**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

**The Domesday Survey (Questions & Answers)**

<http://spartacus-educational.com/EXnormans4.htm>

This commentary is based on the classroom activity: [The Domesday Survey](http://spartacus-educational.com/EXnormans4.htm)

Q1: We only know the names of a few people who carried out the Domesday survey. One of these was the Bishop of Durham who was in charge of the survey in the south-east of England. Why do you think William chose a northern, rather than a southern bishop to carry out a survey of the south-west? Source 3 should help you answer this question.

A1: Robert of Hereford explains how William sent people to the villages to check on the commissioners who recorded the original details in the Domesday survey. This suggests that William did not trust his commissioners. Robert of Hereford also points out that they were strangers to the area. William was probably frightened that if the commissioners knew the people they might do them a favour by under estimating the property they owned. That is why William chose commissioners who were strangers to the area. This helps to explain why William sent the Bishop of Durham to south-west England.

Q2: Compare the value of sources 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 to a historian writing a book on the Domesday survey.

A2: Source 2 explains how William sent out men to survey all of England. This is supported by sources 3, 4 and 6. Robert of Hereford also supplies the date for the Domesday survey ("in the twentieth year of William"). This date is confirmed by source 6. Florence of Worcester points out that some people rebelled against this survey being carried out ("the land was vexed with much violence"). The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides details of the kind of information . that the survey was trying to find out. More detailed information on the questions asked by the commissioners can be found in source 7. The answers supplied in this extract of the Domesday survey gives the historian a good idea of the questions that William must have supplied to his commissioners. Source 5 is an illustration produced in 1868 and would be of little value to a historian writing a book on the Domesday survey.

Q3: Give three reasons why William arranged for the Domesday survey to be carried out in 1086. Which reason do you think is most important?

A3: The Domesday survey helped William discover how much money the people in England could afford to pay in tax. This was probably the most important reason for the survey. The survey also provided knowledge about the distribution the population in England. This enabled William to plan the defence of England more effectively. Another reason for the survey was that it helped William to settle disputes over the ownership of land.