

BRITAIN AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST

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THE NORMAN CONQUEST

Edward died childless. So his throne was disputed between **Harold** and **William Duke of Normandy**, who claimed that Edward, his relative, had left the throne to him. So in 1066 Edward did battle in England where Harold died when an arrow pierced his eye. In this year on Christmas day William "the Conqueror" was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

Under William England became part of **cross-channel kingdom** because part of the kingdom was in England and part in France. In England Normans built several **castles** for physical presence.

A FEUDAL SOCIETY

Normans introduced the **feudal system** a pyramidal system. This was based on **agrarian economy**. In fact there is King, who owned the land, he grants lands to barons, who can grant this land to knights. In return of these lands this vassal (the recipients) has to **swear allegiance and pledge service**. There are 2 kinds of **peasants** the freeman who have land and the serf that do not have land.

William decided to do a census **Domesday book** (il giorno del giudizio) for economic reasons, everyone will be counted, in fact he counts the families who lived there, the animals and the production.

A TIME OF REFORM

Unlike previous forms of law **common law** is based on custom and comparison with previous cases. This is the beginning of a democratic and flexible legal system. In fact this came with the establishment of trial by jury.

Richard I spent all of his time in crusades so he was always absent. So he was succeeded by his younger brother John Lackland who is weak in fact he was forced to sign the **Magna Carta**. This document prevented him from claiming taxes without the approval of a council of advisors and that free men couldn't be arrested; so a small elite of nobles, merchants and senior churchmen increased their power. This reform happened under Plantagenets.

Simon De Montfort formed the **Parliament**, nobles began to govern. His Model Parliament laid the foundations for the modern day.

CHURCH AND STATE

In the end of 1200 the Church has power in Parliament so there was many conflict of interest between church and state. An example is **Thomas Becket** who was made Archbishop of Canterbury by King Henry II.

John Wycliffe led Lollardy reform movement. The Lollardists anticipated the Reformation in the 16th century.

THE FORTUNES OF WAR

England fought the **Hundred Years' War**. When it ends she started a new war between Lancaster and York. It is called **The war of two Roses** because the emblem of both families was a rose. This war ended when Henry VII took the throne because he represented the union of two families, in fact Henry VII was Lancaster by birth and York by marriage.

THE BLACK DEATH

The Black Death interrupted the war with France. It is an epidemic of a bubonic plague. It was caused by rats who travelled on the ships. The Black Death killed around four million of England's population. But paradoxically improved the conditions of the poor. In fact peasants can demand payment for their work.

NOTA: Questa dispensa non ha la pretesa di sostituire il libro di testo ma vuole essere un utile strumento di ripasso. La precedente dispensa è integrata alle lezioni della Prof.ssa G. Tallone.