

# Chapter 20 The European Middle Ages, c. 800–1500 270



c. 800–1000	Era of Viking raids and settlement in Europe and Russia;
	Northern route established
1066	William (the Conqueror) of Normandy conquers
	Anglo-Saxon England
c. 1075–1122	Investiture Controversy
1096	First Crusade
1100s	Gothic style begins
c. 1200	University of Paris founded
1305–1378	Babylonian Captivity (papacy in Avignon)
1337–1453	Hundred Years' War
1346–1350	Black Death's first round
1378–1417	Great Schism
1381	English peasants' revolt; the Lollards and John Wyclif
1414–1417	Council of Constance
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# **Consequences of the Black Death**

#### **Economic Consequences**

- Tax revenues declined sharply
- Public works stopped
- Shortage of labor
- Better working conditions, wages, job security for workers who survived
- Trade volume decline
- Peasant revolts
- Serfdom disappeared in Western Europe

#### **Psychic Consequences**

- Fascination with death seen in art
- Believed God sent plague as warning to sinners
- Penitence, self-flagellation, guilt, shame
- Consciousness and consequences of sin
- Blamed Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus
- Plague was God's punishment for allowing Jews to live among them
- Jewish minorities and innocent victims publicly burned at the stake

## Rungs of the Social Ladder

- Those who fight
- Those who work
- Those who pray

# The Workers

- Nearly 90% of the population worked on the land
- The Medieval Serf
  - Had replaced slaves, but could not be bought or sold
  - Church opposed enslavement of Christians
  - Bound by law, tradition to given place and occupation
  - Hereditary
  - Had to perform labor for lord and pay dues, taxes
  - Included work on demesne (lord's land)
  - Freedom gained by running away, settling new lands, or with lord's permission
  - Conditions improved for those who survived the Plague



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# Medieval Agriculture

- Advances in productivity
- iron-tipped plow
- padded horse collar
- use of manure for fertilizer
- Limits to productivity
- Half to a third of land left fallow to restore fertility
- Famines were common

# **Urban Workers**

- Sharply divided in income, social status
- Skilled craftsmen, shopkeepers
- Benefited from guild system which regulated competition
- Semiskilled, unskilled, casual laborers
- Marginal people never had steady work



Map 20.1 p274

# The Warriors

- Nobility made up 2% or 3% of the population.
- Rights stemmed from royal grants of patents of nobility
- Noble status was hereditary caste
- Nobles were normally vassals to someone of superior rank to whom they owed service
  - Given grants of land for service (fiefs)
  - Traditionally military service
- Five ranks of nobility
  - Duke to count to marquis to baron to knight
  - Varied according to region

# The Warriors

- Claimed their status by being soldiers, guardians, judges

   In reality ancestors often got position as successful
   freebooters
  - Importance of honor
- Noblewomen
  - Sometimes held positions of some power as rulers or more often, regents
  - Ran households, day-to-day management when husbands absent
  - Expected to produce legitimate children



# The Worshippers

- Parish clergy and regular clergy (monks)
- Monasticism
- Dates back to 4<sup>th</sup> century Egypt
- Benedictine Rule most popular in Europe
- Practice mixture of manual and intellectual work
  - Operated extensive farms
  - Many crafts
  - Ran schools
  - Spent hours each day in prayer
- Came from aristocracy or middle class
  - Younger sons and daughters who would not inherit
- Controlled considerable wealth
- Operated hospitals, orphanages, asylums

# **The New Clerical Orders**

- Appearance of heresies met with brutal force
- St. Francis of Assisi
- St. Dominic, especially wanted to convert heretics peacefully
- Dominican Order was intellectual group, included professors of law, theology
- Inquisition to combat heresy
- Use of torture to extract confessions
- Both Franciscans and Dominicans tried to bring about reforms

# The Economic Revival

- Vikings establish Northern trade route with Byzantines, Abbasids via Volga River
- Towns revitalized due to rising trade volume
- New cities built: Berlin, Moscow, and Munich
- Renaissance of older sites due to:
  - higher agricultural production
  - increased trade
  - more peaceful environment

# The Economic Revival

- Peaceful setting for economic activity
  - Increased power of church to enforce condemnation of random violence
  - Peace of God and Truce of God
- Crusades
  - Gave young nobles outlet for warlike impulses
  - First Crusade seizes control of Jerusalem
  - Deepened animosity between Christians and Muslims
  - Fourth Crusade turns on Byzantines
  - Muslims eventually regain control
- Introduction of Roman Law
  - Establishment of law school in Bologna
  - Roman law gradually introduced back into secular affairs





Tom Lovell/National Geographic Image Collection/Alamy Limited

### Bourgeoisie and the Jews

- Bourgeoisie
- Educated, status-conscious people: doctors, lawyers, officeholders, merchants
- People who lived within walled urban areas (bourg or burg)
- Jews
- Segregated into ghettos
- Not allowed to own land or join the guilds
- Restricted to financial and mercantile pursuits

# **Medieval Universities**

- First universities established in the Islamic world
- Bologna, Salerno establish academies for law, medicine
- Paris: law, philosophy, theology
- Much of curriculum devoted to classical Greek works received through Muslims
- St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Christian teacher of 12<sup>th</sup> /13<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Synthesizes Greek philosophy and Christian theology
- Summa Theologica

# **Gothic Architecture**

- Came to be norm in 13<sup>th</sup> century
- Basic elements
  - Lots of light
  - Abundance of decoration
  - Arches, buttresses, vaulting
- Expression of artistic skill, deep faith
- Built over generations

# **Vernacular Literature**

- Latin common written language for educated people
- Vernacular literature began appear, popular by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century
- Dante's Divine Comedy
- Chaucer's Canterbury Tales



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Interior of the transept crossing, consecrated 1216 (photo), French School, (13th century)/Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France/Peter Willi/The Bridgeman Art Library Peter Willi

### Disasters of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century

- Climate changed: Little Ice Age for 500 years
  - cold, rainy summers, shortened growing seasons, frequent crop failures, famines, malnutrition
  - Vulnerable to disease
  - No new lands to cultivate

# The Black Death

- Most massive epidemic on record
- Involved Asia, Europe, parts of Africa
- Traveled along the Silk Road
- Killed perhaps a third of the urban population of Asia and Europe
- Form of bubonic plague
- Some scholars have suggested it might have been anthrax or ebola
- Plague returned later in the century



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# **Consequences of the Black Death**

- Economic Consequences
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  - Better wages
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  - Peasant revolts
  - Serfdom eventually disappears in Western Europe
- Psychic Consequences
  - Fascination with death seen in art
  - Believed God sent plague as warning to sinners
  - Self-flagellation processions
  - Jews scapegoated, many burned at the stake

# The Hundred Years War 1337-1453

- Begins with dynastic quarrel between Edward III of England and Philip VI of France
- Fought entirely on French soil
- Problems of feudal allegiance made war into civil war within France
- Fighting interrupted occasionally by truces
- Major battles: Crecy, Agincourt
  - British introduce longbow, canon
- Joan of Arc changed course of the war
- War ended with British withdrawal from France



Saint Sebastian Interceding for the Plague Stricken by Josse Lieferinxe, ca. 1500. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (37.1995)

# Consequences of the Hundred Years War

- Consumed much manpower and tax monies
- Increased power and prestige of Parliament, especially over taxation
- France did not experience such development
- Differences would become significant
  - France: power transferred from nobles to royal officials
  - England: power of king weakened as Parliament strengthened
- Ended chivalric ideals of combat
  - Infantry and artillery most important, along with gunpowder
  - Social leveler: commoners were just as valuable soldiers

# **Problems in the Church**

- Increasing power of the church
- Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) wielded power over secular rulers
- Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) disputes with French king over taxing clergy
- King captures Pope
- Dies of mistreatment



Giraudon/Art Resource, NY

# **Babylonian Captivity**

- Newly-elected Pope Clement V moves papal court from Rome to Avignon near France
- Successors remain in Avignon as well
- Popes seen as prisoners to French king
- Papacy returns to Rome in 1377, Pope dies
- Conclave pressured to elect Italian, Urban VI
- Claiming coercion bishops in Avignon elect Clement
  VII
- Consequence: Great Schism

# **Great Schism**

- Europeans divided papal loyalties along national lines
- Conciliar Movement
  - Held that entire church community, not the pope, had ultimate authority
  - Necessary to claim authority to appoint a new pope
- John Wyclif
  - Believed individual Christians should read and interpret Scripture for themselves
  - Led revolt of Lollards, 1381



Ms 9198 f.19 The copyist Jean Mielot (fl.1448-68) working in his scriptorium, from' Life and Miracles of the Virgin' (vellum), Le Tavernier, Jean I (fl.1434-60)/Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France/The Bridgeman Art Library

# Royal Kingdoms and the Formation of States

- Growth of towns provides means for centralized government
- England
- William of Normandy conquers England
  - New cadre of nobles beholden to him
- Doomesday Book census for tax purposes
- Universal law code, royal circuit courts, currency
- France
- State develops more slowly
- Royal land originally smaller than vassals
- By late 12<sup>th</sup> king much more powerful
- German (Holy Roman) Empire
- Investiture controversy weakens state
- Emperor comes to be an elected office