



# **THE VIKINGS AND NORMANS**

**LECTURE 3**

# Plan

- 1. The Vikings Raids.**
- 2. King Alfred the Great.**
- 3. William of Normandy (The Conqueror).**
- 4. Life under the Normans.**
- 5. English Language and Norman Conquest.**



# The Vikings Raids

- came from three countries in Scandinavia: Denmark, Norway and Sweden. started in the late 8th century (to be more exact in 793),
- the first attack - Lindisfarne monastery,
- are described as aggressive and evil killers,
- but the aim of coming: searching for better land for their farms and rebuilding their own society,
- firstly targeted for the wealth of the churches, monasteries and coastal communities,
- by 878 they managed to conquer all the England, except for the area of Wessex,
- during 200 years (793-878) the Vikings destroyed much of the society created by Anglo-Saxons,
- English resistance was uncoordinated and often ineffective (several independent kingdoms were often at war with each other).

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# The words of the Vikings (Scandinavian) origin are:

- **proper names with suffix** – by *Grimsby, Thurnby* (translated as *farm, village*),
- **war and violence**: *ransack, gun* (Even though the gun wasn't invented until centuries after the Viking era, the word comes from Vikings and can translate as “war” or “battle”),
- **society and culture**: *Hell, husband* (*hús* (house) + *bóndi* (occupier and tiller of soil)), *law, loan, sale, skill, troll, saga*,
- **animals**: *bug, bull, reindeer, wing*,
- **every day verbs**: *to bark, to call, to cast, to choose, to clip, to get, to give, to glitter, to hit, to kindle, to race, to raise, to rid, to run, to take, to seem, to shake, to skip, to want, to whisk*,
- **objects**: *bag, ball, band, bulk, cake, egg, glove, knife, knot, keel, link, loft, mug, plow, plough, raft, scale* (for weighing), *seat, skirt, want, window*,
- **adjectives**: *ill, loose, odd, ugly, weak*,
- **the body**: *freckles, leg, skin*,
- **people** *fellow, guest, kid, lad*,
- **emotions** *anger, happy*.

# ***King Alfred The Great***

- by the autumn of 878 the Vikings were prepared to invade **Wessex** (the last independent Anglo-Saxons kingdom),
- At the battle of Ethendun (Edington) in 878 **king Alfred's** forces defeated the Vikings,
- He made a treaty with the Vikings (the east and north of England was given to the Vikings and termed the Danelaw),
- king Alfred** reformed the laws, customs and culture,
- king Alfred** is the only king in English history known as "The Great".

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# *King Alfred's achievements*

## **•English Language**

made English to be developed as a written language replacing Latin. Old English became the official written language.

## **•Education and learning**

insisted that nobles learn to read, and learn the great history and heritage of Christian faith, founded two monasteries and numerous schools, He invited the great scholars to the court.

## **•Books**

learned Latin himself and personally translated many Latin works into Old English so that the English people could read them.

## **•The arts**

activity in building and in art, and foreign craftsmen were attracted to the court.

## **•A new code of law**

issued a new code of laws: selected the best laws of his predecessors, limited the practice of the blood feud and imposed heavy penalties for breach of oath or pledge.

## **•National defence**

instituted a system of fortified posts (burgs) and established a national militia, enlarged the English fleet.

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# *William the Conqueror*

The last Anglo-Saxon king, **Edward the Confessor** did not have an heir. Four candidates for the UK throne:

- **Harold Godwinson,**
- **Tostig Godwinson,**
- **Harald Hardrada** and
- **William, Duke of Normandy** (northwest France).

The **English Witan**, the traditional council of nobles, chose **Harold Godwinson** as the new king.

# ***William the Conqueror***

- **William of Normandy** won the famous battle of Hastings (1066),
- was crowned king of England in the Westminster Abbey on Christmas Fay, **1066**,
- reigned from 1066 till 1087.

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# *William the Conqueror*

- William the Conqueror was the new King of England and Duke of Normandy in France (ruling one country while serving as a vassal of another)
- conquest of England lasted for 20 years (Scotland in 1072 and Wales in 1081).
- Anglo-Saxon rebellion lasted until 1070.
- gave the UK lands to his Norman nobles for their support and loyalty. (By 1086 only 2 of the greater landlords were Anglo-Saxon, 4,000 Anglo-Saxon landlords were replaced by 200 Norman ones).
- the complex administrative system was organized (England was divided into shires with a royal official called a sheriff.
- by 1086 ordered a full economic survey of England which was called the Domesday Book.

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# The Feudal System

The word “*feudalism*” comes from the French word *feu* and means “*property in land*”.

**Feudalism** is a system of land ownership and duties. It helped to organised stable and controlled society.

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## The basic structure of the feudal society was like the chain:

the **king** owned all the land

the **king** gave some land to the **barons**, if they promised to give him money and men for the army

the **barons** gave some of their land to a number of **knights**, if they promised to fight when needed

the **knights** gave a few strips of land to large numbers of **peasants**. For this, the peasants had to work on the lord's land and give him a share of their produce. They were not allowed to leave, and were not free men

# *William the Conqueror*

- ordered many [castles](#), [keeps](#), and [mottes](#) built (the [White Tower](#) in the [Tower of London](#)).
- forced to travel back and forth between the UK and France at least 19 times during his reign.
- never spoke English and was illiterate, but he had more influence on the English language than anyone before or since.

# ***English Language and Norman Conquest***

For 300 years, the **Norman** formed the **upper class** of the English society. **Latin replaced Old English** completely as the literary language of government and administrative. As for spoken language, the **Norman nobles spoke French** but the common people hold to Old English.

Naturally that **the lower classes should soon begin to adopt** such of the expressions of the rich as they could catch the meaning. Thus, **70 percent of Modern English vocabulary are the French borrowings.**

## **The words of the French origin:**

- **words relating to government:** *crown, state, government, reign, realm, sovereign, authority, country, minister, chancellor, authority, parliament, people, nation,*
- **words related to feudalism:** *fief, feudal, vassal, liege,*
- **words relating to steps in the scale of rank:** *prince, peer, duke, marquis, viscount, baron,*

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# ***English Language and Norman Conquest***

•**words related to military affairs:** *war, peace, battle, arms, armour, buckler, mail, lance, officer, dart, lieutenant, sergeant, soldier, troops, vessel, navy, admiral, enemy, danger, prison, siege, guard,*

•**words related to law:** *justice, just, judge, court, suit, sue, plaintiff, defendant, plea, plead, cause, assize, fee, accuse, crime, traitor, damage, heritage, properly, penalty, injury, privilege, tenure,*

•**words related to church:** *religion, service, trinity, savior, virgin, angel, saint, abbey, cloister, friar, clergy, parish, baptism, sacrifice, orison, altar, sermon, preach, pray, prayer, feast,*

•**words related to the pleasure of life:** *joy, pleasure, delight, ease, comfort,*

•**some of the favourite pastimes were Chase, Cards and Dice, so we find many French words related to them, such as:** *brace, couple, lease, falcon, quarry, warren, scent, track, partner, suit, trump,*

•**words related to dress:** *apparel, dress, costume, garment,*

•**words related to art:** *art, beauty, colour, image, design, figure, ornament*

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# *English Language and Norman Conquest*

By the end of the 13th century French had become almost a foreign tongue in England.

But it was taught to nobles as the language for blue blood.

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