

CHAPTER 11

The Creativity and Vitality of the High Middle Ages

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Unification and Communication

A. England

10. Viking (Danish) invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries forced the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to unite under a single ruler.
20. Conquest by William of Normandy strengthened centralization, as Normandy had exceptional political coherence for a feudal dukedom.
30. William continued the Anglo-Saxon institution of sheriffs, unpaid agents of the king at the local level. This restricted political opportunity to the wealthy.
40. As an aid to taxation and the resolution of conflicts among vassals, William ordered an accounting of all the land in England, compiled in the *Domesday Book*.
50. With the marriage of William's granddaughter Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou, the English crown acquired holdings in France outside Normandy.

B. France

10. In the early twelfth century the King of France had jurisdiction over a limited domain around Paris—the *Île-de-France*.
20. The Capetian kings associated themselves with the cult of St. Denis, protector of France, and the abbey of St. Denis.
30. Philip II ("Augustus," r. 1180–1223) vastly enlarged the royal domains in northern France and took over Normandy.
40. Philip sent into the provinces royal officials called *baillis* or *seneschals*. Unlike sheriffs, these men were *not* from the localities they were assigned to, and the king paid them. They were often middle-class lawyers.

C. Germany

10. Unlike England or France, Germany moved in the direction of territorial lordship.
20. The East Frankish Empire from which the German principalities evolved was too large for a highly centralized government. The emperors opted for a loose confederation of lords.
30. The investiture controversy increased the power of the territorial lords.
40. Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1152–1190) took some steps to centralize his authority, but basically believed that the local princes' authority did not conflict with, but enhanced, his own.

II. Finance

A. England

10. Henry I (r. 1100–1135) established the Exchequer, a bureau that collected his revenues. These included the following:
 - a) Taxes from his own estates.
 - b) The old tribute to the Danes, or *Danegeld*.
 - c) An annual gift from the Church, the *dona*.

- d0) Money paid to the Crown for settling disputes.
- e0) Inheritance taxes.
- f0) The *scutage*, paid by knights in lieu of military service.

B0. France0

- 10. Twelfth century French rulers derived income from their own domains (the Île-de-France).
- 20. Philip Augustus collected additional funds through court fines and confiscations (the baillis and seneschals did the collecting).
- 30. In the thirteenth century French rulers taxed townspeople with the *taille*, with commutation payments in lieu of military service, and with arbitrary taxation of Jews.
- 40. France did not get a state financial bureau, the Chamber of Accounts, until the fourteenth century.

C0. Sicily and the German Empire0

- 10. Sicily was the only medieval kingdom other than England to develop a financial bureaucracy.
- 20. Sicily's Norman conqueror, Roger de Hauteville, retained the old Muslim financial agency, the *diwan*.
- 30. Roger's son, Roger II, set up state monopolies on the sale of salt and timber.
- 40. Roger II's grandson, Frederick II Hohenstaufen (r. 1212–1250), banned private warfare, placed all castles under royal administration, and subordinated all courts to the royal court.
- 50. Frederick II founded the University of Naples to train officials for his bureaucracy; for example, in Roman law.
- 60. He obtained the tacit consent of his people to regular taxation.
- 70. In Germany, however, Frederick gave away many tax exemptions to Church and nobles.

III0. Law and Justice0

A0. France0

- 10. Louis IX (r. 1226–1270) established the Parlement of Paris, a court of last appeal for nobles and all of France.
- 20. Louis IX also published the first compendium of laws pertaining to all of France.

B0. English Legal Developments0

- 10. Henry II (r. 1154–1189) extended *common law*, a single secular law for the whole kingdom, and roving royal *circuit courts*.
- 20. Henry also had sheriffs summon local grand juries to present cases to the royal courts.
- 30. English courts resorted to ordeal by fire or water less often than Continental ones.
- 40. Henry attempted to subordinate the Church to royal courts, but failed when his assassination of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, backfired.
- 50. In 1215 English barons, under heavy financial pressure from King John, forced him to sign the Magna Carta, in which he promised to observe the law in taxation and other affairs. This helped establish the principle in England that kings too were subject to the law.
- 60. Respect for the impartiality of royal courts promoted loyalty to the Crown.

C0. The German Empire0

- 10. In the German Empire in the thirteenth century, there were two levels of justice.0
 - a0) Manorial courts handled minor disputes over property.
 - b0) Dukes and other high nobles judged serious criminal cases.

D0. Common Law and Roman Law0

- 10. In England common law depended on precedent, eschewed torture, opened proceedings to the public, and allowed the accused access to the evidence against them.

- 20. On the Continent Roman law traditions depended on fixed legal maxims of Justinian's *Code*, used torture, and kept court proceedings and evidence secret.
- E0. New Legal Restrictions0
 - 10. Jews0
 - a0) In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries hostility towards Jews increased.0
 - (1)0 In a growing cash economy, both peasants and nobles were increasingly in debt to Jewish lenders.
 - (2)0 The Crusades intensified xenophobia.
 - (3)0 Christian merchants and financiers resented Jewish competition.
 - (4)0 Accusations of ritual murder and sacrilege spread.
 - b0) Philip IV of France in 1306 and Edward I of England in 1290 made money by expelling the Jews from their kingdoms and seizing their property.
 - 20. Homosexuals0
 - a0) In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries hostility towards homosexuals also increased.0
 - (1)0 Muslims and heretics were often accused of homosexuality.
 - (2)0 Systematization of law included laws governing sexual behavior and making homosexuality illegal.
- IV0. Towns and Economic Revival0
 - A0. The Rise of Towns0
 - 10. There are three basic theories explaining the origin of towns.0
 - a0) They began as boroughs, or fortifications against Viking raids.
 - b0) They began as settlements outside forts in favorable spots for trade.
 - c0) They formed around great cathedrals or monasteries.
 - 20. Many towns were once Roman army camps, or trading cities.
 - 30. Medieval towns had a number of common characteristics.0
 - a0) Walls enclosed the town.
 - b0) Each town had a marketplace.
 - c0) Each town had a mint to coin money and a court.
 - d0) Large towns had populations in the tens of thousands.
 - e0) Townspeople had peasant origins but were very diverse.
 - B0. Town Liberties0
 - 10. Serfs who lived in a town for one year and a day became free.
 - 20. Town citizens had the right to buy and sell in the town without paying taxes.
 - 30. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries towns developed their own courts, handling cases involving commercial transactions.
 - 40. Merchant guilds and craft guilds were organized.
 - 50. Women in towns were members of and even masters in craft guilds. They participated in many kinds of business, including moneylending.
 - 60. Kings and nobles granted the merchant guild oligarchies who ran the towns freedoms: the rights to hold a court, levy taxes, and so on.
 - C0. Town Life0
 - 10. Maintenance of city walls was probably the towns' greatest expense.
 - 20. Most of the town was a market.
 - 30. Towns were filthy; waste was just dumped in the street.
 - D0. Revival of Long-Distance Trade0
 - 10. Long-distance trade was risky due to accident and robbery.
 - 20. Merchants formed partnerships to share risk.
 - 30. Venice dominated trade with the Near East, bringing spices, slaves, silk, and purple textiles into Europe.
 - 40. Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres in Flanders controlled the cloth industry.

- 50. Wool came into Flanders from England. Wool was the cornerstone of the medieval economy in England.
- E0. The Commercial Revolution0
 - 10. The opening of silver mines throughout Europe in the 1160s accelerated development of a cash economy.
 - 20. Business procedures changed as long-distance trade and the cash economy expanded.0
 - a0) Three types of merchants developed: the sedentary businessman who ran the “home office,” the transporter of goods, and the agent abroad.
 - b0) Commercial correspondence developed.
 - c0) Bills of exchange and other complex forms of commercial accounting proliferated.
 - d0) Merchants of Italian cities led these developments.
 - e0) The German-dominated Hanseatic League of commercial cities, founded in 1159, led in northern Europe.
 - f0) Eventually the Hanseatic League guaranteed the debts and contracts of members.
 - 30. Increased wealth and contact with other civilizations raised European living standards.
 - 40. New commercial wealth was a tax base for kings to exploit.
- V0. Medieval Universities0
 - A0. Origins
 - 10. Medieval universities emerged in the thirteenth century in response to the demand of the new secular states for trained administrators.
 - 20. Cathedral schools in France and municipal schools (founded by businessmen) in Italy developed into universities in the twelfth century.
 - 30. In Italy the University of Bologna specialized in teaching Roman law. The University of Salerno specialized in medicine.
 - 40. In northern Europe, first in Paris, later at Oxford and Cambridge, guilds of professors organized universities.
 - B0. Instruction and Curriculum
 - 10. Professors developed the Scholastic method of inquiry. This involved posing questions, citing authorities on both sides of a given question, and providing a rational explanation for what was believed on faith.
 - 20. Scholasticism rested on the recovery of ancient philosophical texts that had entered Europe in the early twelfth century.
 - 30. Scholastics collected and organized knowledge as *summa* or reference books on various topics. One example is St. Thomas Aquinas’s (1225–1274) *Summa Theologica*.
 - 40. Aquinas argued that faith and reason were mutually reinforcing, not contradictory.
 - 50. The basic method of teaching at medieval universities was the lecture, or reading of a passage from the Bible, Justinian’s *Code*, Aristotle, and so on, followed by the professor’s interpretation or *gloss*.
- VI0. Gothic Art0
 - A0. From Romanesque Gloom to “Uninterrupted Light” (Gothic)0
 - 10. Romanesque churches had arched stone ceilings that required heavy walls to support them. They were massive buildings with small windows.
 - 20. Gothic architecture began with the renovation of the abbey church at St. Denis in the *Île-de-France* (1137–1144).
 - 30. The new style spread to England, Germany, and Italy.
 - 40. Cathedrals were objects of civic pride. Many inhabitants of a town collaborated in their construction, from bishops to businessmen to the actual artisans.
 - 50. Cathedrals were supposed to teach Christian doctrine through images. Stained-glass windows became a major art form during this period.

- 60. Cathedrals were connected with many artistic developments, from tapestry making, to theatrical performance, to the early development of singing in harmony and musical notation.
- B0. Troubadour Poetry0
 - 10. Troubadours were poets in southern France (Provence) who sang their songs in noble courts.
 - 20. Some scholars have argued that the ideal of courtly love presented by some troubadours showed an advance in the status of women.
 - 30. Troubadours were influenced by Muslim culture, which reached France through Spain.
- VII0. Heresy and the Friars0
 - A0. Heresy
 - 10. Heretical movements developed in the most commercialized and urbanized areas of Europe (northern Italy, southern France, Flanders, the lower Rhine valley) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
 - 20. Conservative clergy and rural monastic orders could not address problems of the new, more diverse urban society.
 - 30. Pope Gregory's reforms, particularly the attack on Nicolaitism, encouraged laypeople to judge corrupt priests.
 - 40. The Waldensians in France attacked the sacraments and church hierarchy.
 - 50. The Albigensians or Cathars in southern France rejected the Church altogether.
 - B0. New Monastic Orders
 - 10. In response to heresy, St. Dominic and St. Francis created new monastic orders.
 - 20. Members were friars, not monks.
 - 30. They preached and worked in urban settings.
 - 40. They followed the ideal of apostolic poverty, begging for their material needs.
 - 50. Most members came from the burgher class or the ranks of small property owners and shopkeepers.
 - 60. Initially the Dominicans recruited university graduates while the Franciscans favored men with less education. Both orders ended up with highly educated members who could work in the new, more sophisticated, and literate urban society.
 - 70. The papacy used friars from the new orders to run the Inquisition, a successful drive to hunt out and extirpate heresy.
- VIII0. A Challenge to Religious Authority0
 - A0. Kings and Popes
 - 10. At the end of the thirteenth century, a violent dispute between the papacy and the kings of England and France damaged the prestige of the pope.
 - 20. In 1294 King Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France declared war on each other.
 - 30. Both kings taxed the clergy to pay for the war.
 - 40. Pope Boniface VIII decreed that kings did not have the right to tax the clergy, an action that was rejected by both kings.
 - 50. When Boniface attempted to enforce his decree, Philip accused him of heresy and had him arrested.

(www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/medieval/browse.htm)

0INTERNET RESOURCES0

- 10. Walking Tour of Assisi (www.wtu.edu/franciscan/packs/tour/assisi/assisi.html)
- 20. Summa Theologica (www.newadvent.org/summa)
- 30. University of Cambridge: A Short History (www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/pubs/history)

40. Medieval English Towns (www.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/towns.html)
50. Notre Dame Cathedral (www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Notre_Dame_Cathedral.html)
60. The Domesday Book Online (www.domesdaybook.co.uk)
70. Templar History: Richard I (www.templarhistory.com/richard.html)
80. Monarchs and Monasteries: Knowledge and Power in Medieval France (www.loc.gov/exhibits/bnf/bnf0003.html)