

# Medieval history significance



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Medieval History Significance. The terms “ Middle Ages” and “ medieval” are very inexact terms which can be used of a very long period from about 500 AD until about 1500 AD but the most important is undoubtedly the middle period from about 1000 until about 1300. (Keen: 1969, pp. 11-20) This middle period is significant because of a number of events which have had lasting significance for Europe and the wider world. There are at least five major events which fall into this category: The so -called “ Great Schism” of 1056, the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the wave of Crusades that started in France in 1095, the formation of the Hanseatic league in Germany throughout the 1100s and the signing of the Magna Carta by King John in 1215. By the start of the eleventh century most of Europe was christianized, and the earlier period of Viking invasions and barbarian ransacking of Christian communities had ceased. Religion was an increasingly a key factor in the middle of the medieval age, and it affected daily life by providing stability, education and a cultural framework which covered almost the whole of the territory which had been claimed by Charlemagne in the ninth century. In 1056 religious unity was broken by a split between the Western and Eastern areas of Christendom and this resulted in the two separate Church traditions which we still have today: The Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Norman conquest brought French ways and culture to England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. William the Conqueror decided to have a survey made of England, and this resulted in the Domesday Book of 1086. This event was important because it provided a unique record into the lives of everyday people in medieval England. The Crusades which started in 1096 and continued in waves over the next hundred years are very significant indicators of a new kind of militant

Christian society which sought armed conflict with Muslim leaders who had taken over the holy city of Jerusalem. The crusades emphasized the opposition of these two world religions and resulted in mass migrations of huge numbers of people in search of glory and treasures under a religious pretext. A lot of modern religious strife can be traced back to these Crusades. The formation of the Hanseatic league around the ports of northern Europe in 1158 may not seem like a very important event but in fact it was a major factor in the expansion of European travel and trade to other parts of the world. As the population expanded and economic necessities grew acute, increased global trade by sea was one way that prosperity was guaranteed, and in the end it provided a route out of the middle ages into the modern world. Another hugely important event was the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 by King John of England. This was a key step in the setting up of a democratic society, with a parliament and well defined roles for citizens and royalty and it became one of the most influential documents in the world, inspiring other countries including the United States to formulate their own similar charters. References Keen, Maurice. The History of Medieval Europe. New York: Penguin, 1969.