

History
UNFOLDING

CHRISTENDOM

THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES



MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

Emerging From a Dark Age

This MindSparks set is the second of two covering the history of Christian Europe and the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages. The first set is titled *Christendom: After Rome's Fall* (HS844).

This set focuses on the growing strength and vitality of Christian Europe after the chaos that had kept it on the defensive through much of the ninth and tenth centuries. While the region remained overwhelmingly agrarian, steady advancements in technology were already underway. It developed slowly in these high Middle Ages, but in later centuries it would usher in a far more rapid commercial and industrial transformation. For now, greater wealth and population did make possible a growth of towns and a revival of trade. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church reached the pinnacle of its power and in many different ways expressed a growing confidence in its Christian vision. As the feudal age faded, Europe was poised to lead the world into a new, more dynamic modern era.

This set uses 12 visual displays to focus on several of the key themes in this story. Each lesson uses three visual displays to explore one broad topic. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Feudal Order

The images here focus on the agrarian basis of life in Europe and the full flowering of its feudal social and political order.

The Universal Church

In its Gothic architecture, its growing intellectual foundation, and its more activist spiritual and monastic efforts, the Roman Catholic Church fully expressed its authority and confidence.

Europe and the World Beyond

While the Byzantine Empire was besieged by Muslim expansion and began to weaken, Europeans felt ready to mount a counterattack. The Crusades were the result. They failed, but are still evidence of an increasingly outward-looking Europe. The illustrations here focus on the Crusades, the revival of towns and trade, and even the Black Death as examples of the effects of this new spirit.

Beyond Lord and Vassal

From the 13th century on, the feudal order began to fade away. In its place began to appear the growing power of kings and the monarchical state. The illustrations here look at three episodes in which this theme can be seen.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will better understand the concept of feudalism and the nature of the feudal order that developed in the high Middle Ages in Europe.

The Feudal Order

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

The Middle Ages was a bleak time in Europe. Its people for the most part lived in great poverty and insecurity. Yet this was not as backward and unchanging a time as it is often seen. These images of peasant farmers suggest the simple level at which most people lived. However, they also hint at some big changes. The iron farm implements these peasants had were being modified and improved in the Middle Ages in ways that would boost farm production substantially. A new iron plow, heavier than before, was able to dig deeper furrows. An effective horse collar allowed greater use of horses, which were far more efficient than oxen. By the late Middle Ages a new dynamic Europe was starting to emerge.

Illustrations 2A & 2B

Medieval Europe was the high point of the “feudal” age. Both scenes here illustrate the feudal system in different ways. Peasants lived and worked as serfs on a lord’s manor. The manor was self-sufficient, and money and trade were rare. Illustration 2A shows a serf paying the fees due to his lord “in kind.” The lord had enormous power over the serfs on his manor. But he also owed them security and military defense in return for their labor and in-kind payments. The lord of the manor in turn was often bound to fight as a knight for his own prince—the higher noble who granted him his land. Illustration 2B shows a man being knighted by his lord. This personal bond between lord and vassal was the essential element making for a feudal political order.

Illustration 3

This scene shows another knighting ceremony. As it suggests, the lord-vassal relationship was based on a strong sense of duty and honor. The vassal who was granted land took a solemn oath to serve the person who granted it. The oath of loyalty was binding for life; anyone who broke it was considered a traitor. In a feudal order, it is this personal bond, not citizenship in a nation or other territory, that is the real basis of political order. Though from a later time, this illustration captures the emotional spirit of the feudal bond. It was a bond based on a code of chivalry. Along with respect for the lord, there was a duty to defend the honor of the lord’s lady. This code may have softened somewhat the otherwise harsher aspects of life women experienced in medieval Europe.

Lesson 1 — The Feudal Order

Illustration 1



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Discussing the Illustration

1. This illustration shows six peasant farmers from Europe during the Middle Ages. How can you tell these people lived in the Middle Ages?
2. The illustration also helps show how primitive farming methods were in the Middle Ages. How does the illustration show this?
3. Nevertheless, farm techniques in the Middle Ages were improving. New methods of growing food were developed during the Middle Ages to keep up with the increasing population of Europe. For example, the use of iron in farming tools was increasing. Why might this have been an important change?
4. A key improvement in the Middle Ages was the use of a heavier iron plow along with a special collar that enabled easier harnessing of horses. Why would those two changes have been important? Can you think of other important agricultural improvements during the Middle Ages?

Follow-up Activities

1. Conduct research into the development of the iron plow and the horse collar in the Middle Ages. Find pictures or diagrams of these important agricultural improvements. Also try to find images of peasants actually using them. Write short paragraphs for each of your visuals. Use the images and paragraphs in a bulletin-board display.
2. Create a diagram of a medieval manor from around the 11th century CE. Be sure to include a diagram of the three-field system. In addition to the fields, be sure to show the serfs' homes, the lord's actual manor (or castle), the village and the commons, the mill, the church, and anything else likely to have been part of a typical medieval manor. Finally, in an inset with your diagram, show what a single peasant's holdings would have looked like. Use your diagram as the basis of a brief talk to the class on manorialism.

Lesson 1 — The Feudal Order

Illustrations 2A & 2B

2A



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2B



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Discussing the Illustrations

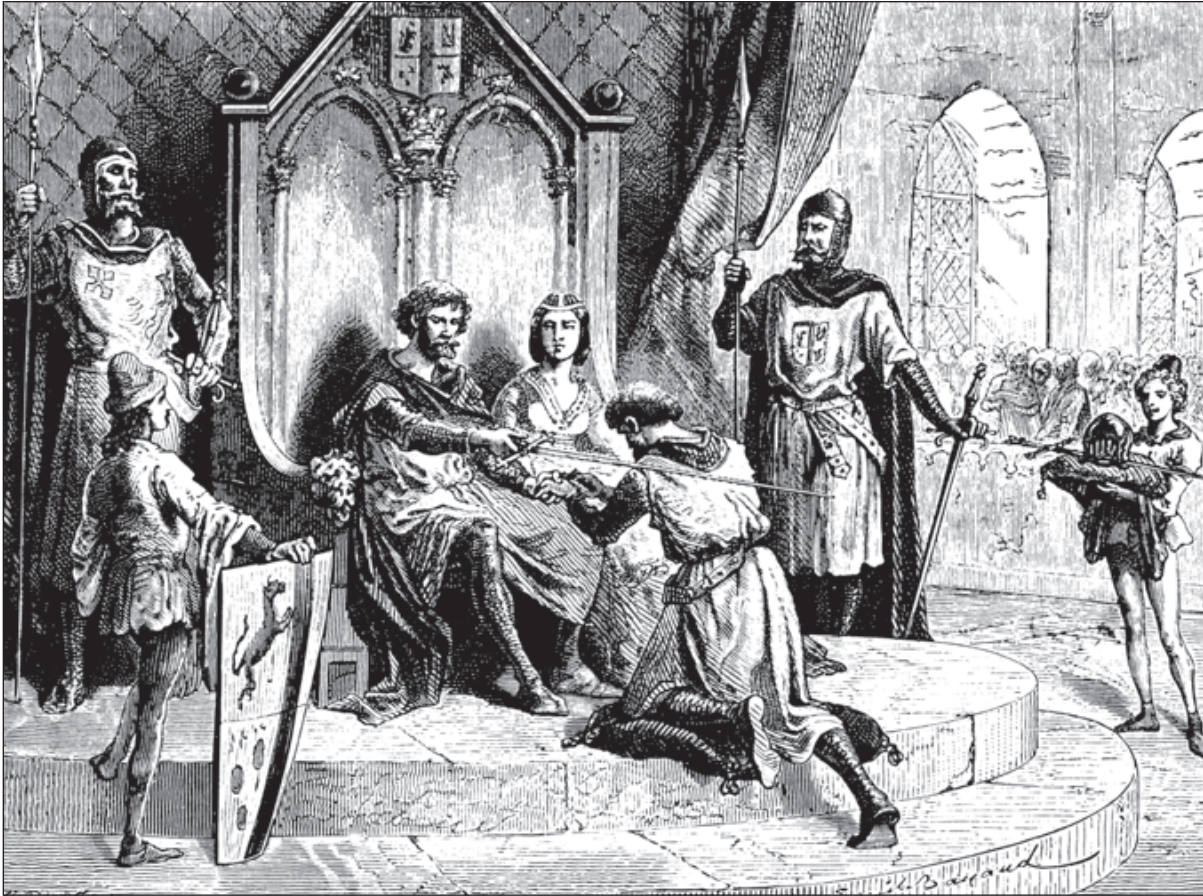
1. In Illustration 2A, a typical peasant is shown paying taxes in kind to his lord. How does the image show what “in kind” means, and why might peasants in the Middle Ages have had to pay taxes in this way?
2. Like most peasants in the Middle Ages, this one was a serf. What is generally meant by the term “serf”?
3. Above the serfs were lesser lords and knights who were granted land by more powerful nobles in exchange for service. The ceremony of becoming a knight is shown in Illustration 2B. How does the image help show what service a knight gave his lord?
4. As the illustration shows, a knight was a man with a horse and armor. This may seem a small thing, but the need for such equipment explains why the knight was granted his lands. Can you explain?
5. The knight or lesser lord in this relationship was called a “vassal.” The lord-vassal bond became the real basis for political order in Medieval Europe. What term is used for this kind of social or political system?

Follow-up Activities

1. Because ever-present dangers made trade and travel dangerous, the medieval manor was almost entirely self-sufficient. That is, all of life’s necessities, such as food and clothing, were produced on the manor. Try to imagine what it would be like if your own community had to become self-sufficient and produce everything it needed to survive. Write an imaginative essay on how your community would have to change if it had to provide for itself all the necessities of life.
2. Military power was important in the Middle Ages. Feudal duties demanded that those assigned to fight be highly trained warriors. Because of this, knights were part of the warrior elite, holding high positions in medieval society. Knights were similar in this way to the samurai warriors of Japan from about the same time. Learn more about medieval knights and samurai warriors. Find as many images of each as you can. Prepare a talk in class on the similarities and differences between the two groups of warriors.

Lesson 1 — The Feudal Order

Illustration 3



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Discussing the Illustration

1. This is another scene of a man being knighted. The knight as well as the lord performing the ceremony held high positions in feudal society. However, even a powerful lord with his own vassals could be a vassal himself. Can you explain how?
2. A strong bond of honor existed between a lord and his vassal. How does this drawing convey a sense of that aspect of the lord-vassal relationship? The drawing is actually from a later historical era. How do you think that affects its usefulness as evidence of what the feudal lord-vassal bond was like?
3. An important part of becoming a knight was taking an oath. In time, an elaborate code of chivalry grew up to guide the knight or lord in proper behavior. What do you know about the code of chivalry?
4. This drawing also calls attention to the effect of the code of chivalry on women in medieval society. From the image and your general knowledge, what do you think that effect was?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Learn more about the code of chivalry and the ideal of Christian virtue as expressed in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, written in the 14th century. Read and learn more about this tale. Discuss and analyze it in your group. Then lead a class discussion on what it teaches about the idea of chivalry and Christian virtue in the late Middle Ages.
2. A key feature of the code of chivalry was the demand that knights behave with honor and courtesy toward women. Knights took a vow to defend not only their lord but also the lord's lady. What would life have been like for the lady in the above illustration? Learn more about the role of women in feudal society. What was expected of a noblewoman? What was her life like? Write a brief report about the role of upper-class women in feudal society. In what ways was her life experience similar to or different from the peasant women around her?

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will better understand how a spirit of confidence was growing in Europe and how this new spirit affected the Roman Catholic Church and the spiritual and intellectual mood of the times.

The Universal Church

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Starting in the 11th century, Europe slowly began to revive from the “Dark Ages” of the 900s and earlier. With this revival came a new sense of confidence. The Catholic Church was at the height of its power. Nothing expresses its increasing assertiveness as the soaring architecture of the great Gothic cathedrals of the 12th and 13th centuries and beyond. Pointed arches, delicate carvings, high walls, wide upper windows, and statues often surrounding the doorways characterized the Gothic style. This photo of the nave of Amiens Cathedral in France captures the sense of light and soaring spiritual grandeur of Gothic architecture. Other famous Gothic cathedrals still standing today can be found in the French cities of Chartres, Reims, and Paris.

Illustration 2

This same sense of growing confidence can also be seen in the realm of ideas. Scholars began to rediscover the works of the ancient Greeks, especially Aristotle. The Church at first was uneasy. After all, Aristotle relied on reason only and differed in key ways from Church teaching. Some feared his ideas might lead people to lose their faith. But Church scholars known as “Scholastics” said reason would support the Christian faith. Thomas Aquinas (shown here) was the most famous Scholastic. He believed that the wisdom of the ancients—Aristotle in particular—could actually strengthen Christian faith. Students gathered at certain cathedrals to hear scholars like Aquinas lecture. In this way the first universities were born.

Illustration 3

The monastic orders also seemed surer of themselves in the late Middle Ages. Earlier, most monks had separated themselves from society as a way to devote their lives to serving God. But some monastic orders began to focus on efforts such as promoting the Christian faith or doing good works in society. Here the assertive words of St. Bernard illustrate this new, more confident Christian spirit. For others, this more active approach led to a new concern for the sick, the poor, and for other outcasts. St. Dominic (shown here) vigorously fought heresy. In the 1200s, he founded a religious order (popularly called the “Dominicans”). It stressed the rigorous learning he felt was needed to preach effectively against the heresies of his time.

Lesson 2—The Universal Church

Illustration 1



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Discussing the Illustration

1. No single political power or nation held Europe together during the High Middle Ages. What did unify it was a religious organization. What organization was this?
2. During the later Middle Ages the Catholic Church was at the height of its power. Nothing shows this better than the architecture of its churches in the 12th century and beyond. The photo here shows one example of this new type of church architecture. Can you name the architectural style of this church?
3. Many say Gothic architecture illustrates the power and confidence of the entire Church as an institution in the 12th and 13th Centuries. Why do you think they say this? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. This photo is of the nave of Amiens Cathedral in France. What details of the interior design of this church make it an example of Gothic architecture? What else do you know about this style of church architecture?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Find as many images as you can of Gothic churches and cathedrals. Many of the most famous of these still stand today, so your images may even be recent photographs. Create a bulletin-board display of the images you find. Try to organize the images in such a way as to show how this type of church developed from around 1100 to 1300 CE and how it expressed a more confident sense of Christianity and of God's glory.
2. **Small-group activity:** As in the activity above, create a bulletin-board display of medieval architecture, but not just of churches. In this case, collect images that show how architecture in the Middle Ages moved from the Romanesque to the Gothic style. What were the main features of these two types of architecture? What unique problems did Romanesque and Gothic builders face and how did they solve those problems? Add pictures, illustrations, and diagrams, as well as accompanying text to your bulletin-board display.

Lesson 2—The Universal Church

Illustration 2

Since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist. Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.

The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; . . . Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.

Thomas Aquinas
Summa Theologica



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Discussing the Illustrations

1. The Church's growing influence can be seen not just in its Gothic cathedrals, but also in the realm of ideas. The most famous Church scholar of the 13th century was Thomas Aquinas. What do you know about him? What impression of Aquinas does this illustration of him give you? Why?
2. Europe in the 1200s was regaining knowledge of the ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle. Some saw Aristotle's ideas as a threat to the Church. What do you know about the ideas of Aristotle? Why do you think these ideas would have threatened some Church leaders in the Middle Ages?
3. Aquinas was one of a group of thinkers called "Scholastics." They tried to show that human reason and the ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans could support Christian faith. Explain how Aquinas's words here help express that view. Do you agree that the views of the Scholastics are evidence of the Church's growing confidence in the late Middle Ages? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. In the late Middle Ages, many works by ancient Greek thinkers were rediscovered in Europe. This revival was in part due to the work of scholars in Muslim Spain. Learn more about this region and its role in Europe's recovery of ancient Greek writings. One source is *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, by Maria Rosa Menocal (Little, Brown & Co., 2002). Write a brief essay on the role of Muslim Spain in Europe's cultural revival in the 12th and 13th centuries.
2. **Small-group activity:** Learn about the film *The Name of the Rose* and the times it depicts. View and discuss the film. Have each member write a review of it. In each review, comment specifically on the part played in the film by Aristotle. Then take a stand on why this film is or is not helpful as a way to better understand the late Middle Ages. (NOTE TO TEACHER: You may wish to preview this film beforehand to determine its suitability for your students.)

Lesson 2—The Universal Church

Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

Arise, soldier of Christ, arise! Get up off the ground and return to the battle from which you have fled! Fight more boldly after your flight, and triumph in glory.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Discussing the Illustrations

1. Monastic orders had always been part of the life of the Church. At first, monasteries and convents were places of retreat apart from society, where monks and nuns could live spiritual lives of prayer and study. But in the 1000s and after, some of them began to focus on a more active way of promoting the Christian faith. Why do you think this occurred?
2. This more active spirit can be seen in the words of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who worked tirelessly for the Cistercian monastic order. In what way do his words seem to differ from the older monastic ideal of withdrawal from the world for prayer and study?
3. Dominic (later Saint Dominic) also felt this need to work actively for God in the world, not apart from it. He founded the Order of Preachers, also known as the “Dominicans.” It stressed the need for rigorous learning in order to fight heresy and defend the Catholic faith. What can you learn from this painting both about Saint Dominic himself and about how he has been seen by other Catholics?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** The Benedictine Rule of daily life for monasteries stressed communal living, physical labor, prayer, and study. However, by the tenth century many monasteries had grown lax in following this rule. This led a monastery in Cluny, in central France, to lead a reform movement to deal with this problem. What was this so-called Cluniac reform? In what ways did it strengthen the original Benedictine Rule for monastic life? In what ways did it depart from that rule and promote a new kind of monasticism? Learn more about the Cluniac reforms and report your findings to the class.
2. Francis of Assisi also founded a new kind of religious order, the Franciscans. A famous story about Francis has to do with the stigmata that supposedly appeared on him. Learn more about this story. Based on what you find out, write an essay about Francis. Show how this episode (as well as the rest of his life) explains why Catholics came to revere Francis and why he was designated a saint.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will better understand how several unrelated aspects of life in the late Middle Ages all reflect a growing European awareness of and contact with the outside world.

Europe and the World Beyond

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustrations 1A & 1B**

Starting in the eighth century CE, Christian Europe lived in constant fear of an expanding Muslim empire. While the tide seemed to slow after the 700s, Muslim raids in France, in the Mediterranean region, and against the Byzantine Empire in the East were a constant menace. By the late 11th century, however, Europe felt strong enough to strike back. In 1095, in response to a plea for help from the Byzantine emperor, Pope Urban II called on Christian believers to rescue the Holy Land from the Muslims. The Crusades were waged between the 11th and 13th centuries, but only the First Crusade really succeeded. The violence of the Crusades is suggested by Illustration 1B, which shows a Crusader attack on the city of Jerusalem.

Illustration 2

Bloody though they were, the Crusades signaled Europe's revival and its new outward-looking spirit. Another sign of this renewal was the growth of towns and trade. Early towns appeared in The Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy. The rise of specialized industries often fueled the growth of towns—for example, the linen and wool industry of Flanders, in Belgium. The photo here is of the medieval German walled city of Rothenburg. In the 1200s, it lay along important trade routes. Such towns often became independent of local lords. Italian city-states such as Venice and Genoa thrived on long-distance trade with societies as far away as East Asia and became highly independent republics.

Illustration 3

Illness and disease were common in Medieval Europe. But in the mid-1300s, Europe was struck by a horrendous disaster known as the "Black Death." It was in fact the bubonic plague. Carried by rats and fleas, it produced lumps in the armpits and elsewhere on the body, and death occurred within days. In just five years, between 1348 and 1353, it wiped out perhaps one-third of the European population or more. But even this disaster was in a sense a sign of Europe's growth and outward-looking spirit. It is believed the disease spread to Europe along caravan trade routes across Central Asia and by ship from the Black Sea. The rising population of cities and their poor sanitation contributed as well.

Illustrations 1A & 1B

1A



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1B



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Discussing the Illustrations

1. From the 700s on, Europeans lived in fear of the Muslim world. However, in the 11th century, Europe's growing strength led some to seek a confrontation with this long-feared foe. Why do you think Europe so feared the Muslim world in these centuries?
2. In 1095, the Pope (Illustration 1A) acting on a plea for help from the Byzantine emperor, decided it was time to act against Islam. Can you identify this Pope and explain what he did? How does this image suggest the kind of response the Pope got to his appeal?
3. Several Crusades were waged. A key aim was to recapture the city in Illustration 1B. What city was it, and why was it so important to the Crusaders? How does this image from a later time depict this battle? How dependable do you think the image is?
4. Some say the Crusades were acts of European aggression, plain and simple. Others say they were responses to a long history of aggression by the Muslim world. With which view do you agree? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Several Crusades were waged, beginning in the 11th century. Learn more about the key figures, places, and events of the Crusades. Based on what you learn, create a map and timeline of the Crusades. Use your map and timeline as centerpieces of a bulletin-board display on the Crusades. Illustrate your timeline with images you find in the course of your research.
2. Create a timeline showing the key interactions between Islam and Christian Europe during the Middle Ages. Combine your timeline with a map showing the key places these contacts took place. Show all the important ways Muslims and Christians interacted, from raids and warfare to trade and cultural exchanges, from the birth of Islam in the seventh century to the time of the Crusades. Discuss your timeline with the class. Use your talk to set the Crusades in the context of the entire course of Muslim-Christian interactions.

Illustration 2



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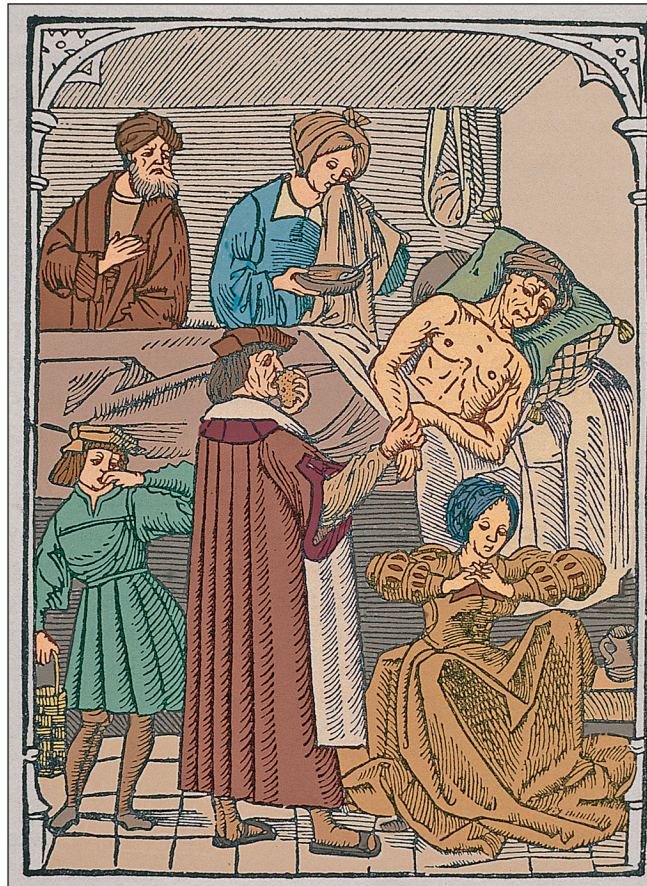
Discussing the Illustration

1. The Crusades were just one example of Europe's growing awareness of and contact with the larger world. This photo suggests another, very different way. It offers a view of the ancient German city of Rothenburg. What details suggest this is not a modern city, but one built in the Middle Ages?
2. In the late Middle Ages, several towns began to grow in northwestern Europe and in northern Italy. In both regions, the cause was a revival of trade. Why do you think the revival of trade affected these two regions most of all?
3. Often such towns gained independence from local landholding lords. What group generally exercised social and political leadership in these towns?
4. The vast majority of Europeans still lived in rural areas in the late Middle Ages. Yet the rise of towns was crucial for all of Europe's later history. Why do you suppose that was so?

Follow-up Activities

1. Learn more about Rothenburg in the late Middle Ages. Find photos or drawings that help show what Rothenburg and other towns in northwestern Europe were like in the Middle Ages. Use these along with the above illustration in a bulletin-board display. Write short paragraphs to go with your images commenting on the daily life in these towns. Include details about work, trade, merchants, artisans, family life, social conditions, entertainment, government, and so on.
2. Read more about the Italian city-states in the late Middle Ages and their trade links with other parts of the world. Then create a map of the Italian city-states, their colonies, and the trade routes linking them with the Byzantine Empire, the Islamic lands of the Middle East, India, and China. In addition to the map, include photos and drawings about key locations along the routes, pictures of typical products and explanations of the role Italian merchants played in these larger patterns of trade.

Illustration 3



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Discussing the Illustration

1. Another sign of Europe's growing involvement with the world was a tragic one—the "Black Death." Using this image, explain what the Black Death was. When did the Black Death occur?
2. What do you know about the nature of this disease and how it is transmitted? How does the image help explain the terror the Black Death instilled in so many Europeans?
3. The Black Death appears to have spread into Europe first from ports along Mediterranean. How was this terrible disaster also a sign of Europe's growing involvement with a world beyond itself?
4. Another factor in the spread of the disease was the growing population of Europe's towns and their poor sanitation. How might this have contributed to the spread of the disease?
5. What do you know about the impact of the Black Death on European life in late 1300s and the 1400s?

Follow-up Activities

1. Read more about everyday life in the late Middle Ages. Imagine you live in a small village in northern France. It is 1350. The plague is devastating Europe, as are numerous wars. Your area is suffering terribly as well. You have seen the effects of the plague up close. Write a letter to a friend in a far off city about these events in your community. Be sure to describe the entire course of the plague from first exposure until death. (One account of the plague can be found at the beginning of Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.)
2. **Small-group activity:** Learn more about where the plague originated and how it spread from Central Asia to the Mediterranean and then throughout Europe. Use what you learn to create a large map showing the spread of the disease. Illustrate your map with images and short captions for the images. Give a brief talk to the class about the map.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will consider several specific events that indicate the fading of the feudal order and the rise of the monarchical state in the late Middle Ages.

Beyond Lord and Vassal

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustrations 1A & 1B**

By the 14th century, feudalism was fading as kings began to unite larger areas into what would one day become the nation-states of the modern era. Illustrating this shift was the Hundred Years' War, a series of conflicts between England and France from 1337 to 1453. The war showed that archers with a new longbow, along with dismounted men-at-arms, could defeat armored knights on horseback. This was a blow to feudal forms of warfare. Only kings could afford the large, better-equipped armies now required. This was even more so after artillery also began to play a role, as in the Siege of Dieppe (Illustration 1A). Joan of Arc (Illustration 1B) played a part in this process. By rallying French forces, her heroism and fame helped foster a rising sense of national loyalty and identity.

Illustration 2

Actually, the power of kings had begun to grow even before the Hundred Years' War. In 1215 in England, for example, King John was forced by a group of barons to sign the Magna Carta, the document shown here. The barons had become alarmed at what they saw as the loss of their feudal rights. For them, the Magna Carta was meant to protect the traditional feudal relationship between king and vassal with its mutual rights and duties. Yet the document was also a sign of unease about growing monarchical power. Today, many historians see it as a key first step on the long road to England's parliamentary system, under which the "nation" would mean representative institutions as well as a monarch.

Illustration 3

The Church also showed concern about the growing power of kings. In England, King John's father, King Henry II, wanted to take away the Church's right to try corrupt clerics in religious courts and try them in royal courts instead. Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, resisted Henry's plans. This test of wills grew more bitter over time. Henry famously asked in exasperation, "Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?" Four of Henry's knights took up the challenge and murdered the archbishop in the cathedral at Canterbury. Becket was seen as a martyr, and was later named a saint. Canterbury became a popular shrine. Yet the incident still reveals the growing power of the monarchical state in these waning years of the Middle Ages.

Lesson 4—Beyond Lord and Vassal

Illustrations 1A & 1B

1A



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1B



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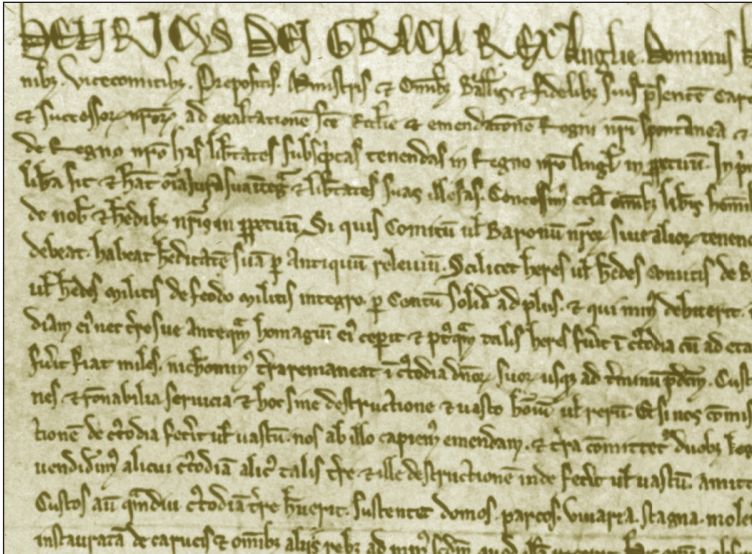
Discussing the Illustrations

1. In the late Middle Ages, feudalism began to break down as certain kings took power from nobles and lesser lords and began forming the modern European nations we know today. The Hundred Years' War definitely helped this process along. Illustration 1A shows a battle in that war. Who fought the Hundred Years' War? What does the image reveal about medieval warfare?
2. During this war, the feudal age of armed knights was ending as new and improved forms of weaponry and tactics gave kings and their armies the advantage. Using Illustration 1A, explain what those new forms of weaponry were. Why did kings have an advantage in this regard?
3. Joan of Arc (Illustration 1B) played an important role in the Hundred Years' War—and in fostering a new spirit of national identity in France. Based on what you know about her, can you explain how she helped foster this spirit? How does this image of her convey this sense of national loyalty and pride?

Follow-up Activities

1. Find illustrations of Joan of Arc from various times in history. Then, using these images design a bulletin-board display on the way Joan of Arc has been portrayed throughout history. Write paragraphs explaining what each image tells us about Joan of Arc and what it suggests about the artist and the way people over time have viewed Joan of Arc.
2. How did the Hundred Years' War affect warfare, feudalism and the rising power of kings? To get some idea, study the Battle of Crecy (1346) in the Hundred Years' War. Now, pretend you are a feudal knight in Europe and you have just fought in the Battle of Crecy. You realize it means that some big changes may be coming. Write a letter to another feudal lord about what you saw, the lessons you think should be learned from the battle, and what you think it means for the future of the feudal system. Try to make your letter believable as the ideas of a real feudal knight.

Illustration 2



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Since, moreover, for God and the amendment of our kingdom and for the better allaying of the quarrel that has arisen between us and our barons, we have granted all these concessions, desirous that they should enjoy them in complete and firm endurance for ever, we give and grant to them the underwritten security, namely, that the barons choose five-and-twenty barons of the kingdom, whomsoever they will, who shall be bound with all their might, to observe and hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties we have granted and confirmed to them by this our present Charter . . .

From the *Magna Carta*

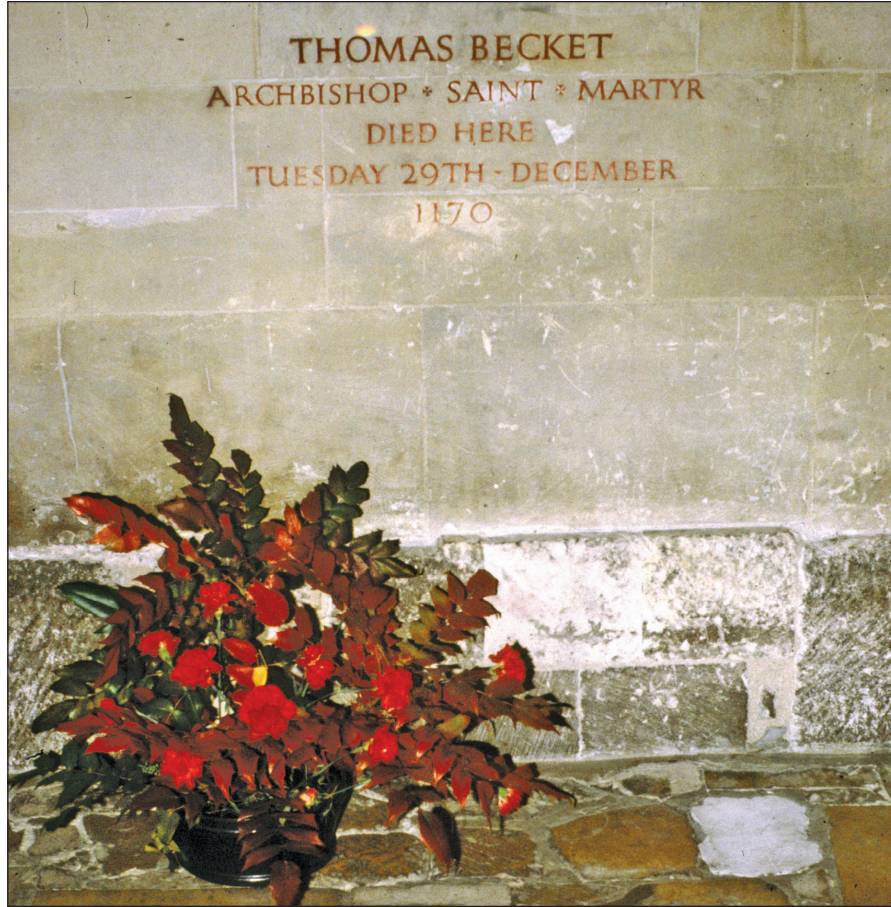
Discussing the Illustrations

1. In England, the power of kings was growing even before the Hundred Years' War. In 1215, the document you see here was actually used to try to limit that power. What document is this? In what language was it written?
2. The Magna Carta is often seen as an early step on the road to England's parliamentary democracy. But it was in fact a feudal conflict involving a small but powerful segment of the population. Which segment?
3. From the excerpt provided, how does the Magna Carta provide for the enforcement of its terms? Is this an effective arrangement? Why or why not?
4. The Magna Carta was an attempt by feudal barons to check the growing power of the king. However, one historian says this: "By signing the Magna Carta as a group, these feudal barons went beyond feudalism and took a step toward a new kind of political order." What do you think this historian means? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. King John affixed his seal to the Magna Carta after a long dispute with his vassals. Learn more about this dispute and how it led to the signing of the Magna Carta. Report on the Magna Carta and its causes as if you were a papal official writing back to the Pope in Rome to tell him what was happening. Be sure to make your letter sound as realistic as possible. Share your letter with the class.
2. Some historians say that the Magna Carta has great significance more because of what developed from it later than from any of its actual words. Find out what these historians mean by reading more about the Magna Carta, the actual dispute out of which it arose, and the meaning it came to have in England over the next five centuries. Write a brief essay assessing this statement: "The Magna Carta's importance grew over time as England grew and changed."

Illustration 3



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Discussing the Illustration

1. The growing power of kings was a theme of another dramatic story from the late Middle Ages, concerning the rivalry between King Henry II of England and Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. A key event in the story took place in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29, 1170. What happened there?
2. Those who murdered Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral were acting on behalf of King Henry II. What dispute between Becket and the king led to this drastic act?
3. In murdering Becket, Henry asserted his power over the Church in England. But the Church remained strong. In fact, some say the Church's power in England actually grew as a result of Becket's death. From what you know of the story of Becket's murder and its aftermath, can you explain why this might be so? What does this photo suggest about the power and meaning of this event in English history?

Follow-up Activities

1. The death of Thomas Becket has often been the subject of films and plays, such as *Becket*, starring Richard Burton, and *Murder in the Cathedral*, a play by T.S. Eliot. Learn more about the actual events of Becket's life, his dispute with King Henry II, and his death. Then view one film about Becket or read a play about him. Write an essay comparing what you know of the actual events with the way those events are portrayed in the movie or play.
2. **Small-group activity:** Learn about Thomas Becket and create your own one-act play about his murder. Any good Internet search engine will bring up a number of sites dedicated to Becket, including several with primary source documents relating to his murder. Make your play as true to history as possible and make sure it helps your audience understand the larger importance of this dramatic moment in history.

Image Close-ups

The Feudal Order

Illustration 1



Stock Montage, Inc.

The Feudal Order

Illustrations 2A & 2B

2A



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2B



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The Universal Church

Illustration 1



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The Universal Church

Illustration 2

Since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist. Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.

The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; . . . Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.

Thomas Aquinas
Summa Theologica



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The Universal Church

Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

*Arise, soldier of Christ,
arise! Get up off the
ground and return to the
battle from which you
have fled! Fight more
boldly after your flight,
and triumph in glory.*

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Europe and the World Beyond Illustrations 1A & 1B

1A



Stock Montage, Inc.

1B



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Europe and the World Beyond

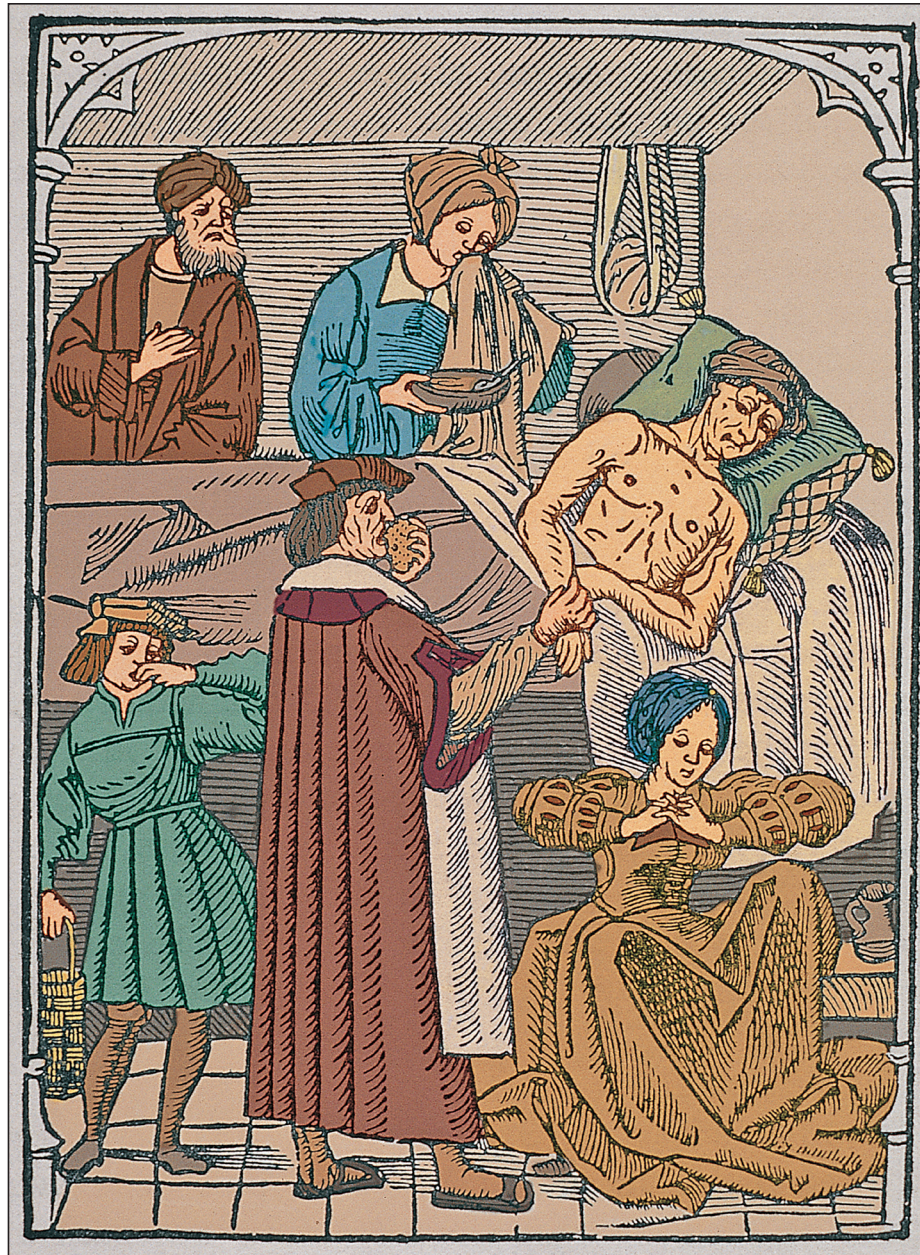
Illustration 2



© Instructional Resources Corporation

Europe and the World Beyond

Illustration 3



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Beyond Lord and Vassal

Illustrations 1A & 1B

1B



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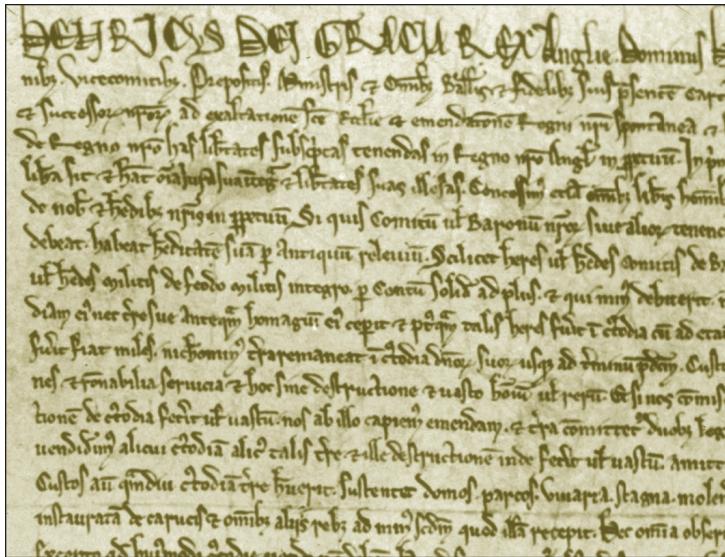
1A



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Beyond Lord and Vassal

Illustration 2



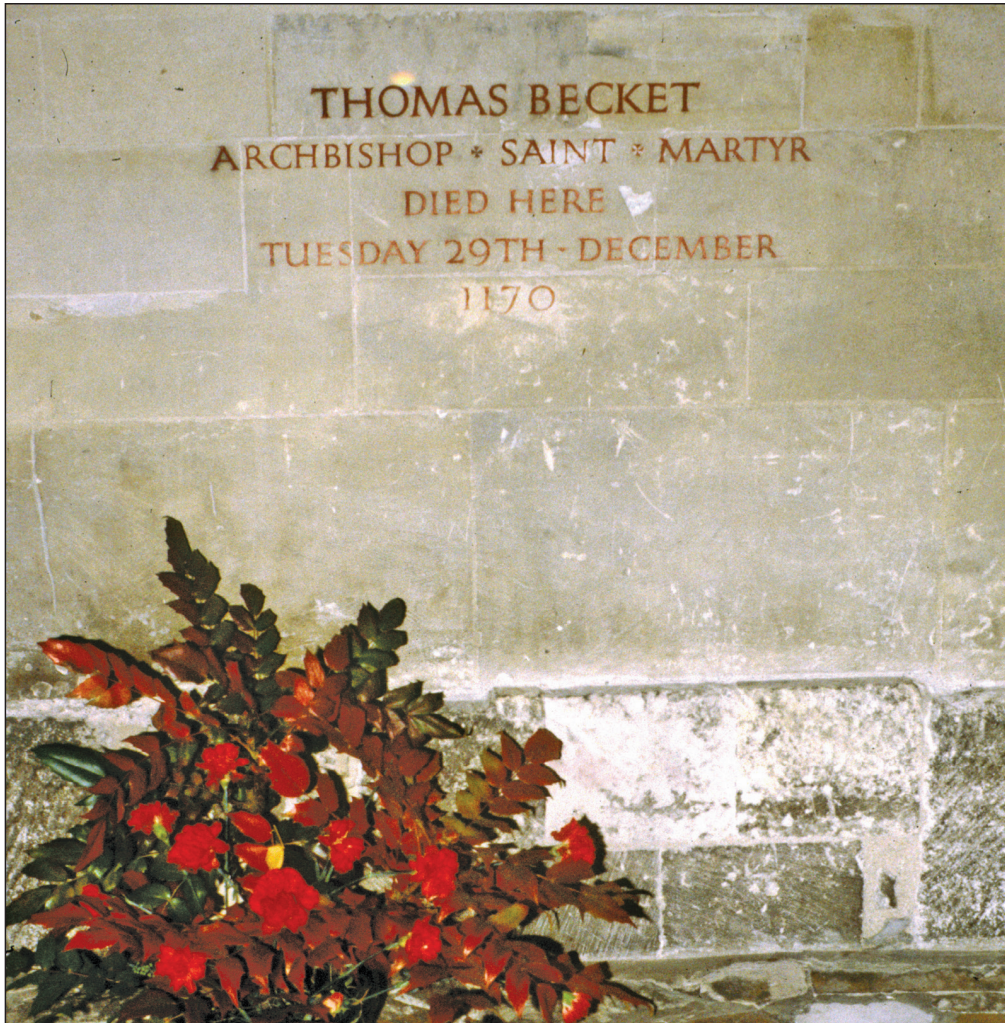
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Since, moreover, for God and the amendment of our kingdom and for the better allaying of the quarrel that has arisen between us and our barons, we have granted all these concessions, desirous that they should enjoy them in complete and firm endurance for ever, we give and grant to them the underwritten security, namely, that the barons choose five-and-twenty barons of the kingdom, whomsoever they will, who shall be bound with all their might, to observe and hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties we have granted and confirmed to them by this our present Charter . . .

From the *Magna Carta*

Beyond Lord and Vassal

Illustration 3



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