

# The Three Orders

## (Medieval European Society)

Ambrish Kumar Gupta

PGT – History

KV, AFS, Manauri, Allahabad

# Features of Middle Age in Europe

- Feudalism
- Political Instability & Chaos in Europe
- Papal Supremacy & Religious orthodoxy
- Crusade
- Hierarchical Society – Three Orders
- Lack of trade & Commerce
- 'Black Death'
- Encouragement of Local Culture
- Restriction on Social Dynamics

# Feudalism

- The term was popularised by Mark Bloch (1886-1944), who argued that history consisted of much more than just political history, international relations and the lives of great people.
- Bloch's *Feudal Society* is about European society between 900-1300, describing in remarkable detail social relations and hierarchies, land management and the popular culture of the period.
- He was shot by the Nazis in the Second World War.

# Feudalism : Meaning

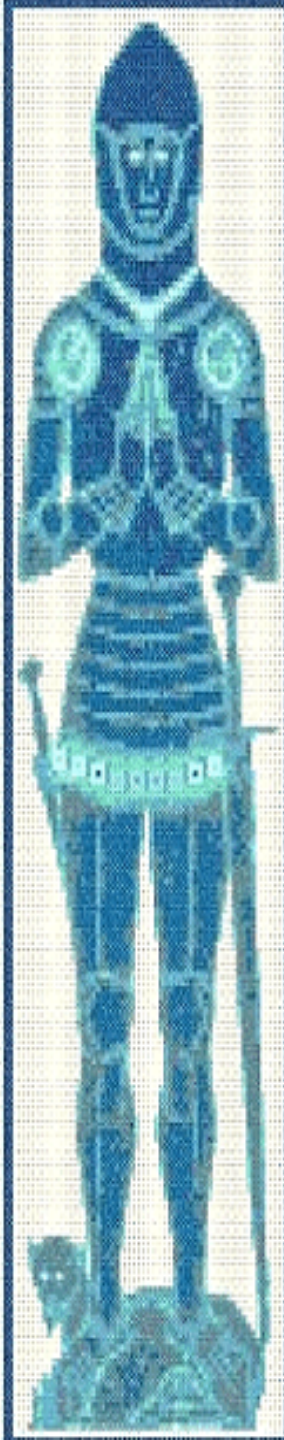
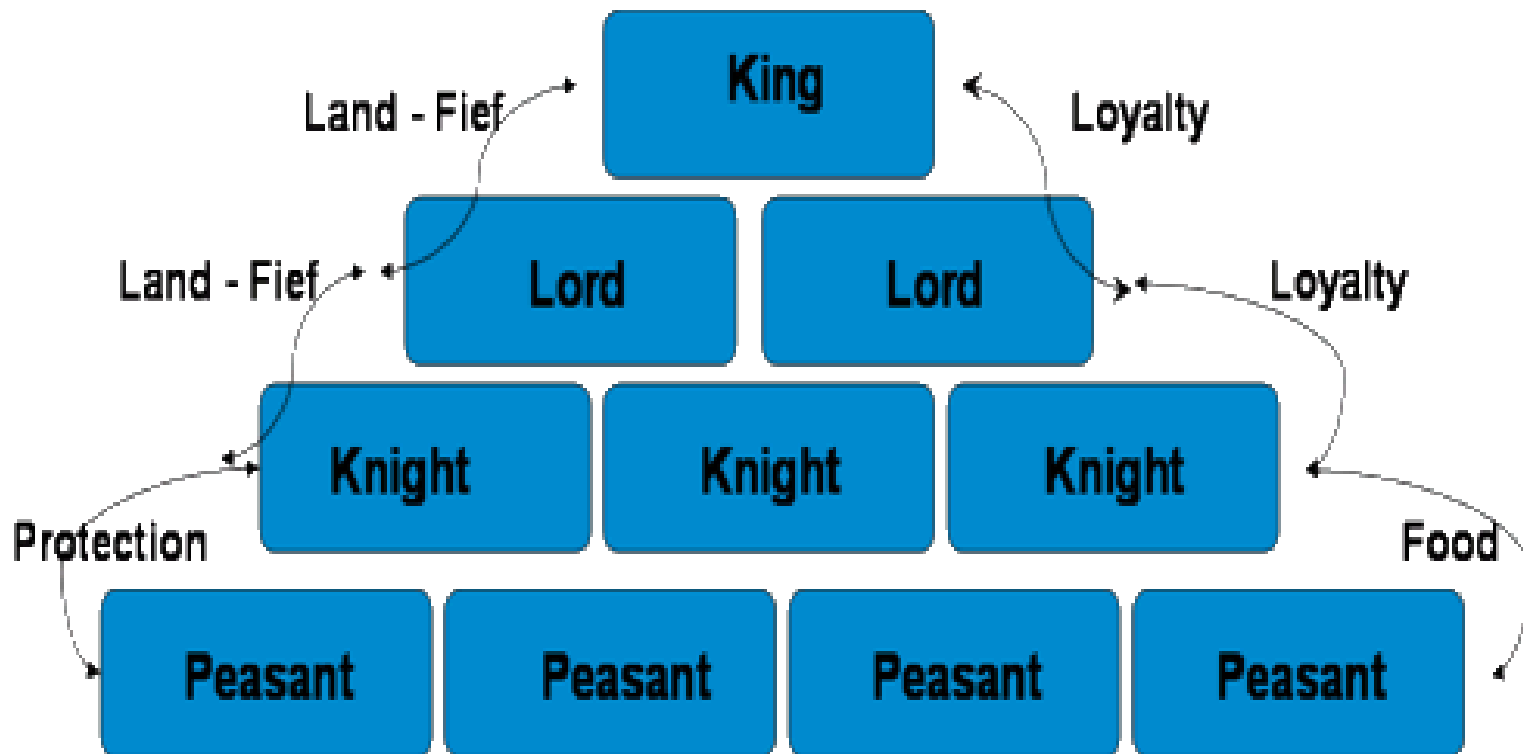
- This term is derived from German words 'Feud' + 'Vassalism', means 'a piece of land' & 'holding sth from a supreme lord'.
- The term 'feudalism' has been used by historians to describe the economic, legal, political and social relationships that existed in Europe in the medieval era.
- In an economic sense it refers to a kind of agricultural production based on the relationship lords & peasants.

# Features of Feudalism

- All lands belong to king & no land is without its lord.
- Peasants cultivated their own land as well as of the lord & performed labour services for them.
- Lord, in exchange provided military protection & had extensive judicial control over them.
- Feudal rights were hereditary.
- Feudal society was based on sub-division of feudal rights of lords.

# Feudalism

A political, economic, and social system based on loyalty and military service.



# About Medieval European Society

- Bishop Adalbero of Laon
  - *Here below, some pray, others fight, still others work . . .*
- Gerard of Cambrai
  - *from the beginning, mankind has been divided into three parts, among men of prayer, farmers, and men of war . . .*
- *a society based on the division of orders according to one's function -- those who work, those who fight and those who pray.*

# The Three Orders

- Those who fight
- Those who pray
- Those who work

Photo source:  
[www.historyguide.org](http://www.historyguide.org)





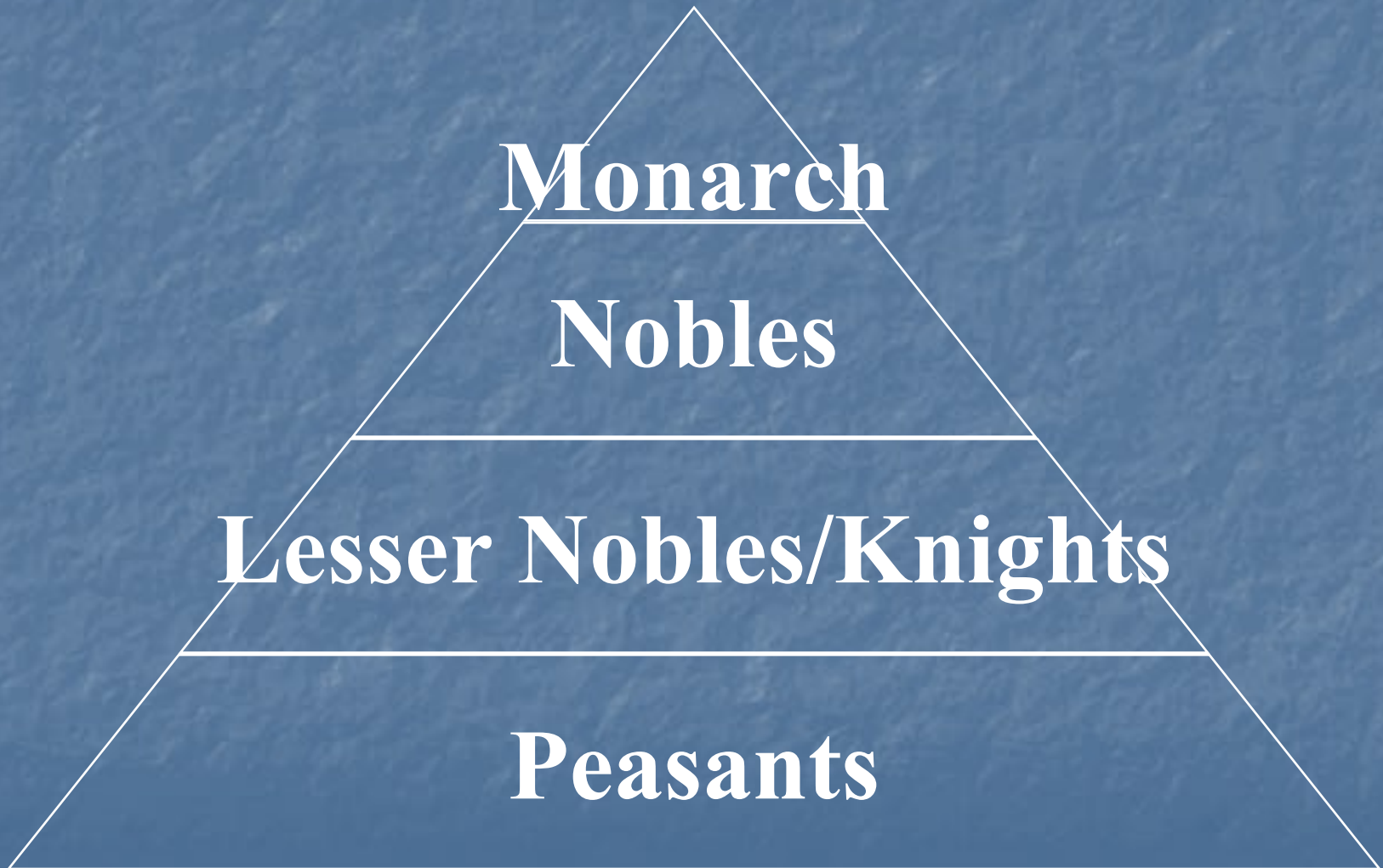
# Those who Fight



# THOSE WHO FIGHT

- European society from the 12th century on was aristocratic
- It continued until the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Nobles had rights and responsibilities:
  - he could raise troops and command them
  - he held his own courts of justice
- The nobility was an estate of warriors – those who fight
- His function was to protect the weak and the poor
- Chivalry was a code of conduct created by the clergy to curb the brutality of knights
- Participation in the medieval [tournament](#)
- The noble had to look after his own land and appointed stewards to maintain the estate, and collect taxes and rents
- He also tried to obtain status by fighting while serving the court of his lord

# The Feudal Power Relationship



# The second order : Nobility

- Priests placed themselves in the first order, and nobles in the second.
- The nobility had a central role in social processes because they controlled land. This control was the outcome of a practice called 'Vassalage'.
- The noble enjoyed a privileged status.
- He had absolute control over his property.
- He could raise troops called feudal levies.
- He held his own court of justice & could even coin his own money.

# The Manor

- He was the lord of all the people settled on his land. He owned vast tracts of land which contained his own dwellings, his private fields and pastures and the homes and fields of his tenant-peasants. His house was called a manor.
- His private lands were cultivated by peasants, who were also expected to act as foot-soldiers in battle when required, in addition to working on their own farms.

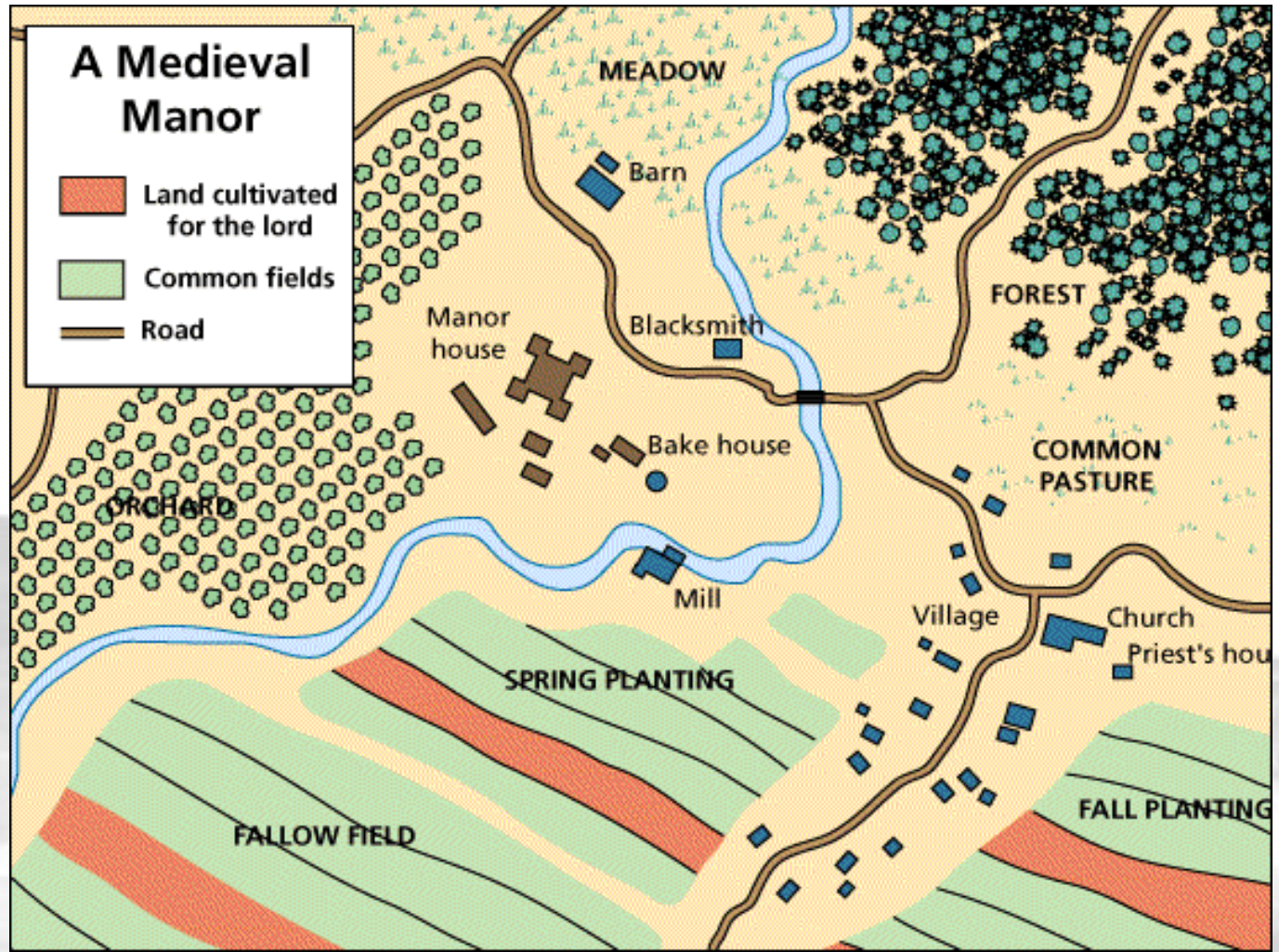
# The Demense : The manorial Estate

- The *demense* was the lord's land which was worked by the peasants
- The other part was held by the peasants but their plot could be cultivated after the *demense*
- Manor was divided into long strips
- One serf would have to work a number of strips
- Manor required cooperation among serfs because horses and plows were limited
- Some manors had tracts of forest or hunting, ponds for fishing, and open meadows for grazing, church on the estate & castle for defence.
- It was from the forest and meadow that the serf could practice [gleaning](#)
- Most serfs never traveled beyond the manor
- Strong sense of family and community
- People knew what to expect from life.

# The manorial state

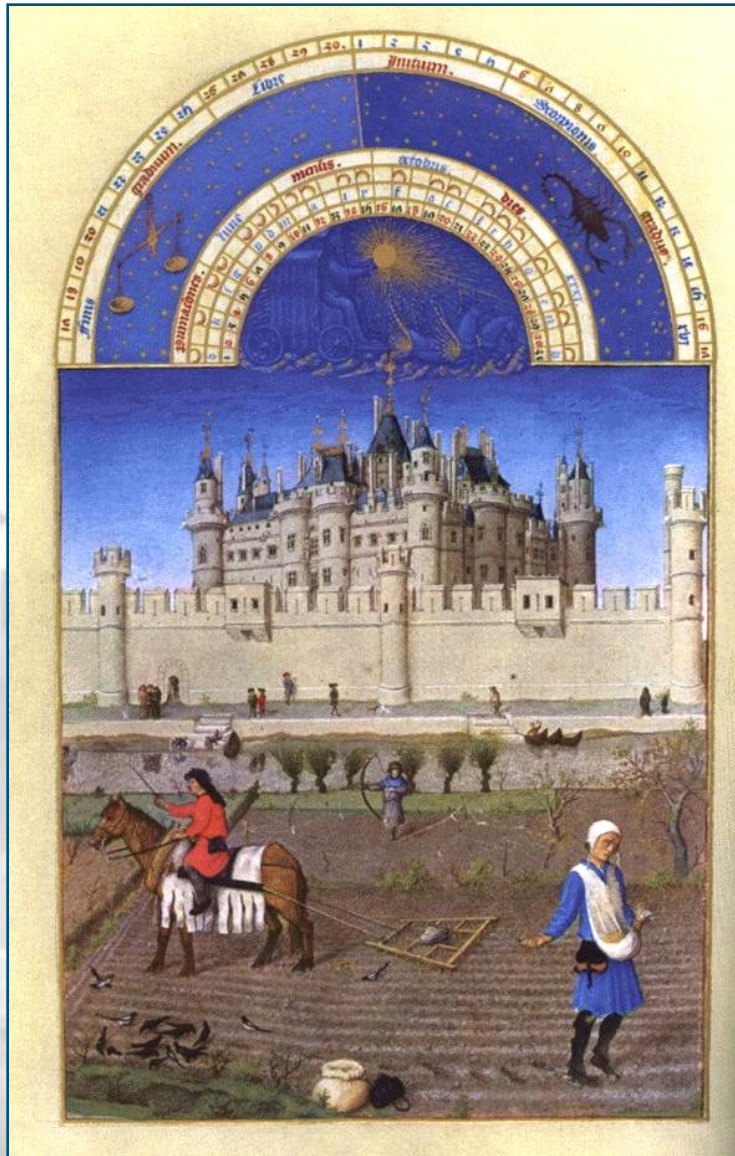
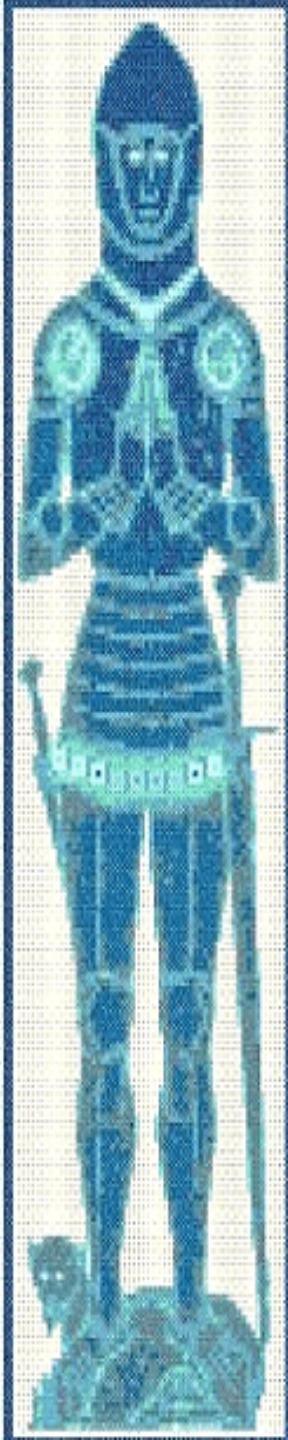
- The manor could not be completely self-sufficient because salt, millstones and metal ware had to be obtained from outside sources.
- Those lords who wanted a luxurious lifestyle and were keen to buy rich furnishings, musical instruments and ornaments not locally produced, had to get these from other places

# The Medieval Manor





# Life on the Medieval Manor



**Serfs** at work

# The Manorial System

- A **Manor** was a self-sufficient agricultural estate run by a lord and worked by peasants and serfs.



- Many peasants at this time became serfs. A serf was a peasant who was bound to the land and didn't really own any land of their own.
  - As the population of Europe increased during this time there was less land to go around. Many peasants lost their holdings and became serfs.
  - Serfs could not leave the manor, they had to work to pay rent, and had to pay fines and fees for various services on the manor. Serfs also could not marry without the Lord's permission.
- In exchange for their labor, the lords of the Manors did owe the serfs protection in the event of invasion.
- They also were able to keep a percentage of the crops they produced on the manor for their own families.

# Daily Life of Peasants

- Peasants lived a hard-working simple life.
- They lived in houses which had thatched roofs resting on timber framework with the spaces filled with mud and straw. There were few, if any windows.
- Many houses only had one to two rooms, there was little privacy.
- The hearth in the main room was used to both heat the house and cook the food. The smoke from the fire crept out through the roof.

# Hygiene

- It is a common misconception that people did not bathe during the Middle Ages.
- The public baths which were popular during the time of Rome fell out of favor, but people did continue to bathe. There is evidence of public baths in Medieval cities. Many of these public baths were shut down after the break out of the Black Death between 1347-1351.
- Baths were more common for the wealthy who could afford to bathe in tubs filled with hot water as well as scented oils and perfumes.
- The poor would bathe in wooden basins or barrels filled with cold water. Although they didn't bathe as often as we do today, they did take a bath more than once a year.
- Soap was made of sheep fat with ashes and soda mixed in. Teeth could be cleaned by scraping them with a hazel twig and rubbing them with a woolen cloth.

# The Cycle of Labor

For peasants there were different jobs to be done throughout the year. The job depended on the growing season and what could be produced during the time.



# Different Seasons

- October was the beginning of the cycle of labor, during that time peasants prepared to plant the winter crops
- November was the time when they would slaughter extra livestock and preserve the meat by salting it so they could have meat during the winter.
  - During the winter people stayed at home repairing tools, mending clothes, spinning and maybe grinding grain into flour.

- In February and March (early spring) peasants would plant spring crops, such as oats, barley, peas and beans.
- In early summer peasants would weed the fields and shear their sheep so they could cart the wool, spin it, and weave it into clothing.





# Feast Days

Although it seems like it, peasants did not work all of the time. They did get some holidays.

There were many feast days, or holidays, which were celebrated throughout the year. These holidays coincided with important events of the Catholic Church including the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and other feasts dedicated to saints or the Virgin Mary. There were about 50 such feast days a year.

Feast days provided an opportunity for dancing, drinking, and informal sports such as wrestling, archery, cockfighting, and even an early form of soccer.

# The Village Church

- The Village church was the center of all religious and most social activities.
- Village priests would teach peasants the basic beliefs of Christianity, although many local priests had very little education themselves.
- On festival days the village churchyard was used for dancing and drinking, much to the dismay of the priest.

# Peasant Diet

- The staple item of the peasant diet was bread. Women made the dough with contained many different types of grain, including wheat, rye, barley, millet, and oats. This was usually called “black bread” because of its dark color.
- Peasants would also eat cheese, which they made, nuts, berries, and whatever fruits were in season. They may also eat eggs from their chickens. Meat was a rare treat.



# Drink

- Water was usually not easy to find and was not very clean to drink, so peasants drank many beverages which were brewed and fermented because the alcohol killed bacteria.
- Peasants usually drank ale made from grain, water, and fermented with yeast. The difference between ale and beer is the addition of hops.
- The upper class usually drank wine which was fermented from grapes.



# The Knights

- From the 9<sup>th</sup> century, there was frequent localised wars in Europe. The amateur peasants-soldiers were not sufficient & good cavalry was needed, this led to the rise of knights.
- They were linked to the lords, just as the latter were linked to the king.
- The lord gave the knight a piece of land (called 'fief') and promised to protect it.
- The 'fief' could be inherited. It extended to anything 1000 & 2000 acres or more. It had all the establishment for his family as in a manor.
- In exchange, the knight paid his lord a regular fee & promised to fight for him in war.
- A knight might serve more than one lord, but his foremost loyalty was to his own lord.

# Knights

- Elite military soldiers
- Usually from the noble classes
- Stages of training: page, squire, knight



Statue of a medieval knight

# Those who Pray



# THOSE WHO PRAY

- At the top of medieval society were those who prayed.
- The Catholic Church had its own laws, owned lands given to it by rulers, and could levy taxes. It was thus a very powerful institution which did not depend on the king. At the head of the western Church was the Pope. He lived in the Rome.
- The Christians in Europe were guided by bishops and clerics – who constituted the first 'order'.
- Most villages had their own church, where people assembled every Sunday to listen to the sermon by the priest and to pray together
- Village priests oversaw the spiritual life of the manor
- By the 11<sup>th</sup> monks had become active members of the community
- The monasteries were dedicated to prayer for the community at large but also produced an educated elite that preserved classical culture



# The First Order : The Clergy

- Everyone could not become a priest. Serfs were banned, as were the physically challenged. Women could not become priests. Men who became priests could not marry. Bishops were the religious nobility.
- Like lords who owned vast landed estates, the bishops also had the use of vast estates, and lived in grand palaces.
- The Church was entitled to a tenth share of whatever the peasants produced from their land over the course of the year, called a 'tithe'.
- Money also came in the form of endowments made by the rich for their own welfare and the welfare of their deceased relatives in the afterlife

# Catholic Church Hierarchy

**The**

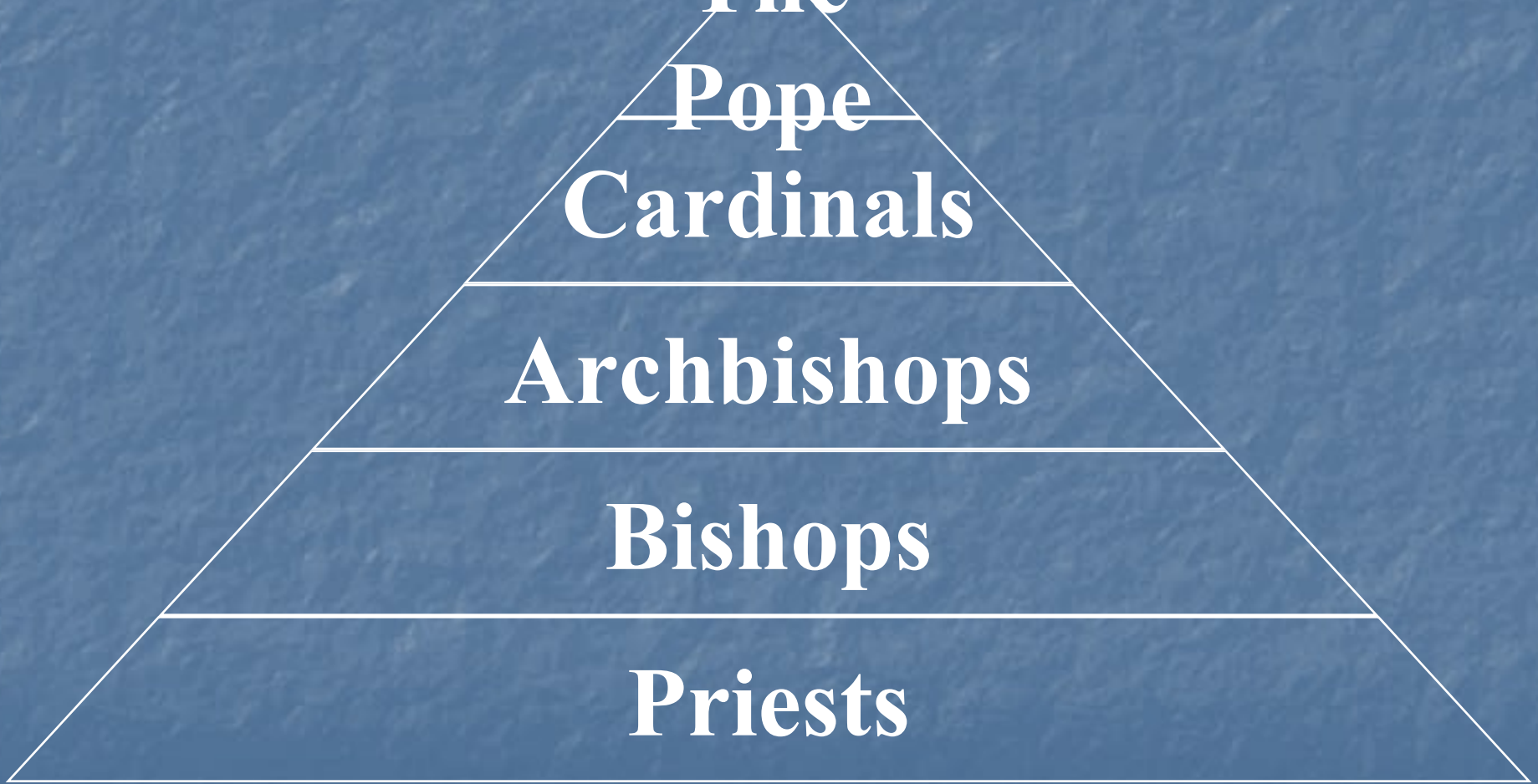
**Pope**

**Cardinals**

**Archbishops**

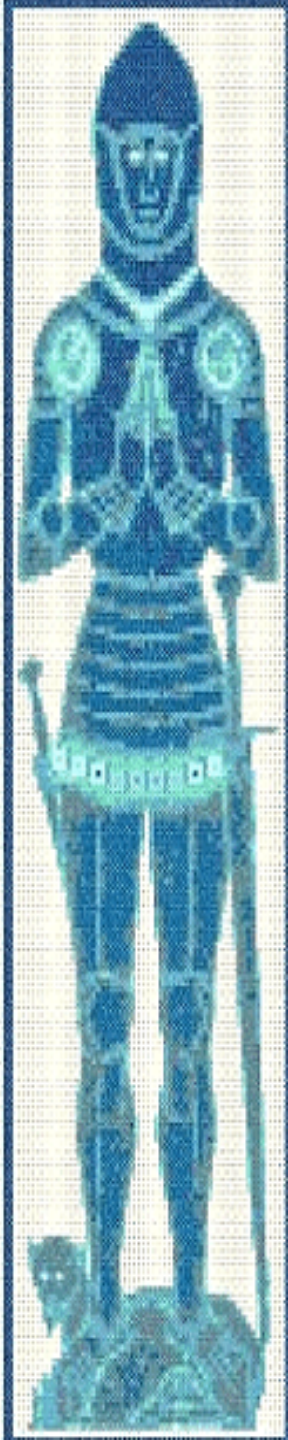
**Bishops**

**Priests**



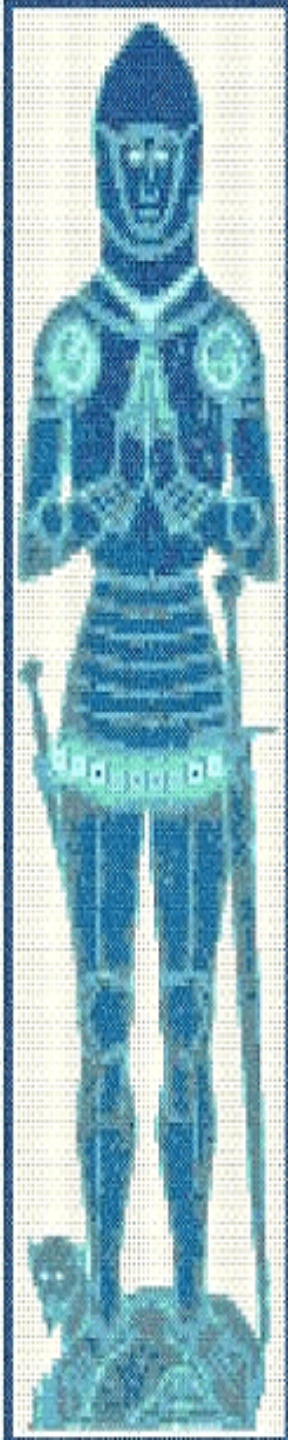
## The Medieval Catholic Church

- ❖ filled the power vacuum left from the collapse of the classical world.
- ❖ monasticism:
  - **St. Benedict** - Benedictine Rule of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
  - provided schools for the children of the upper class.
  - inns, hospitals, refuge in times of war.
  - libraries & **scriptoria** to copy books and **illuminate manuscripts**.
  - monks → missionaries to the barbarians. [St. Patrick, St. Boniface]

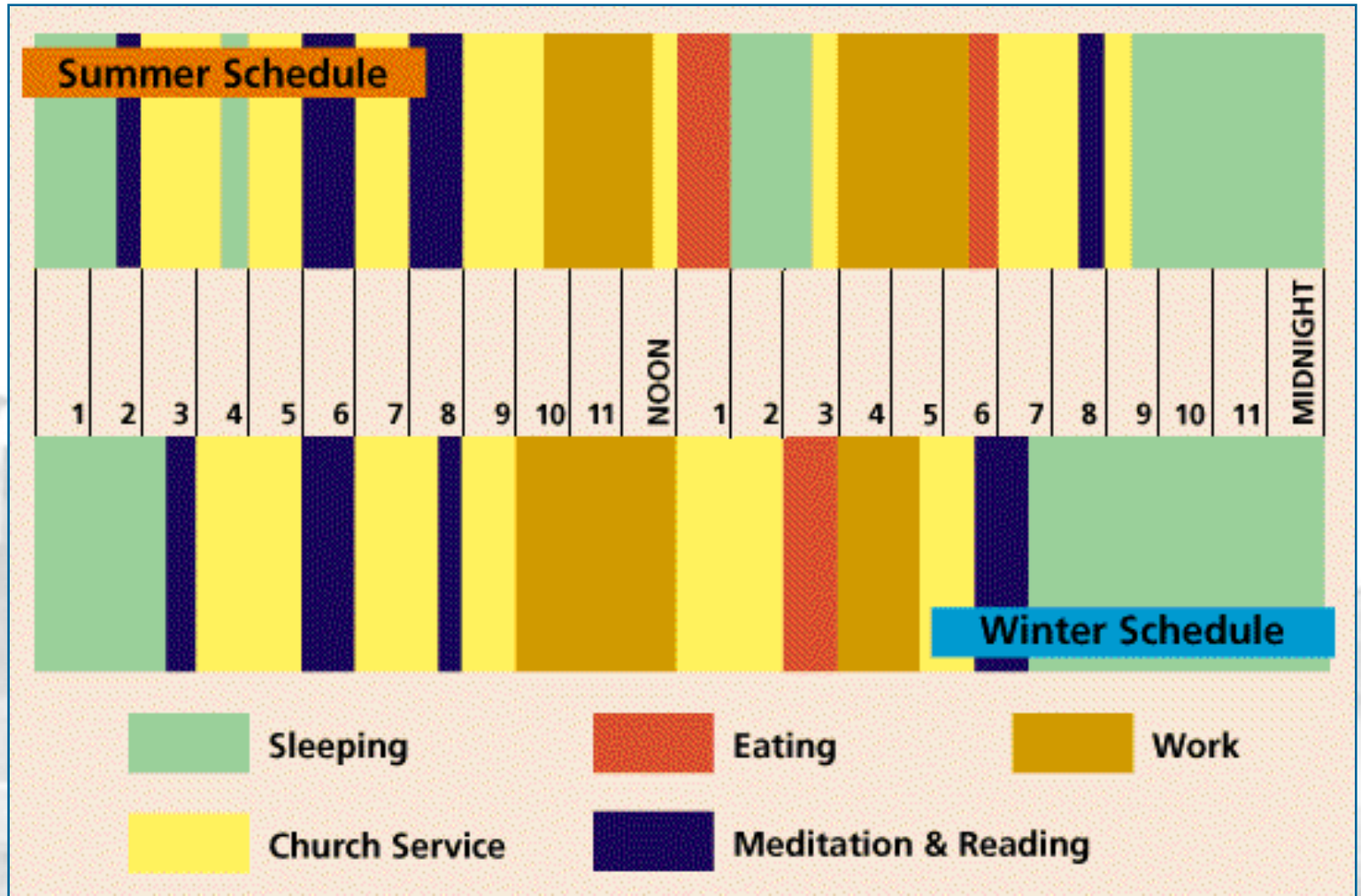
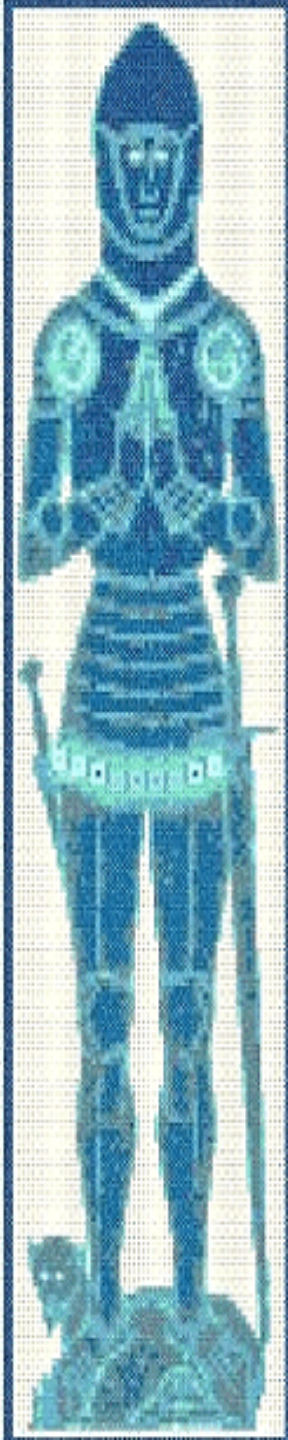


## The Power of the Medieval Church

- ❖ bishops and abbots played a large part in the feudal system.
- ❖ the church controlled about 1/3 of the land in Western Europe.
- ❖ tried to curb feudal warfare → only 40 days a year for combat.
- ❖ curb heresies → **crusades**; **Inquisition**
- ❖ **tithe** → 1/10 tax on your assets given to the church.
- ❖ **Peter's Pence** → 1 penny per person [paid by the peasants].



# A Medieval Monk's Day



# Monks & Nuns

- Apart from the Church, devout Christians had another kind of organization. Some deeply religious people choose to live isolated lives, in contrast to clerics who lived amongst people in towns and villages.
- They lived in religious communities called abbeys or monasteries, often in places very far from human habitation.
- Two of the more well-known monasteries were those established by St Benedict in Italy in 529 and of Cluny in Burgundy in 910.

# Monks & Nuns

- Monks took vows to remain in the abbey for the rest of their lives and to spend their time in prayer, study and manual labour, like farming. Unlike priesthood, this life was open to both men and women – men became monks and women nuns. Except in a few cases, all abbeys were single-sex communities, that is, there were separate abbeys for men and women. Like priests, monks and nuns did not marry.
- From small communities of 10 or 20 men/women, monasteries grew to communities often of several hundred, with large buildings and landed estates, with attached schools or colleges and hospitals.
- They contributed to the development of the arts.

# Friars

- From the 13<sup>th</sup> century, some groups of monks – called friars – chose not to be based in a monastery but to move from place to place preaching to the people & living on charity.
- By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing uncertainty about the value and purpose of monasticism.
- In England, Langland's poem, *Piers Plowman* (c.1360-70), contrasted the ease and luxury of the lives of some monks with the 'pure faith' of 'simple ploughmen and shepherds and poor common labourers.'
- Also in England, Chaucer wrote the *Canterbury Tales* which had comic portraits of a nun, a monk and a friar



# Religion

- For medieval men and women Christian belief and practice permeated all aspects of life
- The village Church was the center of the community
- Pop-religion retained elements of paganism and was wrought with rituals and symbols
- Mass was in Latin but homilies about the gospel were in the vernacular
- Paintings and stained-glass windows exposed the peasants to biblical stories
- There was a strong sense of God's existence believing that God was directly involved in human affairs and could reward the virtuous and punish the sinners with disease, plague, poor harvest, and war.
- Sense of purpose

# Those who worked



# Those Who Worked

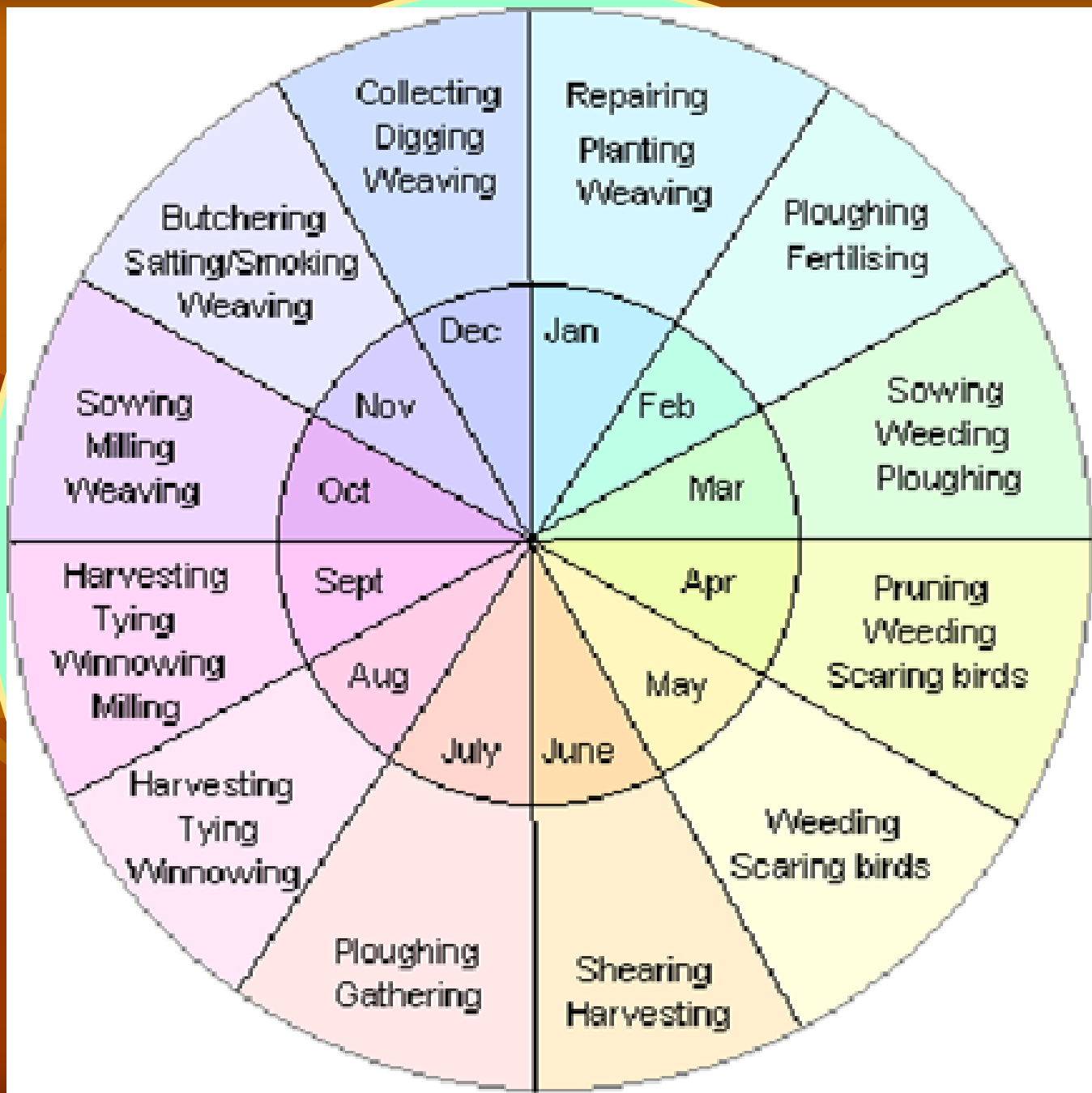


# The Third Order : Peasants & Serfs

- Third order sustained the first two orders.
- Cultivators were of two kinds: free peasants and serfs.
- Free peasants held their farms as tenants of the lord. The men had to render military service (at least 40 days every year).
- Peasant families had to set aside certain days of the week, usually 3 but often more, when they would go to the lord's estate and work there. The output from such labour, called labour-rent, would go directly to the lord.
- In addition, they could be required to do other unpaid labour services, like digging ditches, gathering firewood, building fences and repairing roads and buildings.
- Besides this, women and children had to do other tasks. They spun thread, wove cloth, made candles and pressed grapes to prepare wine for the lord's use.
- There was one direct tax called 'taille' that kings sometimes imposed on peasants (the clergy & nobles were exempted from paying this).

# Serfs

- Serfs cultivated plots of land, but these belonged to the lord. Much of the produce from this had to be given to the lord.
- They also had to work on the land which belonged *exclusively* to the lord. They received no wages and could not leave the estate without the lord's permission.
- The lord claimed a number of monopolies at the expense of his serfs. Serfs could use only their lord's mill to grind their flour, his oven to bake their bread, & his wine presses to distil wine & beer.
- The lord could decide whom a serf should marry, or might give his blessing to the serf choice, but on payment of a fee.



# Those Who Worked

- By the 11th and 12th centuries, the vast majority of European men and women (90%) were peasants who worked their lord's land
- Not much has been recorded about them
- The number of days devoted to working the lord's land varied from place to place but was usually three days a week except during the harvest
- The serf was tied to the land and his condition was hereditary but by the 12th century some serfs could be freed
  - Urbanization, increased productivity of the land, extensive trade, and the development of a cash economy
  - Peasants began to rent land from the lord
  - Serfs no longer owed their lords a labor obligation, but rather various direct and indirect taxes on most tasks on the manor.
  - Since lords were losing their serfs they relaxed ancient obligations
- Manors varied in from 100 acres to over 1000.
  - Could include one village, a few villages, or none at all.

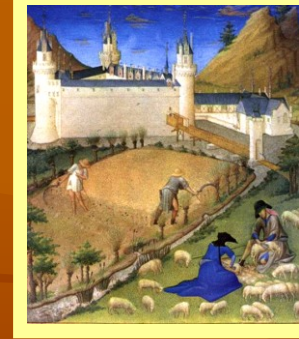
# MEDIEVAL LIFE

Cooperation and Mutual Obligations



## FEUDALISM: POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Decentralized, local government
- Dependent upon the relationship between members of the nobility
- Lord and his vassals administered justice and were the highest authority in their land



## MANORIALISM: ECONOMIC SYSTEM

- Agriculture the basis for wealth
- Lands divided up into self-sufficient manors
- Peasants (serfs) worked the land and paid rent in exchange for protection
- Barter the usual form of exchange



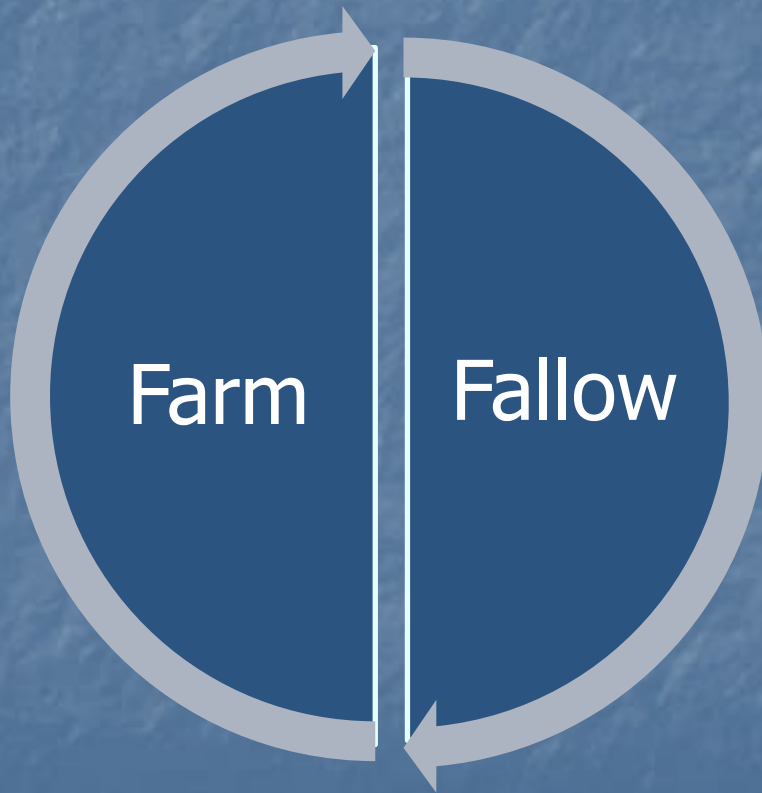


# Factors affecting Social & Economic Relations

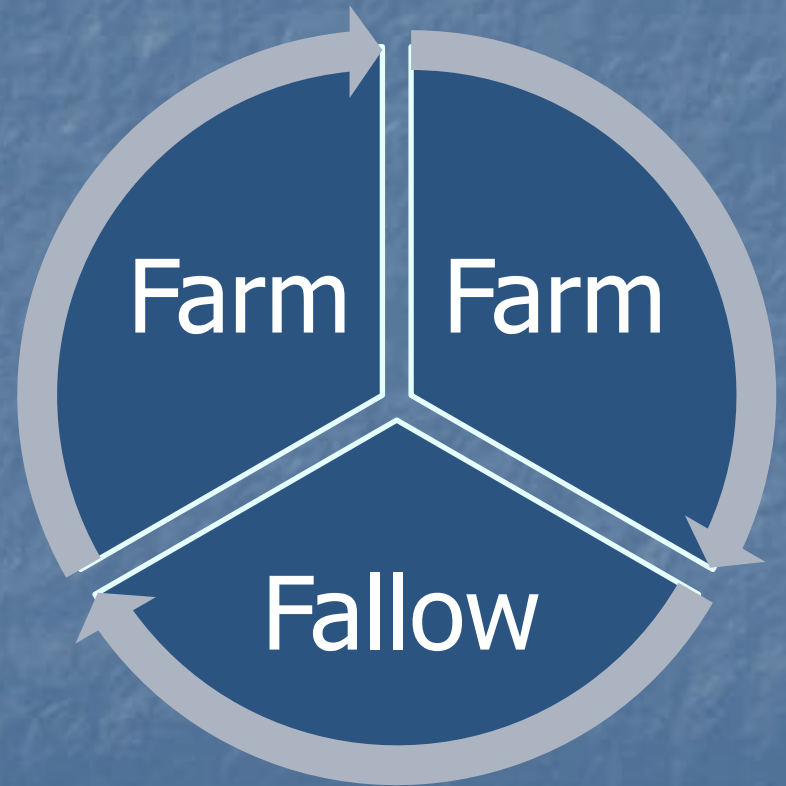
- Changes in the Environment- from 11<sup>th</sup> century Europe entered in a warm phase of environment, this made expansion of the area under cultivation possible.
- Change in Agricultural Technology & Land Use-
  - ❖ use of iron tipped ploughs & mould-boards.
  - ❖ instead of neck-harness, the method of shoulder harnessing animals to the plough came into use.
  - ❖ Horses were now better shod, with iron horseshoes, which prevented foot decay.
  - ❖ There was increased use of wind & water energy for agriculture.
  - ❖ There was increased use of wind and water energy for agriculture. More water-powered and wind powered mills were set up all over Europe for purposes like milling corn & pressing grapes.
  - ❖ Changes in land use from a two-field to a three field system.

# Three-Field System

**Before**



**After**



Fallow means left unfarmed

# The Three-Field System

- Could farmers yield more crops using half of their land or two-thirds of their land?



# Improvement in Agricultural Technology

- Windmills
- Water Wheels
- Iron tools
- Iron plow (could go down much deeper into the soil)
- Horse collar
- System of crop rotation



# The Three Field System

- The method of **crop rotation**, or the **three field system**, was developed during the middle ages.
- Originally half the land would be planted and the other half would be fallow (unplanted)
- Under the new system the land was divided into three fields. Two were planted and one would be left fallow. Crops which used different nutrients would be planted in the two fields and would rotate to let the soil rest.



# Crops

- In the three field system one was planted with grains which were harvested in the summer.
- The second was planted in the spring with grains such as oats and barley and vegetables such as peas and beans. Which were harvested in the fall.
- The third field was left fallow, or unplanted.

# A Fourth Order? New Towns & Townspeople

- Expansion in agriculture was accompanied by growth in three related areas : Population, Trade & Towns.
- Better food meant a longer lifespan. By the thirteenth century, an average European could expect to live 10 years longer than in the eighth century. Women and girls had shorter lifespans compared to men because the latter ate better food.
- from the 11th century, as agriculture increased & became able to sustain higher levels of population, towns began to grow again.
- Peasants who had surplus grain to sell needed a place where they could set up a selling centre and where they could buy tools and cloth. This led to the growth of periodic fairs and small marketing centres which gradually developed town-like features – a town square, a church, roads where merchants built shops and homes, an office where those who governed the town could meet.
- In other places, towns grew around large castles, bishops' estates, or large churches.



# A Fourth Order? New Towns & Townspeople

- In towns, instead of services, peoples paid a tax to the lords who owned the land on which the town stood.
- Town offered the prospect of paid work & freedom from the lord's control, for young people from peasant families.
- If a serf could stay for one year and one day without his lord discovering him, he would become a free man. They provided unskilled labour in urban centres.
- Shopkeepers & merchants were numerous.
- The basis of economic organisation was the guild. Each craft or industry was organised into a guild, an association which controlled the quality of the product, its price and its sale.
- By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, new trade routes with west asia were developing.
- Later there was need for individuals with specialised skills, like bankers and lawyers. The bigger towns had populations of about 30,000.
- They could be said to have formed a 'fourth' order.

# The Revival of Trade

- Medieval Europe was a mostly agrarian society, but during the eleventh and twelfth centuries Europe experienced a growth in towns and cities.
- The increase in agricultural output allowed for the development of trade. By the end of the tenth century people emerged with skills and products for trade. Invasions were also diminishing during this time and the increased stability helped to foster trade.



# Medieval Trade

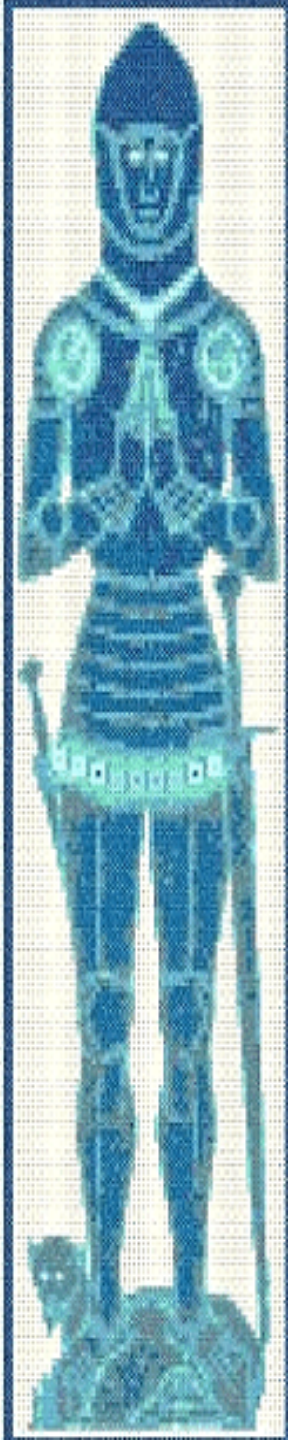


# Medieval Guilds

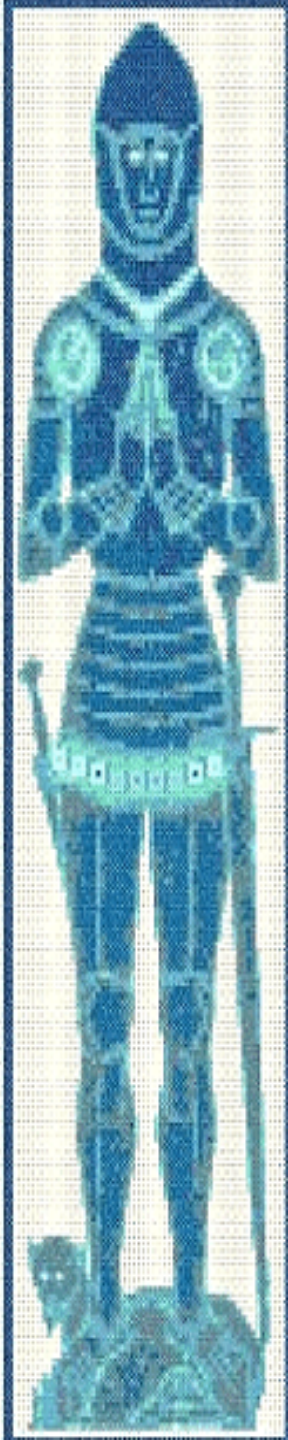


**Guild Hall**

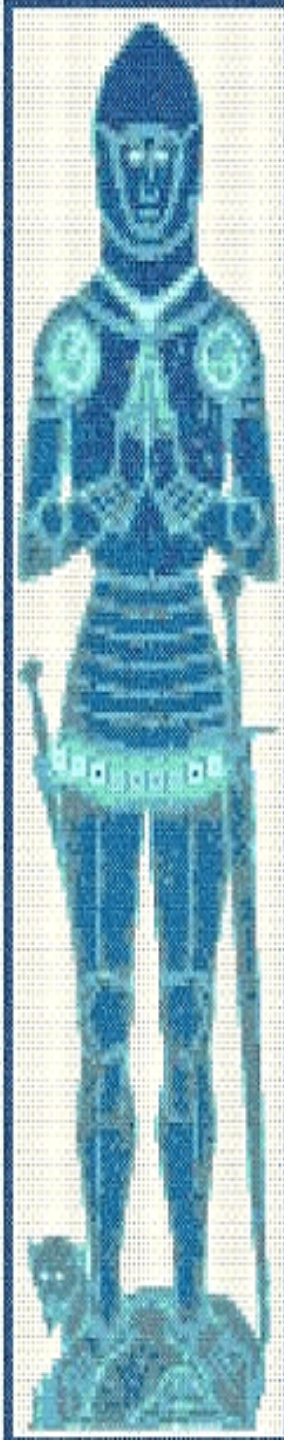
- ❖ **Commercial Monopoly:**
  - **Controlled membership**  
**apprentice** → **journeyman** → **master craftsman**
  - **Controlled quality of the product [masterpiece].**
  - **Controlled prices**



## Medieval Guilds: A Goldsmith's Shop



# Crest of a Cooper's Guild



© 2000 IRC



- Cities has been around since Roman times, and many of the old Roman cities began to reemerge as trade centers.
- There were also new trading centers.
- Some of these cities included:
  - Venice in Northern Italy was a center with ties to the Byzantine Empire and the Middle East.
  - Flanders in Northern France was famous for its wool industry.
- Trade also helped Europe culturally, the Crusades introduced Middle Eastern good into European markets. Europeans also learned about the cultivation of oranges, sugar, and rice as well as techniques for irrigation, papermaking and how to use a compass.

# Trade Fairs

- Fairs were large markets where merchants got together to exchange their goods.
- As trade increased, there was a demand for gold and silver instead of bartered goods. This led to the development of a money economy based on the exchange of coins for goods.
- This increase in trade led to commercial capitalism, an economic system in which people invest in trade and goods in order to make profits.





# The Growth of Cities

- Increased trade led to merchants settling in old Roman cities, they were later joined by craftspeople and artisans. This influx of people revitalized these old cities.
- There were also new cities founded by the same groups. Merchants would build near a castle or along a trade route where a lord offered them protection, if things went well a wall was built around the new city to offer protection.

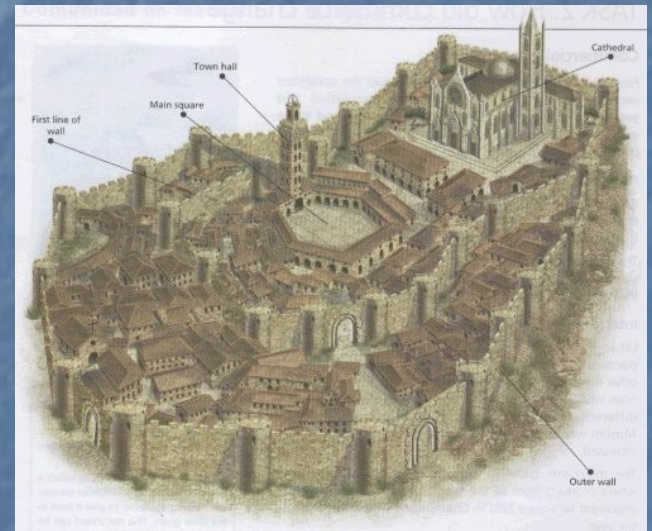
# Bourgeoisie

Residents of the cities were called burghers or bourgeoisie, from the German word *burg*, meaning a walled enclosure.



# Medieval Cities

- Medieval cities were smaller than other ancient cities. They were limited by the wall which surrounded them.
- Medieval London had a population of around 40,000.



Residents of these cities would attempt to gain independence from the lords of the manor near them so they would have more control over their money and trade.

Townspeople began to buy or win rights from their local lords, a city could gain a *charter*, or a "charter of freedoms" from their local lord which would allow them to run their own affairs.

# City Government

Medieval cities developed their own governmental systems.

There would usually be a city council which would serve as judges and city officials and also passed laws.

The Patrician, or upper, class tended to dominate the politics of the towns and cities.

# Daily Life in the Medieval City

- Medieval cities were surrounded by walls which made space a premium.
- Buildings were very close together and had narrow, winding streets.
- Cities were often dirty and smelled from animal and human waste.
- There was air pollution from coal and wood fires as well as water pollution from tanning and animal-slaughtering industries including blood, tannic acids, animal fat, animal hair, and all other waste. Most of this waste was dumped in rivers and so all "clean" water came from wells.

# Dangers

Aside from poor sanitation, the crowded conditions of cities made fire a constant danger. Many structures were made of wood and the people used fire to both heat and light their homes.



# Public Baths

- There were public and private baths located in Medieval cities.
- Communal bathing made sense from the point of resources because preparing baths took a lot of effort and resources.
- The Church frowned upon the public nudity of the baths and attempted to have them closed down.
- The break out of the Bubonic Plague (black death) of the 14<sup>th</sup> century caused the baths to be closed down because they believed they helped to spread disease.





# Women

- In medieval cities women were expected to supervise the household and would occasionally work outside the home.
- Women could help a husband manage a business, but few women worked independently.
- The businesses women did work were often the less lucrative and unpleasant ones such as preparing the dead for burial or spinning wool into yarn.



# The Guild

- A group of individuals working together to improve economic and social conditions for its members
  - Blacksmiths
  - Wine makers
  - Bakers
  - Artisans



# Guilds

- Merchants in medieval cities formed **guilds**, or business associations.
- Guilds managed tanners, carpenters, bankers as well as merchants of silk, spices, wool and the banking industry. .
- Guilds regulated every aspect of a business. They set quality standards, specified methods of production, and fixed prices.
- In order to operate a business, one had to belong to a guild.



# Joining a Guild

There was a process to becoming a member of a guild.

The first step was to be an **apprentice**: A young boy, around the age of 10, would go and work for a craftsman without pay to help learn the craft.

Later apprentices became **journeymen**, who worked for a wages for craftsmen.



# The Masterpiece

For a journeyman to become a master craftsman, he had to complete a **Masterpiece**.

This was their audition for the guild to determine if their work made them qualified enough to join the guild and start their own business.

Then they could become a **Master Craftsman** and own their own business.

# Section 2: Christianity and Medieval Civilization



# How to become a Master

## History *in* Depth

### Craft Guilds

Craft guilds formed an important part of town life during the medieval period. They trained young people in a skilled job, regulated the quality of goods sold, and were major forces in community life.

### Guild Services

#### To members:

- Set working conditions
- Covered members with a type of health insurance
- Provided funeral expenses
- Provided dowries for poor girls

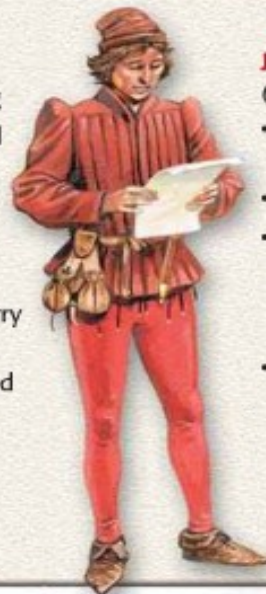
#### To the community:

- Built almshouses for victims of misfortune
- Guaranteed quality work
- Took turns policing the streets
- Donated windows to the Church



### Apprentice

- Parents paid for training
- Lived with a master and his family
- Required to obey the master
- Trained 2–7 years
- Was not allowed to marry during training
- When trained progressed to journeyman



### Journeyman

- (Day Worker)
- Worked for a master to earn a salary
  - Worked 6 days a week
  - Needed to produce a masterpiece (his finest work) to become a master
  - Had to be accepted by the guild to become a master



### Master

- Owned his own shop
- Worked with other masters to protect their trade
- Sometimes served in civic government

# Cathedral Towns

- Rich merchants spent their money for making donations to churches.
- From the 12<sup>th</sup> century, large churches – called cathedrals – were being built in France. These belonged to monasteries, but different groups of people contributed to their construction with their own labour, materials or money.
- Cathedrals were built of stone, and took many years to complete. As they were



# Cathedral-Towns

- Cathedrals were designed so that the priest's voice could be heard clearly within the hall where large numbers of people gathered, and so that the singing by monks could sound beautiful and the chiming bells calling people to prayer could be heard over a great distance.
- Stained glass was used for windows.
- During the day the sunlight would make them radiant for people *inside* the cathedral, and after sunset the light of candles would make them visible to people *outside*.
- The stained glass windows narrated the stories in the Bible through pictures, which illiterate people could 'read'.

# The Crisis of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century

- By the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, Europe's economic expansion slowed down by following reasons-
  - ❖ Climate change from warm summers to cold summers.
  - ❖ Storms & Oceanic flooding destroyed many farmsteads, which resulted in less income in taxes for govt.
  - ❖ Previous 300 years intensive ploughing exhausted the soil.
  - ❖ Population growth was outstripping resources & shortage of pasturage resulted in famines followed by massive cattle death.
  - ❖ In addition, trade was hit by a severe shortage of metal money due to short fall in the output of silver mines in Austria & Serbia.
  - ❖ Ships carrying goods from distant countries brought rats carrying the deadly bubonic plague infection (the 'Black Death').

# The Crisis of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century

- Social Unrest-
  - ❖ The catastrophe caused by Black Death combined with the economic crisis resulted in immense social dislocation.
  - ❖ Depopulation resulted in a major shortage of labour, hence prices of agricultural goods dropped & wage rates increased.
  - ❖ The income of lords was thus badly hit. It declined as agricultural prices came down and wages of labourers increased. In desperation, they tried to give up the money-contracts they had entered into and revive labour services.
  - ❖ This was violently opposed by peasants, particularly the better educated and more prosperous ones.
  - ❖ Though the lords succeeded in crushing the revolts, the peasants ensured that the feudal privileges of earlier days could not be reinvented.

# The Crisis of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century

- Political Changes-Emergence of 'New Monarchs'-
  - In the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, European kings strengthened their military and financial power. Historians called these kings 'the new monarchs'. Louis XI in France, Maximilian in Austria, Henry VII in England and Isabelle and Ferdinand in Spain were absolutist rulers,
  - They started the process of organising standing armies, a permanent bureaucracy and national taxation and in Spain & Portugal, began to play a role in Europe's expansion overseas.

# Continued.....

- The dissolution of the feudal system of lordship and vassalage, and the slow rate of economic growth had given the first opportunity to kings to increase their control over their powerful and not-so-powerful subjects.
- Rulers dispensed with the system of feudal levies for their armies and introduced professionally trained infantry equipped with guns and siege artillery directly under their control.
- The resistance of the aristocracies crumbled in the face of the firepower of the kings.
- By increasing taxes, monarchs got enough revenues to support larger armies and thus defended and expanded their frontiers and overcame internal resistance to royal authority. Centralisation, however, did not occur without resistance from the aristocracy.

# Continued.....

- The nobility managed a tactical shift in order to ensure their survival. From being opponents to the new regimes, they quickly transformed themselves into loyalists.
- It is for this reason that royal absolutism has been called a modified form of feudalism.
- Precisely the same class of people who had been rulers in the feudal system – the lords –continued to dominate the political scene. They were given permanent positions in the administrative service. But the new regimes were different in some important ways.
- The king was no longer at the apex of a pyramid where loyalty had been a matter of personal dependence and trust. He was now at the centre of an elaborate courtier society and a network of patron–client relationships.

# Continued.....

- All monarchies, weak or powerful, needed the cooperation of those who could command authority. Patronage became the means of ensuring such cooperation. And patronage could be given or obtained by means of money. Therefore money became an important way in which non-aristocratic elements like merchants and bankers could gain access to the court. They lent money to the kings, who used it to pay the wages of soldiers. Rulers thus made space for non-feudal elements in the state system

# Feudalism in England

- Feudalism developed in England from the eleventh century (1066 AD).
- The Angles and Saxons, from central Europe, had settled in England in the sixth century.
- The country's name, England, is a variant of 'Angleland'.
- In the eleventh century, William, the Duke of Normandy\*, crossed the English Channel with an army and defeated the Saxon king of England.
- From this time, France and England were often at war because of disputes over territory and trade.



# Feudalism in England (Conttd..)

- William I had the land mapped, and distributed it in sections to 180 Norman nobles who had migrated with him.
- The lords became the chief tenants of the king, and were expected to give him military help. They were obliged to supply a certain number of knights to the king. They soon began to gift some of their own lands to knights who would serve them just as they in turn served the king.
- They could not, however, use their knights for private warfare, which was forbidden in England.
- Anglo-Saxon peasants became tenants of various levels of landholders.

Thank You