

## William, Duke of Normandy

William was the son of Robert, Duke of Normandy. Due to his mother being lowborn and not a noblewoman, he was sometimes called 'William the Tanner' as a sign of disrespect by his enemies. His father died when he was seven years old and William had to fight to keep his dukedom.



### Claim to the English throne

#### Strengths

- William was the second cousin of Edward the Confessor, making him a blood relative (though not a close one).
- While Edward was in exile from England, he was protected by William's father in Normandy. This meant William and Edward became good friends.
- He claimed that Edward had named him his heir in 1051, while Harold was exiled.
- He married Matilda of Flanders which gave him a strong military ally

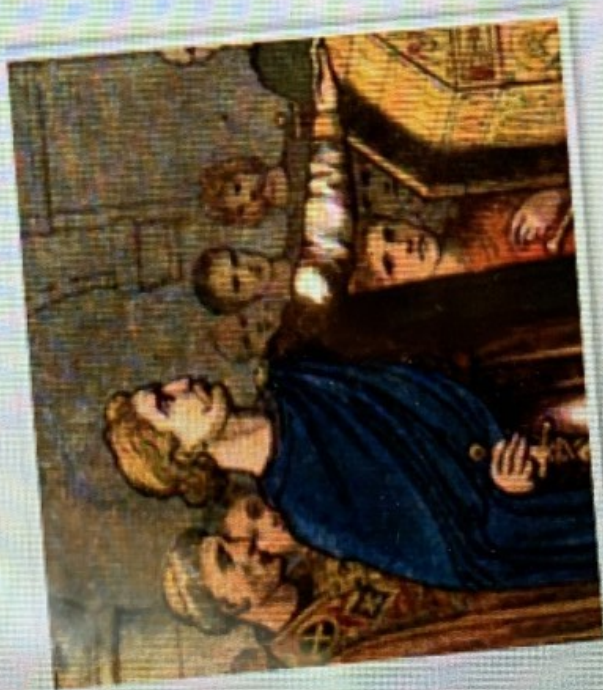
#### Weaknesses

- William was only a distant relation to Edward the Confessor. Edgar Aetheling was a closer blood relation.
- It wasn't Edward's place to offer William the throne – that right belonged to the Witan.
- He wasn't English – he was French.



## Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex

Harold was the most well known of the Saxon earls at the time of Edward the Confessor's death. During the last years of Edward's reign, Harold had effectively been running England. His sister, Edith, was also married to Edward.



### Claim to the English throne

#### Strengths

- Harold was Edward the Confessor's brother-in-law.
- He was the richest and most powerful of the Saxon earls.
- His mother was related to the former king, Cnut the Great.
- He had the support of the Witan, England's royal council.

#### Weaknesses

- He had no direct link to the throne.
- After being shipwrecked in Normandy, he swore to support William's claim to the throne.
- He had been exiled with his father by Edward the Confessor and had to force the king to give him his titles back.