

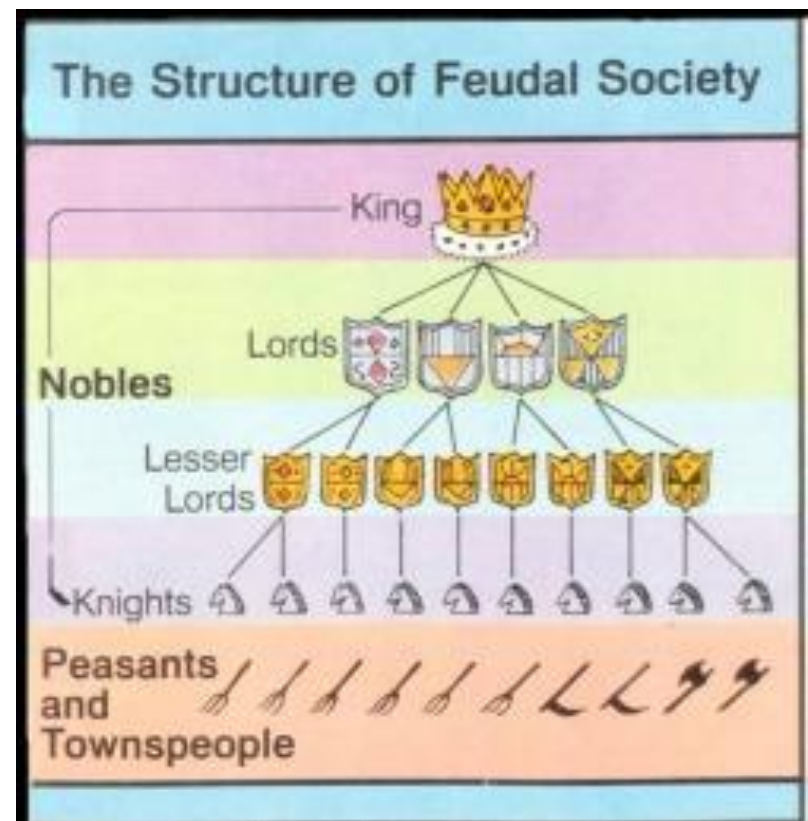
# Feudal Society

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# Beginnings

- Germanic Customs
  - Lords, Knights, Lesser Lords (Vassals)
- Invention of the stirrup
  - Allowed for heavier armour
- Charles Martel
  - Granting of land to knights

- Feudal contract
- Lord:
  - Provided a fief to his vassal
  - Protected vassals
  - Provided court of justice
  - Acted as guardian
- Vassal:
  - Military service (40 days)
  - Service (holidays, court, etc.)
  - Payment (ransom, relief, fees)



- Role of the King
  - Limited power
  - Still thought of as the highest noble
- Feudal system became more complex with passing generations
- First developed in France, expanded to eastern Europe
  - Did not take hold everywhere

- Feudalism and Warfare:
  - Nobles fighting Nobles
    - Boundaries
    - Inheritance
    - Greed, honour, family feuds
  - Knights were heavily armed
  - Lords built castles
  - Declined in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century due to influence of the church and large, powerful lords



## ■ Chivalry:

- Combined Christian values and virtues of being a warrior
- Knights were expected to be:
  - Brave, generous, and loyal
  - Protect noblewomen
  - Defend family honour
- Only between knights



- Noblewomen had few rights
  - Could inherit a fief, but not rule it
  - Some gained influence through their husband's power
  - Wife could command vassals and servants in absence of lord
- Arranged marriages
- Main duty was to raise a large family
- Education based on practical skills
- Treatment would improve putting women on a pedestal (Troubadours)

# Life on the Manor

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# Beginnings

- Grew out of Roman empire (coloni)
- Peasants tied to the land called serfs
  - Were considered part of the fief
- Lord:
  - Divided land among serfs
  - Reserved a demesne
  - Protect the peasants
  - Provide justice

## ■ Serfs:

- Owed certain payments
  - Rent for land
  - Fees for using mill, ovens
  - To continue farming the land after the death of the head of family
  - Coined money had disappeared
- 3 days a week working the land
- Farmed the lord's demesne
- Repaired castle, dug moat

- Each manor was a self-sufficient world
- If a lord owned several manors a bailiff was used to manage
- Each manor had many of the same features:
  - Highest land was manor house
  - Peasant cottages
  - Church
  - Mill
  - Workshops
- Many festivals, life based on planting and harvesting
- Many hazards; warfare, disease, flood, drought

- Improvements in agriculture:
  - Three-field system (Crop rotation)
  - New inventions:
    - Heavy plow
    - Horseshoe
    - Watermill and windmill
    - Iron instruments
  - Led to food surpluses
  - The “Great Clearing”
    - Freedom for serfs

- Feudal Justice:
  - Based on customs
  - Two courts; one for vassals, one for peasants
  - Trial by Ordeal, or Trial by Combat