**The Norman Invasion and Normanization (1066–1087)**

* **William I the Conqueror**:
  + Brought a new aristocracy to England, mainly from Normandy and other regions of France.
  + Strengthened the aristocracy and pursued reforms within the Church.
  + Latin and Norman French became the languages of government and the Church, while the majority of people continued to speak English (Anglo-Saxon).
* **Feudal System**:
  + William I implemented a feudal system, where land was granted by the king to nobles in exchange for military service and loyalty.
  + The king retained large portions of land for himself, making sure to maintain control over his nobles.
  + Castles and knights became central to the military organization.
  + This system was based on loyalty and military service, forming the basis for medieval society.
* **Domesday Book (1086)**:
  + A comprehensive survey of land holdings and resources across England, essentially a census for taxation purposes.
  + The book was used to assess the value of land and settle disputes, and it was regarded as a permanent and unalterable record.

**Key Norman Kings**

* **Henry I (1100–1135)**:
  + Son of William I, born in England, first Norman king to be born in the country.
  + Signed the **Coronation Charter of Liberty**, a precursor to the Magna Carta, which limited his royal power.
  + Centralized the administration of both England and Normandy.
* **Henry II (1154–1189)**:
  + Expanded his realm to include Normandy, Touraine, Gascony, Maine, and Poitou.
  + Famously involved in the **Becket Affair**:
    - Attempted to bring clergy under secular jurisdiction, leading to a conflict with Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury.
    - Becket was murdered by knights who believed they were acting on the king’s wishes, though Henry never formally ordered it.
    - Becket was later canonized as a saint, and Henry did penance for his involvement in the event.
* **Richard I the Lionheart (1189–1199)**:
  + Known for his popularity despite spending little time in England.
  + Spent much of his reign on the **Crusades** and later struggled to reclaim lands from France, including the loss of Normandy and Anjou.
* **John I (1199–1216)**:
  + Richard I’s brother, known for losing Normandy to France.
  + Faced significant discontent due to heavy taxation, leading to the signing of the **Magna Carta (1215)**, which:
    - Guaranteed "freemen" protection from arbitrary rule and a right to a fair trial.
    - Limited the king’s power, forcing him to respect legal procedures and obligations.

**Edward I and the Rise of Parliament**

* **Edward I (1272–1307)**:
  + Focused on resolving the issues of Scottish and Welsh independence.
  + Notable for creating the **first real English Parliament** to address taxation and other national issues, marking the establishment of the **House of Commons**.
  + The parliament included knights, wealthy freemen, and merchants from towns.
* **Scottish and Welsh Conquests**:
  + Faced resistance from Scotland, particularly from **William Wallace**, who defeated the English at the Battle of Bannockburn (1314).
  + Edward I also brought Wales under control and established the title **Prince of Wales** for the eldest son of the ruling monarch (a practice that continues today).

**The Legend of Robin Hood**

* **Robin Hood**:
  + Emerged as a symbol of Saxon resistance to Norman rule.
  + According to legend, Robin Hood was an outlaw who lived in Sherwood Forest and fought against the corrupt Norman nobility.
  + He famously "robbed from the rich and gave to the poor," symbolizing resistance to feudal oppression.
  + While much of his story is legendary, historical evidence suggests that a criminal named **Robin Hood** was active in Yorkshire around 1230.

**Key Takeaways**

* The **Norman Conquest** radically altered English society, especially with the introduction of the feudal system and a new aristocracy.
* **Normanization** involved both the restructuring of the ruling classes and the gradual transformation of English culture, language, and governance.
* The **Magna Carta** and the rise of **Parliament** were significant milestones in limiting royal power and laying the foundation for constitutional principles.
* The cultural and political shifts of this period also led to the creation of national myths like that of **Robin Hood**, reflecting the struggle of the common people against the new Norman rulers.

**References:**

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