



The Norman Conquest



Learning Objective:

To understand who were the contenders for the throne in 1066

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Have you heard of the **Anglo-Saxons**?
What do you know about them?

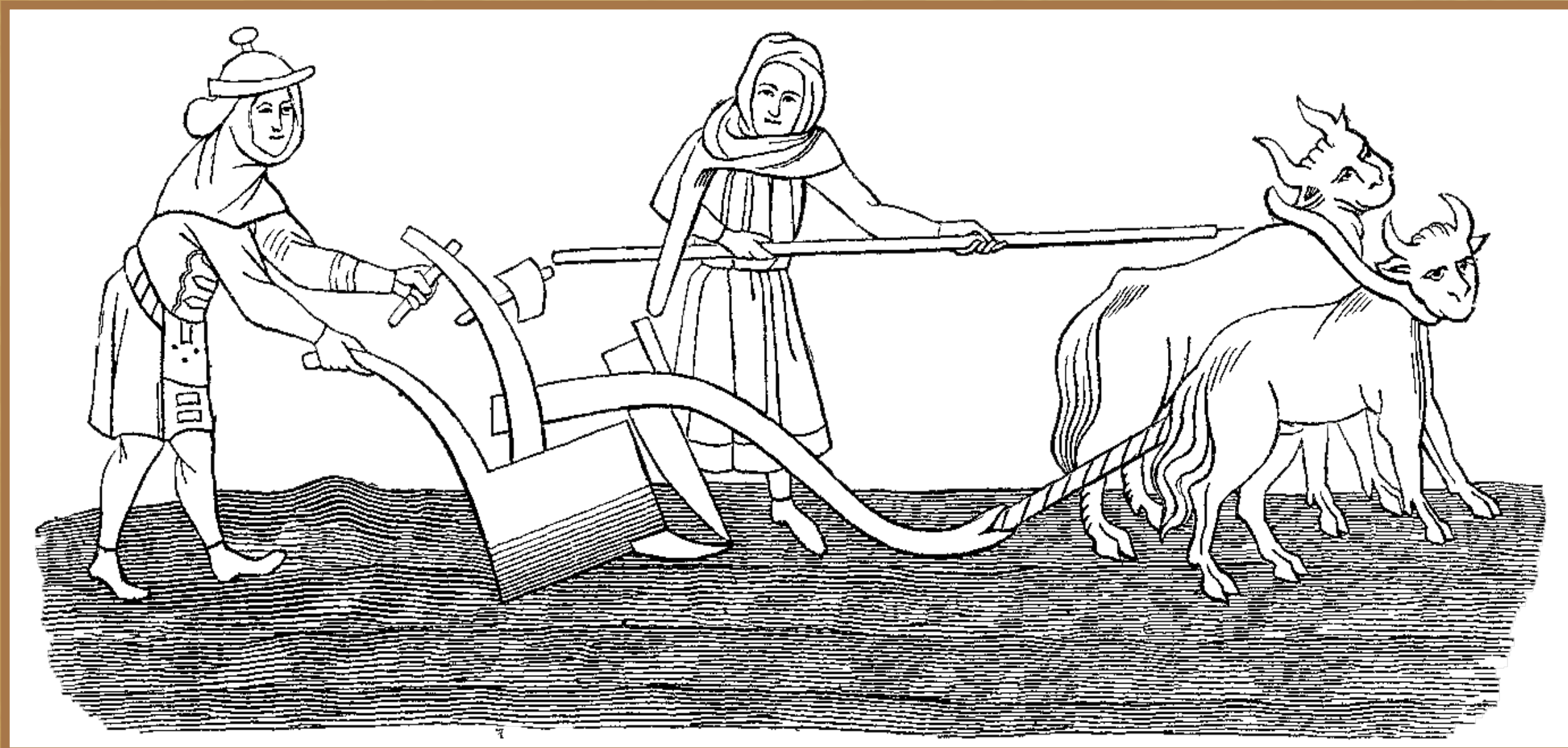


**Think, pair, then
share your knowledge.**

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The Anglo-Saxons were a group of people who lived in England after the Romans left, in 410 AD. During this period of time, lots of smaller kingdoms made up England, and were all ruled by different people. Old English replaced Latin as the spoken language, and Christianity eventually became the main religion.



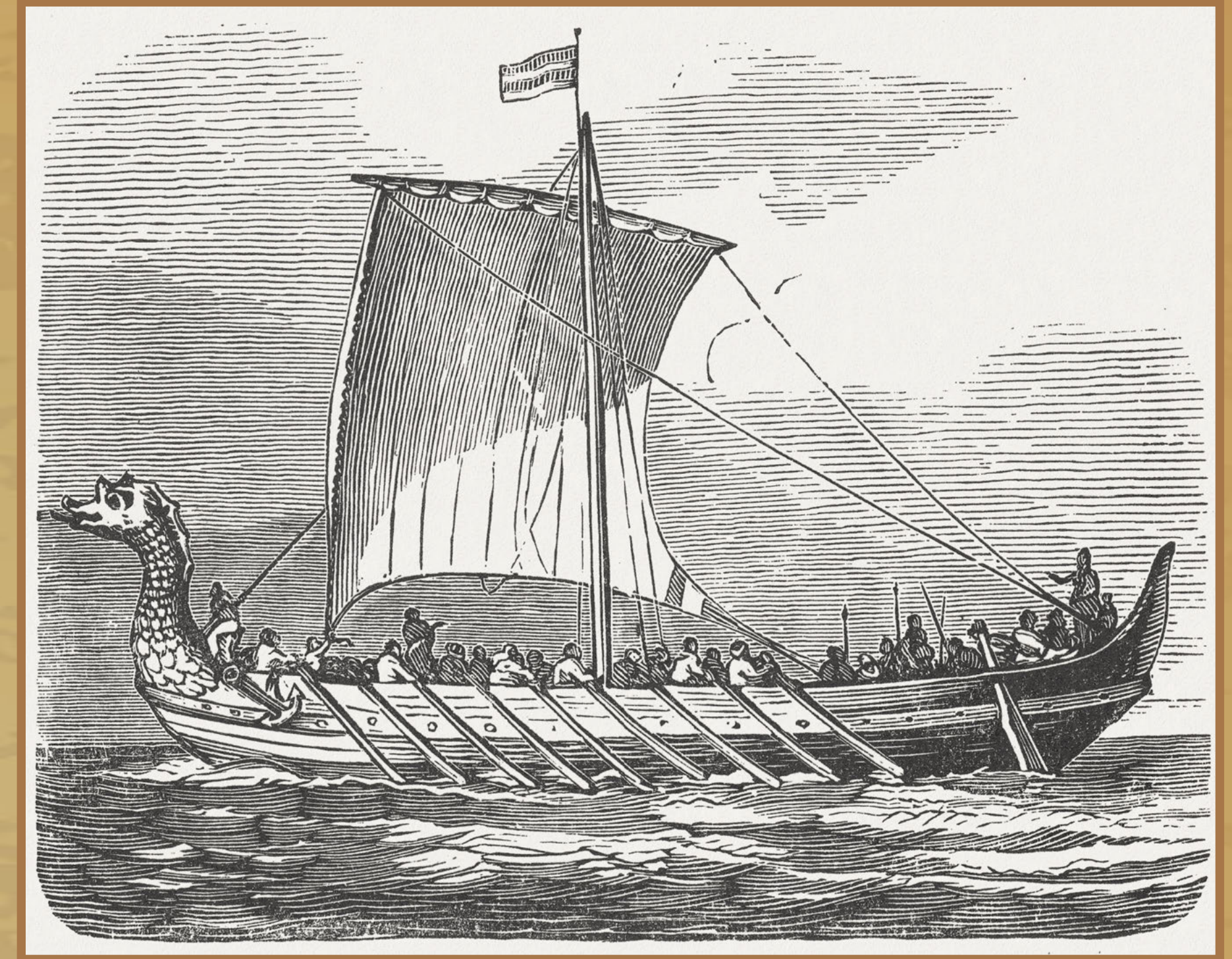
Anglo-Saxons farming the land.

Most Anglo-Saxons lived in small villages near rivers and forests. This provided them with everything they needed to keep animals, grow crops and make things to sell.

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In 793 AD, a group of people from Scandinavia, known as the Vikings, began to raid and invade the different kingdoms of England. They sailed over in wooden boats called longships from the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark.



A Viking longship

This was the start of a very long struggle between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings for the control of England.

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In 1042 AD, after over 250 years of fighting between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, an English king named Edward the Confessor ascended the throne. He was known to be a deeply religious man who avoided arguments and disagreements.



Edward the Confessor



What do you think England was like at this time?

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During Edward the Confessor's reign, England was mostly quiet and **prosperous**. However, when he died on 4th January 1066, he left no **heir**. There was much unrest and confusion about who should become the next king.

Prosperous means that a person or a place is wealthy and successful.



An **heir** to a king or queen is a person who is next in line to the throne.

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What **qualities** do you think the next king of England should have in order to be successful? With a partner, choose five that you think are the most important.

brave

strong

energetic

fair

hard-working

quiet

bold

intelligent

kind

protective

powerful

determined

wealthy

caring

friendly

calm

good listener

decisive

thoughtful

ruthless

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Think, pair, then share your opinions.

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Three men, all strong, experienced warriors, each believed that they had the qualities to be England's next king.

They were:



William, Duke
of Normandy



Harold
Godwinson



Harald
Hardrada

Let's have a look at each one in more detail...

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Who was he?

Harold Godwinson was an Englishman with the important title of the Earl of Wessex. He was one of the most powerful men in the country.



Harold
Godwinson

Links to Edward the Confessor:

- He was Edward's brother-in-law; his sister was married to the king.
- His father, Godwin, did not get on well with Edward. At one time, Harold and his father were banished from England for a year.
- Harold was a brave and respected soldier and leader, who commanded the king's army.
- It is thought that, on his deathbed, Edward promised the throne to Harold.

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Who was he?

Harald Hardrada was a Norwegian viking who had taken part in several raids on the English coast, before becoming the King of Norway. His reputation was fierce - Hardrada means 'hard ruler' and he was nicknamed 'the ruthless'.



Harald
Hardrada

Links to Edward the Confessor:

- He had no link to Edward the Confessor, but a Viking called Cnut had ruled both Norway and England from 1016 to 1035.
- Harald's claim was supported by Tostig, who was Harold Godwinson's brother. The two brothers had fallen out and this was Tostig's way of getting revenge.

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Who was he?

William was the Duke of Normandy, a part of France. He had been in control of Normandy since he was seven years old, and was used to fighting to keep his land.



William, Duke of Normandy

Links to Edward the Confessor:

- William knew the king well - Edward had lived in Normandy from the age of 13 until he returned to England to be crowned king in 1042.
- William had sent soldiers back to England with Edward to support him. Because of this, William claimed that in 1051, Edward had promised him the throne when he died.
 - It is also claimed that in 1064, when Harold Godwinson went to visit William in Normandy, he promised to support him when the time came to take the throne.

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In Anglo-Saxon times, a king could say who he wished to be his successor, but the decision was actually made by the **Witan**.

The **Witan** was a group of wise men who advised the king on all matters.



An 11th century king being advised by his Witan

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William, Duke
of Normandy



Harold
Godwinson



Harald
Hardrada

Which contender do **you** think had the strongest claim to the throne? Why?



**Think, pair, then
share your ideas.**

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Now it's time for you to use what you have learnt about the three contenders for the throne in your own work! **Choose wisely...**



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Plenary:

The Witan chose **Harold Godwinson** to be the next king of England.

On the same day that Edward the Confessor was buried, Harold was crowned and became **King Harold II**.



The crowning of King Harold II



How do you think Harald Hardrada and William of Normandy felt about this decision?
What do you think they decided to do?

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Think, pair, then share your ideas.