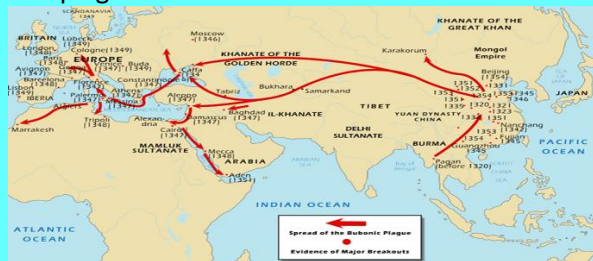


Power of the church versus the monarchy

The plague



In the summer of 1348, a ship arrived at the busy port of Weymouth in Dorset. The crew were unaware that along with their goods the ship was carrying a deadly cargo: the Black Death. Within a few days, hundreds of men, women and children would be infected. Within a few months, around one-third of the population of England would be dead!



The Magna Carta



1215 - King John is most famous as the king who was forced to agree to sign the Great Document or Magna Carta at Runnymede - a set of laws he had to follow giving rights to the people. This was after many conflicts with barons and the Church.

Key terms

- Chancellor - The King's chief servant and had many jobs including managing finances and judging legal cases.
- Anoint - To give spiritual power to a monarch or priest by pouring holy oil on them.
- Criminous clerk - Any of the clergy, who had committed a crime. They could claim the right to be tried in a Church court.
- Excommunication - When a person is banned from church services and Christian burial. A medieval person believed they would go to hell if they died as an excommunicant.
- Legate - A representative of the pope, with a lot of power. A legate could remove a bishop from their job and issue sentences of excommunication without asking the pope
- Statute of Labourers – A law that stopped peasants from asking for pay rises or looking for new jobs.



Thomas Becket - In 1162 Thomas Becket was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by **Henry II**. He became a strong defender of the Church and the rights of clergymen. This was contrary to the loyalty Henry had expected from Becket. At the time the Church held great wealth and power over monarchs and their people. With the support of the Pope in Rome, Becket represented an even greater power. In rage, Henry is said to have shouted: "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Four knights heard this and, in a misplaced effort to please Henry, rode to Canterbury, and murdered Becket at the altar of the Cathedral on 29 December 1170.

Wat Tyler – After not being allowed to ask for new jobs or pay rises and being charged heavy taxes, the peasants revolted. They were led by people who would have been important in their villages – reeves, priests and even local landowners. They sent letters round the countryside calling for people to join them. On 14 June, 1381, **King Richard II** (who was only 14 years old) went to meet a group of rebels. They demanded that he dismiss his advisers and abolish serfdom. Richard agreed. Some of the rebels went home. On 15 June, Richard went to meet Wat Tyler, who had refused to accept the deal. Tyler demanded that laws should be less harsh, the Church's wealth given to the poor and all men should be free and equal. The Lord Mayor of London, attacked Tyler. As he died, Tyler ordered his army to attack, but Richard stepped forward and said: I will be your king and leader. He promised to abolish serfdom. The peasants trusted him and went home. Richard did not keep his promises. Serfdom was not abolished. Royal armies put down the revolts. Hundreds of rebels were hanged.