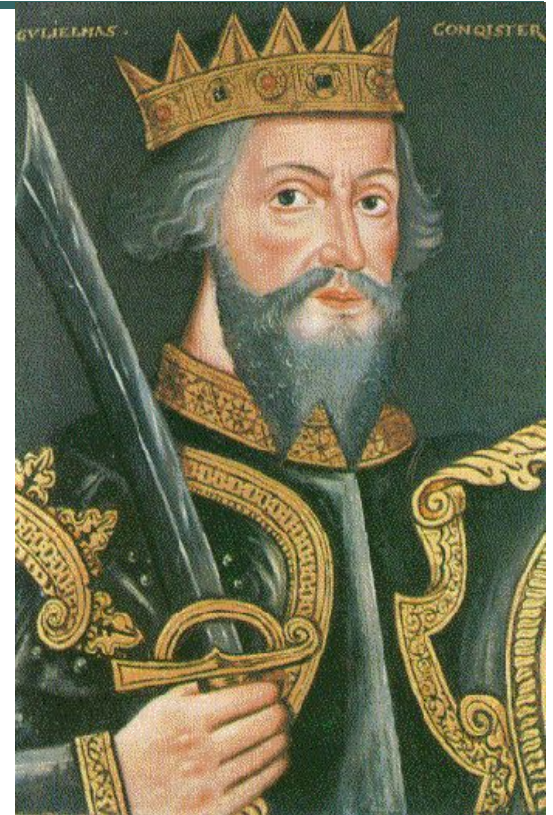


The Domesday Book

Made by Kychkin N, Osipova S, 23804/2

Definition

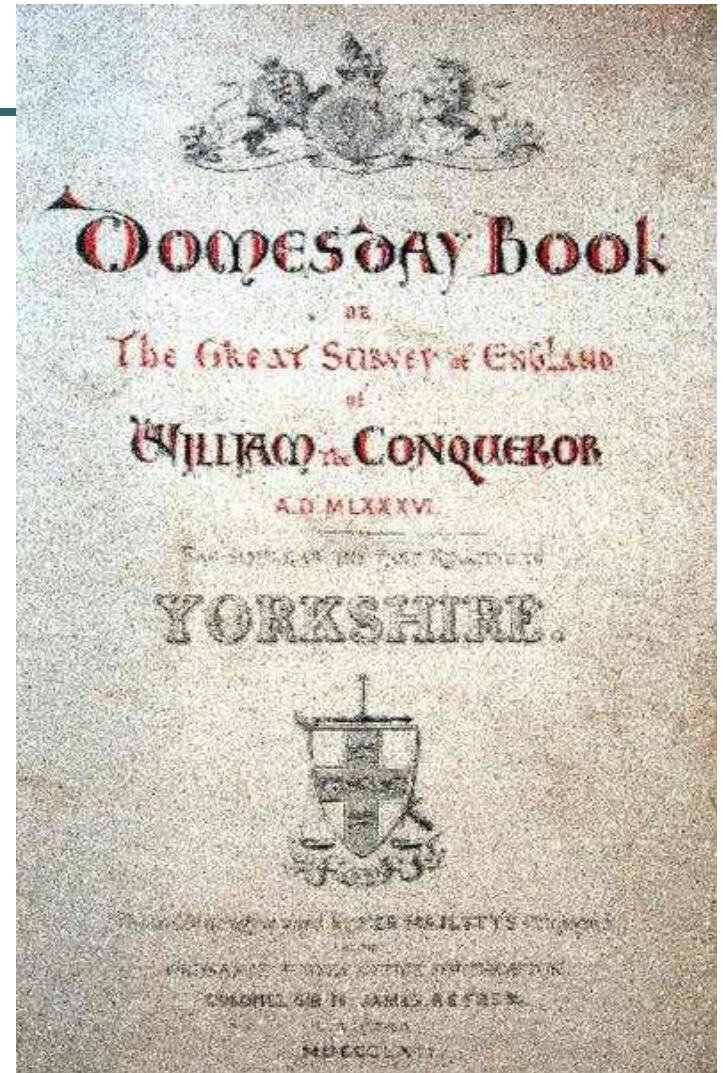
- The **Domesday Book** is a detailed survey of much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086 by order of *King William the Conqueror*, the earliest surviving public record, a hugely important historical resource. It contains records for 13,418 settlements in the English counties.



William the Conqueror

Name

The manuscripts do not carry a formal title. It was nicknamed the 'Domesday' Book by the native English, in allusion to the Last Judgement



The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
states:

*“While spending the
Christmas time of
1085 in Gloucester,
William had deep
speech with his
counsellors and sent
men all over
England to each shire
to find out what or
how much each
landholder had in*

Historical context

- In 1066 William, Duke of Normandy, defeated the Anglo-Saxon King, Harold II, at the Battle of Hastings and became King of England
- In 1085 England was threatened with invasion from Denmark and Norway
- At Christmas 1085 he ordered to discover the resources and taxable values of all parts of England
- The King was essentially interested in recording his royal rights which he wished to maximise



*Death of King Harold II at the
Battle of Hastings, 1066*

The Making Of Domesday

- The task of gathering the information for Domesday began in January 1086. The inquisitors had to ask the following questions:
 - *How many ploughs are there in the manor ?*
 - *How many mills and fishponds ?*
 - *How many freemen, villagers and slaves are there in the manor ?*
 - *How much woodland, pasture, meadow ?*
 - *What does each freeman owe in the manor ?*
 - *How much is the manor worth ?*

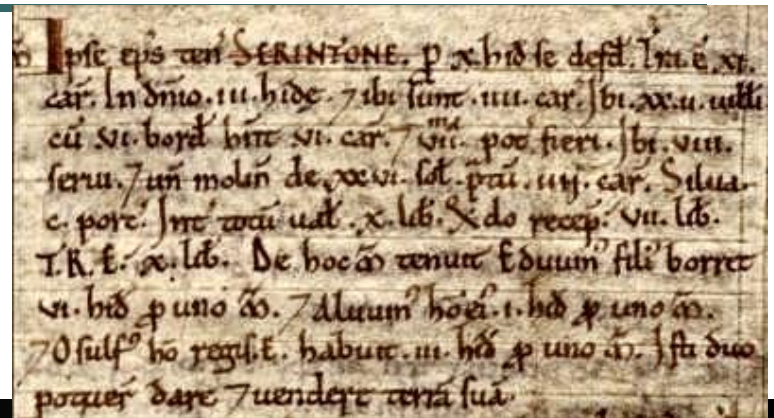
Norman officials checked the answers and the punishments for giving false information were severe. The **reeve** from a manor and six peasants were questioned for every manor visited. A reeve was a type of farm manager.

The Domesday Book was written in Latin. However, there were some artificial words inserted for native terms that had no equivalent in Latin. The text was highly abbreviated.



Purpose

- The primary purpose of the survey was to define and record the fiscal rights of the king.
These were mainly:
 - the national land-tax
 - the proceeds of the crown lands
 - other significant dues
- estimating economic resources for every manor (The king wanted to discover who owned what, how much it was worth and how much was owed to him as King in tax, rents, and military service)
- maximizing royal rights
- estimating the annual value of all the land in the country
- the threat of war from Denmark and Norway



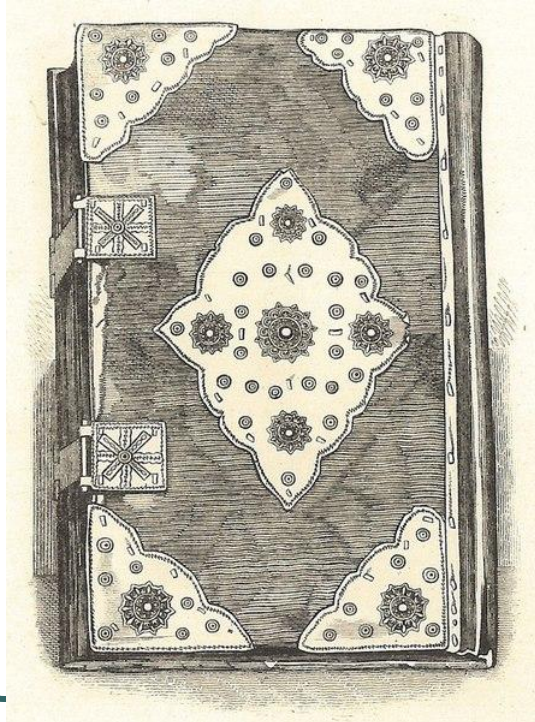
The survey was considered so thorough that one Englishman wrote:

- "...so very thoroughly did William have the inquiry carried out, that there was not a single piece of land, not even an ox, cow or pig which escaped the notice of the survey."



Structure

The Domesday Book consists of two independent works: "**Little Domesday**" and "**Great Domesday**".



Why were many places listed in the Domesday Book as 'wasted'?

- The term 'waste' or 'wasted' described the settlements that William and his army had passed through and left their mark on during their conquest. the term was also used sometimes for manors simply not paying geld for one reason or another

