it is now thought that the shorter is a later epitome of the longer. The main 'Long' chronicle probably represents a composite text begun in the 1150s, primarily composed between

1170 and 1210. It may have had multiple authors; for simplicity, the author or authors will be referred to as the 'chronicler'.[28]

The monks sought to use the Chronicle to make a case for the Abbey's privileges and exemption from oversight of the see of Chichester (a case it lost in 1234),[29] and to expand and supplement the existing narrative account of its foundation and history.[30] The chronicler explained the Norman Conquest as a punishment for Harold's perjury, following the main line of Norman critiques.[31] He knew the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, the *Brevis Relatio* (also a product of Battle Abbey), Wace's *Roman de Rou*, and Merlin's prophecies in Geoffrey of Monmouth.[32] Nevertheless, unanswered questions about the Conquest remained. Nowhere is this more visible than in the chronicler's account of the Battle of Hastings, where the horrific 'Malfosse' accident overshadows a moralizing account of the doings of kings.

The Chronicler differs from his predecessors—Orderic in particular—in eliminating any sense that the combatants were implicated in King William I's sin. The chronicler has William claim that to engage in the battle was sinful, and will thus require him to atone.[33] The chronicler was reintroducing a theme of the penance required after the battle by the Penitential Ordinance, and alluded to in the *Brevis Relatio* and Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*.[34] This theme is consistent with the Battle monks' larger claim that William I founded the Abbey to atone for the deaths caused by the battle and to establish prayers for the victims' souls in perpetuity. Several charters of Battle Abbey attributed to William I—including those revised in the 1150s and 1160s, and forgeries purporting to be William's written around the same time—have William state explicitly that he founded the Abbey to honour his vow to God were he victorious at Hastings.[35] In the charters, as in the Chronicle, this grave purpose (characteristic of the real William's life-long, self-conscious concern with piety[36]) was probably highlighted to illustrate why William supposedly freed Battle Abbey of subjection to any other foundation, and why he thought it worthy to place on a level of equality with the eminent Christ Church, Canterbury.[37] Yet the chronicler was clearly genuinely curious about and sympathetic with the experience of combatants. A monk himself, he extolled the deeds of one monk in the Battle of Hastings, even though monks were not technically supposed to wield weapons in war according to canon law.[38] He found historical or moral explanations inadequate for understanding the Malfosse incident, the combatants' worst encounter in the battle.

The Battle Chronicle and the *Roman de Rou* have several important contextual qualities in common, though they differ in language and genre. England had recently experienced a destructive civil war between King Stephen and Matilda, the daughter of Henry I. The Battle chronicler detailed some of the threats faced by Battle Abbey during the civil war, claiming that justice only replaced iniquity when the peace-loving king Henry ('pacifico rege Henrico') substituted peace for violence.[39] But both writers ultimately shared problems with Henry II. Battle Abbey resisted the king's insistence on the oversight of Chichester,[40] and Wace felt the king had put his livelihood in jeopardy with false promises: David Bates has commented on Wace's early optimism in the 1140s and 1150s, in the years of Henry Plantagenet's ascendancy before he was crowned, an optimism common in the Anglo-Norman realm after a turbulent era

of civil war in England. Henry, however, later rescinded favour from Wace and transferred it to Benoît, and Wace was bitter about the vagaries of his patrons. These mid-twelfth-century writers sought to make sense of the contemporary events that directly affected their lives, and knew there were many different stories to tell involving the Normans.[41] The fluctuating uncertainty of their own present careers, and the sense of personal loss, might very well have helped these writers to sympathize with those who lived at the time of the Battle of Hastings.

Following the later Anglo-Norman writers and Wace, the Battle chronicler referred to Malfosse exclusively as a large ditch, omitting William of Poitiers's ancient building.[42] Eleanor Searle has suggested that the ditch to which the chronicler refers may have been a mass grave from the Battle of Hastings, which included the bodies of Normans unclaimed by their kin. If the monks had recovered physical evidence of such a grave during their reclamation projects in the late twelfth century, she suggests, this would have inspired them to connect the Malfosse with this ditch.[43] However, we should not rely on direct observation as the sole source of the story: it had been called a pit before the Battle chronicler wrote, and the Battle chronicler's narrative closely follows Wace's graphic account of the incident.[44] Wace's story probably guided what the monks observed more than familiarity with the landscape.

Charters from the early thirteenth century identify a place named 'Maufosse'.[45] The name vanished by the mid-thirteenth century, when monks of Battle altered the surrounding landscape following new acquisitions, turning the field into a cattle pasture.[46] It may be that an empty space connoting a hallowed place of burial was now obscured and provided no further visual cue for remembrance. But the quasi-legendary story of the Malfosse incident survived because of the acute pathos of Wace's and the Battle chronicler's narratives of it, written over a century after the battle.

The Evolution of the Story of the Malfosse

The elements of what became the single 'fosse' or 'Malfosse' incident appear in two successive chapters of one of the earliest accounts of the battle: the *Gesta Guillelmi* of William of Poitiers. Writing in the 1070s, about ten years after the battle, William of Poitiers described the first incident: the flight of the English near the end of the day. He provided graphic detail about the fallen English, both wounded and dead, without describing any Norman deaths. In their efforts to escape 'pars per uias, plerique per auia' ('some on roads, others through pathless wastes'), the English lay on the ground, some dead, some alive. Their bodies littered the forests, they blocked passage on the road, and as the Normans pursued them, their horses' hooves further beat the dead bodies.[47] William does not suggest that these bodies were identified, buried, or given absolution of any kind; nor does he suggest that this is a problem. He calls the English guilty ('rea') and casts the Normans' trampling as punishment ('supplicia'): unsurprisingly, his narrative is not sympathetic. The English—and their bodies—got what they deserved.[48] As did Harold, in William of Poitiers's view: Duke William refused to give Harold a Christian burial.[49]

In a second, separate episode, William of Poitiers explains that 'a broken rampart and a labyrinth of ditches' ('praerupti ualli et frequentium fossarum') gave the fleeing English the

opportunity to fight back. The duke ultimately defeated his enemies, but William notes: 'In that encounter some of the noblest Normans fell, for their valour was of no avail on such unfavourable ground.'[50] William gives no impression that numerous Normans died.

Similar incidents supposedly taking place earlier in the battle, in other accounts known directly or indirectly to Wace and the Battle chronicler, provided inspiration for their versions of the incident.[51] The Bayeux Tapestry, created in the years following the battle, includes a comparable episode before Harold's death, with the caption 'Here English and French died at the same time in battle' ('Hic ceciderunt simul Angli et Franci in prelio').[52] This is the only occasion in the Tapestry's portrayal of the battle in which Norman horses and combatants fall as well as the English[53]—a glimmer of equality in death. The event follows the period of silence in the Tapestry after the Normans first engage the English, when corpses of the fallen begin to litter the margins—flattened, and apparently unburied—and the deaths of Harold's brothers. The author of the *Brevis Relatio*, a short account of the Norman Conquest written at Battle Abbey between 1114 and 1120 known to both Wace and the Battle chronicler, described one of the battle's attacks as occurring 'with awful momentum' ('cum horribili impetu') when the army 'rushed in' ('irruit').[54]

In narratives written from 1120 through the middle of the twelfth century, the knowledge and agency of combatants emerged more distinctly, without explicit sympathy for their experience of the events of the battle. Like the Bayeux Tapestry, William of Malmesbury (in the 1120s) and Henry of Huntingdon (in the 1140s) included a falling episode before Harold's death near the end of the battle. Both stress the knowledge and agency of the combatants who either hid or knew about the ditch, not the ignorance of those who encountered it. William specifies that the English knew ('noto') the route through the terrain, and for this reason avoided ('euadentes') a deep ditch ('fossatum … preruptam'); in a grisly remark, he explains that they trampled piles of enemy bodies such that they filled the pit, levelling it with the surrounding field.[55] He explains it as part of 'alternation of fortune' ('uicissitudo').[56]

In Henry's version, the pit caught both sides. His Normans, simulating flight, come upon 'a certain large pit, craftily covered' ('ad quandam foueam magnam dolose protectam'). With the verb 'dolose', Henry clearly implies that the hiding of the pit was a deliberate move by the English. He claims the pit was 'where a great number of the toppling Normans were crushed' ('ubi multus eorum numerus corruens oppressus est') and that the pursuing English had to return over the ditch, where the greater part of them perished ('per foueam predictam redire compulsi, ibidem ex magna parte perierunt').[57] Their remarks convey the grisly nature of the event, including disfigurement and death toll, yet offer no explicit guide as to what one's reaction should be.

The works of Orderic Vitalis were the most direct sources of the event for Wace,[58] as Wace's work was for the Battle chronicler. Orderic, writing his version of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* across the Channel in Normandy in the first two decades of the twelfth century, was the first to refer to an incident near the end of the battle with a high death toll on both sides,[59] apparently combining the two successive moments in the *Gesta Guillelmi*.[60] This

was probably because he thought William must have been referring to the same incident, or because he thought he could explain the moral behind the fates of both English and Normans. According to Orderic, the Normans pursued the English who were fleeing in fear after losing their king. Because tall grasses 'concealed an ancient rampart' ('antiquum aggerem tegebant'), the Normans 'fell, one on top of the other, thus crushing each other to death' ('dum unus repente super alterum cadebat, uicissim extinguebant').[61] Orderic subsequently copied these interpolations into his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but added a reference to how God avenged the English ('Anglos uindicauit') and 'plunged the fierce Normans into the blind chasm' ('furentes Normannos in cecam uoraginem praecipitauit').[62] Orderic's message is very clear:[63] because the Normans had sinned, God intervened and punished them by sending large numbers of them to their doom in a vast chasm hidden by an ancient rampart and tall grasses.[64]

There are three important features of Orderic's version of the incident: the first is his certainty about why it occurred (and, relatedly, his interest in its explanatory force); the second is its descriptive as opposed to experiential quality; the third is the way it was read later in the twelfth century. First, in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, after describing the plummeting fall of the Normans, Orderic proceeds immediately to give the death toll (15,000 men, consistent with William of Poitiers), and to express complete certainty about why the battle occurred: 'Thus on 14 October Almighty God punished the countless sinners *on both sides* in diverse ways.'[65] Freeman took this conclusion to mean 15,000 total deaths in the battle, not just this incident, which makes sense.[66] The placement of Orderic's remark, however, is what is important. The catastrophic fall he has just mentioned is the only specific evidence for his claim that God was punishing sin that day on *both* sides—the Normans included. For Orderic, this episode was unassailable evidence that the combatants deserved punishment. He accuses the Normans of madness ('uesania') in this incident, claiming that the Normans stubbornly ('obnixe') pursued the English to their own detriment. The plunge into the pit mattered in his narrative less for its own sake, and more because it served as an illustration of divine justice.

The second feature of Orderic's version is its descriptive as opposed to experiential quality, evident in his grammatical structure. In *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Orderic says nothing about the Normans not seeing or not knowing, only that tall grasses obscured the rampart: this remark matters because it is not precise about who suffered from the occluded ditch. He described a feature of the landscape, not the personal experience or state of knowledge of those fighting in it.

Third, and most significant, the transformative impact of Orderic's phrase 'blind chasm' or 'hidden chasm' ('cecam uoraginem') on the perception of the Malfosse incident has gone unnoticed. In classical mythology, Scylla was the treacherous monster of the rocky shore, and Charybdis the monster of the dangerous whirlpool, that threatened Odysseus and his crew on their voyage home. Later writers normally referred to Scylla and Charybdis metaphorically to mean beset by two evils. For example, Bede, on whose *Historia Ecclesiastica* Orderic modeled his own, used the word 'uorago' for Charybdis's watery abyss in a metaphorical sense, referring to Scylla and Charybdis in turning from sound logic about the correct date of Easter.[67] It is

possible that Orderic's use of 'uorago caecus' here may have been purely metaphorical. But it is more likely that he used 'uorago' in place of Poitiers's 'fossa', choosing to describe the plummet into a ditch with a phrase that encompassed the rhetoric of evil on a grander scale since, like Bede, he was making a moral point about the unsound judgment of those who were ultimately punished.

This is precisely how Wace read the passage in the 1170s. Wace, who knew the *Historia Ecclesiastica* well,[68] ignored the reference to the rampart altogether and, instead, took literally Orderic's remark about the hidden chasm. This clear and explicit reading of a Latin phrase with powerful mythological connotations of depth and danger—and not confusion—was the origin of the Malfosse story as told in the *Roman de Rou* and the Battle Chronicle. The passage stood out to Wace as the most horrific moment of the battle—as it later did to the Battle chronicler—because, although he believed that this grisly incident occurred, he disagreed with Orderic's moralizing judgment that the Malfosse incident was divine retribution for the sins of the victims who perished therein. Rather, he mused on the nature of the experience and found that it defied understanding or explanation—whether by divine judgment or the mechanics of fortune.

Ignorance and Blindness

The two chroniclers reframed chronology in their account of the Battle of Hastings, and narrated the Malfosse incident in a way that anticipates and highlights the unpleasant surprise, permitting them to narrate the encounter with greater sympathy. It has been argued that Wace progresses chronologically and in this respect resembles annals, a similiarity that offers evidence of his interest in writing true history and gives him credibility as an historian alongside writers in Latin.[69] Not only was he knowledgeable about warfare, as Matthew Bennett has shown, but he was also interested in recounting the consequences and emotional effects of surprise and ambush on combatants. In his narrative of another battle (Varaville) fought by William the Conqueror as duke of Normandy against the French, Wace described the Norman ambush. He chose to narrate in great detail how an old bridge and its role in hindering the escape of the French, and the fear and suffering of the French.[70]

In describing the Malfosse plunge, Wace deviates from chronology to set a scene, and to enhance the drama of his narrative, essentially putting the reader on the battlefield. During his extended account of the Battle of Hastings,[71] Wace is explaining the various attacks made by both the Normans and the English. He suddenly cuts to the passage about the fosse plunge.[72] Wace's remark about the ditch's presence is striking in relation to the prior lines because it has neither chronological nor narrative quality. It merely identifies a feature of the landscape. It is suspenseful for this reason, a surprise in what one would otherwise expect to be a relatively chronological account. Furthermore, it is structurally significant that by the time Wace mentions the ditch, it is already behind the Normans. In stating what they had not noticed, Wace implicitly draws attention to their ignorance about their fate. For the Battle chronicler, too, the key tragedy of the plummet into the Malfosse is that men are unknowing ('inscii') of the danger they face,

and because of their ignorance they are carried by their momentum into the pit—and to their deaths.

This narrative shift from the strategic knowledge of those planning for battle to the ignorance and surprise of those caught in it is evident in both the *Roman de Rou* and the Battle Chronicle's accounts of the Malfosse incident. Like William of Malmesbury, Wace cited English foreknowledge of a ditch, going so far as to claim that Harold actually dug the trench. According to Wace, Harold placed his standard 'at the very spot where Battle Abbey was built';[73] after surveying the region, Harold 'had it enclosed by a good ditch' and set guards on three entry points.[74] Wace repeats later that 'the English had made a ditch to one side which ran through the fields' ('un fossé ont d'une part fait, / qui parmié la champaigne vait').[75] But when he recounts the Malfosse incident, he does not characterize what happens to the Normans in the ditch as the fulfilment of a trap deliberately set by the English. Instead, he observes that a number of the English died too, pulled in by the Normans. What he illuminates, then, is not the *cleverness* of the plan of the English plan, but rather its *futility*.

Whereas William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon stressed the knowledge and strategy of those *setting* the trap, Wace and the Battle chronicler emphasized the ignorance and surprise of the victims who encounter it and the tragic consequences. The import of the story is thus wholly different. This shift matters because it indicates a move from writing about planning the battle in advance, to the experience of it in the moment.

Futility and Agency

For Wace and the Battle chronicler, the occlusion of the Malfosse—and the combatants' resulting ignorance—were inversely proportional to combatants' agency. Their narratives stress the futility of the combatants' encounter with the pit. The event occurred neither as a punishment from God for sin (Orderic) nor as a consequence of an intentional attack (William of Malmesbury), but rather as an accident and a surprise for unknowing combatants, whose very ignorance makes them innocent of blame. For Wace, the event is the more bitter, the more tragic, and the more deserving of compassion because it occurred at a moment in the battle when neither the English nor the Normans were trying to attack one another.

Wace underscores the horror of the Malfosse's role in the battle because it was undeserved. In this he departs from his sources' case of 'pride goeth before a fall'—as Orderic made clear, and as the author of the *Brevis Relatio* put it explicitly—wherein the Normans got what they deserved. According to Wace, the episode occurred during the Norman retreat.[76] Because the Normans are *actually* retreating in the *Roman de Rou*, as opposed to pursuing the English in vanity and madness in Orderic and the *Brevis Relatio*—or dissimulating by feigning flight in Henry of Huntingdon[77]—Wace removes the stain of sin from the combatants, replacing judgment with a stronger tone of sympathy for their fate. This event in the Battle of Hastings has shifted perceptibly in written accounts from a moral microcosm of the Norman Conquest, to a jarring, disjointed and inexplicable episode. The narrator was more interested in conveying an understanding of the combatants' experience than in moralizing why it happened.

The focal change from the combatants' agency to the futility of their experience in battle is most powerful in the Battle Chronicle: the chronicler personifies the ditch, and gives to Malfosse the agency that Wace had removed from the English. In so doing, he makes the point that the helplessness of combatants in the battle is a terrifying core element of their experience. The design of his narrative suggests that comprehending this point is necessary to understand what it was like to be there. Let us take a closer look at this passage.[78]

The Battle chronicler writes that the last disaster, the overgrown ditch, revealed itself to all eyes. He does not say 'there was a disaster', but instead chooses the word 'patere' in the active voice, making the ditch the subject of the sentence—and the actor. The chronicler repeats this verb as a present participle in the next sentence, referring to the ditch as a long and vast protrusion near the battle, revealing itself, thereby suggesting a likeness between disaster and the ditch. In a gruesome description, the pit then strangles innumerable soldiers: the ditch could barely be perceived in time by the eyes ('oculis minus preuideretur'), this a second comment about how it appeared *to viewers*; and it 'engulfed' ('suffocauit') many on both sides. In the first case, disaster is the actor; in the second, the pit itself is the actor. The chronicler directly related the ditch's hidden aspect to the victims' thwarted agency.

The import of the chronicler's remarks is great: no prior account of any incident resembling Malfosse at the Battle of Hastings endows either a disaster or the terrain with agency. Instead of describing an inanimate object, the chronicler animates it to illustrate what he thinks the experience must have been like for the combatants. Those who fell into the Malfosse, his words suggest, might indeed have perceived it as a monster and felt a similar emotional response. They might have felt fear and horror as though the ditch were an enemy pre-meditating their doom, not an indifferent feature of the landscape as in Orderic's account.

In explaining the most tragic moment of the Battle of Hastings as a revelation to those present effected by calamity, and as an episode caused by the monstrous actions of a hidden ditch, the Battle chronicler accorded agency to chaos. Although he held that providence and fortune explained the cause and the outcome of the Norman Conquest,[79] he found them insufficient to provide either moral justification or consolation for the Malfosse incident. The horrors of the battle arose from a concatenation of chances and circumstances that could not be explained or blamed in the same ways as human actions, like Harold's supposed oath to William. The two chroniclers offered this very insight about the experience of the battle by giving new primacy to the Malfosse incident in their accounts of Hastings—within a written tradition of explaining the moral causes of the Norman Conquest that was starting to ossify.[80]

Participation in the Past

Both chroniclers were preoccupied with the nature of experience at the 'moment of greatest danger',[81] and—unlike their predecessors—keen to recreate it. Describing the event or stating that the victims met a tragic end would not suffice: instead, their narratives invited participation in the tragic event. They sought to evoke compassion by involving both reader and writer directly in the Malfosse incident. To stir similar emotions in the reader, they used

narrative techniques including direct address, narrating sensory perceptions, and situating the reader's perspective on the battlefield.

For the combatants in Wace's *Roman de Rou*, the incident's visual effect was powerful and caused fear to radiate outwards. Wace explains that, because they saw their fellow Normans falling into the ditch, the Norman squires in attendance wanted to abandon their guard, and they were 'very much afraid'.[82] Wace has told us in direct address what we would have seen[83] and heard.[84] Immediately after the Malfosse, the Battle chronicler asks the reader to consider the extent of the slaughter of the English, and to contemplate the magnitude of the sounds one would have heard. He fills in the details of how he imagines the sensory experience: the crash of weapons, the hiss of strokes, the cries of the dying, the anguish, the sighs, the groans, and the voices of the dying crying out.[85]

Wace engaged the reader directly by structuring his narrative to parallel in form what he thought was the nature of the experience. His abrupt mention of the ditch mirrors the surprise the combatants would have faced as they came upon the brink of the Malfosse. In putting the reader on the historic battlefield, Wace creates a virtual reality for the reader. Making a surprising jump of vantage point to the pit, he gives the reader the perspective of a helpless onlooker watching the battle unfold. Through Wace's guiding, combatant and reader are surprised to encounter the ditch, and equally powerless to avert the fighters' fate.

Likewise, the Battle chronicler offers the reader a multi-dimensional visual perspective on the battlefield just after describing the Malfosse plunge. He first situates the reader not only close to but also literally encircled by ('in girum') the battlefield—in the middle of the fray—then immediately shifts perspective to a visual vantage point far away:

> The spectacle amid these sufferings revealed itself to be pitiable. The fields were covered with corpses, and *all around* the only colour to meet the gaze was blood-red. It looked from afar as if rivulets of blood, flowing down from all sides, had filled the valleys, just like a river.[86] [emphasis added]

Here, the potential reader is the one doing the observing—witnessing the spectacle, the blood-red colour, seeing the verisimilitude between blood and a river. This is not 'realistic observation' in the sense that no one present could have physically viewed the spectacle both encircled by it and from a distance at the same time.[87] It offers, however, a virtual reality like Wace's. In providing views from different angles, the author permits the reader to jump perspectives, and creates a visual image of what one would have seen if present at the Battle of Hastings. The chroniclers sought to link the reader's experience with that of the combatants—much as William of Newburgh related in the 1190s that blood still bleeds on the site in his present, as though those who go to view the battlefield are seeing the injuries sustained during the Battle of Hastings in real time.[88]

The Battle chronicler suggests not only what the reader would have perceived, but also how one should react to these perceptions. The word 'flebiliter', used here to connote tragedy,

means, literally, 'worthy of weeping'.[89] The word suggests an attempt to evoke the reader's emotional participation as the only way to express and communicate the scale of the tragedy. He is more pointed in invoking the monks' own reaction: 'Truly the pitiful condition of human wretchedness is shown us that we be struck aghast and weep. In imagining these things, our pens appear to waver even now.'[90] This quivering suggests anguish and a live connection between event and writer.[91] The event is tragic; but it is also tragic *to imagine*, and this imagining has emotional and physical consequences. The chronicler reflects explicitly on the feelings generated in reader and writer during the experience of recreating it in writing. These moments contrast directly with narrative strategies which avoid it, talk around it, or separate it from expressions of lamentation as the author of the *Liber Eliensis* did very firmly in the mid-twelfth century.[92] These subtle shifts in ways of writing about the Malfosse matter, because they mark a change from describing the suffering of those involved in the battle to involving the writer and reader in that suffering.

The chroniclers' introduction of participation in battle, and perspectives from the battlefield, were new in written accounts of the Malfosse incident and the Battle of Hastings. We might compare, for instance, Baudri of Bourgueil, whose poem for Countess Adela about the battle explains that the ground flowed with blood.[93] Wace, the Battle chronicler and even William of Newburgh showed that we would have seen it, not only that it happened. With first-hand accounts of the battle now well beyond recall, these writers desired to bring the reader into closer emotional proximity with the combatants in the Malfosse incident and the battle.

The Persistence of Compassion

They were not the first narrators to do so, for not all narrators of the battle relied on words to tell their story. At its outset, this article commented on two historical strategies in the research of war: the attempt to explain and to evaluate its events, and the attempt to imagine and to recreate the experience of battle. The intent of the Bayeux Tapestry's creators has been likened to that of the first- and second-generation narrators of the Battle of Hastings, including William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis, on the grounds that these narratives made cases about why the battle happened.[94] The suggested point of similarity, essentially, is that they employed the former strategy. But the Battle Chronicle and the *Roman de Rou* share with the Bayeux Tapestry the latter strategy: an imagined vision of how the battle might have occurred, including details that illuminate how it might have struck those who fought in it.[95]

The audiences of these empathetic visual and written narratives would have included those uninformed, but curious about, the battle. Yet the Tapestry's content has sometimes been related to the professions and knowledge of its creators and audience. John Cowdrey, for instance, suggested that the Tapestry's portrayal of warfare and military matters probably indicates a like audience: that is, one comprised of a broad mix of secular 'fighting men'.[96] Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Stephen D. White have argued that the monks of St Augustine's, Canterbury took the initiative to make the Tapestry for their own objectives and that they themselves were the main audience.[97]

The problem is that underscoring these kinds of relationships negates the Tapestry's widespread appeal—both its lure for viewers and its plea for compassion. The Tapestry is important because it presents a narrative that requires likeness only in the realm of human understanding.[98] These battle stories tried not only to remind audiences of something familiar, but also to show them something new; and as these scholars have noted, there were many stories to be told. Vivid imagery—like that in the Tapestry, the Battle Chronicle and the *Roman de* Rou—would have made a tragic story visible to a range of people: those in different professions, and future viewers, who really did not know anything about what battle was like.

The monastic profession carried an obligation to imagine and to understand something of human suffering. Intellectual currents in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Anglo-Norman monastic world stressed the search for compassion through shared experience, notably in the devotional works of John of Fécamp and Anselm of Canterbury. In his religious works, Wace sought to make his Christian figures familiar and 'accessible' to a wide audience, stressing the Virgin Mary's own compassion in his *Conceptio Nostre Dame*; John and Anselm encouraged Christians to identify with Mary's suffering in order to relate to that of Christ.[99] If the creators of the Bayeux Tapestry were indeed the monks of Canterbury, they might well have endeavoured to express sympathy and compassion for the French and English combatants who fell and died together. As Elisabeth van Houts has shown, monks would not in practice have been entirely detached from their own families, despite their very different style of living.[100] In addition to divine will, the Tapestry's creators illustrated the equally Christian themes of passion and earthly suffering, and of the unresolved fates of the unburied dead in the margins, imagining and trying to recreate the horror of the experience. These monks, like Wace and the Battle chronicler a hundred years later, were anything but aloof; nor could their spiritual concerns and messages insulate them entirely from the shocking tragedies occuring in the world around them.

Stephen White has argued that the fables in the borders of the Tapestry provided a satirical, ironic and even humorous commentary on the events depicted, and on the secular world from which monks held themselves distant.[101] It is precisely the contrast between these borders and those surrounding the battle that magnified—and sought to convey—the shock experienced by the combatants when they met their enemies. The borders include humorous, derisive, and ironic material; but in the moment that the combatants engage in battle begin to die together, the Latin writing falls temporarily silent. This morbid silence, the fighters' camaraderie in death, and the uncanny piles of bodies in the margins make a powerful point about the horrors of war.[102] If there is a moral message explaining divine judgement and condemning sin,[103] there is also a universal point about the experience of battle, and the surprise and pathos that can vanquish humour and satire in an instant. The Tapestry offered a view of the recent experience of battle, the very recentness of which the Battle chronicler and Wace attempted to capture one hundred years later.

Imagining the Medieval Face of Battle

Earlier in the twelfth century, historians' primary concern in recounting a Malfosse-like incident was to describe what happened in the plunge, and to explain why it happened on a moral scale. Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon suggested that the battle—and the events of the battle—happened because of a larger pattern of sin or fortune: sometimes sins on both sides; sometimes sins of individuals;[104] sometimes changing fortune—which, if unpredictable on a small time scale, was reliably unpredictable over time. For Orderic, the plunge into the ditch nevertheless punished sins on both sides and provided conclusive evidence of God's justice.

A century after the Battle of Hastings, the meaning of the Malfosse incident in written sources had changed completely. The moral certainty about why it happened vanished.[105] What had been a punishment and a strategic plan was now a tragic accident that illuminated the serious consequences of battle, and what the experience was like for its victims. The workings of Providence were obscure; the fates of the men unresolved. For Wace and the Battle chronicler, the story illustrated the futility of a meaningless death in a battle. The losses in the Malfosse were bitter not as deaths in combat to an avowed enemy, but because they occurred in a moment when the violence ceased or should have ceased.

The episode had come to reflect more widespread fears of accidental death, akin to narratives of the White Ship disaster of 1120, in which Henry I's heir drowned. It is here we find Orderic at his most sympathetic: although he uses language of sorrow and grief more rarely than that of anger, Richard Barton has remarked on the depth and personal quality of his account of the widespread grief at this shocking, inextricable tragedy.[106] Those unprepared for death, or whose bodies were unidentified, unburied or lost at sea were at risk of being denied absolution.[107] Wace and the Battle chronicler found the Malfosse incident a grave tragedy because they found no evidence of justice for those killed. Chaos was a forceful agent in the battle. The emotional spectrum for understanding this narrative phenomenon, then, is wide—including compassion, nostalgia, morbid fascination, entertainment—but it is not diffuse: the entire spectrum is a product of a keen desire for what was irrevocably lost.

The magnitude of the horror persuaded them that meaningful explanation was not possible. The Battle chronicler asked, 'digne quis estimabit?'[108]—is it possible to convey worthily the suffering? It was a rhetorical question for which he well knew there was no answer. Although the chroniclers explained how the Malfosse incident happened, they made a deliberate authorial choice to express their inability to achieve consolation or historical resolution. The experience of this absence of order—distinguished by tragedy, chaos, fear, ignorance, gruesome disfigurement, unintended consequences, many unheroic and unjust deaths, sudden knowledge thrust on combatants too late—was the element of the Battle of Hastings narrative that needed to be added back into history one hundred years later. This article's analysis of the Malfosse story's journey after the Battle of Hastings, then, suggests three conclusions: first, that there is a need to rethink what chroniclers thought the past *was* and why they wrote about it; second, that this type of creative response to warfare has been disproportionately been considered a modern one; third, that the search for compassion is not a function of time.

First, why did this episode take such a hold on the imaginations of these two writers? If we understand these narratives of the Malfosse incident as expressions of writers imagining what it was like to be in battle,[109] the reason behind what has appeared to be a convoluted transmission of a story emerges with greater clarity. In writing of the Malfosse incident as an experience—an event that one lives through or feels, and how it impresses itself on the mind—the chroniclers made narrative choices to convey understanding about the past that resonate more with the school of *Verstehen* and phenomenology than with disinterested historical analysis, the classic province of positivist history.[110] Although a great deal of written and remembered information about the battle was available, new access to unmediated experience through historical research was impossible. This awareness prompted them to express in narrative a renewed longing for understanding the reality of the past on personal terms. The only way to access past experience was to imagine it.[111]

We have asked 'why'—does it make sense to ask 'why now'? Each writer had an incentive to propound the views of the Norman victors at Hastings, but neither of them did. Although Wace chronicled the deeds of King Henry II's illustrious Norman forebears[112] and Battle Abbey owed its existence to a deed of William I, both authors eschewed a moralizing or partisan explanation of the Malfosse incident. Compassion for the Christians killed in battle resurfaced and dominated. It might be argued that the interest in suffering on both sides is unsurprising at this moment in history: by the 1160s and 1170s, 'English' elites were often indistinguishable from 'Norman' elites, and as Laura Ashe has suggested, any interest in glorifying *Normanitas*, which was never strong in England, had certainly waned by this time.[113] Yet our chroniclers went even further: they empathized with an imagined personal experience of any individual combatant, and not only for 'the English' and 'the Normans' as groups in Conquest history. The personal tragedy of the battle was perhaps felt keenly because of the relatively smaller number of pitched battles during the reign of Henry II and into in the Angevin era.[114] Imagination helped to comprehend reality. As non-combatants, writing for an audience not involved in battles of the scale of Hastings, our chroniclers wanted to conjure the moment of maximum suffering.

Wace, and the Battle chronicler he inspired, sought to convey a particular kind of historical knowledge: an imagined recreation of the past that directly challenged analysis and emotional distance. The current view of Wace is that he was a serious scholar and historian who used entertainment as a means of communicating knowledge, and that in this regard he had much in common with the Latin prose chroniclers of his era.[115] Often credited with expanding imaginatively on information and great deeds,[116] his account of Malfosse shows that he was also committed to a vision of history that valued problems, confusion and suffering as part of the substance of the past. The two chroniclers filled a gap—not in quantity, but in kind, of historical observation—in their fellow historians' accounts of the battle. Implicitly, they advocated a sophisticated interplay of historical approaches to write a broader history, expanding stories of what happened and why to include experience.

Second, the medieval Malfosse stories suggest a need to remain alert to similarities in style and content—and to the real reasons for differences—in creative or artistic responses to past wars. Arnaldo Momigliano wrote that war was so pervasive an element of human experience in the classical world that those classical writers who recounted the history of wars sought only to explain the causes of specific wars or battles. For them, 'war' could not be explained because war was the natural state of affairs.[117] For Wace and the Battle chronicler, even if the causes of a battle could be explained, explanation of its events began to break down when they faced its human side. Single combat was a popular theme in many medieval accounts of battles, not least because it implied decision, agency and the possibility of resolution. Harold's supposed oath to William gave earlier Norman stories of the Battle of Hastings a tone of planning, intention and the unfolding of justice.[118] A human catastrophe like the Malfosse plunge, on the other hand, defied explanation because it was characterized by ignorance, futility, and injustice. There was nothing natural about it. This inability to achieve resolution made the event loom large in the mindscapes of these writers, even as the Battle of Hastings itself receded farther into the past. As William of Newburgh suggested in the 1190s,[119] something about the battle was not over; the wound was still fresh.

Narrative responses to the frightening qualities of combat have been called a distinctly modern way of talking about warfare. John Keegan ventured the axiom that the public is interested in 'what happened at the point of maximum danger', and suggested that this explained the literature of trench life that emerged in the wake of World War I, particularly in response to the Battle of the Somme. Keegan wrote, 'All great wars of modern times have evoked a literary response, but always at a certain remove from the termination of hostilities themselves.'[120] These kinds of responses to warfare's lack of sense or resolution happened in the Middle Ages as well, and much earlier than the well-documented Agincourt, which his book treats as well. We can apply Keegan's axiom to the fascination, both morbid and sympathetic, with the Malfosse incident. Wace in many words, the Battle chronicler in few, and the Bayeux Tapestry in fewer still, created dramatic and absorbing accounts of the Battle of Hastings; it has even been suggested that Wace's obsession with the battle lost him Henry II's favour.[121] There may be a dark side to these kinds of responses: the battle story could now be not only entertaining, but also unthreatening. Neither writer nor reader was really trapped in a pit in the middle of the Battle of Hastings, so a narrator could place the reader in its midst without physical danger. It was safe to stand at the brink of these past experiences, and to peer in. Yet awareness of this comparative safety spurred curiosity about, and a desire to imagine, the real danger of historical event.

The third and final point, which follows from the previous two, is that the emotional quality of the response to the battle is not a function of time. It has been argued passage of time permitted chroniclers in England and Normandy to write about the Conquest with a degree of emotional distance or acceptance not possible in the years immediately following the event. Elisabeth van Houts has argued for a connection between generational change and the memory of the battle in the Anglo-Norman realm.[122] According to this model, the pattern of response first reflected victory (for the Normans) and trauma (rendered in silence in the English sources); then,

as those who remembered the Conquest died out in the 1120s, a choice to commit the event to writing because monks felt keenly they were 'losing touch with the past'; and after four generations or one hundred years, 'detached' historical analysis was possible.[123] By this time, Marjorie Chibnall argued, an 'official version' of the justice and legitimacy of William's succession had been established, despite some critiques of William's conquest, and it persisted as 'accepted tradition' into the thirteenth century in the works of Matthew Paris and Ranulf Higden.[124] These analyses suggest that time brought a sense of closure, absolution, and resolution of an Anglo-Norman conflict.

As this article shows, there is a problem in linking either the ascendancy of disinterested analysis or the crystallization of an explanatory paradigm with the onward press of time. These arguments understate the fascination with the experience of battle and the compassion for the combatants' vain deaths that had, in fact, always existed in narratives of the battle. Emotional distance does not derive from temporal distance. This we see in the Tapestry's stunned silence, and the preoccupation reemerged with ardour in the works of Wace and the Battle chronicler. These two twelfth-century writers found remove and acceptance inappropriate and insufficient approaches to the battle.[125] Instead, there was a real fear that if they wrote with emotional distance, they and their readers would cease to be moved by past experience. So they did something about it. Seeking to recover and reanimate the experience of suffering, they pressed relentlessly against the impossibility of recreating experience.

Megan Cassidy-Welch remarked of the French response to Agincourt: 'Ultimately, individual mourning for the dead ran its course.'[126] The impression is that with time, grief ended. But does it? Our writers, wary of this very conclusion about Hastings, went back to the battle with their readers to look again. Mourning for the dead had not run its course. It resurfaced, reappearing in new guises. As William of Malmesbury wrote in his *Commentary on Lamentations* in the mid-twelfth century, 'Besides, it is characteristic of grief that it knows no limit or steady course. A grieving mind thinks on many things; similarly, the speech that gives utterance to the mind's thoughts has many twists and turns.'[127]

A century after the Battle of Hastings, the answer to David Bates's question—'1066: does the date still matter?'[128]—would have been a definitive yes. Wace and the Battle chronicler embraced grief and trauma,[129] placing themselves and the reader inescapably in the middle of the conflict, endeavouring to instil empathy by sharing in the combatants' experience. In recreating the Malfosse incident, they offered perceptive historical insights about the tragic experience of ignorance, futility, and danger in the Battle of Hastings.

Two twelfth-century chroniclers viewed the Malfosse incident as the moment of greatest danger, and they made it matter in the story of a momentous battle.[130] Fascinated with the experience of battle, they rejected explanations of the incident that cast it as deserved, or that tried to make sense of it and so to put it to rest. They chose not to try to explain, and implied that explanation was not possible. They dug out and animated the macabre terror of chaos. In imagining what it was like, they sought to know history more fully. They wished to make the

transit of the personal experience from one human being to another in the pursuit of understanding and compassion. They sought to move, and to be moved.

This was how they imagined the medieval face of battle.

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[1] Cf. J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976), p. 18.

[2] See e.g. M. Egger, J. Bürgschwentner, and G. Barth-Scalmani, 'Introduction: approaching the Centenary, 1914-2014', in *Other Fronts, Other Wars? First World War Studies on the Eve of the Centennial*, ed. M. Egger, J. Bürgschwentner, and G. Barth-Scalmani, (Leiden, 2014), pp. 1–15.

[3] Cf. Keegan, pp. 281–3; for a summary of the argument that a lived experience is not passive, but interactive, see broadly D. Carr, *Experience and History: Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World* (New York, 2014).

[4] Hereafter without single quotation marks, because the two chroniclers both described it as a 'fosse' or ditch.

[5] See 'The Persistence of Compassion' in this article, below.

[6] See e.g. D. Boquet and P. Nagy, *Medieval sensibilities: a history of the emotions in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2018), esp. p. x, chapter 6.

[7] Cf. early medieval religious leaders' obligation of *condescensio*: B. H. Rosenwein, *Emotional communities in the early middle ages* (Ithaca, 2006), pp. 85–91.

[8] Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval sensibilities*, p. ix, 7.

[9] 'En tot le jor n'out mie tanz / en la bataille ocis Normanz / com el fossé dedenz perirent, / ço distrent cil qui les morz virent.', Wace, *The Roman de Rou*, ed. A.J. Holden, trans. G.S. Burgess (St. Helier, Jersey, 2002),, ll. iii.8093-6, pp. 270-1.

[10] M. Garrison, 'The study of emotions in early medieval history: some starting points', *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), 243–50, at 245–7; cf. J. Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin, 1994), xiii-xiv.

[11] For an overview of the historiography of the Malfosse incident, see R.A. Brown, 'The Battle of Hastings', in *Anglo-Norman Warfare: Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare*, ed. M. Strickland (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 178–81; J.H. Round, *Feudal England: Historical Studies on the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (London, 1895), pp. 344–7, 374–80; A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 151; D. Waßenhoven, *Englands Eroberung durch die Normannen* (Munich, 2016), pp. 61–2; for discussions of the ditch's potential location, see C.T. Chevallier, 'Where was Malfosse? The end of the Battle

of Hastings', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 101 (1963), 1–13; see also W.H. Stevenson, 'Senlac and the Malfosse', *English Historical Review* 28 (1913), 292–303.

[12] The evolution and variants of the story are discussed below.

[13] J. Bradbury, *The Battle of Hastings* (Stroud, 1998), p. 209.

[14] M.K. Lawson, *The Battle of Hastings, 1066* (Stroud, 2003), p. 207.

[15] Brown, 178–81.

[16] E.A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England: Its Causes and Its Results*, vol. 3, 2nd ed., rev. (Oxford, 1870-1876), p. 503. See also pp. 502, 749–50.

[17] 'En la champaigne out un fossé; / Normanz l'aveient adossé, / en beliant l'orent passé, / ne l'aveient mie esgardé ; / Engleis ont tant Normanz hasté / e tant empeint e tant boté, / el fossé les ont fair ruser, / chevals e homes jambeter. / Mult veïssiez homes tumber, / les uns sor les altres verser / e trebuchier e adenter, / ne s'en poeient relever; / des Engleis i moreit assez / que Normanz ont od els tirez.'' ' Wace, *The Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.8079-92, pp. 270-1.

[18] '[oculis] cunctorum supprema patebat calamitas. Siquidem [et] inter hostiles gladios miserabile quoddam in proximo spatiose protentum ex naturali telluris hiatu [uel] forsan ex procellarum concauatione precipitium uaste patens, [licet uti in uastitate dumis uel tribulis obsitum] oculis minus preuideretur, innumeros et maxime Normannorum Anglos persequentium suffocauit. Nam dum inscii cum impetu dissilirent ibidem in preceps acti flebiliter contriti necabantur. Quod quidem baratrum sortito ex accidenti uocabulo Malfosse hodieque nuncupatur.' *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. E. Searle (Oxford, 1980), pp. 38–9; for 'impetu' cf. 'The Brevis Relatio de Guillelmo Nobilissimo Comite Normannorum', ed. E.M.C. van Houts, *Chronology, Conquest and Conflict in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 32–3.

[19] Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. 185-6.

[20] But cf. Blacker, for claims that Wace 'unwittingly blundered' and 'fell short of his goal' 'to glorify Anglo-Norman achievement', p. 193.

[21] Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. 5299–318.

[22] F.H.M. Le Saux, *A Companion to Wace* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 32.

[23] On Wace's interests in England, see Wace, *Wace, the Hagiographical Works: The Conception Nostre Dame and the Lives of St Margaret and St Nicholas*, ed. J. Blacker, G.S. Burgess, and A.V. Ogden (Leiden, 2013), pp. 15–16, 19; Le Saux, pp. 31, 79–80; Wace, *La vie de sainte Marguerite*, ed. E.A. Francis (Paris, 1932), p. xvii.

[24] Wace, *The Hagiographical Works*, p. 55.

[25] M. Bennett, 'Poetry as history? The *Roman de Rou* of Wace as a source for the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5 (Woodbridge, 1983), 36–7.

[26] P. Eley and P.E. Bennett, 'The Battle of Hastings according to Gaimar, Wace and Benoît: rhetoric and politics', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 43 (1999), 55.

[27] E.M.C. van Houts, 'The adaptation of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by Wace and Benoît', in *Non nova, sed nove: mélanges de civilisation médiévale, dédiés à Willem Noomen*, ed. M. Gosman and J. van Os (Groningen, 1984), p. 116; E. van Houts, 'Wace as historian', in *The History of the Norman People: Wace's Roman de Rou*, ed. G.S. Burgess and E.M.C. van Houts (Woodbridge, 2004), p. xxxvii n.20; Wace, *The History of the Norman People: Wace's Roman de Rou*, ed. G.S. Burgess and E.M.C. van Houts (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. xxvi–xxx; Blacker, 30–2; D. Bates, *The Normans and Empire: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford during Hilary Term 2010* (Oxford, 2013), p. 61; on Wace's sources, see J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain; Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and Its Early Vernacular Versions* (New York, 1974), pp. 468–9; M.E. Houck, *Sources of the Roman de Brut of Wace* (Berkeley, 1941), pp. 161–356.

[28] N. Vincent, 'King Henry II and the monks of Battle: the Battle Chronicle unmasked', in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 266–8.

[29] *Battle Chronicle*, p. 6; E. Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and Its Banlieu, 1066-1538* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 95–9.

[30] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 32–3; for the Chronicle as an exercise in 'myth-making' to provide a context for forged charters, see Vincent, p. 276.

[31] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 32–3, 40–1

[32] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 17, 19–21

[33] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 36–7; see also E.M. Hallam, 'Monasteries as war memorials: Battle Abbey and La Victoire', in *The Church and War*, ed. W.J. Sheils (Oxford, 1983), pp. 50–4.

[34] *Councils & Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church. II, A.D. 1066-1204*, ed. D. Whitelock et al., vol. 2 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 581–4; H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion and the Penitential Ordinance following the Battle of Hastings', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (October 1969), 225–242; K.A. Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 50; D.S. Bachrach, *Religion and the*

Conduct of War, c.*300-1215* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 101–3; see also 'Brevis Relatio', pp. 32–3; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum,* ed. D.E. Greenway (Oxford, 1996) vi.30, pp. 394–5.

[35] *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: the Acta of William I (1066-1087),* ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), pp. 62–7, 73–4, 135–65; for references to William's intent to found Battle Abbey to honour a vow to God on the occasion of the Battle of Hastings, see nos. 15, 16 (revised alongside forgeries); nos. 17, 19, 22 (forgeries).

[36] For William's interest in religion and earlier foundations, see e.g. Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 74, 77–8, 93

[37] *Regesta*, esp. nos. 17, 18, 20, 22.

[38] M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 73; Smith, pp. 46–9; for comprehensive discussion, see D.M.G. Gerrard, *The Church at War: The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and Other Clergy in England, c. 900–1200* (New York, 2016).

[39] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 224–5.

[40] See Vincent, p. 274.

[41] Bates, *The Normans and Empire*, p. 152, p. 62.

[42] See below, 'The Evolution'.

[43] *Battle Chronicle*, p. 16; for the chronicler's notes on the field, p. 64.

[44] A manuscript of Wace, BL MS. Royal 4.C.xi, was in the Battle Abbey library. See also *Battle Chronicle*, p. 17; T.D. Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland. Volume II, From A. D. 1066 to A. D. 1200: To the End of the Reign of Henry VII* (London, 1862-1871), p. 431.

[45] These are found in the Battle Abbey Collection (HBA), Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, USA: see e.g. HBA 35/1482, 36/1201. See also Bradbury, p. 210; Chevallier; C.H. Lemmon, 'The campaign of 1066', in *The Norman Conquest: Its Setting and Impact*, ed. Battle & District Historical Society (London, 1966), pp. 111–12.

[46] *Battle Chronicle*, p. 16; Searle, *Lordship and Community*, p. 131.

[47] William of Poitiers, *The* Gesta Guillelmi *of William of Poitiers*, ed. R.H.C. Davis and M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1998) ii.23, pp. 136-9.

[48] Cf. D. Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven, 2016), p. 244.

[49] William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* ii.25, pp. 140–1.

[50] 'In eo congressu Normannorum aliqui nobiliores ceciderunt, aduersitate loci uirtute eorum impedita.' William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* ii.24, pp. 138–9.

[51] Freeman, pp. 490, 503, 749–50; cf. Brown, pp. 180–1.

[52] *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Complete Tapestry in Colour*, ed. D.M. Wilson, (London, 1985), Pl. 66, 67; Brown, p. 180; for a description of the scene, its context, and the double meanings of the caption, see S.D. White, 'The fall of the English', in *The Bayeux Tapestry and Its Contexts: A Reassessment*, ed. E.C. Pastan, S.D. White, and K. Gilbert (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 241–3; S.D. White, 'Is the Bayeux Embroidery a record of events?', in Pastan, White, and Gilbert, p. 36.

[53] Noted by White, 'The fall of the English', 242. See below, 'The Persistence of Compassion'.

[54] 'Brevis Relatio' c. 6, p. 32.

[55] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, vol. 1, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 1998) iii.242, pp. 454–5.

[56] On William's attributions of causation, see E.A. Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing* (Oxford, 2017), chapter 4.

[57] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum* vi.30, pp. 392–5; Brown mentions only the Norman deaths in Henry's account, Brown, p. 180. On Henry, see also Lawson, 220–1.

[58] See M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 217–18, see also p. 213.

[59] *The* Gesta Normannorum Ducum *of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. E.M.C. van Houts, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1992-1995) vii.15(36), pp. 168–71; on Orderic's interpolations into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* (recorded after 1113, but which he worked on before 1109), see E. van Houts, 'The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*: a history without an end', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 3 (1981), 109; E. van Houts, 'Quelques remarques sur les interpolations attribuées à Orderic Vital dans les *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* de Guillaume de Jumièges', *Revue d'histoire Des Textes* 8 (1978), 213–222; see also William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, p. 138 n.1.

[60] William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* ii.24–5, pp. 138-41.

[61] *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* vii.15(36), ii, pp. 168-9.

[62] Orderic also included a brief reference to a noble's death from *Gesta Guillelmi*: Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1969-1980), pp. 176–9; on this passage, see also E.

Albu, 'Worldly woe and heavenly joy: the tone of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations*, ed. C.C. Rozier, D. Roach, G.E.M. Gasper, and E. van Houts (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 223–4; P. Bouet, 'La felicitas de Guillaume le Conquérant dans la *Gesta Guillelmi* de Guillaume de Poitiers', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1982), 37–52, 174–81.

[63] But cf. Bradbury for the claim that Orderic rendered William of Poitiers's episode 'in a rather confused manner', p. 210.

[64] Cf. *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* vii.15(36), ii, pp. 168–71, discussed above.

[65] 'Sic omnipotens Deus pridie idus Octobris innumeros peccatores utriusque phalangis puniit diuersis modis.' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* vii.15(36), ii, pp. 168–9. Earlier in this chapter, Orderic interpolated 'sabbati' ('on both sides') into William of Jumièges's description of the slaughter during the battle.

[66] Freeman, iii, p. 503 and n.2; cf. Bradbury, p. 209.

[67] 'et ueluti naufragia Scyllae fugientes, in Charybdi uoraginem submergendi dedicunt', Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 540–1; see also Jerome, 'Apologia Adversos Libros Rufini 3.22', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, vol. 23, n.d., coll. 494C–495A: 'in Scyllaeo littore … didici … insatiabilem Charybdis uoraginem' ('on Scylla's shore … I heard of … Charybdis's voracious chasm'); but cf. Brown, who does not mention Orderic's use of the word 'uorago' and claims that the location of the disaster first becomes a " 'deep pit' " in the Battle Chronicle, Brown, p. 179.

[68] van Houts, 'Wace as historian', pp. xxxix, xlvi–xlvii; Bates, *The Normans and Empire*, p. 61: 'he used Orderic's interpolations into the Gesta Normannorum Ducum and the Historia Ecclesiastica a great deal, and took trouble to master English material'.

[69] Blacker, pp. 30–45, esp. at p. 31; Bennett, 'Poetry as history?'.

[70] Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.5191-256, pp. 212-15; M. Bennett, 'Wace and warfare', in *Anglo-Norman Warfare: Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare*, ed. M. Strickland (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 245–7.

[71] Wace's narrative of the battle is analyzed in detail in Eley and Bennett, 'The Battle of Hastings', 54–68; Bennett, 'Poetry as history?', 27–34.

[72] Quoted above. Lines 8077-8 occur after l. 8066 in other MSS (p. 374 n.278); this does not alter the point.

[73] 'iloc tot dreit ou l'abeïe / de la Bataille est establie', Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.6965-6, pp. 248-9.

[74] ‘closre le fait de boen fossé’, Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.6969-72, pp. 248-9; see also Lawson, pp. 207, 220–1.

[75] Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.7847-8, pp. 266-7.

[76] On which see Brown, p. 180.

[77] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum* vi.30, p. 393.

[78] Quoted in full, above.

[79] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 32–3, 40–1, discussed above.

[80] Cf. M. Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 9–27.

[81] Keegan, p. 283.

[82] ‘forment furent espoënté’, Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ll. iii.8103, pp. 272-3; on the significance of this moment in the battle, see also Gerrard, pp. 37–8.

[83] Discussed above.

[84] E.g. Wace, *Roman de Rou*, l. iii.8559-60, pp. 280–1.

[85] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 38–41.

[86] ‘Has inter miserias lugubre patebat spectaculum, arua cadaueribus operiri nec in girum obtutibus aliud quam sanguinis ruborem offerri. Conualles undique defluens cruoris riuus replesse ad instar fluuii procul uidebatur.’’ ’ *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 38–9.

[87] Cf. A. Gransden, ‘Realistic observation in twelfth-century England’, *Speculum* 47 (1972), 29–51.

[88] William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, ed. P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy, vol. 1 (Warminster, 1988), pp. 40–1.

[89] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 38–9, pp. discussed above.

[90] ‘Vere stupenda proponitur ac deflenda infelicitatis humane misera conditio. In horum ergo contemplatione succumbente calamo subiungendum iam uidetur’, *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 40–1.

[91] For the idea of ‘emotional communities’, see B.H. Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about emotions in history’, *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002), 841–5.

[92] *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake (London, 1962), p. 171.

[93] Baudri of Bourgueil, *Les oeuvres poétiques de Baudri de Bourgueil (1046-1130)*, ed. P. Abrahams (Paris, 1926), l. 460.

[94] White, ‘The Fall of the English’, p. 241.

[95] But cf. R. Gameson, 'The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. R. Gameson (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 200, for the argument that textual and visual narratives differ in these regards.

[96] H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gameson, pp. 108–10.

[97] E.C. Pastan and S.D. White, 'Problematizing patronage: Odo of Bayeux and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, ed. M.K. Foys, K.E. Overbey, and D. Terkla (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 1–24; White, 'Is the Bayeux Embroidery a record of events?', pp. 50–3; S.D. White, 'The fables in the borders', in Pastan, White, and Gilbert, p. 160.

[98] For the powerful argument that the Tapestry sought to portray real history, and that this matters more than its English-versus-Norman perspective, see L. Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 45.

[99] Wace, *The Hagiographical Works*, 51; Le Saux, p. 79; T. H. Bestul, *Text of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 22–40, esp. at 34–8; R. Fulton, 'Praying with Anselm at Admont: a meditation on practice', *Speculum* 81 (2006), 700–33; T.H. Bestul, 'Meditatio/Meditation', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. A. Hollywood and P.Z. Beckman (New York, 2012), pp. 157–166.

[100] van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, p. 129; responding in part to arguments made by J. Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 155–91.

[101] S.D. White, 'The beasts who talk on the Bayeux Embroidery: the fables revisited', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 34, (2012), 209–236; White, 'The fables in the borders'.

[102] Cf. White, 'The Fall of the English', p. 109, for a comparison between the Tapestry's corpses and the biblical punishments described in Nahum 3:1-3.

[103] White, 'The Fall of the English', p. 241.

[104] Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, chapters 1 and 4.

[105] For earlier certainty, see e.g. Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 59–60.

[106] Orderic, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi, 300; Barton, 54-5.

[107] C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London, 1997), p. 35; on the response to the White Ship disaster, in which Henry I's heir drowned, pp. 71–3, 107.

[108] *Battle Chronicle*, pp. 40–1.

[109] Cf. Keegan, pp. 15–78.

[110] For a stimulating essay on this theme, see 'History as re-enactment of past experience', in R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 282–302.

[111] On the development of fiction in this period as an imagined window into experience, see L. Ashe, '1155 and the Beginnings of Fiction', *History Today* 65 (2015), 41–6.

[112] For Wace's English interests, see e.g. Le Saux, pp. 8–9.

[113] Ashe, *Fiction and History*, e.g. p. 7; H.M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066*-c.*1220* (Oxford, 2003), chap. 14.

[114] See e.g. J. Gillingham, 'Richard I and the science of war in the Middle Ages', in ed. *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, ed. Strickland, p. 197.

[115] E.g. Le Saux, pp. 283 ff.; Blacker, pp. 30–45; van Houts, 'Wace as historian'; Bennett, 'Poetry as History?', 28; C.F. Briggs, 'History, Story, and Community: Representing the Past in Latin Christendom, 1050–1400', in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400-1400*, ed. S. Foot and C. Robinson (Oxford, 2012), p. 405.

[116] See e.g. Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, p. 182.

[117] A. Momigliano, 'Some observations on causes of war in ancient historiography', *Revue Philosophique de La France et de l'étranger* 148 (1958), 375–376.

[118] Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 59–60; E.A. Winkler, 'The Norman Conquest of the Classical Past: William of Poitiers, Language and History', *Journal of Medieval History* 42 (2016), 459–76.

[119] William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, i, pp. 40–1, discussed above.

[120] Keegan, pp. 281–3.

[121] See Bennett, 'Poetry as history?', 36–8.

[122] Many chroniclers on the Continent, however, wrote with a critical eye: see E. van Houts, 'The Norman Conquest through European eyes', *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), 832–53.

[123] E.M.C. van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 125–6.

[124] Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*, pp. 18–21.

[125] But cf. van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, p. 126, which gives the Battle Chronicle as an example of one of the 'first attempts at detached historical analysis' of the battle.

[126] M. Cassidy-Welch, 'Grief and memory after the Battle of Agincourt', in *The Hundred Years War (Part II): Different Vistas*, ed. L.J.A. Villalon and D.J. Kagay (Leiden, 2008), p. 150.

[127] 'et est doloris proprium quia [dolor] modum nescit, tenorem ignorat. Sicut enim dolentis animus multa cogitat, ita sermo mentis interpres per multa se uersat.' William of Malmesbury, *Willelmi Meldunensis monachi Liber super explanationem lamentationum Ieremiae prophetae*, ed. M. Winterbottom, R.M. Thomson, and S. Sønnesyn (Turnhout, 2011), p. 69; William of Malmesbury, *On Lamentations*, trans. M. Winterbottom (Turnhout, 2013), p. 107, commenting on Jeremiah 1:12.

[128] D. Bates, '1066: does the date still matter?', *Historical Research* 78 (2005), 443–64.

[129] For the call to include the study of grief in work on medieval attachment, loss and consolation literature, see Garrison, 'The study of emotions', 249.

[130] Eley and Bennett, 'The Battle of Hastings', 55; Bennett, 'Poetry as history?', 25.