Chapter 4: Medieval Kingdoms in Europe, 800–1300

Lesson 1: Feudalism

The End of the Carolingian Empire

**GUIDING QUESTION** What internal and external factors after Charlemagne's death weakened kingdoms in Europe?

I. DIVISIONS AND INVASIONS IN THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

- Carolingian Empire was divided into three territories, which were fought over by Charlemagne’s grandsons.
- Western Europe suffered invasions by Norsemen, known as Vikings.
  - Excellent shipbuilders and sailors
  - Used waterways to reach inland targets
  - Strong warriors, able to defeat small local armies
- Local nobles gained power during the conflicts by providing protection.
- Carolingian Empire was weakened by the divisions and invasions.

**Discussion Ask:** How do you think people would have met their needs for protection and stability without the organization of the Carolingian Empire? (Students should understand that without centralized government, Europeans would have had to meet these needs locally.)
The Development of Feudalism

GUIDING QUESTION Why did the collapse of governments lead to the new political and social order known as feudalism?

II. EMERGENCE OF FEUDALISM

Roles in Feudal Society

The chart shows roles and duties in feudal society, as well as who fulfills those roles and duties today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medieval Times</th>
<th>Present Day</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craft guilds</td>
<td>Labor unions</td>
<td>Regulation of workers’ hours, conditions, and qualifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constables</td>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Firefighters</td>
<td>Fire suppression, prevention, and rescue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criers</td>
<td>Reporters, anchorpersons</td>
<td>Communication of news</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knights</td>
<td>Special Forces soldiers</td>
<td>Execution of military strategies</td>
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<td>Sheriffs</td>
<td>Sheriffs</td>
<td>Execution of legal orders, delivery of prisoners to court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal tax collectors</td>
<td>Tax collection agencies</td>
<td>Prepare tax bills and collect payments</td>
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</tbody>
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Feudalism
- Inability of rulers to defend subjects
- Vassalage and knighthood
- The feudal contract
The Structure of Feudalism

- Local lords were chief political, social, and economic authorities.
- Warriors were required to pledge loyalty to their lords.
  - In return, warriors received lands and authority over those living therein.
  - Lords would defend and support warriors.
- Multiple landholders maintained order instead of single government.
- Complicated series of interconnected feudal relationships was based on wealth and land ownership.

Discussion Ask: **What held European society together after the fall of the Carolingian Empire?** (Students should identify the importance of oaths of loyalty between lords and vassals as the "glue" of European society. They should mention the responsibility of lords to provide land, food, shelter, and protection and the responsibility of vassals to provide homage, loyalty, and military service.)

The Nobility of the Middle Ages

**GUIDING QUESTION** How was European feudal society structured?

**III. FEUDAL SOCIETY**

Characteristics of the Feudal Nobility
- Focus on warfare
- Ideal of chivalry
- Roles of aristocratic women
The Code of Chivalry

Beginning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the idea of chivalry developed. It began as a literary movement—troubadours and bards (musicians and poets) spread romantic tales of noble, usually fictitious, knights. These stories developed into an idealized set of rules and behaviors that knights were called on to follow. These rules varied according to time and place, but generally the ideal heroic knight was influenced by courtesy, fairness, piety, and devotion to an honorable idea.

Discussion Ask: **How did the code of chivalry help to maintain the structure of feudal society?** (Students should mention that when a knight followed the code of chivalry, he rendered service not only to his lord but also to the Church, women, and the weak, thus preserving and perpetuating the social order.)
Lesson 2: Peasants, Trade, and Cities

The New Agriculture

GUIDING QUESTION How did new farming methods benefit Europe in the Middle Ages?

I. CHANGES IN FARMING

What new farming methods contributed to Europe’s population growth in the Middle Ages?

- Development of new wind and water technologies, reducing human and animal labor
- Development of *carruca*
  - Heavy ox-drawn, wheeled plow with iron plowshare
  - Able to turn over heavy clay soil
  - Led to growth of cooperative farming villages
- Increased efficiency in land use
  - Three-field system of crop rotation, improving yields

New Farming Practices Led to Population Growth

- **Conditions leading to population growth:** Relative peacefulness meant an increase in stability, an improvement in climate made crop harvests more successful, and technological innovations—such as the heavy-wheeled plow—made population growth possible.
- **New system of crop rotation:** A change from two-field to three-field crop rotation allowed people to grow more crops as fewer fields were left fallow during each new growing season.

Discussion Ask: Why did improvements in farming lead to the growth of villages and community organization? (Students should mention that new equipment and draft animals were too expensive for one family to own, so people had to work together. Living in villages made it easier to share the costs of farm equipment and to cooperate in the fields.)
The Manorial System
GUIDING QUESTION What was life like for nobles and peasants under the economic system of manorialism?

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MANORIAL SYSTEM

Agriculture in the Middle Ages.

- The plow, or carruca, had a coulter (cutter) to break through the soil and a moldboard to turn over the soil and create a furrow for planting seed.

- The introduction of the horse collar revolutionized agriculture in Europe. Unlike the ox yoke, the collar didn’t restrict the horse’s windpipe, allowing farmers to use a faster draft animal to plow their fields. Iron horseshoes gave the animals better traction in the heavy soil. Horses were expensive to care for and feed, so farmers often shared their resources.

- Medieval farmers used common land to graze their animals. Grazing land and forests were usually the property of the lord of the manor, to be used only with permission.

- A medieval farmer plows a field in northern Europe. He is preparing for the fall planting of wheat. The adjacent field is fallow (unplanted). In the far field, farmers are harvesting oats that were planted in the spring.

Life on a Manor

- **Manors**: A manor was an estate owned by a lord and farmed by peasants, most of whom were serfs. The serfs owed rent and labor and lived under the manor lord’s feudal authority.

- **Peasant life**: Peasants lived in simple thatched cottages and performed a variety of tasks, determined by the seasons of the year, as they raised food for themselves and their lords.

Discussion Ask: In what ways was manorialism an economic system? (Students should identify the exchange of goods and services on a manor as an economic system, with the lord providing land and protection to the peasants and the peasants providing the lord with labor and a share of the crops.)

The Revival of Trade

GUIDING QUESTION How did the revival of trade result in a commercial revolution during the Middle Ages?
III. GROWTH OF TRADE

- Revival of trade routes
- Revitalization and growth of cities
- Expansion of merchant and artisan classes
- Increase in manufacturing and consumption of goods
- Increase in taxes
- Growth in demand for and use of money
- Rise of trading companies and banking

Increased Trade
- **Centers of trade:** Trade developed gradually in medieval Europe, with Venice and other Italian cities trading in the Mediterranean and towns in Flanders becoming hubs of commerce in northern Europe.
- **Hanseatic League:** More than 100 cities in the area of the Baltic Sea and North Sea banded together for mutual protection and economic opportunity.
- **Rise of a money economy:** An economy based on gold and silver coins, rather than barter, emerged, as did commercial capitalism—investment in trade and goods for profit.

**Discussion Ask:** Why did trade fairs take place in northern France, and what goods were exchanged there? (Students should mention that northern France lay between the commercial centers of Flanders and northern Italy. Northern merchants brought woolen cloth, furs, tin, hemp, and honey to exchange with Italian merchants for Italian cloth and swords, as well as silks, sugar, and spices that came from Asia by way of Italy.)

The Growth of Cities

**GUIDING QUESTION** What spurred the growth of cities in the Middle Ages?

IV. URBANIZATION IN EUROPE
The Growth of Cities

- **Revival of cities**: Merchants and artisans settled in old Roman cities and founded new towns and cities near castles, for protection, and along trade routes.
- **Artisans supplied merchants with goods to sell.**
- **Groups of merchants developed new settlements along trade routes or near castles.**
  - Castle lords offered protection.
- **If settlements were prosperous and growing, walls were built around them.**

The Growth of Cities

- **Revival of cities**: Merchants and artisans settled in old Roman cities and founded new towns and cities near castles, for protection, and along trade routes.
- **Freedom from feudal lords**: To ensure the freedom they needed to engage in trade, townspeople purchased rights from the lords who controlled their territories. Eventually, cities developed their own governments.
- **Conditions in cities**: Cities were enclosed in walls and had crowded, unsanitary living conditions. Men outnumbered women.
- **Industry and guilds**: As cities became centers of manufacturing, craftspeople organized themselves into guilds—associations that trained artisans, controlled the quality of manufactured goods, and set prices. Guilds played a key role in the economic life of medieval cities.

Discussion Ask: **Medieval people had a saying, "City air is free air." What do you think it meant?** *(Students should mention that merchants and artisans in cities needed greater freedom for business than did manor peasants. They would pay feudal lords for freedoms such as the right to buy and sell property, the right of exemption from military service, and the right of escaped serfs to become free townspeople.)*
Lesson 3: The Growth of European Kingdoms

England in the High Middle Ages

GUIDING QUESTION How did society and the legal system in England evolve after 1066?

I. THE NORMAN CONQUEST AND AFTERWARD

England in the High Middle Ages

◦ The Norman Conquest: William of Normandy defeated the English at the Battle of Hastings and became king of England. He gave English lands to Norman knights, made all nobles swear loyalty to him, and adapted existing Anglo-Saxon institutions. The merging of Anglo-Saxon, spoken by the local population, and French, spoken by the Normans, produced the new English language.

◦ Reign of Henry II: Henry II increased the power of the monarchy by expanding its control of courts, but he was not able to suppress the power of the Church.

◦ Limits on royal power: King John set his seal on the Magna Carta, thus recognizing the rights of nobles. Later, the reign of Edward I saw the establishment of Parliament.

Development of the English Language

- Germanic language was brought to England by Angles and Saxons.

- Invasion and settlement of Vikings influenced Anglo-Saxon language.

- Norman invasion introduced French, which gradually merged with Anglo-Saxon into new English language.

- Cultural origins of common words:
  - Anglo-Saxon: sun, moon, star, earth, fire, water
  - Viking: hit, knife, skin, sky, wrong, town names ending in -by (“settlement”)
  - French: justice, obedience, prison, service, bouquet, fruit
Discussion Ask: How did the introduction of a French king and his knights change English society and government? (The English language was changed through the influence of the French spoken by Norman nobles. The nobles' resistance to the growth of royal power led to the Magna Carta and the development of Parliament.)

France in the High Middle Ages

GUIDING QUESTION Why was the reign of King Philip II Augustus a turning point in the French monarchy?

II. EXPANSION OF FRENCH CONTROL

France in the High Middle Ages

- **Philip II Augustus**: After a period of French kings with little power, Philip regained control of French territories from the English and strengthened the monarchy.
- **Louis IX**: Deeply religious, Louis IX tried to ensure that his people received justice.
- **Philip IV**: Philip IV expanded the royal bureaucracy and improved royal governance. He also created a French parliament called the Estates-General.

Discussion Ask: How did French kings strengthen the monarchy in their country? (Philip II Augustus added territory and thus income to the French empire, weakening vassals while strengthening the monarchy. Philip IV expanded the royal bureaucracy to the point where France was the largest and best-governed monarchy...
The Holy Roman Empire

GUIDING QUESTION Why did the lands of Germany and Italy not become united during the Middle Ages?

III. OTTO I'S NEW EMPIRE

The Holy Roman Empire


◦ Struggles in Italy: The emperors Frederick I and Frederick II wanted to create a new kind of empire by conquering Italy and getting most of their revenue from there. Military campaigns failed, as northern Italian cities and popes resisted German armies.

◦ Effects on empire: The German emperors' Italian campaigns left a power vacuum at home, providing nobles with the chance to increase their own power and build small German states under their own control. Both Germany and Italy failed to be unified under a national monarchy.

Discussion Ask: Why were the German rulers unable to establish a consolidated Holy Roman Empire throughout Germany and Italy? (The Italian states and the papacy did not want to be ruled by a German emperor and fought
back. By concentrating their energies in Italy, the German rulers ignored the growing power of nobles at home, with the result that both Germany and Italy remained fragmented into small, independent states.)

Central and Eastern Europe
GUIDING QUESTION Which Slavic peoples formed new kingdoms in eastern and central Europe?

IV. SLAVIC KINGDOMS

Central and Eastern Europe
◦ Slavic Europe: The western Slavs set up kingdoms in Poland and Bohemia and became part of the Roman Catholic Church. The eastern Slavs in Moravia were converted to Eastern Orthodoxy by Cyril and Methodius, the former of whom created a Slavic alphabet. Most of the southern Slavs also embraced Eastern Orthodoxy.
◦ Kievan Rus: Eastern Slavs who had settled in what is now Ukraine and Russia fell under the domination of Viking invaders. One Viking state, the Principality of Kiev, prospered and came to cover a vast territory; its rulers made Eastern Orthodoxy the state religion.
◦ Mongol rule: The Mongols overran Russia in the thirteenth century. Prince Alexander Nevsky defended Mongol rule against German invaders, and his descendants became leaders of Russia.

Discussion Ask: The Slavic peoples shared an ethnic heritage but not a religious one. How did each group become Christian and to which branch of Christianity did each belong? (Students should identify western Slavs as being converted to Roman Catholicism by German monks by the tenth century; eastern Slavs as being converted to Easter Orthodoxy; and most southern Slavs as also becoming Eastern Orthodox Christians, because of their geographic proximity to the Byzantine Empire.)