

The Byzantine Empire



I. Background

- A. Reached height of empire in 500's C.E., shortly after the fall of the western Roman Empire
- B. The location of **Constantinople** was strategic:
 - 1. Near major trade routes (which ones?)
 - 2. Water on three sides – easy to defend
 - 3. became known as “New Rome” after fall of western Roman Empire
- C. Lands that were once part of the Greek world became the heart of the Byzantine empire – eventually Byzantine officials and emperors spoke Greek rather than Latin
- D. Influences from eastern civilizations such as the Persians were present
- E. Between 500 C.E. and 1200 C.E. this was one of the most advanced empires in the world





Constantinople



II. Justinian



- A. Became emperor in 527 C.E.
- B. Wife **Theodora** worked to improve the social standing of women and was a powerful influence on Justinian
- C. Justinian's goal was to restore the Roman empire
 - 1. he began the re-conquest of Italy, North Africa, and Spain in 533
 - 2. Germanic rulers were overthrown and Byzantine rule expanded in the west for a short time
 - 3. these military campaigns were costly and drained Byzantine resources
 - 4. within a generation of Justinian's death the empire lost most of its outlying territories in western Europe



 *The Byzantine Empire Under Justinian. Justinian's reconquests of North Africa, Italy, and the coast of Spain severely strained the empire's resources.*



**BYZANTINE MOSAIC OF
JUSTINIAN**



BYZANTINE MOSAIC OF THEODORA

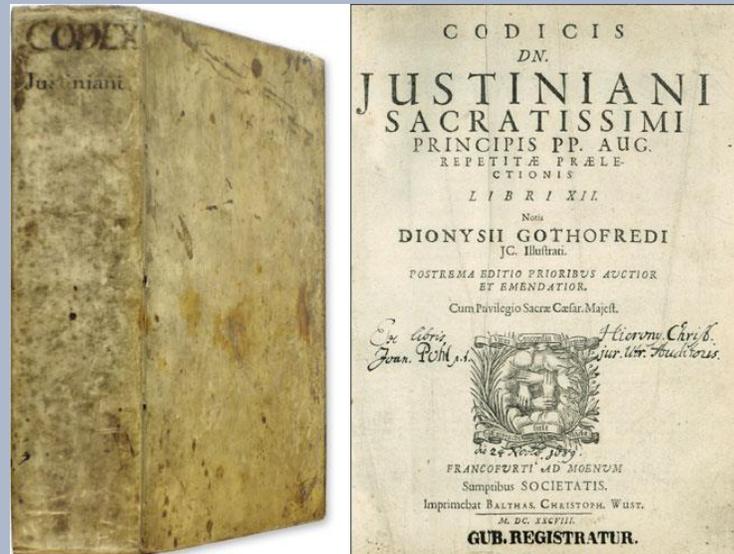


D. Justinian's Code of Laws



1. Appointed a group of scholars to organize and codify Roman laws
2. laws were simplified and categorized
3. a.k.a. *Corpus of Civil Law*, *Justinian's Code*, or *Codex Justinian*
4. This preserved classical Rome's legal heritage in Europe; it is still the basis for most European law systems

E. Art and architecture thrived under Justinian; the Hagia Sophia was an architectural engineering achievement





III. Byzantine Religion

- A. Byzantine emperors held religious authority, and religious issues often became political issues, causing controversy and division
- B. In the 8th century a religious dispute broke out over the use of **icons**, or religious images, in worship
 - some argued that the Bible prohibited the worship of these images
 - defenders said icons were symbols of God's presence in human affairs
 - in 726 Byzantine emperor Leo III ordered all icons removed from churches
 - the emperor and his supporters became known as **iconoclasts**
 - those who resisted the order were supported by the Church in Rome
 - this controversy strained relations between the eastern and western churches
 - in 843 the conflict became somewhat settled when the eastern Church (Orthodox Church) agreed to allow pictures, though not statues, in worship

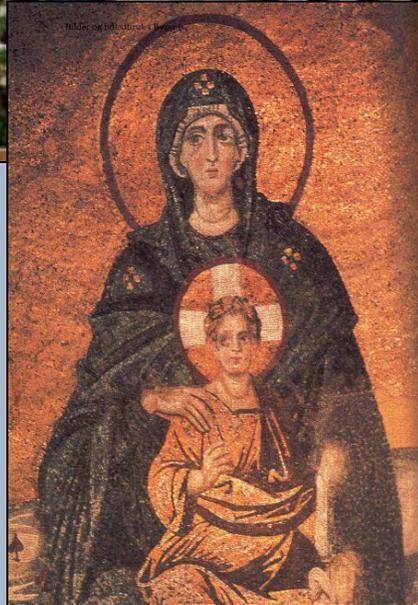
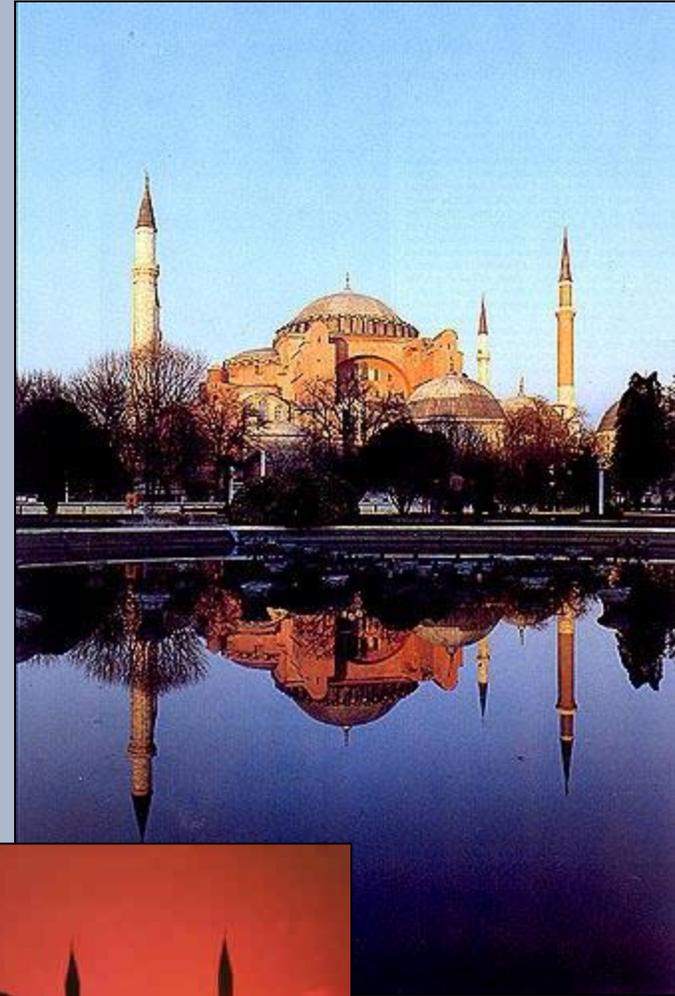


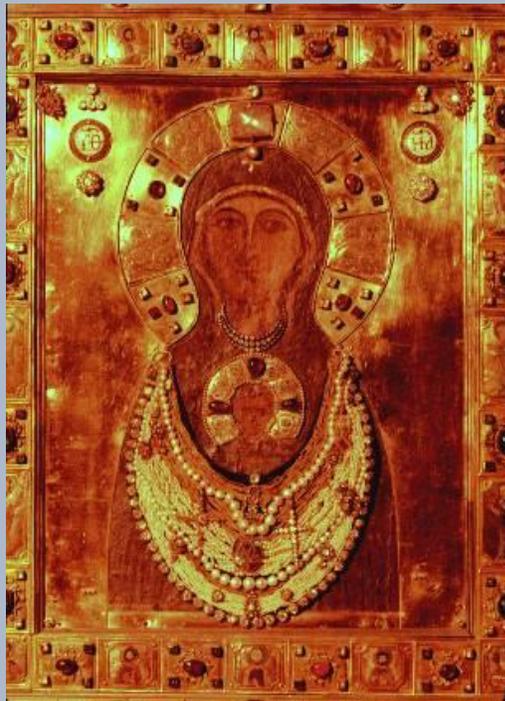
- C. The issue of the authority of the popes remained a big controversy also
- D. By 1054 C.E. doctrinal, political, geographical, and cultural differences led to a **schism**, or split, in the Church:
 - 1. Eastern Orthodoxy in much of Eastern Europe
 - 2. Roman Catholicism in the West
- E. This split weakened the Byzantine empire – ties with Western Europe weakened as the Byzantines had to face challenges from the Islamic world.



**INTERIOR OF
HAGIA SOPHIA**

HAGIA SOPHIA: CHURCH OF THE HOLY WISDOM

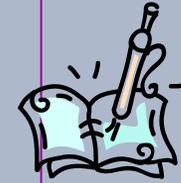




ICONS

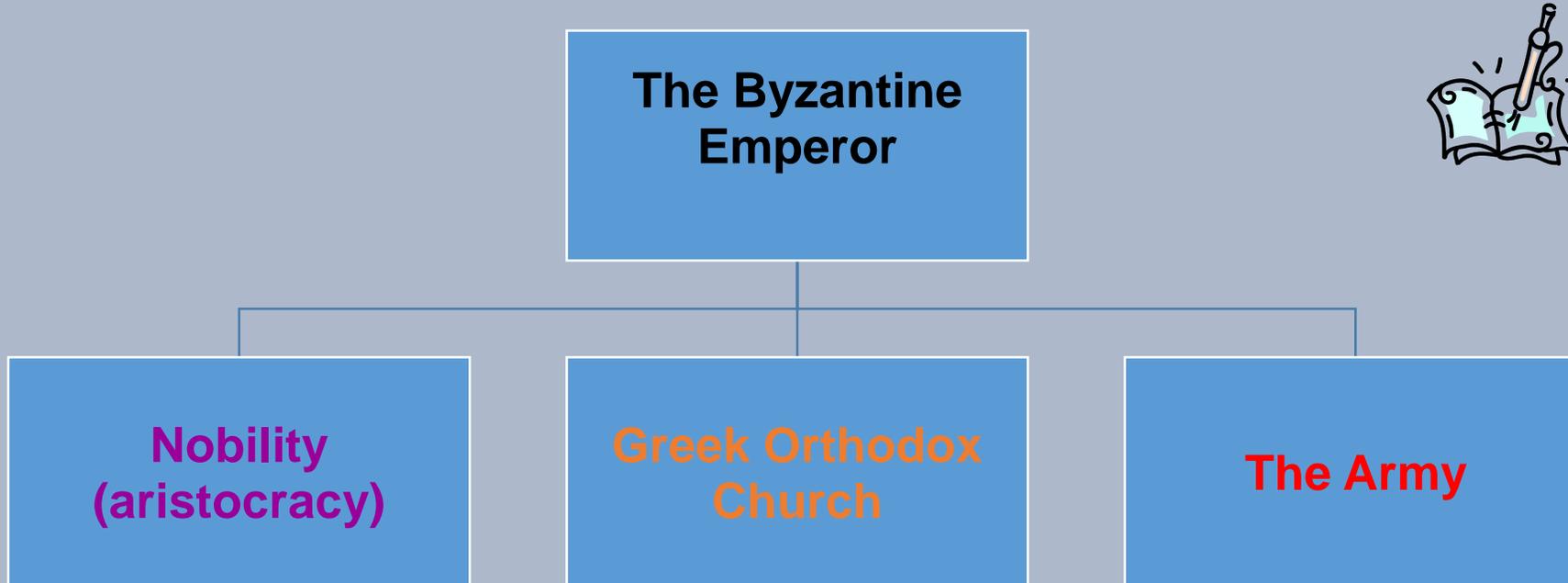


MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE:



- **Imperial and aristocratic life was dominated by the Greek language and Greek philosophy.**
- **Many diverse peoples lived within the Byzantine empire; local laws and customs were generally tolerated by Byzantine rulers and administrators.**
- **As long as diverse groups paid their taxes and contributed men to the army, they were allowed to worship freely and keep their traditional customs.**
- **Political and religious authority was centered in Constantinople – until it fell to Ottoman Turks in 1453. Then, the Byzantine legacy shifted to Russia.**

THE BYZANTINE AUTOCRACY



In the middle ages, the Byzantine empire was much more centralized than **feudal** western Europe. However, the Byzantine emperor needed political and military support from the aristocracy, the Church, and the army to successfully control the state.

The Byzantine Empire

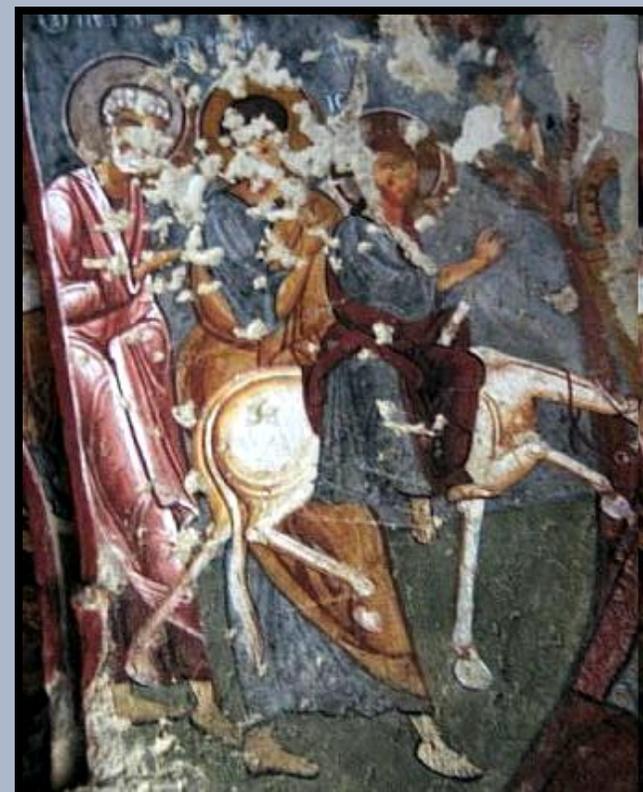
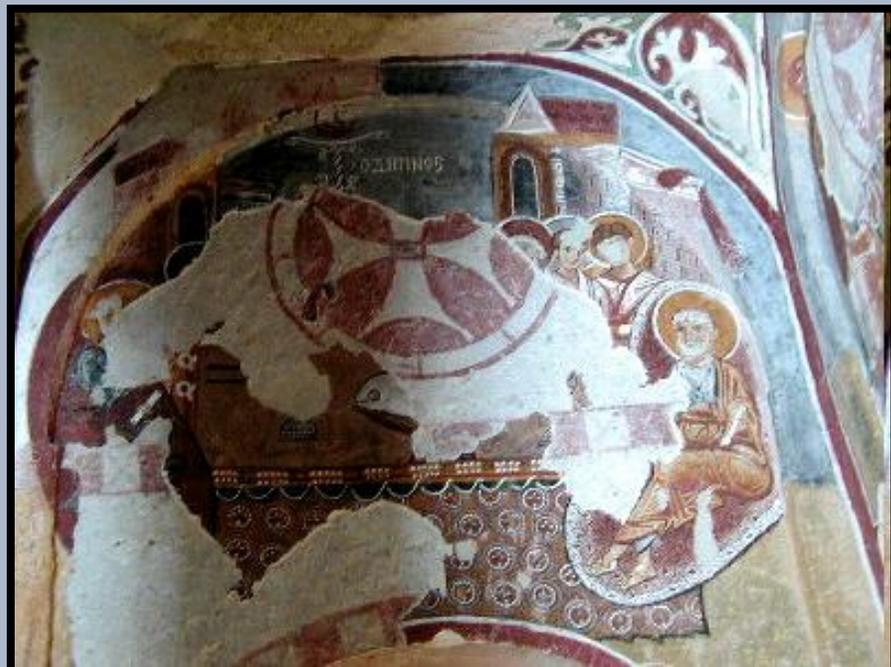
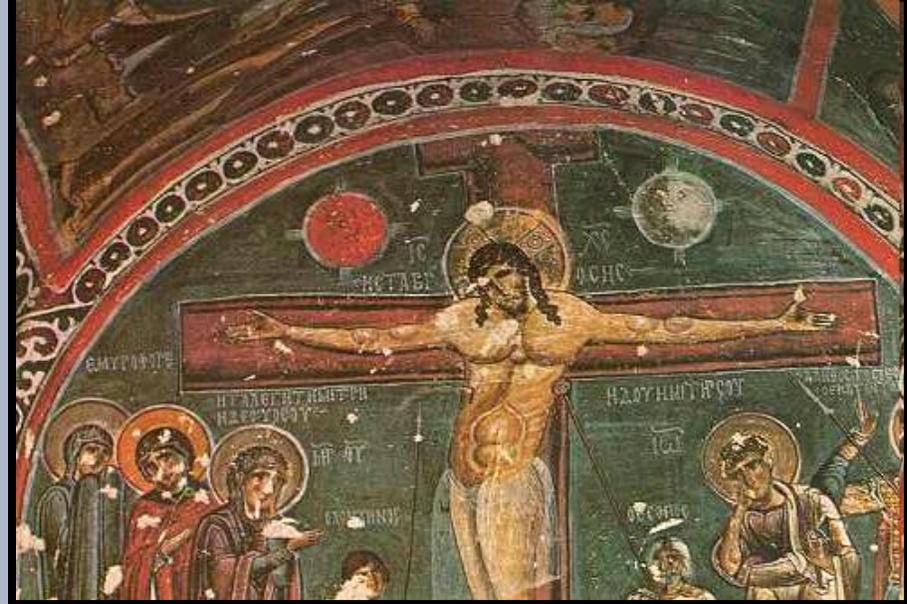
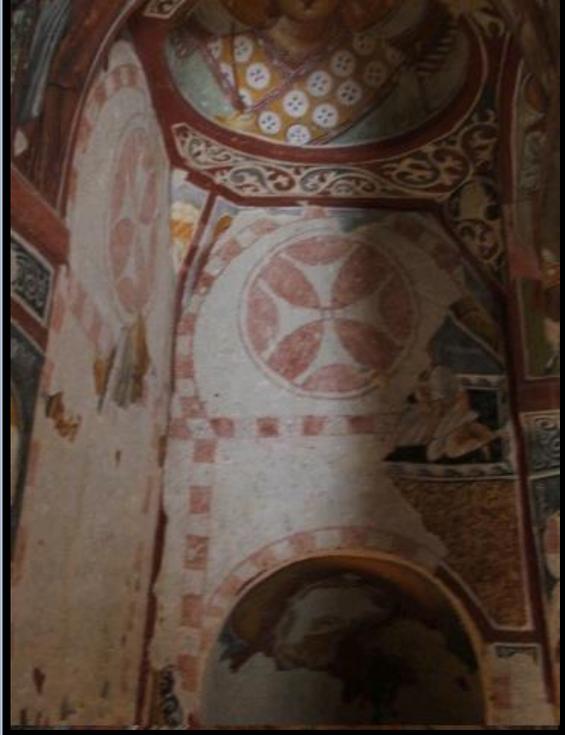




The Byzantine empire's res



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Istanbul Today



Hagia Sophia





Mosaics



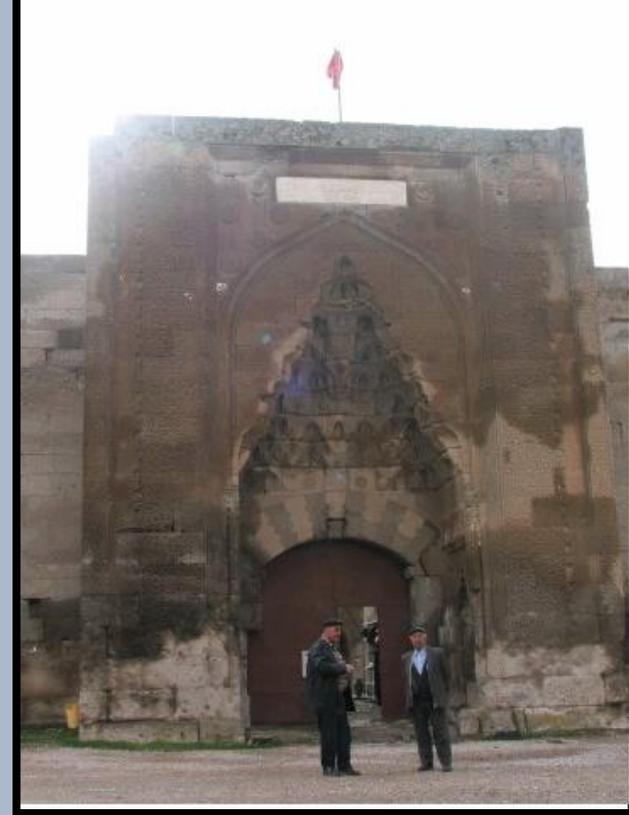
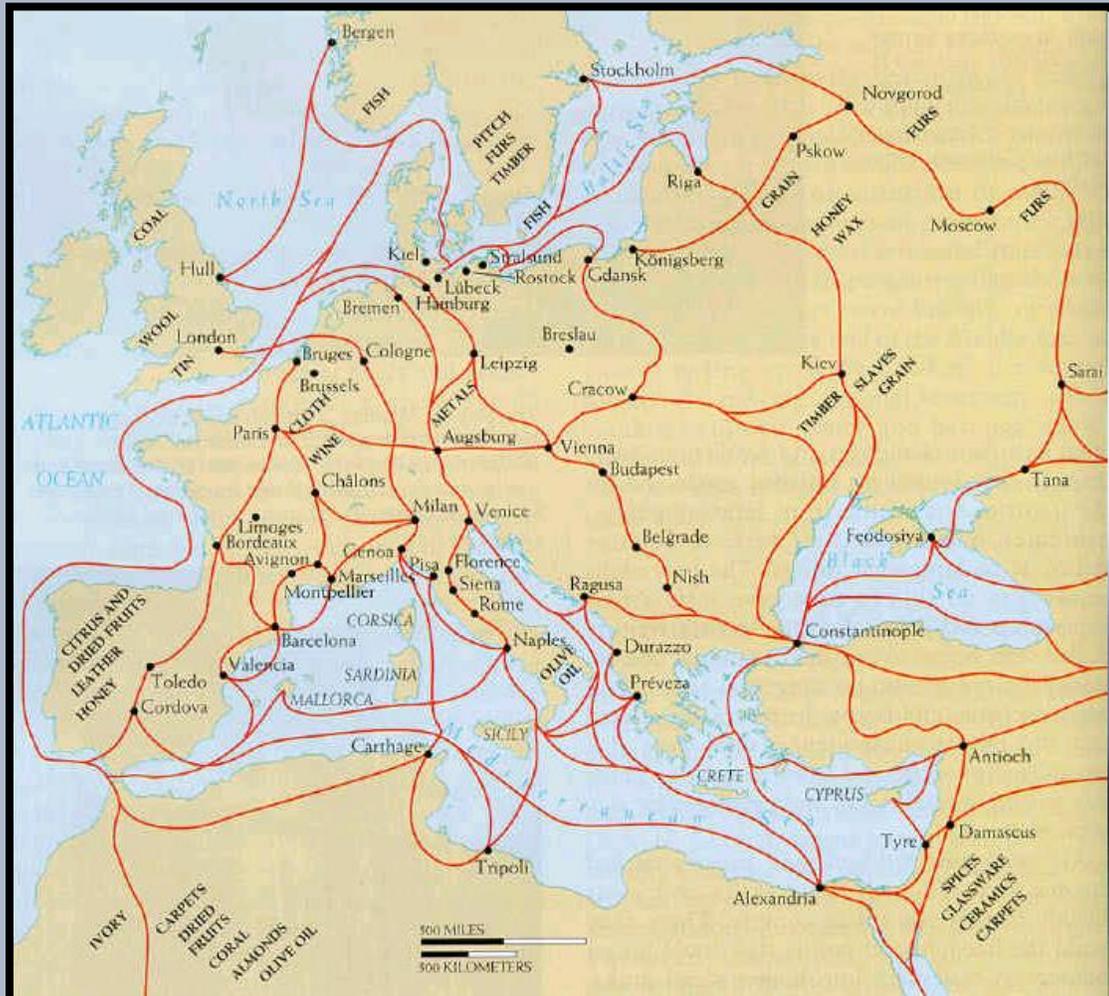
Icon of Mary and Jesus



The Great Schism 1054



Byzantine/ Medieval Trade Routes

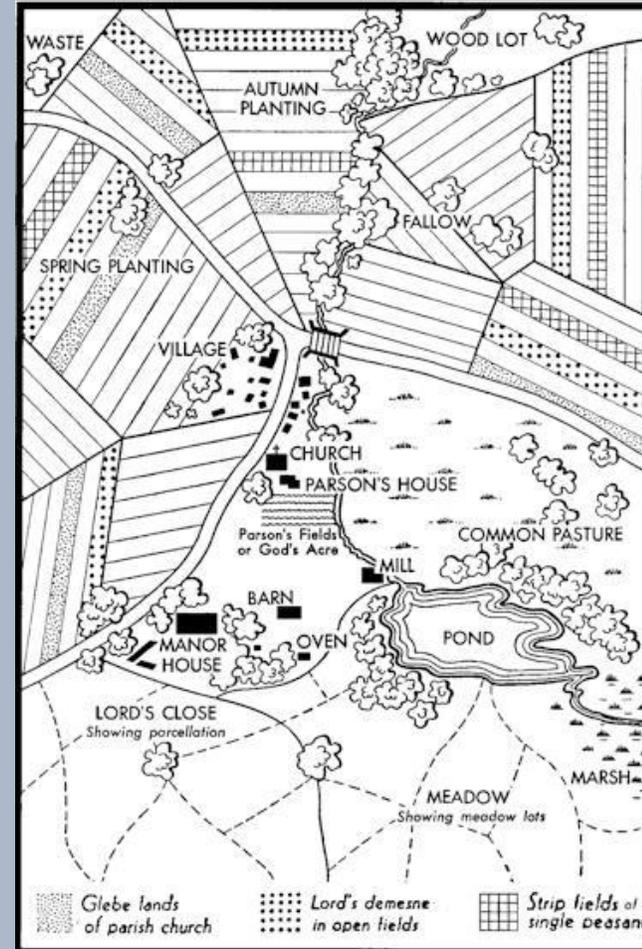


Map of the Byzantine Empire 1143 CE



What changes over time took place regarding Byzantine territory? Overall, what geopolitical changes were taking place throughout the postclassical period?

Western Christendom



Western Europe in the Middle Ages



- As waves of Germanic invaders (Vandals, Visigoths, etc.) overran Western Europe in the 5th and 6th centuries C.E., the Roman Empire crumbled; Roman law and order and government ceased to exist. However, much of Roman tradition continued in the Christian Church.
- The period from **500 - 1000** has been referred to as the “**dark ages**” because trade, government, education, development, and population declined; warfare and instability increased.
- **Feudalism** and **manorialism** became the main political and economic systems; these institutions created self-sufficiency and protection during an unstable period.
- Agricultural advances and the beginnings of stability **after 1000 C.E.** mark the **end of the “dark ages” and the beginning of the “high middle ages,”** or late medieval period.

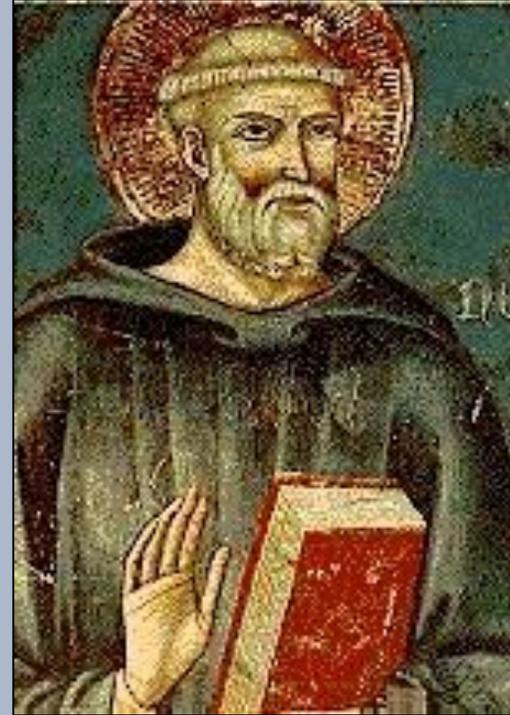
The Medieval Church



- The church was the most powerful institution of the middle ages, with a complex hierarchy and much political power.
- The early middle ages were characterized by the spread of Christianity. The Church's main goal was the **conversion** of people throughout Europe. In the later middle ages, **reform** became the main goal of the church.
- Benedictine Monasticism** began in the mid **6th century**.
- On the one hand, much from the classical period was considered "pagan" and frowned upon by the Church; on the other hand, a great deal of Greco-Roman literature was preserved by monks and nuns who hand copied these classical works.
- Problems in the church:
 1. Increased wealth and power led many clergy members to break their vows.
 2. Many priests were putting their families' interests first; in some cases parishes were part of the family inheritance. (In the 11th century the marriage of priests was outlawed.)
 3. **Simony** – the selling of church positions
 4. The struggle between church and state

In the early 500's C.E., Benedict of Nursia (480-547) or St. Benedict, established a hierarchy and a system of set rules which became successful, popular, and widely adopted by Christian monasteries. Benedictine monasticism gave renewed strength to the Church, and over time many monasteries grew wealthy and powerful.

Monks took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.



Benedict

Charles the Great "Charlemagne" (742-814)



- Charlemagne was king of the Franks, a Germanic tribe centered in what would become northern France and Germany.

Upon the death of their father Pepin in 768, Charles and his brother Carloman became joint kings of the Franks. Three years later Carloman died and Charles became sole ruler of the Franks.

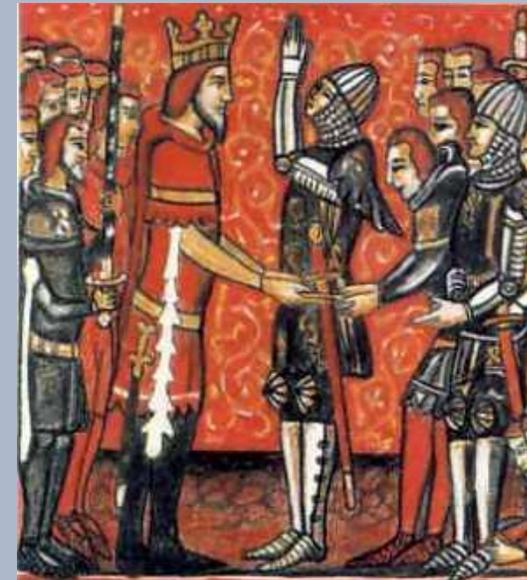
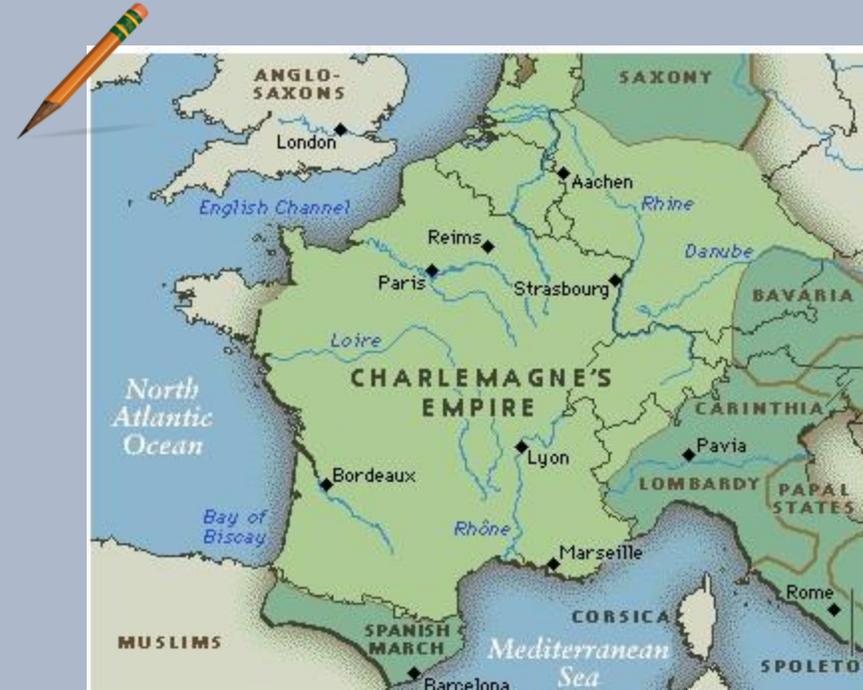
- From his position in Northern France/Germany (with his capital in Aachen, Germany) Charlemagne fought his way to dominance over the rest of France, Saxon Germany, the Lombards of Northern Italy, and Bavarian Germany.

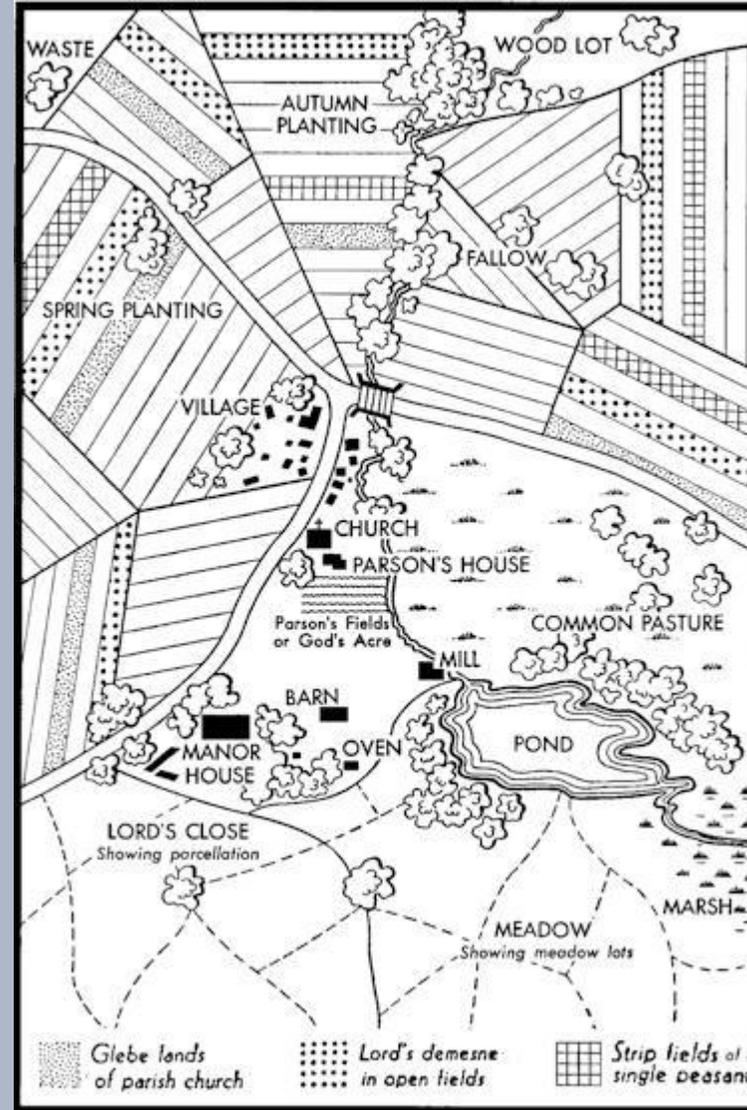
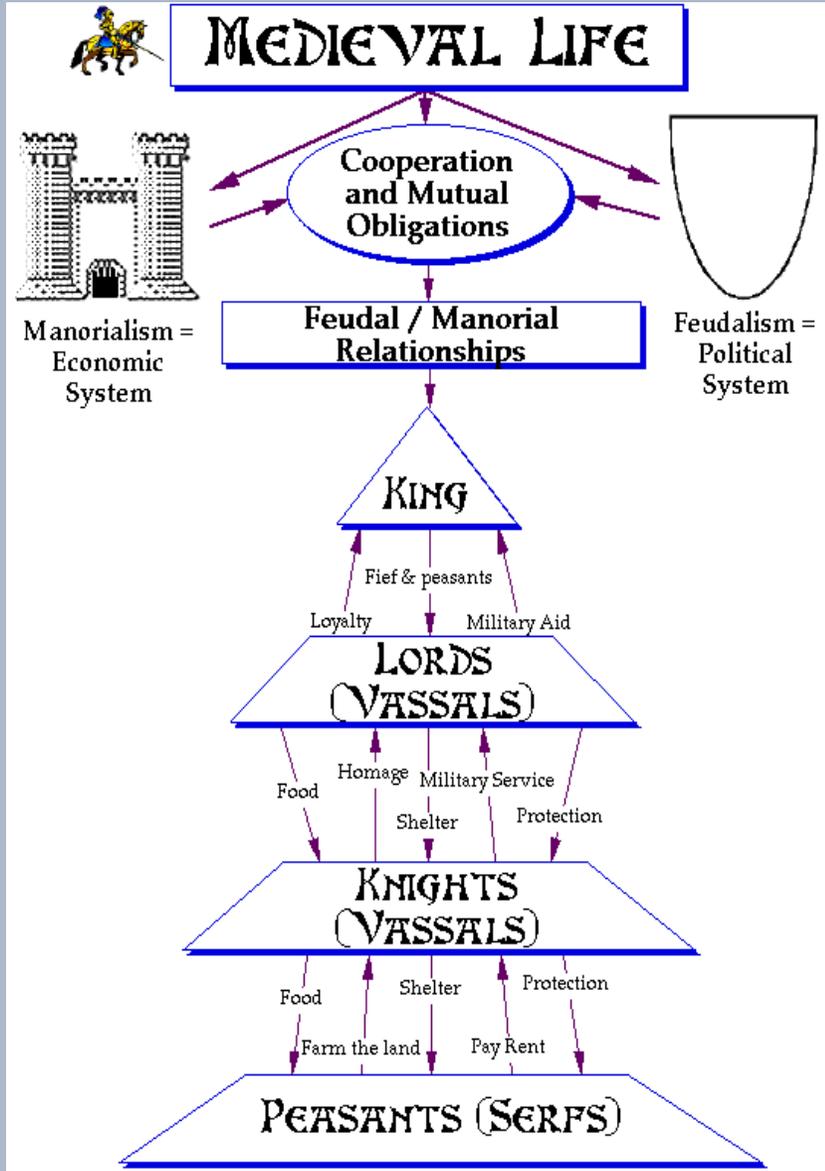


•Charlemagne both expanded his empire and spread Christianity. He believed spreading Christianity would help unify his lands in “Christendom.”

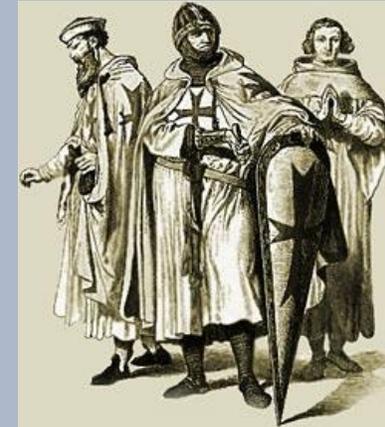
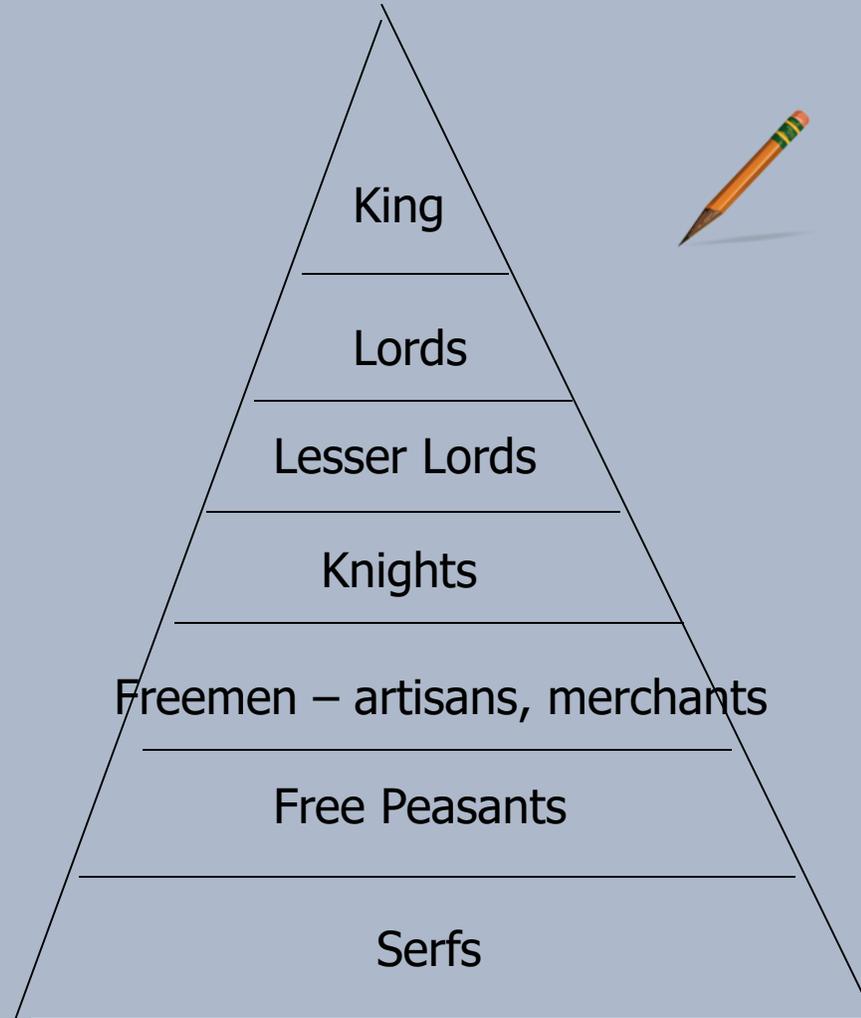
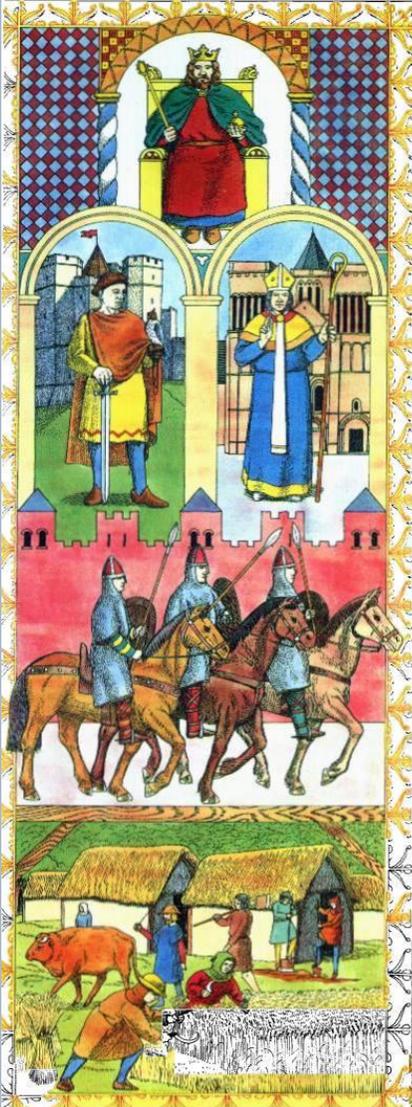
•In 800, Pope Leo III in Rome gave him the title of Charles I, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. (Basically an alliance between Charlemagne and the pope.)

•This began a centuries long struggle for power and control between secular rulers and church leaders. (Church v. State)

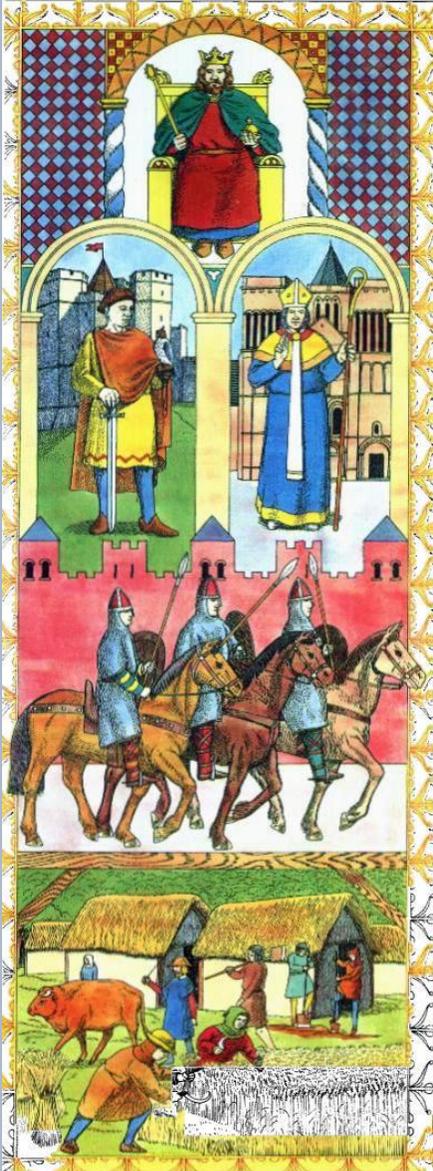




The Feudal Pyramid – In Theory



Feudalism and Manorialism: Definitions



Feudalism: a decentralized, localized form of government based on land and military service. It began to take hold in Europe around the 8th century and became standard after the breakup of Charlemagne's empire.

Manorialism: is the economic system that accompanied feudalism. It dealt more with the relationship between a lord and a serf, or peasant, while feudalism was based on the relationship between lord and vassal. A manor was a self-sufficient estate with a castle, village, farmland, and serfs.