



# Middle Ages Law

Culture Talk



# What is covered?



REVAMP OF ROMAN LAW  
AND EXPANSION OF  
NEW LEGAL SYSTEMS

FEUDALISM AND CANON  
LAW

ISLAMIC LAW





# Byzantine Empire

- When the Roman empire split into Eastern and Western Roman empire. The Eastern Roman empire became part of the Byzantine empire.
- Emperor Justinian I developed the Justinian Codes (Corpus Juris Civilis), which helped reform the Roman law in 529.
  - consist of four books: the Codex Justinianus, the Digesta or Pandectae, the Institutiones, and the Novellae.
  - were created to help unify the empire and outline the specifics about slavery, inheritance, and crime





# Rise of Canon Law

- Roman law also influenced canon law, which outlined the guidelines for how Christians should act and the rules that they should follow.
- Canon law consists of decisions that were made by the Church or other religious leaders, such as the Popes.
  - The laws covered how marriage should work as well as key sacraments, such as baptism and communion.

# Feudalism

- THE MIDDLE AGES ALSO MARKED A PERIOD OF PEACE AND CENTRALIZED LAW.
  - CHARLAMAGNE, THE KING DURING THE 8TH CENTURY, HELPED UNIFY WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE.
  - THIS DID NOT LAST THAT LONG, AND THE UNIFICATION OF EUROPE SPLIT, WHICH GAVE THE RISE TO FEUDALISM.
- FEUDALISM LED TO A STRICT SOCIAL HIERARCHY AND DETERMINED HOW FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE FINANCIALLY.
  - FEUDAL LAW WAS CREATED FOR THIS INSTANCE.
  - THE LAWS COVERED HOW THE LAND SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED, RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LORDS AND VASSALS, IN WHICH VASSALS SHOULD RECEIVE A PORTION OF THE LAND.

# Intro to Precedent

- IN THE 11TH CENTURY, THE NORMAN CONQUEST TOOK PLACE IN ENGLAND, WHICH LED TO CHANGE IN LAW.
- WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR TOOK CONTROL OF ENGLAND, AND INTRODUCED COMMON LAW, WHICH BROUGHT THE IDEA OF USING PRECEDENT TO RULE FUTURE CASES.
- ENGLAND IN FUTURE CENTURIES BECOMES A PIONEER IN NEW LEGAL REFORMS.
  - IN 1215, THE MAGNA CARTA WAS SIGNED BY KING JOHN TO PREVENT THE MONARCHY FROM GAINING TOO MUCH POWER.







# Trade Laws

- Because trade marked a huge deal of importance during the Middle Ages, commercial and trade laws were developed for nations to follow and abide by.
- Specifically, the Lex mercatoria (Law Merchant), which outlined laws that merchants had to follow when they were trading or conducting commercial business.
  - The Hanseatic League, which was a trading network between the Scandinavian nations, highlighted the importance of protecting the rights of merchants.



# Islamic Law

THE RISE OF ISLAM BEGAN TO GROW OUTSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST IN 7TH AND 8TH CENTURY. WHEN IT REACHED INDIA, SHARIA LAW BEGAN TO TAKE A STRONGHOLD THERE. IT HAD A HEAVY INFLUENCE IN SEVERAL EMPIRES, SUCH AS THE MUGHAL EMPIRE.

