

Development of Feudalism



Directions: Read the text on the development of feudalism in Western Europe and organize the ideas in the G.R.A.P.E.S. chart below.

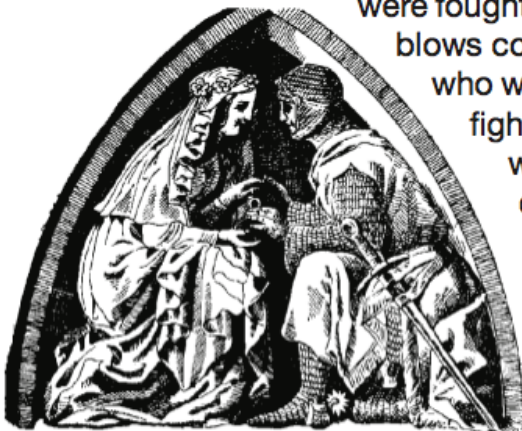
Feudalism From the death of Charlemagne to about 1000, chaos from more Germanic invasions and constant warfare resulted in the creation of a system which promised to bring order during the Middle Ages in Europe. This system is called feudalism, wherein nobles swear an oath of loyalty to a leader and fight for him in exchange for land and other needs. This social/economic system was to dominate Europe for the next few centuries. In a sense, feudalism was based on a mutually agreed upon contract of rights and obligations. It included the lord's giving his favored subjects, or vassals, plots of land called fiefs, or "manors." On these manors peasants, who had no legal rights as persons and who were thought of much as we think of domestic animals today, worked the land for the vassals. In turn, the vassals gave the lords about 10 days of military service a year and an annual fee. All these exchanges were formalized at a ceremony where lord and vassals confirmed the feudal contract. Of course, the peasants were exchanged with the land.

Life on a manor If feudalism defined the political and military system of medieval Europe, manorialism was its economic heart. A manor, or estate, was ruled over by lords and vassals. The peasants, who worked the land and raised the animals, were called serfs. The relationship between vassal and serfs was similar to the one between lord and vassal: an exchange of obligations and rights. Peasants toiled on the manor under a steward's watchful eye for the vassal. In exchange, the vassal protected them in time of war and provided justice through a court on the manor. Specifically, serfs worked three days a week for the master, repairing his castle, digging his moat, and doing many other tasks. For them, life mostly offered filth, monotonous routine, and danger. During the Middle Ages, manors were mostly self-contained and self-sufficient economic units.



Knights and warfare One of the factors which insured that the manors functioned smoothly and without interruption was the presence of a warrior class of men called knights. Each king had many knights (very often, they were his feudal vassals), as part of the feudal contract. These horsemen, fully armored with lances, swords, axes, and maces, rode off to defend one king or another, in mostly small insignificant battles. Often these engagements resulted from kidnappings, marriages, or confusion over feudal

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contracts and loyalties. In any event, these medieval skirmishes were fought man to man, hand to hand, in armor so heavy that a few blows could cause death. However, for the most part, the knight who was knocked off his horse lost and that was the end of the fight. For knights, warfare was a way of life. They trained for war much as soldiers train in today's army. Mock battles called tournaments were held periodically to make sure the skills of these warriors never rusted.

Chivalry Among medieval knights a formal code of behavior—called chivalry—developed. It combined Christian values and the virtues of knighthood which included generosity, loyalty, and bravery. Chivalry also defined rules of warfare. For example, one knight could not attack an enemy knight until his opponent was in his armor. However, many did not obey the chivalrous code and warfare remained brutal and deadly.

G.R.A.P.E.S.	Information. You can paraphrase or quote (if you quote, make sure you use quotation marks)
Geography	
Religion	
Achievements	

Politics	● Charlemagne died in 1000. ● “Germanic invasions and constant warfare resulted in the creation of a system which promised to bring order to Middle Ages to Europe.”
Economy	
Social Structure	