

The High Middle Ages

Synopsis

The High Middle Ages were plagued by famine, disease, and warfare. The people of Europe lived under a feudal system with the king holding supreme power. In 1215, powerful lords formed an allegiance and forced King John of England to sign the Magna Carta, which limited royal power and established an advisory council—the precursor of modern-day parliaments. There was also an increase in the power and prestige of the Church, which instituted codes of behavior limiting violence between feuding knights, and Pope Urban II instigated the first in a series of Crusades to regain control of Jerusalem. Famine and the Black Death wiped out almost half the population of Europe. Adding to the heavy mortality were wars between feuding knights and the Hundred Years' War between the monarchies of France and England. This program presents the pivotal cultural, religious, and political developments of an era that significantly influenced European history.

Questions

1. Describe what life was like after Charlemagne's Empire was divided in 817.
2. Describe the structure of a feudal society.
3. Explain/Describe the Norman presence in Europe.
4. Explain the role of pope Urban II in the shaping of European involvement in the Middle East.

