

England from 1000-1200 intellectual

[History](#)



First Paper England from 1000 -1200 — intellectual. The period from 1000-1200 in England marks the shift from the Dark Ages to the Middle Ages. At this time the country was experiencing waves of invasion from Vikings and other Scandinavian groups, and large areas were ruled by Danish Kings. The arrival of William the Conqueror from the north of France in 1066 also brought in linguistic and cultural influences from the continent. Only the children of rich people were educated and this was usually in schools attached to churches and monasteries. The key intellectual figures of the day were mostly churchmen, because the Christian Church in those days was where education and scholarly activity took place. One of the most famous thinkers of the eleventh century was Anselm of Canterbury, who brought Italian ideas for monastic reform from his homeland in Italy. Some techniques and approaches borrowed from Aristotle and other classical authors were put to good use in arguing theological points against ideas regarded by the mainstream church as heretical, and against other religions like Judaism and Islam. This was an age when people started applying logic to their faith, and thinking more deeply about grammar and language. Latin was, of course, the preferred language for scholarly writings, but French was increasingly spoken by the upper classes because of the royal family's preference for this elite language rather than the rough and ready English that ordinary people spoke. Anselm's many writings used human logic, but put it to the service of faith: " The role of rational argument is to clarify the truth of what we believe, not to establish it in the first place." i Scholars were questioning the basis of key doctrines, like for example arguments to prove the existence of God, in order to be clear about what they were teaching. This paves the way for later thinking, which became secular, even though in <https://assignbuster.com/england-from-1000-1200-intellectual/>

the middle ages the arguments mostly deferred to the Christian mainstream doctrines. In 1085 the famous Domesday book was started, and this was a massive survey document which listed all the lands and assets that belonged to William the Conqueror. This task required a team of educated scribes to note down all the details, and it demonstrated a new interest in ensuring that taxes were gathered in to fund the royal lifestyle and various wars and projects that he was interested in. This book shows how important Churches were in society, since the land was parceled up into parishes and how much wealth was stored there and was one of the first examples of civil servants doing their job of keeping track of the country's wealth, using their own language and demonstrating a knowledge of secretarial skills. In 1096 Oxford University was founded, and this was the start of a new form of learning organization which was independent, and able to set its own academic standards. It was modeled on the craft guilds, which put undergraduates to work much in the same way as apprentices learned a trade. ii Scholars used to travel to the great cities of Europe like Paris, Oxford and Salerno to learn from the most famous teachers of the day. The subject of rhetoric, or the art of fine speaking based on classical authors such as Cicero was a favorite in this period, and the liberal arts curriculum developed out of a combination of Christian and classical textbooks. Oxford specialized in philology (the study of languages) while others had different specializations such Salerno, where medicine was a priority. iii Reflection

When reading about the history of ideas in England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries it is clear that the Church still has a large influence on what is taught at a basic level, but the arrival of the universities is important because it allows a separate place for thinking and discussing to take place.

An important function is then not just teaching, but also research, and although there is still a strongly Christian flavor to what it studied, there is also an opportunity for mixing of ideas from other parts of Europe. The idea of universities appears to have spread quickly, and as towns grew larger perhaps the need for more bureaucrats, taxmen and guild managers caused people to want more schools, and higher levels of training in bookwork. I had not quite appreciated how important Latin was in this period, since almost all of the important books and ideas were written in Latin. I can see that this is a great advantage in medieval Europe, because archbishops and teachers could take up jobs in any city, so long as they could lecture in Latin. This is something that perhaps the modern European Union could learn from, since there seems to be a lot of disagreement and tension there due to the different languages spoken. On the other hand, students had to learn Latin before they could get to the new knowledge of the time, which makes their job harder and excludes people who cannot afford lessons in Latin.