

# 1. Economic and social conditions in the 11-12th centuries and Middle English dialects.

the transitional stage from the slave-owning and tribal system to the feudal system



- Feudal manors were separated from their neighbors by **tolls, local feuds, and various restrictions**



- In Early ME the differences between the regional dialects grew.

grouping of local dialects:

- the **Southern** group (Kentish and the South-Western dialects);
- the **Midland** or **Central** (is divided into West Midland and East Midland);
- the **Northern** group (had developed from OE Northumbrian).

## 2. The Scandinavian invasions, the Norman Conquest & the way they influenced English

### Scandinavian invasions



By the end of the 9th c. the Danes had succeeded in obtaining a permanent footing in England



In the areas of the heaviest settlement the Scandinavians outnumbered the Anglo-Saxon population is attested by geographical names.

1,400 English villages and towns bear names of Scandinavian origin (e.g. *Woodthorp*)

- the Scandinavians were absorbed into the local population both ethnically and linguistically.
- They merged with the society around them, but the impact on the linguistic situation and on the further development of the English language was quite profound.

- The increased **regional differences** of English in the 11th and 12th c. must partly be attributed to the **Scandinavian influence**.
- Due to the contacts and mixture with **O Scand**, the **Northern dialects** had acquired lasting and sometimes indelible **Scandinavian features**.
- In later ages **the Scandinavian element passed into other regions**.
- The incorporation of **the Scandinavian element in the London dialect and Standard English** was brought about by the changing linguistic situation in England: **the mixture of the dialects and the growing linguistic unification**.

### **3. The Norman Conquest**

## **Edward the Confessor (1042-1066)**





- Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) brought over many Norman advisors and favorites;
- he distributed among them English lands and wealth to the considerable resentment of the Anglo-Saxon nobility;
- he appointed them to important positions in the government and church hierarchy.
- He not only spoke French himself but insisted on it being spoken by the nobles at his court.

- In 1066, upon Edward's death, the Elders of England proclaimed Harold Godwin king of England.
- As soon as the news reached William of Normandy, he mustered (gathered) a big army by promise of land and, with the support of the Pope, landed in Britain.
- In the battle of Hastings, fought in October 1066, Harold was killed and the English were defeated.
- This date is commonly known as the date of the Norman Conquest.

- After the victory at Hastings, William by-passed London cutting it off from the North and made the Witan of London (the Elders of England) and the bishops at Westminster Abbey crown him king.
- William and his barons laid waste many lands in England, burning down villages and estates. Most of the lands of the Anglo-Saxon lords passed into the hands of the Norman barons, William's own possessions comprising about one third of the country.
- Normans occupied all the important posts in the church, in the government and in the army. Following the conquest hundreds of people from France crossed the Channel to make their home in Britain.
- French monks, tradesmen and craftsmen flooded the south-western towns, so that not only the higher nobility but also much of the middle class was French.

## 4. Effect of the Norman Conquest on the linguistic situation

- The Norman Conquerors of England had originally come from Scandinavia.
- they had seized the valley of the Seine and settled in what is known as Normandy.
- They were swiftly assimilated by the French and in the 11th c. came to Britain as French speakers.
- Their tongue in Britain is often referred to as “Anglo-French” or “Anglo-Norman”, but may just as well be called French.

- The most important consequence of Norman domination in Britain is to be seen in the wide use of the French language in many spheres of life.
- For almost three hundred years French was the official language of administration: it was the language of the king's court, the church, the army and others.
- The intellectual life, literature and education were in the hands of French-speaking people.
- For all that, England never stopped being an English-speaking country.
- The bulk of the population spoke their own tongue and looked upon French as foreign and hostile.

- At first two languages existed side by side without mingling.
- Then, slowly and quietly, they began to penetrate each other.
- The three hundred years of the domination of French affected English more than any other foreign influence before or after.

The early French borrowings reflect accurately the spheres of Norman influence upon English life; later borrowings can be attributed to the continued cultural, economic and political contacts between the countries:

- **Flowr, cheef, estaat, tur, kastel**
  - **citee, cri, merci, vertu**
- **companie, bataile, doute, peple**
- **to curt cumen - прийти ко двору**
  - **Ut of prisune -из тюрьмы**
    - **In ture -в замке**
    - **Holden in prisun**

- beornes, hostages, toures, crunes chaumbren, joyen, castlen.
- merchauntz, servauntz, vestimentz.
- to turn, to evoke, to control, to revenge).
- letters patents, places delitables, lords spirituels
- control, rendez-vous, char-a-bancs, parterre
- dun: dragun; compaygnie: druerie; be: contre; burgeio - curtayse; iugement: isend; stere: banere.



- you Salt ben ut of prisun numen -  
тебя выпустили из тюрьмы
- Many castles hii awonne - они  
захватили много замков
- Speratin he arrede hauhiss castel-  
Сператин воздвиг высокий замок.
- company, constable, chancellor,  
messenger (от вульг,-лат. mansa -  
дом, помещичий участок

## **5. Changes in the alphabet and spelling in Middle English. Middle English written records**

The most conspicuous feature of Late ME texts in comparison with OE texts is the difference in spelling. The written forms of the words in Late ME texts resemble their modern forms, though the pronunciation of the words was different.

In the course of ME many new devices were introduced into the system of spelling; some of them reflected the sound changes which had been completed or were still in progress in ME; others were graphic replacements of OE letters by new letters and digraphs.

- In ME the runic letters passed out of use. Thorn – þ – and the crossed d – ð, ð̅ – were replaced by the digraph *th*, which retained the same sound value: [θ] and [ð̅];
- the rune “wynn” was displaced by “double *u*” – *w* – ;
- the ligatures *æ* and *œ* fell into disuse.

After the period of Anglo-Norman dominance (11th–13th c.) English **regained its prestige as the language of writing.** Though for a long time writing was in the hands of those who had **a good knowledge of French.**

- The digraphs *ou*, *ie*, and *ch* which occurred in many French borrowings and were regularly used in Anglo-Norman texts were adopted as new ways of indicating the sounds [u:], [e:], [tʃ]
- to *ch*, *ou*, *ie*, and *th* Late ME notaries introduced *sh* (*ssh* and *sch*) e.g. ME *ship* (from OE *scip*), *dg* [dʒ] alongside *j* and *g*; the digraph *wh* replaced the OE sequence of letters *hw* as in OE *hwæt*, ME *what* [hwat].

- Long sounds were shown by double letters, e.g. ME *book* [bo:k], though long [e:] could be indicated by *ie* and *ee*, and also by *e*.
- *o* was employed not only for [o] but also to indicate short [u] alongside the letter *u*; it happened when *u* stood close to *n*, *m*, or *v*, e.g. OE *lufu* became ME *love* [luvə].

- Sometimes, *y*, *w*, were put at the end of a word, so as to finish the word with a curve, e.g. ME *very* [veri], *my* [mi:]; *w* was interchangeable with *u* in the digraphs *ou*, *au*, e.g.
- ME *doun*, *down* [du:n], and was often preferred finally, e.g. ME *how* [hu:], *now* [nu:].
- *G* and *c* stand for [dʒ] and [s] before front vowels and for [g] and [k] before back vowels respectively.



- *Y* stands for [j] at the beginning of words, otherwise, it is an equivalent of the letter *i*, e.g. ME *yet* [jet], *knyght* [knix't].
- The letters *th* and *s* indicate voiced sounds between vowels, and voiceless sounds – initially, finally and next to other voiceless consonants, e.g. ME *worthy* [wurði].

- the sound [u] did not change in the transition from OE to ME;
- in NE it changed to [ʌ], the letter o stood for [u] in those ME words which contain [ʌ] today, otherwise it indicates [o].