



GOVERNMENT IN BRITANNIA FROM THE ROMANS TO THE MODEL PARLIAMENT

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ROMAN BRITAIN

- Island of **Britannia**, and the native **Britons** who lived there, were ruled by the **Roman empire**
- Conquered in **43 CE** under **Emperor Claudius**
- Roman troops pulled out by **410 CE** as Rome declined
- Established city of **Londinium**
- Ruled according to **Roman law**
- **Germanic tribes** began invading Britannia in the **early 400s** as Rome declined



THE ANGLO-SAXONS

- A collection of Germanic tribes (**Angles, Saxons, Jutes**, and more)
 - From Angeln, Lower Saxony, Jutland peninsula, and elsewhere
 - Invaded along the eastern and southern coasts
 - Settled in farming villages rather than in trading cities
 - Pushed the bulk of native Britons to the west (to places like Cornwall and Wales)
 - Spoke **Old English**
- Eventually converted to Christianity



Helmet found at the Sutton Hoo archaeological dig (a burial site). It probably belonged to Raedwald of East Anglia (died circa 624 CE).



KING ALFRED'S RESPONSE TO THE VIKING INVASIONS

- Anglo-Saxon kings ruled various kingdoms, like Sussex and Wessex
- Alfred of Wessex – became first English king, **Alfred the Great**
 - Helped to repel **Viking invasions** which started circa **800 CE**
 - Set up the **burghal system**
 - Alfred lived ca. 849-899, reigned 871-899



BURGHAL SYSTEM UNDER THE ANGLO-SAXONS

○ **Burhs (boroughs)** established under Alfred the Great

- Fortified towns
- Expensive to man and maintain

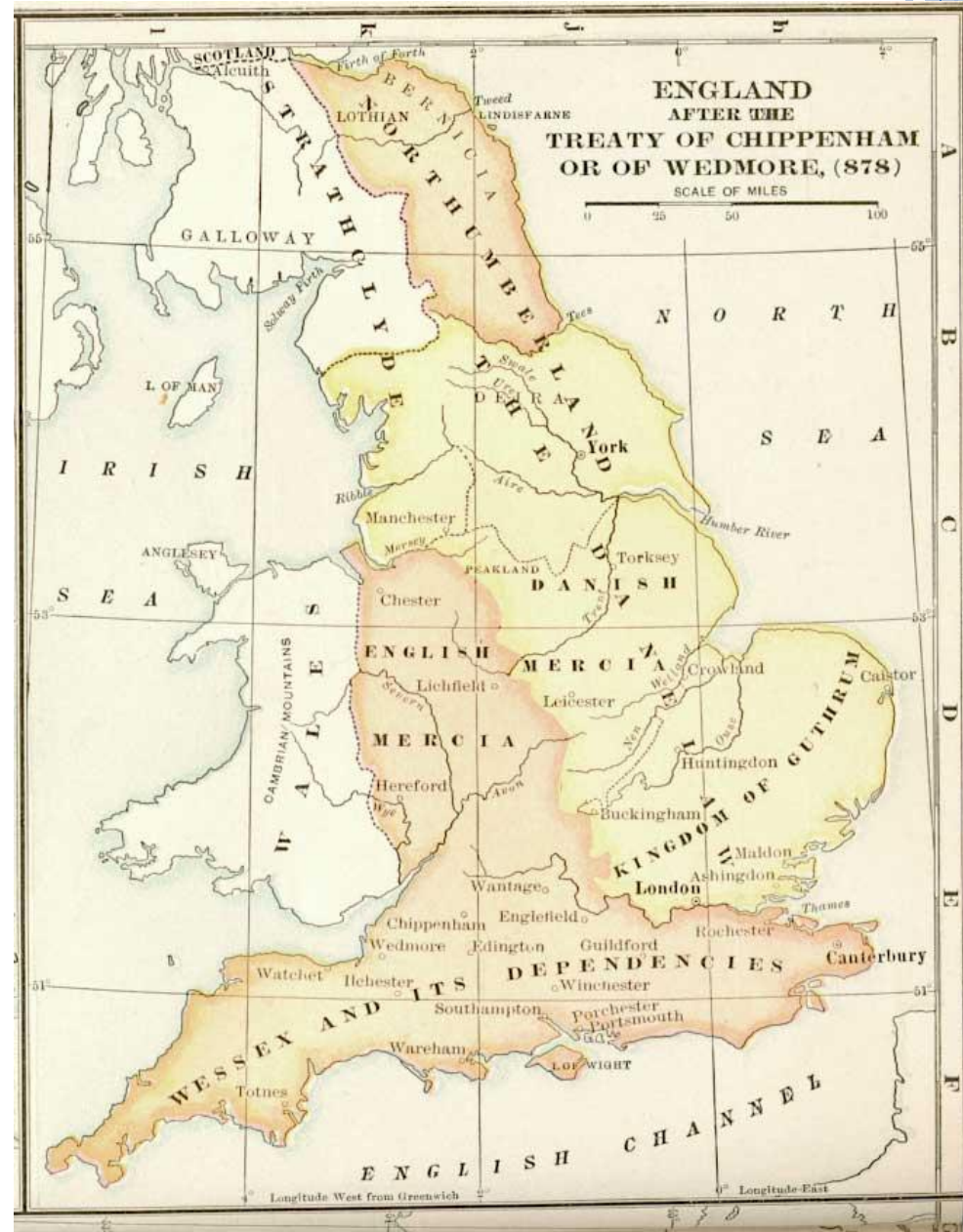
○ **Shires**

- Administrative districts
 - *Shire* is synonymous with *county*
- Shire was expected to pay for the support and maintenance of its borough
- Shires were governed by a *shire reeve*, or *sheriff*
 - Reeve – Term dating back to Old English that means a representative of the crown



DANELAW

- **Danelaw** describes the territory ruled by the Danes (**Vikings**), the treaties between the Danes and the Anglo-Saxons, and the laws of the Danish settlers
- **Weregeld** (*were = man, geld = money*) – payment for the death of a person
 - The higher the person's rank, the higher the payment
- But we would not recognize most of the Danish system of law and government



11TH-CENTURY KINGS OF ENGLAND

Canute (Cnut) the Great

- Reigned 1016-1035

Harold Harefoot (Harold I)

- Reigned 1035-1040

Harthacnut

- Reigned 1040-1042

Edward the Confessor

- Reigned 1042-1066

Harold Godwinson (Harold II)

- Reigned January-October, 1066



NORMAN CONQUEST, 1066

- **Edward the Confessor** died without a clear heir
 - Plenty of people wanted the throne
 - **Harold Godwinson** ruled for most of 1066
 - His sister had been the wife of Edward the Confessor
 - Considered the last Anglo-Saxon king of England
- **William the Conqueror (William I)**
 - Illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy and cousin of Edward the Confessor
 - Won English throne from Harold Godwinson at the **Battle of Hastings**
 - Crowned on Christmas Day, 1066
- England under **William I**
 - **Centralized government**
 - Kept 1/5 of the land for himself and divided the rest among his loyal followers
 - King of England, but a vassal to the king of France (because of Normandy)
 - William I and the French lords under him spoke French
 - Development of **Middle English** (combination of Old English and French)



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What group ruled the Britons from 43 to 410 CE?
2. What group(s) invaded Britannia beginning in the early 400s?
3. What group settled in England beginning around 800 CE?
4. What was the burghal system?
5. How and why did the Normans conquer England in 1066?
6. How did William the Conqueror establish civilized government in England?



HENRY II (RULED ENGLAND, 1154-1189)

- **Henry II** married **Eleanor of Aquitaine**
 - Added **Aquitaine** to his lands in **France**
- Henry II's development of the English legal system
 - **Circuit courts**
 - **Royal judges** visited each part of the realm at least once a year
 - These royal judges heard legal cases and collected taxes
 - Slowly, these judges started creating **common law** throughout the realm by using common sense and establishing precedent
 - **Jury system**
 - No more trial by combat, etc.
 - Loyal, respected citizens (men) who knew the parties in a dispute answered the judge's questions regarding the case
 - Juries became extremely popular and spread
 - Juries were part of the royal court system only



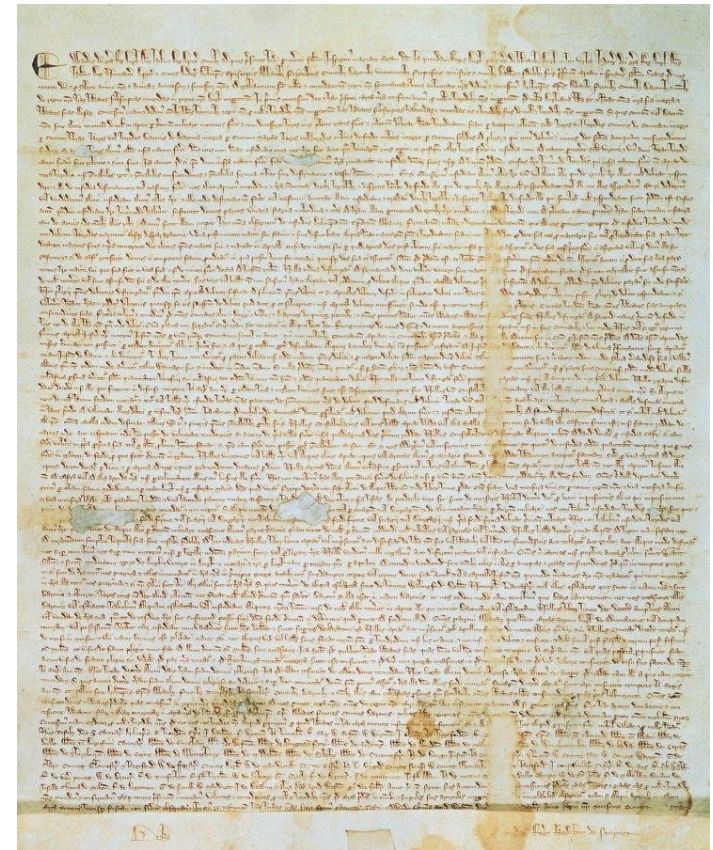
KING JOHN (RULED 1199-1216)

- **Henry II** was succeeded to the throne by his son, **Richard the Lionheart**
 - **Richard the Lionheart (Richard I)** spent most of his time in France or fighting in the Third Crusade
 - **Fun fact:** A lot of historians believe that the Robin Hood stories are set in the time when King Richard was abroad, and John was left in England
 - Richard died, leaving the English throne to his brother, John
- **King John**
 - Foreign relations
 - Lost all of his northern French lands to Philip Augustus
 - Domestic issues
 - Unfair ruler with harsh tax policies (taxes used to finance failed foreign wars)
 - Tried to take power from the Church
 - Threatened the self-governing charters of towns
 - Nobles eventually had enough and revolted



MAGNA CARTA (1215)

- Nobles met with King John at **Runnymede**, just west of London
- Forced **King John** to sign the **Magna Carta** (Great Charter)
- **Due process of law**
 - **No unlawful seizure** of a freeman's property
 - Right to a **jury trial**
- Important idea:
 - In times of crisis, a monarch could be forced to relinquish or share power with others in order to get what he/she wanted (in this case, tax revenue)
 - Magna Carta granted power to nobles
 - Later, other groups would move to have the rights of Magna Carta applied to themselves



MODEL PARLIAMENT, 1295

- **King John** succeeded by his son, **Henry III** (reigned 1216-1272)
 - **Henry III** succeeded by his son, **Edward I** (reigned 1272-1307)
- **Edward I**
 - At war with the French, Scots, and Welsh, and needed money for these wars
 - Called a meeting of a **parliament** to establish taxes to support these wars
 - Edward I knew that the nobles did not want to pay more tax money
 - He needed another group to check the power of the wealthy, powerful lords
- **Model Parliament**, November, 1295
 - Edward I summoned **bishops** and **nobles (lords)**
 - Edward I also summoned two **burgesses** (wealthy, property-owning non-nobles) and two **knights** from each county (a.k.a. shire)
 - This mixture of **commoners** and the **nobility** served as a model for later parliaments



DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENT

- **14th century**
 - Kings continued to call together this mixture of people when new taxes were needed
- **Houses of Parliament** gradually developed
 - **House of Lords** – nobles
 - **House of Commons** – burgesses and knights
- **Parliament** was started by Edward I to check the power of the lords
 - Gradually, Parliament became powerful
 - Parliament grew to be a check on the power of the monarchy
- Future monarchs would have to deal with the power of Parliament



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did English law develop under Henry II?
2. How did royal judges create common law?
3. Describe how early juries functioned.
4. Why was King John unpopular?
5. What rights were established under the Magna Carta?
6. In creating the Model Parliament, how did Edward I attempt to check the power of the lords?

