

Modelled response:

Arguably, you could criticise Howarth's view that William took 5 years of brutal repression to control England by examining the early months of his rule. When William first came to the throne he tried to create a mixed Anglo-Norman nobility combining the Norman settlers and remaining Anglo-Saxon elites. He allowed most of the Anglo-Saxon nobles to keep their land only seizing the land of those who had been killed at Hastings. By doing so William may have been trying to continue Edward the Confessor's method of ruling England which merged Norman and Anglo-Saxon culture something that had led to a period of peace. This demonstrates that William did not just use brutal repression to control the English but initially tried to work with the Anglo-Saxons. Furthermore, it could be argued that it was the Norman elites, rather than William himself who triggered the years of brutal repression. Unfortunately for William his method of land distribution did not please his Norman followers. By only seizing the land of those who died at Hastings he did not have sufficient land to give to the Normans. Consequently, the Normans began to seize the land of the Anglo-Saxons themselves. This led to resentment amongst the Anglo-Saxons who felt they were being mistreated and resulted in a series of Anglo-Saxon rebellions which William was forced to violently suppress. Overall, although short lived, the early months of William's reign prove that he initially intended to treat Anglo-Saxon culture with respect, contradicting the view that William took control through 5 years of repression.