The twelfth-century borderlands of the duchy of Normandy formed the cockpit for dynastic rivalries between the kings of England and France. This book examines how the political divisions between Normandy and its neighbours shaped the communities of the Norman frontier. It traces the region’s history from the conquest of Normandy in 1106 by Henry I of England, to the duchy’s annexation in 1204 by the king of France, Philip Augustus, and its incorporation into the Capetian kingdom. It explores the impact of the frontier upon princely and ecclesiastical power structures, customary laws, and noble strategies such as marriage, patronage, and suretyship. Particular attention is paid to the lesser aristocracy as well as the better-known magnates, and an extended appendix reconstructs the genealogies of thirty-three prominent frontier lineages. The book sheds new light upon the twelfth-century French aristocracy, and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of medieval political frontiers.

Daniel Power is Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of a number of articles concerning France in the central Middle Ages and co-editor of Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands 700–1700 (1999).
The series Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought was inaugurated by G. G. Coulton in 1921; Professor Rosamond McKitterick now acts as General Editor of the Fourth Series, with Dr Christine Carpenter and Jonathan Shepard as Advisory Editors. The series brings together outstanding work by medieval scholars over a wide range of human endeavour extending from political economy to the history of ideas.

For a list of titles in the series, see end of book.
Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought

The Norman Frontier in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries

For Clare
‘They always keep true faith towards their lord, though dwelling in evil borderlands . . .’

Charter of Louis VII (1153), referring to the inhabitants of Mantes
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PREFACE

In the course of producing a work of this type an author will happily incur many debts which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. My first words of gratitude are for Sir James Holt, who supervised the doctoral thesis that forms the basis of the present work. His influence upon my understanding of the dynamics of the Angevin ‘empire’ will be apparent throughout the chapters below. David Luscombe, as series editor, and Edmund King both kindly read the entire manuscript as it was prepared for publication, and their comments and encouragement have been of immense value. I am similarly grateful to Catherine Holmes for her comments upon the introduction. Three other people deserve my particular thanks. Nicholas Vincent drew my attention to countless manuscripts which he had discovered in French and British archives. Kathleen Thompson and Judith Everard generously shared their knowledge of Anglo-French and Breton history respectively with me. I also wish to thank the following historians for sending me offprints or unpublished research, or for their guidance, suggestions, or support: Martin Aurell, David Bates, Pierre Bauduin, Maître Billoré, Christine Carpenter, David Crouch, Marc-Antoine Dor, John Gillingham, Judith Green, Julian Haseldine, Matthew Innes, the late Tom Keefe, Rosamond McKitterick, Vincent Moss, John Morrill, Béatrice Pouille, Sandra Raban, Jonathan Steinberg and Elisabeth Van Houts. I am much obliged to William Davies of Cambridge University Press for his patience while awaiting the arrival of a much-delayed text.

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Preface

Paul Coles of the University’s Cartography Unit. The generosity of the British Academy enabled me to complete the necessary research for this project. For permission to consult manuscripts I am indebted to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, the Archives Départementales of Calvados, Côtes d’Armor, Eure, Eure-et-Loir, Ille-et-Vilaine, Loir-et-Cher, Maine-et-Loire, Mayenne, Nord, Oise, Orne, Sarthe, Seine-Maritime, Somme, Val d’Oise and Yvelines; the Bibliothèques Municipales of Alençon, Avranches, Le Mans and Rouen, and the Bibliothèque de l’Evêché de Sées; in England, the British Library, the Public Record Office, the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, Derbyshire and Hertfordshire County Record Offices and Birmingham City Archives. My work in France has been especially assisted by the hospitality of Marie-Elisabeth and Didier Bougeard, Angela and Francis Chronnell, Claire Graffeuille and Tony Gheeraert, and Bernard and Thérèse Dubust. The greatest debts of all are always the hardest to convey in mere words. For many years my parents and siblings have shared the history of the Norman frontier with me with a mixture of enthusiasm and bemusement. Towards the end of the project my children Susanna and Richard helped me along in their own inimitable ways. Most important of all, my wife Clare knows how much the completion of this work was made possible by her love, and I dedicate it to her with my own love in return.
NOTES ON NAMES, DATES, MANUSCRIPTS AND COINAGE

In surnames, I have followed the Anglo-Normanist conventions of using ‘de’ with identifiable French placenames and ‘of’ for English placenames, and of using English first names but French surnames, even after 1204 (with one or two familiar exceptions, e.g. Philippe de Beaumanoir). Where possible I have used the modern placename as represented on IGN maps (e.g. Fontevraud, La Roche-Mabile, Aumale and Torigny rather than Fontevrault, La Roche-Mabille, Aumèle or Torigny). A few familiar but non-standard forms have been retained (e.g. ‘de Clare’ rather than ‘of Clare’, and ‘de Quency’, ‘de Waremne’, ‘de Lacy’ and ‘de Montgomery’ rather than ‘de Cuinchy’, ‘de Varenne’, ‘de Lassy’ or ‘de Montgomery’), but in some cases the modern placename has been given on the map. Surnames for which identification is uncertain (e.g. Geoffrey de Bosco), or where no modern form exists (e.g. Hugh de Caigni), have been left in Latin. For Christian names, the more familiar form has generally been used, but sometimes a modern French form has seemed more appropriate: hence Guérin has been preferred to Warin and Renaud to Reginald, but Hasculf (closer to the Latin form) has been adopted in preference to the obsolete French forms Harcoit or Harscoét. In a few cases, the sources’ preference for differing forms suggest that standardisation would be misplaced (e.g. Gasco, Gazo and Gado).

Dates are given as they appear in acts, indicating ‘o.s.’ (old style) for dates where the method of calculating the New Year is uncertain; ‘n.s.’ (new style) is reserved for those where this can be ascertained, and ‘s.d.’ indicates undated acts.

In quotations from unpublished manuscripts the punctuation has been retained as far as possible, but capitalisation has been modernised.

For coinage, the mint is named where known; for French coinages this is specified in its modern French form (e.g. livres angevins).
NOTE ON MAPS

The diocesan boundaries are based primarily upon the late medieval pouillés, supplemented where possible by earlier episcopal confirmations (see chapter 3). These sources indicate the centres rather than the boundaries of parishes, and it is probable that some boundaries which did not follow watercourses, particularly those which crossed forests, were not defined exactly in the twelfth century; probable examples include the diocesan border between Avranches and Le Mans west of Domfront, the boundaries of the deaneries of Passais and La Roche-Mabile in the Forest of Andaine, and the district of La Montagne near the lands of the lords of Gournay.

In general, fortresses and religious houses are shown only if mentioned in the text.

In Maps i and viii the French coastline is based upon Atlas de l’an mil, 35, 19.
ABBREVIATIONS

For abbreviated titles of published primary sources, see bibliography.

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

ADC Archives Départementales du Calvados (Caen)
ADCA Archives Départementales des Côtes d’Armor (St-Brieuc)
ADE Archives Départementales de l’Eure (Evreux)
ADEL Archives Départementales de l’Eure-et-Loir (Chartres)
ADIV Archives Départementales de l’Ille-et-Vilaine (Rennes)
ADLC Archives Départementales du Loir-et-Cher (Blois)
ADM Archives Départementales de la Mayenne (Laval)
ADML Archives Départementales de la Maine-et-Loire (Angers)
ADN Archives Départementales du Nord (Lille)
ADOI Archives Départementales de l’Oise (Beauvais)
ADOR Archives Départementales de l’Orne (Alençon)
ADSA Archives Départementales de la Sarthe (Le Mans)
ADSM Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime (Rouen)
ADSO Archives Départementales de la Somme (Amiens)
ADVO Archives Départementales du Val d’Oise (Cergy-Pontoise)
ADY Archives Départementales des Yvelines (Versailles)
AN Archives Nationales de France (Paris)
BCA Birmingham City Archives
BES Bibliothèque de l’Evêché de Sées (Orne)
BL British Library (London)
BMAL Bibliothèque Municipale d’Alençon (Orne)
BMAV Bibliothèque Municipale d’Avranches (Manche)
BMF Bibliothèque Municipale de Flers (Orne)
BMM Bibliothèque Municipale du Mans (Sarthe)
BMRO Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen (Seine-Maritime)
BN Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris)
CUL Cambridge University Library
HRO Hertfordshire Record Office (Hertford)
List of abbreviations

OBL  Bodleian Library (Oxford)
PBSG  Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (Paris)
PRO  Public Record Office (London)

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

ANS  Anglo-Norman Studies (cited by date of publication; early volumes were called Proceedings of the Battle Conference)

ar.  arrondissement
BEC  Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes
BSAN  Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie
cant.  canton
CCM  Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale
ch.-l. du cant.  chef-lieu du canton
cne.  commune
dépt.  département
EHR  English Historical Review
HR  Historical Research
IGN  Institut Géographique National (maps in 1:25000 and 1:50000 series)
JMH  Journal of Medieval History
MGH  Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MGH, SS  Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores
MGH, SRG  Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
MSAN  Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie
MSAP  Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie
NMS  Nottingham Medieval Studies
NRHDFE  Nouvelle Revue Historique du Droit Français et Etranger
RHDFE  Revue Historique du Droit Français et Etranger
SHF  Société de l’Histoire de France
SHN  Société de l’Histoire de Normandie
VCH  The Victoria County History
Map 11 The frontiers of north-east Normandy
Map III  The Eure and Avre valleys
Map IV: North-east Maine, the Alençonais, and Perche.
Map v: The frontiers of Normandy, north-west Maine and Brittany