

Chapter 1 : William the Conqueror () - Find A Grave Memorial

William the Conqueror's rise to power once he became King of England was not an easy www.nxgvision.com Norman invader, who had used military force to put himself on the throne, faced a difficult challenge to suppress almost two decades of disgruntled rebellions from across England, Scotland and Wales.

William the Conqueror Save William I[a] c. A descendant of Rollo , he was Duke of Normandy from onward. After a long struggle to establish his power, by his hold on Normandy was secure, and he launched the Norman conquest of England six years later. The rest of his life was marked by struggles to consolidate his hold over England and his continental lands and by difficulties with his eldest son. His illegitimate status and his youth caused some difficulties for him after he succeeded his father, as did the anarchy that plagued the first years of his rule. During his childhood and adolescence, members of the Norman aristocracy battled each other, both for control of the child duke and for their own ends. In William was able to quash a rebellion and begin to establish his authority over the duchy, a process that was not complete until about His marriage in the s to Matilda of Flanders provided him with a powerful ally in the neighbouring county of Flanders. By the time of his marriage, William was able to arrange the appointment of his supporters as bishops and abbots in the Norman church. His consolidation of power allowed him to expand his horizons, and by William secured control of the neighbouring county of Maine. In the s and early s William became a contender for the throne of England, then held by the childless Edward the Confessor , his first cousin once removed. William built a large fleet and invaded England in September , decisively defeating and killing Harold at the Battle of Hastings on 14 October After further military efforts William was crowned king on Christmas Day , in London. He made arrangements for the governance of England in early before returning to Normandy. In William ordered the compilation of the Domesday Book , a survey listing all the landholdings in England along with their pre-Conquest and current holders. William died in September while leading a campaign in northern France, and was buried in Caen. His reign in England was marked by the construction of castles, the settling of a new Norman nobility on the land, and change in the composition of the English clergy. He did not try to integrate his various domains into one empire but instead continued to administer each part separately. Normandy went to his eldest son, Robert Curthose , and his second surviving son, William Rufus , received England. Background Norsemen first began raiding in what became Normandy in the late 8th century. Permanent Scandinavian settlement occurred before , when Rollo , one of the Viking leaders, and King Charles the Simple of France reached an agreement surrendering the county of Rouen to Rollo. The lands around Rouen became the core of the later duchy of Normandy. Alfred returned to England in to visit his mother and perhaps to challenge Harold as king. William was born in or at Falaise , Duchy of Normandy, most likely towards the end of Robert was accused by some writers of killing his brother, a plausible but now unprovable charge. It is unclear if William would have been supplanted in the ducal succession if Robert had had a legitimate son. Although some of his supporters tried to dissuade him from undertaking the journey, Robert convened a council in January and had the assembled Norman magnates swear fealty to William as his heir[2][15] before leaving for Jerusalem. He died in early July at Nicea , on his way back to Normandy. Some relatives switched sides over time, and are marked with both symbols. William faced several challenges on becoming duke, including his illegitimate birth and his youth: At first, Alan of Brittany had custody of the duke, but when Alan died in either late or October , Gilbert of Brionne took charge of William. According to stories that may have legendary elements, an attempt was made to seize William at Valognes, but he escaped under cover of darkness, seeking refuge with King Henry. The period from to saw almost continuous warfare, with lesser crises continuing until After a long effort, the duke succeeded in exiling Guy in They succeeded in capturing an Angevin fortress, but accomplished little else. William is in the centre, Odo is on the left with empty hands, and Robert is on the right with a sword in his hand. The first, which he led, faced Henry. This second force defeated the invaders at the Battle of Mortemer. According to a late source not generally considered to be reliable, papal sanction was not secured until , but as papal-Norman relations in the s were generally good, and Norman clergy were able to visit Rome in without incident, it was probably secured

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After waiting a short while, William secured Dover, parts of Kent, and Canterbury, while also sending a force to capture Winchester, where the royal treasury was. Next he led his forces around the south and west of London, burning along the way. He finally crossed the Thames at Wallingford in early December. William then sent forces into London to construct a castle; he was crowned at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day Ecclesiastical offices continued to be held by the same bishops as before the invasion, including the uncanonical Stigand. He left his half-brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, in charge of England along with another influential supporter, William fitzOsbern, the son of his former guardian. The town held out for 18 days, and after it fell to William he built a castle to secure his control. Their forces landed

near Bristol but were defeated by Eadnoth. By Easter, William was at Winchester, where he was soon joined by his wife Matilda, who was crowned in May. Edwin and Morcar submitted, but William continued on to York, building castles at York and Nottingham before returning south. On his southbound journey, the king began constructing castles at Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Cambridge. Then the king returned to Normandy late in the year. Although William returned to York and built another castle, Edgar remained free, and in the autumn he joined up with King Sweyn of Denmark. York was captured by the combined forces of Edgar and Sweyn. Edgar was proclaimed king by his supporters, but William responded swiftly, ignoring a continental revolt in Maine. William symbolically wore his crown in the ruins of York on Christmas Day, and then proceeded to buy off the Danes. He marched to the River Tees, ravaging the countryside as he went. But William was not finished; he marched over the Pennines during the winter and defeated the remaining rebels at Shrewsbury before building castles at Chester and Stafford. This campaign, which included the burning and destruction of part of the countryside that the royal forces marched through, is usually known as the "Harrying of the North"; it was over by April, when William wore his crown ceremonially for Easter at Winchester. The legates ceremonially crowned William during the Easter court. Some of the native abbots were also deposed, both at the council held near Easter and at a further one near Whitsun. The Whitsun council saw the appointment of Lanfranc as the new Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas of Bayeux as the new Archbishop of York, to replace Ealdred, who had died in September. William was able to secure the departure of Sweyn and his fleet in the summer, allowing him to return to the continent to deal with troubles in Maine, where the town of Le Mans had revolted in 1066. Another concern was the death of Count Baldwin VI of Flanders in July, which led to a succession crisis as his widow, Richilde, was ruling for their two young sons, Arnulf and Baldwin. Richilde proposed marriage to William fitzOsbern, who was in Normandy, and fitzOsbern accepted. But after he was killed in February at the Battle of Cassel, Robert became count. Earl Edwin was betrayed by his own men and killed, while William built a causeway to subdue the Isle of Ely, where Hereward the Wake and Morcar were hiding.

Chapter 2 : William the Conqueror - History Learning Site

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As wrote by Marjorie Chinnall "the greatest risk that William took was probably that of fighting in person Waltham Abbey, which had been founded by Harold, later claimed that his body had been secretly buried there. After waiting a short while, William secured Dover, parts of Kent, and Canterbury, while also sending a force to capture Winchester, where the royal treasury was. Next he led his forces around the south and west of London, burning along the way. He finally crossed the Thames at Wallingford in early December. William then sent forces into London to construct a castle; he was crowned at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day Ecclesiastical offices continued to be held by the same bishops as before the invasion, including the uncanonical Stigand. He left his half-brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, in charge of England along with another influential supporter, William fitzOsbern, the son of his former guardian. The town held out for 18 days, and after it fell to William he built a castle to secure his control. Their forces landed near Bristol but were defeated by Eadnoth. By Easter, William was at Winchester, where he was soon joined by his wife Matilda, who was crowned in May Edwin and Morcar submitted, but William continued on to York, building castles at York and Nottingham before returning south. On his southbound journey, the king began constructing castles at Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Cambridge. Then the king returned to Normandy late in Although William returned to York and built another castle, Edgar remained free, and in the autumn he joined up with King Sweyn of Denmark. York was captured by the combined forces of Edgar and Sweyn. Edgar was proclaimed king by his supporters, but William responded swiftly, ignoring a continental revolt in Maine. William symbolically wore his crown in the ruins of York on Christmas Day, and then proceeded to buy off the Danes. 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Chapter 3 : William the Conqueror | Revolv

Born circa in Falaise, Normandy, France, William the Conqueror was an illegitimate child of Robert I, duke of Normandy, who died in while returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Robert Bartlett describes how the fateful battle of unfolded. Harold marches his troops miles south to meet the Norman invaders in Hastings. Although his men are tired, the battle is closely fought: At dusk, the Normans finally overcome the English and Harold is killed when an arrow lodges in his eye. William is crowned in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day. I have taken England with both my hands. William, setting foot on English soil in Slaughter and starvation in northern England Topfoto The campaign of destruction and oppression came to be known as the Norman Yoke. To cement his kingship, William creates a new Norman aristocracy. Castles are built to protect the new nobles and flaunt their power. Yet the north continues to cause William problems. After a series of rebellions, he decides to force it into submission and unite England through a campaign of terror and brutality. He lays waste to English villages and destroys farmlands, robbing agricultural communities of their livelihoods. When famine sets in there are tales of people eating dogs, cats and even human flesh to survive. With , dead, it will be decades before the north recovers from such systematic devastation. He cut down many people and destroyed homes and land. Nowhere else had he shown such cruelty God will punish him. Find out how the Normans transformed the English language. In , he quashes the last serious revolt by English nobles and marriages between French-speaking Normans and Anglo-Saxons become common, beginning a melding of cultures still evident in the English language of today. Words including onion, pork, beef and mushroom derive from the French nobility.

Chapter 4 : William the Conqueror and Consolidation of Power

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Chapter 5 : For William the Conqueror, Winning the Battle of Hastings Was Only the Beginning

William I of England, better known as William the Conqueror, overcame a difficult childhood to become one of the most influential kings in British history. Here are 10 facts about the man and his rise to power.

William the Conqueror Died Norman king of England William I, better known as William the Conqueror, was an illegitimate child who grew up to become one of the most powerful men in Western Europe. In 1066, he launched an invasion of England and gained control after defeating King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. The victory of William and the Normans forever changed the character of England. He instituted new laws and greatly increased the power of English kings over noblemen. He also initiated a new line of English royalty, and even today the British royal house is distantly related to William. But the greatest mark on history left by William came with the influence of the Normans on aspects of English life ranging from architecture to language. It was not a very pleasant background, but the fact that William was illegitimate it would be years before he gained full acceptance within the community. Duke Robert and Herleve had another child, a girl named Adelaide, and later Robert arranged for Herleve to marry a powerful nobleman, with whom she had two sons, Odo and Robert. These two half-brothers of William would later play an important role in his career. Duke Robert went on to marry the sister of Canute, Danish king of England ruled 1017-1035, but the marriage did not produce any children. In 1049, he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and before leaving he convinced the nobles within the duchy an area ruled by a duke of Normandy to recognize William as his legitimate heir. As it turned out, Duke Robert died on the return trip. William was only seven or eight at the time, and the next years were difficult ones as he attempted to maintain control over Normandy. Both men appointed to act as his guardians and advisors were killed, but by the age of fifteen William, recently knighted, had emerged as a powerful force in his own right. Securing his power William survived a rebellion in 1051, when he was about nineteen, and proved his abilities as a leader; therefore King Henry I of France asked for his help in a campaign. The people of the city taunted William by hanging out hides from the town walls bearing the insult "Hides for the tanner! Geoffrey fled for his life. Recognizing that his illegitimacy would be a continuing source of challenges to his authority, William made up his mind to marry well. After years of careful negotiations, in 1049 he married Matilda of Flanders. Despite the fact that the marriage had complex but highly significant political reasons behind it, it appears that it was a happy one. They must have made a strange-looking couple, since William was a large man and Matilda stood only four feet tall, but together they had four sons and five or six daughters. Eyes on England By the early 1060s, a number of things were falling into line for William. In 1065, both King Henry and Geoffrey of Anjou died, removing two possible opponents. At the same time, William enjoyed good relations with the powerful Catholic Church, which gave its blessing to his next project—the most important one of his life. For a long time, it had appeared that England was up for grabs, as the power of its Anglo-Saxon kings began to fade. Their half-Norman son Edward the Confessor became king in 1066, and when he died in early January 1066, many Normans took this as a sign that the time had come to place their claim on the throne of England. However, the Godwinesons, a powerful Anglo-Saxon family, believed themselves to be the rightful rulers. The Norman Invasion Harold knew that the Normans were coming, but when the invasion had not occurred by the early fall of 1066, he sent his army home. Then he learned that another Harold, king of Norway, was attempting to invade from the north. On September 25, the two armies met at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire, and though the English won, the battle exhausted them. Taking advantage of this opportunity, William landed his army in southern England on September 28, and the next day took the town of Hastings. Harold himself died in battle, and now England belonged to William, who received the English crown on Christmas Day. Norman rule in England As he had done earlier in Normandy, William spent the coming years securing his power, and in so doing he faced a number of foes—including his son Robert and his brother Odo. Robert had a powerful ally in King Philip I of France, who hoped to gain control of Normandy, and though William gained the victory over all his foes he sent Robert away, and had Odo imprisoned, the conflicts forced him to devote much of his reign to warfare. William also instituted a number of reforms designed to strengthen his hold on the throne. Going against the principles of feudalism,

which spread power among many nobles, he concentrated as much wealth and authority as he could in the hands of the king. As part of this process, in he ordered an intensive study of the lands and properties in England, the Domesday Book. Meanwhile, the most lasting effects of the Norman invasion began to work their way into English culture. Norman architecture would prove highly influential on English buildings for centuries to come, but even more important was the Norman effect on the English language. The French-speaking Normans brought a whole new vocabulary to England, whose language was closely related to German. As a result, English today has an amazing array of words, some derived from French and Latin, others from German. He grew extraordinarily fat, so much so that on a military campaign in the summer of , he injured his stomach on his pommel, or saddlehorn. The wound led to an illness from which he would not recover. Matilda had died in , and when William died on September 9, , he was alone. He had exiled Robert, his eldest son, for his rebellion. William Rufus, his second son and designated heir, was also away, protecting the throne against any challenges from others. As William II, he would reign from to His body had become so bloated that the pallbearers had a hard time fitting it into the tomb, and in the struggle to wedge it in, the corpse burst open. An Introduction to Domesday Book. Gormley, Kathleen and Richard Neill. The Norman Impact on the Medieval World. Cambridge University Press, New Discovery Books, William the Conqueror and the Normans. Illustrations by Gerry Wood. Illustrations by Michael Bragg. Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

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William had little trouble dealing with the insurrection and after severely punishing the rebels he built a castle in the town. (5) William also had to deal with raids on the north led by King Sweyn of Denmark. In September, Sweyn's fleet sailed into the Humber.

William became Duke of Normandy aged seven, when his father died in 1035. With responsibility thrust on him so young, William had his fair share of guardians as well as would-be assassins. William had to learn to deal with physical threats from an early age, and three of his guardians died trying to protect him. When William was 15, King Henry I of France made him a knight, and by the time he turned 19 he was himself successfully dealing with threats of rebellion and invasion. He built an invasion fleet of around 700 ships and an army of men. He landed at Pevensey in Sussex on 28 September and assembled a prefabricated wooden castle near Hastings as a base. This prompted Harold to respond immediately and in haste rather than await reinforcements in London. This took place on 14 October. According to some accounts, perhaps based on an interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry which commemorates the Norman victory, Harold was killed by an arrow through the eye, and the English forces fled giving William victory. It is more likely that Harold was cut down by swords. William was then crowned on Christmas Day in Westminster Abbey. Overcoming Resistance[edit] Although the south of England submitted quickly to Norman rule, resistance continued, especially in the North for six more years until Uprisings occurred in the Welsh Marches and at Stafford, and there were separate attempts at invasion by the Danes and the Scots. The last serious resistance to Norman rule came with the Revolt of the Earls in 1065. It is estimated that one fifth of the people of England were killed during these years by war, massacre or starvation. Many surviving Anglo-Saxon nobles emigrated to other European kingdoms. He also ordered many castles, keeps and moats, among them the Tower of London, to be built across England to ensure that the rebellions by the English people or his own followers would not succeed. His conquest also led to Norman French replacing English as the language of the ruling classes, for nearly 200 years. It was completed in August 1086. The Domesday Book is really two independent works. The other, Great Domesday, covers the rest of England, except for lands in the north that would later become Westmorland, Cumberland, Northumberland and County Durham partly because some of these lands were under Scottish control at the time. There are also no surveys of London, Winchester and some other towns. Apart from the wholly rural portions, which constitute its bulk, Domesday contains entries of interest concerning most of the towns, which were probably made because of their bearing on the tax-raising rights of the Crown therein. He was 26, she was 16. William and Matilda had four male children. The first-born was Robert Curthose and the second was William. The third was called Richard, who died in 1081 whilst William I was alive, and the last was Henry. William I and Matilda also had a number of daughters, but it is not known exactly how many there were. He died from injuries to his abdomen after he fell off a horse at the Siege of Mantes and was buried in St. Denis. This created a foul smell and made the mourners leave. When King William I died he divided his lands and riches among his three remaining sons. William II [edit] According to William of Malmesbury, William Rufus was "thickset and muscular with a protruding belly; a dandy dressed in the height of fashion, however outrageous, he wore his blond hair long, parted in the centre and off the face so that his forehead was bare; and in his red, choleric face were eyes of changeable colour, speckled with flecks of light". William II was born in Normandy sometime between the years 1067 and 1068. He was nicknamed "Rufus", which is Latin for "red", perhaps because of his red-faced appearance. He was the second son of William the Conqueror and was King of England from 1087 until 1100, with powers also over Normandy, and influence in Scotland. He was less successful in extending his control in Wales. Since William Rufus and Robert were natural rivals, these nobles worried that they could not hope to please both of them, and thus ran the risk of losing the favour of one ruler or the other or both of them. The only solution, as they saw it, was to unite England and Normandy once more under one ruler. They therefore revolted against William in favour of Robert in the Rebellion of 1100, under the leadership of the powerful Bishop Odo of Bayeux, who was a half-brother of William the Conqueror. Robert failed to appear in England to rally his supporters, and William won the support of the English with silver and promises of better government, and defeated the rebellion, thus

securing his authority. After this Robert and William made up their differences and William agreed to help Robert recover lands lost to France. All this led to a long period of animosity between church and state. William and Anselm disagreed about many things, and the English clergy, who relied on the king for their living, were unable to support Anselm publicly. William called a council at Rockingham in to bring Anselm to heel but the churchman appealed to Rome. In October , Anselm went into exile, taking his case to the Pope. The new pope was Pope Urban II who was not in a position to make further royal enemies. The Emperor of Germany supported an antipope, and Urban came to an agreement with William. William argued with the Scottish king, Malcolm III, forcing him to pay homage in and seizing the north-western county of Cumbria in . At the Battle of Alnwick on 13 November Malcolm and his son were slain. On the home front William had a number of disputes with the Norman nobles. In , William had to lead an army against the earl of Northumbria. Another noble, William of Eu, was also accused of treachery and blinded and castrated. In the same year William II also led an unsuccessful campaign into Wales. He tried again in with an equal lack of success. He went to Normandy in and from then until campaigned in France, enjoying some limited success. At the time of his death he was planning to occupy Aquitaine in south-western France. The circumstances remain unclear. During the hunt, the party spread out as they chased their prey, and William, in the company of Walter Tirel or Tyrell , Lord of Poix, became separated from the others. It was the last time that William was seen alive. William was found the next day by a group of local peasants, lying dead in the woods with an arrow piercing his lungs. A stone known as the Rufus Stone marks the spot where some believe he fell. Walter and William had been hunting together when Walter let loose a wild shot that, instead of hitting the stag he aimed for, struck William in the chest. Walter tried to help him, but there was nothing he could do. Fearing that he would be charged with murder, Walter panicked, leapt onto his horse, and fled, ending up in France. As William II never married, and so had no legitimate heir, the next king was his brother, Henry. He was the fourth son of William the Conqueror, and he was King of England from to . He became known as Henry Beauclerc because of his scholarly interests, and by the nickname "Lion of Justice" because of the legal reforms he made. After being accepted as king by the leading barons, Henry was crowned three days later. He was able to keep the support of the barons by issuing the Charter of Liberties, which promised the barons certain rights. Henry I was probably the first Norman ruler to be fluent in the English language. In return Henry agreed to pay Robert marks each year. Four years later, though, Henry took an army across the English Channel. This later led to the two countries uniting under the Plantagenet kings. Henry needed money to strengthen his position, and this led to more central government. Henry also made a number of legal reforms, including the Charter of Liberties, and restoring many of the laws of King Edward the Confessor. Eustace and his wife, Juliane, were outraged and threatened to rebel. Henry arranged to meet his daughter, only for Juliane to draw a crossbow and attempt to kill her father. She was captured and confined to the castle, but escaped by leaping from a window into the moat below. Some years later Henry made it up with his daughter and son-in-law. The marriage greatly displeased the Norman barons and to try to please them Edith changed her name to Matilda upon becoming queen. Henry I had two children by Edith-Matilda, who died in - Matilda, who was born in February , and William Adelin, who was born in November . William died when the White Ship was wrecked off the coast of Normandy in . In , Henry I married for a second time. Although King Henry I had only two legitimate children, is famed for holding the record for the largest number of acknowledged illegitimate children born to any English king, with the number being around 20 or . Death and Legacy[edit] Henry visited Normandy in to see his young grandsons. He took great delight in his grandchildren, but soon argued with his daughter and son-in-law and these disputes led him to stay in Normandy far longer than he originally planned. It was here that he died of food poisoning from eating foul lampreys in December at St. Denis le Fermont in Normandy. His body was returned to England and buried at Reading Abbey, which Henry had founded 14 years before. Left without legitimate male heirs after his son William died, Henry made his barons swear to accept his daughter Empress Matilda, who was also the widow of Henry V, the Holy Roman Emperor, as his heir. Stephen , [edit] King Stephen. Stephen was born around the year in Blois in France. At around the age of 10, Stephen went to be brought up at the English court of his uncle, King Henry I. After marrying a daughter of the Count of Boulogne, who was called Matilda, he became joint ruler of Boulogne in

The first few years of his reign were peaceful, but by he was seen as weak and indecisive, setting the country up for a civil war against Matilda, commonly called The Anarchy. See below for more on Empress Matilda. Empress Matilda did not keep control for long though. She soon was forced out of London, and after her ablest lieutenant, the Earl of Gloucester, was captured, Matilda was forced to release Stephen. Stephen regained his throne in November , and by December , he was besieging Matilda at Oxford, but she managed to escape.

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William the Conqueror should strictly be known as William I. www.nxgvision.com is credited with kick-starting England into the phase known as Medieval England; William was the victor at the Battle of Hastings; he introduced modern castle building techniques into Medieval England and by his death in 1087, he had financially tied down many people with the Domesday Book.

The Norman Conquest has long been argued about. The question has been whether William I introduced fundamental changes in England or based his rule solidly on Anglo-Saxon foundations. A particularly controversial issue has been the introduction of feudalism. On balance, the debate is inconclusive. Early years William was the elder of the two children of Robert I of Normandy and his concubine Herleva also called Arlette, the daughter of a tanner or undertaker from the town of Falaise. In Robert died while returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and William, his only son, whom he had nominated as his heir before his departure, was accepted as duke by the Norman magnates and by his overlord, King Henry I of France. His weakness led to a breakdown of authority throughout the duchy: His mother, however, managed to protect him through the most dangerous period. Ruler of Normandy By 1047, when William reached his 15th year, was knighted, and began to play a personal part in the affairs of his duchy, the worst was over. But his attempts to recover rights lost during the anarchy and to bring disobedient vassals and servants to heel inevitably led to trouble. From until he dealt with a series of baronial rebellions, mostly led by his kinsmen. Occasionally he was in great danger and had to rely on Henry of France for help, but it was during these years that William learned to fight and rule. William soon learned to control his youthful recklessness. He was always ready to take calculated risks on campaign and to fight a battle, but he was not a flamboyant commander. His plans were simple, his methods direct, and he ruthlessly exploited any opportunity. If he found himself at a disadvantage, he withdrew immediately. He showed the same qualities in his government. He never lost sight of his aim to recover lost ducal rights and revenues, and, although he developed no theory of government or great interest in administrative techniques, he was always prepared to improvise and experiment. He was moral and pious by the standards of the time, and he acquired an interest in the welfare of the Norman church. He made his half brother Odo bishop of Bayeux in at the age of about 16; as bishop, Odo combined the roles of nobleman and prelate in a way that did not greatly shock contemporaries. Although Odo and the other bishops appointed by William were not recognized for their spirituality, they strengthened the church in Normandy by their pious donations and administrative skill. Presiding over numerous church councils, William and his bishops passed important legislation against simony the selling of church offices and clerical marriage. He also welcomed foreign monks and scholars to Normandy, including Lanfranc of Pavia, a famous master of the liberal arts, who entered the monastery of Bec about 1042 and was made abbot of Caen in 1043. William endowed several monasteries in his duchy, significantly increasing their number, and introduced the latest currents in reform to Norman monasticism. Although he was always sparing of food and drink, he became fat in later life. He had a rough bass voice and was a good and ready speaker. Writers of the next generation agree that he was exceptionally strong and vigorous. He was a hunter and soldier, fierce and despotic, and generally feared; uneducated, he had few graces but was intelligent and shrewd and soon obtained the respect of his rivals. New alliances After William began to participate in events outside his duchy. In support of King Henry and in an attempt to strengthen his southern frontier and expand into the western county of Maine, he fought a series of campaigns against Geoffrey Martel, count of Anjou. But from 1050, when Henry and Geoffrey made peace and a serious rebellion began in eastern Normandy, until William was again in grave danger. During this period he conducted important negotiations with his cousin Edward the Confessor, king of England, in which he was named heir to the English throne, and took a wife. Hardecantute 1066 and Edward the Confessor 1066 In that year Edward was about 36 and William 13 years old. Baldwin, an imperial vassal with a distinguished lineage, was in rebellion against the emperor, Henry III, and was in desperate need of allies. In 1066 William was reconciled to the papacy, and as penance he and Matilda built two monasteries at Caen. Four sons were born to the couple: Among the daughters was Adela, who became the mother of Stephen, king of England from 1135 to 1154.

The immediate purpose of this tripartite alliance was to improve the security of each of the parties. Between and William was threatened by the combined menace of internal revolt and the new alliance against him between King Henry and Geoffrey Martel. Had the Norman rebels coordinated their attacks with king and count, it would have meant the end for William, but his own skill and some luck allowed him to prevail. After suppressing the rebels, William decisively defeated the invading forces of Henry and Geoffrey at the Battle of Mortemer in . After a second victory, at Varaville in , the duke was in firm control of Normandy. His position was secured even further when both Henry and Geoffrey died in and were succeeded by weaker rulers. Finally conquering Maine in , William became the most powerful ruler in northern France. He was ransomed by William, who then took him on a campaign into Brittany. Myrabella When Edward died childless on January 5, , Harold was accepted as king by the English magnates, and William decided on war. He proceeded carefully, however, first taking steps to secure his duchy and to obtain international support for his venture. He took council with his leading nobles, bestowed special authority on his wife, Matilda, and his son Robert, and appointed key supporters to important positions in the ducal administration. He also appealed to volunteers to join his army of invasion and won numerous recruits from outside Normandy. Events outpaced William, however, as others moved more quickly. At this point he probably intended to sail due north and invade England by way of the Isle of Wight and Southampton Water. But adverse winds held up his fleet, and in September a westerly gale drove his ships up-Channel. He had suffered a costly delay, some naval losses, and a drop in the morale of his troops. The delay, however, yielded a very important benefit for William: William embarked his army and set sail for the southeastern coast of England. The trip was not without incident: The following morning he landed, took the unresisting towns of Pevensey and Hastings, and began to organize a bridgehead with 4, to 7, cavalry and infantry. The campaigning season was almost past, and, when William received news of his opponent, it was not reassuring. On September 25 Harold had defeated and slain Tostig and Harald at Stamford Bridge, near York , in a bloody battle with great losses on both sides, and he was retracing his steps to meet the new invader at Hastings. On October 13, Harold emerged from the forest, but the hour was too late to push on to Hastings, and he took up a defensive position instead. Early the next day, before Harold had prepared his exhausted troops for battle, William attacked. The failure to break the English lines caused disarray in the Norman army. William rallied the fleeing horsemen, however, and they turned and slaughtered the foot soldiers chasing them. Toward nightfall the king himself fell, struck in the eye by an arrow according to Norman accounts, and the English gave up. He then moved quickly against possible centres of resistance to prevent a new leader from emerging. On Christmas Day, , he was crowned king in Westminster Abbey. In a formal sense, the Norman Conquest of England had taken place. King of England William was already an experienced ruler. In Normandy he had replaced disloyal nobles and ducal servants with his friends, limited private warfare, and recovered usurped ducal rights, defining the duties of his vassals. The Norman church flourished under his reign, as he adapted its structures to English traditions. Like many contemporary rulers, he wanted the church in England to be free of corruption but also subordinate to him. Thus, he condemned simony and disapproved of clerical marriage. He would not tolerate opposition from bishops or abbots or interference from the papacy, but he remained on good terms with Popes Alexander II and Gregory VII—though tensions arose on occasion. During his reign, church synods were held much more frequently, and he also presided over several episcopal councils. He was ably supported in this by his close adviser Lanfranc, whom he made archbishop of Canterbury , replacing Stigand ; William replaced all other Anglo-Saxon bishops of England—except Wulfstan of Dorchester—with Normans. He also promoted monastic reform by importing Norman monks and abbots, thus quickening the pace of monastic life in England and bringing it into line with Continental developments. Courtesy of the Phaidon Press Ltd. The rebellions that began that year reached their peak in , when William resorted to such violent measures that even contemporaries were shocked. To secure his hold on the country, he introduced the Norman practice of building castles, including the Tower of London. The rebellions, which were crushed by , completed the ruin of the English higher aristocracy and secured its replacement by an aristocracy of Norman lords, who introduced patterns of landholding and military service that had been developed in Normandy. London, Tower of Tower of London. He retained most of the greatest Anglo-Norman barons with him in Normandy and

confided the government of England to bishops, trusting especially his old friend Lanfranc. He returned to England only when it was absolutely necessary: In the spring of William had his son Henry knighted, and in August at Salisbury he took oaths of fealty from all the important landowners in England. Despite his duties as king, William remained preoccupied with the frontiers of Normandy even after the conquest. The danger spots were in Maine and the Vexin on the Seine, where Normandy bordered on the French royal demesne. In William reached agreement with Fulk in the treaty of Blancheland: Robert Curthose was to be count of Maine but only as a vassal of Fulk. In July he entered Mantes by surprise, but, while the town burned, he suffered an injury from which he never recovered. He was thwarted at the very moment when he seemed about to enforce his last outstanding territorial claim. Death William was taken to a suburb of Rouen , where he lay dying for five weeks. He had the assistance of some of his bishops and doctors, and in attendance were his half brother Robert, count of Mortain, and his younger sons, William Rufus and Henry. Robert Curthose was with the king of France. Although William was tempted to make the loyal Rufus his sole heir, in the end he compromised: Normandy and Maine went to Robert and England to Rufus. Henry was given great treasure with which to purchase an appanage. William died at daybreak on September 9, in his 60th year. His burial in St. The tomb itself was desecrated by Calvinists in the 16th century and by revolutionaries in the 18th.

Chapter 8 : William the Conqueror Biography - 1st Norman King of England

William the Conqueror was a Norman duke when he won the Battle of Hastings on 14 October – a victory that would ultimately lead to him taking the English crown. Although William's army won the battle decisively, it was hard-fought on both sides and unusually long by medieval standards. Both William and his opponent, Harold II, King of England, had everything to lose and their forces were well matched.

C N Trueman "William the Conqueror" historylearningsite. The History Learning Site, 5 Mar William the Conqueror should strictly be known as William I. William is credited with kick-starting England into the phase known as Medieval England; William was the victor at the Battle of Hastings; he introduced modern castle building techniques into Medieval England and by his death in 1087, he had financially tied down many people with the Domesday Book. William as shown in the Bayeux Tapestry William was born in 1027 and he died in 1087. In 1027, Robert died and as his only surviving heir, William became Duke of Normandy at the age of 8. In 1035, they tried to kill William. In 1048, the lords in western Normandy rebelled against William again. They, again, failed but these two incidents taught William to trust no-one. He also became a victim of the violent time he lived in. He believed that if someone betrayed him, then he should show no mercy. If a village or town betrayed him, then he should show no mercy. Once the town had fallen to him, he ordered that those who had abused him should have their hands and feet cut off. In 1066, William met Edward the Confessor. However, there were no proper witnesses to this meeting – only those who wanted to keep on the good side of William. In 1068, William married Matilda of Flanders. They had nine children, of whom seven survived. During the next ten years, William had to constantly fight off invaders to his territory. He was always successful and built up a feared and professional army. These men were highly trained. They wore chain mail into battle, used a lance, sword or mace to fight with and rode horses that were bred to carry such a weight at speed. His control over the people was greatly extended by the Domesday Book. He took several days to die. When he did, he was buried but he was too big for his coffin and his body had to be stuffed into it. Legend has it, that the body split open because it had rotted so much before burial – What was put into his coffin was stolen in 1794 – all except a thigh bone. This was removed during the French Revolution – no-one knows the whereabouts of the skeleton of the man who won the Battle of Hastings! He caused castles to be built which were a sore burden to the poor.

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William I, byname William the Conqueror or William the Bastard or William of Normandy, French Guillaume le Conquérant or Guillaume le Bâtard or Guillaume de Normandie, (born c. , Falaise, Normandy [France]—died September 9, , Rouen), duke of Normandy (as William II) from and king of England (as William I) from , one of the greatest soldiers and rulers of the Middle Ages.

He reigned from to However, she never married Robert and instead became the wife of Herluin de Conteville. Rising to the Throne Before his death, Robert had convened a council early in January where the assembled Norman magnates swore fealty to William as his successor. Robert died on his return journey to Normandy in July, at Nicea, after embarking on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. By the time his father died, William was only 7 years old, which was a major challenge for him in becoming the duke. Another complication was that he was an illegitimate son. Authority of Duke William continued to get more established as he matured. In , he won a battle at Val-es-Dunes and became a master of Normandy. William married Matilda in , and together they raised 4 sons and 4 daughters. From henceforth, William succeeded in dealing with rebellion in Normandy that involved his kinsmen. He also dealt with external threats successfully, including the attempted invasion by King Henry I. In , he finished the conquest of Maine, and in the following year, he was acknowledged as overlord of Brittany. In , Edward had promised William the throne and Harold swore to support that claim. So, when Harold was crowned as the new king, William became very furious. On September 28, , William went to England and established a camp near Hastings. At that time, Harold was in the northern region where he was fighting king Hardrada of Norway, who had invaded England. Harold defeated Hardrada at Stamford Bridge and then marched quickly south. During the battle, Harold was hit by an arrow and died on the spot. In addition to that, his two brothers were also killed and the English army collapsed. On December 25, , William was crowned in Westminster Abbey. With his victory came many changes. Many members of the local English leaders were replaced with Normans. Other changes included a more strictly controlled system of feudal government and castle construction. The feudal system of governing was unheard of in England before the conquest but was very prominent in northern France. King William and his followers managed to secure their position during the next four years, especially after Yorkshire rising. At Yorkshire, William destroyed a lot of crops, livestock and houses, making sure that the area remained deserted and indigent for many years. He took over large parts of land that was seized from Saxon rebels and the old royal estates. Governing England William spent his first years of reign in England destroying any resistance and establishing his borders. He maintained authority of Anglo-Saxon law and gave little legislation. The famous Laws of William were not assembled until the Twelfth century. He placed the local government resolutely under his command and made use of recognized land tax and broad commitment to military service. King William also exercised powers over the church. However, William persisted on his civil liberties to have authority over the church as well as its associations with the papacy. In fact, he would not allow a pope to be acknowledged and papal letters would not be given without his permission. In addition to that, he presided over the selection of prelates and did not allow bishops to excommunicate his tenants-in-chief or officials without his permission. Primarily, the survey was carried out so as to record accountability to the land tax. The results of the survey were recapitulated in the 2 great volumes called the Domesday Book. Six months after this, William demanded for pledges of fealty from vast landowners regardless of whether they were tenants-in-chief or not. This way, he was affirming his rights not just as a feudal aristocrat over vassals, but as a king over his subjects. Final Years and Death After making sure that his kingdom was well settled, King William went to Normandy, where he spent his last 15 years. He left his regents, mostly clergymen, to run the government of England. He spent his last few months of reign fighting the French under leadership of King Philip I. On September 9, at Siege of Mantes, William fell from his horse and died from injuries received. Prior to his death, King William had divided his land between his 2 sons, with William Rufus getting the land in England and Robert receiving the one in Normandy. Soon after his death, a war broke between his sons William and Robert over control of Normandy as well as England. King William was treasured for his interest in reforming the church, his efforts

to uphold order, and his fair judgment in political matters. Leave a Reply Your email address will not be published.