

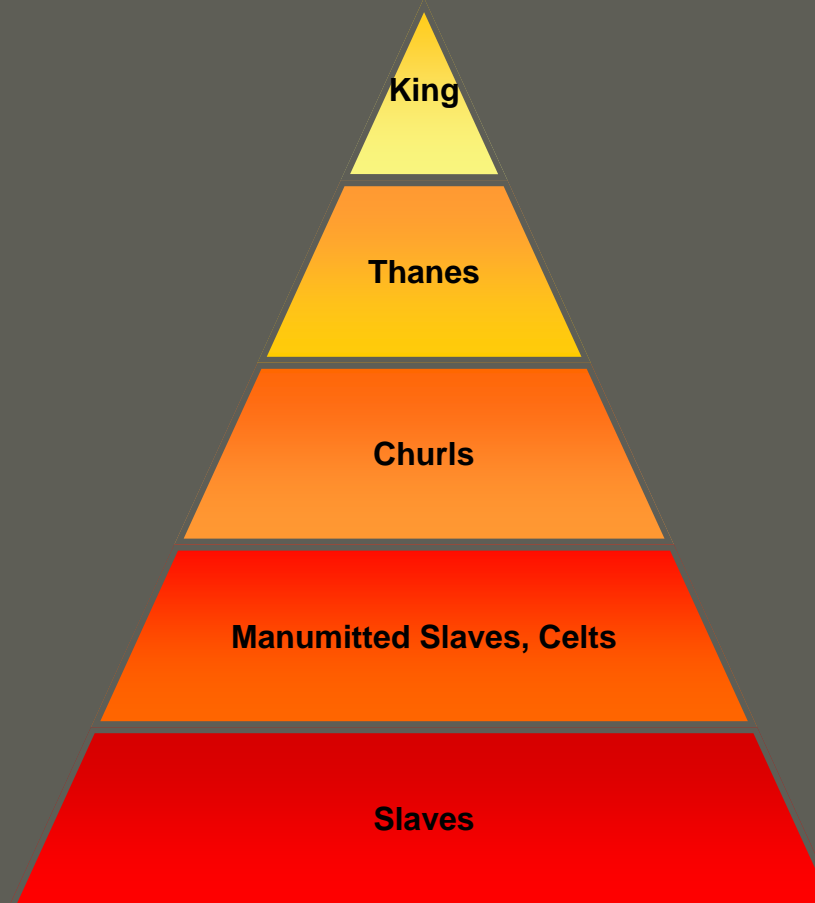
PS/WÜ Sprache und Kultur im Angelsächsischen England  
Ulrike Krischke  
WiSe 2010/2011  
Referentin: Christina Marschall

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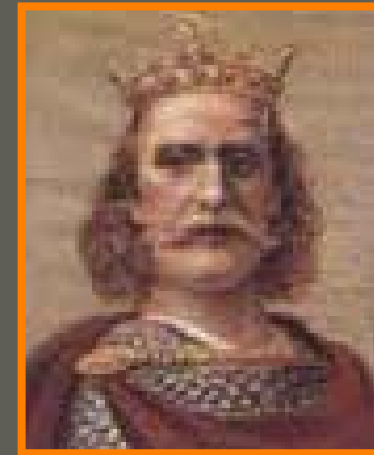
# The Structure of Anglo-Saxon Society

# The Structure of Anglo-Saxon Society



# King

- Kingship as dominant political organisation
- Appointment by selection
- Pre-eminent in dignity, rank and law
- Responsibilities included administration, military, moral duties



King Harold

# Thanes

- Belonged to upper group of free noblemen
- Lived in large halls
- Liable to taxation and church
- Could be called upon for military service



# Thanes

- Duty of attendance on legal assemblies
- Privilege of owning land
- Freedom of movement throughout the country
- Fixed measure of protection from the law



# Churls

- Made up main body of society
- Belonged to lower group of common freemen
- Lived in small huts
- Same rights and obligations as thanes



# Slaves

- Piece of property and working machine
- Lived in cowsheds or barns
- Few civil rights
- No wergeld
- Worked on estates, as craftsmen and servants

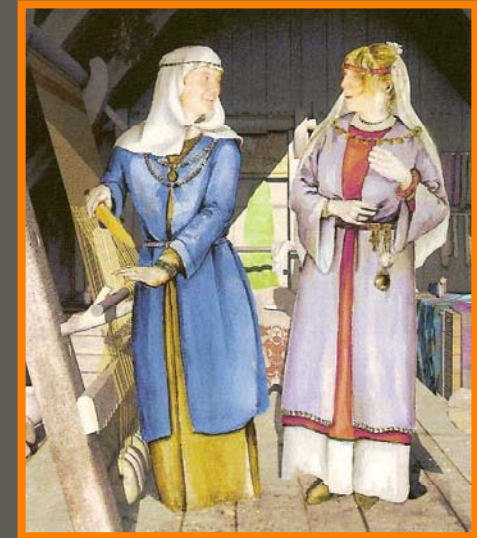
# Slaves

- Ways of becoming a slave:
  - Born to the condition
  - Sold into slavery in time of famine
  - Prisoner of war
  - Penalty
- Ways to gain freedom:
  - Running away
  - Buying liberty or being bought free
  - Manumission by master



# Women

- Considerable freedom in law and practice
- Responsible for management of household
- Embroidery, weaving, spinning, sewing
- Ownership of land, jewellery, clothing



# Women



# Women



# Women

Æpelflæd (870-918) – Lady of the Mercians:

- King Alfred the Great's eldest daughter
- Controlled Mercia for over seven years
- Vigorous and efficient in resisting Viking aggression



# Wergeld

- Defines man's social position and his financial value in law
- Fine payable by the killer for dead man
- Was to be paid to victim's family
- Amount varied according to social status



# Kinship

- Nuclear family as focal unit
- Duty of prosecution and assuring that fine was received and paid
- Kinless man was transferred to king or group of associates

# Any Questions



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