

The Middle Ages

1066-1485

William the Conqueror and the Norman Influence

Duke of Normandy, cousin of Edward the Confessor; believed Edward had promised throne of England to him

Harold, earl of Wessex crowned king after Edward's death

Norman Invasion, October 1066—Battle of Hastings

Language—Norman and Anglo-Saxon elements □
Middle English

Established Domesday Book



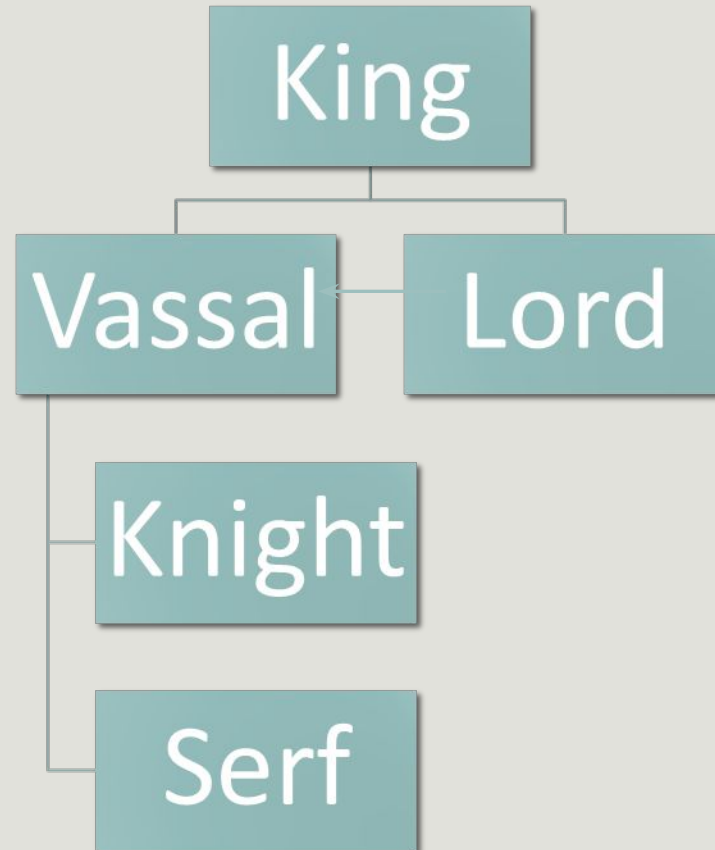
The Normans Change England

William and his progeny remain dukes of Normandy and kings of England

French = language of aristocracy

Introduced feudalism, which displaced the comitatus

Feudalism



Vassals

“The bond between lord and vassal was affirmed or reaffirmed by the ceremony of homage. The vassal knelt, placed his clasped hands within those of his master, declared, ‘Lord, I become your man,’ and took an oath of fealty. The lord raised him to his feet and bestowed on him a ceremonial kiss. The vassal was thenceforth bound by his oath ‘to love what his lord loved and loathe what he loathed, and never by word or deed do aught that should grieve him.’”

—Morris Bishop, historian

Knights in Shining Armor

Code of Chivalry: influenced life, art, and literature

Military service to lord

Trained from early age (page, squire, “knighted”)

Upon knighthood, titled “Sir”



Women in Medieval Society

No political rights

Subservient to husband,
father, or brother

Husband or father's social
standing determined hers

Peasant women:
childbearing, housework,
hard field work

Noblewomen: childbearing
and household supervision



Chivalry and Courtly Love

Chivalry: system of ideals and social codes governing the behavior of knights and gentlewomen

- Oath of Loyalty to overlord
- Observing certain rules of warfare
- Adoring a particular lady = Courtly Love

Courtly Love

- Non-sexual
- Wear lady's colors in battle
- Glorify her in words, be inspired by her
- Lady remains pure and out of reach; set above admirer



The Rise of the Romance

Women idealized, but position in society not improved

Romance: a new form of literature about a hero, who often has the help of magic, who undertakes a quest to conquer an evil enemy

- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- Many other King Arthur stories



Major Events

The Crusades (1095-1270)

The Martyrdom of Thomas à Becket (1170)

The Magna Carta (1215)

The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

The Black Death (1348-1349)

The Crusades

Series of holy wars between Christian Europe and Muslims over control of holy sites like Jerusalem

Pope Urban II: Christians had a duty to free Jerusalem and other holy cities from Muslim rule

Contact with Middle Eastern civilization:

- Mathematics
- Astronomy
- Architecture
- Crafts

Martyrdom of Thomas Becket

Thomas à Becket: c. 1118-1170

Norman chancellor (prime minister) to King Henry II (reigned 1154-1189)

King a vassal to Christian church; pope very powerful

Henry appointed Becket to Archbishop of Canterbury

Becket took his job seriously, sided with pope

Four knights of Henry's murdered Becket in the cathedral at Canterbury

Becket canonized a saint



The Magna Carta

King John forced to sign in 1215

Granted certain rights to his barons

Basis for English constitutional law

- Trial by jury
- Legislative taxation
- Restrictions on royal power



The Hundred Years' War

England and France

Based on weak claims to French throne by Edward III (reigned 1327-1377) and Henry V (reigned 1413-1422)

Unsuccessful for English, but fostered development of British nationalism

Representation shifts from knight to yeoman; chivalry lives on mainly in romances

The Black Death

Probably bubonic plague; highly infectious disease spread by fleas from infected rats

Reduced population of England by 1/3

- Labor shortage
- Lower classes more bargaining power
- Freedom for serfs, end of feudalism
- Peasant Revolt, 1381

Contributed to end of Middle Ages in England



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Slide 9: “Chivalry.”

<http://blogs.mit.edu/CS/blogs/eialba/archive/2007/08/16/65242.aspx>

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