

HPHI 7016: Past Peoples, Present Societies

Fall 2021

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Assessment 2: Bibliographic Exercise (Medieval)

The Domesday Book was the first documented, comprehensive assessment of land holdings within England. Compiled nearly 20 years following the Norman Conquest, it clearly demonstrates that King William I had settled in and was planning to stay. Not only did William want to know who owned the land and what it was used for, but he wanted to know what taxes they had paid in the past. With this information he knew what revenue he could expect to receive in the future as well as ensure he was receiving taxes from every location when due. Its importance has not waned through the centuries; today the document remains incredibly significant as a rare historical record from 11th century England.

For this assessment, I relied heavily upon the website WorldCat.org to identify both print and online editions. I also used the National Archives website to find additional references. Digitized books will be cited as the printed work, but online links are provided if a review is needed.

Print Sources

Ballard, A., *The Domesday Inquest* (London: Methuen & Co., 1906)

Ballard's work is an explanation of Domesday for a more casual reader as it covers the circumstances leading up to the Norman Conquest and focuses on explaining the contents of Domesday in modern ways. Chapters focus on each question from the inquisitors and explains why it was asked and what the responses meant, as well as various people and places included in the survey. It would be a good companion piece to a more direct translation of Domesday for someone who is working to better understand the context, content and output of the survey.

Accessible online at: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/76634#page/10/mode/1up>

de Gray-Birch, W., *Domesday Book: A Popular Account of the Exchequer Manuscript So Called, with Notices of the Principal Points of General Interest Which It Contains* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1887)

This work puts Domesday Book in context with similar land surveys made later in Arundel, Cambridge and Exeter. De Gray-Birch provides summaries of the key themes of Domesday: the land, the people, the monetary value and, not surprising for a book published by the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge", the churches. This book is more geared towards informing the public on Domesday's general content and impact over educating the reader on specific details.

Accessible online at:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Domesday_Book/5SQLAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

***Doomsday Book: A Complete Translation*, eds. and trans. by A. Williams and G.H. Martin (London: Penguin Books, 2003)**

As the name implies, this version is a direct translation of the Domesday Book. Aside from a brief foreword added by one of the authors, and an index of locations and a glossary, there is no additional text or commentary by the authors. This is most definitely intended as a scholarly reference book, particularly to someone looking for a translation and nothing else.

***Domesday Book or the Great Survey of England of William the Conqueror, Fac-Simile on the Part Relating to Lincolnshire*, ed. and trans. by H. James and B. Sanders (Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1862)**

This book is one of a series, each volume covering a different region. The book is based on photographic reproductions of the original work. I found that interesting and a very ingenious application of the emerging photographic techniques taking the world by storm at the time. No translation or context is provided along with the fac-simile. This gears it more towards scholars researching the topic over the general public, but the less expensive means to produce it makes the work more accessible to the masses, further demonstrating the importance of the work and desire to share it widely.

***Doomsday Book, Sussex, Vol. 2*, ed. and trans. by J. Morris and trans. by J. Mothersill (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)**

This series shows the 1086 text on one side of the page (reproduced from a 1783 work) with a translation provided on the opposite page. Morris also provides an explanation of the translation process in his introduction, noting that words and phrases have been substituted where needed to indicate the modern usage as opposed to a direct translation of Latin. This would be useful to someone studying the translation process as well as helping modern readers better understand the context. This series includes an index of the key individuals mentioned. The result is a work which would be aimed at a scholarly audience looking for details, explanations, and references.

Inman, A.H., *Domesday and Feudal Statistics* (London: Elliot Stock, 1900)

This work is focused on presenting Domesday statistics in the form of data tables, along with commentary on what the data tells us. The book is geared towards scholars and would be helpful for a researcher who just needs the data from the text. Domesday is not the only data featured, as pipe roll fees and exchequer inquisitions from the 13th and 14th century are also tabulated and discussed. Quite a bit of focus is put on Agricultural statistics, so this would be a good reference book for someone researching that subject.

Accessible online at: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/62259#page/8/mode/thumb>

***Libri Censualis, Vocati Domesday-Book, Indices. Accessit Dissertation Generalis De Ratione Hujusce Libri*, ed. by H. Ellis (London: printed by G. Eyre and A. Strahan for the House of Commons, 1816)**

I found this book at the Newberry Library in Chicago. The book itself is not in Latin, so I was able to read it. I found it interesting that it includes a reprint of the communication between the House of Commons in July 1800 pointing out that important documents from English history need to be preserved and better cared for, and King George III's response of assent and authorization to proceed with the preservation and reprinting for "more convenient use" of such documents. This exchange illustrates the importance of Domesday and the recognition of its importance throughout time. *Libri Censualis* was printed 16 years later, which may either be due to the time it took to index the work, or possibly due to the sheer volume of works the House of Commons undertook to typeset and print.

The book begins with an explanation of what the work is, why it was initiated and how it was executed. It also details the types of people who were included (nobles, bishops, etc) and terminology used. Following the introductory section, *Libri Censualis* is an index of the towns and counties surveyed with a notation of where to find them in the original manuscript. The introduction is helpful as an explanation of the work, and having an index is very helpful for scholars who need to find specific details, but this book is more of a companion piece to the original work and would require access to the original manuscript for deeper study. I came across Ellis' name frequently in other works, so he seems to be a Domesday expert.

Maitland, F.W., *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: University Press, 1907)

This is another interpretation of Domesday which looks more at the overall context rather than drilling into the content. Portions of Domesday are translated to support conclusions being drawn, but the bulk of Maitland's essays are a more holistic look at the work. It is aimed towards an audience more interested in learning how to interpret Domesday versus the specific data it contains but is a nice complimentary work to a direct translation as it helps the researcher with additional context and reflection to consider.

Accessible online at: <https://archive.org/details/domesdaybook00maituoft>

Online Sources

Oxford, Balliol College, MS 350 (Domesday Book),

<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/65e0a975-bb8c-4647-9f93-017ad657772d/>

[accessed 31 October 2021]

This manuscript is a transcription of the later Domesday survey made in Hertfordshire c. 1160-70. No translation is provided, so this would be most useful for scholars wanting to see an original work.

National Archives, “Domesday: Britain’s Finest Treasure”,

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/> **[accessed 30 October 2021]**

This is much more of an entertaining, interactive site for public consumption and “infotainment”. Information is presented in clear ways but is more about the significance of the document than direct translations of the content. The site includes information for the general public, as well as teachers and students, so it is focused on explaining the work to the masses.

Open Domesday, <https://opendomesday.org/> [accessed 28 October 2021]

This website has digital images of the Domesday Book along with a corresponding map of England to illustrate where each of the towns and areas can be found. It is easy to navigate and search by town, person, folio page and more. Translations are provided, but is formatted as a list to convey the information (# of Households, Land Value, Land Owners, etc) as opposed to a verbatim translation of the page. It provides reference to the source material, compiled by a Professor at the University of Hull, which does give a sense of authority and is geared towards those doing research or the general public wanting to know more than the basics.

Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, “Domesday”, <https://domesday.pase.ac.uk/> [accessed 30 October 2021]

This site provides a tabular format for names and details, which makes it easy to use and search. It also allows the user to click on a name to learn more (alternate spellings, where it was recorded throughout the book, etc). The website does have a number of broken links and does not seem to be actively maintained, but the bulk of the content is still accessible. It is a collaboration of education and public institutions, which does lend it credibility on the content, even if the site is not fully functional.