

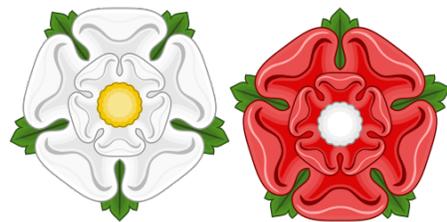
## VI. Medieval England (1066- )

### A. The “Problem of the King”

1. When William conquered England, he knew about the “problem of the dukes.” He *was* the problem, at least in France. Naturally, he wanted to avoid it.
2. William divided up the land of his own Norman lords and the English lords into small chunks so that they could not possess too much power individually, and they would be surrounded by one another and thus have difficulty plotting against the king.
3. The outcome of William’s unique organization was a strong kingship in England much earlier than elsewhere.
4. *That* became the new problem. Strong kings become tyrants.
5. When John I lost the Battle of Bouvines to Philip II of France (above, page 26), he increased taxes to pay for more wars. Seeing this as unjust the lords rebelled against John and forced him to agree to limits on his power in a “great charter” called “Magna Carta” in **1215**.
6. Of course, John tried to overturn the arrangement, as did later kings, so more wars were needed to keep them in line, and after one of these, a lord named *Simon of Monfort* held the first “parliament” (assembly of representatives) to discuss the problem of how to manage the kingdom.

### C. The War of the Roses (1455-85)

1. We have already looked at the Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453) repeatedly, and we know that England eventually lost and was disconnected from France.
2. The outcome for England was ironic, because so many of the royal princes died during the war that the descendants of Isabel and Edward II ended up in an argument over who was the rightful king *of England*.
3. One branch of the royal family were the descendants of the Duke of York, and one branch were descendants of the Duke of Lancaster. The war between them is known as the “War of the Roses” (1455-85) because the symbol of Lancaster was a red rose, and the symbol of the York was a white rose.
4. At the end of the war, the two houses were combined by Henry VII, who was the father of the later, and much more famous Henry VIII.
5. Although this sounds like the kind of thing that couldn’t possibly matter any more, the experience of this dynastic war deeply shaped Henry VIII, and we shall see that he initiated the English Reformation (in our next segment) in large part because of it.



The “War of the Roses” (1455-85) made the English kings just as desperate to avoid the end of their dynasties as the French.