Late Middle Ages
1300–1500

Francis Rich

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The **Late Middle Ages** or **Late Medieval Period** was the period of European history lasting from AD 1250 to 1500. The Late Middle Ages followed the High Middle Ages and preceded the onset of the early modern period (and in much of Europe, the Renaissance). Around 1300, centuries of prosperity and growth in Europe came to a halt. A series of famines and plagues, including the Great Famine of 1315–1317 and the Black Death, reduced the population to around half of what it had been before the calamities. Along with depopulation came social unrest and endemic warfare. France and England experienced serious peasant uprisings, such as the Jacquerie and the Peasants' Revolt, as well as over a century of intermittent conflict, the Hundred Years' War. To add to the many problems of the period, the unity of the Catholic Church was temporarily shattered by the Western Schism. Collectively, those events are sometimes called the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages.

Despite the crises, the 14th century was also a time of great progress in the arts and sciences. Following a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman texts that took root in the High Middle Ages, the Italian Renaissance began. The absorption of Latin texts had started before the Renaissance of the 12th century through contact with Arabs during the Crusades, but the availability of important Greek texts accelerated with the Capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks, when many Byzantine scholars had to seek refuge in the West, particularly Italy.

Combined with this influx of classical ideas was the invention of printing, which facilitated dissemination of the printed word and democratized learning. Those two things would later lead to the Protestant Reformation. Toward the end of the period, the Age of Discovery began. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire cut off trading possibilities with the East. Europeans were forced to seek new trading routes, leading to the Spanish expedition under Christopher Columbus to the Americas in 1492 and Vasco da Gama's voyage to Africa and India in 1498. Their discoveries strengthened the economy and power of European nations.

The changes brought about by these developments have led many scholars to view this period as the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern history and of early modern Europe. However, the division is somewhat artificial, since ancient learning was never entirely absent from European society. As a result, there was developmental continuity between the ancient age (via classical antiquity) and the modern age. Some historians, particularly in Italy, prefer not to speak of the Late Middle Ages at all but rather see the high period of the Middle Ages transitioning to the Renaissance and the modern era.

Historiography and periodization

The term "Late Middle Ages" refers to one of the three periods of the Middle Ages, along with the Early Middle Ages and the High Middle Ages. Leonardo Bruni was the first historian to use tripartite periodization in his *History of the Florentine People* (1442). Flavio Biondo used a similar framework in *Decades of History from the Deterioration of the Roman Empire*

(1439–1453). Tripartite periodization became standard after the German historian Christoph Cellarius published *Universal History Divided into an Ancient, Medieval, and New Period* (1683).

For 18th-century historians studying the 14th and 15th centuries, the central theme was the Renaissance, with its rediscovery of ancient learning and the emergence of an individual spirit. The heart of this rediscovery lies in Italy, where, in the words of Jacob Burckhardt: "Man became a spiritual individual and recognized himself as such". This proposition was later challenged, and it was argued that the 12th century was a period of greater cultural achievement.

As economic and demographic methods were applied to the study of history, the trend was increasingly to see the late Middle Ages as a period of recession and crisis. Belgian historian Henri Pirenne continued the subdivision of Early, High, and Late Middle Ages in the years around World War I. Yet it was his Dutch colleague, Johan Huizinga, who was primarily responsible for popularising the pessimistic view of the Late Middle Ages, with his book *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (1919). To Huizinga, whose research focused on France and the Low Countries rather than Italy, despair and decline were the main themes, not rebirth.

Modern historiography on the period has reached a consensus between the two extremes of innovation and crisis. It is now generally acknowledged that conditions were vastly different north and south of the Alps, and the term "Late Middle Ages" is often avoided entirely within Italian historiography. The term "Renaissance" is still considered useful for describing certain

intellectual, cultural, or artistic developments, but not as the defining feature of an entire European historical epoch. The period from the early 14th century up until – and sometimes including – the 16th century, is rather seen as characterized by other trends: demographic and economic decline followed by recovery, the end of western religious unity and the subsequent emergence of the nation state, and the expansion of European influence onto the rest of the world.

History

The limits of Christian Europe were still being defined in the 14th and 15th centuries. While the Grand Duchy of Moscow was beginning to repel the Mongols, and the Iberian kingdoms completed the Reconquista of the peninsula and turned their attention outwards, the Balkans fell under the dominance of the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, the remaining nations of the continent were locked in almost constant international or internal conflict. The situation gradually led to the consolidation of central authority and the emergence of the nation state. The financial demands of war necessitated higher levels of taxation, resulting in the emergence of representative bodies – most notably the English Parliament. The growth of secular authority was further aided by the decline of the papacy with the Western Schism and the coming of the Protestant Reformation.

Northern Europe

After the failed union of Sweden and Norway of 1319–1365, the pan-Scandinavian Kalmar Union was instituted in 1397. The

Swedes were reluctant members of the Danish-dominated union from the start. In an attempt to subdue the Swedes, King Christian II of Denmark had large numbers of the Swedish aristocracy killed in the Stockholm Bloodbath of 1520. Yet this measure only led to further hostilities, and Sweden broke away for good in 1523. Norway, on the other hand, became an inferior party of the union and remained united with Denmark until 1814.

Iceland benefited from its relative isolation and was the last Scandinavian country to be struck by the Black Death. Meanwhile, the Norse colony in Greenland died out, probably under extreme weather conditions in the 15th century. These conditions might have been the effect of the Little Ice Age.

Northwest Europe

The death of Alexander III of Scotland in 1286 threw the country into a succession crisis, and the English king, Edward I, was brought in to arbitrate. Edward claimed overlordship over Scotland, leading to the Wars of Scottish Independence. The English were eventually defeated, and the Scots were able to develop a stronger state under the Stewarts.

From 1337, England's attention was largely directed towards France in the Hundred Years' War. Henry V's victory at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 briefly paved the way for a unification of the two kingdoms, but his son Henry VI soon squandered all previous gains. The loss of France led to discontent at home. Soon after the end of the war in 1453, the dynastic struggles of the Wars of the Roses (c. 1455–1485) began, involving the rival dynasties of the House of Lancaster

and House of York. The war ended in the accession of Henry VII of the Tudor family, who continued the work started by the Yorkist kings of building a strong, centralized monarchy. While England's attention was thus directed elsewhere, the Hiberno-Norman lords in Ireland were becoming gradually more assimilated into Irish society, and the island was allowed to develop virtual independence under English overlordship.

Western Europe

The French House of Valois, which followed the House of Capet in 1328, was at its outset marginalized in its own country, first by the English invading forces of the Hundred Years' War, and later by the powerful Duchy of Burgundy. The emergence of Joan of Arc as a military leader changed the course of war in favour of the French, and the initiative was carried further by King Louis XI. Meanwhile, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, met resistance in his attempts to consolidate his possessions, particularly from the Swiss Confederation formed in 1291. When Charles was killed in the Burgundian Wars at the Battle of Nancy in 1477, the Duchy of Burgundy was reclaimed by France. At the same time, the County of Burgundy and the wealthy Burgundian Netherlands came into the Holy Roman Empire under Habsburg control, setting up conflict for centuries to come.

Central Europe

Bohemia prospered in the 14th century, and the Golden Bull of 1356 made the king of Bohemia first among the imperial electors, but the Hussite revolution threw the country into crisis. The Holy Roman Empire passed to the Habsburgs in

1438, where it remained until its dissolution in 1806. Yet in spite of the extensive territories held by the Habsburgs, the Empire itself remained fragmented, and much real power and influence lay with the individual principalities. In addition, financial institutions, such as the Hanseatic League and the Fugger family, held great power, on both economic and political levels.

The kingdom of Hungary experienced a golden age during the 14th century. In particular the reigns of the Angevin kings Charles Robert (1308–42) and his son Louis the Great (1342–82) were marked by success. The country grew wealthy as the main European supplier of gold and silver. Louis the Great led successful campaigns from Lithuania to Southern Italy, and from Poland to Northern Greece.

He had the greatest military potential of the 14th century with his enormous armies (often over 100,000 men). Meanwhile, Poland's attention was turned eastwards, as the Commonwealth with Lithuania created an enormous entity in the region. The union, and the conversion of Lithuania, also marked the end of paganism in Europe.

Louis did not leave a son as heir after his death in 1382. Instead, he named as his heir the young prince Sigismund of Luxemburg. The Hungarian nobility did not accept his claim, and the result was an internal war. Sigismund eventually achieved total control of Hungary and established his court in Buda and Visegrád. Both palaces were rebuilt and improved, and were considered the richest of the time in Europe. Inheriting the throne of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire, Sigismund continued conducting his politics from Hungary,

but he was kept busy fighting the Hussites and the Ottoman Empire, which was becoming a menace to Europe in the beginning of the 15th century.

The King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary led the largest army of mercenaries of the time, The Black Army of Hungary, which he used to conquer Bohemia and Austria and to fight the Ottoman Empire. After Italy, Hungary was the first European country where the Renaissance appeared. However, the glory of the Kingdom ended in the early 16th century, when the King Louis II of Hungary was killed in the battle of Mohács in 1526 against the Ottoman Empire. Hungary then fell into a serious crisis and was invaded, ending its significance in central Europe during the medieval era.

Eastern Europe

The state of Kievan Rus' fell during the 13th century in the Mongol invasion. The Grand Duchy of Moscow rose in power thereafter, winning a great victory against the Golden Horde at the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380. The victory did not end Tartar rule in the region, however, and its immediate beneficiary was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which extended its influence eastwards. Under the reign of Ivan the Great (1462–1505), Moscow became a major regional power, and the annexation of the vast Republic of Novgorod in 1478 laid the foundations for a Russian national state. After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 the Russian princes started to see themselves as the heirs of the Byzantine Empire. They eventually took on the imperial title of Tsar, and Moscow was described as the Third Rome.

Southeast Europe

The Byzantine Empire had for a long time dominated the eastern Mediterranean in politics and culture. By the 14th century, however, it had almost entirely collapsed into a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire, centered on the city of Constantinople and a few enclaves in Greece. With the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Byzantine Empire was permanently extinguished.

The Bulgarian Empire was in decline by the 14th century, and the ascendancy of Serbia was marked by the Serbian victory over the Bulgarians in the Battle of Velbazhd in 1330. By 1346, the Serbian king Stefan Dušan had been proclaimed emperor. Yet Serbian dominance was short-lived; the Serbian army led by the Lazar Hrebljevanovic was defeated by the Ottomans at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, where most of the Serbian nobility was killed and the south of the country came under Ottoman occupation, as much of southern Bulgaria had become Ottoman territory in 1371. Northern remnants of Bulgaria were finally conquered by 1396, Serbia fell in 1459, Bosnia in 1463, and Albania was finally subordinated in 1479 only a few years after the death of Skanderbeg. Belgrade, an Hungarian domain at the time, was the last large Balkan city to fall under Ottoman rule, in 1521. By the end of the medieval period, the entire Balkan peninsula was annexed by, or became vassal to, the Ottomans.

Southwest Europe

Avignon was the seat of the papacy from 1309 to 1376. With the return of the Pope to Rome in 1378, the Papal State

developed into a major secular power, culminating in the morally corrupt papacy of Alexander VI. Florence grew to prominence amongst the Italian city-states through financial business, and the dominant Medici family became important promoters of the Renaissance through their patronage of the arts. Other city states in northern Italy also expanded their territories and consolidated their power, primarily Milan, Venice and Genoa. The War of the Sicilian Vespers had by the early 14th century divided southern Italy into an Aragon Kingdom of Sicily and an Anjou Kingdom of Naples. In 1442, the two kingdoms were effectively united under Aragonese control.

The 1469 marriage of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon and the 1479 death of John II of Aragon led to the creation of modern-day Spain. In 1492, Granada was captured from the Moors, thereby completing the Reconquista. Portugal had during the 15th century – particularly under Henry the Navigator – gradually explored the coast of Africa, and in 1498, Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India. The Spanish monarchs met the Portuguese challenge by financing the expedition of Christopher Columbus to find a western sea route to India, leading to the discovery of the Americas in 1492.

Late Medieval European society

Around 1300–1350 the Medieval Warm Period gave way to the Little Ice Age. The colder climate resulted in agricultural crises, the first of which is known as the Great Famine of 1315-1317. The demographic consequences of this famine, however, were not as severe as the plagues that occurred later in the century, particularly the Black Death. Estimates of the

death rate caused by this epidemic range from one third to as much as sixty percent. By around 1420, the accumulated effect of recurring plagues and famines had reduced the population of Europe to perhaps no more than a third of what it was a century earlier.

The effects of natural disasters were exacerbated by armed conflicts; this was particularly the case in France during the Hundred Years' War. It took 150 years for the European population to regain similar levels of 1300.

As the European population was severely reduced, land became more plentiful for the survivors, and labour consequently more expensive. Attempts by landowners to forcibly reduce wages, such as the English 1351 Statute of Laborers, were doomed to fail. These efforts resulted in nothing more than fostering resentment among the peasantry, leading to rebellions such as the French Jacquerie in 1358 and the English Peasants' Revolt in 1381. The long-term effect was the virtual end of serfdom in Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, landowners were able to exploit the situation to force the peasantry into even more repressive bondage.

The upheavals caused by the Black Death left certain minority groups particularly vulnerable, especially the Jews, who were often blamed for the calamities. Anti-Jewish pogroms were carried out all over Europe; in February 1349, 2,000 Jews were murdered in Strasbourg. States were also guilty of discrimination against the Jews. Monarchs gave in to the demands of the people, and the Jews were expelled from England in 1290, from France in 1306, from Spain in 1492, and from Portugal in 1497.

While the Jews were suffering persecution, one group that probably experienced increased empowerment in the Late Middle Ages was women. The great social changes of the period opened up new possibilities for women in the fields of commerce, learning and religion. Yet at the same time, women were also vulnerable to incrimination and persecution, as belief in witchcraft increased. Up until the mid-14th century, Europe had experienced steadily increasing urbanisation. Cities were also decimated by the Black Death, but the role of urban areas as centres of learning, commerce and government ensured continued growth. By 1500, Venice, Milan, Naples, Paris and Constantinople each probably had more than 100,000 inhabitants. Twenty-two other cities were larger than 40,000; most of these were in Italy and the Iberian peninsula, but there were also some in France, the Empire, the Low Countries, plus London in England.

Military history

Through battles such as Courtrai (1302), Bannockburn (1314), and Morgarten (1315), it became clear to the great territorial princes of Europe that the military advantage of the feudal cavalry was lost, and that a well equipped infantry was preferable. Through the Welsh Wars the English became acquainted with, and adopted, the highly efficient longbow. Once properly managed, this weapon gave them a great advantage over the French in the Hundred Years' War.

The introduction of gunpowder affected the conduct of war significantly. Though employed by the English as early as the Battle of Crécy in 1346, firearms initially had little effect in the field of battle. It was through the use of cannons as siege

weapons that major change was brought about; the new methods would eventually change the architectural structure of fortifications.

Changes also took place within the recruitment and composition of armies. The use of the national or feudal levy was gradually replaced by paid troops of domestic retinues or foreign mercenaries. The practice was associated with Edward III of England and the condottieri of the Italian city-states. All over Europe, Swiss soldiers were in particularly high demand. At the same time, the period also saw the emergence of the first permanent armies. It was in Valois France, under the heavy demands of the Hundred Years' War, that the armed forces gradually assumed a permanent nature.

Parallel to the military developments emerged also a constantly more elaborate chivalric code of conduct for the warrior class. This new-found ethos can be seen as a response to the diminishing military role of the aristocracy, and gradually it became almost entirely detached from its military origin. The spirit of chivalry was given expression through the new (secular) type of chivalric orders; the first of these was the Order of St. George, founded by Charles I of Hungary in 1325, while the best known was probably the English Order of the Garter, founded by Edward III in 1348.

Christian conflict and reform

The Papal Schism

The French crown's increasing dominance over the Papacy culminated in the transference of the Holy See to Avignon in

1309. When the Pope returned to Rome in 1377, this led to the election of different popes in Avignon and Rome, resulting in the Papal Schism (1378–1417). The Schism divided Europe along political lines; while France, her ally Scotland and the Spanish kingdoms supported the Avignon Papacy, France's enemy England stood behind the Pope in Rome, together with Portugal, Scandinavia and most of the German princes.

At the Council of Constance (1414–1418), the Papacy was once more united in Rome. Even though the unity of the Western Church was to last for another hundred years, and though the Papacy was to experience greater material prosperity than ever before, the Great Schism had done irreparable damage. The internal struggles within the Church had impaired her claim to universal rule, and promoted anti-clericalism among the people and their rulers, paving the way for reform movements.

Protestant Reformation

Though many of the events were outside the traditional time period of the Middle Ages, the end of the unity of the Western Church (the Protestant Reformation), was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the medieval period. The Catholic Church had long fought against heretic movements, but during the Late Middle Ages, it started to experience demands for reform from within. The first of these came from Oxford professor John Wycliffe in England. Wycliffe held that the Bible should be the only authority in religious questions, and he spoke out against transubstantiation, celibacy and indulgences. In spite of influential supporters among the English aristocracy, such as John of Gaunt, the movement was not allowed to survive. Though Wycliffe himself was left

unmolested, his supporters, the Lollards, were eventually suppressed in England.

The marriage of Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia established contacts between the two nations and brought Lollard ideas to her homeland. The teachings of the Czech priest Jan Hus were based on those of John Wycliffe, yet his followers, the Hussites, were to have a much greater political impact than the Lollards. Hus gained a great following in Bohemia, and in 1414, he was requested to appear at the Council of Constance to defend his cause. When he was burned as a heretic in 1415, it caused a popular uprising in the Czech lands. The subsequent Hussite Wars fell apart due to internal quarrels and did not result in religious or national independence for the Czechs, but both the Catholic Church and the German element within the country were weakened.

Martin Luther, a German monk, started the German Reformation by posting 95 theses on the castle church of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. The immediate provocation spurring this act was Pope Leo X's renewal of the indulgence for the building of the new St. Peter's Basilica in 1514. Luther was challenged to recant his heresy at the Diet of Worms in 1521. When he refused, he was placed under the ban of the Empire by Charles V. Receiving the protection of Frederick the Wise, he was then able to translate the Bible into German.

To many secular rulers the Protestant reformation was a welcome opportunity to expand their wealth and influence. The Catholic Church met the challenges of the reforming movements with what has been called the Catholic Reformation, or Counter-Reformation. Europe became split into

northern Protestant and southern Catholic parts, resulting in the Religious Wars of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Trade and commerce

The increasingly dominant position of the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean presented an impediment to trade for the Christian nations of the west, who in turn started looking for alternatives. Portuguese and Spanish explorers found new trade routes – south of Africa to India, and across the Atlantic Ocean to America. As Genoese and Venetian merchants opened up direct sea routes with Flanders, the Champagne fairs lost much of their importance.

At the same time, English wool export shifted from raw wool to processed cloth, resulting in losses for the cloth manufacturers of the Low Countries. In the Baltic and North Sea, the Hanseatic League reached the peak of their power in the 14th century, but started going into decline in the fifteenth.

In the late 13th and early 14th centuries, a process took place – primarily in Italy but partly also in the Empire – that historians have termed a "commercial revolution". Among the innovations of the period were new forms of partnership and the issuing of insurance, both of which contributed to reducing the risk of commercial ventures; the bill of exchange and other forms of credit that circumvented the canonical laws for gentiles against usury and eliminated the dangers of carrying bullion; and new forms of accounting, in particular double-entry bookkeeping, which allowed for better oversight and accuracy.

With the financial expansion, trading rights became more jealously guarded by the commercial elite. Towns saw the growing power of guilds, while on a national level special companies would be granted monopolies on particular trades, like the English wool Staple. The beneficiaries of these developments would accumulate immense wealth. Families like the Fuggers in Germany, the Medicis in Italy, the de la Poles in England, and individuals like Jacques Coeur in France would help finance the wars of kings, and achieve great political influence in the process.

Though there is no doubt that the demographic crisis of the 14th century caused a dramatic fall in production and commerce in *absolute* terms, there has been a vigorous historical debate over whether the decline was greater than the fall in population. While the older orthodoxy held that the artistic output of the Renaissance was a result of greater opulence, more recent studies have suggested that there might have been a so-called 'depression of the Renaissance'. In spite of convincing arguments for the case, the statistical evidence is simply too incomplete for a definite conclusion to be made.

Arts and sciences

In the 14th century, the predominant academic trend of scholasticism was challenged by the humanist movement. Though primarily an attempt to revitalise the classical languages, the movement also led to innovations within the fields of science, art and literature, helped on by impulses from Byzantine scholars who had to seek refuge in the west after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.

In science, classical authorities like Aristotle were challenged for the first time since antiquity. Within the arts, humanism took the form of the Renaissance. Though the 15th-century Renaissance was a highly localised phenomenon – limited mostly to the city states of northern Italy – artistic developments were taking place also further north, particularly in the Netherlands.

Philosophy, science and technology

The predominant school of thought in the 13th century was the Thomistic reconciliation of the teachings of Aristotle with Christian theology. The Condemnation of 1277, enacted at the University of Paris, placed restrictions on ideas that could be interpreted as heretical; restrictions that had implication for Aristotelian thought. An alternative was presented by William of Ockham, following the manner of the earlier Franciscan John Duns Scotus, who insisted that the world of reason and the world of faith had to be kept apart. Ockham introduced the principle of parsimony – or Occam's razor – whereby a simple theory is preferred to a more complex one, and speculation on unobservable phenomena is avoided. This maxim is, however, often misquoted. Occam was referring to his nominalism in this quotation. Essentially saying the theory of absolutes, or metaphysical realism, was unnecessary to make sense of the world.

This new approach liberated scientific speculation from the dogmatic restraints of Aristotelian science, and paved the way for new approaches. Particularly within the field of theories of motion great advances were made, when such scholars as Jean Buridan, Nicole Oresme and the Oxford Calculators challenged

the work of Aristotle. Buridan developed the theory of *impetus* as the cause of the motion of projectiles, which was an important step towards the modern concept of inertia. The works of these scholars anticipated the heliocentric worldview of Nicolaus Copernicus.

Certain technological inventions of the period – whether of Arab or Chinese origin, or unique European innovations – were to have great influence on political and social developments, in particular gunpowder, the printing press and the compass. The introduction of gunpowder to the field of battle affected not only military organisation, but helped advance the nation state. Gutenberg's movable type printing press made possible not only the Reformation, but also a dissemination of knowledge that would lead to a gradually more egalitarian society. The compass, along with other innovations such as the cross-staff, the mariner's astrolabe, and advances in shipbuilding, enabled the navigation of the World Oceans, and the early phases of colonialism. Other inventions had a greater impact on everyday life, such as eyeglasses and the weight-driven clock.

Visual arts and architecture

A precursor to Renaissance art can be seen already in the early 14th-century works of Giotto. Giotto was the first painter since antiquity to attempt the representation of a three-dimensional reality, and to endow his characters with true human emotions. The most important developments, however, came in 15th-century Florence. The affluence of the merchant class allowed extensive patronage of the arts, and foremost among the patrons were the Medici.

The period saw several important technical innovations, like the principle of linear perspective found in the work of Masaccio, and later described by Brunelleschi. Greater realism was also achieved through the scientific study of anatomy, championed by artists like Donatello. This can be seen particularly well in his sculptures, inspired by the study of classical models. As the centre of the movement shifted to Rome, the period culminated in the High Renaissance masters da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.

The ideas of the Italian Renaissance were slow to cross the Alps into northern Europe, but important artistic innovations were made also in the Low Countries. Though not – as previously believed – the inventor of oil painting, Jan van Eyck was a champion of the new medium, and used it to create works of great realism and minute detail. The two cultures influenced each other and learned from each other, but painting in the Netherlands remained more focused on textures and surfaces than the idealized compositions of Italy.

In northern European countries Gothic architecture remained the norm, and the gothic cathedral was further elaborated. In Italy, on the other hand, architecture took a different direction, also here inspired by classical ideals. The crowning work of the period was the Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, with Giotto's clock tower, Ghiberti's baptistery gates, and Brunelleschi's cathedral dome of unprecedented proportions.

Literature

The most important development of late medieval literature was the ascendancy of the vernacular languages. The

vernacular had been in use in England since the 8th century and France since the 11th century, where the most popular genres had been the chanson de geste, troubadour lyrics and romantic epics, or the romance. Though Italy was later in evolving a native literature in the vernacular language, it was here that the most important developments of the period were to come.

Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, written in the early 14th century, merged a medieval world view with classical ideals. Another promoter of the Italian language was Boccaccio with his *Decameron*. The application of the vernacular did not entail a rejection of Latin, and both Dante and Boccaccio wrote prolifically in Latin as well as Italian, as would Petrarch later (whose *Canzoniere* also promoted the vernacular and whose contents are considered the first modern lyric poems). Together the three poets established the Tuscan dialect as the norm for the modern Italian language.

The new literary style spread rapidly, and in France influenced such writers as Eustache Deschamps and Guillaume de Machaut. In England Geoffrey Chaucer helped establish Middle English as a literary language with his *Canterbury Tales*, which contained a wide variety of narrators and stories (including some translated from Boccaccio). The spread of vernacular literature eventually reached as far as Bohemia, and the Baltic, Slavic and Byzantine worlds.

Music

Music was an important part of both secular and spiritual culture, and in the universities it made up part of the

quadrivium of the liberal arts. From the early 13th century, the dominant sacred musical form had been the motet; a composition with text in several parts. From the 1330s and onwards, emerged the polyphonic style, which was a more complex fusion of independent voices. Polyphony had been common in the secular music of the Provençal troubadours. Many of these had fallen victim to the 13th-century Albigensian Crusade, but their influence reached the papal court at Avignon.

The main representatives of the new style, often referred to as *ars nova* as opposed to the *ars antiqua*, were the composers Philippe de Vitry and Guillaume de Machaut. In Italy, where the Provençal troubadours had also found refuge, the corresponding period goes under the name of trecento, and the leading composers were Giovanni da Cascia, Jacopo da Bologna and Francesco Landini. Prominent reformer of Orthodox Church music from the first half of 14th century was John Kukuzelis; he also introduced a system of notation widely used in the Balkans in the following centuries.

Theatre

In the British Isles, plays were produced in some 127 different towns during the Middle Ages. These vernacular Mystery plays were written in cycles of a large number of plays: York (48 plays), Chester (24), Wakefield (32) and Unknown (42). A larger number of plays survive from France and Germany in this period and some type of religious dramas were performed in nearly every European country in the Late Middle Ages. Many of these plays contained comedy, devils, villains and clowns.

Morality plays emerged as a distinct dramatic form around 1400 and flourished until 1550, an example being *The Castle of Perseverance*, which depicts mankind's progress from birth to death. Another famous morality play is *Everyman*. Everyman receives Death's summons, struggles to escape and finally resigns himself to necessity. Along the way, he is deserted by Kindred, Goods, and Fellowship – only Good Deeds goes with him to the grave.

At the end of the Late Middle Ages, professional actors began to appear in England and Europe. Richard III and Henry VII both maintained small companies of professional actors. Their plays were performed in the Great Hall of a nobleman's residence, often with a raised platform at one end for the audience and a "screen" at the other for the actors. Also important were Mummers' plays, performed during the Christmas season, and court masques. These masques were especially popular during the reign of Henry VIII who had a House of Revels built and an Office of Revels established in 1545.

The end of medieval drama came about due to a number of factors, including the weakening power of the Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation and the banning of religious plays in many countries. Elizabeth I forbid all religious plays in 1558 and the great cycle plays had been silenced by the 1580s. Similarly, religious plays were banned in the Netherlands in 1539, the Papal States in 1547 and in Paris in 1548. The abandonment of these plays destroyed the international theatre that had thereto existed and forced each country to develop its own form of drama. It also allowed dramatists to turn to

secular subjects and the reviving interest in Greek and Roman theatre provided them with the perfect opportunity.

After the Middle Ages

After the end of the late Middle Ages period, the Renaissance spread unevenly over continental Europe from the southern European region. The intellectual transformation of the Renaissance is viewed as a bridge between the Middle Ages and the Modern era. Europeans would later begin an era of world discovery. Combined with the influx of classical ideas was the invention of printing which facilitated dissemination of the printed word and democratized learning. These two things would lead to the Protestant Reformation. Europeans also discovered new trading routes, as was the case with Columbus' travel to the Americas in 1492, and Vasco da Gama's circumnavigation of Africa and India in 1498. Their discoveries strengthened the economy and power of European nations.

Ottomans and Europe

By the end of the 15th century the Ottoman Empire had advanced all over Southeastern Europe, eventually conquering the Byzantine Empire and extending control over the Balkan states. Hungary was the last bastion of the Latin Christian world in the East, and fought to keep its rule over a period of two centuries. After the death of the young king Vladislaus I of Hungary during the Battle of Varna in 1444 against the Ottomans, the Kingdom was placed in the hands of count John Hunyadi, who became Hungary's regent-governor (1446–1453). Hunyadi was considered one of the most relevant military

figures of the 15th century: Pope Pius II awarded him the title of *Athleta Christi* or Champion of Christ for being the only hope of resisting the Ottomans from advancing to Central and Western Europe.

Hunyadi succeeded during the Siege of Belgrade in 1456 against the Ottomans, the biggest victory against that empire in decades. This battle became a real Crusade against the Muslims, as the peasants were motivated by the Franciscan friar Saint John of Capistrano, who came from Italy predicating Holy War. The effect that it created in that time was one of the main factors that helped in achieving the victory. However the premature death of the Hungarian Lord left Pannonia defenseless and in chaos. In an extremely unusual event for the Middle Ages, Hunyadi's son, Matthias, was elected as King of Hungary by the nobility. For the first time, a member of an aristocratic family (and not from a royal family) was crowned.

King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1458–1490) was one of the most prominent figures of the period, directing campaigns to the West, conquering Bohemia in answer to the Pope's call for help against the Hussite Protestants. Also, in resolving political hostilities with the German emperor Frederick III of Habsburg, he invaded his western domains. Matthew organized the Black Army of mercenary soldiers; it was considered as the biggest army of its time. Using this powerful tool, the Hungarian king led wars against the Turkish armies and stopped the Ottomans during his reign. After the death of Matthew, and with end of the Black Army, the Ottoman Empire grew in strength and Central Europe was defenseless. At the Battle of Mohács, the forces of the Ottoman Empire annihilated the Hungarian army and Louis II of Hungary drowned in the

Csele Creek while trying to escape. The leader of the Hungarian army, Pál Tomori, also died in the battle. This is considered to be one of the final battles of Medieval times.

Chapter 2

Western Schism

The **Western Schism**, also called **Papal Schism**, **The Vatican Standoff**, **Great Occidental Schism** and **Schism of 1378** (Latin: *Magnum schisma occidentale, Ecclesiae occidentalis schisma*), was a split within the Catholic Church lasting from 1378 to 1417 in which bishops residing in Rome and Avignon both claimed to be the true pope, joined by a third line of Pisan popes in 1409. The schism was driven by personalities and political allegiances, with the Avignon papacy being closely associated with the French monarchy. These rival claims to the papal throne damaged the prestige of the office.

The papacy had resided in Avignon since 1309, but Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome in 1377. However, the Catholic Church split in 1378 when the College of Cardinals elected both Urban VI and Clement VII pope within six months of Gregory XI's death. After several attempts at reconciliation, the Council of Pisa (1409) declared that both popes were illegitimate and elected a third pope. The schism was finally resolved when the Pisan pope John XXIII called the Council of Constance (1414–1418). The Council arranged the abdication of both the Roman pope Gregory XII and the Pisan pope John XXIII, excommunicated the Avignon pope Benedict XIII, and elected Martin V as the new pope reigning from Rome.

The affair is sometimes referred to as the *Great Schism*, although this term is also used for the East–West Schism of 1054 between the Churches remaining in communion with the See of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

History

Origin

Since 1309, the papacy had resided in Avignon, a papal enclave surrounded by France. The Avignon Papacy had developed a reputation for corruption that estranged major parts of Western Christendom.

This reputation can be attributed to perceptions of predominant French influence, and to the papal curia's efforts to extend its powers of patronage and increase its revenues.

The last undisputed Avignon pope, Gregory XI, decided to return to Rome on 17 January 1377. However, Pope Gregory XI announced his intention to return to Avignon just after the Easter celebrations of 1378. This was at the entreaty of his relatives, his friends, and nearly everyone in his retinue.

Before he could leave, Gregory XI died in the Vatican palace on 27 March 1378. The Romans put into operation a plan to use intimidation and violence (*impressio et metus*) to ensure the election of a Roman pope.

The pope and his Curia were back in Rome after seventy years in Avignon, and the Romans were prepared to do everything in their power to keep them there. On 8 April 1378, the cardinals elected Bartolomeo Prignano, the archbishop of Bari, as Pope Urban VI. Urban had been a respected administrator in the papal chancery at Avignon, but as pope he proved suspicious, reformist, and prone to violent outbursts of temper.

Two popes

Most of the cardinals who had elected Urban VI soon regretted their decision and removed themselves to Anagni. Meeting at Fondi, the College of Cardinals elected Robert of Geneva as Pope Clement VII on 20 September 1378. The cardinals argued that the election of Urban VI was invalid because it had been done for fear of the rioting Roman crowds. Unable to maintain himself in Italy, Clement VII reestablished a papal court in Avignon. Clement had the immediate support of Queen Joanna I of Naples and of several of the Italian barons. Charles V of France, who seems to have been sounded out beforehand on the choice of the Roman pontiff, soon became his warmest protector. Clement eventually succeeded in winning to his cause Castile, Aragon, Navarre, a great part of the Latin East, Flanders, and Scotland.

The pair of elections threw the Church into turmoil. There had been antipope claimants to the papacy before, but most of them had been appointed by various rival factions. In this case, the College of Cardinals had elected both the pope and the antipope. The conflicts quickly escalated from a church problem to a diplomatic crisis that divided Europe. Secular leaders had to decide which claimant they would recognize.

In the Iberian Peninsula there were the Fernandine Wars (*Guerras fernandinas*) and the 1383–1385 Crisis in Portugal, during which dynastic opponents supported rival claimants to the papal office. Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion in Wales recognized the Avignon pope, while England recognized the Roman pope.

Consequences

Sustained by such national and factional rivalries throughout Catholic Christianity, the schism continued after the deaths of both Urban VI in 1389 and Clement VII in 1394. Boniface IX, who was crowned at Rome in 1389, and Benedict XIII, who reigned in Avignon from 1394, maintained their rival courts. When Pope Boniface died in 1404, the eight cardinals of the Roman conclave offered to refrain from electing a new pope if Benedict would resign; but when Benedict's legates refused on his behalf, the Roman party then proceeded to elect Pope Innocent VII.

In the intense partisanship characteristic of the Middle Ages, the schism engendered a fanatical hatred noted by Johan Huizinga: when the town of Bruges went over to the "obedience" of Avignon, a great number of people left to follow their trade in a city of Urbanist allegiance; in the 1382 Battle of Roosebeke, the oriflamme, which might only be unfurled in a holy cause, was taken up against the Flemings, because they were Urbanists and thus viewed by the French as schismatics.

Efforts were made to end the Schism through force or diplomacy. The French crown even tried to coerce Benedict XIII, whom it supported, into resigning. None of these remedies worked. The suggestion that a church council should resolve the Schism, first made in 1378, was not adopted at first, because canon law required that a pope call a council. Eventually theologians like Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson, as well as canon lawyers like Francesco Zabarella, adopted arguments that equity permitted the Church to act for its own welfare in defiance of the letter of the law.

Three popes

Eventually the cardinals of both factions secured an agreement that the Roman pope Gregory XII and the Avignon pope Benedict XIII would meet at Savona. They balked at the last moment, and both groups of cardinals abandoned their preferred leaders. The Council of Pisa met in 1409 under the auspices of the cardinals to try solving the dispute. At the fifteenth session, on 5 June 1409, the Council of Pisa attempted to depose both the Roman and Avignon popes as schismatical, heretical, perjured and scandalous, but it then added to the problem by electing a third pope, Alexander V. He reigned briefly in Pisa from 26 June 1409 until his death in 1410, when he was succeeded by John XXIII, who won some but not universal support.

Resolution

Finally, the Council of Constance was convened by the Pisan pope John XXIII in 1414 to resolve the issue. The council was also endorsed by the Roman pope Gregory XII, giving it greater legitimacy. The council, advised by the theologian Jean Gerson, secured the resignations of both Gregory XII and John XXIII, while excommunicating the Avignon pope Benedict XIII, who refused to step down. After a prolonged sede vacante, the Council elected Pope Martin V in 1417, essentially ending the schism.

Nonetheless, the Crown of Aragon did not recognize Pope Martin V and continued to recognize Benedict XIII. Archbishops loyal to Benedict XIII subsequently elected Antipope Benedict XIV (Bernard Garnier) and three followers

simultaneously elected Antipope Clement VIII, but the Western Schism was by then practically over. Clement VIII resigned in 1429 and apparently recognized Martin V.

Gregory XII's abdication in 1415 was the last papal resignation until Benedict XVI in 2013.

Aftermath

After its resolution, the Western Schism still affected the Catholic Church for years to come. One of the most significant of these involved the emergence of the theory called conciliarism, founded on the success of the Council of Constance, which effectively ended the conflict. This new reform movement held that a general council is superior to the pope on the strength of its capability to settle things even in the early church such as the case in 681 when Pope Honorius was condemned by a council called Constantinople III. There are theorists such as John Gerson who explained that the priests and the church itself are the sources of the papal power and, thus, the church should be able to correct, punish, and, if necessary, depose a pope. For years, the so-called conciliarists have challenged the authority of the pope and they became more relevant after a convened council also known as the Council of Florence (1439–1445) became instrumental in achieving ecclesial union between the Catholic Church and the churches of the East.

Pope Pius II (r. 1458–1464) settled the issue by decreeing that no appeal could be made from pope to council. Thus, a papal election could not be overturned by anyone but the elected pope himself. No such crisis has arisen since the 15th century,

and so there has been no need to revisit this decision. There was also a marked decline in morality and discipline within the church. Scholars note that although the Western Schism did not directly cause such a phenomenon, it was a gradual development rooted in the conflict, effectively eroding the church authority and its capacity to proclaim the gospel. This was further aggravated by the dissension caused by the Protestant Reformation, which created a lot of unrest.

Official list of popes

For the next five centuries, the Catholic Church recognized the Roman popes as the legitimate line from 1378 to 1409, followed by the Pisan popes from 1409 to 1415. All Avignon popes after 1378 are considered to be antipopes. This recognition is reflected in the numbering of popes Alexander VI, VII, and VIII, who numbered themselves consecutively after their Pisan namesake Alexander V.

The recognition of the Pisan popes made the continued legitimacy of the Roman pope Gregory XII doubtful for 1409–1415. The *Annuario Pontificio* for 1860 listed the Pisan popes as true popes from 1409 to 1415, but it acknowledged that Gregory XII's reign ended in either 1409 or 1415. The *Annuario Pontificio* for 1864 eliminated the overlapping period by ending Gregory XII's reign in 1409, listing the last three popes of the schism as Gregory XII (1406–1409), Alexander V (1409–1410), and John XXIII (1410–1415). This remained the official chronology of popes through the mid-20th century.

The Western Schism was reinterpreted in 1958 when Pope John XXIII chose to reuse the ordinal XXIII, citing "twenty-two [sic]

Johns of indisputable legitimacy." (There had actually been nineteen undisputed Johns due to antipopes and numbering errors.) The Pisan popes Alexander V and John XXIII are now considered to be antipopes. This reinterpretation is reflected in modern editions of the *Annuario Pontificio*, which extend Gregory XII's reign to 1415. The line of Roman popes is now retroactively recognized by the Catholic Church as the sole legitimate line during the Western Schism. However, Popes Alexander VI through VIII have not been renumbered, leaving a gap in the numbering sequence.

According to Broderick (1987)

Doubt still shrouds the validity of the three rival lines of pontiffs during the four decades subsequent to the still disputed papal election of 1378. This makes suspect the credentials of the cardinals created by the Roman, Avignon, and Pisan claimants to the Apostolic See. Unity was finally restored without a definitive solution to the question; for the Council of Constance succeeded in terminating the Western Schism, not by declaring which of the three claimants was the rightful one, but by eliminating all of them by forcing their abdication or deposition, and then setting up a novel arrangement for choosing a new pope acceptable to all sides. To this day the Church has never made any official, authoritative pronouncement about the papal lines of succession for this confusing period; nor has Martin V or any of his successors. Modern scholars are not agreed in their solutions, although they tend to favor the Roman line.

Chapter 3

Hundred Years' War

The **Hundred Years' War** (1337–1453) was a war involving a series of conflicts between the Kingdom of England and Kingdom of France, that took place during the Late Middle Ages, and lasted for a total of 116 years. The war had been based on disputed claims to the French crown by the English Royal Dynasty House of Plantagenet and the French House of Valois. Over time, the war encompassed a broad power struggle, involving factions from across Western Europe, and was fueled by emerging nationalist sentiment on both sides.

The Hundred Years' War was one of the most notable conflicts of the Middle Ages. Five generations of kings from two rival dynasties had been fighting for the throne to the largest kingdom in Western Europe. The war had an enduring effect on later Europe and European history. Both sides produced innovations in military technology, strategy, and tactics, such as professional standing armies and artillery, that permanently changed warfare; chivalry, which had reached its height during the conflict, subsequently declined. Stronger national identities took root in both countries, which became more centralised and gradually rose as global powers.

The term "Hundred Years' War" was adopted by later historians as a historiographical periodisation to encompass these conflicts, constructing the longest military conflict in European history. The war is commonly divided into three phases separated by truces: the Edwardian War (1337–1360), the Caroline War (1369–1389), and the Lancastrian War (1415–

1453). Each side drew many allies into the conflict, with English forces initially prevailing; the House of Valois ultimately retained control over France, with the previously-intertwined French and English monarchies thereafter remaining separate.

Overview

Origins

The root causes of the conflict can be traced to the crisis of 14th-century Europe. The outbreak of war was motivated by a gradual rise in tension between the kings of France and England over territory; the official pretext was the question that arose because of the interruption of the direct male line of the Capetian dynasty.

Tensions between the French and English crowns had gone back centuries to the origins of the English royal family, which was French (Norman, and later, Angevin) in origin. English monarchs had therefore historically held titles and lands within France, which made them vassals to the kings of France. The status of the English king's French fiefs was a major source of conflict between the two monarchies throughout the Middle Ages. French monarchs systematically sought to check the growth of English power, stripping away lands as the opportunity arose, particularly whenever England was at war with Scotland, an ally of France. English holdings in France had varied in size, at some points dwarfing even the French royal domain; by 1337, however, only Gascony was English.

In 1328, Charles IV of France died without sons or brothers and a new principle disallowed female succession. Charles's closest male relative was his nephew Edward III of England, whose mother, Isabella, was Charles's sister. Isabella claimed the throne of France for her son by the rule of Proximity of blood, but the French nobility rejected this, maintaining that Isabella could not transmit a right she did not possess. An assembly of French barons decided that a native Frenchman should receive the crown, rather than Edward.

So the throne passed instead to Charles's patrilineal cousin, Philip, Count of Valois. Edward protested but ultimately submitted and did homage for Gascony. Further French disagreements with Edward induced Philip, during May 1337, to meet with his Great Council in Paris. It was agreed that Gascony should be taken back into Philip's hands, which prompted Edward to renew his claim for the French throne, this time by force of arms.

Edwardian Phase

In the early years of the war, the English, led by their king and his son Edward, the Black Prince, saw resounding successes (notably at Crécy in 1346 and at Poitiers in 1356 where King John II of France was taken prisoner).

Caroline Phase and Black Death

By 1378, under King Charles V the Wise and the leadership of Bertrand du Guesclin, the French had reconquered most of the lands ceded to King Edward in the Treaty of Brétigny (signed in 1360), leaving the English with only a few cities on the

continent. In the following decades, the weakening of royal authority, combined with the devastation caused by the Black Death of 1347–1351 (with the loss of nearly half of the French population and between 20% and 33% of the English one) and the major economic crisis that followed, led to a period of civil unrest in both countries, struggles from which England emerged first.

Lancastrian Phase and after

The newly crowned Henry V of England seized the opportunity presented by the mental illness of Charles VI of France and the French civil war between Armagnacs and Burgundians to revive the conflict. Overwhelming victories at Agincourt in 1415 and Verneuil in 1424 as well as an alliance with the Burgundians raised the prospects of an ultimate English triumph and persuaded the English to continue the war over many decades. However, a variety of factors such as the deaths of both Henry and Charles in 1422, the emergence of Joan of Arc which boosted French morale, and the loss of Burgundy as an ally, marking the end of the civil war in France, prevented it.

The Siege of Orléans in 1429 announced the beginning of the end for English hopes of conquest. Even with the eventual capture of Joan by the Burgundians and her execution in 1431, a series of crushing French victories such as those at Patay in 1429, Formigny in 1450 and Castillon in 1453 concluded the war in favour of the Valois dynasty. England permanently lost most of its continental possessions, with only

the Pale of Calais remaining under its control on the continent, until it too was lost in the Siege of Calais in 1558.

Related conflicts and aftereffects

Local conflicts in neighbouring areas, which were contemporarily related to the war, including the War of the Breton Succession (1341–1365), the Castilian Civil War (1366–1369), the War of the Two Peters (1356–1369) in Aragon, and the 1383–85 crisis in Portugal, were used by the parties to advance their agendas.

By the war's end, feudal armies had been largely replaced by professional troops, and aristocratic dominance had yielded to a democratisation of the manpower and weapons of armies. Although primarily a dynastic conflict, the war inspired French and English nationalism.

The wider introduction of weapons and tactics supplanted the feudal armies where heavy cavalry had dominated, and artillery became important. The war precipitated the creation of the first standing armies in Western Europe since the Western Roman Empire, and helped change their role in warfare.

In France, civil wars, deadly epidemics, famines, and bandit free-companies of mercenaries reduced the population drastically. In England, political forces over time came to oppose the costly venture. The dissatisfaction of English nobles, resulting from the loss of their continental landholdings, as well as the general shock at losing a war in which investment had been so great, helped lead to the Wars of the Roses (1455–1487).

Causes and prelude

Dynastic turmoil in France: 1316–1328

- The question of female succession to the French throne was raised after the death of Louis X in 1316. Louis X left only one daughter, and John I of France, who only lived for five days. Furthermore, the paternity of his daughter was in question, as her mother, Margaret of Burgundy, had been exposed as an adulterer in the Tour de Nesle affair. Philip, Count of Poitiers, brother of Louis X, positioned himself to take the crown, advancing the stance that women should be ineligible to succeed to the French throne. Through his political sagacity he won over his adversaries and succeeded to the French throne as Philip V. By the same law that he procured, his daughters were denied the succession, which passed to his younger brother, Charles IV, in 1322.

Charles IV died in 1328, leaving a daughter and a pregnant wife. If the unborn child was male, he would become king; if not, Charles left the choice of his successor to the nobles. A girl, Blanche of France (later Duchess of Orleans) was born, therefore rendering the main male line of the House of Capet extinct.

By proximity of blood, the nearest male relative of Charles IV was his nephew, Edward III of England. Edward was the son of Isabella, the sister of the dead Charles IV, but the question arose whether she should be able to transmit a right to inherit

that she did not herself possess. The French nobility, moreover, baulked at the prospect of being ruled by Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer, who were widely suspected of having murdered the previous English king, Edward II. The assemblies of the French barons and prelates and the University of Paris decided that males who derive their right to inheritance through their mother should be excluded. Thus the nearest heir through male ancestry was Charles IV's first cousin, Philip, Count of Valois, and it was decided that he should be crowned Philip VI. In 1340 the Avignon papacy confirmed that under Salic law males should not be able to inherit through their mothers.

Eventually, Edward III reluctantly recognised Philip VI and paid him homage for his French fiefs in 1325. He made concessions in Guyenne, but reserved the right to reclaim territories arbitrarily confiscated. After that, he expected to be left undisturbed while he made war on Scotland.

The dispute over Guyenne: a problem of sovereignty

Tensions between the French and English monarchies can be traced back to the 1066 Norman conquest of England, in which the English throne was seized by the Duke of Normandy, a vassal of the King of France. As a result, the crown of England was held by a succession of nobles who already owned lands in France, which put them among the most powerful subjects of the French King, as they could now draw upon the economic power of England to enforce their interests in the mainland. To the kings of France, this dangerously threatened their royal authority, and so they would constantly try to undermine English rule in France, while the English monarchs would

struggle to protect and expand their lands. This clash of interests was the root cause of much of the conflict between the French and English monarchies throughout the medieval era.

The Anglo-Norman dynasty that had ruled England since the Norman conquest of 1066 was brought to an end when Henry, the son of Geoffrey of Anjou and Empress Matilda, and great-grandson of William the Conqueror, became the first of the Angevin kings of England in 1154 as Henry II. The Angevin kings ruled over what was later known as the Angevin Empire, which included more French territory than that under the kings of France. The Angevins still owed homage for these territories to the French king. From the 11th century, the Angevins had autonomy within their French domains, neutralising the issue.

King John of England inherited the Angevin domains from his brother Richard I. However, Philip II of France acted decisively to exploit the weaknesses of John, both legally and militarily, and by 1204 had succeeded in taking control of much of the Angevin continental possessions. Following John's reign, the Battle of Bouvines (1214), the Saintonge War (1242), and finally the War of Saint-Sardos (1324), the English king's holdings on the continent, as Duke of Aquitaine, were limited roughly to provinces in Gascony.

The dispute over Guyenne is even more important than the dynastic question in explaining the outbreak of the war. Guyenne posed a significant problem to the kings of France and England: Edward III was a vassal of Philip VI of France because of his French possessions and was required to

recognise the suzerainty of the King of France over them. In practical terms, a judgment in Guyenne might be subject to an appeal to the French royal court. The King of France had the power to revoke all legal decisions made by the King of England in Aquitaine, which was unacceptable to the English. Therefore, sovereignty over Guyenne was a latent conflict between the two monarchies for several generations.

During the War of Saint-Sardos, Charles of Valois, father of Philip VI, invaded Aquitaine on behalf of Charles IV and conquered the duchy after a local insurrection, which the French believed had been incited by Edward II of England. Charles IV grudgingly agreed to return this territory in 1325. To recover his duchy, Edward II had to compromise: he sent his son, the future Edward III, to pay homage.

The King of France agreed to restore Guyenne, minus Agen but the French delayed the return of the lands, which helped Philip VI. On 6 June 1329, Edward III finally paid homage to the King of France. However, at the ceremony, Philip VI had it recorded that the homage was not due to the fiefs detached from the duchy of Guyenne by Charles IV (especially Agen). For Edward, the homage did not imply the renunciation of his claim to the extorted lands.

Gascony under the King of England

In the 11th century, Gascony in southwest France had been incorporated into Aquitaine (also known as *Guyenne* or *Guienne*) and formed with it the province of Guyenne and Gascony (French: *Guyenne-et-Gascogne*). The Angevin kings of England became Dukes of Aquitaine after Henry II married the

former Queen of France, Eleanor of Aquitaine, in 1152, from which point the lands were held in vassalage to the French Crown. By the 13th century the terms Aquitaine, Guyenne and Gascony were virtually synonymous.

At the beginning of Edward III's reign on 1 February 1327, the only part of Aquitaine that remained in his hands was the Duchy of Gascony. The term Gascony came to be used for the territory held by the Angevin (Plantagenet) Kings of England in southwest France, although they still used the title Duke of Aquitaine. For the first 10 years of Edward III's reign, Gascony had been a major point of friction. The English argued that, as Charles IV had not acted in a proper way towards his tenant, Edward should be able to hold the duchy free of any French suzerainty. This argument was rejected by the French, so in 1329, the 17-year-old Edward III paid homage to Philip VI. Tradition demanded that vassals approach their liege unarmed, with heads bare. Edward protested by attending the ceremony wearing his crown and sword. Even after this pledge of homage, the French continued to pressure the English administration. Gascony was not the only sore point. One of Edward's influential advisers was Robert III of Artois. Robert was an exile from the French court, having fallen out with Philip VI over an inheritance claim. He urged Edward to start a war to reclaim France, and was able to provide extensive intelligence on the French court.

Franco-Scot alliance

France was an ally of the Kingdom of Scotland as English kings had for some time tried to subjugate the area. In 1295, a treaty was signed between France and Scotland during the reign of

Philip the Fair known as the Auld Alliance. Charles IV formally renewed the treaty in 1326, promising Scotland that France would support the Scots if England invaded their country. Similarly, France would have Scotland's support if its own kingdom were attacked. Edward could not succeed in his plans for Scotland if the Scots could count on French support.

Philip VI had assembled a large naval fleet off Marseilles as part of an ambitious plan for a crusade to the Holy Land. However, the plan was abandoned and the fleet, including elements of the Scottish navy, moved to the English Channel off Normandy in 1336, threatening England. To deal with this crisis, Edward proposed that the English raise two armies, one to deal with the Scots "at a suitable time", the other to proceed at once to Gascony. At the same time, ambassadors were to be sent to France with a proposed treaty for the French king.

Beginning of the war: 1337–1360

End of homage

At the end of April 1337, Philip of France was invited to meet the delegation from England but refused. The *arrière-ban*, literally a call to arms, was proclaimed throughout France starting on 30 April 1337. Then, in May 1337, Philip met with his Great Council in Paris. It was agreed that the Duchy of Aquitaine, effectively Gascony, should be taken back into the king's hands on the grounds that Edward III was in breach of his obligations as vassal and had sheltered the king's 'mortal enemy' Robert d'Artois. Edward responded to the confiscation of Aquitaine by challenging Philip's right to the French throne.

When Charles IV died, Edward had made a claim for the succession of the French throne, through the right of his mother Isabella (Charles IV's sister), daughter of Philip IV. Any claim was considered invalidated by Edward's homage to Philip VI in 1329. Edward revived his claim and in 1340 formally assumed the title 'King of France and the French Royal Arms'.

On 26 January 1340, Edward III formally received homage from Guy, half-brother of the Count of Flanders. The civic authorities of Ghent, Ypres and Bruges proclaimed Edward King of France.

Edward's purpose was to strengthen his alliances with the Low Countries. His supporters would be able to claim that they were loyal to the "true" King of France and were not rebels against Philip. In February 1340, Edward returned to England to try to raise more funds and also deal with political difficulties.

Relations with Flanders were also tied to the English wool trade, since Flanders' principal cities relied heavily on textile production and England supplied much of the raw material they needed. Edward III had commanded that his chancellor sit on the woolsack in council as a symbol of the pre-eminence of the wool trade.

At the time there were about 110,000 sheep in Sussex alone. The great medieval English monasteries produced large surpluses of wool that were sold to mainland Europe. Successive governments were able to make large amounts of money by taxing it. France's sea power led to economic disruptions for England, shrinking the wool trade to Flanders and the wine trade from Gascony.

Outbreak, the English Channel and Brittany

On 22 June 1340, Edward and his fleet sailed from England and the next day arrived off the Zwin estuary. The French fleet assumed a defensive formation off the port of Sluis. The English fleet deceived the French into believing they were withdrawing. When the wind turned in the late afternoon, the English attacked with the wind and sun behind them. The French fleet was almost completely destroyed in what became known as the Battle of Sluys.

England dominated the English Channel for the rest of the war, preventing French invasions. At this point, Edward's funds ran out and the war probably would have ended were it not for the death of the Duke of Brittany in 1341 precipitating a succession dispute between the duke's half-brother John of Montfort and Charles of Blois, nephew of Philip VI.

In 1341, conflict over the succession to the Duchy of Brittany began the War of the Breton Succession, in which Edward backed John of Montfort and Philip backed Charles of Blois. Action for the next few years focused around a back-and-forth struggle in Brittany. The city of Vannes in Brittany changed hands several times, while further campaigns in Gascony met with mixed success for both sides. The English-backed Montfort finally succeeded in taking the duchy but not until 1364.

Battle of Crécy and the taking of Calais

- In July 1346, Edward mounted a major invasion across the channel, landing in Normandy's Cotentin,

at St. Vaast. The English army captured the city of Caen in just one day, surprising the French. Philip mustered a large army to oppose Edward, who chose to march northward toward the Low Countries, pillaging as he went. He reached the river Seine to find most of the crossings destroyed. He moved further and further south, worryingly close to Paris, until he found the crossing at Poissy. This had only been partially destroyed, so the carpenters within his army were able to fix it. He then continued on his way to Flanders until he reached the river Somme. The army crossed at a tidal ford at Blanchetaque, leaving Philip's army stranded. Edward, assisted by this head start, continued on his way to Flanders once more, until, finding himself unable to outmanoeuvre Philip, Edward positioned his forces for battle and Philip's army attacked.

The Battle of Crécy of 1346 was a complete disaster for the French, largely credited to the longbowmen and the French king, who allowed his army to attack before it was ready. Philip appealed to his Scottish allies to help with a diversionary attack on England. King David II of Scotland responded by invading northern England, but his army was defeated and he was captured at the Battle of Neville's Cross, on 17 October 1346. This greatly reduced the threat from Scotland.

In France, Edward proceeded north unopposed and besieged the city of Calais on the English Channel, capturing it in 1347. This became an important strategic asset for the English, allowing them to keep troops safely in northern France. Calais

would remain under English control, even after the end of the Hundred Years' War, until the successful French siege in 1558.

Battle of Poitiers

The Black Death, which had just arrived in Paris in 1348, began to ravage Europe. In 1355, after the plague had passed and England was able to recover financially, King Edward's son and namesake, the Prince of Wales, later known as the Black Prince, led a Chevauchée from Gascony into France, during which he pillaged Avignonet and Castelnaudary, sacked Carcassonne, and plundered Narbonne. The next year during another Chevauchée he ravaged Auvergne, Limousin, and Berry but failed to take Bourges. He offered terms of peace to King John II of France (known as John the Good), who had outflanked him near Poitiers, but refused to surrender himself as the price of their acceptance.

This led to the Battle of Poitiers (19 September 1356) where the Black Prince's army routed the French. During the battle, the Gascon noble Jean de Grailly, captal de Buch led a mounted unit that was concealed in a forest. The French advance was contained, at which point de Grailly led a flanking movement with his horsemen cutting off the French retreat and succeeding in capturing King John and many of his nobles. With John held hostage, his son the Dauphin (later to become Charles V) assumed the powers of the king as regent.

After the Battle of Poitiers, many French nobles and mercenaries rampaged, and chaos ruled. A contemporary report recounted:

... all went ill with the kingdom and the State was undone. Thieves and robbers rose up everywhere in the land. The Nobles despised and hated all others and took no thought for usefulness and profit of lord and men. They subjected and despoiled the peasants and the men of the villages. In no wise did they defend their country from its enemies; rather did they trample it underfoot, robbing and pillaging the peasants' goods ...

From the *Chronicles of Jean de Venette*

Reims Campaign and Black Monday

Edward invaded France, for the third and last time, hoping to capitalise on the discontent and seize the throne. The Dauphin's strategy was that of non-engagement with the English army in the field. However, Edward wanted the crown and chose the cathedral city of Reims for his coronation (Reims was the traditional coronation city). However, the citizens of Reims built and reinforced the city's defences before Edward and his army arrived. Edward besieged the city for five weeks, but the defences held and there was no coronation. Edward moved on to Paris, but retreated after a few skirmishes in the suburbs. Next was the town of Chartres.

Disaster struck in a freak hailstorm on the encamped army, causing over 1,000 English deaths – the so-called Black Monday at Easter 1360. This devastated Edward's army and forced him to negotiate when approached by the French. A conference was held at Brétigny that resulted in the Treaty of Brétigny (8 May 1360). The treaty was ratified at Calais in October. In return for increased lands in Aquitaine, Edward renounced Normandy, Touraine, Anjou and Maine and

consented to reduce King John's ransom by a million crowns. Edward also abandoned his claim to the crown of France.

First peace: 1360–1369

The French king, John II, had been held captive in England. The Treaty of Brétigny set his ransom at 3 million crowns and allowed for hostages to be held in lieu of John. The hostages included two of his sons, several princes and nobles, four inhabitants of Paris, and two citizens from each of the nineteen principal towns of France. While these hostages were held, John returned to France to try and raise funds to pay the ransom. In 1362 John's son Louis of Anjou, a hostage in English-held Calais, escaped captivity. So, with his stand-in hostage gone, John felt honour-bound to return to captivity in England.

The French crown had been at odds with Navarre (near southern Gascony) since 1354, and in 1363 the Navarrese used the captivity of John II in London and the political weakness of the Dauphin to try to seize power. Although there was no formal treaty, Edward III supported the Navarrese moves, particularly as there was a prospect that he might gain control over the northern and western provinces as a consequence. With this in mind, Edward deliberately slowed the peace negotiations. In 1364, John II died in London, while still in honourable captivity. Charles V succeeded him as king of France. On 16 May, one month after the dauphin's accession and three days before his coronation as Charles V, the Navarrese suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Cocherel.

French ascendancy under Charles V: 1369–1389

Aquitaine and Castile

- In 1366 there was a civil war of succession in Castile (part of modern Spain). The forces of the ruler Peter of Castile were pitched against those of his half-brother Henry of Trastámara. The English crown supported Peter; the French supported Henry. French forces were led by Bertrand du Guesclin, a Breton, who rose from relatively humble beginnings to prominence as one of France's war leaders. Charles V provided a force of 12,000, with du Guesclin at their head, to support Trastámara in his invasion of Castile.

Peter appealed to England and Aquitaine's Black Prince for help, but none was forthcoming, forcing Peter into exile in Aquitaine. The Black Prince had previously agreed to support Peter's claims but concerns over the terms of the treaty of Brétigny led him to assist Peter as a representative of Aquitaine, rather than England. He then led an Anglo-Gascon army into Castile. Peter was restored to power after Trastámara's army was defeated at the Battle of Nájera.

Although the Castilians had agreed to fund the Black Prince, they failed to do so. The Prince was suffering from ill health and returned with his army to Aquitaine. To pay off debts incurred during the Castile campaign, the prince instituted a hearth tax. Arnaud-Amanieu VIII, Lord of Albret had fought on

the Black Prince's side during the war. Albret, who already had become discontented by the influx of English administrators into the enlarged Aquitaine, refused to allow the tax to be collected in his fief. He then joined a group of Gascon lords who appealed to Charles V for support in their refusal to pay the tax. Charles V summoned one Gascon lord and the Black Prince to hear the case in his High Court in Paris. The Black Prince answered that he would go to Paris with sixty thousand men behind him. War broke out again and Edward III resumed the title of King of France. Charles V declared that all the English possessions in France were forfeited, and before the end of 1369 all of Aquitaine was in full revolt.

With the Black Prince gone from Castile, Henry de Trastámara led a second invasion that ended with Peter's death at the Battle of Montiel in March 1369. The new Castilian regime provided naval support to French campaigns against Aquitaine and England. In 1372 the Castilian fleet defeated the English fleet in the Battle of La Rochelle.

1373 campaign of John of Gaunt

In August 1373, John of Gaunt, accompanied by John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany led a force of 9,000 men from Calais on a *chevauchée*. While initially successful as French forces were insufficiently concentrated to oppose them, the English met more resistance as they moved south. French forces began to concentrate around the English force but under orders from Charles V, the French avoided a set battle. Instead, they fell on forces detached from the main body to raid or forage. The French shadowed the English and in October, the English found themselves trapped against the River Allier by four

French forces. With some difficulty, the English crossed at the bridge at Moulins but lost all their baggage and loot. The English carried on south across the Limousin plateau but the weather was turning severe. Men and horses died in great numbers and many soldiers, forced to march on foot, discarded their armour. At the beginning of December, the English army entered friendly territory in Gascony. By the end of December they were in Bordeaux, starving, ill-equipped and having lost over half of the 30,000 horses with which they had left Calais. Although the march across France had been a remarkable feat, it was a military failure.

English turmoil

With his health deteriorating, the Black Prince returned to England in January 1371, where his father Edward III was elderly and also in poor health. The prince's illness was debilitating, and he died on 8 June 1376. Edward III died the following year on 21 June 1377 and was succeeded by the Black Prince's second son Richard II who was still a child of 10 (Edward of Angoulême, the Black Prince's first son, had died sometime earlier). The treaty of Brétigny had left Edward III and England with enlarged holdings in France, but a small professional French army under the leadership of du Guesclin pushed the English back; by the time Charles V died in 1380, the English held only Calais and a few other ports.

It was usual to appoint a regent in the case of a child monarch but no regent was appointed for Richard II, who nominally exercised the power of kingship from the date of his accession in 1377. Between 1377 and 1380, actual power was in the hands of a series of councils. The political community

preferred this to a regency led by the king's uncle, John of Gaunt, although Gaunt remained highly influential. Richard faced many challenges during his reign, including the Peasants' Revolt led by Wat Tyler in 1381 and an Anglo-Scottish war in 1384–1385. His attempts to raise taxes to pay for his Scottish adventure and for the protection of Calais against the French made him increasingly unpopular.

1380 campaign of the Earl of Buckingham

In July 1380, the Earl of Buckingham commanded an expedition to France to aid England's ally, the Duke of Brittany. The French refused battle before the walls of Troyes on 25 August; Buckingham's forces continued their *chevauchée* and in November laid siege to Nantes. The support expected from the Duke of Brittany did not appear and in the face of severe losses in men and horses, Buckingham was forced to abandon the siege in January 1381. In February, reconciled to the regime of the new French king Charles VI by the Treaty of Guérande, Brittany paid 50,000 francs to Buckingham for him to abandon the siege and the campaign.

French turmoil

After the deaths of Charles V and du Guesclin in 1380, France lost its main leadership and overall momentum in the war. Charles VI succeeded his father as king of France at the age of 11, and he was thus put under a regency led by his uncles, who managed to maintain an effective grip on government affairs until about 1388, well after Charles had achieved royal majority.

With France facing widespread destruction, plague, and economic recession, high taxation put a heavy burden on the French peasantry and urban communities. The war effort against England largely depended on royal taxation, but the population was increasingly unwilling to pay for it, as would be demonstrated at the Harelle and Maillotin revolts in 1382. Charles V had abolished many of these taxes on his deathbed, but subsequent attempts to reinstate them stirred up hostility between the French government and populace.

Philip II of Burgundy, the uncle of the French king, brought together a Burgundian-French army and a fleet of 1,200 ships near the Zeeland town of Sluis in the summer and autumn of 1386 to attempt an invasion of England, but this venture failed. However, Philip's brother John of Berry appeared deliberately late, so that the autumn weather prevented the fleet from leaving and the invading army then dispersed again.

Difficulties in raising taxes and revenue hampered the ability of the French to fight the English. At this point, the war's pace had largely slowed down, and both nations found themselves fighting mainly through proxy wars, such as during the 1383–1385 Portuguese interregnum. The independence party in the Kingdom of Portugal, which was supported by the English, won against the supporters of the King of Castile's claim to the Portuguese throne, who in turn was backed by the French.

Second peace: 1389–1415

The war became increasingly unpopular with the English public due to the high taxes needed for the war effort. These taxes were seen as one of the reasons for the Peasants' Revolt.

Richard II's indifference to the war together with his preferential treatment of a select few close friends and advisors angered an alliance of lords that included one of his uncles. This group, known as Lords Appellant, managed to press charges of treason against five of Richard's advisors and friends in the Merciless Parliament. The Lords Appellant were able to gain control of the council in 1388 but failed to reignite the war in France. Although the will was there, the funds to pay the troops was lacking, so in the autumn of 1388 the Council agreed to resume negotiations with the French crown, beginning on 18 June 1389 with the signing of the three-year Truce of Leulinghem.

In 1389, Richard's uncle and supporter, John of Gaunt, returned from Spain and Richard was able to rebuild his power gradually until 1397, when he reasserted his authority and destroyed the principal three among the Lords Appellant. In 1399, after John of Gaunt died, Richard II disinherited Gaunt's son, the exiled Henry of Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke returned to England with his supporters, deposed Richard and had himself crowned Henry IV. In Scotland, the problems brought in by the English regime change prompted border raids that were countered by an invasion in 1402 and the defeat of a Scottish army at the Battle of Homildon Hill. A dispute over the spoils between Henry and Henry Percy, 1st Earl of Northumberland, resulted in a long and bloody struggle between the two for control of northern England, resolved only with the almost complete destruction of the House of Percy by 1408.

In Wales, Owain Glyndŵr was declared Prince of Wales on 16 September 1400. He was the leader of the most serious and widespread rebellion against England authority in Wales since

the conquest of 1282–1283. In 1405, the French allied with Glyndŵr and the Castilians in Spain; a Franco-Welsh army advanced as far as Worcester, while the Spaniards used galleys to raid and burn all the way from Cornwall to Southampton, before taking refuge in Harfleur for the winter. The Glyndŵr Rising was finally put down in 1415 and resulted in Welsh semi-independence for a number of years.

In 1392, Charles VI suddenly descended into madness, forcing France into a regency dominated by his uncles and his brother. A conflict for control over the Regency began between his uncle Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and his brother, Louis of Valois, Duke of Orléans. After Philip's death, his son and heir John the Fearless continued the struggle against Louis but with the disadvantage of having no close relation to the king. Finding himself outmanoeuvred politically, John ordered the assassination of Louis in retaliation. His involvement in the murder was quickly revealed and the Armagnac family took political power in opposition to John. By 1410, both sides were bidding for the help of English forces in a civil war. In 1418 Paris was taken by the Burgundians, who were unable to stop the massacre of Count of Armagnac and his followers by a Parisian crowd, with an estimated death toll between 1,000 and 5,000.

Throughout this period, England confronted repeated raids by pirates that damaged trade and the navy. There is some evidence that Henry IV used state-legalised piracy as a form of warfare in the English Channel. He used such privateering campaigns to pressure enemies without risking open war. The French responded in kind and French pirates, under Scottish protection, raided many English coastal towns. The domestic

and dynastic difficulties faced by England and France in this period quieted the war for a decade. Henry IV died in 1413 and was replaced by his eldest son Henry V. The mental illness of Charles VI of France allowed his power to be exercised by royal princes whose rivalries caused deep divisions in France. In 1414 while Henry held court at Leicester, he received ambassadors from Burgundy. Henry accredited envoys to the French king to make clear his territorial claims in France; he also demanded the hand of Charles VI's youngest daughter Catherine of Valois. The French rejected his demands, leading Henry to prepare for war.

Resumption of the war under Henry V: 1415–1429

Burgundian alliance and the seizure of Paris

Battle of Agincourt (1415):

In August 1415, Henry V sailed from England with a force of about 10,500 and laid siege to Harfleur. The city resisted for longer than expected, but finally surrendered on 22 September. Because of the unexpected delay, most of the campaign season was gone. Rather than march on Paris directly, Henry elected to make a raiding expedition across France toward English-occupied Calais. In a campaign reminiscent of Crécy, he found himself outmanoeuvred and low on supplies and had to fight a much larger French army at the Battle of Agincourt, north of the Somme. Despite the problems and having a smaller force, his victory was near-total; the French defeat was catastrophic,

costing the lives of many of the Armagnac leaders. About 40% of the French nobility was killed. Henry was apparently concerned that the large number of prisoners taken were a security risk (there were more French prisoners than there were soldiers in the entire English army) and he ordered their deaths.

Treaty of Troyes (1420)

Henry retook much of Normandy, including Caen in 1417, and Rouen on 19 January 1419, turning Normandy English for the first time in two centuries. A formal alliance was made with Burgundy, which had taken Paris after the assassination of Duke John the Fearless in 1419. In 1420, Henry met with King Charles VI. They signed the Treaty of Troyes, by which Henry finally married Charles' daughter Catherine of Valois and Henry's heirs would inherit the throne of France. The Dauphin, Charles VII, was declared illegitimate. Henry formally entered Paris later that year and the agreement was ratified by the Estates-General.

Death of the Duke of Clarence (1421)

On 22 March 1421 Henry V's progress in his French campaign experienced an unexpected reversal. Henry had left his brother and presumptive heir Thomas, Duke of Clarence in charge while he returned to England. Clarence engaged a Franco-Scottish force of 5000 men, led by Gilbert Motier de La Fayette and John Stewart, Earl of Buchan at the Battle of Baugé. Clarence, against the advice of his lieutenants, before his army had been fully assembled, attacked with a force of no more than 1500 men-at-arms. Then, during the course of the battle,

he led a charge of a few hundred men into the main body of the Franco-Scottish army, who quickly enveloped the English. In the ensuing melée, the Scot, John Carmichael of Douglasdale, broke his lance unhorsing the Duke of Clarence. Once on the ground, the duke was slain by Alexander Buchanan. The body of the Duke of Clarence was recovered from the field by Thomas Montacute, 4th Earl of Salisbury, who conducted the English retreat.

English success

Henry V returned to France and went to Paris, then visiting Chartres and Gâtinais before returning to Paris. From there, he decided to attack the Dauphin-held town of Meaux. It turned out to be more difficult to overcome than first thought. The siege began about 6 October 1421, and the town held for seven months before finally falling on 11 May 1422.

At the end of May, Henry was joined by his queen and together with the French court, they went to rest at Senlis. While there, it became apparent that he was ill (possibly dysentery), and when he set out to the Upper Loire, he diverted to the royal castle at Vincennes, near Paris, where he died on 31 August. The elderly and insane Charles VI of France died two months later on 21 October. Henry left an only child, his nine-month-old son, Henry, later to become Henry VI.

On his deathbed, as Henry VI was only an infant, Henry V had given the Duke of Bedford responsibility for English France. The war in France continued under Bedford's generalship and several battles were won. The English won an emphatic victory at the Battle of Verneuil (17 August 1424). At the Battle of

Baugé, the Duke of Clarence had rushed into battle without the support of his archers. At Verneuil, the archers fought to devastating effect against the Franco-Scottish army. The effect of the battle was to virtually destroy the Dauphin's field army and to eliminate the Scots as a significant military force for the rest of the war.

French victory: 1429–1453

Joan of Arc and French revival

The appearance of Joan of Arc at the siege of Orléans sparked a revival of French spirit, and the tide began to turn against the English. The English laid siege to Orléans in 1428, but their force was insufficient to fully invest the city. In 1429 Joan persuaded the Dauphin to send her to the siege, saying she had received visions from God telling her to drive out the English. She raised the morale of the troops, and they attacked the English redoubts, forcing the English to lift the siege. Inspired by Joan, the French took several English strongholds on the Loire.

The English retreated from the Loire Valley, pursued by a French army. Near the village of Patay, French cavalry broke through a unit of English longbowmen that had been sent to block the road, then swept through the retreating English army. The English lost 2,200 men, and the commander, John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury, was taken prisoner. This victory opened the way for the Dauphin to march to Reims for his coronation as Charles VII, on 16 July 1429.

After the coronation, Charles VII's army fared less well. An attempted French siege of Paris was defeated on 8 September 1429, and Charles VII withdrew to the Loire Valley.

Henry's coronations and the desertion of Burgundy

Henry VI was crowned king of England at Westminster Abbey on 5 November 1429 and king of France at Notre-Dame, in Paris, on 16 December 1431.

Joan of Arc was captured by the Burgundians at the siege of Compiègne on 23 May 1430. The Burgundians offered her for ranson to the Dauphin who refused the offer. The Burgundians then transferred her to the English, who organised a trial headed by Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais and member of the English Council at Rouen. Joan was convicted and burned at the stake on 30 May 1431 (she was rehabilitated 25 years later by Pope Callixtus III).

After the death of Joan of Arc, the fortunes of war turned dramatically against the English. Most of Henry's royal advisers were against making peace. Among the factions, the Duke of Bedford wanted to defend Normandy, the Duke of Gloucester was committed to just Calais, whereas Cardinal Beaufort was inclined to peace. Negotiations stalled. It seems that at the congress of Arras, in the summer of 1435, where the duke of Beaufort was mediator, the English were unrealistic in their demands. A few days after the congress ended in September, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, deserted to Charles VII, signing the Treaty of Arras that returned Paris to the King of France. This was a major blow to English sovereignty in France. The Duke of Bedford died on 14

September 1435 and was later replaced by Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York.

French resurgence

The allegiance of Burgundy remained fickle, but the English focus on expanding their domains in the Low Countries left them little energy to intervene in the rest of France. The long truces that marked the war gave Charles time to centralise the French state and reorganise his army and government, replacing his feudal levies with a more modern professional army that could put its superior numbers to good use. A castle that once could only be captured after a prolonged siege would now fall after a few days from cannon bombardment. The French artillery developed a reputation as the best in the world.

By 1449, the French had retaken Rouen. In 1450 the Count of Clermont and Arthur de Richemont, Earl of Richmond, of the Montfort family (the future Arthur III, Duke of Brittany), caught an English army attempting to relieve Caen and defeated it at the Battle of Formigny in 1450. Richemont's force attacked the English army from the flank and rear just as they were on the verge of beating Clermont's army.

French conquest of Gascony

After Charles VII's successful Normandy campaign in 1450, he concentrated his efforts on Gascony, the last province held by the English. Bordeaux, Gascony's capital, was besieged and surrendered to the French on 30 June 1451. Largely due to the English sympathies of the Gascon people, this was reversed

when John Talbot and his army retook the city on 23 October 1452. However, the English were decisively defeated at the Battle of Castillon on 17 July 1453. Talbot had been persuaded to engage the French army at Castillon near Bordeaux. During the battle the French appeared to retreat towards their camp. The French camp at Castillon had been laid out by Charles VII's ordinance officer Jean Bureau and this was instrumental in the French success as when the French cannon opened fire, from their positions in the camp, the English took severe casualties losing both Talbot and his son.

End of the war

Although the Battle of Castillon is considered the last battle of the Hundred Years' War, England and France remained formally at war for another 20 years, but the English were in no position to carry on the war as they faced unrest at home. Bordeaux fell to the French on 19 October and there were no more hostilities afterwards. Following defeat in the Hundred Years' War, English landowners complained vociferously about the financial losses resulting from the loss of their continental holdings; this is often considered a major cause of the Wars of the Roses that started in 1455.

The Hundred Years' War almost resumed in 1474, when the duke Charles of Burgundy, counting on English support, took up arms against Louis XI. Louis managed to isolate the Burgundians by buying Edward IV of England off with a large cash sum and an annual pension, in the Treaty of Picquigny (1475). The treaty formally ended the Hundred Years' War with Edward renouncing his claim to the throne of France. However, future Kings of England (and later of Great Britain) continued

to claim the title until 1803, when they were dropped in deference to the exiled Count of Provence, titular King Louis XVIII, who was living in England after the French Revolution.

Some historians use the term "The Second Hundred Years' War" as a periodisation to describe the series of military conflicts between Great Britain and France that occurred from about 1689 (or some say 1714) to 1815. Likewise, some historians refer to the Capetian–Plantagenet rivalry, series of conflicts and disputes that covered a period of 100 years (1159–1259) as *"The First Hundred Years War"*.

Significance

Historical significance

The French victory marked the end of a long period of instability that had was seeded with the Norman Conquest (1066), when William the Conqueror added "King of England" to his titles, becoming both the vassal to (as Duke of Normandy) and the equal of (as king of England) the king of France.

When the war ended, England was bereft of its Continental possessions, leaving it with only Calais on the continent. The war destroyed the English dream of a joint monarchy and led to the rejection in England of all things French, although the French language in England, which had served as the language of the ruling classes and commerce there from the time of the Norman conquest, left many vestiges in English vocabulary. English became the official language in 1362 and French was no longer used for teaching from 1385.

National feeling that emerged from the war unified both France and England further. Despite the devastation on its soil, the Hundred Years' War accelerated the process of transforming France from a feudal monarchy to a centralised state. In England the political and financial troubles which emerged from the defeat were a major cause of the War of the Roses (1455–1487).

Lowe (1997) argued that opposition to the war helped to shape England's early modern political culture. Although anti-war and pro-peace spokesmen generally failed to influence outcomes at the time, they had a long-term impact.

England showed decreasing enthusiasm for conflict deemed not in the national interest, yielding only losses in return for high economic burdens.

In comparing this English cost-benefit analysis with French attitudes, given that both countries suffered from weak leaders and undisciplined soldiers, Lowe noted that the French understood that warfare was necessary to expel the foreigners occupying their homeland. Furthermore, French kings found alternative ways to finance the war – sales taxes, debasing the coinage – and were less dependent than the English on tax levies passed by national legislatures. English anti-war critics thus had more to work with than the French.

Bubonic plague and warfare reduced population numbers throughout Europe during this period. France lost half its population during the Hundred Years' War, with Normandy reduced by three-quarters and Paris by two-thirds. During the same period, England's population fell by 20 to 33 percent.

Military significance

The first regular standing army in Western Europe since Roman times was organised in France in 1445, partly as a solution to marauding free companies. The mercenary companies were given a choice of either joining the Royal army as *compagnies d'ordonnanc*e on a permanent basis, or being hunted down and destroyed if they refused. France gained a total standing army of around 6,000 men, which was sent out to gradually eliminate the remaining mercenaries who insisted on operating on their own. The new standing army had a more disciplined and professional approach to warfare than its predecessors. The Hundred Years' War was a time of rapid military evolution. Weapons, tactics, army structure and the social meaning of war all changed, partly in response to the war's costs, partly through advancement in technology and partly through lessons that warfare taught. The feudal system slowly disintegrated as well as the concept of chivalry.

By the war's end, although the heavy cavalry was still considered the most powerful unit in an army, the heavily armoured horse had to deal with several tactics developed to deny or mitigate its effective use on a battlefield. The English began using lightly armoured mounted troops, known as hobelars. Hobelars' tactics had been developed against the Scots, in the Anglo-Scottish wars of the 14th century. Hobelars rode smaller unarmoured horses, enabling them to move through difficult or boggy terrain where heavier cavalry would struggle. Rather than fight while seated on the horse, they would dismount to engage the enemy.

Chapter 4

Ottoman Turks

The **Ottoman Turks** (or **Osmanlı Turks**, Turkish: *Osmanlı Türkleri*) were the Turkish-speaking people of the Ottoman Empire (c. 1299–1922/1923). Reliable information about the early history of Ottoman Turks remains scarce, but they take their Turkish name, *Osmanlı* ("Osman" became altered in some European languages as "Ottoman"), from the house of Osman I (reigned c. 1299–1326), the founder of the House of Osman, the ruling dynasty of the Ottoman Empire for its entire 624 years. Expanding from its base in Bithynia, the Ottoman principality began incorporating other Turkish-speaking Muslims and non-Turkish Christians. Crossing into Europe from the 1350s, coming to dominate the Mediterranean and, in 1453, capturing Constantinople (the capital city of the Byzantine Empire), the Ottoman Turks blocked all major land routes between Asia and Europe. Western Europeans had to find other ways to trade with the East.

Brief history

The "Ottomans" first became known to the West in the 13th century when they migrated from their homeland in Central Asia westward to the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Anatolia. The Ottoman Turks established a beylik in Western Anatolia under Ertugrul, the capital of which was *Söğüt* in western Anatolia. Ertugrul, leader of the nomadic Kayı tribe, first established a principality as part of the decaying Seljuk empire. His son Osman expanded the principality; the polity and the people

were named "Ottomans" by Europeans after him ("Ottoman" being a corruption of "Osman"). Osman's son Orhan expanded the growing realm into an empire, taking Nicaea (present-day İznik) and crossed the Dardanelles in 1362. All coins unearthed in *Söğüt* during the two centuries before Orhan bear the names of Illkhanate rulers. The Seljuks were under the suzerainty of the Illkhanates and later the Mongolian Timur lane. The Ottoman Empire came into its own when Mehmed II captured the reduced Byzantine Empire's well-defended capital, Constantinople in 1453.

The Ottoman Empire came to rule much of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East (excluding Iran), and North Africa over the course of several centuries, with an advanced army and navy.

The Empire lasted until the end of the First World War, when it was defeated by the Allies and partitioned. Following the successful Turkish War of Independence that ended with the Turkish national movement retaking most of the land lost to the Allies, the movement abolished the Ottoman sultanate on November 1, 1922 and proclaimed the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. The movement nullified the Treaty of Sèvres and negotiated the significantly more favorable Treaty of Lausanne (1923), assuring recognition of modern Turkish national borders, termed *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact).

Not all Ottomans were Muslims and not all Ottoman Muslims were Turks, but by 1923, the majority of people living within the borders of the new Turkish republic were identified as Turks. Notable exceptions were the Kurds and the few remaining Armenians, Georgians and Greeks.

Culture and arts

The conquest of Constantinople began to make the Ottomans the rulers of one of the most profitable empires, connected to the flourishing Islamic cultures of the time, and at the crossroads of trade into Europe. The Ottomans made major developments in calligraphy, writing, law, architecture, and military science, and became the standard of opulence.

Calligraphy

Because Islam is a monotheistic religion that focuses heavily on learning the central text of the Quran and Islamic culture has historically tended towards discouraging or prohibiting figurative art, calligraphy became one of the foremost of the arts.

The early Yâkût period was supplanted in the late 15th century by a new style pioneered by Şeyh Hamdullah (1429–1520), which became the basis for Ottoman calligraphy, focusing on the Nesih version of the script, which became the standard for copying the Quran (see Islamic calligraphy).

The next great change in Ottoman calligraphy came from the style of Hâfiz Osman (1642–1698), whose rigorous and simplified style found favour with an empire at its peak of territorial extent and governmental burdens.

The late calligraphic style of the Ottomans was created by Mustafa Râkim (1757–1826) as an extension and reform of Osman's style, placing greater emphasis on technical

perfection, which broadened the calligraphic art to encompass the sülüs script as well as the Nesih script.

Poetry

Ottoman poetry included epic-length verse but is better known for shorter forms such as the gazel. For example, the epic poet Ahmedi (-1412) is remembered for his *Alexander the Great*. His contemporary Sheykhi wrote verses on love and romance. Yaziji-Oglu produced a religious epic on Mohammed's life, drawing from the stylistic advances of the previous generation and Ahmedi's epic forms.

Painting

By the 14th century, the Ottoman Empire's prosperity made manuscript works available to merchants and craftsmen, and produced a flowering of miniatures that depicted pageantry, daily life, commerce, cities and stories, and chronicled events.

By the late 18th century, European influences in painting were clear, with the introduction of oils, perspective, figurative paintings, use of anatomy and composition.

Chapter 5

Fall of Constantinople

- The **fall of Constantinople** was the capture of the Byzantine Empire's capital by the Ottoman Empire. The city fell on 29 May 1453, the culmination of a 53-day siege which had begun on 6 April 1453.

The attacking Ottoman Army, which significantly outnumbered Constantinople's defenders, was commanded by the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmed II (later called "Mehmed the Conqueror"), while the Byzantine army was led by Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos. After conquering the city, Mehmed II made Constantinople the new Ottoman capital, replacing Adrianople.

The fall of Constantinople marked the end of the Byzantine Empire, and effectively the end of the Roman Empire, a state which dated back to 27 BC and lasted nearly 1,500 years. The capture of Constantinople, a city which marked the divide between Europe and Asia Minor, also allowed the Ottomans to more effectively invade mainland Europe, eventually leading to Ottoman control of much of the Balkan peninsula.

The conquest of Constantinople and the fall of the Byzantine Empire was a key event of the Late Middle Ages and is considered the end of the Medieval period. The city's fall also stood as a turning point in military history. Since ancient times, cities and castles had depended upon ramparts and walls to repel invaders. Constantinople's defenses in particular, especially the Theodosian Walls, were some of the most advanced defensive systems in Europe and the world.

However, these substantial fortifications were overcome with the use of gunpowder, specifically in the form of large cannons and bombards, heralding a coming change in siege warfare.

State of the Byzantine Empire

Constantinople had been an imperial capital since its consecration in 330 under Roman emperor Constantine the Great. In the following eleven centuries, the city had been besieged many times but was captured only once before: the Sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The crusaders established an unstable Latin state in and around Constantinople while the remainder of the Byzantine Empire splintered into a number of successor states, notably Nicaea, Epirus and Trebizond. They fought as allies against the Latin establishments, but also fought among themselves for the Byzantine throne.

The Nicaeans eventually reconquered Constantinople from the Latins in 1261, reestablishing the Byzantine Empire under the Palaiologos dynasty. Thereafter, there was little peace for the much-weakened empire as it fended off successive attacks by the Latins, Serbs, Bulgarians and Ottoman Turks. Between 1346 and 1349 the Black Death killed almost half of the inhabitants of Constantinople. The city was further depopulated by the general economic and territorial decline of the empire, and by 1453, it consisted of a series of walled villages separated by vast fields encircled by the fifth-century Theodosian Walls.

By 1450, the empire was exhausted and had shrunk to a few square kilometers outside the city of Constantinople itself, the

Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara and the Peloponnese with its cultural center at Mystras. The Empire of Trebizond, an independent successor state that formed in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, was also present at the time on the coast of the Black Sea.

Preparations

When Mehmed II succeeded his father in 1451, he was just nineteen years old. Many European courts assumed that the young Ottoman ruler would not seriously challenge Christian hegemony in the Balkans and the Aegean. In fact, Europe celebrated Mehmed coming to the throne and hoped his inexperience would lead the Ottomans astray. This calculation was boosted by Mehmed's friendly overtures to the European envoys at his new court. But Mehmed's mild words were not matched by his actions. By early 1452, work began on the construction of a second fortress (*Rumeli hisarı*) on the European side of the Bosphorus, several miles north of Constantinople. The new fortress sat directly across the strait from the *Anadolu Hisarı* fortress, built by Mehmed's great-grandfather Bayezid I. This pair of fortresses ensured complete control of sea traffic on the Bosphorus and defended against attack by the Genoese colonies on the Black Sea coast to the north. In fact, the new fortress was called *Boğazkesen*, which means "strait-blocker" or "throat-cutter". The wordplay emphasizes its strategic position: in Turkish *boğaz* means both "strait" and "throat". In October 1452, Mehmed ordered Turakhan Beg to station a large garrison force in the Peloponnese to block Thomas and Demetrios (despotes in Southern Greece) from providing aid to their brother

Constantine XI Palaiologos during the impending siege of Constantinople. Karaca Pasha, the beylerbeyi of Rumelia, sent men to prepare the roads from Adrianople to Constantinople so that bridges could cope with massive cannon. Fifty carpenters and 200 artisans also strengthened the roads where necessary. The Greek historian Michael Critobulus quotes Mehmed II's speech to his soldiers before the siege:

My friends and men of my empire! You all know very well that our forefathers secured this kingdom that we now hold at the cost of many struggles and very great dangers and that, having passed it along in succession from their fathers, from father to son, they handed it down to me. For some of the oldest of you were sharers in many of the exploits carried through by them—those at least of you who are of maturer years—and the younger of you have heard of these deeds from your fathers. They are not such very ancient events nor of such a sort as to be forgotten through the lapse of time. Still, the eyewitness of those who have seen testifies better than does the hearing of deeds that happened but yesterday or the day before.

European support

Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI swiftly understood Mehmed's true intentions and turned to Western Europe for help; but now the price of centuries of war and enmity between the eastern and western churches had to be paid. Since the mutual excommunications of 1054, the Pope in Rome was committed to establishing authority over the eastern church. The union was agreed by the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1274, at the Second Council of Lyon, and indeed, some Palaiologoi emperors had since been received into

the Latin Church. Emperor John VIII Palaiologos had also recently negotiated union with Pope Eugene IV, with the Council of Florence of 1439 proclaiming a *Bull of Union*. The imperial efforts to impose union were met with strong resistance in Constantinople. A propaganda initiative was stimulated by anti-unionist Orthodox partisans in Constantinople; the population, as well as the laity and leadership of the Byzantine Church, became bitterly divided. Latent ethnic hatred between Greeks and Italians, stemming from the events of the Massacre of the Latins in 1182 by the Greeks and the Sack of Constantinople in 1204 by the Latins, played a significant role. Ultimately, the attempted union between east and west failed, greatly annoying Pope Nicholas V and the hierarchy of the Roman church.

In the summer of 1452, when Rumelı Hisari was completed and the threat of the Ottomans had become imminent, Constantine wrote to the Pope, promising to implement the union, which was declared valid by a half-hearted imperial court on 12 December 1452. Although he was eager for an advantage, Pope Nicholas V did not have the influence the Byzantines thought he had over the Western kings and princes, some of whom were wary of increasing papal control. Furthermore, these Western rulers did not have the wherewithal to contribute to the effort, especially in light of the weakened state of France and England from the Hundred Years' War, Spain's involvement in the Reconquista, the internecine fighting in the Holy Roman Empire, and Hungary and Poland's defeat at the Battle of Varna of 1444. Although some troops did arrive from the mercantile city-states in northern Italy, the Western contribution was not adequate to counterbalance Ottoman strength. Some Western individuals, however, came to help

defend the city on their own account. Cardinal Isidore, funded by the Pope, arrived in 1452 with 200 archers. An accomplished soldier from Genoa, Giovanni Giustiniani, arrived in January 1453 with 400 men from Genoa and 300 men from Genoese Chios. As a specialist in defending walled cities, Giustiniani was immediately given the overall command of the defence of the land walls by the Emperor. The Byzantines knew him by the Latin spelling of his name, "John Justinian", named after the famous 6th century Byzantine emperor Justinian the Great. Around the same time, the captains of the Venetian ships that happened to be present in the Golden Horn offered their services to the Emperor, barring contrary orders from Venice, and Pope Nicholas undertook to send three ships laden with provisions, which set sail near the end of March.

Meanwhile, in Venice, deliberations were taking place concerning the kind of assistance the Republic would lend to Constantinople. The Senate decided upon sending a fleet in February 1453, but the fleet's departure was delayed until April, when it was already too late for ships to assist in battle. Further undermining Byzantine morale, seven Italian ships with around 700 men, despite having sworn to defend Constantinople, slipped out of the capital the moment Giustiniani arrived. At the same time, Constantine's attempts to appease the Sultan with gifts ended with the execution of the Emperor's ambassadors.

Fearing a possible naval attack along the shores of the Golden Horn, Emperor Constantine XI ordered that a defensive chain be placed at the mouth of the harbour. This chain, which floated on logs, was strong enough to prevent any Turkish ship from entering the harbour. This device was one of two that

gave the Byzantines some hope of extending the siege until the possible arrival of foreign help. This strategy was enforced because in 1204, the armies of the Fourth Crusade successfully circumvented Constantinople's land defences by breaching the Golden Horn Wall. Another strategy employed by the Byzantines was the repair and fortification of the Land Wall (Theodosian Walls). Emperor Constantine deemed it necessary to ensure that the Blachernae district's wall was the most fortified because that section of the wall protruded northwards. The land fortifications consisted of a 60 ft (18 m) wide moat fronting inner and outer crenellated walls studded with towers every 45–55 metres.

Strength

The army defending Constantinople was relatively small, totalling about 7,000 men, 2,000 of whom were foreigners. At the onset of the siege, probably fewer than 50,000 people were living within the walls, including the refugees from the surrounding area. Turkish commander Dorgano, who was in Constantinople working for the Emperor, was also guarding one of the quarters of the city on the seaward side with the Turks in his pay.

These Turks kept loyal to the Emperor and perished in the ensuing battle. The defending army's Genoese corps were well trained and equipped, while the rest of the army consisted of small numbers of well-trained soldiers, armed civilians, sailors and volunteer forces from foreign communities, and finally monks. The garrison used a few small-calibre artillery pieces, which in the end proved ineffective. The rest of the citizens repaired walls, stood guard on observation posts, collected and

distributed food provisions, and collected gold and silver objects from churches to melt down into coins to pay the foreign soldiers.

The Ottomans had a much larger force. Recent studies and Ottoman archival data state that there were some 50,000–80,000 Ottoman soldiers, including between 5,000 and 10,000 Janissaries, 70 cannons, and an elite infantry corps, and thousands of Christian troops, notably 1,500 Serbian cavalry that Đurađ Branković was forced to supply as part of his obligation to the Ottoman sultan —just a few months before, Branković had supplied the money for the reconstruction of the walls of Constantinople. Contemporaneous Western witnesses of the siege, who tend to exaggerate the military power of the Sultan, provide disparate and higher numbers ranging from 160,000 to 300,000 (Niccolò Barbaro: 160,000; the Florentine merchant Jacopo Tedaldi and the Great Logothete George Sphrantzes: 200,000; the Cardinal Isidore of Kiev and the Archbishop of Mytilene Leonardo di Chio: 300,000).

Ottoman dispositions and strategies

Mehmed built a fleet (partially manned by Spanish sailors from Gallipoli) to besiege the city from the sea. Contemporary estimates of the strength of the Ottoman fleet span from 110 ships to 430 (Tedaldi: 110; Barbaro: 145; Ubertino Pusculo: 160, Isidore of Kiev and Leonardo di Chio: 200–250; (Sphrantzes): 430). A more realistic modern estimate predicts a fleet strength of 110 ships comprising 70 large galleys, 5 ordinary galleys, 10 smaller galleys, 25 large rowing boats, and 75 horse-transports.

Before the siege of Constantinople, it was known that the Ottomans had the ability to cast medium-sized cannons, but the range of some pieces they were able to field far surpassed the defenders' expectations. The Ottomans deployed a number of cannons, anywhere from 50 cannons to 200. They were built at foundries that employed Turkish cannon founders and technicians, most notably Saruca, in addition to at least one foreign cannon founder, Orban (also called Urban). Most of the cannons at the siege were built by Turkish engineers, including a large bombard by Saruca, while one cannon was built by Orban, who also contributed a large bombard.

Orban, a Hungarian (though some suggest he was German), was a somewhat mysterious figure. His 27 feet (8.2 m) long cannon was named "Basilica" and was able to hurl a 600 lb (270 kg) stone ball over a mile (1.6 km). Orban initially tried to sell his services to the Byzantines, but they were unable to secure the funds needed to hire him.

Orban then left Constantinople and approached Mehmed II, claiming that his weapon could blast "the walls of Babylon itself". Given abundant funds and materials, the Hungarian engineer built the gun within three months at Edirne. However, this was the only cannon that Orban built for the Ottoman forces at Constantinople, and it had several drawbacks: it took three hours to reload; cannonballs were in very short supply; and the cannon is said to have collapsed under its own recoil after six weeks. The account of the cannon's collapse is disputed, given that it was only reported in the letter of Archbishop Leonardo di Chio and in the later, and often unreliable, Russian chronicle of Nestor Iskander.

Having previously established a large foundry about 150 miles (240 km) away, Mehmed now had to undertake the painstaking process of transporting his massive artillery pieces. In preparation for the final assault, Mehmed had an artillery train of 70 large pieces dragged from his headquarters at Edirne, in addition to the bombards cast on the spot. This train included Orban's enormous cannon, which was said to have been dragged from Edirne by a crew of 60 oxen and over 400 men. There was another large bombard, independently built by Turkish engineer Saruca, that was also used in the battle.

Mehmed planned to attack the Theodosian Walls, the intricate series of walls and ditches protecting Constantinople from an attack from the West and the only part of the city not surrounded by water. His army encamped outside the city on 2 April 1453, the Monday after Easter.

The bulk of the Ottoman army was encamped south of the Golden Horn. The regular European troops, stretched out along the entire length of the walls, were commanded by Karadja Pasha. The regular troops from Anatolia under Ishak Pasha were stationed south of the Lycus down to the Sea of Marmara. Mehmed himself erected his red-and-gold tent near the *Mesoteichion*, where the guns and the elite Janissary regiments were positioned. The Bashi-bazouks were spread out behind the front lines. Other troops under Zagan Pasha were employed north of the Golden Horn. Communication was maintained by a road that had been destroyed over the marshy head of the Horn. The Ottomans were experts in laying siege to cities. They knew that in order to prevent diseases they had to burn corpses, sanitarily dispose of excrement, and pay close attention to their sources of water.

Byzantine dispositions and strategies

The city had about 20 km of walls (land walls: 5.5 km; sea walls along the Golden Horn: 7 km; sea walls along the Sea of Marmara: 7.5 km), one of the strongest sets of fortified walls in existence. The walls had recently been repaired (under John VIII) and were in fairly good shape, giving the defenders sufficient reason to believe that they could hold out until help from the West arrived. In addition, the defenders were relatively well-equipped with a fleet of 26 ships: 5 from Genoa, 5 from Venice, 3 from Venetian Crete, 1 from Ancona, 1 from Aragon, 1 from France, and about 10 from the empire itself.

On 5 April, the Sultan himself arrived with his last troops, and the defenders took up their positions. As Byzantine numbers were insufficient to occupy the walls in their entirety, it had been decided that only the outer walls would be manned. Constantine and his Greek troops guarded the *Mesoteichion*, the middle section of the land walls, where they were crossed by the river Lycus. This section was considered the weakest spot in the walls and an attack was feared here most. Giustiniani was stationed to the north of the emperor, at the Charisian Gate (*Myriandrion*); later during the siege, he was shifted to the *Mesoteichion* to join Constantine, leaving the *Myriandrion* to the charge of the Bocchiardi brothers. Minotto and his Venetians were stationed in the Blachernae Palace, together with Teodoro Caristo, the Langasco brothers, and Archbishop Leonardo of Chios.

To the left of the emperor, further south, were the commanders Cataneo, who led Genoese troops, and Theophilus Palaeologus, who guarded the Pegae Gate with Greek soldiers. The section of

the land walls from the Pegae Gate to the Golden Gate (itself guarded by a Genoese called Manuel) was defended by the Venetian Filippo Contarini, while Demetrius Cantacuzenus had taken position on the southernmost part of the Theodosian wall. The sea walls were manned more sparsely, with Jacobo Contarini at Stoudion, a makeshift defence force of Greek monks to his left hand, and Prince Orhan at the Harbour of Eleutherios. Pere Julià was stationed at the Great Palace with Genoese and Catalan troops; Cardinal Isidore of Kiev guarded the tip of the peninsula near the boom. Finally, the sea walls at the southern shore of the Golden Horn were defended by Venetian and Genoese sailors under Gabriele Trevisano. Two tactical reserves were kept behind in the city: one in the Petra district just behind the land walls and one near the Church of the Holy Apostles, under the command of Loukas Notaras and Nicephorus Palaeologus, respectively. The Venetian Alviso Diedo commanded the ships in the harbour. Although the Byzantines also had cannons, the weapons were much smaller than those of the Ottomans, and the recoil tended to damage their own walls.

According to David Nicolle, despite many odds, the idea that Constantinople was inevitably doomed is incorrect, and the overall situation was not as one-sided as a simple glance at a map might suggest. It has also been claimed that Constantinople was "the best-defended city in Europe" at that time.

Siege

At the beginning of the siege, Mehmed sent out some of his best troops to reduce the remaining Byzantine strongholds

outside the city of Constantinople. The fortress of Therapia on the Bosphorus and a smaller castle at the village of Studius near the Sea of Marmara were taken within a few days. The Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara were taken by Admiral Baltoghlu's fleet. Mehmed's massive cannons fired on the walls for weeks, but due to the cannons' imprecision and extremely slow rate of reloading, the Byzantines were able to repair most of the damage after each shot, mitigating the cannons' effect.

Meanwhile, despite some probing attacks, the Ottoman fleet under Baltoghlu could not enter the Golden Horn due to the chain the Byzantines had previously stretched across the entrance. Although one of the fleet's main tasks was to prevent any foreign ships from entering the Golden Horn, on 20 April, a small flotilla of four Christian ships managed to slip in after some heavy fighting, an event which strengthened the morale of the defenders and caused embarrassment to the Sultan. Baltoghlu's life was spared after his subordinates testified to his bravery during the conflict. He was most likely injured in the eye during the skirmish. Mehmed stripped Baltoghlu of his wealth and property and gave it to the janissaries and ordered he be whipped 100 times

Mehmed ordered the construction of a road of greased logs across Galata on the north side of the Golden Horn, and dragged his ships over the hill, directly into the Golden Horn on 22 April, bypassing the chain barrier. This action seriously threatened the flow of supplies from Genoese ships from the nominally neutral colony of Pera, and it demoralized the Byzantine defenders. On the night of 28 April, an attempt was made to destroy the Ottoman ships already in the Golden Horn using fire ships, but the Ottomans forced the Christians to

retreat with heavy losses. 40 Italians escaped their sinking ships and swam to the northern shore. On orders of Mehmed, they were impaled on stakes, in sight of the city's defenders on the sea walls across the Golden Horn. In retaliation, the defenders brought their Ottoman prisoners, 260 in all, to the walls, where they were executed, one by one, before the eyes of the Ottomans. With the failure of their attack on the Ottoman vessels, the defenders were forced to disperse part of their forces to defend the sea walls along the Golden Horn.

The Ottoman army had made several frontal assaults on the land wall of Constantinople, but they were always repelled with heavy losses. Venetian surgeon Niccolò Barbaro, describing in his diary one such land attack by the Janissaries, wrote:

They found the Turks coming right up under the walls and seeking battle, particularly the Janissaries ... and when one or two of them were killed, at once more Turks came and took away the dead ones ... without caring how near they came to the city walls. Our men shot at them with guns and crossbows, aiming at the Turk who was carrying away his dead countryman, and both of them would fall to the ground dead, and then there came other Turks and took them away, none fearing death, but being willing to let ten of themselves be killed rather than suffer the shame of leaving a single Turkish corpse by the walls.

After these inconclusive frontal offensives, the Ottomans sought to break through the walls by constructing tunnels in an effort to mine them from mid-May to 25 May. Many of the sappers were miners of Serbian origin sent from Novo Brdo and were under the command of Zagan Pasha. However, an

engineer named Johannes Grant, a German who came with the Genoese contingent, had counter-mines dug, allowing Byzantine troops to enter the mines and kill the workers. The Byzantines intercepted the first tunnel on the night of 16 May. Subsequent tunnels were interrupted on 21, 23, and 25 May, and destroyed with Greek fire and vigorous combat. On 23 May, the Byzantines captured and tortured two Turkish officers, who revealed the location of all the Turkish tunnels, which were subsequently destroyed.

On 21 May, Mehmed sent an ambassador to Constantinople and offered to lift the siege if they gave him the city. He promised he would allow the Emperor and any other inhabitants to leave with their possessions. Moreover, he would recognize the Emperor as governor of the Peloponnese. Lastly, he guaranteed the safety of the population that might choose to remain in the city. Constantine XI only agreed to pay higher tributes to the sultan and recognized the status of all the conquered castles and lands in the hands of the Turks as Ottoman possession. However, the Emperor was not willing to leave the city without a fight:

As to surrendering the city to you, it is not for me to decide or for anyone else of its citizens; for all of us have reached the mutual decision to die of our own free will, without any regard for our lives.

Around this time, Mehmed had a final council with his senior officers. Here he encountered some resistance; one of his Viziers, the veteran Halil Pasha, who had always disapproved of Mehmed's plans to conquer the city, now admonished him to abandon the siege in the face of recent adversity. Zagan Pasha

argued against Halil Pasha and insisted on an immediate attack. Believing that the beleaguered Byzantine defence was already weakened sufficiently, Mehmed planned to overpower the walls by sheer force and started preparations for a final all-out offensive.

Final assault

Preparations for the final assault began in the evening of 26 May and continued to the next day. For 36 hours after the war council decided to attack, the Ottomans extensively mobilized their manpower in order to prepare for the general offensive. Prayer and resting was then granted to the soldiers on the 28th before the final assault would be launched. On the Byzantine side, a small Venetian fleet of 12 ships, after having searched the Aegean, reached the Capital on 27 May and reported to the Emperor that no large Venetian relief fleet was on its way. On Saturday 28 May, as the Ottoman army prepared for the final assault, large-scale religious processions were held in the city. In the evening, a solemn last ceremony of Vespers before Pentecost was held in the Hagia Sophia, in which the Emperor with representatives and nobility of both the Latin and Greek churches partook. Up until this point, the Ottomans had fired 5,000 shots from their cannons using 55,000 pounds of gunpowder.

Shortly after midnight on 29 May, on the Greek Orthodox feast of Pentecost, the all-out offensive began. The Christian troops of the Ottoman Empire attacked first, followed by successive waves of the irregular azaps, who were poorly trained and equipped, and Anatolian Turkmen beylik forces who focused on a section of the damaged Blachernae walls in the north-west

part of the city. This section of the walls had been built earlier, in the 11th century, and was much weaker. The Turkmen mercenaries managed to breach this section of walls and entered the city, but they were just as quickly pushed back by the defenders. Finally, the last wave consisting of elite Janissaries, attacked the city walls. The Genoese general in charge of the defenders on land, Giovanni Giustiniani, was grievously wounded during the attack, and his evacuation from the ramparts caused a panic in the ranks of the defenders.

With Giustiniani's Genoese troops retreating into the city and towards the harbour, Constantine and his men, now left to their own devices, continued to hold their ground against the Janissaries. However, Constantine's men eventually could not prevent the Ottomans from entering the city, and the defenders were overwhelmed at several points along the wall. When Turkish flags were seen flying above the Kerkoporta, a small postern gate that was left open, panic ensued, and the defence collapsed. Meanwhile, Janissary soldiers, led by Ulubatlı Hasan, pressed forward. Many Greek soldiers ran back home to protect their families, the Venetians retreated to their ships, and a few of the Genoese escaped to Galata. The rest surrendered or committed suicide by jumping off the city walls. The Greek houses nearest to the walls were the first to suffer from the Ottomans. It is said that Constantine, throwing aside his purple imperial regalia, led the final charge against the incoming Ottomans, perishing in the ensuing battle in the streets alongside his soldiers. On the other hand, the Venetian Nicolò Barbaro claimed in his diary that Constantine hanged himself at the moment when the Turks broke in at the San Romano gate. Ultimately, his fate remains unknown.

After the initial assault, the Ottoman army fanned out along the main thoroughfare of the city, the Mese, past the great forums and the Church of the Holy Apostles, which Mehmed II wanted to provide a seat for his newly appointed patriarch to better control his Christian subjects. Mehmed II had sent an advance guard to protect these key buildings.

A few lucky civilians managed to escape. When the Venetians retreated over to their ships, the Ottomans had already taken the walls of the Golden Horn. Luckily for the occupants of the city, the Ottomans were not interested in killing potentially valuable slaves, but rather in the loot they could get from raiding the city's houses, so they decided to attack the city instead.

The Venetian captain ordered his men to break open the gate of the Golden Horn. Having done so, the Venetians left in ships filled with soldiers and refugees. Shortly after the Venetians left, a few Genoese ships and even the Emperor's ships followed them out of the Golden Horn. This fleet narrowly escaped prior to the Ottoman navy assuming control over the Golden Horn, which was accomplished by midday. The army converged upon the Augusteum, the vast square that fronted the great church of Hagia Sophia whose bronze gates were barred by a huge throng of civilians inside the building, hoping for divine protection. After the doors were breached, the troops separated the congregation according to what price they might bring in the slave markets.

Ottoman casualties are unknown but they are believed by most historians to be very heavy due to several unsuccessful Ottoman attacks made during the siege and final assault. The

Venetian Barbaro observed that blood flowed in the city "like rainwater in the gutters after a sudden storm" and that bodies of Turks and Christians floated in the sea "like melons along a canal".

Plundering phase

Leonard of Chios witnessed the horrible atrocities that followed the fall of Constantinople. The Ottoman invaders pillaged the city, enslaved tens of thousands of people, and raped women and children. Even nuns were subjected to sexual assault by the Ottomans:

All the valuables and other booty were taken to their camp, and as many as sixty thousand Christians who had been captured. The crosses which had been placed on the roofs or the walls of churches were torn down and trampled. Women were raped, virgins deflowered and youths forced to take part in shameful obscenities. The nuns left behind, even those who were obviously such, were disgraced with foul debaucheries.

During three days of pillaging, the Ottoman invaders captured children and took them away to their tents, and became rich by plundering the imperial palace and the houses of Constantinople. The Ottoman official Tursun Beg wrote:

After having completely overcome the enemy, the soldiers began to plunder the city. They enslaved boys and girls and took silver and gold vessels, precious stones and all sorts of valuable goods and fabrics from the imperial palace and the houses of the rich... Every tent was filled with handsome boys and beautiful girls.

If any citizens of Constantinople tried to resist, they were slaughtered. According to Niccolò Barbaro, "all through the day the Turks made a great slaughter of Christians through the city". According to Makarios Melissenos:

As soon as the Turks were inside the City, they began to seize and enslave every person who came their way; all those who tried to offer resistance were put to the sword. In many places the ground could not be seen, as it was covered by heaps of corpses.

The women of Constantinople suffered from rape at the hands of Ottoman forces. According to historian Philip Mansel, widespread persecution of the city's civilian inhabitants took place, resulting in thousands of murders and rapes, and 30,000 civilians being enslaved or forcibly deported. The vast majority of the citizens of Constantinople were forced to become slaves.

Many women and girls would have been sold as sex slaves, and slavery would continue to be allowed until the early 20th century. According to Nicolas de Nicolay, slaves were displayed naked at the city's slave market, and young girls could be purchased. George Sphrantzes says that people of both genders were raped inside Hagia Sophia. According to Steven Runciman most of the elderly and the infirm/wounded and sick who were refugees inside the churches were killed, and the remainder were chained up and sold into slavery.

According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Mehmed II "permitted an initial period of looting that saw the destruction of many Orthodox churches", but tried to prevent a complete sack of the city. The looting was extremely thorough in certain parts of

the city. On 2 June, the Sultan found the city largely deserted and half in ruins; churches had been desecrated and stripped, houses were no longer habitable, and stores and shops were emptied. He is famously reported to have been moved to tears by this, saying, "What a city we have given over to plunder and destruction."

Looting was carried out on a massive scale by sailors and marines who entered the city via other walls before they had been suppressed by regular troops, who were beyond the main gate. According to David Nicolle, the ordinary people were treated better by their Ottoman conquerors than their ancestors had been by Crusaders back in 1204, stating only about 4,000 Greeks died in the siege. Many of the riches of the city were already looted in 1204, leaving only limited loot to the Ottomans.

Aftermath

Mehmed II granted his soldiers three days to plunder the city, as he had promised them and in accordance with the custom of the time. Soldiers fought over the possession of some of the spoils of war. On the third day of the conquest, Mehmed II ordered all looting to stop and issued a proclamation that all Christians who had avoided capture or who had been ransomed could return to their homes without further molestation, although many had no homes to return to, and many more had been taken captive and not ransomed. Byzantine historian George Sphrantzes, an eyewitness to the fall of Constantinople, described the Sultan's actions:

On the third day after the fall of our city, the Sultan celebrated his victory with a great, joyful triumph. He issued a proclamation: the citizens of all ages who had managed to escape detection were to leave their hiding places throughout the city and come out into the open, as they were to remain free and no question would be asked. He further declared the restoration of houses and property to those who had abandoned our city before the siege. If they returned home, they would be treated according to their rank and religion, as if nothing had changed.

- —*George Sphrantzes*

The *Hagia Sophia* was converted into a mosque, but the Greek Orthodox Church was allowed to remain intact and Gennadius Scholarius was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. This was once thought to be the origin of the Ottoman *millet* system; however, it is now considered a myth and no such system existed in the fifteenth century.

The fall of Constantinople shocked many Europeans, who viewed it as a catastrophic event for their civilization. Many feared other European Christian kingdoms would suffer the same fate as Constantinople. Two possible responses emerged amongst the humanists and churchmen of that era: Crusade or dialogue. Pope Pius II strongly advocated for another Crusade, while the German Nicholas of Cusa supported engaging in a dialogue with the Ottomans.

The Morean (Peloponnesian) fortress of Mystras, where Constantine's brothers Thomas and Demetrius ruled, constantly in conflict with each other and knowing that Mehmed would eventually invade them as well, held out until

1460. Long before the fall of Constantinople, Demetrius had fought for the throne with Thomas, Constantine, and their other brothers John and Theodore. Thomas escaped to Rome when the Ottomans invaded Morea while Demetrius expected to rule a puppet state, but instead was imprisoned and remained there for the rest of his life. In Rome, Thomas and his family received some monetary support from the Pope and other Western rulers as Byzantine emperor in exile, until 1503. In 1461 the independent Byzantine state in Trebizond fell to Mehmed.

Constantine XI had died without producing an heir, and had Constantinople not fallen he likely would have been succeeded by the sons of his deceased elder brother, who were taken into the palace service of Mehmed after the fall of Constantinople. The oldest boy, renamed Murad, became a personal favourite of Mehmed and served as Beylerbey (Governor-General) of Rumeli (the Balkans). The younger son, renamed Mesih Pasha, became Admiral of the Ottoman fleet and Sancak Beg (Governor) of the Province of Gallipoli. He eventually served twice as Grand Vizier under Mehmed's son, Bayezid II.

With the capture of Constantinople, Mehmed II had acquired the future capital of his kingdom, albeit one in decline due to years of war. The loss of the city was a crippling blow to Christendom, and it exposed the Christian West to a vigorous and aggressive foe in the East. The Christian reconquest of Constantinople remained a goal in Western Europe for many years after its fall to the Ottoman Empire. Rumours of Constantine XI's survival and subsequent rescue by an angel led many to hope that the city would one day return to Christian hands. Pope Nicholas V called for an immediate

counter-attack in the form of a crusade, however no European powers wished to participate, and the Pope resorted to sending a small fleet of 10 ships to defend the city. The short lived Crusade immediately came to an end and as Western Europe entered the 16th century, the age of Crusading began to come to an end.

For some time Greek scholars had gone to Italian city-states, a cultural exchange begun in 1396 by Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of Florence, who had invited Manuel Chrysoloras, a Byzantine scholar to lecture at the University of Florence. After the conquest many Greeks, such as John Argyropoulos and Constantine Lascaris, fled the city and found refuge in the Latin West, bringing with them knowledge and documents from the Greco-Roman tradition to Italy and other regions that further propelled the Renaissance. Those Greeks who stayed behind in Constantinople mostly lived in the Phanar and Galata districts of the city. The Phanariotes, as they were called, provided many capable advisers to the Ottoman rulers.

Third Rome

Byzantium is a term used by modern historians to refer to the later Roman Empire. In its own time, the Empire ruled from Constantinople (or "New Rome" as some people call it, although this was a laudatory expression that was never an official title) was considered simply as "the Roman Empire." The fall of Constantinople led competing factions to lay claim to being the inheritors of the Imperial mantle. Russian claims to Byzantine heritage clashed with those of the Ottoman Empire's own claim. In Mehmed's view, he was the successor to the Roman Emperor, declaring himself *Kayser-i Rum*, literally "Caesar of

Rome", that is, of the Roman Empire, though he was remembered as "the Conqueror". He founded a political system that survived until 1922 with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

Stefan Dušan, Tsar of Serbia, and Ivan Alexander, Tsar of Bulgaria, both made similar claims, regarding themselves as legitimate heirs to the Roman Empire. Other potential claimants, such as the Republic of Venice and the Holy Roman Empire have disintegrated into history.

Impact on the Churches

Pope Pius II believed that the Ottomans would persecute Greek Orthodox Christians and advocated for another crusade at the Council of Mantua in 1459. However, Vlad the Impaler was the only Christian ruler who showed enthusiasm for this suggestion.

In 17th-century Russia, the fall of Constantinople had a role in the fierce theological and political controversy between adherents and opponents of the reforms in the Russian Orthodox Church carried out by Patriarch Nikon, which he intended to bring the Russian Church closer to the norms and practices of other Orthodox churches. Avvakum and other "Old Believers" saw these reforms as a corruption of the Russian Church, which they considered to be the "true" Church of God. As the other Churches were more closely related to Constantinople in their liturgies, Avvakum argued that Constantinople fell to the Turks because of these heretical beliefs and practices.

The fall of Constantinople has a profound impact on the ancient Pentarchy of the Orthodox Church. Today, the four ancient sees of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople have relatively few followers and believers locally, because of Islamization and the *Dhimma* system to which Christians have been subjected since the earliest days of Islam, although migration has created a body of followers in Western Europe and the United States,. As a result of this process, the centre of influence in the Orthodox Church changed and migrated to Eastern Europe (e.g., Russia) rather than remaining in the former Byzantine Near East.

Legacy

Legends

There are many legends in Greece surrounding the Fall of Constantinople. It was said that the partial lunar eclipse that occurred on 22 May 1453 represented a fulfilment of a prophecy of the city's demise. Four days later, the whole city was blotted out by a thick fog, a condition unknown in that part of the world in May. When the fog lifted that evening, a strange light was seen playing about the dome of the Hagia Sophia, which some interpreted as the Holy Spirit departing from the city. "This evidently indicated the departure of the Divine Presence, and its leaving the City in total abandonment and desertion, for the Divinity conceals itself in cloud and appears and again disappears." For others, there was still a distant hope that the lights were the campfires of the troops of John Hunyadi who had come to relieve the city. It is possible that all these phenomena were local effects of the cataclysmic

Kuwae volcanic eruption in the Pacific Ocean which occurred around the time of the siege. The "fire" seen may have been an optical illusion due to the reflection of intensely red twilight glow by clouds of volcanic ash high in the atmosphere.

Another legend holds that two priests saying divine liturgy over the crowd disappeared into the cathedral's walls as the first Turkish soldiers entered.

According to the legend, the priests will appear again on the day that Constantinople returns to Christian hands. Another legend refers to the *Marble Emperor* (Constantine XI), holding that an angel rescued the emperor when the Ottomans entered the city, turning him into marble and placing him in a cave under the earth near the Golden Gate, where he waits to be brought to life again (a variant of the sleeping hero legend).

However many of the myths surrounding the disappearance of Constantine were developed later and little evidence can be found to support them even in friendly primary accounts of the siege.

Cultural impact

Guillaume Dufay composed several songs lamenting the fall of the Eastern church, and the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, avowed to take up arms against the Turks. However, as the growing Ottoman power from this date on coincided with the Protestant Reformation and subsequent Counter-Reformation, the recapture of Constantinople became an ever-distant dream. Even France, once a fervent participant in the Crusades, became an ally of the Ottomans.

Nonetheless, depictions of Christian coalitions taking the city and of the late Emperor's resurrection by Leo the Wise persisted.

29 May 1453, the day of the fall of Constantinople, fell on a Tuesday, and since then Tuesday has been considered an unlucky day by Greeks generally.

Impact on the Renaissance

The migration waves of Byzantine scholars and émigrés in the period following the sacking of Constantinople and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is considered by many scholars key to the revival of Greek and Roman studies that led to the development of the Renaissance humanism and science. These émigrés were grammarians, humanists, poets, writers, printers, lecturers, musicians, astronomers, architects, academics, artists, scribes, philosophers, scientists, politicians and theologians. They brought to Western Europe the far greater preserved and accumulated knowledge of Byzantine civilization. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "Many modern scholars also agree that the exodus of Greeks to Italy as a result of this event marked the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance".

Renaming of the city

Ottomans used the Arabic transliteration of the city's name "Ḳos□an□īniyye" (القسطنطينية) or "Kostantiniyye", as can be seen in numerous Ottoman documents. *Islambol* (اسلامبول, *Full of Islam*) or *Islambul* (*find Islam*) or *Islam(b)ol* (*old Turkic: be Islam*), both in Turkish, were folk-etymological adaptations of

Istanbul created after the Ottoman conquest of 1453 to express the city's new role as the capital of the Islamic Ottoman Empire. It is first attested shortly after the conquest, and its invention was ascribed by some contemporary writers to Mehmed II himself.

The name of Istanbul is thought to be derived from the Greek phrase *īs tīmbolī(n)* (Greek: ε□ς τ□ν πόλιν, translit. *eis tēn pólin*, "to the City"), and it is claimed that it had already spread among the Turkish populace of the Ottoman Empire before the conquest. However, Istanbul only became the official name of the city in 1930 by the revised Turkish Postal Law as part of Atatürk's reforms.

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Primary sources

For the fall of Constantinople, Marios Philippides and Walter Hanak list 15 eyewitness accounts (13 Christian and 2 Turkish) and 20 contemporary non-eyewitness accounts (13 Italian).

Eyewitness accounts

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- Tursun Beg, wrote a history entitled *Tarih-i Abu'l Fath*
- George Sphrantzes, the only Greek eyewitness who wrote about it, but his laconic account is almost entirely lacking in narrative
- Leonard of Chios, wrote a report to Pope Nicholas V

- Nicolò Barbaro, physician on a Venetian galley who kept a journal
- Angelino Giovanni Lomellini, Venetian *podestà* of Pera who wrote a report dated 24 June 1453
- Jacopo Tetaldi, Florentine merchant
- Isidore of Kiev, Orthodox churchman who wrote eight letters to Italy
- Benvenuto, Anconitan consul in Constantinople
- Ubertino Puscolo, Italian poet learning Greek in the city, wrote an epic poem
- Eparkhos and Diplovatatzes, two refugees whose accounts has become garbled through multiple translations
- Nestor Iskander, youthful eyewitness who wrote a Slavonic account
- Samile the Vladik, bishop who, like Eparkhos and Diplovatatzes, fled as a refugee to Wallachia
- Konstantin Mihailović, Serbian who fought on the Ottoman side
- a report by some Franciscan prisoners of war who later came to Bologna

Non-eyewitness accounts

- Doukas, a Byzantine Greek historian, one of the most important sources for the last decades and eventual fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans
- Laonikos Chalkokondyles, a Byzantine Greek historian
- Michael Kritoboulos, a Byzantine Greek historian

- Makarios Melissourgos, 16th-century historian who augmented the account of Sphrantzes, not very reliably
- Paolo Dotti, Venetian official on Crete whose account is based on oral reports
- Fra Girolamo's letter from Crete to Domenico Capranica
- Lauro Quirini, wrote a report to Pope Nicholas V from Crete based on oral reports
- Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), wrote an account based on written sources
- Henry of Soemmern, wrote a letter dated 11 September 1453 in which he cites his sources of information
- Niccola della Tuccia, whose *Cronaca di Viterbo* written in the autumn of 1453 contains unique information
- Niccolò Tignosi da Foligno, *Expugnatio Constantinopolitana*, part of a letter to a friend
- Filippo da Rimini, *Excidium Constantinopolitanae urbis quae quondam Bizantium ferebatur*
- Antonio Ivani da Sarzana, *Expugnatio Constantinopolitana*, part of a letter to the duke of Urbino
- Nikolaos Sekoundinos, read a report before the Venetian Senate, the Pope and the Neapolitan court
- Giacomo Languschi, whose account is embedded in the Venetian chronicle of Zorzi Dolfin, had access to eyewitnesses
- John Moskhos, wrote a poem in honour of Loukas Notaras

- Adamo di Montaldo, *De Constantinopolitano excidio ad nobilissimum iuvenem Melladucam Cicadam*, which contains unique information
- Ashikpashazade, included a chapter on the conquest in his *Tarih-i al-i Osman*
- Neshri, included a chapter on the conquest in his universal history
- Evliya Çelebi, 17th-century traveller who collected local traditions of the conquest

Chapter 6

Middle Class

The **middle class** is a class of people in the middle of a social hierarchy. Its usage has often been vague whether defined in terms of occupation, income, education or social status. The definition by any author is often chosen for political connotations. Modern social theorists—and especially economists—have defined and re-defined the term "middle class" in order to serve their particular social or political ends.

Within capitalism, *middle-class* initially referred to the *bourgeoisie*; as distinct from the nobility, then with the further differentiation of classes as capitalist societies developed to the degree where the 'capitalist' became the new ruling class, the term came instead to be synonymous with *petite bourgeoisie*.

The common measures of what constitutes middle class vary significantly among cultures. On the one hand, the term can be viewed primarily in terms of socioeconomic status. One of the narrowest definitions limits it to those in the middle fifth of the nation's income ladder. A wider characterization includes everyone but the poorest 20% and the wealthiest 20%. Some theories like "Paradox of Interest", use decile groups and wealth distribution data to determine the size and wealth share of the middle class.

In modern American vernacular, the term *middle class* is most often used as a self-description by those persons whom academics and Marxists would otherwise identify as the

working class, which are below both the upper class and the true middle class, but above those in poverty. This leads to considerable ambiguity over the meaning of the term *middle class* in American usage. Sociologists such as Dennis Gilbert and Joseph Kahl see this American self-described middle class (working class) as the most populous class in the United States.

In 1977 Barbara Ehrenreich and her then husband John defined a new class in the United States as "salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor ... [is] ... the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations;" the Ehrenreichs named this group the "professional-managerial class".

There has been significant global middle-class growth over time. In February 2009, *The Economist* asserted that over half of the world's population belonged to the middle class, as a result of rapid growth in emerging countries. It characterized the middle class as having a reasonable amount of discretionary income, so that they do not live from hand-to-mouth as the poor do, and defined it as beginning at the point where people have roughly a third of their income left for discretionary spending after paying for basic food and shelter.

History and evolution of the term

The term "middle class" is first attested in James Bradshaw's 1745 pamphlet *Scheme to prevent running Irish Wools to France.* Another phrase used in early modern Europe was "the middling sort".

The term "middle class" has had several, sometimes contradictory, meanings. Friedrich Engels saw the category as an intermediate social class between the nobility and the peasantry in late-feudalist society. While the nobility owned much of the countryside, and the peasantry worked it, a new *bourgeoisie* (literally "town-dwellers") arose around mercantile functions in the city. In France, the middle classes helped drive the French Revolution. This "middle class" eventually overthrew the ruling monarchists of feudal society, thus becoming the new ruling class or bourgeoisie in the new capitalist-dominated societies.

The modern usage of the term "middle-class", however, dates to the 1913 UK Registrar-General's report, in which the statistician T.H.C. Stevenson identified the middle class as those falling between the upper-class and the working-class. The middle class includes: professionals, managers, and senior civil servants. The chief defining characteristic of membership in the middle-class is control of significant human capital while still being under the dominion of the elite upper class, who control much of the financial and legal capital in the world.

Within capitalism, "middle-class" initially referred to the *bourgeoisie*; later, with the further differentiation of classes as capitalist societies developed, the term came to be synonymous with the term *petite bourgeoisie*. The boom-and-bust cycles of capitalist economies result in the periodic (and more or less temporary) impoverisation and proletarianisation of much of the *petite bourgeois* world, resulting in their moving back and forth between working-class and petite-bourgeois status. The typical modern definitions of "middle class" tend to ignore the

fact that the classical petite-bourgeoisie is and has always been the owner of a small-to medium-sized business whose income is derived almost exclusively from the employment of workers; "middle class" came to refer to the combination of the labour aristocracy, professionals, and salaried, white-collar workers.

The size of the middle class depends on how it is defined, whether by education, wealth, environment of upbringing, social network, manners or values, etc. These are all related, but are far from deterministically dependent. The following factors are often ascribed in the literature on this topic to a "middle class:"

- Achievement of tertiary education.
- Holding professional qualifications, including academics, lawyers, chartered engineers, politicians, and doctors, regardless of leisure or wealth.
- Belief in *bourgeois* values, such as high rates of house ownership, delayed gratification, and jobs that are perceived to be secure.
- Lifestyle. In Great Britain, social status has historically been linked less directly to wealth than in the United States, and has also been judged by such characteristics as accent (Received Pronunciation and U and non-U English), manners, type of school attended (state or private school), occupation, and the class of a person's family, circle of friends and acquaintances.

In the United States, by the end of the twentieth century, more people identified themselves as middle-class than as lower or

"working" class (with insignificant numbers identifying themselves as upper-class). The Labour Party in the UK, which grew out of the organised labour movement and originally drew almost all of its support from the working-class, reinvented itself under Tony Blair in the 1990s as "New Labour", a party competing with the Conservative Party for the votes of the middle-class as well as those of the Labour Party's traditional group of voters – the working-class. Around 40% of British people consider themselves to be middle class, and this number has remained relatively stable over the last few decades.

Marxism

Marxism defines social classes according to their relationship with the means of production. The "middle class" is said to be the class below the ruling class and above the proletariat in the Marxist social schema and is synonymous with the term "petite-" or "petty-bourgeoisie". Marxist writers have used the term in two distinct but related ways. In the first sense, it is used for the bourgeoisie (the urban merchant and professional class) that arose between the aristocracy and the proletariat in the waning years of feudalism in the Marxist model. V. I. Lenin stated that the "peasantry ... in Russia constitute eight- or nine-tenths of the petty bourgeoisie". However, in modern developed countries, Marxist writers define the *petite bourgeoisie* as primarily comprising (as the name implies) owners of small to medium-sized businesses, who derive their income from the exploitation of wage-laborers (and who are in turn exploited by the "big" bourgeoisie i.e. bankers, owners of large corporate trusts, etc.) as well as the highly educated

professional class of doctors, engineers, architects, lawyers, university professors, salaried middle-management of capitalist enterprises of all sizes, etc. – as the "middle class" which stands between the ruling capitalist "owners of the means of production" and the working class (whose income is derived solely from hourly wages).

Pioneer 20th century American Marxist theoretician Louis C. Fraina (Lewis Corey) defined the middle class as "the class of independent small enterprisers, owners of productive property from which a livelihood is derived". From Fraina's perspective, this social category included "propertied farmers" but not propertyless tenant farmers.

Middle class also included salaried managerial and supervisory employees but not "the masses of propertyless, dependent salaried employees. Fraina speculated that the entire category of salaried employees might be adequately described as a "new middle class" in economic terms, although this remained a social grouping in which "most of whose members are a new proletariat."

Professional-managerial class

In 1977 Barbara Ehrenreich and her then husband John defined a new class in the United States as "salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor ... [is] ... the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations;" the Ehrenreichs named this group the "professional-managerial class". This group of middle-class professionals is distinguished from other social classes by their training and

education (typically business qualifications and university degrees), with example occupations including academics and teachers, social workers, engineers, managers, nurses, and middle-level administrators. The Ehrenreichs developed their definition from studies by André Gorz, Serge Mallet, and others, of a "new working class," which, despite education and a perception of themselves as middle class, were part of the working class because they did not own the means of production, and were wage earners paid to produce a piece of capital.

The professional-managerial class seeks higher rank status and salary and tend to have incomes above the average for their country.

Recent global growth

It is important to understand that modern definitions of the term "middle class" are often politically motivated and vary according to the exigencies of political purpose which they were conceived to serve in the first place as well as due to the multiplicity of more- or less-scientific methods used to measure and compare "wealth" between modern advanced industrial states (where poverty is relatively low and the distribution of wealth more egalitarian in a relative sense) and in developing countries (where poverty and a profoundly unequal distribution of wealth crush the vast majority of the population). Many of these methods of comparison have been harshly criticised; for example, economist Thomas Piketty, in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, describes one of the most commonly used comparative measures of wealth across the globe – the Gini coefficient – as being an example of

"synthetic indices ... which mix very different things, such as inequality with respect to labor and capital, so that it is impossible to distinguish clearly among the multiple dimensions of inequality and the various mechanisms at work."

In February 2009, *The Economist* asserted that over half the world's population now belongs to the middle class, as a result of rapid growth in emerging countries. It characterized the middle class as having a reasonable amount of discretionary income, so that they do not live from hand-to-mouth as the poor do, and defined it as beginning at the point where people have roughly a third of their income left for discretionary spending after paying for basic food and shelter. This allows people to buy consumer goods, improve their health care, and provide for their children's education. Most of the emerging middle class consists of people who are middle class by the standards of the developing world but not the developed one, since their money incomes do not match developed country levels, but the percentage of it which is discretionary does. By this definition, the number of middle-class people in Asia exceeded that in the West sometime around 2007 or 2008.

The Economist's article pointed out that in many emerging countries, the middle class has not grown incrementally but explosively. The point at which the poor start entering the middle class by the millions is alleged to be the time when poor countries get the maximum benefit from cheap labour through international trade, before they price themselves out of world markets for cheap goods. It is also a period of rapid urbanization, when subsistence farmers abandon marginal farms to work in factories, resulting in a several-fold increase in their economic productivity before their wages catch up to

international levels. That stage was reached in China some time between 1990 and 2005, when the Chinese "middle class" grew from 15% to 62% of the population and is just being reached in India now.

The Economist predicted that surge across the poverty line should continue for a couple of decades and the global middle class will grow exponentially between now and 2030. Based on the rapid growth, scholars expect the global middle class to be the driving force for sustainable development. This assumption, however, is contested (see below).

As the American middle class is estimated by some researchers to comprise approximately 45% of the population, *The Economist*'s article would put the size of the American middle class below the world average. This difference is due to the extreme difference in definitions between *The Economist*'s and many other models.

In 2010, a working paper by the OECD asserted that 1.8 billion people were now members of the global "middle class". Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2014, released in October 2014, estimated that one billion adults belonged to the "middle class," with wealth anywhere between the range of $10,000–$100,000.

According to a study carried out by the Pew Research Center, a combined 16% of the world's population in 2011 were "upper-middle income" and "upper income".

An April 2019 OECD report said that the millennial generation is being pushed out of the middle class throughout the Western world.

Russia

In 2012, the "middle class" in Russia was estimated as 15% of the whole population. Due to sustainable growth, the pre-crisis level was exceeded. In 2015, research from the Russian Academy of Sciences estimated that around 15% of the Russian population are "firmly middle class", while around another 25% are "on the periphery".

China

Since the beginning of the 21st century, China's middle class has grown by significant margins. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, by 2013, some 420 million people, or 31%, of the Chinese population qualified as middle class. Based on the World Bank definition of middle class as those having with daily spending between $10 to $50 per day, nearly 40% of the Chinese population were considered middle class as of 2017.

India

Estimates vary widely on the number of middle-class people in India. According to *The Economist*, 78 million of India's population are considered middle class as of 2017, if defined using the cutoff of those making more than $10 per day, a standard used by the India's National Council of Applied Economic Research. If including those with incomes $2 – $10 per day, the number increases to 604 million. This was termed by researchers as the "new middle class". Measures considered include geography, lifestyle, income, and education. The World Inequality Report in 2018 further concluded that elites (i.e. the

top 10%) are accumulating wealth at a greater rate than the middle class, that rather than growing, India's middle class may be shrinking in size.

Africa

According to a 2014 study by Standard Bank economist Simon Freemantle, a total of 15.3 million households in 11 surveyed African nations are middle-class. These include Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In South Africa, a report conducted by the Institute for Race Relations in 2015 estimated that between 10%–20% of South Africans are middle class, based on various criteria. An earlier study estimated that in 2008 21.3% of South Africans were members of the middle class. A study by EIU Canback indicates 90% of Africans fall below an income of $10 a day. The proportion of Africans in the $10–$20 middle class (excluding South Africa), rose from 4.4% to only 6.2% between 2004 and 2014. Over the same period, the proportion of "upper middle" income ($20–$50 a day) went from 1.4% to 2.3%. According to a 2014 study by the German Development Institute, the middle class of Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 14 million to 31 million people between 1990 and 2010.

Latin America

According to a study by the World Bank, the number of Latin Americans who are middle class rose from 103m to 152m between 2003 and 2009.

Chapter 7

Black Death

The **Black Death** (also known as the **Pestilence**, the **Great Mortality** or the **Plague**) was a bubonic plague pandemic occurring in Afro-Eurasia from 1346 to 1353. It is the most fatal pandemic recorded in human history, causing the death of 75–200 million people in Eurasia and North Africa, peaking in Europe from 1347 to 1351. Bubonic plague is caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, but it may also cause septicaemic or pneumonic plagues.

The Black Death was the beginning of the second plague pandemic. The plague created religious, social and economic upheavals, with profound effects on the course of European history.

The origin of the Black Death is disputed. The pandemic originated either in Central Asia or East Asia but its first definitive appearance was in Crimea in 1347. From Crimea, it was most likely carried by fleas living on the black rats that travelled on Genoese slave ships, spreading through the Mediterranean Basin and reaching Africa, Western Asia and the rest of Europe via Constantinople, Sicily and the Italian Peninsula. There is evidence that once it came ashore, the Black Death was in large part spread by fleas – which cause pneumonic plague – and the person-to-person contact via aerosols which pneumonic plague enables, thus explaining the very fast inland spread of the epidemic, which was faster than would be expected if the primary vector was rat fleas causing bubonic plague.

The Black Death was the second great natural disaster to strike Europe during the Late Middle Ages (the first one being the Great Famine of 1315–1317) and is estimated to have killed 30 percent to 60 percent of the European population. The plague might have reduced the world population from c. 475 million to 350–375 million in the 14th century. There were further outbreaks throughout the Late Middle Ages and, with other contributing factors (the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages), the European population did not regain its level in 1300 until 1500. Outbreaks of the plague recurred around the world until the early 19th century.

Names

European writers contemporary with the plague described the disease in Latin as *pestis* or *pestilentia*, 'pestilence'; *epidemia*, 'epidemic'; *mortalitas*, 'mortality'. In English prior to the 18th century, the event was called the "pestilence" or "great pestilence", "the plague" or the "great death". Subsequent to the pandemic "the *furste moreyn*" (first murrain) or "first pestilence" was applied, to distinguish the mid-14th century phenomenon from other infectious diseases and epidemics of plague. The 1347 pandemic plague was not referred to specifically as "black" in the 14th or 15th centuries in any European language, though the expression "black death" had occasionally been applied to fatal disease beforehand.

"Black death" was not used to describe the plague pandemic in English until the 1750s; the term is first attested in 1755, where it translated Danish: *den sorte død*, lit. 'the black death'. This expression as a proper name for the pandemic had been popularized by Swedish and Danish chroniclers in the

15th and early 16th centuries, and in the 16th and 17th centuries was transferred to other languages as a calque: Icelandic: *svarti dauði*, German: *der schwarze Tod*, and French: *la mort noire*. Previously, most European languages had named the pandemic a variant or calque of the Latin: *magna mortalitas*, lit. 'Great Death'. The phrase 'black death' – describing Death as black – is very old. Homer used it in the Odyssey to describe the monstrous Scylla, with her mouths "full of black Death" (Ancient Greek: πλε οιμέλανοςΘανάτοιο, romanized: *pleîoi mélanos Thanátoio*). Seneca the Younger may have been the first to describe an epidemic as 'black death', (Latin: *mors atra*) but only in reference to the acute lethality and dark prognosis of disease. The 12th–13th century French physician Gilles de Corbeil had already used *atra mors* to refer to a "pestilential fever" (*febris pestilentialis*) in his work *On the Signs and Symptoms of Diseases* (*De signis et symptomatibus aegritudium*). The phrase *mors nigra*, 'black death', was used in 1350 by Simon de Covino (or Couvin), a Belgian astronomer, in his poem "On the Judgement of the Sun at a Feast of Saturn" (*De judicio Solis in convivio Saturni*), which attributes the plague to an astrological conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. His use of the phrase is not connected unambiguously with the plague pandemic of 1347 and appears to refer to the fatal outcome of disease.

The historian Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet wrote about the Great Pestilence in 1893 and suggested that it had been "some form of the ordinary Eastern or bubonic plague". In 1908, Gasquet claimed that use of the name *atra mors* for the 14th-century epidemic first appeared in a 1631 book on Danish history by J. I. Pontanus: "Commonly and from its effects, they

called it the black death" (*Vulgo & ab effectu atram mortem vocitabant*).

Previous plague epidemics

Recent research has suggested plague first infected humans in Europe and Asia in the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age. Research in 2018 found evidence of *Yersinia pestis* in an ancient Swedish tomb, which may have been associated with the "Neolithic decline" around 3000 BCE, in which European populations fell significantly. This *Y. pestis* may have been different from more modern types, with bubonic plague transmissible by fleas first known from Bronze Age remains near Samara. The symptoms of bubonic plague are first attested in a fragment of Rufus of Ephesus preserved by Oribasius; these ancient medical authorities suggest bubonic plague had appeared in the Roman Empire before the reign of Trajan, six centuries before arriving at Pelusium in the reign of Justinian I. In 2013, researchers confirmed earlier speculation that the cause of the Plague of Justinian (541–542 CE, with recurrences until 750) was *Y. pestis*. This is known as the First plague pandemic.

14th-century plague

Causes

Early theory:

The most authoritative contemporary account is found in a report from the medical faculty in Paris to Philip VI of France.

It blamed the heavens, in the form of a conjunction of three planets in 1345 that caused a "great pestilence in the air" (miasma theory). Muslim religious scholars taught that the pandemic was a “martyrdom and mercy” from God, assuring the believer's place in paradise. For non-believers, it was a punishment. Some Muslim doctors cautioned against trying to prevent or treat a disease sent by God. Others adopted preventive measures and treatments for plague used by Europeans. These Muslim doctors also depended on the writings of the ancient Greeks.

Predominant modern theory

Due to climate change in Asia, rodents began to flee the dried-out grasslands to more populated areas, spreading the disease. The plague disease, caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, is enzootic (commonly present) in populations of fleas carried by ground rodents, including marmots, in various areas, including Central Asia, Kurdistan, Western Asia, North India, Uganda and the western United States.

Y. pestis was discovered by Alexandre Yersin, a pupil of Louis Pasteur, during an epidemic of bubonic plague in Hong Kong in 1894; Yersin also proved this bacillus was present in rodents and suggested the rat was the main vehicle of transmission. The mechanism by which *Y. pestis* is usually transmitted was established in 1898 by Paul-Louis Simond and was found to involve the bites of fleas whose midguts had become obstructed by replicating *Y. pestis* several days after feeding on an infected host. This blockage starves the fleas and drives them to aggressive feeding behaviour and attempts to clear the blockage by regurgitation, resulting in thousands of plague

bacteria being flushed into the feeding site, infecting the host. The bubonic plague mechanism was also dependent on two populations of rodents: one resistant to the disease, which act as hosts, keeping the disease endemic, and a second that lack resistance. When the second population dies, the fleas move on to other hosts, including people, thus creating a human epidemic.

DNA evidence

Definitive confirmation of the role of *Y. pestis* arrived in 2010 with a publication in *PLOS Pathogens* by Haensch et al. They assessed the presence of DNA/RNA with polymerase chain reaction (PCR) techniques for *Y. pestis* from the tooth sockets in human skeletons from mass graves in northern, central and southern Europe that were associated archaeologically with the Black Death and subsequent resurgences. The authors concluded that this new research, together with prior analyses from the south of France and Germany, "ends the debate about the cause of the Black Death, and unambiguously demonstrates that *Y. pestis* was the causative agent of the epidemic plague that devastated Europe during the Middle Ages". In 2011, these results were further confirmed with genetic evidence derived from Black Death victims in the East Smithfield burial site in England. Schuenemann et al. concluded in 2011 "that the Black Death in medieval Europe was caused by a variant of *Y. pestis* that may no longer exist".

Later in 2011, Bos et al. reported in *Nature* the first draft genome of *Y. pestis* from plague victims from the same East Smithfield cemetery and indicated that the strain that caused the Black Death is ancestral to most modern strains of *Y.*

pestis. Since this time, further genomic papers have further confirmed the phylogenetic placement of the *Y. pestis* strain responsible for the Black Death as both the ancestor of later plague epidemics including the third plague pandemic and as the descendant of the strain responsible for the Plague of Justinian. In addition, plague genomes from significantly earlier in prehistory have been recovered.

DNA taken from 25 skeletons from 14th century London have shown plague is a strain of *Y. pestis* almost identical to that which hit Madagascar in 2013.

Alternative explanations

It is recognised that an epidemiological account of plague is as important as an identification of symptoms, but researchers are hampered by the lack of reliable statistics from this period. Most work has been done on the spread of the disease in England, and even estimates of overall population at the start vary by over 100% as no census was undertaken in England between the time of publication of the Domesday Book of 1086 and the poll tax of the year 1377. Estimates of plague victims are usually extrapolated from figures for the clergy.

Mathematical modelling is used to match the spreading patterns and the means of transmission. A research in 2018 challenged the popular hypothesis that "infected rats died, their flea parasites could have jumped from the recently dead rat hosts to humans". It suggested an alternative model in which "the disease was spread from human fleas and body lice to other people". The second model claims to better fit the trends of death toll because the rat-flea-human hypothesis

would have produced a delayed but very high spike in deaths, which contradict historical death data.

Lars Walløe complains that all of these authors "take it for granted that Simond's infection model, black rat → rat flea → human, which was developed to explain the spread of plague in India, is the only way an epidemic of *Yersinia pestis* infection could spread", whilst pointing to several other possibilities. Similarly, Monica Green has argued that greater attention is needed to the range of (especially non-commensal) animals that might be involved in the transmission of plague.

Archaeologist Barney Sloane has argued that there is insufficient evidence of the extinction of numerous rats in the archaeological record of the medieval waterfront in London and that the disease spread too quickly to support the thesis that *Y. pestis* was spread from fleas on rats; he argues that transmission must have been person to person. This theory is supported by research in 2018 which suggested transmission was more likely by body lice and fleas during the second plague pandemic.

Summary

Although academic debate continues, no single alternative solution has achieved widespread acceptance. Many scholars arguing for *Y. pestis* as the major agent of the pandemic suggest that its extent and symptoms can be explained by a combination of bubonic plague with other diseases, including typhus, smallpox and respiratory infections. In addition to the bubonic infection, others point to additional septicaemic (a type of "blood poisoning") and pneumonic (an airborne plague

that attacks the lungs before the rest of the body) forms of plague, which lengthen the duration of outbreaks throughout the seasons and help account for its high mortality rate and additional recorded symptoms. In 2014, Public Health England announced the results of an examination of 25 bodies exhumed in the Clerkenwell area of London, as well as of wills registered in London during the period, which supported the pneumonic hypothesis. Currently, while osteoarcheologists have conclusively verified the presence of *Y. pestis* bacteria in burial sites across northern Europe through examination of bones and dental pulp, no other epidemic pathogen has been discovered to bolster the alternative explanations. In the words of one researcher: "Finally, plague is plague."

Transmission

The importance of hygiene was recognised only in the nineteenth century with the development of the germ theory of disease; until then streets were commonly filthy, with live animals of all sorts around and human parasites abounding, facilitating the spread of transmissible disease.

Territorial origins

According to a team of medical geneticists led by Mark Achtman that analysed the genetic variation of the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis* "evolved in or near China", from which it spread around the world in multiple epidemics. Later research by a team led by Galina Eroshenko places the origins more specifically in the Tian Shan mountains on the border between Kyrgyzstan and China.

Nestorian graves dating to 1338–1339 near Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan have inscriptions referring to plague, which has led some historians and epidemiologists to think they mark the outbreak of the epidemic. Others favour an origin in China. According to this theory, the disease may have travelled along the Silk Road with Mongol armies and traders, or it could have arrived via ship. Epidemics killed an estimated 25 million across Asia during the fifteen years before the Black Death reached Constantinople in 1347.

Research on the Delhi Sultanate and the Yuan Dynasty shows no evidence of any serious epidemic in fourteenth-century India and no specific evidence of plague in fourteenth-century China, suggesting that the Black Death may not have reached these regions.

Ole Benedictow argues that since the first clear reports of the Black Death come from Kaffa, the Black Death most likely originated in the nearby plague focus on the northwestern shore of the Caspian Sea.

Demographic historians estimate that China's population fell by at least 15 percent, and perhaps as much as a third, between 1340 and 1370. This population loss coincided with the Black Death that ravaged Europe and much of the Islamic world in 1347–52. However, there is a conspicuous lack of evidence for pandemic disease on the scale of the Black Death in China at this time. War and famine – and the diseases that typically accompanied them – probably were the main causes of mortality in the final decades of Mongol rule.

- —*Richard von Glahn*

European outbreak

Plague was reportedly first introduced to Europe via Genoese traders from their port city of Kaffa in the Crimea in 1347. During a protracted siege of the city, in 1345–1346 the Mongol Golden Horde army of Jani Beg, whose mainly Tatar troops were suffering from the disease, catapulted infected corpses over the city walls of Kaffa to infect the inhabitants, though it is more likely that infected rats travelled across the siege lines to spread the epidemic to the inhabitants. As the disease took hold, Genoese traders fled across the Black Sea to Constantinople, where the disease first arrived in Europe in summer 1347.

The epidemic there killed the 13-year-old son of the Byzantine emperor, John VI Kantakouzenos, who wrote a description of the disease modelled on Thucydides's account of the 5th century BCE Plague of Athens, but noting the spread of the Black Death by ship between maritime cities. Nicephorus Gregoras also described in writing to Demetrios Kydones the rising death toll, the futility of medicine, and the panic of the citizens. The first outbreak in Constantinople lasted a year, but the disease recurred ten times before 1400.

Carried by twelve Genoese galleys, plague arrived by ship in Sicily in October 1347; the disease spread rapidly all over the island. Galleys from Kaffa reached Genoa and Venice in January 1348, but it was the outbreak in Pisa a few weeks later that was the entry point to northern Italy. Towards the end of January, one of the galleys expelled from Italy arrived in Marseilles.

From Italy, the disease spread northwest across Europe, striking France, Spain (the epidemic began to wreak havoc first on the Crown of Aragon in the spring of 1348), Portugal and England by June 1348, then spread east and north through Germany, Scotland and Scandinavia from 1348 to 1350. It was introduced into Norway in 1349 when a ship landed at Askøy, then spread to Bjørgvin (modern Bergen) and Iceland. Finally, it spread to northwestern Russia in 1351. Plague was somewhat more uncommon in parts of Europe with less developed trade with their neighbours, including the majority of the Basque Country, isolated parts of Belgium and the Netherlands, and isolated Alpine villages throughout the continent.

According to some epidemiologists, periods of unfavourable weather decimated plague-infected rodent populations and forced their fleas onto alternative hosts, inducing plague outbreaks which often peaked in the hot summers of the Mediterranean, as well as during the cool autumn months of the southern Baltic states. Among many other culprits of plague contagiousness, malnutrition, even if distantly, also contributed to such an immense loss in European population, since it weakened immune systems.

Western Asian and North African outbreak

The disease struck various regions in the Middle East and North Africa during the pandemic, leading to serious depopulation and permanent change in both economic and social structures. As infected rodents infected new rodents, the disease spread across the region, entering also from southern Russia.

By autumn 1347, plague had reached Alexandria in Egypt, transmitted by sea from Constantinople; according to a contemporary witness, from a single merchant ship carrying slaves. By late summer 1348 it reached Cairo, capital of the Mamluk Sultanate, cultural centre of the Islamic world, and the largest city in the Mediterranean Basin; the Bahriyya child sultan an-Nasir Hasan fled and more than a third of the 600,000 residents died. The Nile was choked with corpses despite Cairo having a medieval hospital, the late 13th century bimaristan of the Qalawun complex. The historian al-Maqrizi described the abundant work for grave-diggers and practitioners of funeral rites, and plague recurred in Cairo more than fifty times over the following century and half.

During 1347, the disease travelled eastward to Gaza by April; by July it had reached Damascus, and in October plague had broken out in Aleppo. That year, in the territory of modern Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Palestine, the cities of Ashkelon, Acre, Jerusalem, Sidon, and Homs were all infected. In 1348–1349, the disease reached Antioch. The city's residents fled to the north, but most of them ended up dying during the journey. Within two years, the plague had spread throughout the Islamic world, from Arabia across North Africa. The pandemic spread westwards from Alexandria along the African coast, while in April 1348 Tunis was infected by ship from Sicily. Tunis was then under attack by an army from Morocco; this army dispersed in 1348 and brought the contagion with them to Morocco, whose epidemic may also have been seeded from the Islamic city of Almería in al-Andalus.

Mecca became infected in 1348 by pilgrims performing the Hajj. In 1351 or 1352, the Rasulid sultan of the Yemen, al-

Mujahid Ali, was released from Mamluk captivity in Egypt and carried plague with him on his return home. During 1348, records show the city of Mosul suffered a massive epidemic, and the city of Baghdad experienced a second round of the disease.

Signs and symptoms

Bubonic plague

Symptoms of the disease include fever of 38–41 °C (100–106 °F), headaches, painful aching joints, nausea and vomiting, and a general feeling of malaise. Left untreated, of those that contract the bubonic plague, 80 percent die within eight days.

Contemporary accounts of the pandemic are varied and often imprecise. The most commonly noted symptom was the appearance of buboes (or *gavocciolos*) in the groin, neck, and armpits, which oozed pus and bled when opened. Boccaccio's description:

In men and women alike it first betrayed itself by the emergence of certain tumours in the groin or armpits, some of which grew as large as a common apple, others as an egg ... From the two said parts of the body this deadly *gavocciolo* soon began to propagate and spread itself in all directions indifferently; after which the form of the malady began to change, black spots or livid making their appearance in many cases on the arm or the thigh or elsewhere, now few and large, now minute and numerous. As the *gavocciolo* had been and still was an infallible token of approaching death, such also

were these spots on whomsoever they showed themselves.This was followed by acute fever and vomiting of blood. Most victims died two to seven days after initial infection. Freckle-like spots and rashes, which could have been caused by flea-bites, were identified as another potential sign of plague.

Pneumonic plague

Lodewijk Heyligen, whose master the Cardinal Colonna died of plague in 1348, noted a distinct form of the disease, pneumonic plague, that infected the lungs and led to respiratory problems. Symptoms include fever, cough, and blood-tinged sputum. As the disease progresses, sputum becomes free-flowing and bright red. Pneumonic plague has a mortality rate of 90 to 95 percent.

Septicaemic plague

Septicaemic plague is the least common of the three forms, with a mortality rate near 100%. Symptoms are high fevers and purple skin patches (purpura due to disseminated intravascular coagulation). In cases of pneumonic and particularly septicaemic plague, the progress of the disease is so rapid that there would often be no time for the development of the enlarged lymph nodes that were noted as buboes.

Consequences

Deaths

There are no exact figures for the death toll; the rate varied widely by locality. In urban centres, the greater the population

before the outbreak, the longer the duration of the period of abnormal mortality. It killed some 75 to 200 million people in Eurasia. The mortality rate of the Black Death in the 14th century was far greater than the worst 20th-century outbreaks of *Y. pestis* plague, which occurred in India and killed as much as 3% of the population of certain cities. The overwhelming number of deceased bodies produced by the Black Death caused the necessity of mass burial sites in Europe, sometimes including up to several hundred or several thousand skeletons. The mass burial sites that have been excavated have allowed archaeologists to continue interpreting and defining the biological, sociological, historical, and anthropological implications of the Black Death.

According to medieval historian Philip Daileader, it is likely that over four years, 45–50% of the European population died of plague. Norwegian historian Ole Benedictow suggests it could have been as much as 60% of the European population. In 1348, the disease spread so rapidly that before any physicians or government authorities had time to reflect upon its origins, about a third of the European population had already perished. In crowded cities, it was not uncommon for as much as 50% of the population to die. Half of Paris' population of 100,000 people died. In Italy, the population of Florence was reduced from between 110,000 and 120,000 inhabitants in 1338 down to 50,000 in 1351. At least 60% of the population of Hamburg and Bremen perished, and a similar percentage of Londoners may have died from the disease as well, with a death toll of approximately 62,000 between 1346 and 1353. Florence's tax records suggest that 80% of the city's population died within four months in 1348. Before 1350, there were about 170,000 settlements in Germany, and this

was reduced by nearly 40,000 by 1450. The disease bypassed some areas, with the most isolated areas being less vulnerable to contagion. Plague did not appear in Douai in Flanders until the turn of the 15th century, and the impact was less severe on the populations of Hainaut, Finland, northern Germany, and areas of Poland. Monks, nuns, and priests were especially hard-hit since they cared for victims of the Black Death.

The physician to the Avignon Papacy, Raimundo Chalmel de Vinario (Latin: *Magister Raimundus*, lit. 'Master Raymond'), observed the decreasing mortality rate of successive outbreaks of plague in 1347–48, 1362, 1371, and 1382 in his 1382 treatise *On Epidemics* (*De epidemica*). In the first outbreak, two thirds of the population contracted the illness and most patients died; in the next, half the population became ill but only some died; by the third, a tenth were affected and many survived; while by the fourth occurrence, only one in twenty people were sickened and most of them survived. By the 1380s in Europe, it predominantly affected children. Chalmel de Vinario recognized that bloodletting was ineffective (though he continued to prescribe bleeding for members of the Roman Curia, whom he disliked), and claimed that all true cases of plague were caused by astrological factors and were incurable; he himself was never able to effect a cure.

The most widely accepted estimate for the Middle East, including Iraq, Iran, and Syria, during this time, is for a death toll of about a third of the population. The Black Death killed about 40% of Egypt's population. In Cairo, with a population numbering as many as 600,000, and possibly the largest city west of China, between one third and 40% of the inhabitants died inside of eight months.

Italian chronicler Agnolo di Tura recorded his experience from Siena, where plague arrived in May 1348:

Father abandoned child, wife husband, one brother another; for this illness seemed to strike through the breath and sight. And so they died. And none could be found to bury the dead for money or friendship.

Members of a household brought their dead to a ditch as best they could, without priest, without divine offices ... great pits were dug and piled deep with the multitude of dead. And they died by the hundreds both day and night ... And as soon as those ditches were filled more were dug ... And I, Agnolo di Tura ... buried my five children with my own hands. And there were also those who were so sparsely covered with earth that the dogs dragged them forth and devoured many bodies throughout the city.

There was no one who wept for any death, for all awaited death. And so many died that all believed it was the end of the world.

Economic

With such a large population decline from the pandemic, wages soared in response to a labour shortage. On the other hand, in the quarter century after the Black Death in England, it is clear many labourers, artisans, and craftsmen, those living from money-wages alone, did suffer a reduction in real incomes owing to rampant inflation. Landowners were also pushed to substitute monetary rents for labour services in an effort to keep tenants.

Environmental

A study performed by Thomas Van Hoof of the Utrecht University suggests that the innumerable deaths brought on by the pandemic cooled the climate by freeing up land and triggering reforestation. This may have led to the Little Ice Age.

Persecutions

Renewed religious fervour and fanaticism bloomed in the wake of the Black Death. Some Europeans targeted "various groups such as Jews, friars, foreigners, beggars, pilgrims", lepers, and Romani, blaming them for the crisis. Lepers, and others with skin diseases such as acne or psoriasis, were killed throughout Europe.

Because 14th-century healers and governments were at a loss to explain or stop the disease, Europeans turned to astrological forces, earthquakes, and the poisoning of wells by Jews as possible reasons for outbreaks. Many believed the epidemic was a punishment by God for their sins, and could be relieved by winning God's forgiveness.

There were many attacks against Jewish communities. In the Strasbourg massacre of February 1349, about 2,000 Jews were murdered. In August 1349, the Jewish communities in Mainz and Cologne were annihilated.

By 1351, 60 major and 150 smaller Jewish communities had been destroyed. During this period many Jews relocated to Poland, where they received a warm welcome from King Casimir the Great.

Social

One theory that has been advanced is that the devastation in Florence caused by the Black Death, which hit Europe between 1348 and 1350, resulted in a shift in the world view of people in 14th-century Italy and led to the Renaissance. Italy was particularly badly hit by the pandemic, and it has been speculated that the resulting familiarity with death caused thinkers to dwell more on their lives on Earth, rather than on spirituality and the afterlife. It has also been argued that the Black Death prompted a new wave of piety, manifested in the sponsorship of religious works of art.

This does not fully explain why the Renaissance occurred in Italy in the 14th century. The Black Death was a pandemic that affected all of Europe in the ways described, not only Italy. The Renaissance's emergence in Italy was most likely the result of the complex interaction of the above factors, in combination with an influx of Greek scholars following the fall of the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the drastic reduction in the populace the value of the working class increased, and commoners came to enjoy more freedom. To answer the increased need for labour, workers travelled in search of the most favorable position economically.

Prior to the emergence of the Black Death, the workings of Europe were run by the Catholic Church and the continent was considered a feudalistic society, composed of fiefs and city-states. The pandemic completely restructured both religion and political forces; survivors began to turn to other forms of spirituality and the power dynamics of the fiefs and city-states crumbled.

Cairo's population, partly owing to the numerous plague epidemics, was in the early 18th century half of what it was in 1347. The populations of some Italian cities, notably Florence, did not regain their pre-14th century size until the 19th century. The demographic decline due to the pandemic had economic consequences: the prices of food dropped and land values declined by 30–40% in most parts of Europe between 1350 and 1400. Landholders faced a great loss, but for ordinary men and women it was a windfall. The survivors of the pandemic found not only that the prices of food were lower but also that lands were more abundant, and many of them inherited property from their dead relatives, and this probably destabilized feudalism.

The word "quarantine" has its roots in this period, though the concept of isolating people to prevent the spread of disease is older. In the city-state of Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik, Croatia), a thirty-day isolation period was implemented in 1377 for new arrivals to the city from plague-affected areas. The isolation period was later extended to forty days, and given the name "quarantino" from the Italian word for "forty".

Recurrences

Second plague pandemic

The plague repeatedly returned to haunt Europe and the Mediterranean throughout the 14th to 17th centuries. According to Jean-Noël Biraben, the plague was present somewhere in Europe in every year between 1346 and 1671. (Note that some researchers have cautions about the uncritical

use of Biraben's data.) The second pandemic was particularly widespread in the following years: 1360–63; 1374; 1400; 1438–39; 1456–57; 1464–66; 1481–85; 1500–03; 1518–31; 1544–48; 1563–66; 1573–88; 1596–99; 1602–11; 1623–40; 1644–54; and 1664–67. Subsequent outbreaks, though severe, marked the retreat from most of Europe (18th century) and northern Africa (19th century).

The historian George Sussman argued that the plague had not occurred in East Africa until the 1900s. However, other sources suggest that the Second pandemic did indeed reach Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to historian Geoffrey Parker, "France alone lost almost a million people to the plague in the epidemic of 1628–31." In the first half of the 17th century, a plague claimed some 1.7 million victims in Italy. More than 1.25 million deaths resulted from the extreme incidence of plague in 17th-century Spain.

The Black Death ravaged much of the Islamic world. Plague was present in at least one location in the Islamic world virtually every year between 1500 and 1850. Plague repeatedly struck the cities of North Africa. Algiers lost 30,000–50,000 inhabitants to it in 1620–21, and again in 1654–57, 1665, 1691, and 1740–42. Cairo suffered more than fifty plague epidemics within 150 years from the plague's first appearance, with the final outbreak of the second pandemic there in the 1840s. Plague remained a major event in Ottoman society until the second quarter of the 19th century. Between 1701 and 1750, thirty-seven larger and smaller epidemics were recorded in Constantinople, and an additional thirty-one between 1751

and 1800. Baghdad has suffered severely from visitations of the plague, and sometimes two-thirds of its population has been wiped out.

Third plague pandemic

- The third plague pandemic (1855–1859) started in China in the mid-19th century, spreading to all inhabited continents and killing 10 million people in India alone. The investigation of the pathogen that caused the 19th-century plague was begun by teams of scientists who visited Hong Kong in 1894, among whom was the French-Swiss bacteriologist Alexandre Yersin, after whom the pathogen was named.

Twelve plague outbreaks in Australia between 1900 and 1925 resulted in well over 1,000 deaths, chiefly in Sydney. This led to the establishment of a Public Health Department there which undertook some leading-edge research on plague transmission from rat fleas to humans via the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*.

The first North American plague epidemic was the San Francisco plague of 1900–1904, followed by another outbreak in 1907–1908.

Modern-day

Modern treatment methods include insecticides, the use of antibiotics, and a plague vaccine. It is feared that the plague bacterium could develop drug resistance and again become a major health threat. One case of a drug-resistant form of the bacterium was found in Madagascar in 1995. A further

outbreak in Madagascar was reported in November 2014. In October 2017 the deadliest outbreak of the plague in modern times hit Madagascar, killing 170 people and infecting thousands.

An estimate of the case fatality rate for the modern bubonic plague, following the introduction of antibiotics, is 11%, although it may be higher in underdeveloped regions.

In popular culture

- *A Journal of the Plague Year* – 1722 book by Daniel Defoe describing the Great Plague of London of 1665–1666
- *Black Death* – a 2010 action horror film set in medieval England in 1348
- *I promessi sposi* ("The Betrothed") – a plague novel by Alessandro Manzoni, set in Milan, and published in 1827; turned into an opera by Amilcare Ponchielli in 1856, and adapted for film in 1908, 1941, 1990, and 2004
- *Cronaca fiorentina* ("Chronicle of Florence") – a literary history of the plague, and of Florence up to 1386, by Baldassarre Bonaiuti
- *Danse Macabre* ("Dance of Death") – an artistic genre of allegory of the Late Middle Ages on the universality of death
- *The Decameron* – by Giovanni Boccaccio, finished in 1353. Tales told by a group of people sheltering from the Black Death in Florence. Numerous adaptations to other media have been made

- *Doomsday Book* – a 1992 science fiction novel by Connie Willis
- *A Feast in Time of Plague* – a verse play by Aleksandr Pushkin (1830), made into an opera by César Cui in 1900
- Four thieves vinegar – a popular French legend supposed to provide immunity to the plague
- Geisslerlieder – Medieval "flagellant songs"
- "A Litany in Time of Plague" – a sonnet by Thomas Nashe which was part of his play *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592)
- *The Plague* – a 1947 novel by Albert Camus, often read as an allegory about Fascism
- *The Seventh Seal* – a 1957 film written and directed by Ingmar Bergman
- *World Without End* – a 2007 novel by Ken Follett, turned into a miniseries of the same name in 2012
- *The Years of Rice and Salt* – an alternative history novel by Kim Stanley Robinson set in a world in which the plague killed virtually all Europeans

Chapter 8

England in the Middle Ages

England in the Middle Ages concerns the history of England during the medieval period, from the end of the 5th century through to the start of the Early Modern period in 1485. When England emerged from the collapse of the Roman Empire, the economy was in tatters and many of the towns abandoned. After several centuries of Germanic immigration, new identities and cultures began to emerge, developing into kingdoms that competed for power.

A rich artistic culture flourished under the Anglo-Saxons, producing epic poems such as *Beowulf* and sophisticated metalwork. The Anglo-Saxons converted to Christianity in the 7th century and a network of monasteries and convents were built across England. In the 8th and 9th centuries England faced fierce Viking attacks, and the fighting lasted for many decades, eventually establishing Wessex as the most powerful kingdom and promoting the growth of an English identity. Despite repeated crises of succession and a Danish seizure of power at the start of the 11th century, it can also be argued that by the 1060s England was a powerful, centralised state with a strong military and successful economy.

The Norman invasion of England in 1066 led to the defeat and replacement of the Anglo-Saxon elite with Norman and French nobles and their supporters. William the Conqueror and his successors took over the existing state system, repressing local revolts and controlling the population through a network of castles. The new rulers introduced a feudal approach to

governing England, eradicating the practice of slavery, but creating a much wider body of unfree labourers called serfs. The position of women in society changed as laws regarding land and lordship shifted. England's population more than doubled during the 12th and 13th centuries, fueling an expansion of the towns, cities, and trade, helped by warmer temperatures across Northern Europe.

A new wave of monasteries and friaries was established while ecclesiastical reforms led to tensions between successive kings and archbishops. Despite developments in England's governance and legal system, infighting between the Anglo-Norman elite resulted in multiple civil wars and the loss of Normandy.

The 14th century in England saw the Great Famine and the Black Death, catastrophic events that killed around half of England's population, throwing the economy into chaos, and undermining the old political order. Social unrest followed, resulting in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, while the changes in the economy resulted in the emergence of a new class of gentry, and the nobility began to exercise power through a system termed bastard feudalism. Nearly 1,500 villages were deserted by their inhabitants and many men and women sought new opportunities in the towns and cities. New technologies were introduced, and England produced some of the great medieval philosophers and natural scientists. English kings in the 14th and 15th centuries laid claim to the French throne, resulting in the Hundred Years' War. At times England enjoyed huge military success, with the economy buoyed by profits from the international wool and cloth trade, but by 1450 the country was in crisis, facing military failure in

France and an ongoing recession. More social unrest broke out, followed by the Wars of the Roses, fought between rival factions of the English nobility. Henry VII's victory in 1485 conventionally marks the end of the Middle Ages in England and the start of the Early Modern period.

Political history

Early Middle Ages (600–1066)

- At the start of the Middle Ages, England was a part of Britannia, a former province of the Roman Empire. The local economy had once been dominated by imperial Roman spending on a large military establishment, which in turn helped to support a complex network of towns, roads, and villas. At the end of the 4th century, however, Roman forces had been largely withdrawn, and this economy collapsed. Germanic immigrants began to arrive in increasing numbers during the 5th and 6th centuries, establishing small farms and settlements, and their language, Old English, swiftly spread as more settlers arrived and those of the previous inhabitants who had not moved west or to Brittany switched from British Celtic and British Latin to the migrants' language. New political and social identities emerged, including an Anglian culture in the east of England and a Saxon culture in the south, with local groups establishing *regiones*, small polities ruled over by powerful families and individuals. By the 7th century, some rulers, including those of Wessex,

> East Anglia, Essex, and Kent, had begun to term themselves kings, living in *villae regales*, royal centres, and collecting tribute from the surrounding *regiones*; these kingdoms are often referred to as the Heptarchy.

In the 7th century, the Kingdom of Mercia rose to prominence under the leadership of King Penda. Mercia invaded neighbouring lands until it loosely controlled around 50 *regiones* covering much of England. Mercia and the remaining kingdoms, led by their warrior elites, continued to compete for territory throughout the 8th century. Massive earthworks, such as the defensive dyke built by Offa of Mercia, helped to defend key frontiers and towns.

In 789, however, the first Scandinavian raids on England began; these Viking attacks grew in number and scale until in 865 the Danish *micel here* or Great Army, invaded England, captured York and defeated the kingdom of East Anglia. Mercia and Northumbria fell in 875 and 876, and Alfred of Wessex was driven into internal exile in 878.

However, in the same year Alfred won a decisive victory against the Danes at the Battle of Edington, and he exploited the fear of the Viking threat to raise large numbers of men and using a network of defended towns called *burhs* to defend his territory and mobilise royal resources. Suppressing internal opposition to his rule, Alfred contained the invaders within a region known as the Danelaw. Under his son, Edward the Elder, and his grandson, Æthelstan, Wessex expanded further north into Mercia and the Danelaw, and by the 950s and the reigns of Eadred and Edgar, York was finally permanently retaken from

the Vikings. The West Saxon rulers were now kings of the *Angelcynn*, that is of the whole English folk.

With the death of Edgar, however, the royal succession became problematic. Æthelred took power in 978 following the murder of his brother Edward, but England was then invaded by Sweyn Forkbeard, the son of a Danish king. Attempts to bribe Sweyn not to attack using danegeld payments failed, and he took the throne in 1013. Swein's son, Cnut, liquidated many of the older English families following his seizure of power in 1016. Æthelred's son, Edward the Confessor, had survived in exile in Normandy and returned to claim the throne in 1042. Edward was childless, and the succession again became a concern. England became dominated by the Godwin family, who had taken advantage of the Danish killings to acquire huge wealth. When Edward died in 1066, Harold Godwinson claimed the throne, defeating his rival Norwegian claimant, Harald Hardrada, at the battle of Stamford Bridge.

High Middle Ages (1066–1272)

In 1066, William, the Duke of Normandy, took advantage of the English succession crisis to start the Norman Conquest. With an army of Norman followers and mercenaries, he defeated Harold at the battle of Hastings and rapidly occupied the south of England. William used a network of castles to control the major centres of power, granting extensive lands to his main Norman followers and co-opting or eliminating the former Anglo-Saxon elite. Major revolts followed, which William suppressed before intervening in the north-east of England, establishing Norman control of York and devastating the region. Some Norman lords used England as a launching point

for attacks into South and North Wales, spreading up the valleys to create new Marcher territories. By the time of William's death in 1087, England formed the largest part of an Anglo-Norman empire, ruled over by a network of nobles with landholdings across England, Normandy, and Wales. England's growing wealth was critical in allowing the Norman kings to project power across the region, including funding campaigns along the frontiers of Normandy.

Norman rule, however, proved unstable; successions to the throne were contested, leading to violent conflicts between the claimants and their noble supporters. William II inherited the throne but faced revolts attempting to replace him with his older brother Robert or his cousin Stephen of Aumale. In 1100, William II died while hunting. Despite Robert's rival claims, his younger brother Henry I immediately seized power. War broke out, ending in Robert's defeat at Tinchebrai and his subsequent life imprisonment. Robert's son Clito remained free, however, and formed the focus for fresh revolts until his death in 1128. Henry's only legitimate son, William, died aboard the *White Ship* disaster of 1120, sparking a fresh succession crisis: Henry's nephew, Stephen of Blois, claimed the throne in 1135, but this was disputed by the Empress Matilda, Henry's daughter. Civil war broke out across England and Normandy, resulting in a long period of warfare later termed the Anarchy. Matilda's son, Henry, finally agreed to a peace settlement at Winchester and succeeded as king in 1154.

Henry II was the first of the Angevin rulers of England, so-called because he was also the Count of Anjou in Northern France. Henry had also acquired the huge duchy of Aquitaine by marriage, and England became a key part of a loose-knit

assemblage of lands spread across Western Europe, later termed the Angevin Empire. Henry reasserted royal authority and rebuilt the royal finances, intervening to claim power in Ireland and promoting the Anglo-Norman colonisation of the country. Henry strengthened England's borders with Wales and Scotland, and used the country's wealth to fund a long-running war with his rivals in France, but arrangements for his succession once again proved problematic. Several revolts broke out, led by Henry's children who were eager to acquire power and lands, sometimes backed by France, Scotland and the Welsh princes. After a final confrontation with Henry, his son Richard I succeeded to the throne in 1189.

Richard spent his reign focused on protecting his possessions in France and fighting in the Third Crusade; his brother, John, inherited England in 1199 but lost Normandy and most of Aquitaine after several years of war with France.

John fought successive, increasingly expensive, campaigns in a bid to regain these possessions. John's efforts to raise revenues, combined with his fractious relationships with many of the English barons, led to confrontation in 1215, an attempt to restore peace through the signing of the *Magna Carta*, and finally the outbreak of the First Barons' War. John died having fought the rebel barons and their French backers to a stalemate, and royal power was re-established by barons loyal to the young Henry III. England's power structures remained unstable and the outbreak of the Second Barons' War in 1264 resulted in the king's capture by Simon de Montfort. Henry's son, Edward, defeated the rebel factions between 1265 and 1267, restoring his father to power.

Late Middle Ages (1272–1485)

On becoming king, Edward I rebuilt the status of the monarchy, restoring and extending key castles that had fallen into disrepair. Uprisings by the princes of North Wales led to Edward mobilising a huge army, defeating the native Welsh and undertaking a programme of English colonisation and castle building across the region. Further wars were conducted in Flanders and Aquitaine. Edward also fought campaigns in Scotland, but was unable to achieve strategic victory, and the costs created tensions that nearly led to civil war. Edward II inherited the war with Scotland and faced growing opposition to his rule as a result of his royal favourites and military failures. The Despenser War of 1321–22 was followed by instability and the subsequent overthrow, and possible murder, of Edward in 1327 at the hands of his French wife, Isabella, and a rebel baron, Roger Mortimer. Isabella and Mortimer's regime lasted only a few years before falling to a coup, led by Isabella's son Edward III, in 1330.

Like his grandfather, Edward III took steps to restore royal power, but during the 1340s the Black Death arrived in England. The losses from the epidemic, and the recurring plagues that followed it, significantly affected events in England for many years to come. Meanwhile, Edward, under pressure from France in Aquitaine, made a challenge for the French throne. Over the next century, English forces fought many campaigns in a long-running conflict that became known as the Hundred Years' War. Despite the challenges involved in raising the revenues to pay for the war, Edward's military successes brought an influx of plundered wealth to many parts of England and enabled substantial building work by the king.

Many members of the English elite, including Edward's son the Black Prince, were heavily involved in campaigning in France and administering the new continental territories.

Edward's grandson, the young Richard II, faced political and economic problems, many resulting from the Black Death, including the Peasants' Revolt that broke out across the south of England in 1381. Over the coming decades, Richard and groups of nobles vied for power and control of policy towards France until Henry of Bolingbroke seized the throne with the support of parliament in 1399. Ruling as Henry IV, he exercised power through a royal council and parliament, while attempting to enforce political and religious conformity. His son, Henry V, reinvigorated the war with France and came close to achieving strategic success shortly before his death in 1422. Henry VI became king at the age of only nine months and both the English political system and the military situation in France began to unravel.

A sequence of bloody civil wars, later termed the Wars of the Roses, finally broke out in 1455, spurred on by an economic crisis and a widespread perception of poor government. Edward IV, leading a faction known as the Yorkists, removed Henry from power in 1461 but by 1469 fighting recommenced as Edward, Henry, and Edward's brother George, backed by leading nobles and powerful French supporters, vied for power. By 1471 Edward was triumphant and most of his rivals were dead. On his death, power passed to his brother Richard of Gloucester, who initially ruled on behalf of the young Edward V before seizing the throne himself as Richard III. The future Henry VII, aided by French and Scottish troops, returned to England and defeated Richard at the battle of Bosworth in

1485, bringing an end to the majority of the fighting, although lesser rebellions against his Tudor dynasty would continue for several years afterwards.

Government and society

Governance and social structures

Early Middle Ages (600–1066);

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were hierarchical societies, each based on ties of allegiance between powerful lords and their immediate followers. At the top of the social structure was the king, who stood above many of the normal processes of Anglo-Saxon life and whose household had special privileges and protection. Beneath the king were *thegns*, nobles, the more powerful of which maintained their own courts and were termed *ealdormen*. The relationship between kings and their nobles was bound up with military symbolism and the ritual exchange of weapons and armour. Freemen, called *churls*, formed the next level of society, often holding land in their own right or controlling businesses in the towns. *Geburs*, peasants who worked land belonging to a *thegn*, formed a lower class still. The very lowest class were slaves, who could be bought and sold and who held only minimal rights.

The balance of power between these different groups changed over time. Early in the period, kings were elected by members of the late king's council, but primogeniture rapidly became the norm for succession. The kings further bolstered their status by adopting Christian ceremonies and nomenclature,

introducing ecclesiastical coronations during the 8th century and terming themselves "Christ's deputy" by the 11th century. Huge estates were initially built up by the king, bishops, monasteries and *thegns*, but in the 9th and 10th centuries these were slowly broken up as a consequence of inheritance arrangements, marriage settlements and church purchases. In the 11th century, the royal position worsened further, as the *ealdormen* rapidly built up huge new estates, making them collectively much more powerful than the king—this contributed to the political instability of the final Anglo-Saxon years. As time went by, the position of the *churls* deteriorated, as their rights were slowly eroded and their duties to their lords increased.

The kingdom of Wessex, which eventually laid claim to England as a whole, evolved a centralised royal administration. One part of this was the king's council, the *witenagemot*, comprising the senior clergy, *ealdormen*, and some of the more important *thegns*; the council met to advise the king on policy and legal issues. The royal household included officials, *thegns* and a secretariat of clergy which travelled with the king, conducting the affairs of government as it went. Under the Danish kings, a bodyguard of housecarls also accompanied the court. At a regional level, *ealdormen* played an important part in government, defence and taxation, and the post of sheriff emerged in the 10th century, administering local shires on behalf of an ealdorman. Anglo-Saxon mints were tightly controlled by the kings, providing a high-quality currency, and the whole country was taxed using a system called hidage.

The Anglo-Saxon kings built up a set of written laws, issued either as statutes or codes, but these laws were never written

down in their entirety and were always supplemented by an extensive oral tradition of customary law. In the early part of the period local assemblies called moots were gathered to apply the laws to particular cases; in the 10th century these were replaced by hundred courts, serving local areas, and shire moots dealing with larger regions of the kingdom. Many churchmen and *thegns* were also given permission by the king to hold their own local courts. The legal system depended on a system of oaths in which the value of different individuals swearing on behalf of the plaintiff or defendant varied according to their social status – the word of a companion of the king, for example, was worth twelve times that of a *churl*. If fines were imposed, their size similarly varied accord to the oath-value of the individual. The Anglo-Saxon authorities struggled to deal with the bloodfeuds between families that emerged following violent killings, attempting to use a system of *weregild*, a payment of blood money, as a way of providing an alternative to long-running vendettas.

High Middle Ages (1066–1272)

Within twenty years of the Norman conquest, the former Anglo-Saxon elite were replaced by a new class of Norman nobility, with around 8,000 Normans and French settling in England. The new earls (successors to the ealdermen), sheriffs and church seniors were all drawn from their ranks. In many areas of society there was continuity, as the Normans adopted many of the Anglo-Saxon governmental institutions, including the tax system, mints and the centralisation of law-making and some judicial matters; initially sheriffs and the hundred courts continued to function as before. The existing tax liabilities were captured in the Domesday Book, produced in 1086.

Changes in other areas soon began to be felt. The method of government after the conquest can be described as a feudal system, in that the new nobles held their lands on behalf of the king; in return for promising to provide military support and taking an oath of allegiance, called homage, they were granted lands termed a fief or an honour. Major nobles in turn granted lands to smaller landowners in return for homage and further military support, and eventually the peasantry held land in return for local labour services, creating a web of loyalties and resources enforced in part by new honorial courts. This system had been used in Normandy and concentrated more power in the king and the upper elite than the former Anglo-Saxon system of government. The practice of slavery declined in the years after the conquest, as the Normans considered the practice backward and contrary to the teachings of the church. The more prosperous peasants, however, lost influence and power as the Normans made holding land more dependent on providing labour services to the local lord. They sank down the economic hierarchy, swelling the numbers of unfree villeins or serfs, forbidden to leave their manor or seek alternative employment.

At the centre of power, the kings employed a succession of clergy as chancellors, responsible for running the royal chancery, while the *familia regis*, the military household, emerged to act as a bodyguard and military staff. England's bishops continued to form an important part in local administration, alongside the nobility. Henry I and Henry II both implemented significant legal reforms, extending and widening the scope of centralised, royal law; by the 1180s, the basis for the future English common law had largely been established, with a standing law court in Westminster—an

early Common Bench—and travelling judges conducting eyres around the country. King John extended the royal role in delivering justice, and the extent of appropriate royal intervention was one of the issues addressed in the *Magna Carta* of 1215. The emerging legal system reinvigorated the institution of serfdom in the 13th century by drawing an increasingly sharp distinction between freemen and villeins.

Many tensions existed within the system of government. Royal landownings and wealth stretched across England, and placed the king in a privileged position above even the most powerful of the noble elite. Successive kings, though, still needed more resources to pay for military campaigns, conduct building programmes or to reward their followers, and this meant exercising their feudal rights to interfere in the land-holdings of nobles.

This was contentious and a frequent issue of complaint, as there was a growing belief that land should be held by hereditary right, not through the favour of the king. Property and wealth became increasingly focused in the hands of a subset of the nobility, the great magnates, at the expense of the wider baronage, encouraging the breakdown of some aspects of local feudalism. As time went by, the Norman nobility intermarried with many of the great Anglo-Saxon families, and the links with the Duchy began to weaken. By the late 12th century, mobilising the English barons to fight on the continent was proving difficult, and John's attempts to do so ended in civil war. Civil strife re-emerged under Henry III, with the rebel barons in 1258–59 demanding widespread reforms, and an early version of Parliament was summoned in 1265 to represent the rebel interests.

Late Middle Ages (1272–1485)

On becoming king in 1272, Edward I reestablished royal power, overhauling the royal finances and appealing to the broader English elite by using Parliament to authorise the raising of new taxes and to hear petitions concerning abuses of local governance. This political balance collapsed under Edward II and savage civil wars broke out during the 1320s. Edward III restored order once more with the help of a majority of the nobility, exercising power through the exchequer, the common bench and the royal household.

This government was better organised and on a larger scale than ever before, and by the 14th century the king's formerly peripatetic chancery had to take up permanent residence in Westminster. Edward used Parliament even more than his predecessors to handle general administration, to legislate and to raise the necessary taxes to pay for the wars in France. The royal lands—and incomes from them—had diminished over the years, and increasingly frequent taxation was required to support royal initiatives. Edward held elaborate chivalric events in an effort to unite his supporters around the symbols of knighthood. The ideal of chivalry continued to develop throughout the 14th century, reflected in the growth of knightly orders (including the Order of the Garter), grand tournaments and round table events.

Society and government in England in the early 14th century were challenged by the Great Famine and the Black Death. The economic and demographic crisis created a sudden surplus of land, undermining the ability of landowners to exert their feudal rights and causing a collapse in incomes from rented

lands. Wages soared, as employers competed for a scarce workforce. Legislation was introduced to limit wages and to prevent the consumption of luxury goods by the lower classes, with prosecutions coming to take up most of the legal system's energy and time. A poll tax was introduced in 1377 that spread the costs of the war in France more widely across the whole population.

The tensions spilled over into violence in the summer of 1381 in the form of the Peasants' Revolt; a violent retribution followed, with as many as 7,000 alleged rebels executed. A new class of gentry emerged as a result of these changes, renting land from the major nobility to farm out at a profit. The legal system continued to expand during the 14th century, dealing with an ever-wider set of complex problems.

By the time that Richard II was deposed in 1399, the power of the major noble magnates had grown considerably; powerful rulers such as Henry IV would contain them, but during the minority of Henry VI they controlled the country. The magnates depended upon their income from rent and trade to allow them to maintain groups of paid, armed retainers, often sporting controversial livery, and buy support amongst the wider gentry; this system has been dubbed bastard feudalism. Their influence was exerted both through the House of Lords at Parliament and through the king's council. The gentry and wealthier townsmen exercised increasing influence through the House of Commons, opposing raising taxes to pay for the French wars. By the 1430s and 1440s the English government was in major financial difficulties, leading to the crisis of 1450 and a popular revolt under the leadership of Jack Cade. Law and order deteriorated, and the crown was unable to intervene

in the factional fighting between different nobles and their followers. The resulting Wars of the Roses saw a savage escalation of violence between the noble leaderships of both sides: captured enemies were executed and family lands attainted. By the time that Henry VII took the throne in 1485, England's governmental and social structures had been substantially weakened, with whole noble lines extinguished.

Women in society

Medieval England was a patriarchal society and the lives of women were heavily influenced by contemporary beliefs about gender and authority. However, the position of women varied considerably according to various factors, including their social class; whether they were unmarried, married, widowed or remarried; and in which part of the country they lived. Significant gender inequities persisted throughout the period, as women typically had more limited life-choices, access to employment and trade, and legal rights than men.

In Anglo-Saxon society, noblewomen enjoyed considerable rights and status, although the society was still firmly patriarchal. Some exercised power as abbesses, exerting widespread influence across the early English Church, although their wealth and authority diminished with the monastic reforms of the 9th century. Anglo-Saxon queens began to hold lands in their own right in the 10th century and their households contributed to the running of the kingdom. Although women could not lead military forces, in the absence of their husbands some noblewomen led the defence of manors and towns. Most Anglo-Saxon women, however, worked on the land as part of the agricultural community, or as brewers or

bakers. After the Norman invasion, the position of women in society changed. The rights and roles of women became more sharply defined, in part as a result of the development of the feudal system and the expansion of the English legal system; some women benefited from this, while others lost out. The rights of widows were formally laid down in law by the end of the 12th century, clarifying the right of free women to own property, but this did not necessarily prevent women from being forcibly remarried against their wishes.

The growth of governmental institutions under a succession of bishops reduced the role of queens and their households in formal government. Married or widowed noblewomen remained significant cultural and religious patrons and played an important part in political and military events, even if chroniclers were uncertain if this was appropriate behaviour. As in earlier centuries, most women worked in agriculture, but here roles became more clearly gendered, with ploughing and managing the fields defined as men's work, for example, and dairy production becoming dominated by women.

The years after the Black Death left many women widows; in the wider economy labour was in short supply and land was suddenly readily available. In rural areas peasant women could enjoy a better standard of living than ever before, but the amount of work being done by women may have increased. Many other women travelled to the towns and cities, to the point where they outnumbered men in some settlements. There they worked with their husbands, or in a limited number of occupations, including spinning, making clothes, victualling and as servants. Some women became full-time ale brewers, until they were pushed out of business by the male-dominated

beer industry in the 15th century. Higher status jobs and apprenticeships, however, remained closed to women. As in earlier times, noblewomen exercised power on their estates in their husbands' absence and again, if necessary, defended them in sieges and skirmishes. Wealthy widows who could successfully claim their rightful share of their late husband's property could live as powerful members of the community in their own right.

Identity

An English cultural identity first emerged from the interaction of the Germanic immigrants of the 5th and 6th centuries and the indigenous Romano-British inhabitants. Although early medieval chroniclers described the immigrants as Angles and Saxons, they came from a much wider area across Northern Europe, and represented a range of different ethnic groups. Over the 6th century, however, these different groups began to coalesce into stratified societies across England, roughly corresponding to the later Angle and Saxon kingdoms recorded by Bede in the 8th century. By the 9th century, the term the *Angelcynn* was being officially used to refer to a single English people, and promoted for propaganda purposes by chroniclers and kings to inspire resistance to the Danish invasions.

The Normans and French who arrived after the conquest saw themselves as different from the English. They had close family and economic links to the Duchy of Normandy, spoke Norman French and had their own distinctive culture. For many years, to be English was to be associated with military failure and serfdom. During the 12th century, the divisions between the English and Normans began to dissolve as a result of

intermarriage and cohabitation. By the end of the 12th century, and possibly as early as the 1150, contemporary commentators believed the two peoples to be blending, and the loss of the Duchy in 1204 reinforced this trend. The resulting society still prized wider French cultural values, however, and French remained the language of the court, business and international affairs, even if Parisians mocked the English for their poor pronunciation. By the 14th century, however, French was increasingly having to be formally taught, rather than being learnt naturally in the home, although the aristocracy would typically spend many years of their lives in France and remained entirely comfortable working in French.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the English began to consider themselves superior to the Welsh, Scots and Bretons. The English perceived themselves as civilised, economically prosperous and properly Christian, while the Celtic fringe was considered lazy, barbarous and backward. Following the invasion of Ireland in the late 12th century, similar feelings were expressed about the Irish, with the distinctions clarified and reinforced in 14th-century English legislation. The English also felt strongly about the foreign traders who lived in the special enclaves in London in the Late Middle Ages; the position of the Jews is described below, but Italian and Baltic traders were also regarded as aliens and were frequently the targets of violence during economic downturns. Even within England, different identities abounded, each with their own sense of status and importance. Regional identities could be important – men and women from Yorkshire, for example, had a clear identity within English society, and professional groups with a distinct identity, such as lawyers, engaged in open fighting with others in cities such as London.

Jews

The Jewish community played an important role in England throughout much of the period. The first Jews arrived in England in the aftermath of the Norman invasion, when William the Conqueror brought over wealthy members of the Rouen community in Normandy to settle in London. The Jewish community expanded out across England and provided essential money-lending and banking services that were otherwise banned by the usury laws. During the 12th century, the Jewish financial community grew richer still, operating under royal protection and providing the king with a source of ready credit.

All major towns had Jewish centres, and even the smaller towns saw visits by travelling Jewish merchants. Towards the end of Henry II's reign, however, the king ceased to borrow from the Jewish community and instead turned to extracting money from them through arbitrary taxation and fines. The Jews became vilified and accusations were made that they conducted ritual child murder, encouraging the pogroms carried out against Jewish communities in the reign of Richard I.

After an initially peaceful start to John's reign, the king again began to extort money from the Jewish community and, with the breakdown in order in 1215, the Jews were subject to fresh attacks. Henry III restored some protection and Jewish money-lending began to recover. Despite this, the Jewish community became increasingly impoverished and was finally expelled from England in 1290 by Edward I, being replaced by foreign merchants.

Religion

Rise of Christianity

Christianity had been the official imperial religion of the Roman Empire, and the first churches were built in England in the second half of the 4th century, overseen by a hierarchy of bishops and priests. Many existing pagan shrines were converted to Christian use and few pagan sites still operated by the 5th century. The collapse of the Roman system in the late 5th century, however, brought about the end of formal Christian religion in the east of England, and the new Germanic immigrants arrived with their own polytheistic gods, including Woden, Thunor and Tiw, still reflected in various English place names. Despite the resurgence of paganism in England, Christian communities still survived in more western areas such as Gloucestershire and Somerset.

The movement towards Christianity began again in the late 6th and 7th centuries, helped by the conversion of the Franks in Northern France, who carried considerable influence in England. Pope Gregory I sent a team of missionaries to convert King Æthelberht of Kent and his household, starting the process of converting Kent. Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury and started to build new churches across the South-East, reusing existing pagan shrines. Oswald and Oswiu, kings of Northumbria, were converted in the 630s and 640s, and the wave of change carried on through the middle of the 7th century across the kingdoms of Mercia, the South Saxons and the Isle of Wight. The process was largely complete by the end of the 7th century, but left a confusing

and disparate array of local practices and religious ceremonies. This new Christianity reflected the existing military culture of the Anglo-Saxons: as kings began to convert in the 6th and 7th centuries, conversion began to be used as a justification for war against the remaining pagan kingdoms, for example, while Christian saints were imbued with martial properties.

The Viking invasions of the 8th and 9th centuries reintroduced paganism to North-East England, leading in turn to another wave of conversion. Indigenous Scandinavian beliefs were very similar to other Germanic groups, with a pantheon of gods including Odin, Thor and Ullr, combined with a belief in a final, apocalyptic battle called Ragnarok. The Norse settlers in England were converted relatively quickly, assimilating their beliefs into Christianity in the decades following the occupation of York, which the Archbishop had survived. The process was largely complete by the early 10th century and enabled England's leading Churchmen to negotiate with the warlords. As the Norse in mainland Scandinavia started to convert, many mainland rulers recruited missionaries from England to assist in the process.

Religious institutions

With the conversion of much of England in the 6th and 7th centuries, there was an explosion of local church building. English monasteries formed the main basis for the church, however, and were often sponsored by local rulers, taking various forms, including mixed communities headed by abbesses, bishop-led communities of monks, and others formed around married priests and their families. Cathedrals were constructed, staffed either with secular canons in the

European tradition or, uniquely to England, chapters of monks. These institutions were badly affected in the 9th century by Viking raids and predatory annexations by the nobility. By the start of the 10th century, monastic lands, financial resources and the quality of monasteries' religious work had been much diminished. Reforms followed under the kings of Wessex who promoted the Benedictine rule then popular on the Continent. A reformed network of around 40 monastic institutions across the south and east of England, under the protection of the king, helped re-establish royal control over the reconquered Danelaw.

The 1066 Norman conquest brought a new set of Norman and French churchmen to power; some adopted and embraced aspects of the former Anglo-Saxon religious system, while others introduced practices from Normandy. Extensive English lands were granted to monasteries in Normandy, allowing them to create daughter priories and monastic cells across the kingdom. The monasteries were brought firmly into the web of feudal relations, with their holding of land linked to the provision of military support to the crown. The Normans adopted the Anglo-Saxon model of monastic cathedral communities, and within seventy years the majority of English cathedrals were controlled by monks; every English cathedral, however, was rebuilt to some extent by the new rulers. England's bishops remained powerful temporal figures, and in the early 12th-century raised armies against Scottish invaders and built up extensive holdings of castles across the country.

New orders began to be introduced into England. As ties to Normandy waned, the French Cluniac order became fashionable and their houses were introduced in England. The

Augustinians spread quickly from the beginning of the 12th century onwards, while later in the century the Cistercians reached England, creating houses with a more austere interpretation of the monastic rules and building the great abbeys of Rievaulx and Fountains. By 1215, there were over 600 monastic communities in England, but new endowments slowed during the 13th century, creating long-term financial problems for many institutions. The Dominican and Franciscan friars arrived in England during the 1220s, establishing 150 friaries by the end of the 13th century; these mendicant orders rapidly became popular, particularly in towns, and heavily influenced local preaching. The religious military orders that became popular across Europe from the 12th century onwards acquired possessions in England, including the Templars, Teutons and Hospitallers.

Church, state and heresy

The Church had a close relationship with the English state throughout the Middle Ages. The bishops and major monastic leaders played an important part in national government, having key roles on the king's council. Bishops often oversaw towns and cities, managing local taxation and government. This frequently became untenable with the Viking incursions of the 9th century, and in locations such as Worcester the local bishops came to new accommodations with the local *ealdormen*, exchanging some authority and revenue for assistance in defence. The early English church was racked with disagreement on doctrine, which was addressed by the Synod of Whitby in 664; some issues were resolved, but arguments between the archbishops of Canterbury and York as

to which had primacy across Britain began shortly afterwards and continued throughout most of the medieval period.

William the Conqueror acquired the support of the Church for the invasion of England by promising ecclesiastical reform. William promoted celibacy amongst the clergy and gave ecclesiastical courts more power, but also reduced the Church's direct links to Rome and made it more accountable to the king. Tensions arose between these practices and the reforming movement of Pope Gregory VII, which advocated greater autonomy from royal authority for the clergy, condemned the practice of simony and promoted greater influence for the papacy in church matters. Despite the bishops continuing to play a major part in royal government, tensions emerged between the kings of England and key leaders within the English Church. Kings and archbishops clashed over rights of appointment and religious policy, and successive archbishops including Anselm, Theobald of Bec, Thomas Becket and Stephen Langton were variously forced into exile, arrested by royal knights or even killed. By the early 13th century, however, the church had largely won its argument for independence, answering almost entirely to Rome.

In the 1380s, several challenges emerged to the traditional teachings of the Church, resulting from the teachings of John Wycliffe, a member of Oxford University. Wycliffe argued that scripture was the best guide to understanding God's intentions, and that the superficial nature of the liturgy, combined with the abuses of wealth within the Church and the role of senior churchmen in government, distracted from that study. A loose movement that included many members of the

gentry pursued these ideas after Wycliffe's death in 1384 and attempted to pass a Parliamentary bill in 1395: the movement was rapidly condemned by the authorities and was termed "Lollardy". The English bishops were charged to control and counter this trend, disrupting Lollard preachers and to enforcing the teaching of suitable sermons in local churches. By the early 15th century, combating Lollard teachings had become a key political issue, championed by Henry IV and his Lancastrian followers, who used the powers of both the church and state to combat the heresy.

Pilgrimages and Crusades

Pilgrimages were a popular religious practice throughout the Middle Ages in England, with the tradition dating back to the Roman period. Typically pilgrims would travel short distances to a shrine or a particular church, either to do penance for a perceived sin, or to seek relief from an illness or other condition. Some pilgrims travelled further, either to more distant sites within Britain or, in a few cases, onto the continent.

During the Anglo-Saxon period, many shrines were built on former pagan sites which became popular pilgrimage destinations, while other pilgrims visited prominent monasteries and sites of learning. Senior nobles or kings would travel to Rome, which was a popular destination from the 7th century onwards; sometimes these trips were a form of convenient political exile. Under the Normans, religious institutions with important shrines, such as Glastonbury, Canterbury and Winchester, promoted themselves as pilgrimage destinations, maximising the value of the historic

miracles associated with the sites. Accumulating relics became an important task for ambitious institutions, as these were believed to hold curative powers and lent status to the site. Indeed, by the 12th century reports of posthumous miracles by local saints were becoming increasingly common in England, adding to the attractiveness of pilgrimages to prominent relics.

Participation in the Crusades was also seen as a form of pilgrimage, and indeed the same Latin word, *peregrinatio*, was sometimes applied to both activities. While English participation in the First Crusade between 1095 and 1099 was limited, England played a prominent part in the Second, Third and Fifth Crusades over the next two centuries, with many crusaders leaving for the Levant during the intervening years. The idea of undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was not new in England, however, as the idea of religiously justified warfare went back to Anglo-Saxon times. Many of those who took up the Cross to go on a Crusade never actually left, often because the individual lacked sufficient funds to undertake the journey. Raising funds to travel typically involved crusaders selling or mortgaging their lands and possessions, which affected their families and, at times, considerably affected the economy as a whole.

Economy and technology

Geography

England had a diverse geography in the medieval period, from the Fenlands of East Anglia or the heavily wooded Weald, through to the upland moors of Yorkshire. Despite this,

medieval England broadly formed two zones, roughly divided by the rivers Exe and Tees: the south and east of England had lighter, richer soils, able to support both arable and pastoral agriculture, while the poorer soils and colder climate of the north and west produced a predominantly pastoral economy. Slightly more land was covered by trees than in the 20th century, and bears, beavers and wolves lived wild in England, bears being hunted to extinction by the 11th century and beavers by the 12th. Of the 10,000 miles of roads that had been built by the Romans, many remained in use and four were of particular strategic importance—the Icknield Way, the Fosse Way, Ermine Street and Watling Street—which criss-crossed the entire country. The road system was adequate for the needs of the period, although it was significantly cheaper to transport goods by water. The major river networks formed key transport routes, while many English towns formed navigable inland ports.

For much of the Middle Ages, England's climate differed from that in the 21st century. Between the 9th and 13th centuries England went through the Medieval Warm Period, a prolonged period of warmer temperatures; in the early 13th century, for example, summers were around 1 °C warmer than today and the climate was slightly drier. These warmer temperatures allowed poorer land to be brought into cultivation and for grapevines to be cultivated relatively far north. The Warm Period was followed by several centuries of much cooler temperatures, termed the Little Ice Age; by the 14th century spring temperatures had dropped considerably, reaching their coldest in the 1340s and 1350s. This cold end to the Middle Ages significantly affected English agriculture and living conditions.

Even at the start of the Middle Ages the English landscape had been shaped by human occupation over many centuries. Much woodland was new, the result of fields being reclaimed by brush after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Human intervention had established wood pastures, an ancient system for managing woods and animals, and coppicing, a more intensive approach to managing woodlands. Other agricultural lands included arable fields and pastorage, while in some parts of the country, such as the South-West, waste moorland remained testament to earlier over-farming in the Bronze Age. England's environment continued to be shaped throughout the period, through the building of dykes to drain marshes, tree clearance and the large-scale extraction of peat. Managed parks for hunting game, including deer and boars, were built as status symbols by the nobility from the 12th century onwards, but earlier versions of parks, such as hays, may have originated as early as the 7th century.

Economy and demographics

The English economy was fundamentally agricultural, depending on growing crops such as wheat, barley and oats on an open field system, and husbanding sheep, cattle and pigs. In the late Anglo-Saxon period many peasants moved away from living in isolated hamlets and instead came together to form larger villages engaged in arable cultivation. Agricultural land became typically organised around manors, and was divided between some fields that the landowner would manage directly, called demesne land, and the majority of the fields that would be cultivated by local peasants. These peasants would pay rent to the landowner either through agricultural labour on the lord's demesne fields or through rent in the form

of cash and produce. By the 11th century, a market economy was flourishing across much of England, while the eastern and southern towns were heavily involved in international trade. Around 6,000 watermills were built to grind flour, freeing up labour for other more productive agricultural tasks.

Although the Norman invasion caused some damage as soldiers looted the countryside and land was confiscated for castle building, the English economy was not greatly affected. Taxes were increased, however, and the Normans established extensive forests that were exploited for their natural resources and protected by royal laws. The next two centuries saw huge growth in the English economy, driven in part by the increase in the population from around 1.5 million in 1086 to between 4 and 5 million in 1300. More land, much of it at the expense of the royal forests, was brought into production to feed the growing population and to produce wool for export to Europe. Many hundreds of new towns, some of them planned communities, were built across England, supporting the creation of guilds, charter fairs and other medieval institutions which governed the growing trade. Jewish financiers played a significant role in funding the growing economy, along with the new Cistercian and Augustinian religious orders that emerged as major players in the wool trade of the north. Mining increased in England, with a silver boom in the 12th century helping to fuel the expansion of the money supply.

Economic growth began to falter at the end of the 13th century, owing to a combination of overpopulation, land shortages and depleted soils. The Great Famine shook the English economy severely and population growth ceased; the first outbreak of the Black Death in 1348 then killed around

half the English population. The agricultural sector shrank rapidly, with higher wages, lower prices and diminishing profits leading to the final demise of the old demesne system and the advent of the modern farming system centring on the charging of cash rents for lands. As returns on land fell, many estates, and in some cases entire settlements, were simply abandoned, and nearly 1,500 villages were deserted during this period. A new class of gentry emerged who rented farms from the major nobility. Unsuccessful government attempts were made to regulate wages and consumption, but these largely collapsed in the decades following the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The English cloth industry grew considerably at the start of the 15th century, and a new class of international English merchant emerged, typically based in London or the South-West, prospering at the expense of the older, shrinking economies of the eastern towns. These new trading systems brought about the end of many of the international fairs and the rise of the chartered company. Fishing in the North Sea expanded into deeper waters, backed by commercial investment from major merchants. Between 1440 and 1480, however, Europe entered a recession and England suffered the Great Slump: trade collapsed, driving down agricultural prices, rents and ultimately the acceptable levels of royal taxation. The resulting tensions and discontent played an important part in Jack Cade's popular uprising in 1450 and the subsequent Wars of the Roses. By the end of Middle Ages the economy had begun to recover and considerable improvements were being made in metalworking and shipbuilding that would shape the Early Modern economy.

Technology and science

Technology and science in England advanced considerably during the Middle Ages, driven in part by the Greek and Islamic thinking that reached England from the 12th century onwards. Many advances were made in scientific ideas, including the introduction of Arabic numerals and a sequence of improvements in the units used for measuring time. Clocks were first built in England in the late 13th century, and the first mechanical clocks were certainly being installed in cathedrals and abbeys by the 1320s. Astrology, magic and palm reading were also considered important forms of knowledge in medieval England, although some doubted their reliability.

The period produced some influential English scholars. Roger Bacon, a philosopher and Franciscan friar, produced works on natural philosophy, astronomy and alchemy; his work set out the theoretical basis for future experimentation in the natural sciences. William of Ockham helped to fuse Latin, Greek and Islamic writing into a general theory of logic; "Ockham's Razor" was one of his oft-cited conclusions. English scholars since the time of Bede had believed the world was probably round, but Johannes de Sacrobosco estimated the circumference of the earth in the 13th century. Despite the limitations of medieval medicine, Gilbertus Anglicus published the *Compendium Medicinae*, one of the longest medical works ever written in Latin. Prominent historical and science texts began to be translated into English for the first time in the second half of the 14th century, including the *Polychronicon* and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. The universities of Oxford and

Cambridge were established during the 11th and 12th centuries, drawing on the model of the University of Paris.

Technological advances proceeded in a range of areas. Watermills to grind grain had existed during most of the Anglo-Saxon period, using horizontal mill designs; from the 12th century on many more were built, eliminating the use of hand mills, with the older horizontal mills gradually supplanted by a new vertical mill design.

Windmills began to be built in the late 12th century and slowly became more common. Water-powered fulling mills and powered hammers first appeared in the 12th century; water power was harnessed to assist in smelting by the 14th century, with the first blast furnace opening in 1496. New mining methods were developed and horse-powered pumps were installed in English mines by the end of the Middle Ages. The introduction of hopped beer transformed the brewing industry in the 14th century, and new techniques were invented to better preserve fish.

Glazed pottery became widespread in the 12th and 13th centuries, with stoneware pots largely replacing wooden plates and bowls by the 15th century. William Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde began using the printing press during the late 15th century.

Transport links were also improved; many road bridges were either erected or rebuilt in stone during the long economic boom of the 12th and 13th centuries. England's maritime trade benefited from the introduction of cog ships, and many docks were improved and fitted with cranes for the first time.

Warfare

Armies

Warfare was endemic in early Anglo-Saxon England, and major conflicts still occurred approximately every generation in the later period. Groups of well-armed noblemen and their households formed the heart of these armies, supported by larger numbers of temporary troops levied from across the kingdom, called the fyrd. By the 9th century, armies of 20,000 men could be called up for campaigns, with another 28,000 men available to guard urban defences. The most common weapon was the spear, with swords used by the wealthier nobles; cavalry was probably less common than in wider Europe, but some Anglo-Saxons did fight from horseback. The Viking attacks on England in the 9th century led to developments in tactics, including the use of shield walls in battle, and the Scandinavian seizure of power in the 11th century introduced housecarls, a form of elite household soldier who protected the king.

Anglo-Norman warfare was characterised by attritional military campaigns, in which commanders tried to raid enemy lands and seize castles in order to allow them to take control of their adversaries' territory, ultimately winning slow but strategic victories. Pitched battles were occasionally fought between armies but these were considered risky engagements and usually avoided by prudent commanders. The armies of the period comprised bodies of mounted, armoured knights, supported by infantry. Crossbowmen become more numerous in the 12th century, alongside the older shortbow. At the heart

of these armies was the *familia regis*, the permanent military household of the king, which was supported in war by feudal levies, drawn up by local nobles for a limited period of service during a campaign. Mercenaries were increasingly employed, driving up the cost of warfare considerably, and adequate supplies of ready cash became essential for the success of campaigns.

In the late 13th century Edward I expanded the *familia regis* to become a small standing army, forming the core of much larger armies up to 28,700 strong, largely comprising foot soldiers, for campaigns in Scotland and France. By the time of Edward III, armies were smaller in size, but the troops were typically better equipped and uniformed, and the archers carried the longbow, a potentially devastating weapon. Cannons were first used by English forces at battles such as Crécy in 1346. Soldiers began to be contracted for specific campaigns, a practice which may have hastened the development of the armies of retainers that grew up under bastard feudalism. By the late 15th century, however, English armies were somewhat backward by wider European standards; the Wars of the Roses were fought by inexperienced soldiers, often with outdated weapons, allowing the European forces which intervened in the conflict to have a decisive effect on the outcomes of battles.

Navies

The first references to an English navy occur in 851, when chroniclers described Wessex ships defeating a Viking fleet. These early fleets were limited in size but grew in size in the 10th century, allowing the power of Wessex to be projected across the Irish Sea and the English Channel; Cnut's fleet had

as many as 40 vessels, while Edward the Confessor could muster 80 ships. Some ships were manned by sailors called lithesmen and bustsecarls, probably drawn from the coastal towns, while other vessels were mobilised as part of a national levy and manned by their regular crews. Naval forces played an important role during the rest of the Middle Ages, enabling the transportation of troops and supplies, raids into hostile territory and attacks on enemy fleets.

English naval power became particularly important after the loss of Normandy in 1204, which turned the English Channel from a friendly transit route into a contested and critical border region. English fleets in the 13th and 14th centuries typically comprised specialist vessels, such as galleys and large transport ships, and pressed merchant vessels conscripted into action; the latter increasingly included cogs, a new form of sailing ship. Battles might be fought when one fleet found another at anchor, such as the English victory at Sluys in 1340, or in more open waters, as off the coast of Winchelsea in 1350; raiding campaigns, such as the French attacks on the south of England between 1338 and 1339, could cause devastation from which some towns never fully recovered.

Fortifications

Many of the fortifications built by the Romans in England survived into the Middle Ages, including the walls surrounding their military forts and cities. These defences were often reused during the unstable post-Roman period. The Anglo-Saxon kings undertook significant planned urban expansion in the 8th and 9th centuries, creating *burhs*, often protected with

earth and wood ramparts. *Burh* walls sometimes utilised older Roman fortifications, both for practical reasons and to bolster their owners' reputations through the symbolism of former Roman power.

Although a small number of castles had been built in England during the 1050s, after the conquest the Normans began to build timber motte and bailey and ringwork castles in large numbers to control their newly occupied territories. During the 12th century the Normans began to build more castles in stone, with characteristic square keeps that supported both military and political functions. Royal castles were used to control key towns and forests, whilst baronial castles were used by the Norman lords to control their widespread estates; a feudal system called the castle-guard was sometimes used to provide garrisons. Castles and sieges continued to grow in military sophistication during the 12th century, and in the 13th century new defensive town walls were constructed across England.

By the 14th century, castles were combining defences with luxurious, sophisticated living arrangements and landscaped gardens and parks. Early gunpowder weapons were used to defend castles by the end of the 14th century and gunports became an essential feature for a fashionable castle. The economics of maintaining castles meant that many were left to decline or abandoned; in contrast, a small number of castles were developed by the very wealthy into palaces that hosted lavish feasts and celebrations amid elaborate architecture. Smaller defensible structures called tower houses emerged in the north of England to protect against the Scottish threat. By the late medieval period, town walls were increasingly less

military in character and more often expressions of civic pride or part of urban governance: many grand gatehouses were built in the 14th and 15th centuries for these purposes.

Arts

Art

Medieval England produced art in the form of paintings, carvings, books, fabrics and many functional but beautiful objects. A wide range of materials was used, including gold, glass and ivory, the art usually drawing overt attention to the materials utilised in the designs.

Anglo-Saxon artists created carved ivories, illuminated manuscripts, embroidered cloths, crosses and stone sculpture, although relatively few of these have survived to the modern period. They produced a wide range of metalwork, frequently using gold and garnets, with brooches, buckles, sword hilts and drinking horns particularly favoured designs. Early designs, such as those found at the Sutton Hoo burial, used a zoomorphic style, heavily influenced by German fashions, in which animal shapes were distorted into flowing shapes and positioned alongside geometric patterns.

From the 7th century onwards more naturalistic designs became popular, showing a plasticity of form and incorporating both animals and people into the designs. In the 10th century, Carolingian styles, inspired by Classical imagery, began to enter from the continent, becoming widely used in the reformed Benedictine monasteries across the south and east of England.

The Norman conquest introduced northern French artistic styles, particular in illuminated manuscripts and murals, and reduced the demand for carvings. In other artistic areas, including embroidery, the Anglo-Saxon influence remained evident into the 12th century, and the famous Bayeux Tapestry is an example of older styles being reemployed under the new regime. Stained glass became a distinctive form of English art during this later medieval period, although the coloured glass for these works was almost entirely imported from Europe. Little early stained glass in England has survived, but it typically had both an ornamental and educational function, while later works also commemorated the sponsors of the windows into the designs. English tapestry making and embroidery in the early 14th century were of an especially high quality; works produced by nuns and London professionals were exported across Europe, becoming known as the *opus anglicanum*. English illuminated books, such as the Queen Mary Psalter, were also famous in this period, featuring rich decoration, a combination of grotesque and natural figures and rich colours. The quality of illuminated art in England declined significantly in the face of competition from Flanders in the 14th century, and later English illuminated medieval pieces generally imitated Flemish styles.

Literature, drama and music

The Anglo-Saxons produced extensive poetry in Old English, some of which was written down as early as the 9th century, although most surviving poems were compiled in the 10th and early 11th century. *Beowulf*, probably written between 650 and 750, is typical of these poems, portraying a vivid, heroic tale, ending with the protagonist's death at the hands of a dragon,

but still showing signs of the new Christian influences in England. Old English was also used for academic and courtly writing from the 9th century onwards, including translations of popular foreign works, including *The Pastoral Care*.

Poetry and stories written in French were popular after the Norman conquest, and by the 12th century some works on English history began to be produced in French verse. Romantic poems about tournaments and courtly love became popular in Paris and this fashion spread into England in the form of *lays*; stories about the court of King Arthur were also fashionable, due in part to the interest of Henry II. English continued to be used on a modest scale to write local religious works and some poems in the north of England, but most major works were produced in Latin or French. In the reign of Richard II there was an upsurge in the use of Middle English in poetry, sometimes termed "Ricardian poetry", although the works still emulated French fashions. The work of Geoffrey Chaucer from the 1370s onwards, however, culminating in the influential *Canterbury Tales*, was uniquely English in style. Major pieces of courtly poetry continued to be produced into the 15th century by Chaucher's disciples, and Thomas Malory compiled the older Arthurian tales to produce *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

Music and singing were important in England during the medieval period, being used in religious ceremonies, court occasions and to accompany theatrical works. Singing techniques called gymel were introduced in England in the 13th century, accompanied by instruments such as the guitar, harp, pipes and organ. Henry IV sponsored an extensive range of music in England, while his son Henry V brought back many

influences from occupied France. Carols became an important form of music in the 15th century; originally these had been a song sung during a dance with a prominent refrain — the 15th century form lost the dancing and introduced strong religious overtones. Ballads were also popular from the late 14th century onwards, including the *Ballad of Chevy Chase* and others describing the activities of Robin Hood. Miracle plays were performed to communicate the Bible in various locations. By the late 14th century, these had been extended into vernacular mystery plays which performed annually over several days, broken up into various cycles of plays; a handful have survived into the 21st century. Guilds competed to produce the best plays in each town and performances were often an expression of civic identity.

Architecture

In the century after the collapse of the Romano-British economy, very few substantial buildings were constructed and many villas and towns were abandoned. New long- and round-houses were constructed in some settlements, while in others timber buildings were built imitating the older Roman styles. The Germanic immigrants constructed small rectangular buildings from wood, and occasionally grander halls. However, the conversion to Christianity in the 6th and 7th centuries reintroduced Italian and French masons, and these craftsmen built stone churches, low in height, following a narrow, rectangular plan, plastered inside and fitted with glass and colourful vestments. This Romanesque style developed throughout the period, featuring characteristic circular arches. By the 10th and 11th centuries, much larger churches and monastery buildings were being built, featuring square and

circular towers after the contemporary European fashion. The palaces constructed for the nobility centred on great timber halls, while manor houses began to appear in rural areas.

The Normans brought with them architectural styles from their own duchy, where austere stone churches were preferred. Under the early Norman kings this style was adapted to produce large, plain cathedrals with ribbed vaulting. During the 12th century the Anglo-Norman style became richer and more ornate, with pointed arches derived from French architecture replacing the curved Romanesque designs; this style is termed Early English Gothic and continued, with variation, throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. In the early 14th century the Perpendicular Gothic style was created in England, with an emphasis on verticality, immense windows and soaring arcades. Fine timber roofs in a variety of styles, but in particular the hammerbeam, were built in many English buildings. In the 15th century the architectural focus turned away from cathedrals and monasteries in favour of parish churches, often decorated with richly carved woodwork; in turn, these churches influenced the design of new chantry chapels for existing cathedrals.

Meanwhile, domestic architecture had continued to develop, with the Normans, having first occupied the older Anglo-Saxon dwellings, rapidly beginning to build larger buildings in stone and timber. The elite preferred houses with large, ground-floor halls but the less wealthy constructed simpler houses with the halls on the first floor; master and servants frequently lived in the same spaces. Wealthier town-houses were also built using stone, and incorporated business and domestic arrangements into a single functional design. By the 14th century grander

houses and castles were sophisticated affairs: expensively tiled, often featuring murals and glass windows, these buildings were often designed as a set of apartments to allow greater privacy. Fashionable brick began to be used in some parts of the country, copying French tastes. Architecture that emulated the older defensive designs remained popular. Less is known about the houses of peasants during this period, although many peasants appear to have lived in relatively substantial, timber-framed long-houses; the quality of these houses improved in the prosperous years following the Black Death, often being built by professional craftsmen.

Legacy

Historiography

The first history of medieval England was written by Bede in the 8th century; many more accounts of contemporary and ancient history followed, usually termed chronicles. In the 16th century, the first academic histories began to be written, typically drawing primarily on the chroniclers and interpreting them in the light of current political concerns. Edward Gibbon's 18th-century writings were influential, presenting the medieval period as a dark age between the glories of Rome and the rebirth of civilisation in the Early Modern period. Late Victorian historians continued to use the chroniclers as sources, but also deployed documents such as *Domesday Book* and *Magna Carta*, alongside newly discovered financial, legal and commercial records. They produced a progressive account of political and economic development in England. The growth of the British Empire spurred interest in the various periods of

English hegemony during the Middle Ages, including the Angevin Empire and the Hundred Years' War.

By the 1930s, older historical analyses were challenged by a range of neo-positivist, Marxist and econometric approaches, supported by a widening body of documentary, archaeological and scientific evidence. Marxist and Neo-Marxist analyses continued to be popular in the post-war years, producing seminal works on economic issues and social protests. Post-modern analysis became influential in the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on identity, gender, interpretation and culture. Many studies focused on particular regions or groups, drawing on new records and new scientific approaches, including landscape and environmental archaeology. Fresh archaeological finds, such as the Staffordshire Hoard, continue to challenge previous interpretations, and historical studies of England in the Middle Ages have never been so diverse as in the early 21st century.

Popular representations

The period has also been used in a wide range of popular culture. William Shakespeare's plays on the lives of the medieval kings have proved to have had long lasting appeal, heavily influencing both popular interpretations and histories of figures such as King John and Henry V. Other playwrights have since taken key medieval events, such as the death of Thomas Becket, and used them to draw out contemporary themes and issues. The medieval mystery plays continue to be enacted in key English towns and cities. Film-makers have drawn extensively on the medieval period, often taking themes from Shakespeare or the Robin Hood ballads for inspiration.

Historical fiction set in England during the Middle Ages remains persistently popular, with the 1980s and 1990s seeing a particular growth of historical detective fiction. The period has also inspired fantasy writers, including J. R. R. Tolkien's stories of Middle-earth. English medieval music was revived from the 1950s, with choral and musical groups attempting to authentically reproduce the original sounds. Medieval living history events were first held during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the period has inspired a considerable community of historical re-enactors, part of England's growing heritage industry.

Chapter 9

Scotland in the Late Middle Ages

Scotland in the Late Middle Ages, between the deaths of Alexander III in 1286 and James IV in 1513, established its independence from England under figures including William Wallace in the late 13th century and Robert Bruce in the 14th century. In the 15th century under the Stewart Dynasty, despite a turbulent political history, the Crown gained greater political control at the expense of independent lords and regained most of its lost territory to approximately the modern borders of the country. However, the Auld Alliance with France led to the heavy defeat of a Scottish army at the Battle of Flodden in 1513 and the death of the king James IV, which would be followed by a long minority and a period of political instability.

The economy of Scotland developed slowly in this period and a population of perhaps a little under a million by the middle of the 14th century began to decline after the arrival of the Black Death, falling to perhaps half a million by the beginning of the 16th century.

Different social systems and cultures developed in the lowland and highland regions of the country as Gaelic remained the most common language north of the Tay and Middle Scots dominated in the south, where it became the language of the ruling elite, government and a new national literature. There were significant changes in religion which saw mendicant friars and new devotions expand, particularly in the developing burghs.

By the end of the period Scotland had adopted many of the major tenets of the European Renaissance in art, architecture and literature and produced a developed educational system. This period has been seen one in which a clear national identity emerged in Scotland, as well as significant distinctions between different regions of the country which would be particularly significant in the period of the Reformation.

Political history

Wars of Independence 1286–1371

John:

The death of king Alexander III in 1286, and the subsequent death of his granddaughter and heir Margaret (called "the Maid of Norway") in 1290, left 14 rivals for succession.

To prevent civil war the Scottish magnates asked Edward I of England to arbitrate. He extracted legal recognition that the realm of Scotland was held as a feudal dependency to the throne of England before choosing John Balliol, the man with the strongest claim, who became king as John I (30 November 1292). Robert Bruce of Annandale, the next strongest claimant, accepted this outcome with reluctance. Over the next few years Edward I used the concessions he had gained to systematically undermine both the authority of King John and the independence of Scotland. In 1295 John, on the urgings of his chief councillors, entered into an alliance with France, the beginning of the Auld Alliance.

In 1296 Edward invaded Scotland, deposing King John. The following year William Wallace and Andrew Murrey raised forces to resist the occupation and under their joint leadership an English army was defeated at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

Murrey died of wounds after the battle and for a short time Wallace ruled Scotland in the name of John Balliol as Guardian of the realm. Edward came north in person and defeated Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk. Wallace escaped but probably resigned as Guardian of Scotland. In 1305 he fell into the hands of the English, who executed him for treason despite the fact that he owed no allegiance to England.

Robert I

Rivals John Comyn and Robert the Bruce, grandson of the claimant Robert Bruce of Annandale, were appointed as joint guardians in Wallace's place. On 10 February 1306, Bruce participated in the murder of Comyn, at Greyfriars Kirk in Dumfries. Less than seven weeks later, on 25 March Bruce was crowned as king Robert I at Scone. However, Edward's forces overran the country after defeating Bruce's small army at the Battle of Methven.

Despite the excommunication of Bruce and his followers by Pope Clement V, his support grew; and by 1314, with the help of leading nobles such as Sir James Douglas and the Earl of Moray, only the castles at Bothwell and Stirling remained under English control. Edward I had died in 1307 and his heir Edward II moved an army north to break the siege of Stirling Castle and reassert control. They were defeated by forces

under Robert I at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, securing *de facto* independence.

In 1320 the Declaration of Arbroath, a remonstrance to the Pope from the nobles of Scotland, helped to convince Pope John XXII to overturn the earlier excommunication and nullify the various acts of submission by Scottish kings to English ones so that Scotland's sovereignty could be recognised by the major European dynasties.

The Declaration has also been seen as one of the most important documents in the development of a Scottish national identity. Robert's brother Edward Bruce carried out a series of campaigns against English forces in Ireland and was declared High King. The campaigns in Ireland, although ultimately unsuccessful, opened the prospect of what has been characterised as "Pan-Gaelic Greater Scotia" under the Bruce dynasty. Robert's forces carried out a series of raids of Northern England, defeating an English army in 1327 at the Battle of Stanhope Park. Robert's victories contributed to the deposition of Edward II and Robert was able to take advantage of the minority of his son Edward III to secure the Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton, signed in May 1328, which recognised Scotland as an independent kingdom, and Bruce as its king.

David II

Robert I died in 1329, leaving his five-year-old son to reign as David II. During his minority, the country was ruled by a series of governors, two of whom died as a result of a renewed invasion by English forces from 1332. This was on the pretext

of restoring Edward Balliol, son of John Balliol, to the Scottish throne, thus starting the Second War of Independence. Despite victories at Dupplin Moor (1332) and Halidon Hill (1333), in the face of tough Scottish resistance led by Sir Andrew Murray, the son of Wallace's comrade in arms, successive attempts to secure Balliol on the throne failed. Edward III lost interest in the fate of his protege after the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War with France. In 1341 David was able to return from temporary exile in France. In 1346 under the terms of the Auld Alliance, he invaded England in the interests of France, but was defeated and taken prisoner at the Battle of Neville's Cross on 17 October 1346 and would remain in England as a prisoner for 11 years. His cousin Robert Stewart ruled as guardian in his absence. Balliol finally resigned his claim to the throne to Edward in 1356, before retiring to Yorkshire, where he died in 1364.

Without swearing allegiance to Edward III, David was released for a ransom of 100,000 marks in 1357, but he was unable to pay, resulting in secret negotiations with the English and attempts to secure succession to the Scottish throne for an English king. Major issues were his marriages and the failure to produce an heir. His first wife, Joan, the sister of Edward III, left him for England sometime after his return and she died without children in 1362. His planned second marriage to Margaret, the widow of the knight Sir John Logie, resulted in a factional division that alienated nobles including Robert Steward. Eventually the king backed the queen's opponents and attempted to divorce her. She fled to the continent and appealed to the Pope for support. Before he could marry again David died, apparently unexpectedly, bringing the Bruce dynasty to an end.

Robert II, Robert III and James I

After the unexpected death of the childless David II, Robert Stewart, the first of the Stewart (later Stuart) monarchs, came to the throne in 1371. Despite his relatively venerable age of 55, his son, John, Earl of Carrick, grew impatient and assumed the reins of government as Lord Lieutenant. A border incursion into England led to the victory at Otterburn in 1388, but at the cost of the life of John's ally James Douglas, 2nd Earl of Douglas. This, along with Carrick having suffered a debilitating horse kick, led to a shift in power to his brother Robert Stewart, Earl of Fife, who now was appointed as Lieutenant in his place. When Robert II died in 1390 John took the regnal name Robert III, to avoid awkward questions over the exact status of the first King John, but power rested with his brother Robert, now Duke of Albany. After the suspicious death of his elder son, David, Duke of Rothesay in 1402, Robert, fearful for the safety of his younger son, James (the future James I), sent him to France in 1406. However, the English captured him en route and he spent the next 18 years as a prisoner held for ransom. As a result, after the death of Robert III later that year, regents ruled Scotland: first Albany and after his death in 1420 his son Murdoch, during whose term of office the country suffered considerable unrest.

When the Scots finally began the ransom payments in 1424, James, aged 32, returned with his English bride, Joan Beaufort, determined to assert this authority. He revoked grants from customs and of lands made during his captivity, undermining the position of those who had gained in his absence, particularly the Albany Stewarts. James had Murdoch and two of his sons tried and then executed with further

enforcement of his authority by more arrests and forfeiture of lands. In 1436 he attempted to regain one of the major border fortresses still in English hands at Roxburgh, but the siege ended in a humiliating defeat. He was murdered by discontented council member Robert Graham and his co-conspirators near the Blackfriars church, Perth in 1437.

James II

The assassination left the king's seven-year-old son to reign as James II. After the execution of a number of suspected conspirators, leadership fell to Archibald Douglas, 5th Earl of Douglas, as lieutenant-general of the realm. After his death in 1439, power was shared uneasily between the Douglas family, William, 1st Lord Crichton, Lord Chancellor of Scotland and Sir Alexander Livingston of Callendar. A conspiracy to break the power of the Douglas family led to the "Black Dinner" at Edinburgh Castle in 1440, which saw the judicial murder of the young William Douglas, 6th Earl of Douglas and his brother by Livingstone and Crichton. The main beneficiary was the victims' great uncle James Douglas, Earl of Avondale who became the 7th Earl of Douglas and emerged as the main power in the government.

In 1449 James II was declared to have reached his majority, but the Douglases consolidated their position and the king began a long struggle for power, leading to the murder of the 8th Earl of Douglas at Stirling Castle on 22 February 1452. This opened an intermittent civil war as James attempted to seize Douglas lands, punctuated by a series of humiliating reversals. Gradually James managed to win over the allies of the Douglases with offers of lands, titles and offices and the

Douglases' forces were finally defeated at the Battle of Arkinholm on 12 May 1455. Once independent, James II proved to be an active and interventionist king. He travelled the country dispensing justice and some of the unpopular policies of the following reign, such as the sale of pardons, may have originated in this period. Ambitious plans to take Orkney, Shetland and the Isle of Man came to nothing. His attempt to take Roxburgh from the English in 1460 succeeded, but at the cost of his life as he was killed by an exploding artillery piece.

James III

James II's son, aged nine or ten, became king as James III, and his widow Mary of Guelders acted as regent until her own death three years later. The Boyd family, led by Robert, Lord Boyd, emerged as the leading force in the government, making themselves unpopular through self-aggrandisement, with Lord Robert's son Thomas being made Earl of Arran and marrying the king's sister, Mary. While Robert and Thomas were out of the country in 1469 the king asserted his control, executing members of the Boyd family. His foreign policy included a rapprochement with England, with his eldest son, the future James IV, being betrothed to Cecily of York, the daughter of Edward IV of England, a change of policy that was immensely unpopular at home.

During the 1470s conflict developed between the king and his brothers, Alexander, Duke of Albany and John, Earl of Mar. Mar died suspiciously in 1480 and his estates were forfeited and possibly given to a royal favourite, Robert Cochrane. Albany fled to France in 1479, accused of treason. By this point the alliance with England was failing and from 1480

there was intermittent war, followed by a full-scale invasion of Scotland two years later, led by the Duke of Gloucester, the future Richard III, and accompanied by Albany. James was imprisoned by his own subjects in Edinburgh Castle, and Albany was established as lieutenant-general. Having taken Berwick-upon-Tweed the English retreated and Albany's government began to collapse forcing him to flee. Despite conspiracies and more attempts at invasion, James was able to regain power. However, the king managed to alienate the barons, refusing to travel for the implementation of justice, preferring to be resident in Edinburgh, he debased the coinage, probably creating a financial crisis, he continued to pursue an English alliance and dismissed key supporters, including his Chancellor Colin Campbell, 1st Earl of Argyll, becoming estranged from his wife, Margaret of Denmark, and his son James. Matters came to a head in 1488 when he faced an army raised by the disaffected nobles, and many former councillors, acting in the name of the prince as James IV. He was defeated at the Battle of Sauchieburn and killed.

James IV

James IV was 15 when he came to the throne, but soon proved a capable and independent minded ruler, whose reign is often considered to have seen a flowering of Scottish culture under the influence of the European Renaissance. He took a direct interest in the administration of justice and frequently moved his court in legal circuits of justice ayres. He defeated a major Northern rebellion, mainly of supporters of the murdered James III. It began in Dunbarton in 1489, led by the Earl of Lennox and Lord Lyle and spreading through the North. James is credited with finally bringing the Lordship of the Isles under

control. He forced through the forfeiture of the lands of the last lord John MacDonald in 1493, backing Alexander Gordon, 3rd Earl of Huntly's power in the region and launching a series of naval campaigns and sieges that resulted in the capture or exile of his rivals by 1507.

For a time he supported Perkin Warbeck, the pretender to the English throne, and carried out a brief invasion of England on his behalf in 1496. However, he then established good diplomatic relations with England, and in 1502 signed the Treaty of Perpetual Peace, marrying Henry VII's daughter, Margaret Tudor, thus laying the foundation for the 17th century Union of the Crowns. Animosity with Henry VIII of England helped prompt the renewal of the Auld Alliance in 1512. When the Pope organised a Holy League, which included England, against the French in 1511, James was caught between incompatible diplomatic policies. He tried to suggest an unrealistic European Crusade to Constantinople, but after border skirmishing, when the French were attacked by the English he declared war on England and was excommunicated by the Pope. He sent his navy and gunners to support the French and in 1513 led a major army of perhaps 34,000 over the border.

After using his formidable artillery train to take Norham Castle he marched south, where the invasion was stopped decisively on 9 September 1513 at the Battle of Flodden. The King, many of his nobles, and a large number of ordinary troops were killed, commemorated by the song "The Floo'ers o' the Forest". Once again Scotland's government lay in the hands of regents in the name of the infant James V.

Geography

The defining factor in the geography of Scotland is the distinction between the Highlands and Islands in the north and west and the lowlands in the south and east. The highlands are further divided into the Northwest Highlands and the Grampian Mountains by the fault line of the Great Glen. The lowlands are divided into the fertile belt of the Central Lowlands and the higher terrain of the Southern Uplands, which included the Cheviot hills, over which the border with England came to run by the end of the period. The Central Lowland belt averages about 50 miles in width and, because it contains most of the good quality agricultural land and has easier communications, could support most of the urbanisation and elements of conventional medieval government. However, the Southern Uplands, and particularly the Highlands were economically less productive and much more difficult to govern. This provided Scotland with a form of protection, as minor English incursions had to cross the difficult southern uplands and the two major attempts at conquest by the English, under Edward I and then Edward III, were unable to penetrate the highlands, from which area potential resistance could reconquer the lowlands. However, it also made those areas problematic to govern for Scottish kings and much of the political history of the era after the wars of independence circulated around attempts to resolve problems of entrenched localism in these regions.

It was in the later medieval era that the borders of Scotland reached approximately their modern extent. The Isle of Man fell under English control in the 14th century, despite several

attempts to restore Scottish authority. The English were able to annexe a large slice of the lowlands under Edward III, but these losses were gradually regained, particularly while England was preoccupied with the Wars of the Roses (1455–85). In 1468 the last great acquisition of Scottish territory occurred when James III married Margaret of Denmark, receiving the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands in payment of her dowry. However, in 1482 Berwick, a border fortress and the largest port in medieval Scotland, fell to the English once again, for what was to be the final change of hands.

Demography

Because medieval Scotland lacked the intrusive government and growing bureaucracy that can be found in contemporaneous England, there is very little evidence on which to base reliable estimates of population before the early 18th century. On the basis that it had roughly a sixth of the farmable land of England, it has been suggested that the population would have been of a similar proportion, probably a little less than a million at its height before the Black Death reached the country in 1349. Although there is no reliable documentation on the impact of the plague, there are many anecdotal references to abandoned land in the following decades. If the pattern followed that in England, then the population may have fallen to as low as half a million by the end of the 15th century. Compared with the situation after the redistribution of population in the later clearances and the industrial revolution, these numbers would have been relatively evenly spread over the kingdom, with roughly half

living north of the Tay. Perhaps ten per cent of the population lived in one of fifty burghs that existed at the beginning of the period, mainly in the east and south. It has been suggested that they would have had a mean population of about 2,000, but many would be much smaller than 1,000 and the largest, Edinburgh, probably had a population of over 10,000 by the end of the era.

Economy

Agriculture

Scotland is roughly half the size of England and Wales, but has only between a fifth and a sixth of the amount of the arable or good pastoral land, making marginal pastoral farming and, with its extensive coastline, fishing, the key factors in the medieval economy. With difficult terrain, poor roads and methods of transport there was little trade between different areas of the country and most settlements depended on what was produced locally, often with very little in reserve in bad years. Most farming was based on the lowland farmtoun or highland baile, settlements of a handful of families that jointly farmed an area notionally suitable for two or three plough teams, allocated in run rigs to tenant farmers. They usually ran downhill so that they included both wet and dry land, helping to offset some of the problems of extreme weather conditions. This land was divided into the infield, which was in continuous arable cultivation, and the outfield which was rotated between arable and grass. Most ploughing was done with a heavy wooden plough with an iron coulter, pulled by oxen, who were more effective and cheaper to feed than horses.

Obligations to the local lord usually included supplying oxen for ploughing the lord's land on an annual basis and the much resented obligation to grind corn at the lord's mill. The rural economy appears to have boomed in the 13th century and in the immediate aftermath of the Black Death was still buoyant, but by the 1360s there was a severe falling off of incomes, which can be seen in clerical benefices, of between a third and half compared with the beginning of the era. This was followed by a slow recovery in the 15th century.

Burghs

Most of the burghs were on the east coast, and among them were the largest and wealthiest, including Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh, whose growth was facilitated by trade with the continent. Although in the southwest Glasgow was beginning to develop and Ayr and Kirkcudbright had occasional links with Spain and France, sea trade with Ireland was much less profitable.

In addition to the major royal burghs this era saw the proliferation of lesser baronial and ecclesiastical burghs, with 51 being created between 1450 and 1516. Most of these were much smaller than their royal counterparts; excluded from international trade, they mainly acted as local markets and centres of craftsmanship. In general burghs probably carried out far more local trading with their hinterlands, relying on them for food and raw materials. The wool trade was a major export at the beginning of the period, but the introduction of sheep-scab was a serious blow to the trade and it began to decline as an export from the early 15th century and despite a levelling off, there was another drop in exports as the markets

collapsed in the early-16th century Low Countries. Unlike in England, this did not prompt the Scots to turn to large scale cloth production and only poor quality rough cloths seem to have been significant.

Crafts, industry and trade

There were relatively few developed crafts in Scotland in this period, although by the later 15th century there were the beginnings of a native iron casting industry, which led to the production of cannon, and of the silver and goldsmithing for which the country would later be known.

As a result, the most important exports were unprocessed raw materials, including wool, hides, salt, fish, animals and coal, while Scotland remained frequently short of wood, iron and, in years of bad harvests, grain. Exports of hides and particularly salmon, where the Scots held a decisive advantage in quality over their rivals, appear to have held up much better than wool, despite the general economic downturn in Europe in the aftermath of the plague.

The growing desire among the court, lords, upper clergy and wealthier merchants for luxury goods that largely had to be imported led to a chronic shortage of bullion. This, and perennial problems in royal finance, led to several debasements of the coinage, with the amount of silver in a penny being cut to almost a fifth between the late 14th century and the late 15th century. The heavily debased "black money" introduced in 1480 had to be withdrawn two years later and may have helped fuel a financial and political crisis.

Society

Kinship and clans

The fundamental social bond in late medieval Scottish society was that of kinship. Descent was agnatic, with members of a group sharing a (sometimes fictional) common ancestor, in the south often reflected in a common surname. Unlike in England, where kinship was predominately cognatic (derived through both males and females), women retained their original surname at marriage and marriages were intended to create friendship between kin groups, rather than a new bond of kinship. As a result, a shared surname has been seen as a "test of kinship", proving large bodies of kin who could call on each other's support and this could help intensify the idea of the feud, which was usually carried out as a form of revenge for a kinsman and for which a large bodies of kin could be counted on to support rival sides, although conflict between members of kin groups also occurred.

The combination of agnatic kinship and a feudal system of obligation has been seen as creating the highland clan system, evident in records from the 13th century. Surnames were rare in the highlands until the 17th and 18th centuries and in the Middle Ages all members of a clan did not share a name and most ordinary members were usually not related to its head. The head of a clan in the beginning of the era was often the strongest male in the main sept or branch of the clan, but later, as primogeniture began to dominate, was usually the eldest son of the last chief. The leading families of a clan formed the *fine*, often seen as equivalent to lowland gentlemen,

providing council in peace and leadership in war, and below them were the *daoine usisle* (in Gaelic) or tacksmen (in Scots), who managed the clan lands and collected the rents. In the isles and along the adjacent western seaboard there were also *buannachann*, who acted as a military elite, defending the clan lands from raids or taking part in attacks on clan enemies. Most of the followers of the clan were tenants, who supplied labour to the clan heads and sometimes act as soldiers. In the early modern era they would take the clan name as their surname, turning the clan into a massive, if often fictive, kin group.

Social structure

In the late medieval era the terminology used to describe the different ranks of Scottish social structure was increasingly dominated by the Scots language and as a result began to parallel the terminology used in England. This consciousness over status was reflected in military and (from 1430) sumptuary legislation, which set out the types of weapons and armour that should be maintained, and clothes that could be worn, by various ranks. Below the king were a small number of dukes (usually descended from very close relatives of the king) and earls, who formed the senior nobility. Below them were the barons, and, from the 1440s, fulfilling the same role were the lords of Parliament, the lowest level of the nobility with the rank-given right to attend the Estates. There were perhaps 40 to 60 of these in Scotland throughout the period. Members of these noble ranks, perhaps particularly those that had performed military or administrative service to the Crown, might also be eligible for the status of knighthood. Below these were the lairds, roughly equivalent to the English gentlemen.

Most were in some sense in the service of the major nobility, either in terms of land or military obligations, roughly half sharing with them their name and a distant and often uncertain form of kinship. Serfdom died out in Scotland in the 14th century, although through the system of courts baron landlords still exerted considerable control over their tenants. Below the lords and lairds were a variety of groups, often ill-defined. These included yeomen, sometimes called "bonnet lairds", often owning substantial land, and below them the husbandmen, lesser landholders and free tenants that made up the majority of the working population. Society in the burghs was headed by wealthier merchants, who often held local office as a burgess, alderman, bailies or as a member of the council. A small number of these successful merchants were dubbed knights for their service by the king by the end of the era, although this seems to have been an exceptional form of civic knighthood that did not put them on a par with landed knights. Below them were craftsmen and workers that made up the majority of the urban population.

Social conflict

Historians have noted considerable political conflict in the burghs between the great merchants and craftsmen throughout the period. Merchants attempted to prevent lower crafts and gilds from infringing on their trade, monopolies and political power. Craftsmen attempted to emphasise their importance and to break into disputed areas of economic activity, setting prices and standards of workmanship. In the 15th century a series of statutes cemented the political position of the merchants, with limitations on the ability of residents to influence the composition of burgh councils and many of the

functions of regulation taken on by the bailies. In rural society historians have noted a lack of evidence of widespread unrest similar to that evidenced the Jacquerie of 1358 in France and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in England, possibly because there was relatively little of the type of change in agriculture, like the enclosure of common land, that could create widespread resentment before the modern era. Instead a major factor was the willingness of tenants to support their betters in any conflict in which they were involved, for which landlords reciprocated with charity and support. Highland and border society acquired a reputation for lawless activity, particularly the feud. However, more recent interpretations have pointed to the feud as a means of preventing and speedily resolving disputes by forcing arbitration, compensation and resolution.

Government

The Crown

The Crown was at the centre of government in late medieval Scotland. The unification of the kingdom, the spread of Anglo-Norman custom, the development of a European trading economy and Robert I's success in achieving independence from England, all did much to build up the prestige of the institution. However, its authority within the kingdom was not unchallenged, not least from the many semi-independent lordships and it endured a series of crisis, particularly frequent minorities and resulting regencies. All of this, in addition to the relative poverty of the kingdom and the lack of a system of regular taxation, helped to limit the scale of central administration and government. Much more than the

English monarchy, the Scottish court remained a largely itinerant institution, with the king moving between royal castles, particularly Perth and Stirling, but also holding judicial sessions throughout the kingdom, with Edinburgh only beginning to emerge as the capital in the reign of James III at the cost of considerable unpopularity. Like most western European monarchies, the Scottish Crown in the 15th century adopted the example of the Burgundian court, through formality and elegance putting itself at the centre of culture and political life, defined with display, ritual and pageantry, reflected in elaborate new palaces and patronage of the arts.

Privy Council

After the Crown the most important government institution was the Privy Council, composed of the king's closest advisers, but which, unlike in England, retained legislative and judicial powers. It was relatively small, with normally less than 10 members in a meeting, some of whom were nominated by Parliament, particularly during the many minorities of the era, as a means of limiting the power of a regent. The council was a virtually full-time institution by the late 15th century, and surviving records from the period indicate it was critical in the working of royal justice. Nominally members of the council were some of the great magnates of the realm, but they rarely attended meetings. Most of the active members of the council for most of the period were career administrators and lawyers, almost exclusively university-educated clergy, the most successful of which moved on to occupy the major ecclesiastical positions in the realm as bishops and, towards the end of the period, archbishops. By the end of the 15th century this group was being joined by increasing numbers of

literate laymen, often secular lawyers, of which the most successful gained preferment in the judicial system and grants of lands and lordships. From the reign of James III onwards the clerically-dominated post of Lord Chancellor was increasingly taken by leading laymen.

Parliament

The next most important body in the process of government was parliament, which had evolved by the late 13th century from the King's Council of Bishops and Earls into a 'colloquium' with a political and judicial role. By the early 14th century, the attendance of knights and freeholders had become important, and probably from 1326 burgh commissioners joined them to form the Three Estates, meeting in a variety of major towns throughout the kingdom. It acquired significant powers over particular issues, including consent for taxation, but it also had a strong influence over justice, foreign policy, war, and other legislation, whether political, ecclesiastical, social or economic.

From the early 1450s, a great deal of the legislative business of the Scottish Parliament was usually carried out by a parliamentary committee known as the 'Lords of the Articles', chosen by the three estates to draft legislation which was then presented to the full assembly to be confirmed. Parliamentary business was also carried out by 'sister' institutions, before c. 1500 by General Council and thereafter by the Convention of Estates. These could carry out much business also dealt with by Parliament—taxation, legislation and policy-making—but lacked the ultimate authority of a full parliament. In the 15th century parliament was being called on an almost annual

basis, more often than its English counterpart, and was willing to offer occasional resistance or criticism to the policies of the Crown, particular in the unpopular reign of James III. However, from about 1494, after his success against the Stewarts and Douglases and over rebels in 1482 and 1488, James IV managed to largely dispense with the institution and it might have declined, like many other systems of Estates in continental Europe, had it not been for his death in 1513 and another long minority.

Local government

At a local level, government combined traditional kinship-based lordships with a relatively small system of royal offices. Until the 15th century the ancient pattern of major lordships survived largely intact, with the addition of two new "scattered earldoms" of Douglas and Crawford, thanks to royal patronage after the Wars of Independence, mainly in the borders and south-west. The dominant kindred were the Stewarts, who came to control many of the earldoms. Their acquisition of the Crown, and a series of internal conflicts and confiscations, meant that by around the 1460s the monarchy had transformed its position within the realm, gaining control of most of the "provincial" earldoms and lordships. Rather than running semi-independent lordships, the major magnates now had scattered estates and occasional regions of major influence. In the lowlands the Crown was now able to administer government through a system of sheriffdoms and other appointed officers, rather than semi-independent lordships. In the highlands James II created two new provincial earldoms for his favourites: Argyll for the Campbells and Huntly for the Gordons, which acted as a bulwark against the

vast Lordship of the Isles built up by the Macdonalds. James IV largely resolved the Macdonald problem by annexing the estates and titles of John Macdonald II to the Crown in 1493 after discovering his plans for an alliance with the English.

Warfare

Armies

Scottish armies of the late medieval era depended on a combination of familial, communal and feudal forms of service. "Scottish service" (*servitum Scoticanum*), also known as "common service" (*communis exertcitus*), a levy of all able-bodied freemen aged between 16 and 60, provided the bulk of armed forces, with (according to decrees) 8 days warning. Feudal obligations, by which knights held castles and estates in exchange for service, provided troops on a 40-day basis. By the second half of the 14th century money contracts of *bonds* or *bands of manrent*, similar to English indentures of the same period, were being used to retain more professional troops, particularly men-at-arms and archers. In practice forms of service tended to blur and overlap and several major Scottish lords brought contingents from their kindred.

These systems produced relatively large numbers of poorly armoured infantry, often armed with 12–14 foot spears. They often formed the large close order defensive formations of shiltrons, able to counter mounted knights as they did at Bannockburn, but vulnerable to arrows (and later artillery fire) and relatively immobile, as they proved at Halidon Hill. There were attempts to replace spears with longer pikes of 15½ to

18½ feet in the later 15th century, in emulation of successes over mounted troops in the Netherlands and Switzerland, but this does not appear to have been successful until the eve of the Flodden campaign in early 16th century. There were smaller numbers of archers and men-at-arms, which were often outnumbered when facing the English on the battlefield. Archers became much sought after as mercenaries in French armies of the 15th century to help counter the English superiority in this arm, becoming a major element of the French royal guards as the Garde Écossaise. Scottish men-at-arms often dismounted to fight beside the infantry, with perhaps a small mounted reserve, and it has been suggested that these tactics were copied and refined by the English, leading to their successes in the Hundred Years' War.

Artillery

The Stewarts attempted to follow France and England in building up an artillery train. The abortive siege of Roxborugh in 1436 under James I was probably the first conflict in which the Scots made serious use of artillery. James II had a royal gunner and received gifts of artillery from the continent, including two giant bombards made for Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, one of which, Mons Meg, still survives. Although these were probably already outdated on the continent, they represented impressive military technology when they reached Scotland. James II enthusiasm for artillery cost him his life, and James III also experienced ill-fortune when artillery sent from Sigismund, Archduke of Austria, sank in a storm en route to Scotland in 1481. James IV brought in experts from France, Germany and the Netherlands and established a foundry in 1511. Edinburgh Castle had a house of artillery where visitors

could see cannon cast for what became a formidable train, allowing him to send cannon to France and Ireland and to quickly subdue Norham Castle in the Flodden campaign. However, 18 heavy artillery pieces had to be drawn by 400 oxen and slowed the advancing army, proving ineffective against the longer range and smaller calibre English guns at the Battle of Flodden.

Navy

After the establishment of Scottish independence, Robert I turned his attention to building up a Scottish naval capacity. This was largely focused on the west coast, with the Exchequer Rolls of 1326 recording the feudal duties of his vassals in that region to aid him with their vessels and crews. Towards the end of his reign he supervised the building of at least one royal man-of-war near his palace at Cardross on the River Clyde. In the late 14th century naval warfare with England was conducted largely by hired Scots, Flemish and French merchantmen and privateers. James I took a greater interest in naval power. After his return to Scotland in 1424 he established a shipbuilding yard at Leith, a house for marine stores, and a workshop. King's ships, one of which accompanied him on his expedition to the Islands in 1429, were built and equipped there to be used for trade as well as war, and the office of Lord High Admiral was probably founded in this period. In his struggles with his nobles in 1488 James III received assistance from his two warships the *Flower* and the *King's Carvel* also known as the *Yellow Carvel*.

James IV put the enterprise on a new footing, founding a new harbour at Newhaven in May 1504, and two years later ordered

the construction of a dockyard at the Pools of Airth. The upper reaches of the Forth were protected by new fortifications on Inchgarvie. The king acquired a total of 38 ships for the Royal Scottish Navy, including the *Margaret*, and the carrack *Michael* or *Great Michael*. The latter, built at great expense at Newhaven and launched in 1511, was 240 feet (73 m) in length, weighed 1,000 tons, had 24 cannon, and was, at that time, the largest ship in Europe. Scottish ships had some success against privateers, accompanied the king in his expeditions in the islands and intervened in conflicts in Scandinavia and the Baltic. In the Flodden campaign the fleet consisted of 16 large and 10 smaller craft. After a raid on Carrickfergus in Ireland, it joined up with the French and had little impact on the war. After the disaster at Flodden the *Great Michael*, and perhaps other ships, were sold to the French and the king's ships disappeared from royal records after 1516.

Religion

The Church

Since gaining its independence from English ecclesiastical organisation in 1192, the Catholic Church in Scotland had been a "special daughter of the see of Rome", enjoying a direct relationship with the Papacy. Lacking archbishoprics, it was in practice run by special councils of made up of all the bishops, with the bishop of St Andrews emerging as the most important player, until in 1472 St Andrews became the first archbishopric, to be followed by Glasgow in 1492. Late medieval religion had its political aspects, with Robert I carrying the *brecbennoch* (or Monymusk reliquary), said to

contain the remains of St. Columba, into battle at Bannockburn and James IV using his pilgrimages to Tain and Whithorn to help bring Ross and Galloway under royal authority. There were also further attempts to differentiate Scottish liturgical practice from that in England, with a printing press established under royal patent in 1507 to replace the English Sarum Use for services. As elsewhere in Europe, the collapse of papal authority in the Papal Schism allowed the Scottish Crown to gain effective control of major ecclesiastical appointments within the kingdom, a position recognised by the Papacy in 1487. This led to the placement of clients and relatives of the king in key positions, including James IV's illegitimate son Alexander, who was nominated as Archbishop of St. Andrews at the age of 11, intensifying royal influence and also opening the Church to accusations of venality and nepotism. Despite this, relationships between the Scottish crown and the Papacy were generally good, with James IV receiving tokens of papal favour.

Popular practice

Traditional Protestant historiography tended to stress the corruption and unpopularity of the late medieval Scottish church, but more recent research has indicated the ways in which it met the spiritual needs of different social groups. Historians have discerned a decline of monasticism in this period, with many religious houses keeping smaller numbers of monks, and those remaining often abandoning communal living for a more individual and secular lifestyle. New monastic endowments from the nobility also declined in the 15th century. In contrast, the burghs saw the flourishing of mendicant orders of friars in the later 15th century, who

placed an emphasis on preaching and ministering to the population. The order of Observant Friars were organised as a Scottish province from 1467 and the older Franciscans and Dominicans were recognised as separate provinces in the 1480s. In most burghs, in contrast to English towns where churches tended to proliferate, there was usually only one parish church, but as the doctrine of Purgatory gained in importance in the period, the number of chapelries, priests and masses for the dead within them grew rapidly. The number of altars to saints also grew dramatically, with St. Mary's in Dundee having perhaps 48 and St Giles' in Edinburgh over 50, as did the number of saints celebrated in Scotland, with about 90 being added to the missal used in St Nicholas church in Aberdeen. New cults of devotion connected with Jesus and the Virgin Mary also began to reach Scotland in the 15th century, including The Five Wounds, The Holy Blood and The Holy Name of Jesus and new feasts including The Presentation, The Visitation and Mary of the Snows. In the early 14th century the Papacy managed to minimise the problem of clerical pluralism, but with relatively poor livings and a shortage of clergy, particularly after the Black Death, in the 15th century the number of clerics holding two or more livings rapidly increased. This meant that parish clergy were largely drawn from the lower and less educated ranks of the profession, leading to frequent complaints about their standards of education or ability, although there is little clear evidence that this was actually declining. Heresy, in the form of Lollardry, began to reach Scotland from England and Bohemia in the early 15th century, but despite evidence of a number of burnings of heretics and some apparent support for its anti-sacramental elements, it probably remained a relatively small movement.

Culture

Education

In medieval Scotland education was dominated by the Church and largely aimed at the training and education of clerics. In the later medieval period there was a general increase in the numbers of educational institutions as well as increasing use by the laity.

These included private tuition in the families of lords and wealthy burghers, song schools attached to most major churches and an increasing number of grammar schools, particularly in the expanding burghs. These were almost exclusively aimed at boys, but by the end of the 15th century Edinburgh also had schools for girls. The growing emphasis on education cumulated with the passing of the Education Act 1496, which decreed that all sons of barons and freeholders of substance should attend grammar schools. All this resulted in an increase in literacy, but which was largely concentrated among a male and wealthy elite, with perhaps 60 per cent of the nobility being literate by the end of the period.

Until the 15th century those who wished to attend university had to travel to England or the continent, but this situation was transformed by the founding of the University of St Andrews in 1413, the University of Glasgow in 1451 and the University of Aberdeen in 1495. Initially these institutions were designed for the training of clerics, but they would increasingly be used by laymen who would begin to challenge the clerical monopoly of administrative post in the government

and law. Scottish scholars continued to visit the continent for their second degrees and this international contact helped bring the new ideas of humanism back into Scottish intellectual life.

Art and architecture

Scotland is known for its dramatically placed castles, many of which date from the late medieval era. In contrast to England, where the wealthy began to move towards more comfortable grand houses, these continued to be built into the modern period, developing into the style of Scottish Baronial architecture in the 19th century, popular amongst the minor aristocracy and merchant class. This building type, often built with defence in mind in the form of the tower house, was characterised by corbelled turrets and crow-stepped gables marked the first uniquely Scottish mode of building. Ceilings of these houses were decorated with vividly coloured painting on boards and beams, using emblematic motifs from European pattern books or the artist's interpretation of trailing grotesque patterns. The grandest buildings of this type were the royal palaces in this style at Linlithgow, Holyrood, Falkland and the remodelled Stirling Castle, all of which have elements of continental European architecture, particularly from France and the Low Countries, adapted to Scottish idioms and materials (particularly stone and harl). More modest buildings with continental influences can be seen in the late 15th century western tower of St Mary's parish church, Dundee, and tollbooths like the one at Dunbar.

Parish church architecture in Scotland was often much less elaborate than in England, with many churches remaining

simple oblongs, without transepts and aisles, and often without towers. In the highlands they were often even simpler, many built of rubble masonry and sometimes indistinguishable from the outside from houses or farm buildings. However, there were some churches built in a grander continental style. French master-mason John Morrow was employed at the building of Glasgow Cathedral and the rebuilding of Melrose Abbey, both considered fine examples of Gothic architecture. The interiors of churches were often more elaborate before the Reformation, with highly decorated sacrament houses, like the ones surviving at Deskford and Kinkell. The carvings at Rosslyn Chapel, created in the mid-15th century, elaborately depicting the progression of the seven deadly sins, are considered some of the finest in the Gothic style. Late medieval Scottish churches also often contained elaborate burial monuments, like the Douglas tombs in the town of Douglas.

There is relatively little information about native Scottish artists during the late Middle Ages. As in England, the monarchy may have had model portraits used for copies and reproductions, but the versions that survive are generally crude by continental standards. Much more impressive are the works or artists imported from the continent, particularly the Netherlands, generally considered the centre of painting in the Northern Renaissance.

The products of these connections included the delicate hanging lamp in St. John's Kirk in Perth; the tabernacles and images of St Catherine and St John brought to Dunkeld, and vestments and hangings in Holyrood; Hugo van Der Goes's altarpiece for the Trinity College Church in Edinburgh, commissioned by James III, the work after which the Flemish

Master of James IV of Scotland is named, and the illustrated Flemish Bening Book of Hours, given by James IV to Margaret Tudor.

Language and literature

It was in this period that the Scots language became the dominant language of the state and the social elite, while also becoming linked with Scottish national identity and making inroads into the highland zone at the expense of Gaelic. Middle Scots, often called "English" in this period, was derived largely from Old English, with the addition of elements from Gaelic and French. Although resembling the language spoken in northern England, it became a distinct dialect from the late 14th century onwards. It was the dominant language of the lowlands and borders, brought there largely by Anglo-Saxon settlers from the 5th century, but began to be adopted by the ruling elite as they gradually abandoned French in the late medieval era. By the 15th century it was the language of government, with acts of parliament, council records, and treasurer's accounts almost all using it from the reign of James I onwards. As a result, Gaelic, once dominant north of the Tay, began a steady decline.

Gaelic was the language of the bardic tradition, which provided a mechanism for the transference of oral culture from generation to generation. Members of bardic schools were trained in the complex rules and forms of Gaelic poetry. In a non-literate society, they were the repositories of knowledge, including not just stories and songs, but also genealogies and medicine. They were found in many of the courts of the great lords, down to the chiefdoms of the highlands at the beginning

of the period. The bardic tradition was not completely isolated from trends elsewhere, including love poetry influenced by continental developments and medical manuscripts from Padua, Salerno and Montpellier translated from Latin. The Gaelic oral tradition also began to manifest itself in written form, with the great compilation of Gaelic poetry, the *Book of the Dean of Lismore* produced by James and Duncan MacGregor at the beginning of the 16th century, probably designed for use in the courts of the greater chiefs. However, by the 15th-century lowland writers were beginning to treat Gaelic as a second class, rustic and even amusing language, helping to frame attitudes towards the highlands and to create a cultural gulf with the lowlands.

It was Scots that emerged as the language of national literature in Scotland. The first surviving major text is John Barbour's *Brus* (1375), composed under the patronage of Robert II and telling the story in epic poetry of Robert I's actions before the English invasion until the end of the war of independence.

The work was extremely popular among the Scots-speaking aristocracy and Barbour is referred to as the father of Scots poetry, holding a similar place to his contemporary Chaucer in England. In the early 15th century these were followed by Andrew of Wyntoun's verse *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* and Blind Harry's *The Wallace*, which blended historical romance with the verse chronicle. They were probably influenced by Scots versions of popular French romances that were also produced in the period, including *The Buik of Alexander*, *Launcelot o the Laik* and *The Porteous of Noblenes* by Gibert Hay.

Much Middle Scots literature was produced by makars, poets with links to the royal court. These included James I who wrote *The Kingis Quair*. Many of the makars had university education and so were also connected with the Kirk. However, Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris* (c. 1505) provides evidence of a wider tradition of secular writing outside of Court and Kirk now largely lost. Before the advent of printing in Scotland, writers such as Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, Walter Kennedy and Gavin Douglas have been seen as leading a golden age in Scottish poetry.

In the late 15th century, Scots prose also began to develop as a genre. Although there are earlier fragments of original Scots prose, such as the *Auchinleck Chronicle*, the first complete surviving works include John Ireland's *The Meroure of Wyssdome* (1490). There were also prose translations of French books of chivalry that survive from the 1450s, including *The Book of the Law of Armys* and the *Order of Knychthode* and the treatise *Secreta Secetorum*, an Arabic work believed to be Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great. The landmark work in the reign of James IV was Gavin Douglas's version of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Eneados*, which was the first complete translation of a major classical text in an Anglian language, finished in 1513, but overshadowed by the disaster at Flodden.

Music

Bards, who acted as musicians, but also as poets, story tellers, historians, genealogists and lawyers, relying on an oral tradition that stretched back generations, were found in Scotland as well as Wales and Ireland. Often accompanying themselves on the harp, they can also be seen in records of the

Scottish courts throughout the medieval period. Scottish church music from the later Middle Ages was increasingly influenced by continental developments, with figures like 13th-century musical theorist Simon Tailler studying in Paris before returning to Scotland, where he introduced several reforms in church music. Scottish collections of music like the 13th-century 'Wolfenbüttel 677', which is associated with St Andrews, contain mostly French compositions, but with some distinctive local styles. The captivity of James I in England from 1406 to 1423, where he earned a reputation as a poet and composer, may have led him to take English and continental styles and musicians back to the Scottish court on his release. In the late 15th century a series of Scottish musicians trained in the Netherlands before returning home, including John Broune, Thomas Inglis and John Fety, the last of whom became master of the song school in Aberdeen and then Edinburgh, introducing the new five-fingered organ playing technique. In 1501 James IV refounded the Chapel Royal within Stirling Castle, with a new and enlarged choir, and it became the focus of Scottish liturgical music. Burgundian and English influences were probably reinforced when Henry VII's daughter Margaret Tudor married James IV in 1503.

National identity

- The late Middle Ages has often been seen as the era in which Scottish national identity was initially forged, in opposition to English attempts to annexe the country and as a result of social and cultural changes. English invasions and interference in Scotland have been judged to have created a sense of

> national unity and a hatred towards England which dominated Scottish foreign policy well into the 15th century, making it extremely difficult for Scottish kings like James III and James IV to pursue policies of peace towards their southern neighbour. In particular the *Declaration of Arbroath* asserted the ancient distinctiveness of Scotland in the face of English aggression, arguing that it was the role of the king to defend the independence of the community of Scotland. This document has been seen as the first "nationalist theory of sovereignty".

The adoption of Middle Scots by the aristocracy has been seen as building a shared sense of national solidarity and culture between rulers and ruled, although the fact that north of the Tay Gaelic still dominated may have helped widen the cultural divide between highlands and lowlands. The national literature of Scotland created in the late medieval period employed legend and history in the service of the Crown and nationalism, helping to foster a sense of national identity at least within its elite audience.

The epic poetic history of the *Brus* and *Wallace* helped outline a narrative of united struggle against the English enemy. Arthurian literature differed from conventional version of the legend by treating Arthur as a villain and Mordred, the son of the king of the Picts, as a hero. The origin myth of the Scots, systematised by John of Fordun (c. 1320-c. 1384), traced their beginnings from the Greek prince Gathelus and his Egyptian wife Scota, allowing them to argue superiority over the English, who claimed their descent from the Trojans, who had been defeated by the Greeks.

It was in this period that the national flag emerged as a common symbol. The image of St. Andrew, martyred while bound to an X-shaped cross, first appeared in the Kingdom of Scotland during the reign of William I and was again depicted on seals used during the late 13th century; including on one particular example used by the Guardians of Scotland, dated 1286. Use of a simplified symbol associated with Saint Andrew, the saltire, has its origins in the late 14th century; the Parliament of Scotland decreed in 1385 that Scottish soldiers should wear a white Saint Andrew's Cross on their person, both in front and behind, for the purpose of identification. Use of a blue background for the Saint Andrew's Cross is said to date from at least the 15th century. The earliest reference to the Saint Andrew's Cross as a flag is to be found in the *Vienna Book of Hours*, circa 1503.