



Britain in Middle Ages

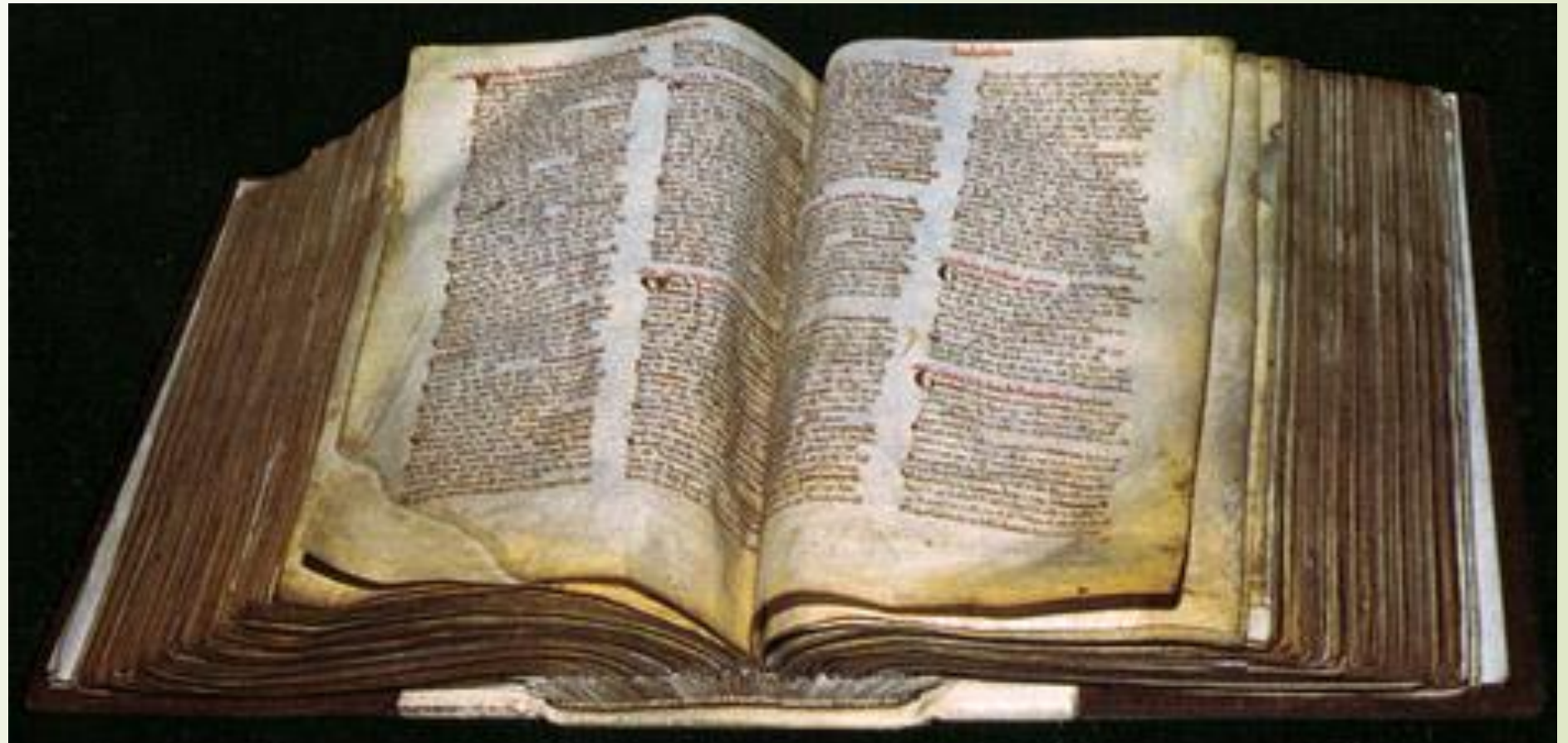
- Early Middle Ages
- Late Middle Ages



William the Conqueror

- New foreign aristocracy captured power and lands
- Three languages were spoken in the country: English (common people), Latin (church) and French (law and authority)
- Period of feudalism and vassalage started
- Knightly service was a condition of tenure of land
- Two social groups opposed each other: lords and “poor people”. Poor people were:
 - peasants (villeins, free holders, cottages and serfs);
 - slaves

Domesday Book: first complete picture of the distribution of land on the British Isles



The Royal House of Normandy (XI-XII cent.)

**William I the Conqueror
(1066-1087)**

- **Conquest of England**
- **Domesday Book**
- **Feudal Hierarchy**

William II (1087-1100)

- A cruel soldier

Henry I (1100-1135)

- Effective ruler
- Introduced some government and tax reforms



Social, cultural and political implications of the Norman Conquest:

- A political unification of the country and the centralization of the government: a strong royal government and feudal dependence;
- The supreme power of the king over his vassals;
- The establishment of the feudal hierarchy and further development between the King and the barons;
- An emergence of the English Common Law (from precedent to precedent);
- The making of Parliament
- Meaningful linguistic changes


The House of Plantagenet (XII-XIV cent.)

Planta genista





Plantagenet Kings:

- Henry II
 - Richard I the Lion-Heart
 - John Lackland
 - Henry III
 - Edward I the Hammer of Scots
 - Edward II
 - Edward III
- 

Henry II (1154-1189)

- First official conflict with the Church;
- Thomas Becket was canonized



Richard I the Lion-Heart

- Great military leader and warrior
- Took part in the Crusades in the Holy Land
- Inspired Walter Scott to write "Ivanhoe"



John Lackland (1199-1216)

- ❑ Hard-working administrator seen as a loser by historians
- ❑ Barons openly opposed him: did not pay taxes and raised an army of knights
- ❑ Sealed Magna Carta Libertata in 1215: the foundation stone of English liberty
- ❑ Magna Carta restricted King's rights and proclaimed the power of law over the free people of the country



Henry III (1216-1272): 56 years in power

- ❑ Unpopular king, bad with money matters
- ❑ Started a civil war with his barons
- ❑ “Oxford Provisions” were signed to protect the knights from barons
- ❑ 1265 – First Parliament with “commons” was formed
- ❑ Earl Simon de Montfort is seen as a progenitor of modern parliamentary democracy



Edward I the Hammer of Scots: 1272-1307

- 1295 – Model Parliament was formed (barons and church + citizens and knights)
- He succeeded in imposing the English rule on Wales
- He seized the Stone of Destiny from the Scone Abbey, but failed to subdue the Scots

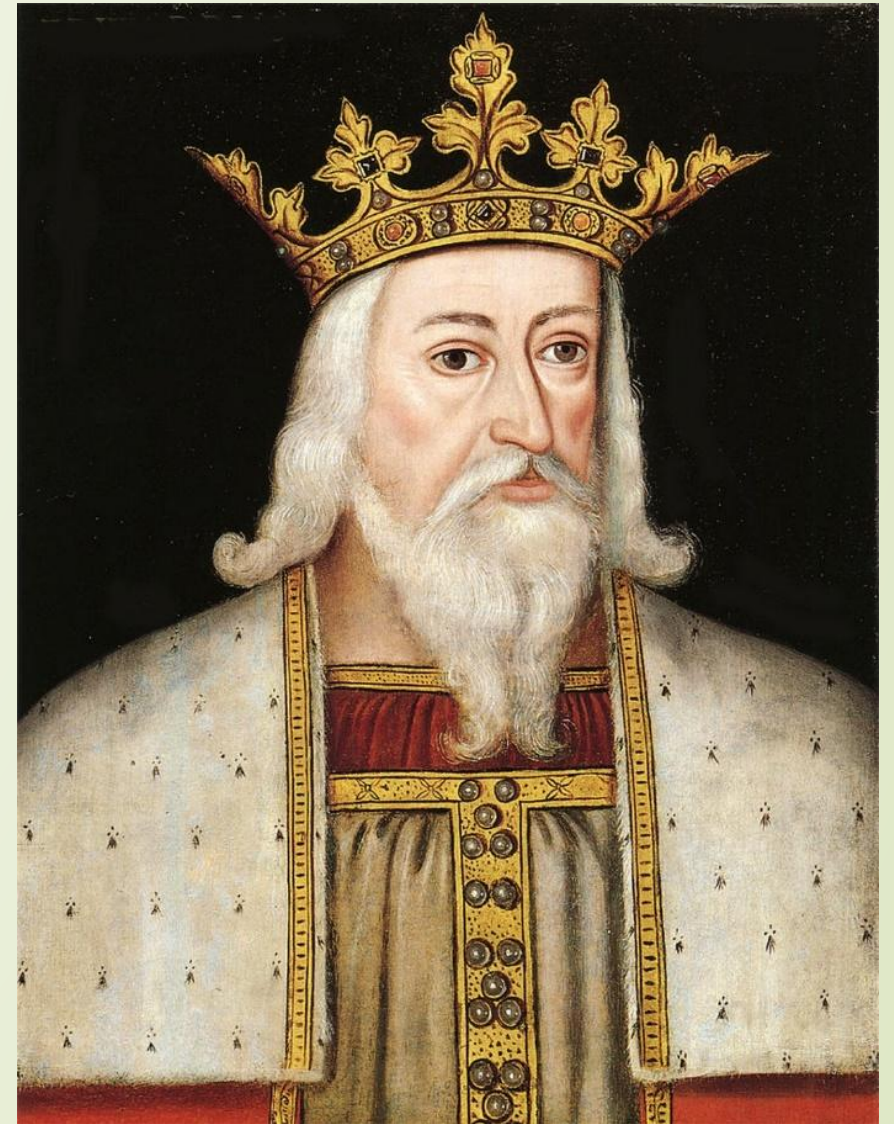


Stone of Destiny



Edward III (1327-1377)

- Instituted the Order of the Garter and cultivated chivalry and tournaments
- Started the Hundred Years' War for the French throne
- During his reign, there was an outbreak of plague. the Black Death destroyed 1/3 of the English population





The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

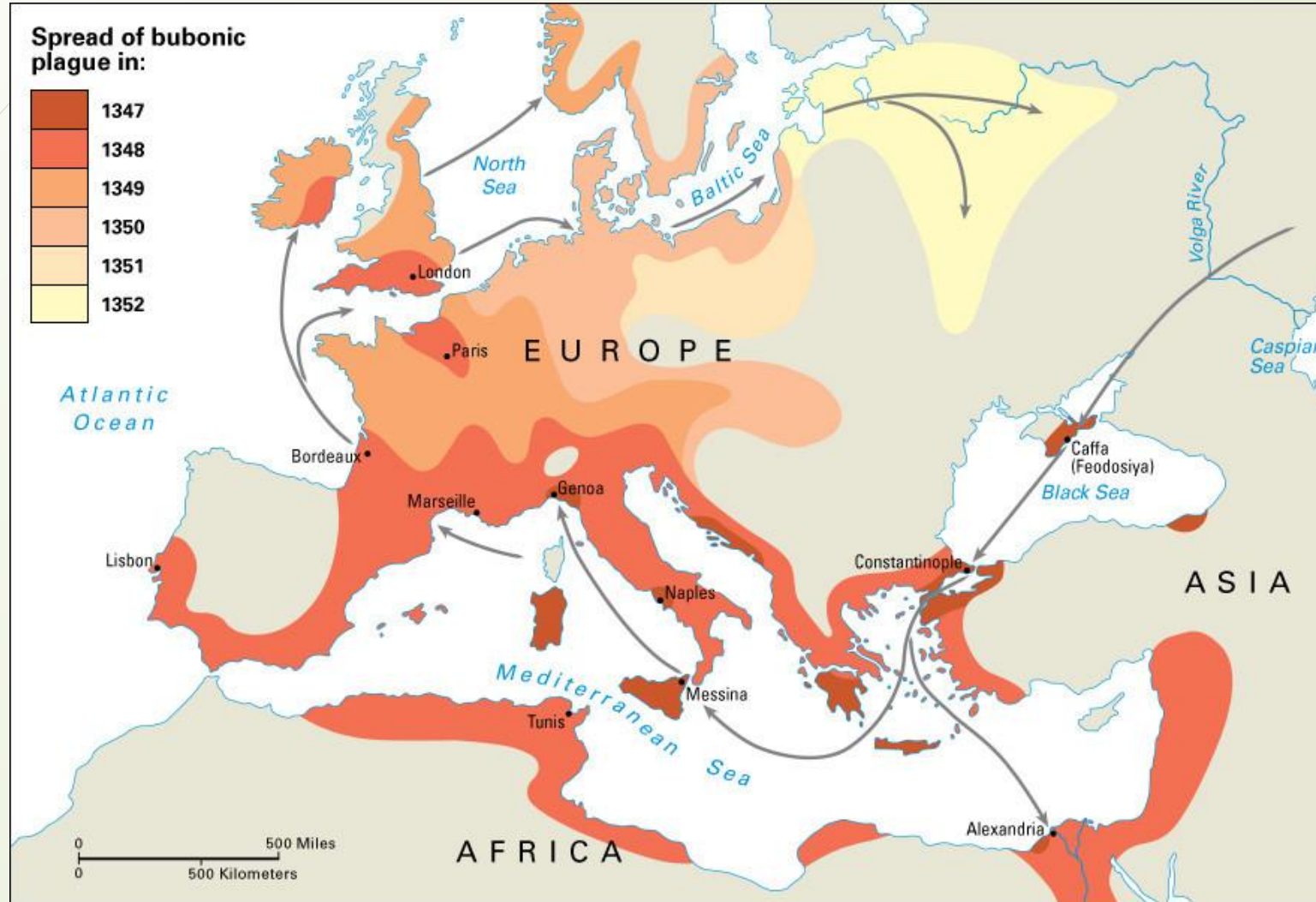
- a series of conflicts waged from 1337 to 1453 by the House of Plantagenet, rulers of the Kingdom of England, against the House of Valois, rulers of the Kingdom of France, over the succession to the French throne
- feudal armies had been largely replaced by professional troops
- Although primarily a dynastic conflict, the war gave impetus to ideas of French and English nationalism
- European population was reduced drastically
- The dissatisfaction of English nobles gradually lead to the War of the Roses



The Hundred Years' War: Results

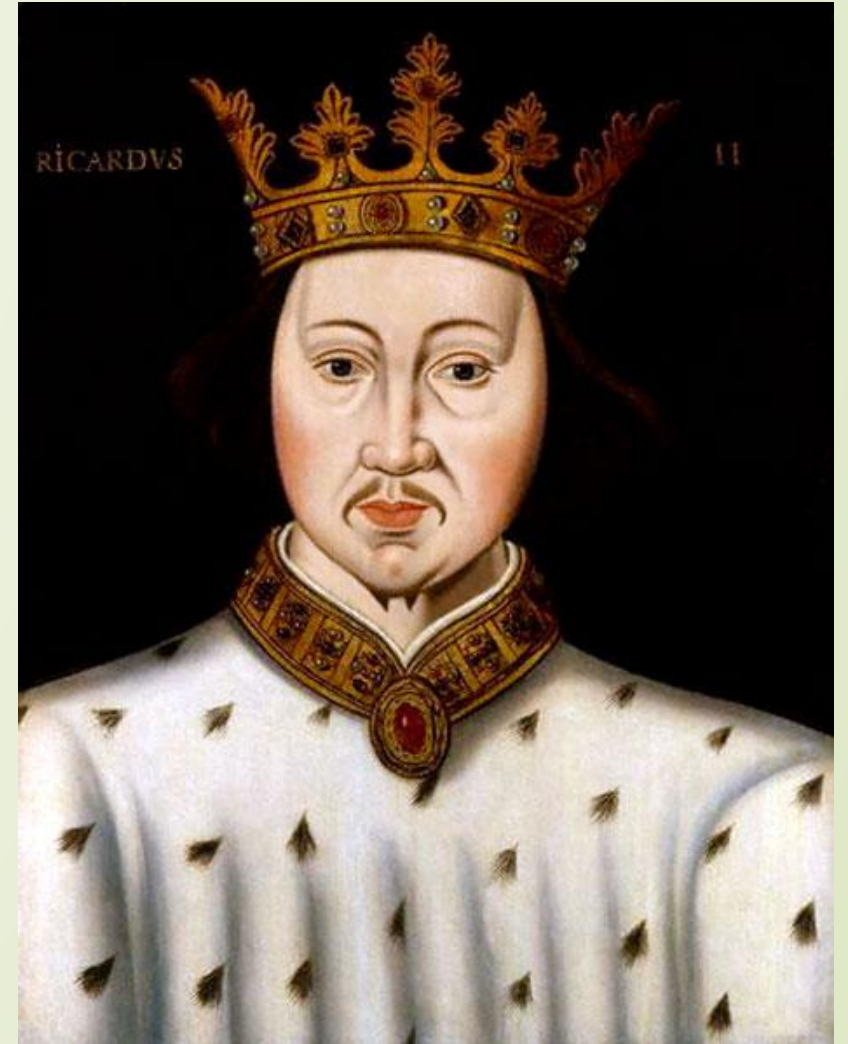
- English claims to the French throne *de facto* abandoned
- Strengthening of the French monarchy
- Rise of nationalistic identities in England and France
- Decline of chivalry
- Decline of feudalism

Black Death in Europe



Richard II

- Social unrest because of political and military affairs
- Polltax of 1381
- Massive rebellions led by Wat Tyler and John Ball
- John Wycliffe: the first reformer of the Church, killed the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor



The Great Peasants' Revolt. 1381

John Ball

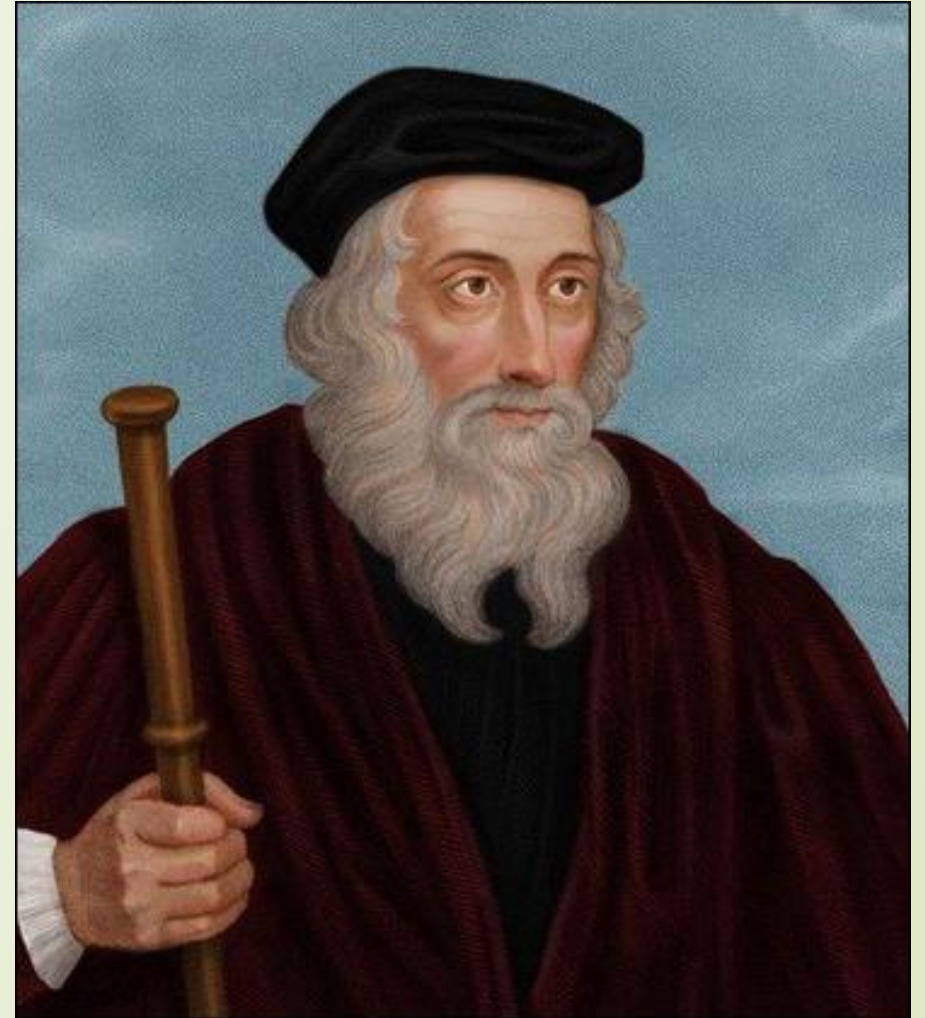


Wat Tyler



John Wycliffe: the first reformer of the Church

- First translator of the Bible
- He was against property as such
- “When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?”
- “Englishmen learn Christ’s law best in English. Moses heard God’s law in his own tongue, so did Christ’s apostles”



XIV century: culture

- Geoffrey Chaucer completes the “Canterbury Tales”
- The developing of the English language as a national language
- Robin Hood’s epoch

