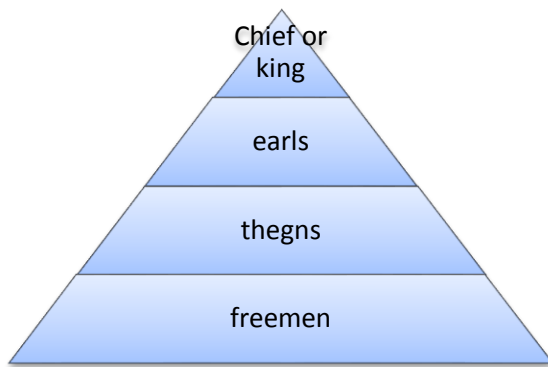


Revision of the Anglo-Saxons and introduction to Beowulf

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is the first form of the Anglo-Saxon History that records the main events happened in their land: England.

How scholars know the past History? They take their information from documents, events, thinker ideas... that record handing over record to generation to generation. From the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle we can get information of the Anglo-Saxon social, economic, political life and about their organization. The Germanic tribes had brought with them their Nordic religion, a strong , military organization and a code of values



based on a high sense of honor and fidelity to their chief. They also brought their farming and fishing methods and the social structure which had at its centre the family. The family branched out to the clan and the tribe, so the bonds between family were very strong. Anglo-Saxon society was ruled by a chief or king, who had usually assumed power as military leader. Then came the earls, who were nobles by birth, and thegns, who were the personal companions of the king, all the other people were freemen, who were obliged to help maintain roads,

bridged and forts and provide military service when necessary. People lived in country villages where the farmland, woods, pastures and meadows were owned communally. The Anglo-Saxons imposed their language, later know as Old English, which became through several modifications, the English spoken today. The Celtic languages of the native Britons survived only in Wales, Ireland and in North-West of Scotland. Christianity, which began to spread throughout pagan Anglo-Saxon Britain from the end of 6th century, proved a driving force in uniting the kingdom and in opening the country to the influence of Europe. When the Danish king Cnut (1016-1035) became Christian, he took pains to reconcile the Anglo-Saxon and the Danish elements of English society. The Church was also very influential on aspects of culture because it introduced the writing of documents while pagan Anglo-Saxon culture was mainly based on oral tradition.

Beowulf in an epic poem. The word Beowulf is made up by “Beo” and “wulf”. “Wulf” is the English for “lupo”. It celebrated the great deeds of the Anglo-Saxon civilization. You don’t know who composed Beowulf. Epics focus on the adventures of a noble hero, typically a king or another aristocratic. Epic poetry tells a story, but differs from other narratives because of its length and more stylized verse form.

Civilization: a state of human society that is very developed and organized; a society, its culture and its way of life during a particular period of time or in a particular part of the word; all the people in the word and the societies they live in, considered as a whole.

Culture: the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group.

LEXIS:

To record: registrare

To hand over: trasmettere

Earl: conte

Meadows: prati

Communally: in comune

To spread: diffondersi

Throughout: dappertutto