

NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Role of the King

The king was the only one who could make laws for the whole kingdom. He alone could raise taxes on a national level. Certain more serious legal cases 'royal pleas' were only heard by the King or the King's court. To encourage loyalty, the king would offer land but could also grant offices such as sheriffsdoms. Those who were not a loyal officer could expect to have their land taken off them. Lords who wanted to have power or land needed to remain loyal.

Friction on the borders

William tried to invade Scotland in 1072 but failed; the border between England and Scotland was under constant dispute. Malcolm III (King of Scotland) swore fealty to William under the Treaty of Abernathy in 1072. Wales on other hand was not a united country; it was made up of five warrior kingdoms ruled by princes. William placed his most trusted earls along the border known as the Marcher Lords of Hereford, Shrewsbury and Chester. These earls had more powers than regular earls to allow them to adequately defend the border.

Change and continuity in government

Anglo-Saxon	Norman
<p>The King governed the country, advised by the Witan (King's council). He created new laws, controlled the production of money, owned and granted land, had the ability to raise an army and decide taxes. The main instrument of government was to issue an order in writing (called a writ!).</p>	<p>The King governed the country, advised by the Curia Regis (King's council). William enforced the laws much more strictly. The king's writs (official documents and proclamations) were used to maintain control, oath ceremonies were held where promises were made to serve William.</p>
<p>The land was divided into earldoms; Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex, Kent. The earls had a lot of power. The most powerful position was the Earl of Wessex. If a land-owning person died, their land would be divided between their sons.</p>	<p>The land was divided into smaller areas that meant that no one person or family had all of the power. If a land-holding person died, it would be given to the eldest son only; this was called primogeniture. If there was no eldest son, the land was returned to king.</p>
<p>Most of society was made up of peasant farmers, slaves and thegns (local lords). Thegns were those who held their land directly from the king and served him.</p>	<p>Society was divided under the Norman feudal system, based mainly on landholding. Villeins were those who actually did the farming and the work, but had little power.</p>
<p>Earls were the highest Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, the area controlled by an earl was called an earldom, the earl's power relied on support of the thegns.</p>	<p>Barons and Tenants in Chief were the large landholders of Norman England who held their land directly from the king, they also had a lot of power.</p>

THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

Anglo-Saxon Earls

Under the Anglo-Saxons, England was divided into earldoms (large areas of land) ruled by earls. This land had been given to them by the king, but he could also take land away. The king could request troops from earls during times of war and the service of their housecarls and fyrd. It was important that the king gave out land to his followers.



Feudal System

King William directly owned 20% of the land. 25% was owned by the Church. The rest was shared out amongst William's supporters (200 Bishops and Barons).

Barons and Bishops were granted land (they did not own it- they held it in tenure). In return they swore fealty and paid homage to William. They also promised money and service.



Knights promised to be loyal to their baron or bishop. A knight could also be called a Lord of the Manor and granted some of their land to the peasants. They served a set number of days in the army.



Peasants had to obey the Lord of the manor in return for their land. They also gave the lord some of their crops and worked a set number of days on his lands without pay. Most could not leave the Lord's land without permission, therefore most were not freemen.

Slaves made up 10% of the population in 1066. Slavery rapidly declined as they were expensive to keep and the Church disapproved.

Key terms



Key Term	Definition
Aristocracy	Highest class in society
Baron	Norman version of an earl
Bishop	A senior member of the church
Earldom	An area of land under the control of an Earl.
Fealty	An oath of loyalty and a promise to serve your lord. It was a religious act.
Feudalism	A system which controls land
Patronage	Being given land in return for loyalty
Thegn	Anglo-Saxon nobleman

William developed the system to his advantage:
1. Norman Lords replaced Anglo-Saxons. 2. The King had far more power. 3. The peasants were more exploited. The Norman Feudal system was more formal than the Anglo-Saxon system.

Norman Barons

Under the Normans, the King, the Church and 200 Norman Barons and Bishops held the land. Barons were granted smaller amounts of land- often confined to one county, but William did not let any one person have too much land. This made it much harder for them to build a power base from which to challenge the King's position. Before the Normans, 4,000 thegns had held land, however by 1086 there were only 4.

LAW AND ORDER

Law enforcement

Courts

The majority of the court system continued from the Anglo-Saxons, however the Normans introduced a new court, the Lord's Court, also known as the Honourial Court. This court was introduced as there were many disputes over land; it also allowed the Lord to deal with his tenants.

King's Court	Dealt with Royal pleas (the most serious cases) of murder, treason, arson, robbery and rape
Shire Court	Supervised by a sheriff and met more regularly under the Normans. Dealt with crimes involving violence or theft.
Hundred Court	Held monthly with a bailiff in charge. Dealt with minor disputes.
Lord's Court (NEW!) 	For the lord to deal with his tenants. Dealt with crime, disputes, supervised property transactions and announced new laws from the king. The tenants also gave the lords advice.
Manor Court	Controlled by the Lord of the Manor. Dealt with day to day life issues, such as bad ploughing. Male villeins could pay for a license to marry.

Trial by Ordeal

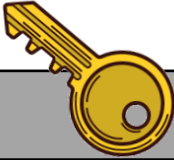
Trial by ordeal had existed before the Normans. The Anglo-Saxons trial by hot iron and trial by cold water. The Normans introduced trial by battle. This was for serious offences and reflected the Normans militaristic culture. All of the trials were based on religious beliefs.

A trial by battle took place between the accused and the accuser. It was usually done by richer people using swords. It was not intended to be a fight to the death; the idea was God would intervene to help the person in the right. If a person surrendered it suggested they were guilty. These trials were not used very often.

Murdrum Fine

This fine was introduced to protect the Normans from Anglo-Saxon hostility. If a Norman was killed and their murderer had not been found within 5 days, the hundred (all the local community) would be fined. These fines helped to reduce violent acts against the Normans but when attacks did occur, the fines provided valuable income for the King.

Key terms



Terms	Definition
Arson	To deliberately set fire to something
Bailiff	Appointed by a sheriff. Collected taxes for the king.
Constable	Had power of arrest. Held the key to the stocks. Not well paid.
Hue and Cry	Everyone had to raise the alarm if they saw a crime taking place. Everyone who heard the alarm had to try and catch the suspect. Fine if ignored.
Oath	A promise sworn on a holy book or relic. Oaths declined under the Normans.
Sheriff	(Shire-Reeve). In charge of a shire.
Tithing	10-12 freemen promise to prevent each other from committing crime. If one did, they had to reveal the guilt one or risk all of them being punished.
Treason	To disobey the king
Watchmen	Made sure people kept to the curfew and prevent crime. Usually volunteers.

DOMESDAY SURVEY

Laws of Inheritance

Under the Anglo-Saxons property and land was divided between all the sons. However, the Normans changed this and property was passed on intact to the eldest son. This was called primogeniture. Younger brothers and sisters were left with nothing after their father's death. If there was no eldest son, the land would be returned to the lord. This meant that the Normans were able to keep large estates of land and maintain power effectively. The Lord could then keep the land, grant it away as a gift or sell it off. These laws were known as feudal incidents and gave a totally new source of money and power for the king and the elite. It meant the lords had continuing control of how much their tenants lands descended from one generation to another.



Threat of Invasion

In 1085, William faced the threat of invasion from Danish Vikings and the Count of Flanders, so he called a Council of War in Gloucester. He needed to enforce a geld (tax) to pay for his army. He ordered an inventory to be drawn up in order to help him raise the tax. The Survey was suggested in 1085 and carried out in 1086. It was only written in a book in the time of William I. The survey became known as Domesday which means 'day of judgement'. The term was only used in the 12th century because by then the legal authority of the Survey was seen as being equal to that of God's on judgement day.



The Domesday Survey

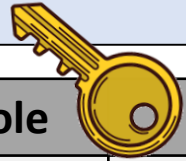
In 1085 William asked officials to conduct a survey of all property and resources in England. It was a massive undertaking which was completed in less than a year. The resulting document is one of the best sources we have about Norman England. The Norman Conquest had completely changed the ownership of land in England. Since 1066 people had died or land had been sold and land disputes were common. A thorough survey would reveal exactly who owned what and how that had changed since 1066. Even more importantly it would allow William to change rents and tax people more efficiently. When it was presented to the King at Salisbury on 1st August 1086, the most important tenants were made to swear loyalty to the King. The final survey as we have it today was completed by William's son, William Rufus.

What can we learn from it?

The Domesday Book tell us who owned the land but also sheds light on England's population and how much wealth that population did or did not have. There were about 2,000 knights and 10,000 Norman settlers. The total population was between 1.5 and 2 million people. Some places were left out including London and Winchester, perhaps because the survey was left unfinished. About 250 people controlled the land, this was similar to the time of Edward the Confessor. However, the main difference was that under King Edward the land belonged mostly to Anglo-Saxons, under William it was mainly owned by Normans.



VILLAGE LIFE

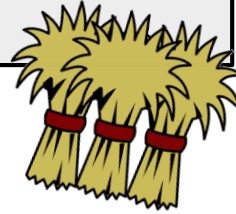


Role	Responsibilities
Bordars, Cottars, Villeins	Peasants who were not free. Worked on the lord's land for free. Could not leave the village without permission. Were granted some land to farm for themselves. Did not have to swear fealty as not important enough.
Bailiff	Appointed by a sheriff. Collected taxes for the king.
Freemen	Upper-peasantry. Had to obey the Lord of the Manor in return for their land. Gave the lord some of their crops and worked a set number of days on the lord's land unpaid.
Miller	Produced grain to make bread for the area. Bread had to be baked in the ovens of the Lord of the Manor and the lord decided how much money the miller paid for this.
Priest	Ran the local church, he was responsible for ensuring marriages were legal
Reeve	Day-to-day management of the manor and its peasants, an essential role to ensure the everyone did their jobs. The reeve was a peasant chosen by the lord or through a vote by the peasants.
Slaves	Made up about 10% of the population of 1066. They had no freedom and no land. Slavery rapidly declined after the Norman Conquest.



Villages

90% of people lived in the countryside during this period. There were small clusters of houses with between 100 and several 100 people. They were controlled by the lord of the manor, who lived in the manor house. Other than having a new Norman landlord, the lives of peasants were more or less the same. The Domesday Book records 13,400 villages in 1086.



Lifestyle

Peasants lived in cottages made of wattle and daub, they grew crops on strips of land and grazed animals on common land. They used ploughs for farming which were pulled by oxen. At the centre of each village was a church made from stone. The church bell rang to tell villagers when to start and finish work. Peasants spent most of their free time in the church. The Church was also used to store goods, served as a prison and could act as a fortress if the village was under attack. The Manor House was where the Lord of the Manor lived (knights or barons). The land they owned was known as a demesne, it included peasants houses, barns, a church, a mill, forests and lakes. Manor houses were made from stone, making them warmer and more secure.

Forest Laws

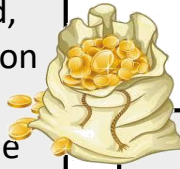
The Normans created game reserves such as the New Forest in Hampshire and drove 500 families from the land. The Forests were Royal and Forest Law banned Anglo-Saxons from hunting in the forests. If they did they faced serious punishments such as being blinded. The rich hated it as they lost out of sport, the poor lost out on a source of food and their crops were damaged.



TOWN LIFE

Growth of Towns

There had been very few towns in Anglo-Saxon England, but they were very important trading centres. Anglo-Saxon England had a strong trade with mainland Europe and Scandinavia, mainly exporting wool and cloth. Under the Normans trade increased and so did the number and size of towns. Trade increased because the Norman Lords had greater links with mainland Europe. Between 1066 and 1100, 21 new towns were created. Many developed as new religious centres with new Cathedrals in Durham, Ely, Salisbury, Winchester and Lincoln. London was the largest town with 10,000 inhabitants. By 1086 only 5% of the population lived in towns.



Town Society



Merchants, lawyers, doctors and property owners were at the top of the town hierarchy, followed by craftsmen. Unskilled workers and servants formed the lower ranks as they were employed by the richer people in towns. A Burgess was a town dweller from the upper ranks of townspeople; Lincoln had 970 burgesses. Burgesses had legal and administrative responsibilities but the amount of power they had did vary from town to town. Burgesses could also be craftspeople such as weavers and goldsmiths, or conductors of trade such as bakers and butchers.

The importance of trade

Trade played an important role in the growth of towns during the Norman period. Trade links with France were strengthened at the expense of Scandinavian links, however the Normans brought stability in trade and this led to the development of many towns. Markets and fairs could only be held if a Franchise (authorisation for a group of towns people to carry out business activity) was given in the form of a grant. After the Norman Conquest 2,800 grants were given. Whilst markets gave traders a place to buy and sell, fairs marked religious events and were an occasion to celebrate. The Normans introduced guilds to England. A guild is a society of merchants which controlled who was allowed to carry out business there. To practice as a merchant you had to be part of the guild. Craft guilds were introduced in the later Middle Ages and were used to monitor the quality of goods and set prices, wages and conditions for work.



Top Trades



1. Salt was very important product as it was used for cooking and to preserve food. The town of Droitwich, for example, grew rapidly due to the production and sale of salt. The Domesday Book shows that there were 13 salt houses in Droitwich and that three salt workers paid their tax to the King in Salt.
2. The production of iron and lead was very important in Norman England for building houses and making weapons. Towns that specialised in metalworking were often situated near woodland, because wood was used in the furnaces needed to melt and shape metal.
3. Wool was in great demand in England and neighbouring counties for making clothes. It was produced in the countryside, but was brought along major rivers to market in towns such as York and Lincoln. Wool was often exported abroad to towns such as Flanders in Belgium. Some English coastal towns grew as centres of international trade, including Boston, London and Southampton. Towns like Bristol grew as a result of trade in wine from Gascony.