

During the Middle Ages - specifically the fifth through the twelfth centuries - women experienced a change in attitudes towards their sex. Although the Catholic Church began by empowering women, as time continued the general attitude grew more condescending and even disgusted toward the female gender. However, the attitudes of the Germanic culture experienced an inverse change compared to that of the church. Beginning with complete disregard to any women's rights, slowly Germanic culture accepted and perhaps even embraced the influence of women on society.

In the early middle ages the Catholic Church utilized women as missionaries.

- ✓ Queens played an important role in converting entire kingdoms. Clothilde, the
- ✓ wife of ~~English~~ king Clovis converted her husband of many diligent years of effort.

In stark contrast, the rights of the women in Germanic culture of ~~the~~ the early Middle Ages were nearly non-existent. For although the Germanic tribes had formerly converted to Catholicism, traditional perspectives held greater power than newly introduced Church principles. Women were viewed essentially as property. When it came to marriage, women's individual choice was not even a factor. Rather, the marriage went to the highest bidder and suitors were chosen by males - whether a father, brother, or even uncle. Unlike the Church's practice of monogamy, men often had several wives ~~and~~ or concubines, demeaning any worth a woman may have had at that time period. Kidnapping women or murdering husbands was even a common practice. Although ~~none~~ a fine

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This became so widespread that it was common for a woman to find herself wed to an uneducated, illiterate husband. Not only could nuns no longer ~~be~~ educate, they were placed under the control of male clergy. Bishops ruled over abbesses, and no longer were women allowed to help in administration of mass or the sacraments. Segregation between males and females began to occur in church schools and practices.

However, the church's influence was beginning to have positive effects on German society. Marital rights were being granted, along with some political power. No longer was a dowry expected from marriage. Instead of the bride paying money to the groom - as if to thank him for the favor of removing her -

The queen's word ~~or~~ was considered in decisions and her orders carried out. ~~This division~~ The Queen was also expected to competently run financial and domestic affairs so the king could concentrate on militaristic maneuvers. This division of responsibility carried to the noble portion of society. Aristocratic women ran their household, as well as the extended household. They were also expected to take charge of finances and domestic practices.

~~During the late middle ages invasions by the Magyars and other tribes targeted women~~

By the eleventh and twelfth centuries roles had completely reversed. Clerics were highly influenced by classical thought, and in society women ruled as chateaines, in charge

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nature of women, both in mind and body were disdained as completely inferior.

Although women made many gains in the Middle Ages, there also existed a definite regression. Germanic Culture eventually gave rights to women, especially noble women, while the Catholic Church began to reject the importance of the female role.

excellent