

# Knowledge Organiser – Crime, Punishment and law enforcement in Medieval England

## Part 4– Law enforcement and punishment in Norman England

### Key Words

6.	<b>King’ mund</b>	The idea that all men should expect to be safe from crime and live peacefully under the authority of the king.
7.	<b>Trial by combat</b>	Two people would fight using swords, or sometimes large sticks, until one was killed or unable to fight (anyone who gave in was put to death). The loser of the fight would then be punished as God had judged him to be guilty.
8.	<b>Branding</b>	Making a mark on a criminal by burning their flesh with a hot iron. The mark or brand was a long-term punishment permanently marking the person out as a criminal.

### How far did the Normans change crime and punishment between 1066-1154?

	Change	Continuity
<b>Definitions of crime</b>	<p><b>Poaching</b> – Becomes illegal to hunt in new royal forests.</p> <p><b>Leaving home</b> – Becomes illegal for a serf to leave his lord’s village without permission.</p>	All other crimes stay the same.
<b>Law enforcement</b>	<p><b>King’s mund</b> – idea that all men should be able to live peacefully, and safe from crime, under the authority of the king.</p> <p><b>Kings peace</b> – replaced by the king’s <u>mund</u> (although the ideas are similar).</p> <p><b>Trial by combat</b> – Used to settle disputes over land or money.</p>	<p><b>The Tithing system</b> – all men over 12 belong to a tithe and follow collective responsibility.</p> <p><b>Hue and cry</b> – as most people still lived in small villages, it made sense to keep using a system where everyone would help to catch a suspect.</p> <p><b>All other Trials by Ordeal</b></p>
<b>Punishments</b>	<p><b>Increase in crimes punishable by death and mutilation</b> – e.g. poaching.</p> <p><b>Branding</b> – permanently marking the flesh of a person to mark them out as a criminal.</p> <p><b>Murdrum Fine</b> – fines for murdering a Norman are paid by the community where the body is found.</p> <p><b>Wergild</b> – this is replaced by the murdrum fine.</p>	All other punishments stay the same

- Local collective responsibility for preventing crime and apprehending suspects continued under the Normans, with every male over 12 belonging to a tithing. If someone was accused of a crime, the rest of the group was expected to find them and take them to the authorities.
- The Hue and Cry also continued. As most people continued to live in small village communities, where everyone knew each other, community-based systems for enforcing the law made sense.
- The idea also continued that all men should expect to be safe from crime, and be able to live peacefully under the authority of the King. This idea was called the **King’s mund**. Crime was seen as an attempt to disrupt the king’s mund. This shows some continuity with the Anglo-Saxon idea of the King’s peace, although the authority of the king was extended under the Normans.
- Trial by ordeal continued, but the Normans introduced **trial by combat**, which was used to settle disputes over large sums of money or land. It was seen as a more dignified option for wealthier people.
- The Norman system of punishments continued to rely on a combination of physical punishments, fines and execution. However, there was an increase in the number of crimes punishable by death or mutilation e.g. poaching was punishable by death. Mutilation was also used as an alternative to the death penalty in some cases, which could include **branding** or chopping off a body part.