

How was England forged, c.793-1065? Knowledge Organiser

The origins of Anglo-Saxon England:

- The **Anglo-Saxons** migrated to Britain after 450 CE.
- England was **divided** into several separate kingdoms.
- In 937 CE, the rulers of Wessex defeated the Vikings in the north and east of England – **England became a single kingdom** for the first time.

What was Anglo-Saxon society like?

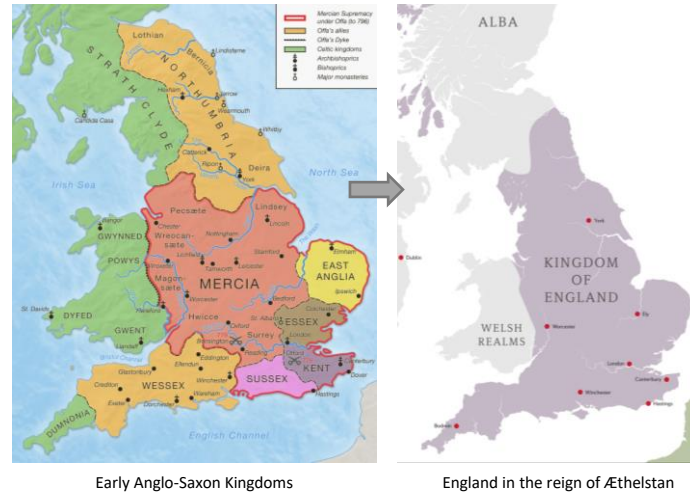
- A hierarchy, with **slaves** and **peasants** at the bottom. They worked for **lords** and the lords served the **king**.
- This gave **stability**, order and peace to society.

How did the power of kings help forge England?

- Alfred the Great's army defeated the Viking army at the **Battle of Edington**, near Warminster in 878 CE. After this, the Vikings lived in a region called **Danelaw**.
- Alfred improved the **army** and **navy** as well as **education** and **law**, strengthening Wessex further.
- Alfred's children (Edward and Æthelflæd) won battles and built **burhs** to increase their power and land.
- Alfred's grandson, Æthelstan, **united** England in 937 CE.
- In the 960s CE, **Edgar the Peaceful** cemented the union.

How did religion help forge England?

- Pope Gregory I sent a mission from Rome in 597 CE to **convert** the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.
- The Anglo-Saxon Church was also influenced by missionaries from Ireland who had different ideas.
- The spread of Christianity was **slow and uneven**, but by the time of Æthelstan, it was an important part of Anglo-Saxon **identity**, uniting the people and the ruler.



How did culture help forge England?



The language of **Old English** developed, giving the people of England a common language. Epic tales like **Beowulf** were told, showing shared values and beliefs.

Artefacts like the **Desborough Necklace** show the **skill** of Anglo-Saxon craftsmen, and the **unique style** of their jewellery. The cross shows the influence of religion.



Anglo-Saxon England had a **strong coinage** from the 9th century. The same coins were used all around the country, **controlled by the king** and showing his face.



Key Words:

Anglo-Saxons – groups of people who migrated to Britain after c.450 CE.

Vikings – invaders who came to England from Scandinavia.

Old English – the language of the Anglo-Saxons.

Burhs – fortified towns, built by Alfred, Æthelflæd and Edward in the 9th century.

Paganism – the kind of religion practised by the Anglo-Saxons before they converted to Christianity.

Hierarchy – a society, divided into classes, with the king at the top.

Fyrd – ordinary peasant soldiers in the Anglo-Saxon army.

Want to know more or test out your knowledge to prepare for the test? Try this:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zp6xsbk/articles/zphysk7>

How did the Normans change the face of Europe, c.911-1150AD? Knowledge Organiser

Who were the Normans?

- In the 10th century, **Viking** invaders attacked France
- Around 911, the king (Charles the Simple) **granted Normandy to Viking leader Rollo** to protect him.

What changes did the Normans bring about?

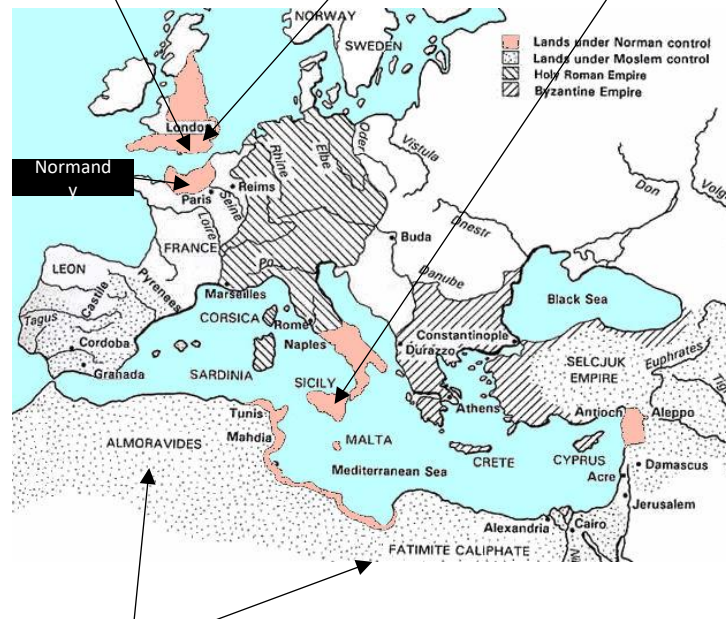
- Building **castles** (Pic 1) helped strengthen Norman control at key times and in strategic places.
- Building **cathedrals** (Pic 2) showed the Normans' Christianity and the superiority of their culture.
- In England, **marriages** between Normans & Saxons spread and Norman names became fashionable.
- The **feudal system** organised society as a hierarchy, based on owning land and giving loyalty to a lord.
- In Sicily, **Islamic, Greek and Norman mixing** is shown in (for example) architecture (Pic 3).

Did anything of Anglo-Saxon England survive 1066?

- The Anglo-Saxons had a good system of **land taxes** the Normans kept and expanded in the 1080s.
- Systems of **law and justice** that gave England stability were kept.

Who did the Normans encounter around 11th and 12th century Europe?

- Southern Europe, including modern **Spain and Portugal** was part of **an Islamic empire** controlled in the 11th century by the Almoravids.
- North Africa was split between different Islamic empires – the **Almoravids**, the **Fatimids** and the **Seljuks**
- Christian Europe was dominated by the **Holy Roman Empire** (based around modern Germany) in the West and the **Byzantine Empire** (based around modern Greece) in the East.
- After 1090, the **Crusades** took the Normans as far as Jerusalem.



Key Words:

Castle – a defensive military enclosure, which the Normans brought to England.

Motte & Bailey – a style of castle built by the Normans – it was quick and easy to construct.

Feudal System – a social hierarchy that the king controlled and used to get loyalty and soldiers.

Twelfth Century Renaissance – a period of major social, political and intellectual changes across Europe.

Crusade – a war led by Christians to regain control of Jerusalem from the Seljuk Empire, starting in 1090s.

Norman Conquest – the defeat of the Anglo-Saxon king Harold in 1066 and the takeover of England by the Normans

Normans – descendants of Vikings who lived in northern Francia.



How good was the Norman Conquest for England?

- Historians have **disagreed** how to **interpret** this, with some seeing the Normans mainly as violent invaders.
- In 2000, Simon Schama said the Normans **destroyed Anglo-Saxon England** and brought a 'truck-load of trouble' to England, emphasising the negative aspects of Norman rule.
- In 2010, Robert Bartlett emphasised the positive aspects of Norman rule – their **skill in battle, architecture and government** – and the value of these for England.

What can we know about the worlds of Islam and West Africa, c.1070-c.1250? Knowledge Organiser

European Circle

- Before the Black Death (1347-49), Europe was **not the most important region** of the world.
- **Norman Sicily** was a key point of trade in the Mediterranean, where different trade networks met.
- Europeans were quite **knowledgeable** about other parts of the world (e.g the Catalan Atlas showed Mansa Musa, ruler of Mali).

Janet Abu-Lughod and World Systems Theory

- Janet Abu-Lughod published a book in 1989 where she argued that **the 13th century was a peak of trade and cultural links** between world societies.
- She said the medieval world was **far more joined-up** than had been thought.

Central Asian Circle

- The rise of the **Mongol Empire** after 1200 helped to secure peace in Central Asia.
- Trade over land, through the **Silk Road**, brought goods from China to the Islamic world and to Europe.
- Over time, **the Mongol Empire broke up**, weakening their power and reducing the importance of the Silk Road.



Key Words:

Griot – traditional West African storyteller and keeper of oral traditions.

Silk Road – a network of trade routes that crossed Central Asia, bringing goods from China to Europe.

Hajj – pilgrimage made by followers of Islam to the holy city of Mecca.

Pilgrimage – A journey made to a religious site for prayer.

Mongols – Nomadic peoples who lived in Central Asia – they conquered land from Russia to China in the 13th century.

World Systems Theory – a way of explaining the trade and power links between different regions.

West African Circle

- Much of the **gold** that fuelled the growth in trade came from West Africa. Control of the gold mines allowed powerful kingdoms to grow here – **Mali** was an important example.
- In the 14th century, **Mansa Musa** ruled Mali.
- In 1324-25, **Musa** made a pilgrimage (**hajj**) to Mecca, which made his wealth famous, even in Europe – he brought 60,000 people with him and many tons of gold.



What do historians think we can know about this period?

- Historians disagree about **how much we can know** of societies that did not keep written records.
- In the 1960s, Hugh Trevor-Roper argued there was **nothing useful that could be known** about Africa except what Europeans wrote about it.
- Today, Toby Green argues that oral traditions **give back a voice to people** whose history has been denied.

Where could wield power in the medieval world? Knowledge Organiser

Kings had power in the medieval period:

- The king was the head of the **feudal system**, meaning he distributed land to his allies (and took it away from enemies).
- In exchange for land, the king received soldiers to fight in his army and **feudal incidents** (forms of taxation). He could also influence **inheritance** of land and decide on **marriages** of the aristocracy.
- The king **kept the peace** through laws and justice, and he decided when to go to **war** – only he had these powers.

The Church had power in the medieval period:

- The Church received taxes (the **tithe**) from the people and owned one quarter of the land in England, making it very wealthy.
- People believed in Church teachings about **prayer**, **pilgrimage** and **purgatory** – they looked to the Church for comfort and guidance, so Catholicism had many supporters.
- The Church could **enforce** its power through its own courts, including **excommunication** or burning of opponents.

The aristocracy had power in the medieval period:

- The feudal system was changing to be more about **money**. Instead of leading men to fight, the aristocracy could pay **taxes** to the king, reducing their sense of **personal loyalty** to him, but making themselves very important to the king's income.

Several conflicts changed the way medieval power was balanced:

- Sometimes kings got into disagreements with the Church. **Henry II** had the Archbishop of Canterbury (Thomas Becket) murdered. **King John** was excommunicated for opposing the Pope. Both had to show they were sorry and have the Church forgive them.
- Weak kings had major problems with the barons. **King John** had demanded high taxes from the aristocracy to fight a war (which he lost). In 1215 they rebelled and forced him to seal **Magna Carta**.

Other empires, outside Christendom, were very powerful during this period:

- In the Middle East, the **Abbasid Caliphate** [Empire] was based around Baghdad (Iraq). This is now seen as a 'Golden Age' of Islamic culture and power.
- From 1235-1400CE, a very powerful empire arose in **Mali** (West Africa). It produced huge quantities of gold, leading one of its rulers (**Musa Keita**) to become perhaps the richest person in history.
- From 1206-1368CE, the largest contiguous (joined by land) empire in history was established by the **Mongols**.
- The Mongols invaded and conquered Abbasid lands (ending the Golden Age by destroying Baghdad) as well as taking over China from the **Song Dynasty**. They set up the Yuan dynasty in China under **Kublai Khan**.



How important was religion to medieval people?

- **Peter Marshall** argues that 'Religion was woven into the fabric of virtually all the products of human existence: society, politics, culture, gender, art, literature, economy.'
- The Pope (the leader of the Catholic Church) was the head of the group of Christian countries in Europe which were known as **Christendom**. Religion and politics were inseparable.
- To be outside the **community of Christianity** and to live in Europe (like the Jews) put you at risk of **rejection** or **harm**.

Key Words:

Aristocracy – The major landowners, warriors and royal allies (also called the **barons** or **tenants-in-chief**).

Crusade – a 'holy war', led by Christians, to win back Jerusalem from Arab control

Feudal System – a social hierarchy that the king controlled and used to get loyalty and soldiers.

Indulgence – Document offered or sold by the Church to get people to heaven.

Magna Carta – An agreement made in 1215 where King John accepted limits on his power put there by the barons.

Pilgrimage – a journey made to a holy site to pray or to see holy relics.

Purgatory – medieval Christians believed your soul was held here after death. You could get to heaven quicker by having people pray for you.