People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
AbbesLaghrour University – Khenchela
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة عباس لغرور خنشلة
كلية الآداب واللغات
قسم الأدب واللغة لانجليزية

Civilisations of the Target Language (British Civilisation) (UED 1.1)

Lecturer: Dr. Khaled Chouana
khaled.chouana@univ-khenchela.dz

Academic Year: 2025-2026 / **Semester:** One / **Level:** L1 Bachelor Degree (Socle Commun)

Teaching Unit	Dedicated Time (per week)	Credit	Coefficient
Discovery Unit	3 hours	2	2

Presence: Obligatory / **Evaluation Method:** Written Exam: 60 % / Tutorial: 40% (continuous assessment)

Tutorial's Components

Criteria	Attendance	Oral Participation and Discipline	Short Written Test (Quiz)
Mark (total 20)	5 pts	5 pts	10 pts

Course Syllabus

Weeks	Main Tracks
1	**General introduction**
2	**Prehistoric Britain**
3	**Earliest Settlers of Britain**
4	**Anglo-Saxons and Vikings**
5	**The Norman Conquest**
6	**England, Feudalism, and the Magna Carta**
7	**Middle Ages**
8	**The Tudors and the English Reformation**
9	**The Elizabethan Era**
10	**The Stuarts, the Civil War, and the New Constitutional Monarchy**
11	**General conclusion**

Description and objectives of the course

The course aims to improve students' knowledge of the English language through British life and history. The lectures and the tutorial sessions offer a general overview of the history and culture of the United Kingdom from its foundation to the 18th Century. Students of this course are supposed to have a basic knowledge of different civilizations and cultures. By the end, students should be able to recognize key dates and events related to the history of Britain. They should also engage in critical discussions and write relevant compositions about several aspects of British history and culture.

References

BBC – British Prehistory. URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/british_prehistory/
Britannica– Ancient Britain.URL: https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom/Ancient-Britain
Harriss, Gerald. Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461. Oxford University Press, 2005.
McDowall, David, An Illustrated History of Britain. London: Longman, 2006
Oakland, J. British Civilization: An Introduction (7th Ed.). London: Routledge, 2011.

Lecture One: Prehistoric Britain

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

- ✓ define the key periods of prehistoric Britain
- ✓ distinguish the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages in Britain
- ✓ describe the lifestyle, tools, and cultural practices of the people during Prehistoric Britain

Introduction

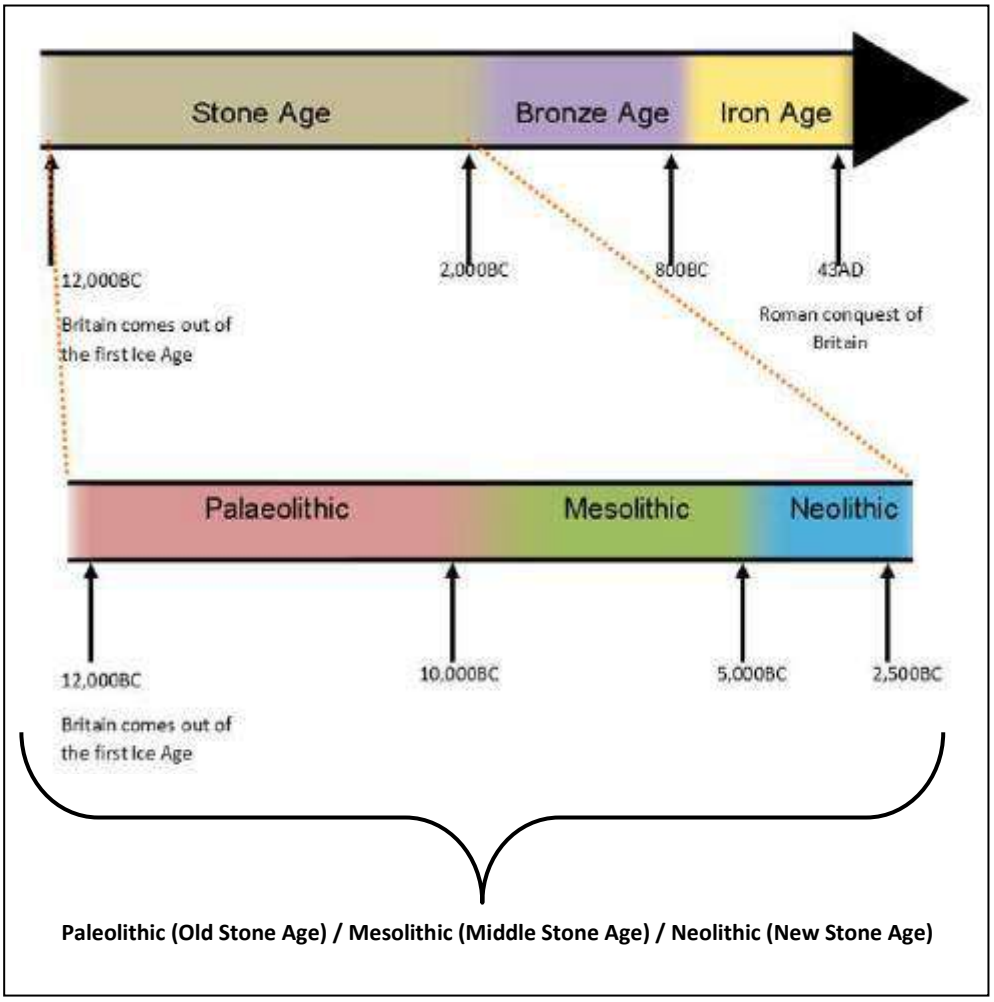
It is commonly believed that nobody really knows who the original inhabitants of the British Isles are. Humans in the European continent were able to migrate into the territory when the last British ice sheets began to melt around 12,000 years ago and a new wave of migrants was able to settle permanently. It must be noted; however, that the first humans settled in the British around 800,000 years ago during the Lower Paleolithic period. They migrated when lower sea levels connected Britain to the European continent. For most of that time, the BBC websites points out that they subsisted by collecting food like berries, nuts, and leaves, and by hunting.

Prehistoric Britain is the period in human history preceding the development of writing. Archeological evidence suggests that prehistory started with the first settlers in the British Isles to continue until the Roman invasion in AD 43.

It must be noted that AD (Anno Domini) refers to the years after the birth Of Jesus Christ, while BC (Before Christ) refers to the years before his birth. CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before Common Era) are alternative, non-religious labels for the same periods (CE corresponds to AD / BCE corresponds to BC).

Prehistoric Britain comprises three periods, namely the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. These ages are characterized by distinct cultural and technological advancements.

The following diagram illustrates the different periods of prehistoric Britain:



As shown, we can see that the Stone Age is divided into three distinct sub-periods: the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age), the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and the Neolithic (New Stone Age). These periods are distinguished by the types of stone tools used by humans in addition to the associated human lifestyle. Indeed, the Paleolithic (meaning in Greek old stone) refers to the use of older stone tools during that sub-period. As for the Mesolithic (meaning in Greek middle stone), it indicates that the stone instruments in that sub-period were more sophisticated than those in the Paleolithic. Finally, the word Neolithic comes from the Greek *neos* (new) and *lithos* (stone). This suggests that the stone tools used at that time were more advanced than those of the previous two sub-periods.

1. Timeline of Prehistoric Britain

The following timeline provides a chronological overview of the prehistoric period in Britain and covers the key dates and events from the earliest human presence to the Roman conquest:

Year	Events
800,000 BC	People migrate to Britain from Europe. Britain is joined to Europe (no sea in between). Mammoth, rhino and giant beavers live in Britain.
25,000 BC	Ice Age: Northern Europe and most of modern Britain is plunged into a deep Ice Age
12,000 BC	Beginning of the end of the Ice Age Re-colonization of Britain by people
8,500 BC	Warmer climate leads to the growth of forests all over Britain.
6,000 BC	Britain becomes an Island. The land bridge joining Britain to Europe floods as the sea level rises.
4,200 BC	Farming people arrive from Europe. First evidence of farming. Farming quickly spread all across the British Isles. Land is cleared; wheat and barley planted, and herds of domesticated sheep and cattle are raised.
3,000 BC	New Stone Age begins: farming people arrive from Europe. First stone circles erected.
2,800 BC	First phase of building Stonehenge
2,700 BC	Tools and weapons are made from copper
2,100 BC	Bronze Age begins First metal workers People learn to make bronze weapons and tools. Introduction of cremation of the dead and burials in round barrows. Beaker culture - their name is thought to originate from the distinctive beakers that accompanied their burials. They were farmers and archers. They lived in round huts (similar to the Celts) with a low stone wall for a base. The roof was made of thatch, turf, or hides.

2,000 BC	Stonehenge completed
1650 BC	Trade routes begins to form
1200 BC	Small villages were first formed
750 BC	Iron Age begins. Iron replaces bronze as most useful metal. Population about 150,000.
500 BC	The Celtic people arrive from Central Europe. The Celts were farmers and lived in small village groups in the centre of their arable fields. They were also warlike people. The Celts fought against the people of Britain and other Celtic tribes.
43 CE	The Roman conquest of Britain marks the end of the Prehistoric period and the start of the Roman Britain.

2. The Stone Age

Human presence in Britain started around 800,000 years ago during the Paleolithic period (Old Stone Age). The first settlers of Britain at that period were hunters and gatherers who used basic stone tools. Then around 10,000 BC people living during the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) improved their stone tools and created semi-permanent communities and this was possible because of a warmer climate and the growth of forests. Around 4000 BC, people reached a high level of progression during the Neolithic period (New Stone Age) as they developed agriculture, tamed domestic animals and established permanent villages. These innovations were known as the Neolithic Revolution and led to a more settled lifestyle and the creation of societies. During the Neolithic period, people introduced long barrows used for burials and built complex stone structures like Stonehenge (See the picture below).

Stonehenge is a famous ancient site that was built on Salisbury Plain, England, around 2500 BC. It is a circle of fifty-six timbers, placed in a ritual landscape (Ackyroyd, 2013, p. 14) and is considered as one of the most mysterious monuments in the world since archeologists questioning how huge stones could be transported to England from to Wales (260 km). Also, they have been wondering about its purpose although evidence indicates that Stonehenge played a crucial role as a ceremonial location. Some scholars think the site served as an astronomical clock used by the priests called Druids during seasonal ceremonies. Stonehenge has always fascinated British people and it appears in different pieces of literature, including Thomas Hardy's novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

3. The Bronze Age

The use of bronze began in central Europe in and about 1800 BC (Arnold-Baker, 2016, p. 193). This period is usually the start date for the Bronze Age. It was marked by a significant development in human history. More tools and weapons were produced as a result of this new development, People created larger and more complex societies. In this era, there was an important growth in trade and the establishment of social casts and rankings. Also, people during that period developed hill forts, those solid constructions used for defense against invading enemies.

4. The Iron Age

The Iron Age in the British Isles runs from about 800 BC to the Roman invasion in AD 43, following the Bronze Age. Iron was introduced in Britain even though artifacts made of this metal did not dominate until 500-400 BC.

During the first millennium, powerful regional cultures emerged with distinct pottery, metalworking and settlement styles. Historians attributed major changes during this period mainly to invasions from outside Britain.

Technological innovations increased during the Iron Age, especially towards the end of the period. People developed several enhanced farming techniques and introduced new crop varieties such as wheat, peas and beans. Thus, the population of Britain grew substantially and probably exceeded one million.

Towards the end of the second century BC, Roman influence began to extend into the western Mediterranean and southern France. After AD 43, Wales and England south of the line of Hadrian's Wall became part of the Roman Empire. Beyond this line, in Scotland and Ireland, Iron Age life and traditions continued with only occasional Roman incursions into Scotland, and trade with Ireland. Salway argues, "the Roman period is a turning-point, not so much in the underlying story of man's settlement of the land of Britain but in the country's emergence from prehistory into history" (2015, p. 26).

5. Key Definitions of Prehistoric Britain

- **Ice Age:** A period from 2.6 million years ago to 11,700 years ago as temperatures were cold and large parts of the planet Earth was covered in glaciers.

- **Artifacts:** They are objects such as pottery, jewelry, and ceramics which reveal cultural details of the daily life, trade and cultural practices in Prehistoric Britain.
- **Hill Fort:** A fortified settlement built on elevated ground that was used for protection, habitation and as a center of commerce and social gatherings (See the picture below).

- **Neolithic Revolution:** The transition from hunting and gathering to farming during the Neolithic period. This shift led to advancements in agriculture, domestication of animals and the establishment of permanent villages.
- **Rotary Quern:** A manual device that mills grain into flour and which was introduced during the Iron Age (See the picture below).

- **Druid:** A member of the high-ranking class in ancient Celtic societies linked to religious practices, legal matters and education. Druids were associated with the use of Stonehenge for rituals and ceremonies.
- **Potter's Wheel:** A device introduced during the Iron Age and employed in pottery making to produce ceramic vessels. (See the picture below).

- **Celts:** Ancient Indo-European people who migrated throughout Europe, including the British Isles during the Iron Age and early medieval period. They were famous for their unique language, art and cultural traditions and lived in tribes. Celts were skilled metalworkers, especially in iron and gold.
- **Hadrian's Wall:** A fortified wall built in AD 122 by the Romans to defend Britain from Scottish invaders.

Conclusion

The era of Prehistoric Britain was a significant time in the history of the British Isles. It had a significant impact on present-day British society. The lasting impact of this period can be seen in many aspects of modern life (language, cultural customs, technologies...Etc).

Archeologists and researchers made significant discoveries and findings as they explained the way the first men in England lived and developed throughout centuries.

This understanding helps EFL students connect with their Algerian past and develop deep appreciation for their cultural and historical heritage.

Lecture Two: Earliest Settlers of Britain

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ be familiar with the earliest settlers of Britain
- ✓ identify the key characteristics of the Iberian and Celtic cultures
- ✓ recognize the impact of Roman colonization on Britain

Introduction

The history of Britain has been shaped by constant migratory waves. Indeed, the British Isles were influenced by the distinct cultures and practices developed by these societies. The earliest known settlers of Britain were the Iberians, followed by the Celtic tribes and later, the Roman Empire's conquest. In what follows we will give a short overview of the different settlers of Britain by highlighting their achievements and impacts on the British Isles.

1. Iberians

The Iberians were one of the earliest groups to settle in the British Isles. They migrated from the Iberian Peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal) during the late Stone Age, around 6000 BC.

Below are some important facts about the Iberians and their settlement in Britain:

- ✓ They arrived in Britain during the Mesolithic period.
- ✓ They settled in different areas of the British Isles, including western regions like Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland.
- ✓ The Iberians introduced advanced farming techniques and contributed to the development of ancient agricultural settlements.
- ✓ Their descendants may still be present in these western regions today.

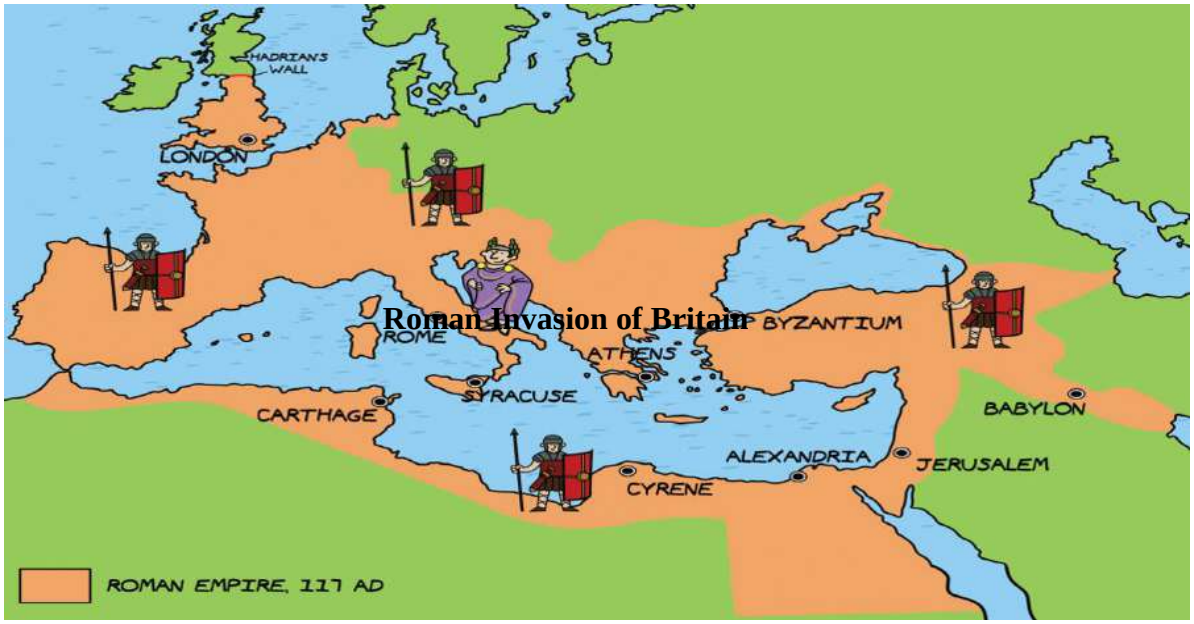
2. Celts

The Celts (see the picture below) were ancient tribal people who migrated from mainland Europe to the British Isles around 1800 BC, during the Bronze Age.

- ✓ They came from regions now part of France and Germany.
- ✓ They established powerful kingdoms and tribal societies.
- ✓ They had a rich culture and were known for their ironworking skills and warrior culture.
- ✓ They spoke various Celtic languages (Old Irish, Welsh, and Cornish).
- ✓ They left an impact on the landscape of Britain by building hillforts and stone monuments

3. Roman Conquest

The Roman invasion of Britain began in AD 43 under Emperor Claudius and lasted for nearly four centuries until AD 409. The following map illustrates the invasion of Britain by Romans.



Roman Invasion of Britain

The Roman conquest represents a crucial moment in British history as it had a profound impact of the island.

- ✓ The Celtic tribes resisted Roman invasion but were defeated through military force and diplomacy.
- ✓ The Romans Romanized Britain by integrating Latin, Roman laws and Roman culture.
- ✓ They built roads, towns, and fortifications.
- ✓ They introduced systems of governance, legislation, and laws.
- ✓ The Romans withdrew from Britain in the early 5th century AD due to pressure from Germanic tribes and internal challenges.

4. A Brief Timeline of Britain (From Iberians to Romans)

7000 - BC: Earliest farming villages in Europe

5000 - BC: Agriculture reaches Iberia

4000 - BC: Copper metallurgy introduced in Europe

3500 - BC: Construction of Megalithic tombs and circles in Atlantic coastal areas

3500 - BC: The cart and plow spread across Europe

3000 - BC: Bronze metallurgy begins in Europe

3000 - BC: Nomadic Indo-European settlers colonize large areas of Europe

3000 - BC: Stonehenge built

1800 - BC: Proto-Celts begin moving into Western Europe and the British Isles

700 - BC: Iron metallurgy begins in Celtic Danube regions

650 - BC: Hallstatt Celtic wagon burials in Bohemia and Bavaria

550 - BC: Celtic contact with Greek colony of Massalia in Southern France

500 - BC: Hallstatt Celts migrate to Britain

400 - BC: Celts become known to the Greeks and Romans

368 - BC: Celtic mercenaries employed by Syracuse

334 - BC: Romans sign a peace treaty with the Senones

298 - BC: Celts invade Thrace and are defeated at Mt. Haemus

285-282 - BC: Roman defeats the Senones

279 - BC: Celts under Brennus invade Greece and sack Delphi

278 - BC: Celts invade and settle in Anatolia (Galatia)

264-241- BC: Celts involved in the First Punic War

216-BC: Celts assist in Hannibal's invasion of Italy and the Carthaginian victory at Cannae

200 - BC: Germans begin to dominate Central Europe

125 - BC: Roman conquest of Southern Gaul

113 - BC: War between Romans and Celtic Iberians

100 - BC: Belgic Gauls migrate into Britain

58 - BC: Julius Caesar begins to subjugate Gaul

55-54 - BC: Rome sends expeditionary force to Britain

52 - BC: Vercingetorix leads a Gallic rebellion, defeated at the siege of Alesia by Caesar

43 - AD: Romans under Claudius invade Britain

69 - AD: Southern Britain is romanized

84 - AD: Romans defeat the Caldonians in Northern Britain

Conclusion

The early history of Britain was shaped by successive waves of migration and invasions from the Iberians, Celts and Romans. The Iberians who came from Spain brought innovative agricultural techniques and paved the way for later colonies. Also, Celts introduced ironworking skills, complex structures centered on tribes and wars, and a diverse cultural legacy. Finally, the Romans developed Britain by bringing their language, laws, roads and infrastructure. Together, the Iberians, Celts, and Romans laid the foundation for the development of the British society and left a significant impact on the nation's history, culture, and identity.

Lecture Three: The Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ understand the historical context of the Nordic invasions and the Anglo-Saxons settlement
- ✓ identify similarities and differences between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings
- ✓ analyze the legacy and impact of the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings on England

Introduction

The invasions of the British Isles were a series of conquests initiated by people who came from different parts of Europe and had a profound impact on the history of England. These invasions took place between the 8th and the 11th century.

Among the most notable groups that participated in the invasions of the British Isles were the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. It should be noted that despite their early hostility, their meetings introduced important cultural development and interchange in the British Isles.

The following lecture gives a brief overview of the invasions of England by focusing on impact brought by the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings to the British Isles.

1. Timeline of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings

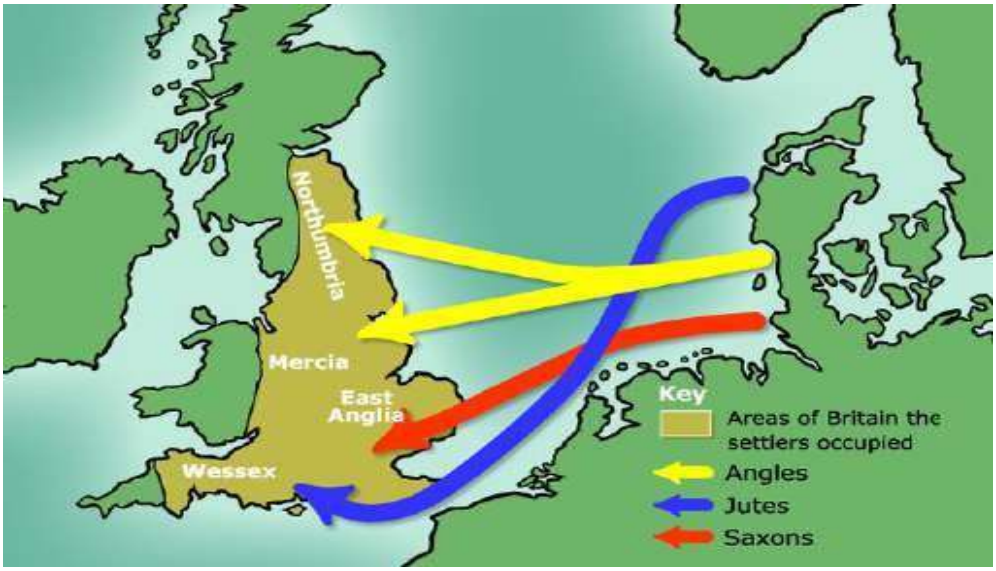
- **449 CE:** The Jutes, Angles, and Saxons begin to settle in England.
- **500s-600s CE:** The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria are established.
- **597 CE:** St. Augustine arrives in Kent to convert Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.
- **789 CE:** The first recorded Viking raid on Britain occurs at the Isle of Wight.
- **793 CE:** Viking raid on Lindisfarne monastery, considered the start of the Viking Age in Britain.
- **794-835 CE:** Vikings continue raids on monastic sites and coastal settlements in northern and western Britain.
- **865 CE:** The Great Heathen Army, a large Viking force, lands in East Anglia, beginning a full-scale invasion of England.
- **867 CE:** The Vikings capture York and establish it as their stronghold.
- **871 CE:** Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex, known for resisting Viking advances and initiating defensive reforms.
- **886 CE:** Alfred the Great captures London, and a more formal division between Anglo-Saxon and Viking-controlled territories known as the Danelaw is established.
- **900-1000 CE:** Vikings continue to raid and settle in various parts of Europe, including France, the Mediterranean, and Iceland.

- **954 CE:** Death of Erik Bloodaxe, the last Viking king of York, marking the end of Viking rule in northern England.
- **1013 CE**: King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark invades England and briefly becomes king after the fall of Æthelred the Unready.
- **1016 CE:** Cnut the Great becomes king of England, marking a period of Danish rule.
- **1042 CE:** End of Danish rule in England with the death of Harthacnut. The Anglo-Saxon monarchy is restored under Edward the Confessor.
- **1066 CE:** The Norman invasion of England takes place, ending Anglo-Saxon rule.

2. The Anglo-Saxons

2.1. Settlement and Expansion

Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were Germanic tribes composed of merciless warriors who raided the British Isles (See the map below).



Anglo-Saxon Settlements in Britain

The map illustrates the settlement of the three major Germanic tribes, namely the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes into Britain. The Angles settled in Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia, while the Saxons settled in Wessex. The Jutes moved into the southeastern region and settled in Kent. The map depicts how the Germanic tribes contributed to the creation of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

Around 449 CE they began to establish permanent communities on the island. The Angles settled in the east and the northern Midlands, while the Jutes settled in Kent and the southern coast. They quickly mixed in with the Angles and Saxons forming the Anglo-Saxon people. The Angles' migration led to the majority of Britain being called England, meaning the land of the Angles.

During the next 200 years, the Anglo-Saxons pushed the Celts westwards into the mountains, which the Saxons called "Weallas", or "Wales" which means "the land of the foreigners" (Wall, 2015, p. 26). Other Celtic groups were driven into Cornwall and they accepted the rule of Saxon lords.

The Anglo-Saxons established a number of kingdoms, some of which still exist in county to this day. These main kingdoms were:

1. **Essex**: situated in the area around present-day Essex.
2. **Sussex**: in the South Saxons (present-day Sussex).
3. **Wessex**: located in south and west England.
4. **Mercia**: situated in the central region.
5. **Northumbria**: located in the north, it included areas in north the River Humber and extended into parts of modern Scotland.
6. **East Anglia**: founded eastern England and was inhabited by the Angles.
7. **Kent**: An Anglo-Saxon kingdom located in the southeast.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were unified under Wessex during the reign of King Alfred the Great in the early 10th Century.

2.2. Government and Society

The Anglo-Saxons created institutions that made the English state strong for the next 500 years. One of these institutions was the king's Council, called the Witan. The Witan probably grew out of informal groups of senior warriors and priests who advised the king in difficult matters. By the end of 10th Century the Witan was a formal body issuing laws and charters.

The Anglo-Saxons divided the land into new administrative areas, based on shires or counties. These shires were established by the end of the 10th century and remained exactly the same for a thousand years.

In each shire there was a manor or large house. It was a simple building where local villagers came to pay their taxes. Also, justice was administrated in the manor and it was the place where men met to join the Anglo-Saxon army. The lord of the manor was in charge of organizing the administrative aspect of the shire and make sure village land was properly shared. It was the beginning of the manorial system which paved the way for feudalism under the Normans. The lords were local officials, but by the 11th century they became war lords and were often called by the new Danish name earl.

3. The Vikings

3.1. Origins and Early Invasions

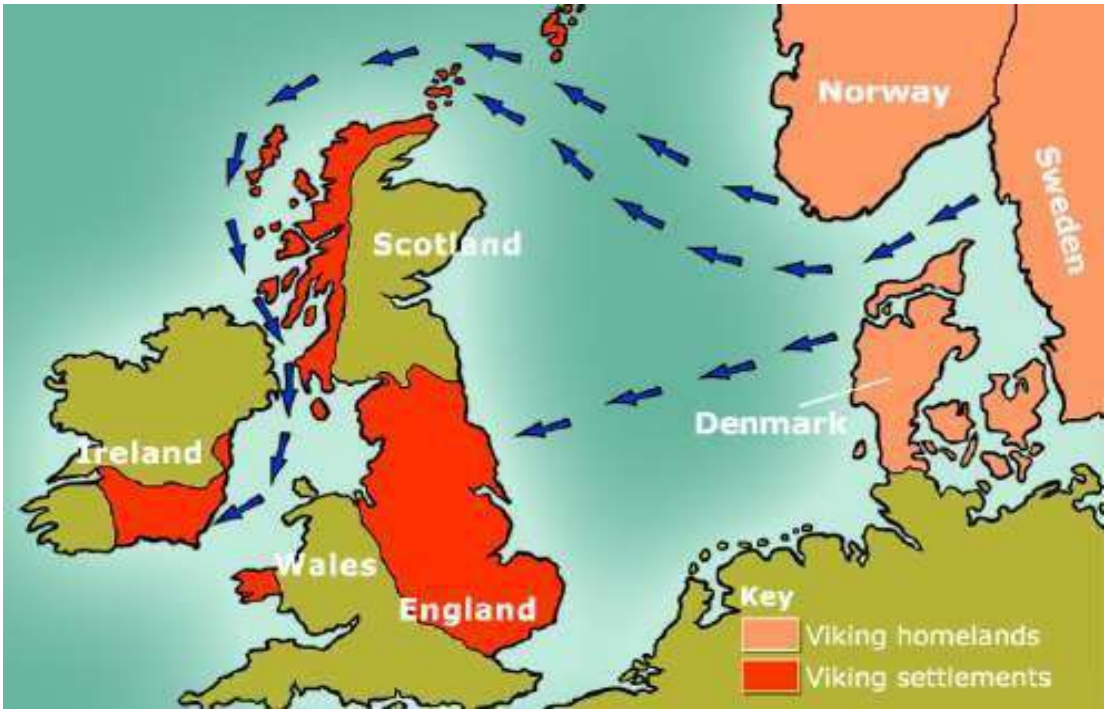
Vikings were a group of seafaring people from Scandinavia (present-day Norway, Denmark, and Sweden) who established throughout areas in Europe, North Africa, and North America and engaged in raids and trade from the late 8th to the late 11th century. One theory suggests that the word "Viking" derives from Old English *wicing*, meaning "village, habitation" (Brink & Price, 2008, p. 6). However, the Online

Etymology Dictionary suggests that the word comes from the Old Norse term *vikingr*, meaning someone who participates in sea expeditions or raids.

The Vikings attacked Britain as they traded goods with the Anglo-Saxons for many years. So they knew of their wealth. The first recorded Viking attack on the monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria took place in AD 793. This event is often considered the beginning of the Viking Age in the British Isles.

In the years that followed, villages near the sea found themselves dominated by the Vikings and soon no region of the British Isles was safe from the raids of the Scandinavian seafaring people. They attacked villages in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and England. By 866, the Vikings arrived in York and made it the second biggest city in the country after London.

The following map illustrates the Viking expansion from their Scandinavian homelands into the British Isles (See below).



Viking Settlements in the British Isles

The arrows show the routes the Vikings took as they traveled across the North Sea to raid and settle in England, Scotland and Wales. Significant Viking settlements, marked in red, include parts of northeastern England, where they established the Danelaw, and York which became a major Viking city in 866.

3.2. The Danelaw

The areas where the Viking settled were known as Danelaw. The word comes from the Old English "Dena lagu" to describe the region of England where Danish laws and customs were enforced.

The Danelaw covered an area east of a line on a map joining London to Chester (see the figure below).

The Danelaw is highlighted in red. The boundaries of the Anglo-Saxon territory are illustrated in brown. The Anglo-Saxons lived south of the line mainly in Wessex which was governed by King Alfred the Great.

In 886, Alfred took London from the Vikings and fortified it. The same year he signed a treaty with the Viking leader Guthrum dividing England between Vikings and English. The Danelaw (The Viking territory) comprised the north-west, the north-east, and east of England. Alfred became king of the remaining territory.

Alfred's grandson Athelstan led an English victory over the Vikings at the Battle of Brunaburh in 937, and his English kingdom included the Danelaw. In 954, Eirik Bloodaxe, the last Viking king of York, was killed and his kingdom was taken over by English earls.

❖ **Key Definitions**

- **Anglo-Saxons:** Germanic tribes who migrated to the British Isles around 430 CE, displacing the Celtic population and establishing the basis of early English kingdoms.
- **Nordic invasions**: A series of raids, settlements, and conquests carried out by Scandinavian groups (Vikings) in Europe between the 8th and 11th centuries, affecting regions like the British Isles.

- **Vikings:** Scandinavian people who initiated the invasions of England and several other territories. They were known for their maritime skills and raiding activities.
- **Danelaw:** The region in northern and eastern England controlled by the Vikings following the Nordic invasions and characterized by Viking governance, law, and settlement.
- **Witan:** The council of Anglo-Saxon kings that evolved into a formal body advising the monarchy and issuing laws.
- **Manorial system:** A system of land management and social organization established by the Anglo-Saxons which paved the way for the feudal system in medieval England.

Conclusion

The Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings had a profound impact on Britain as they brought together their cultures that would subsequently shape the nation's identity. From the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to the merciless raids of Scandinavian tribes, the two groups left a permanent mark on Britain's language, governance and culture.

Anglo-Saxons contributed to the English language. Indeed, Old English was heavily influenced by Anglo-Saxon speech and it became the foundation of modern English. Similarly, Anglo-Saxon literature produced important works such as *Beowulf* which remains a cornerstone of English literature and reflects the values of heroism, paganism and altruism prevalent in Anglo-Saxon society.

Despite their reputation as merciless raiders, the Vikings were highly organized. They were not only great warriors and skillful shipbuilders but also adept traders dealing in goods such as silver, silk, and slaves. Their rich Norse mythology included gods like Odin and Thor. Over time, the Vikings integrated into the local Anglo-Saxon communities, resulting in a significant cultural exchange that helped shape the English nation.

Lecture Four: The Norman Conquest

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ provide an overview of the Norman conquest
- ✓ distinguish some key concepts related to the Norman Conquest
- ✓ be aware of the importance of the Norman Conquest in Britain and its consequences

Introduction

The Norman Conquest is one of the most important events in the history of England. It happened in the eleven century when an army composed of Normans and French invaded England. The Duke of Normandy, William, later known as William the Conqueror led the invasion by defeating the Anglo-Saxons in England and establishing a new regime that would have lasting consequences on English society and institutions. As O'Driscoll puts it, "the successful Norman invasion of England brought Britain into the mainstream of western European culture" (2009, p. 18).

1. The Road to William's Invasion

As he approached death in late 1066, King Edward the Confessor was concerned about the future of his kingdom. Indeed, Edward lacked a son to succeed him and this meant the English monarchy did not have any future monarch. Edward knew that without an agreed-upon replacement, his kingdom could dissolve into chaos, as different factions would fight to take control of England.

Earl Harold Godwinson, a member of England's great noble families, ended up claiming the throne. Harold, however, was not related to Edward by blood, so this left the door open for a challenger.

2. William of Normandy

The challenger of the English throne came from France in Normandy. The Duke of Normandy William was entitled to the crown of England. He was Edward the Confessor's cousin and he believed that England was rightfully his to inherit.

William I, King of England

William gathered a powerful army comprising heavily armed knights and cavalry troops and set out to cross the English Channel and conquer the throne by violence.

In late September 1066, William and his army arrived at the coast of England. They fought against King Harold's Anglo-Saxon forces. However, Harold's army was rapidly defeated by William's troops on October 14 at the Battle of Hastings. William became king of England at Christmas in 1066. As historian Peter Rex noted, "Duke William did not only make himself King, as others had done before him, nor did he merely add yet another cohort of nobles to the ranks of those already in power, instead he virtually eliminated the whole of the existing governing class and transferred the ownership of their estates to his own somewhat mixed collection of followers, Bretons, Flemings, Poitevins and, above all, Normans" (2012, p. 9). William would rule the country for 21 years until his death in 1087.

3. 1066: The Turning Point at Hastings

The Battle of Hastings took place on October 14, 1066, and ended in the defeat of Harold II of England by William the Conqueror. The battle is a significant event in English history as it established the Normans as the supreme rulers of England. The following picture illustrates the Battle of Hastings. It is Bayeux Tapestry, a medieval embroidered cloth that depicts the Norman Conquest.

Bayeux Tapestry illustrating Battle of Hastings

After the death of the childless monarch of England Edward the Confessor in January 1066, there were numerous uncertainties about who would govern England next. Edward married Edith, Godwin of Wessex's daughter, who was part of the most influential family in England during that era. With no children to inherit his throne, the dying Edward named the Earl of Wessex Harold Godwinson as his successor.

This abrupt transfer of power posed challenges for a number of dukes and knights who wanted to rule England. Tosting, Harold's brother, also wanted to be king, as did Harald Hardrada of Norway, the Viking

king of Norway. Harold triumphed over Tosting and Hardrada on September 25th, 1066 during the Battle of Stamford Bridge. However, Harold did not know that he would soon face an even greater threat.

Indeed, William, Duke of Normandy, was a distant cousin of Edward and asserted that King Edward had already promised him the throne in 1051. William arrived at Pevensey, England, on September 28th, 1066, and invaded the town. After securing it, he moved on to Hastings to gather his army where he and Harold would settle their differences on the battlefield.

The English army, led by King Harold, took up their position on Senlac Hill near Hastings on the morning of the 14th October 1066. Harold's tired and drained Saxon soldiers were forced to march towards the south, following the bloody fight to take control of Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire only days earlier.

William led his winning combination of Norman infantry, cavalry, and archers against Harold's poorly trained Anglo-Saxon peasants, with the total show of force running between 5,000 and 7,000 men. The soldiers from France were much better-trained than the English, and had better weapons, arches and horses. The fighting continued for most of the day with the shield wall unbroken.

Once the Saxons carefully organized formation was broken; they were vulnerable to cavalry attack. King Harold was struck in the eye by a chance Norman arrow and was killed, but the battle raged on until all of Harold's loyal bodyguard were slain. The battle lasted all day and thousands of men were killed and injured.

4. The Reign of William the Conqueror in England

After winning the Battle of Hastings, William's ruling in England marked a turning point in the nation's history. He brought about a number of important reforms that changed the social and political context.

In an effort to centralize control, he established feudalism, fostered royal authority, and started building castles. William's rule laid the groundwork for a new English society shaped by Norman customs and rule.

The king commissioned a thorough survey of his domain known as the Domesday Book in order to identify who exactly owned and rented which lands, and then he used force to convert as much as 20% of England under control.

William redistributed lands to his loyal Norman knights and barons. Then, English landowners became vassals to these powerful lords when William demanded they swear loyalty to him in the Oath of Salisbury Plain in 1068.

William created a much stronger, centralized royal government than had existed during the Anglo-Saxon period. Through this and the Oath of Salisbury Plain, William set the foundation of the feudal system in England, by which lords and their vassals paid homage to the king. As a Frenchman, and through the Normans who settled throughout the island, England became more closely tied to European affairs in the

centuries that followed. The conquest created one of the most powerful monarchies in Europe, and also set the stage for rivalry with France, which would continue until the 19th century.

England was influenced by French customs, and the Norman-French language blended with the Anglo-Saxon language to create the English language.

5. Key terms of the Norman Conquest

- **Anglo-Saxon England:** Anglo-Saxon England was early medieval England starting at the end of Roman Britain, which lasted until the Norman invasion in 1066.
- **Domesday Book:** A manuscript record of the "Great Survey" of much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086 by order of King William the Conqueror. It aimed to determine what taxes were owed during the reign of King Edward the Confessor, thereby allowing William to reassert the rights of the kingdom and assess where power lay after a wholesale redistribution of land following the Norman Conquest.
- **Edward the Confessor:** He ruled in Anglo Saxon times as a king of England from 1042 to his death in1066.
- **Harold Godwinson:** He was the last Anglo-Saxon king of England. He died at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Timeline of the Norman Conquest

- ✓ **1064:** The Earl of Wessex Harold Godwinson is shipwrecked in Normandy and swears an oath of loyalty to William, the Duke of Normandy
- ✓ **January 5, 1066:** Edward the Confessor, king of England, dies without an heir creating a succession crisis.
- ✓ **January 6, 1066:** Harold Godwinson is crowned king of England though William of Normandy claimed he was promised the throne.
- ✓ **September 25, 1066:** Harold Godwinson defeats Harald Hardrada and Tostig, ending the Viking threat in the Battle of Stamford Bridge.
- ✓ **September 28, 1066:** William of Normandy lands at Pevensey on the southern coast of England with his invasion force.
- ✓ **October 14, 1066:** William the Conqueror defeat Harold Godwinson's Anglo-Saxon army in the Battle of Hastings.
- ✓ **December 25, 1066:** William the Conqueror is crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey on Christmas day.
- ✓ **1067:** William consolidates his rule and starts distributing lands to his Norman followers.
- ✓ **1068-1070:** Rebellions in Northern England and other parts of the country are brutally suppressed by William's forces.

- ✓ **1070:** William completes his conquest of England, with the submission of the Welsh.
- ✓ **1071:** William invades Scotland and defeats King Malcom III.
- ✓ **1085-1086:** William commissions the Domesday Book, a detailed survey of land ownership and resources in England.
- ✓ **1087:** William dies and is succeeded by his son, William II (Rufus).

A summary of the Norman Conquest

The three main rivals for the English throne were: Harold Godwinson, Harald Hardrada, and William of Normandy. Harold Godwinson was the brother-in-law of Edward the Confessor through his sister Edith's marriage to the King of England Edward. William of Normandy was a distant cousin to Edward. When Edward the Confessor died, Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, was immediately crowned king and became Harold II. The royal council, known as the Witan, supported him. The Duke of Normandy William, on the other hand, claimed Edward had promised him the throne years earlier. He also stated Harold had sworn an oath to support his claim, which Harold broke.

Harold Godwinson gathered an army to defend the kingdom. Harald Hardrada was king of Norway. He invaded Yorkshire with a fleet of ships, but was defeated and killed by Harold's army at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. While Harold II was in the north of England fighting Hardrada, William, Duke of Normandy invaded Sussex. Harold rushed back south to fight him. On 14 October 1066, Harold II fought William's army at the Battle of Hastings and lost. Harold was killed with an arrow in his. William was crowned king of England on Christmas Day 1066, but it took years more fighting to conquer the whole country.

Conclusion

Class discussion about the content of the lecture

Lecture Five: England, Feudalism, and Magna Carta

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ define feudalism and its key components
- ✓ give a short summary of Magna Carta
- ✓ foster discussions on the feudal system and Magna Carta and their relevance in modern societies

Introduction

In this lecture, students will explore the feudal system that shaped England following the Norman Conquest of 1066. They will also be introduced to a key historical document of British history, the Magna Carta.

The key components of feudalism will be defined, and the roles of each member in this system will be explained. Students will also look at the impacts of this hierarchical system on social, political, and economic spheres. Additionally, an overview of the creation of Magna Carta, the reasons of its issuance, and its historical significance will be provided.

By understanding the foundational elements of feudalism and the Magna Carta, students will recognize their enduring influence on English culture and appreciate their relevance in contemporary discussions about authority, property ownership, and social justice, to name a few.

1. Feudal system

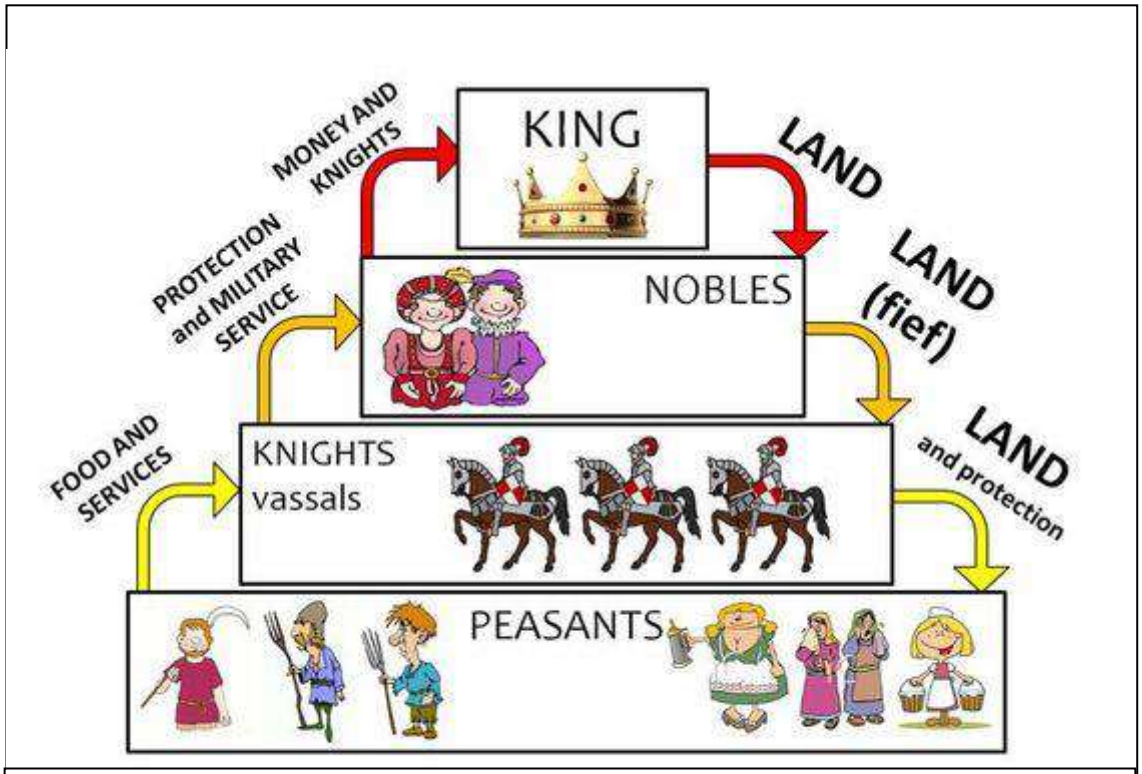
William the Conqueror established feudalism after defeating the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. This system was based on a hierarchy of land tenure with the king at the top distributing estates and lands the English nobility. He gave his most trusted nobles, known as barons, lands in return of loyalty and military service. “The court was the focal point of relations between the king and the political class. It was above all a relationship of loyalty, service, and reward” (Harriss, 2005, p. 22).

The nobles then distributed their lands to vassals who promised loyalty and provided military aid. The serfs, at the bottom of the system, worked on the land and had minimal rights or freedom.

The feudal system was a way of organizing the English society into different groups based on their roles. The king was at the top of the pyramid with all of the control, and the peasants at the bottom doing all of the hard work.

As a result England was different from the rest of Europe because it had one powerful family, instead of a large number of powerful nobles. William, and the kings after him, thought of England as their personal property.

The following diagram illustrates the hierarchy and organization of the feudal system:



Hierarchy and Organization of Feudalism

- ✓ The king is the most powerful entity at the top of the pyramid. He owns all the land and grants large portions of land, known also as fiefs to the loyal nobles.
- ✓ The nobles (barons) are granted land in return of military service and protection of the king.
- ✓ Knights and vassals serve the nobles by providing protection and military aid in exchange for land.
- ✓ Peasants or serfs are the bottom of the pyramid, making up the majority of the English population. They receive land to live on in exchange for their food and services. Still, they have little or no rights and they are tied to the land, unable to leave without the lord's permission.

2. Decline of feudalism and Emergence of Magna Carta

Feudalism declined in England during the reign of King John who signed the Magna Carta in 1215, which reduced royal power and feudal obligations.

Magna Carta, means the Great Charter. It is one of the most important documents in British history as it established the principle that everyone is subject to the law, even the king, and guarantees the rights of individuals, the right to justice and the right to a fair trial.

Magna Carta (one of four surviving exemplifications of the 1215 text)

By 1215, because of years of unsuccessful foreign policies and heavy taxation demands, King John faced down a possible rebellion by the country's powerful barons. He then agreed to a charter of liberties that would place him and all of England's future sovereigns within a rule of law.

With negotiations stalled early in 1215, a civil war broke out, and the rebellious barons gained control of London. Forced into a corner, John yielded, and on June 15, 1215, at Runnymede, he accepted the terms included in a document called the Articles of the Barons. Four days later, after further modifications, the king and the barons issued a formal version of the document, which would become known as the Magna Carta. Intended as a peace treaty, the charter failed in its goals, as civil war broke out within three months.

Magna Carta marks a clear stage in the collapse of English feudalism. Feudal society was based on links between lord and vassal. The nobles did not allow John's successors to forget this charter and its promises. Every king recognised Magna Carta, until the Middle Ages ended in disorder and a new kind of monarchy came into being in the sixteenth century.

Conclusion

Both feudalism and the Magna Carta left lasting effects on English society. Feudalism's hierarchical structure has echoes in modern class systems, and its ideas about land ownership still influence property laws today. The Magna Carta's principles of fair trial and social justice continue to resonate in contemporary legal and political debates, particularly regarding the balance of power and the protection of individual rights.

Feudalism and the Magna Carta provide a foundation for understanding England's transition to the modern age. Their legacies can be seen not only in British culture but also in broader Western legal and political traditions.

Lecture Six: Middle Ages

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ give a short summary of Middle Ages in England
- ✓ identify the series of wars and conflicts in Medieval England
- ✓ distinguish the hard conditions of common people

Introduction

This lecture introduces us to a key period in British history, namely Middle Ages, also called medieval period. It must be noted that Britain along with other kingdoms and nations in Europe witnessed a number of events and troubles during that period. After giving a short overview of Middle Ages in Britain, we will deal with several key events that happened in Britain and transformed it altogether. A timeline will be provided to us that summarizes the key events during Middle Ages. By the end, we will close the lecture with a discussion which highlights the importance of Middle Ages in Britain.

1. Of Middle Ages

Middle Ages or the medieval period is the time between the decline of the Roman Empire and the early modern period or the Renaissance; the time between 500 and 1500. During most of the Middle Ages, the island of Great Britain was divided into several kingdoms. While the Roman and Norman Conquests influenced the island of Great Britain, the Romans never invaded Ireland.

The medieval period in England saw the emergence of monarchy, the issuing of common laws, and reducing the king's prerogatives after the signing of the Magna Carta. That era was also characterized by the growth of the church's influence and interference in politics, the Hundred Years War, the Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and the Wars of the Roses. All these dramatic events contributed to alter the British society and pave the way for the Renaissance and early modern England.

2. The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

The Hundred Years' War was a military conflict between England and France which fought over who would be the king of France. The war lasted from 1337 to 1453. However, it spilled over into surrounding regions such as Italy, Spain, the Low Countries, and western Germany (Villalon & Kagay, 2005, p. 25).

When the French king, Charles IV, died in 1328, he had no male heirs to the kingship. Charles' sister was Isabella, who was the mother of Edward III. Edward thought he should be king of France. However, Charles also had a cousin named Philip who thought he should be king. The lands owned by Edward in France came under attacks by the French. Edward decided to declare he had a right to the French throne

because of his relation to Isabella. In England, inheritance could be gained through the mother or the father's bloodline, but in France, it could only be gained by the father's bloodline.

The hundred years' war began with victory for the English. The French fleet was destroyed at Sluys (Flanders) in 1340. Then, after a short truce, the French cavalry was dispersed by the English archers at Crecy (Flanders) in 1346.

In 1349 the Black Death struck the English nation and wiped out half of the population. Despite this, the war with the French kingdom continued and in 1356 the English achieved victory at the Battle of Poitiers. By 1360, Edward III abandoned his claim to the French throne and France ceded the southwest to England. However, war broke out again later and more battles were fought. Inspired by Joan of Arc, the French took the offensive and drove the English out of France in 1453. Two years later, the civil war broke out in England between the houses of Lancaster and the house of York (1455-1485).

3. Black Death 1349

The Middle Ages were a period marked by the Black Death. It was a form of Bubonic Plague was known that had been known in England for centuries. This dangerous disease caused the victim's skin to turn black in patches and it inflamed glands or buboes in the groin. The patient suffered from compulsive vomiting, swollen tongues and severe headaches. Schama notes that "the Black Death was a knock-out blow to a world that was already hurting" (2003, p. 208).

The Italian writer and poet Giovanni Boccaccio wrote in 1350 that "Brothers abandoned each other, uncles abandoned their nephews, sisters abandoned their brothers, and wives frequently abandoned their husbands. And there is something else that is almost incredible. Fathers and mothers were loathe to visit and care for their children, almost as if they did not belong to them" (Qtd. in Nardo, 2011, p. 8).

It started in the East, possibly in China, and it quickly spread across Europe and North Africa. Whole communities were wiped out and corpses littered the streets as there was no one left to bury them.

In England, the plague began in the poor, overcrowded parish of St. Giles-in-the-Field in London and spread to other areas of England. York was one city badly affected. The victims were buried outside the city walls to prevent the plague from returning.

The Black Death killed between 2 to 2.5 million people in England. One of its main consequences was the huge reduction in cultivated lands due to the death of thousands of peasants. As a result, landowners face ruin and were obliged to give farmers high wages.

By the end of the 14th century, peasants and artisans benefited from increased wages and higher grain prices.

4. Peasants' Revolt of 1381

The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was also an important uprising in medieval England. It started in 1377 when Richard II imposed an oppressive poll tax on peasants to help finance his military campaigns in foreign

lands. Another poll tax was issued two years later, in 1379. Yet another poll tax was issued within this timeframe that left peasants paying different amounts. Peasants felt the weight of the taxes and were very angry at the unfairness of the taxes issued. King Richard II was at the time only a teenager (See the picture below).

Richard II Meets the Rebels on 14 June 1381 (Jean Froissart's Chronicles)

After the Black Death ravaged Europe, there was a shortage of laborers to work the land. However, Richard II's policies aimed to reverse this trend, limiting wage increases and imposing additional burdens on the peasantry.

Peasants were able to demand fair wages for their work. However, nobles began to fight to re-gain control over land and take away the peasants' freedom. Additionally, peasants were still paying heavy taxes to help fund the Hundred Years' War between England and France.

In 1351, King Edward III passed a law that limited the wages of peasants to those that existed before the plague occurred. Those who broke the new rule were punished with fines or being placed in stocks. Exhausted by the heavy taxes and the unfair treatment, peasants captured the Tower of London.

The king met with the peasants a number of times and promised to give them what they asked for. Peasants were not organized enough to stand up to the monarchy, nor could they continue to not work for wages. Upon hearing the promises of the king, the peasants disbursed and returned to work. The king did not keep his word and consequently the peasants revolted.

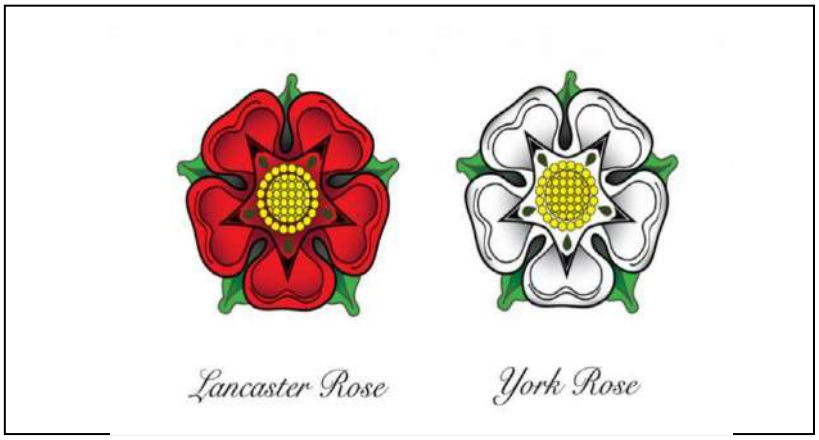
All in all, the revolt failed to achieve lasting social or economic reforms because the monarchy was very powerful and the peasant did not have agency within medieval England.

5. Wars of the Roses 1455-1485

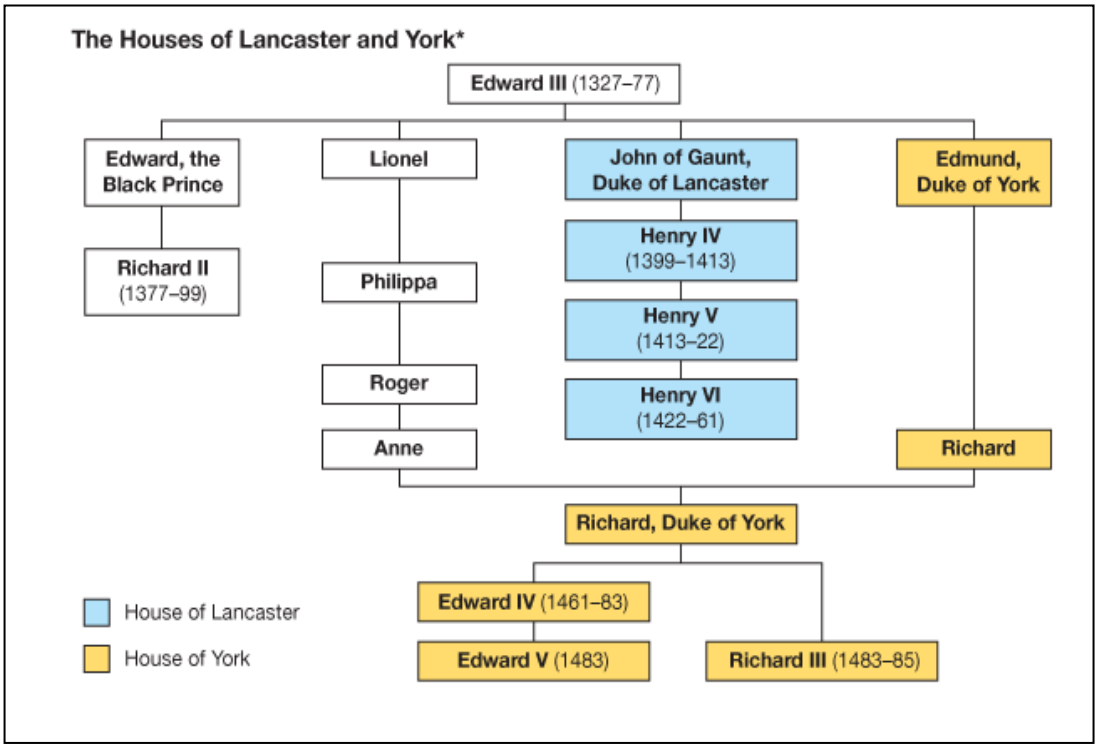
The Wars of the Roses were a series of conflicts that created chaos in England during the second half of the 15th century. Webster points out that it is "the period from Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450 till the Battle of Bosworth in 1485" (1998, p. 18).

The Wars of the Roses lasted thirty years and involved the two main rival branches of the Plantagenet dynasty, the Houses of York and Lancaster. Each believed they had a claim to the English throne.

They were called the Wars of the Roses because each side, York and Lancaster, chose a different color of rose to symbolize them. The York used the white rose to represent them, and the Lancaster chose red (See the picture below).



The two houses were very close as they were descendants of the same king Edward III (See the diagram below).



Tudor King Henry VII took Edward IV's daughter, Elizabeth of York as his queen when the Wars ended. They combined the white and red roses to make the Tudor Rose. Although there would still be power struggles to maintain the Tudor dynasty's power during the new king's reign, the Wars of the Roses was over.

- **Timeline of key events in Britain during the Middle Ages**

- Around 410 AD: The Roman Empire's withdrawal from Britain.
- 1066: The Norman Conquest, led by William the Conqueror, establishes Norman rule.
- 1086: Compilation of the Domesday Book, a comprehensive survey of England's land and resources.
- 1215: The historic signing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede, a significant stride towards limiting the power of monarchs constitutionally.
- 1348-1350: The Black Death pandemic causes widespread devastation to the population.
- 1337-1453: The Hundred Years' War, a prolonged conflict between England and France.
- 1381: The Peasants' Revolt, a protest against the oppressive feudal system.
- Late 15th century: The Wars of the Roses, a series of dynastic conflicts over the English throne, involving the Houses of Lancaster and York.
- 1485: The Battle of Bosworth Field, leading to the emergence of the Tudor dynasty with the reign of Henry VII. This marked the end of Middle Ages in Britain.

- **Summary of Middle Ages in Britain**

In the Middle Ages, Britain experienced a feudal system with a structured society led by monarchs, nobles, and the clergy. William the Conqueror's 1066 Norman Conquest introduced Norman influence, affecting language and culture. Notable constructions such as the Tower of London and Canterbury Cathedral emerged in this period. The signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 marked a pivotal moment in the development of constitutional principles. The 14th Century Black Death caused widespread devastation, and the Hundred Years' War with France played a defining role during this time. The Wars of the Roses destabilized England but also established the Tudors as a new powerful dynasty that ruled England for centuries. Henry VII's victory in 1485 marks the end of the Middle Ages in England and the start of the Early Modern period. Despite unrest in England, the era witnessed important accomplishments in the field of art, literature, and architecture.

Conclusion: Class discussion about the importance and legacy of Middle Ages on England

Lecture Seven: The Tudors and the English Reformation

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ identify the key events in England under the reign of the Tudors
- ✓ understand the English reformation and its impact on the British society of the 17th Century
- ✓ assess the ruling of the Tudors and their legacy

Introduction

This lecture explores the impact and legacy of one of the most important dynasties in Britain: the Tudors. Indeed, this royal family influenced British life, society and politics and established itself as a powerful monarchy in England during the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

We will provide a brief overview of the Tudors by focusing on their most prominent kings and queens. Special attention will be given to the English reformation, a transformative event that reshaped British society and laid the foundation for the religious landscape of modern Britain.

Finally, we will examine the legacy of the Tudors and their contributions to British history as they played a prominent role in shaping the nation's development.

1. Brief Overview of the Tudors

The Tudors were a lineage of Welsh-English descent who ruled both England and Wales (1485-1603). Henry Tudor became King Henry VII in 1485 when his army defeated Richard III, who, together with so many of his household men and noble supporters, was slain in the Battle of Bosworth Field (Guy, 2000, p.11).

They ruled England for 118 years in total during which time they had 5 different monarchs. During their respective eras, Church and political institutions were more closely aligned and influenced each other. Monarchs relied on the clergy to make sure the common people in England heard the king's message. They supported new religious beliefs, as well as the discovery and settlement of new territories.

During the Tudor rule, England also accumulated huge levels of wealth. The Tudor era ended with the passing of Elizabeth I in 1603. As the virgin queen did not have any children, her relative James I inherited the throne.

2. Henry VIII and Reformation

Henry VIII (1509-1547) was the son of Henry VII. He formed alliances with France and Spain, the two major European powers at the time and started military campaigns to restore England's reputation.

King Henry VIII wanted a male heir; however, his wife Catherine of Aragon gave birth only to a daughter, Mary. He asked the pope to annul their marriage, but the pope refused his request. As a consequence, Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and founded his own Church of England. In 1534, the Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy that declared Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. The act marked the beginning of the English Reformation, which separated England from the authority of the pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

King Henry VIII

The king then married Anne Boleyn, who gave birth to Elizabeth, but the marriage ended with Anne's execution. His third wife Jane Seymour finally gave him a son, Edward but she died shortly after childbirth. Henry subsequently married Anne of Cleves for political reasons. Unfortunately, the marriage was annulled after six months. The king's fifth wife Catherine Howard was also executed, and his sixth wife Catherine Parr remained with him until his death.

During the Reformation, England transitioned from being a nation to a Protestant nation as its official religion. This transformation occurred when Henry VIII and Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy that declared the king as the leader of the Church of England. Therefore, anyone who refused to acknowledge the king as the head of the church was committing a crime. Priests were compelled to pledge allegiance to the monarch and the newly established church of England.

In 1543, King Henry VIII made an important decision by passing an Act of Succession which restored Mary and Elizabeth to the line of succession after their brother Edward. Henry VIII died in 1547, and his ten-year-old son Edward VI became king. After a six-year reign, Edward died in 1553 after falling ill. His sister Mary became Queen of England after his death.

3. Bloody Mary

When Mary I, daughter of Henry VIII, ascended to the throne in 1553, she became the first female ruler in English history (Duncan, 2012, p. 21). However, before becoming queen, she had to face several challenges and plots aiming at removing her from her royal right. Mary was called to Edward VI's deathbed

but was warned that it was a plan to have her captured. This would have made it easier for her cousin, Lady Jane Grey, also known as the Nine Day's Queen, to take to the throne (Ives, 2009, p. 2).

Queen Mary I of England, also known as Bloody Mary

Consequently, Mary I fled to East Anglia to claim the throne after her brother's death and was crowned Queen. She married Philip II of Spain in order to restore Catholicism. Mary was a devout Catholic as her mother Catherine of Aragon raised her in the Catholic faith. Mary wanted to repeal Edward VI's reforms and restore the pope's authority in England.

Her persecution of Protestants in England and the burning of 280 English Protestants earned her the nickname "Bloody Mary" (Hilliam, 2005, p. 17). The first Queen of England had no children and was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth after her death in 1558.

4. Elizabeth I

Queen Elizabeth I was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. She was the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty and reigned for 44 years and 4 months, making her the longest serving English sovereign up to that time (Kendall, 2022, p. 8).

Elizabeth I won her subjects' devotion and respect with her strong leadership. She could manage the political and religious challenges of her time in a skillful way. Under her reign, England's economy strengthened and the arts and literature flourished.

She also called Parliament to pass a religious settlement that shaped the Church of England. The Act of Supremacy (1559) made her the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. She maintained a middle ground between Catholics and Protestants, but her reign face plots against her life. The most notable was the Babington Plot, which involved Mary, Queen of Scots. She was Elizabeth's cousin and both were

granddaughters of Henry VII. Elizabeth ordered the execution of Mary for treason in 1587. In the next lecture, we will explore Queen Elizabeth I and her reign in more details.

5. Key Definitions of the Tudors

- **Tudor Dynasty:** A royal dynasty that ruled England from 1485 to 1603. It started with Henry VII and ended with Elizabeth I. The dynasty is notable for its significant political and religious changes in England.
- **Henry VIII:** The second Tudor king, known for his six marriages and his break from the Catholic Church, which led to the English Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England.
- **The English Reformation:** A religious movement in the 16th century that led to the establishment of Protestantism in England, initiated by Henry VIII's break from the Catholic Church.
- **The Act of Supremacy of 1534:** The act declared Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England, effectively establishing the English monarchy's authority over the church.
- **The Act of Supremacy of 1559:** This act was passed during the reign of Elizabeth I and restored the monarch's supremacy over the Church of England.

Conclusion

Class discussion about the Tudors and their impact on England

Lecture Eight: The Elizabethan Era

Objectives:

By the end of this lecture, students should:

- ✓ identify the main aspects of the Elizabethan Era
- ✓ recognize the contributions of key figures in enriching British literature and culture.
- ✓ Assess the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and her legacy

Introduction

The term "Elizabethan Era" refers to the English history of Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558–1603). She was among the most astute and successful of all English monarchs. She resisted demands to marry and she cultivated her image as a Virgin Queen wedded not to a man, but to an increasingly prosperous England.

Historians often depict the reign of Elizabeth I as the Golden Age in English history and it was widely romanticized in books, movies, plays, and TV series. The Elizabethan age is considered to be a time of English renaissance that inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph.

This period saw the flourishing of poetry, music and literature. The era is most famous for theatre, as William Shakespeare and many others composed plays. It was also an age of exploration and expansion abroad to establish colonies under English rule across the globe, including in The New World.

Queen Elizabeth I

1. Religious Conflict

Queen Elizabeth wanted a middle way between the Protestantism of her brother, Edward, and the Catholicism of her sister, Mary. She used laws passed by Parliament in an attempt to make the Church of England Protestant. This has become known as the Elizabethan Religious Settlement.

2. The Economy of the Golden Age

The Elizabethan era was a time of growing wealth and prosperity, driven by land acquisitions from monasteries under Henry VIII, which allowed new landowners to rise. Elizabeth I encouraged the middle class to engage in agriculture, shifting from peasants farming for nobles to independent citizens working for wages.

Trading companies, supported by the queen, were established to generate profits, and Elizabeth also backed sailors who gained wealth by attacking foreign ships, particularly Spanish vessels carrying goods from the Americas. Additionally, Elizabeth profited from the transatlantic slave trade through her association with privateers like John Hawkins and Francis Drake, who were involved in violent raids in West Africa and the transportation of enslaved people to the Americas, resulting in substantial wealth for the crown.

3. The Spanish Armada

England and Spain had initially been allies. King Philip II of Spain had been married to Elizabeth I's sister, Mary, and England and Spain had been allies during war with France. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she tried to remain friendly with Spain. Philip had remained friendly too.

Tensions began to rise between the two nations when Elizabeth executed Mary Queen of Scots. Philip was particularly angered by the death of his Catholic ally. Philip had also been aggravated by the behavior of Elizabeth's privateers Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins, who made money by robbing and raiding Spanish settlements and ships in the Americas.

In the summer of 1588, Philip attempted to launch an invasion of England. This was one of the largest attempted invasions England had seen. 130 Spanish ships were sent to invade England, but Spain failed. There were several factors in the defeat of the Armada as Elizabeth's naval commanders were highly skilled. Also, strong storms scattered, and sank, many of the Spanish ships. Finally, the English ships were designed for battle. Many of the Spanish ships were not warships, and were generally used for transporting soldiers and supplies.

4. Scientific Study and Exploration

Along with a thriving economy and the flourishing arts, England's Golden Age opened an entire new world to the English realm through scientific study. Men like Sir Francis Bacon, who structured the idea of a defined scientific method, worked in England's Golden Age.

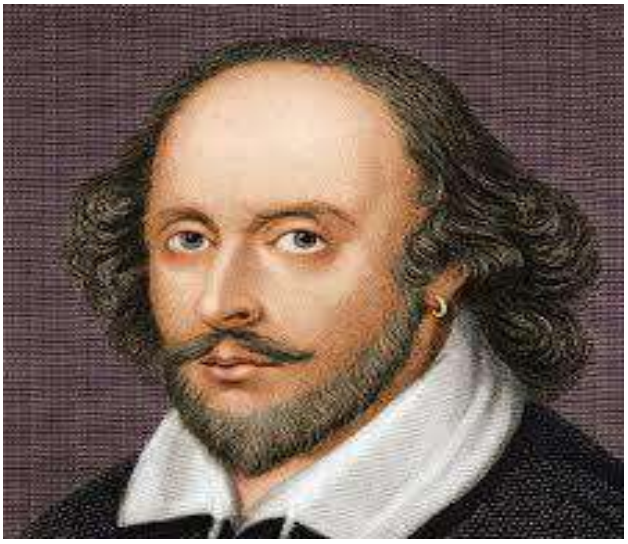
As scientific exploration boomed, so did overseas exploration. Up until this time, Spain and Portugal had dominated the New World's seas, but Elizabeth's Golden Age saw the emergence of English explorers onto the scene. There was Sir Francis Drake, the first European to pass from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast of South America.

Also, Henry Hudson discovered the Hudson River of New York, whereas Sebastian Cabot sailed for England and searched for the illusive Northwest Passage across North America.

The favorite explorer of Queen Elizabeth was Sir Walter Raleigh. He was the one who established the first English colony in America on Roanoke Island. We must not forget that the state of Virginia was named after Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen.

5. Expansion of the Arts

Theatres flourished during the Elizabethan period, with dedicated playhouses being built in London from the 1560s. Before Elizabeth's reign, plays were primarily religious and performed by travelling actors, but the Golden Age saw the rise of famous playwrights like Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, and William Shakespeare, whose works, such as *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, remain iconic. Theatre became a popular form of entertainment across social classes, reflected in the design of venues, which offered both standing areas for the lower classes and seated galleries for wealthier audiences.



William Shakespeare

Conclusion

The Elizabethan Era is regarded as England's Golden Age. It was marked by significant cultural, economic, and political growth. It was a time of flourishing arts, particularly in theatre, with figures like William Shakespeare who left a rich literary legacy. The period also saw advancements in exploration, trade, and the establishment of England as a powerful maritime, especially after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. However, the era was also characterized by the exploitation of colonies and involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, which the queen permitted. Overall, the Elizabethan Era shaped the cultural and historical identity of England and left an important impact on its future.

Lecture Nine: The Stuarts, the Civil War, and the New Constitutional Monarchy

Objectives:

By the end of the lecture students should be able to:

- Provide a general overview of the Stuarts and the English Civil War
- Identify the development of the constitutional monarchy in Britain
- Recognize the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and its impact on today's Britain

Introduction

This last lecture of the British Civilization course will concentrate on the Stuart dynasty, by examining their reign, key events, and achievements. The Stuarts ruled England during a period of significant change in British history characterized by political unrest, religious conflict and the eventual creation of the constitutional monarchy.

1. Of the Stuarts

The Stuart dynasty was a Scottish royal family that ruled England, Scotland, and Ireland from the early 17th century to the early 18th century. The Stuart monarchs faced significant challenges and conflicts during their reigns. Notable figures among the Stuarts include James I, who succeeded Elizabeth I and became the first monarch of both England and Scotland. Also, another Stuart King was Charles I, who faced a civil war with Parliament, and ultimately was executed. His son James II became king of England but was overthrown during the Glorious Revolution.

The era of the Stuarts witnessed profound political and social changes, including the establishment of constitutional monarchy, with power increasingly shifting towards Parliament. Economic shifts and changes in societal attitudes also played a role in shaping this period, leading to the emergence of a more constitutional and parliamentary form of governance in England.

The Stuart monarchs, from James I onwards, were less successful than the Tudors. They quarrelled with Parliament and this resulted in civil war. The republic that followed was even more unsuccessful, and by popular demand the dead king's son was called back to the throne. Another Stuart king was driven from his throne by his own daughter and her Dutch husband, William of Orange. The latter became king by Parliament's election, not by right of birth.

When the last Stuart, Queen Anne, died in 1714, the monarchy was no longer absolutely powerful as it had been when James VI rode south from Scotland in 1603. It had become a parliamentary monarchy controlled by a constitution.

These important changes did not take place simply because the Stuarts were bad rulers. They resulted from a basic change in society. During the 17th century economic power moved even faster into the hands of

the merchant and landowning farmer classes (Jones, 1985, p. 6). The Crown could no longer raise money or govern without their cooperation. These groups were represented by the House of Commons. In return for money the Commons demanded political power. The victory of the Commons and the classes it represented was unavoidable.

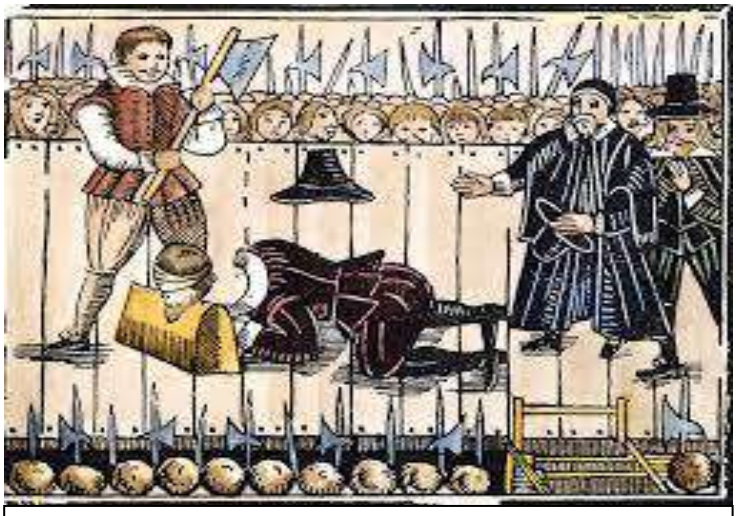
2. The English Civil War

The English Civil War (1642–1651) was a series of armed conflicts and political struggles between Parliamentarians (Roundheads) and Royalists (Cavaliers). The causes of the English Civil War included tensions between the monarchy and Parliament over issues such as taxation, religion, and the extent of royal power.

Religious differences, with Protestants and Puritans on one side and the more traditional Anglicans on the other, also played a significant role. The conflict started as Charles I attempted to govern without Parliament's approval and his perceived authoritarian rule.

The Parliamentarians (Roundheads) were led by Oliver Cromwell. They sought greater political power, religious reforms, and limitations on the king's authority. On the other hand, Royalists (Cavaliers) were supporters of the king and wanted to maintain traditional authority.

The war resulted in the establishment of the Commonwealth of England, led by Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. The monarchy was abolished, and Charles II, son of the executed king (Charles I), went into exile. The restoration of the monarchy occurred in 1660, marking the end of the Commonwealth period and the beginning of the Restoration era under Charles II.



Execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649

We see in the above painting that King Charles I is about to be executed. As Sharpe contends "1649 had profound revolutionary consequences for the representation of rule, as well as for government itself" (2013, p. 2). Indeed, the year 1649 symbolizes a turning point in English history as it represents the breakdown of absolute monarchy and the assertion of parliamentary sovereignty.

3. Glorious Revolution and Constitutional Monarchy

Constitutional monarchy can be defined as an evolving system where the monarch's powers were constrained by laws and a constitution. The new constitutional monarchy was established in England after the Glorious Revolution took place in England in 1688 by overthrowing King James II. However, it must be noted that the foundations of the constitutional principle were established with the signing of Magna Carta by King John in 1215. Indeed, Adams argues that "the body of Magna Carta and clause 61 constitute together the first inclination of the constitution towards a limited monarchy" (1908, p. 245). In fact, Clause 61 of Magna Carta contained a commitment from John that he would seek to obtain nothing from anyone, in our own person or through someone else, whereby any of these grants or liberties may be revoked or diminished.

James II's pursuit of Catholicism and pro-Catholic policies caused concern among the Protestant nobility and Parliament. The birth of James's Catholic successor heightened fears about a permanent Catholic monarchy. Support for James II collapsed and he fled to France, resulting in minimal bloodshed in what became known as the Bloodless or Glorious Revolution.

Prall notes that "the Glorious Revolution of 1688 represented a crucial turning point in modern British history by decisively shifting political power from the monarchy to Parliament" (1985, p. 83).

In 1689, Parliament jointly offered William and Mary (eldest daughter of James II) the crown, and William and Mary accepted the crown on the terms set out in the Declaration of Right (1689). This document that later would be enacted the Bill of Rights established 13 key clauses that limited the power of the Crown, strengthened parliamentary authority, and established certain rights for the people.

Similarly and as part of the Glorious Revolution, the Act of Toleration was passed in 1689, granting non-Anglican Protestants some religious freedom (Mews, 1898, p. 101).

The Glorious Revolution is considered a defining moment in the development of the constitutional monarchy in Britain. This meant the creation of a constitutional framework that limited the powers of the monarch and confirmed the rights of parliament.

Timeline of the Stuarts:

1603: James I ascend to the throne, marking the beginning of the Stuart Dynasty.

1605: The Gunpowder Plot - A failed attempt to assassinate James I and the Parliament.

1625-1649: Charles I's reign and the tensions leading to the English Civil War.

1642-1651: English Civil War - Royalists (Cavaliers) vs. Parliamentarians (Roundheads).

1649: Execution of Charles I; England becomes a republic under Oliver Cromwell.

1653-1658: The Protectorate - Cromwell's rule as Lord Protector.

1660: The Restoration - Charles II returns to the throne, monarchy restored.

1665-1666: The Great Plague and the Great Fire of London.

1679-1681: Exclusion Crisis - Debate over excluding James, Duke of York, from the throne.

1685-1688: James II's reign and the Glorious Revolution.

1688: William of Orange and Mary, daughter of James II, invited to rule - constitutional changes.

1701-1714: War of the Spanish Succession - Anne, the last Stuart monarch, oversees the conflict.

1714: End of the Stuart Dynasty with the death of Queen Anne; House of Hanover succeeds.

Conclusion

The English Civil War and the establishment of the constitutional monarchy in Britain offer crucial lessons in the balance of power, the consequences of political extremes, and the potential for peaceful political transformations. Understanding these historical events provide students insights into the development of modern democratic principles and governance structures.

The Stuarts played an important role in the development of the British constitutional monarchy. The Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and Bill of Rights emerged to shape the balance of power between the monarchy and parliament. This evolution laid the foundation for modern constitutional principles.

References

1. Ackyroyd, P. Foundation: The History of England From Its Earliest Beginnings to the Tudors. New York: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2013.
2. Adams, G. B. The Origin of the English Constitution. The American Historical Review, vol. 13, no. 2, 1908, pp. 229–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/1832612
3. Arnold-Baker, C. The Companion to British History. London: Routledge, 2016.
4. Brink, S. and N. Price. (eds). The Viking World. London: Routledge, 2008.
5. Duncan, S. Mary I: Gender, Power, and Ceremony in the Reign of England's First Queen. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
6. Guy, J. The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2000.
7. Harriss, Ge. Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461. Oxford University Press, 2005.
8. Hilliam, P. Elizabeth I: Queen of England's Golden Age. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2005.
9. Ives, E. Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery. Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
10. Jones, E. Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1660-1750: Agricultural Change." The Journal of Economic History, vol. 25, no. 1, 1965, pp. 1–18. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2116390.
11. Kendall, P. Elizabeth I: Life and Legacy of the Virgin Queen. Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2022.
12. Mews, J. The Digest of English Case Law Containing the Reported Decisions of the Superior Courts: And a Selection from Those of the Irish Courts [from 1557] to the End of 1897. Sweet and Maxwell. 1898. vol. 12.
13. Nardo, D. The Black Death. Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2011.
14. Prall, S. The Bloodless Revolution. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
15. Rex, P. 1066: A New History of the Norman Conquest. Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Amberley Publishing, 2012.
16. Schama, S. A History of Britain: At the Edge of the World? 3000 BC-AD 1603, Volume 1. London: The Bodley Head, 2003.
17. Sharpe, K. Rebranding Rule: The Restoration and Revolution Monarchy, 1660-1714. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013.
18. Villalon, A. and D. Kagay. (ed). The Hundred Years War. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005.
19. Wall, M. The Anglo-Saxon Age: The Birth of England. Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Amberley Publishing, 2015.
20. Webster, B. The Wars of the Roses. Bristol: UCL Press Limited, 1998.