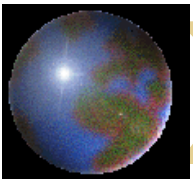


Middle Ages 449-1485

The Anglo-Saxon
Period 449-1066

The Medieval Period
1066-1485

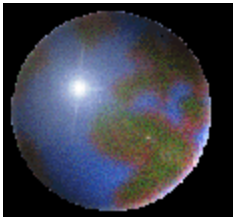




The Middle Ages 449-1485

- Characteristics of the period
- Enormous upheaval and change in England
- Reigns of some of the most famous and infamous kings
- Time of disastrous wars, both internal and external
- Time of foreign invasion
- Time of painful reconsolidation and emergence of England as nation

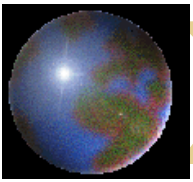




Anglo-Saxon Period

“Anglo-Saxon England was born of warfare, remained forever a military society, and came to its end in battle.” - J. R. Lander

In a society dominated by aggression, what would you expect to be the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward family life, the role of women, art, literature, ethics and work?



Celtic Invasions

Around 500 BC two groups of Celts invaded British Isles

Brythons (Britons) settled island of Britain

Gaels settled on Ireland

Picts settled in Scotland

Organized into clans; loyal to chieftain

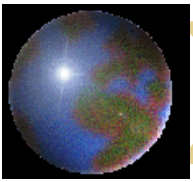
Religion – **animism** (from Latin for “spirit”)

Believed spirits controlled every aspect of life

Druids – priests who settled arguments, presided over religious rituals, and memorized and recited poems about past

Conquered by Romans in the first century A.D. and became part of the Roman Empire.

Druids thought that the soul was immortal, passing in death from death from one person to another. Considered mistletoe and oak trees sacred and generally held their rites in old oak forests.



Roman Invasions

55 BC Julius Caesar invaded Britain

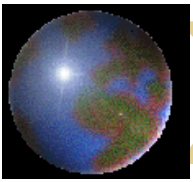
43 AD Emperor Claudius invaded; marks
beginning of Roman Britain

Began to Christianize the Celts; Celtic
religion vanished

Controlled world from Hadrian's Wall to
Arabia



Roman
Helmet

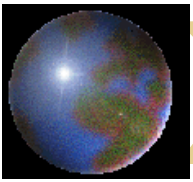


Roman Invasions: What legacy did the Romans leave?

System of roads/highways – height of the empire, one could travel on post roads and use same currency from Northumbria to Middle East; not possible since

Provided an organized society which kept other invaders out for several centuries

410 Rome threatened and Romans pulled out of Britain



Germanic Invasions - 449

Angles/Saxons
from Germany

Angles, Saxons, and Jutes

Jutes from
Denmark

Deep sea fishermen and farmers

Britons no match, but didn't go quietly

Pushed west to Wales

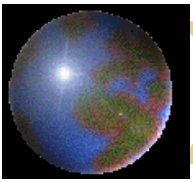
King Arthur was probably a Celtic chieftain

Language

Common language now known as Old

English (similar to Dutch and German)

Religion – pagan – similar to Norse mythology

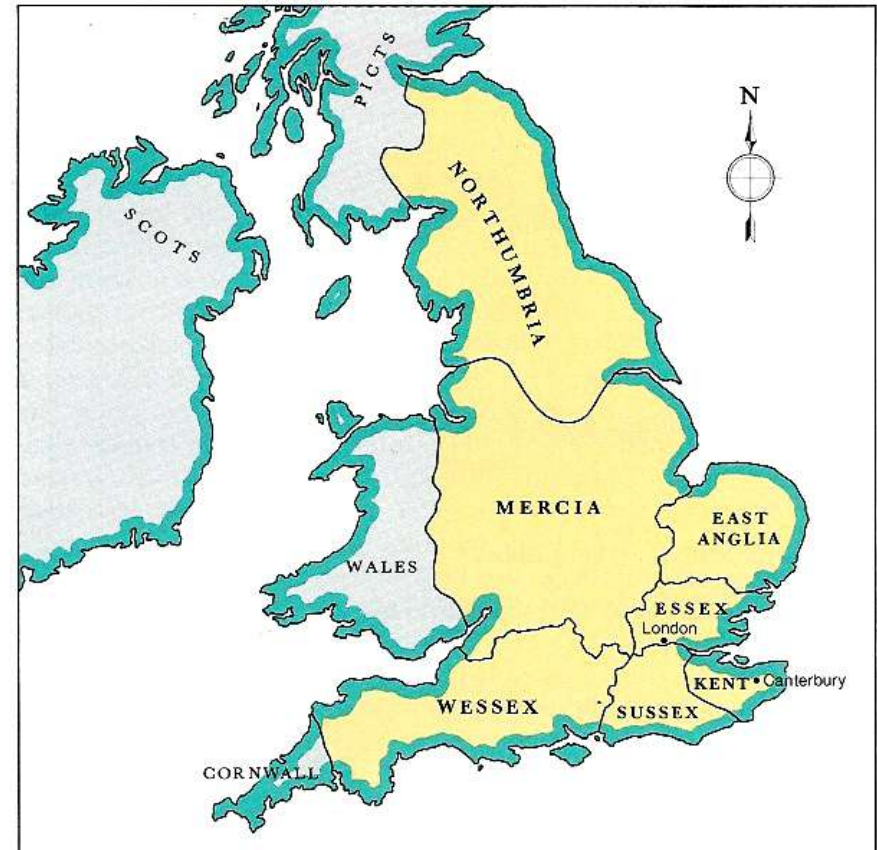


Germanic Invasions - 449

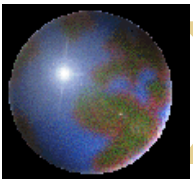
Created the Anglo-Saxon England ("Engla land") that lasted until 1066

Divided into separate kingdoms:
Kent, Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex most important

United themselves in last two centuries to resist invasions from Vikings, or Norsemen (whom they called Danes).



Seven kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon Period:
Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, East Anglia,
Essex, Sussex, and Kent

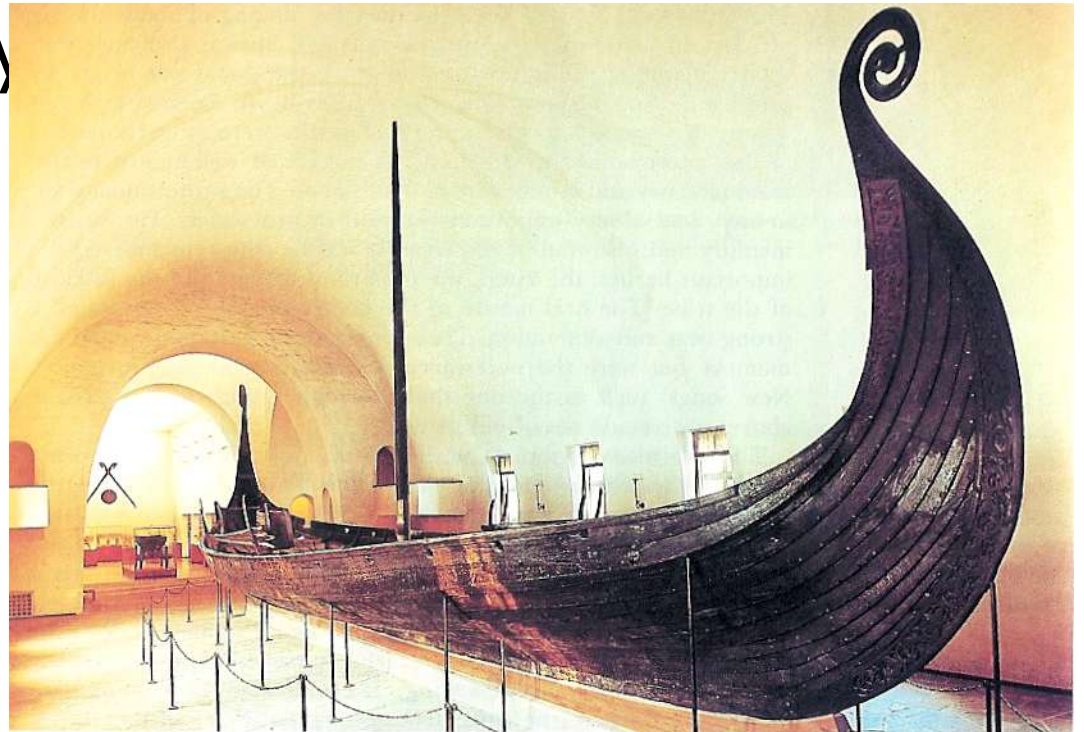


Viking Invasions 8th-12th Centuries

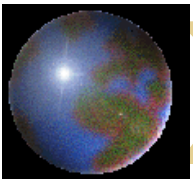
Invaders from Norway
and Denmark

Anglo-Saxons
unprepared for
ferocity of Vikings

Common prayer:
“From the furor of
the Norsemen, Oh
Lord protect us.”



Viking Ship, known as the Oseberg
Ship, dates 825 AD.



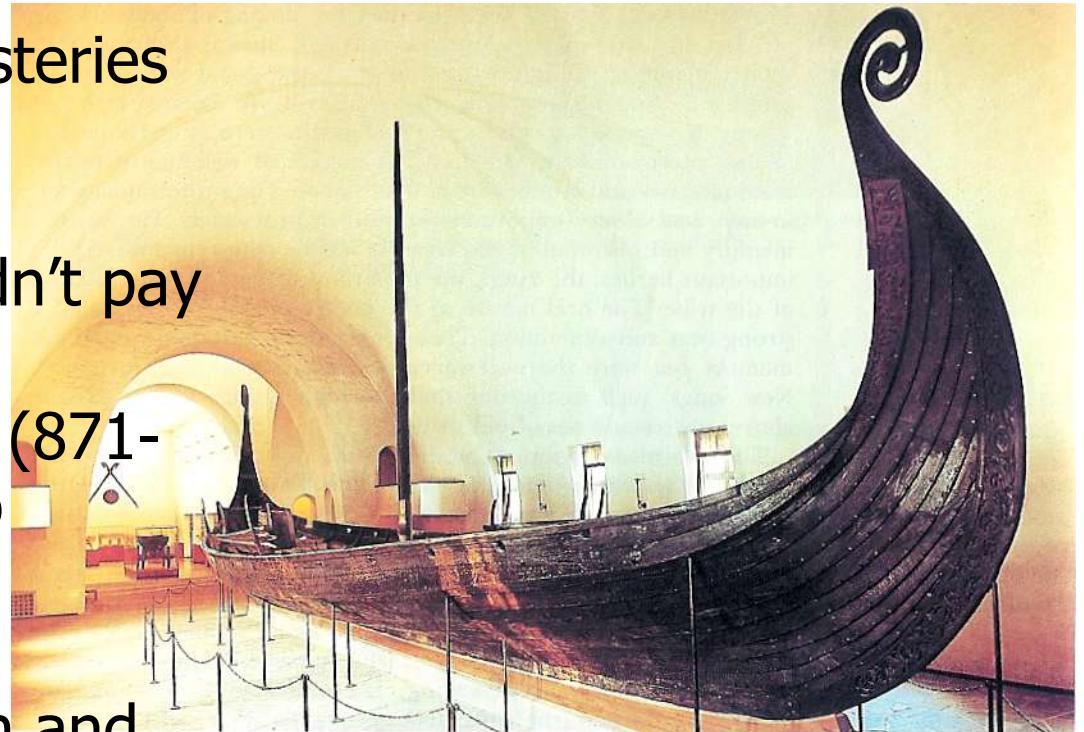
Viking Invasions 8th-12th Centuries

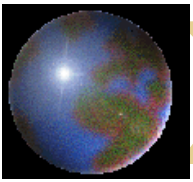
Vikings destroyed monasteries
and sacred object

Slaughtered everyone in
settlements that couldn't pay
enough to them

King Alfred of Wessex (871-
899) forced Vikings to
northern England

Danelaw – dividing line
between Viking Britain and
Anglo-Saxon Britain





Anglo-Saxon Literature

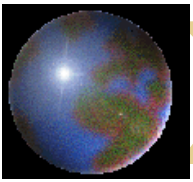
Oral tradition – poems and song committed to memory and performed by scops, bards, gleemen, or minstrels

With coming of Christian Church, written literature began to evolve

Two important traditions in literature

heroic tradition – celebrates heroes

elegiac tradition – passing of earlier, better times



Anglo-Saxon Civilization

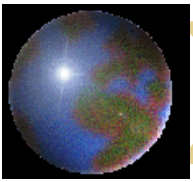
Common language

Shared a heroic ideal; set of traditional heroes

Admired men of outstanding courage

Loyalty to leader and tribe

Fierce personal valor



Anglo-Saxon Civilization

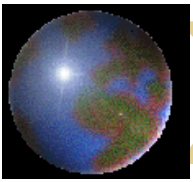
Persons of rank received with grave courtesy

Ruler generous to those who remain loyal

Everyone aware of shortness of life & passing of all things in the world

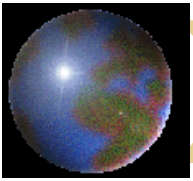
Impersonal, irresistible fate determined most of life (Wyrd or Fate)

Heroic human will & courage allowed individuals to control their own response to fate



Anglo-Saxon Literature

Beowulf – one of few pieces that survived. Priests and monks were the only ones who could write; stories survival depended upon them. The church was not too eager to preserve literature that was pagan in nature, so historians believe they either ignored it or changed it. This may account for the mixture of Christian and pagan elements in *Beowulf*.



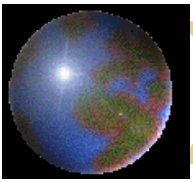
Anglo-Saxon Literature

Beowulf: England:: *Iliad* and
Odyssey : Greece

Oral art – handed down with
changes and
embellishments

Composed in Old English
probably in Northumbria in
northeast England
sometime between 700-750

Depicts a world from the early
6th century

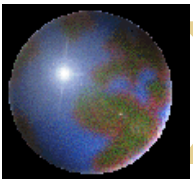


Anglo-Saxon Literature

Poem based on early Celtic and Scandinavian folk legends

Scenery described is from Northumbria; assumed that poet was Northumbrian monk

Only manuscript available dates from the year 1000; discovered in the 18th century



Characteristics of Epic Hero

Is significant and glorified

Is on a quest

Has superior or supernhuman strength, intelligence,
and/or courage

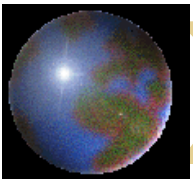
Is ethical

Risks death for glory or for the greater good of society

Performs brave deeds

Is a strong and responsible leader

Reflects the ideals of a particular society



Old English Poetics

Alliteration – repetition of consonant and vowel sounds at the beginning of words

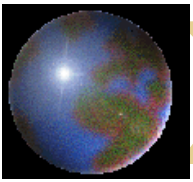
Caesura – a natural pause or break in the middle of the line of poetry and joined by the use of a repeated vowel or consonant sound

Out of the marsh // from the foot of misty

Hills and bogs // bearing God's hatred

Grendel came // hoping to kill

Anyone he could trap // on this trip to high Herot



Old English Poetics

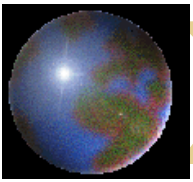
Kennings – a metaphorical phrase used to replace a concrete noun. Ready made descriptive compound words that evoke vivid images

Kennings are formed by
prepositional phrases
possessive phrases
compound words

Preposition phrase – Giver of knowledge

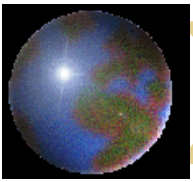
Possessive phrase – mankind's enemy

Compound word – sea path



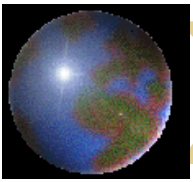
Why the “Middle Ages”

“The term Middle Ages as a description of the thousand-year period between the 5th and 15th centuries – between the end of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance – is at once an oversimplification and a distortion of a long and complex period of European history. Coined by Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers, the label Middle Ages (or its Latin form, the Medieval period) implies a mere transitional era, a long interruption in the continuity of Western history during which the classical culture of Greece and Rome, waiting to be revived in the Renaissance, lay dormant or dead.



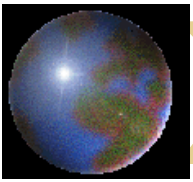
Why the “Middle Ages”

From our perspective, we can see the Middle Ages in more positive terms, not as an interruption but as a fertile and dynamic period that produced a distinctive and permanently valuable culture of its own. It was more varied than a single, reductive label would imply. There is a certain unity in this long span of history that justifies our considering it as a single period, but within this unity was enormous diversity. Only the very early Middle Ages, from the sixth to the ninth centuries, were characterized by the cultural inertia often attributed to the whole period.



Why the “Middle Ages”

The collapse of the Roman Empire left Europe for a time in chaos, with its economy, its social organization, and its culture brought almost to a halt. But even these “Dark Ages” were not without their rays of light, especially in areas where survivals of the Roman heritage or the Church preserved pockets of culture. In retrospect, we can see forces working during this fallow period that were to emerge later in a new and vital form of social organization. The new organization began to take shape in about the tenth century and led by the thirteenth century to a flowering of art and culture that anticipated and rivaled the Renaissance without forfeiting its own distinctively medieval character.



Why the “Middle Ages”

The formidable challenge to the early Middle Ages was to find a mode of social organization to replace the Roman Empire and to weave together the various threads of European culture: the remnants of Latin civilization, Christianity, and the northern, Germanic, “barbarian” tradition. The solution that gradually emerged over a period of several centuries lay in two institutions, the Roman Church and feudalism.”

Literature of The Western World Volume I: The Ancient World Through the Renaissance. Ed. Brian Wilkie and James Hurt. New York: University of Illinois, 1984. 1097.