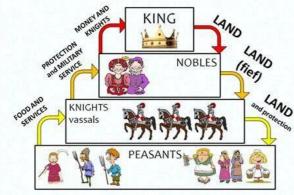
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Explain the feudal system in the middle ages

feudalism, Term that emerged in the 17th century that has been used to describe economic, legal, political, social, and economic relationships in the European Middle Ages. Derived from the Latin word feudum (fief) but unknown to people of the Middle Ages, the term "feudalism" has been used most broadly to refer to medieval society as a whole, and in this way may be understood as a socio-economic system that is often called manorialism.



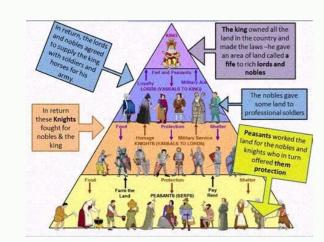
Feudal Pyramid of Power

The many ways "feudalism" has been used have drained it of specific meaning, however, and caused some scholars to reject it as a useful concept for understanding medieval society. views updated Jun 11 2018OverviewHistoryTheory in ActionAnalysis and Critical ResponseTopics for Further StudyBibliographySee AlsoOVERVIEWwho controls government? Nobilityhow is government put into power? Birth; feudal contractwhat roles do the people have? simotesupafu Work for nobles' benefitwho controls distribution of goods? Nobilitymajor figures William the Conqueror; Eleanor of Aquitainehistorical example Medieval EnglandFew political systems have shown the adaptiveness and longevity of feudalism. This system, based on personal relationships, local administration, and defined hierarchies, touched several continents for more than 1,500 years. In some places it filled the void left by other political organizations; in others, it represented the next stage in the evolution of government. fatoxovu In both cases, feudalism grew out of practice and precedents. Theory followed experience. In all cases, a parallel code of values and aesthetics—chivalry in the West, bushido in the East—complemented and reinforced the system. Feudalism relied on personal and/or family honor as well as self-interest to work. Its informal and varied methods required a balance between superiors and dependents, rights and responsibilities.



"Feudalism" also has been applied, often inappropriately, to non-Western societies where institutions similar to those of medieval Europe are thought to have existed. The many ways "feudalism" has been used have drained it of specific meaning, however, and caused some scholars to reject it as a useful concept for understanding medieval society. Views updated Jun 11 2018OverviewHistoryTheory in ActionAnalysis and Critical ResponseTopics for Further StudyBibliographySee AlsoOVER/VEWNho controls government put into power?

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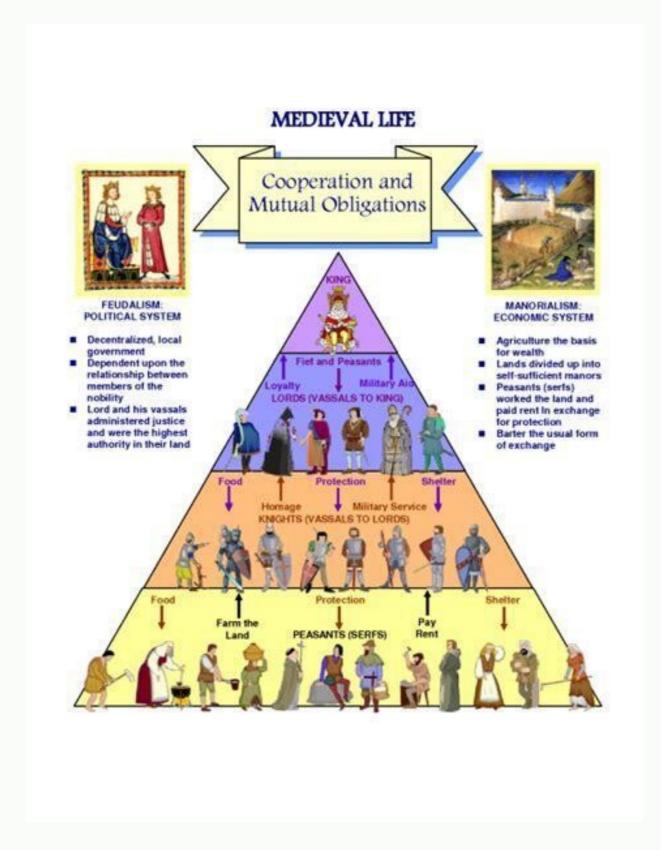
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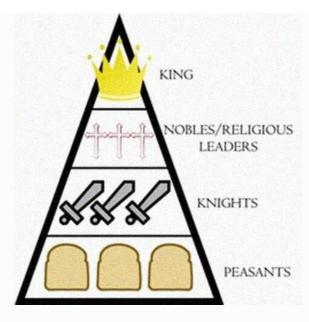
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Feudalism relied on personal and/or family honor as well as self-interest to work. Its informal and varied methods required a balance between superiors and dependents, rights and responsibilities. saxiyuvira Though not in practice today, feudalism and the legends it inspired continue to fascinate many people.HISTORYModern individuals often equate feudalism with the image of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Medieval Arthurian legends sprang from the feudal tradition and its code of chivalry, and as fruits of the system, do reflect on the values of feudalism itself. But the contemporary, Hollywood-inspired image of a strong king uniting a close-knit Camelot is not an accurate picture of feudalism. In fact, feudalism grew because empires fell and kings were not strong. Local, decentralized, informal decision-making among individuals in the absence of powerful authorities led to the evolution of feudalism. A Chaotic TimeThe feudal system emerged out of a time of chaos in Europe. The rise of Augustus as the first Roman emperor had marked the beginning of the Roman Empire in 27 B.C. For 500 years, the empire provided stability and peace across a vast territory spanning three contents. Caregively content and professional law schools and professional law schools ensured public works such as Theodosius I in 395 A.D. and professional law schools ensured its uniformity and longevity. The death of Roman Empire and the peace it provided was no more. By 771, Charlemagne became ruler of a less vast but nonetheless impressive empire that stretched through France, German yand Italy, with the blessing and support of the Pope, but bitter civil wars after his death plunged Europe into disorder once again. Though the Church, based in Rome and led by the Pope, tried to fill the void left by the empire and provide central authority, protection, and law to the different peoples, it often faced internal obstacles.



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In this group, the war chief owed his followers food for sustenance and spoils from the battles the group fought together. In return, the leader's companions owed him their loyalty and fighting prowess without question. The comitatus system had never relay disappeared, but chird provided elsewhere. These customs had several key features: they were localized, not centralized; they were based on personal relationships; and they outlined hierarchies of people, from superiors to subordinates. These features represented the final to the

In this work he claimed to be translating a much older document brought by the Archdeacon of Oxford from Brittany, and he presented his book as an accurate portrayal of times past. In reality, however, scholars believe there was no older document and much of Geoffrey's History came straight from his imagination. This does not make his achievement any less important, however, for the popular History was read widely at the time (and still is today). Geoffrey provided readers with a list of larger-than-life figures, great kings and their great warriors, who related to each other in feudalistic ways.

The heroic vassals performed their duties for their lords, and the lords in turn provided for their dependents. They embodied the chivalric virtues of courage, faithfulness, and loyalty. Geoffrey's History included an account of King Arthur and his followers, described as if they were members of the Germanic comitatus, a war band bound together by mutual oaths and obligations. Another work attributed to Geoffrey, Vita Merlini, also influenced later tales of Arthur and Merlin. Geoffrey influenced a generation of chroniclers in the Middle Ages such as Wace (1100?-1174) and Layamon (unknown, late twelfth, early thirteenth century) to preserve history and their perceptions of it. More importantly, however, he gave his audience a popular and enduring cast of characters who reflected the best of feudalism and its chivalric code. By blurring the line between fiction and non-fiction, he also started the mystery over the nature and truth of the historical King Arthur, the fact on which the legends were based. As one of the fathers of Arthurian literature, Geoffrey's influence lives on today. If local customs of duties and obligations anticipated the ceremony of what would become feudalism. One example is that of Tassilo's commendation.

Pepin the Short was uncle to Tassilo, a young boy and Duke of Bavaria.

Though the Bavarian people did not wish to be under Carolingian rule, ned Tassilo's father had led an unsuccessful revolt against Pepin defended Tassilo's duchy of Bavaria from usurpers and protected the young nobleman. In return, he demanded that Tassilo formally commend himself to Pepin in a public and Pepin's nuccessors. The ceremony was a complex one. Tassilo took Pepin's hands in his and promised lifelong devotion. He touched religious relics—reportedly the bodies of Saints Denis, Germanus, and Martin, among others—as he promised his dedication to Pepin. Even the members of the Bavarian aristocracy who came with Tassilo had to swear loyalty oaths to Pepin and Pissilo's Bavarian nobles, by following his example, proved their dependence not only on their lord, Tassilo, but also on his lord, Pepin. Thirty years later, Pepin reenacted this commendation, this time pledging his loyalty to Charlemagne. This early ceremony of commendation served as the prototype for later ceremonies of vassalage, in which a man willingly recognized his subordinate status and pledged his loyalty to his lord, in return for the protection and stability the lord provided. The Role of the ChurchBeyond the local customs of duties and obligations and the public ceremonies of commendation, the blending of secular and religious authority offered another foundation for what would become feudalism. The separation of church and state didn't exist in the Early Middle Ages. Christianity, once a persecuted Constantinople to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus.

When Charlemagne was crowned in 800, the Pope placed the crown on the new emperor's head, symbolizing the cooperation and interrelationship between the two leaders. Of course, the fact that the secular and religious worlds seemed to blur together also led to a power struggle between the two groups, as each leader claimed that he had the superior authority. In many instances, however, the lines dividing the two all but disappeared. For example, as feudalism developed, lords gave tracts of lands to vassals, who in turn pledged loyalty and accepted duties to the lord.

One of these vassals was the Church accepted land from kings and lords, the Church also accepted the obligations of faithfulness and defense that came with them.

The Church, then, could enter into what became feudal contracts. A given church official therefore could be the servant of the Pope at the same time he also was the vassals died, their lands returned to their lords. The Church, however, did not die—only representatives of the Church did. So the Church gained from this feudal loophole and continued to accumulate land throughout the Middle Ages, and with it, power. The Church also influenced the character of feudalism as it developed. While local, secular leaders made decisions regarding the kind of lands given

and military service expected and other duties and responsibilities attached to feudal relationships, and these decentralized decisions over time set precedents and became customary, the Church took the opportunity over the years to explain what values the feudal individual—be it lord, vassal, or lady—should embrace. The Church helped to develop an informal code known as chivalry centered around the ideal virtues of love, beauty, courage, and truth. This code implied that might should be used for right; thus knights were exhorted to protect the virtue of damsels in distress, and capture and ransom foes, if possible, rather than kill them. Doing one's Christian duty also meant doing one's feudal duty. In a sense, the Church painted God as the greatest lord of all, with every person on earth as vassals owing Him honor and service and loyalty. Not only did the chivalric code enforce the tenets of feudalism, but it also gave the Church even greater unifying authority in an age of otherwise decentralized, local power. For example, the Church played upon the feudal ideas of duties and responsibilities and the chivalric notions of justice and honor to call knights and soldiers from various countries together to try to liberate the Kingdom of Jerusalem, one of the key places in Christianity's Holy Land, from Moslem rule and place it under Christian ownership. The repeated attempts at the military takeover of Jerusalem were known as the Crusades, which began in 1095, continued to 1291, and were ultimately unsuccessful. The Crusades nonetheless highlighted the blurry line between secular and religious worlds: kings, emperors, and lords joined together beneath the cross to push for Christian control of a holy city, while popes and church leaders rallied knights and soldiers and planned military strategies. The rhetoric and practice of faith and law, church and state, were inextricably linked as feudalism developed. Feudal EuropeThe high point for feudalism in the West was the High Middle Ages (approximately 1050-1300). The rise of Otto the Great in Germany in 936, the foundation of the Kievan state in Russia in approximately 950, and the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 all served to cement feudal practices from England to Russia. But although the German tribes, the Merovingian and Carolingian kings, and the Church influenced its development, feudalism remained at heart a decentralized, local, informal system. It grew from decisions and customs that endured through time and became precedents for accepted behavior between different pairs of superiors and dependents in social, economic, and religious hierarchies. Political theory, therefore, did not dictate political practice; on the contrary, it took centuries for scholars to try in writing to articulate the assumptions behind feudal practice. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, authors such as Marie de France, John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Marsiglio of Padua, and Christine de Pizan were exploring feudal ideas of reciprocal obligation and contract theory and ensuring their importance in the Western tradition long after the Middle Ages had ended. None used the term "feudalism," however; the term is a modern one devised to describe the system of obligations owed in both directions could not hold past the High Middle Ages The centralized state threatened the loose organization of localities; proto-nations could pay salaried officers and hire mercenary armies. The relationship between subject and sovereign replaced that of vassal and lord. Towns, with their growing economies and emerging middle class, grew into nearly self-sustaining worlds providing for their own protection and needs with little use for knights. For some time, a phenomenon known as "bastard feudalism" appeared, in which the aristocracy wielded its manpower—military might owed to the lords by feudal contract—to gain power and impose its will. These efforts in effect used feudal means toward non-feudal ends, and spelled the last breath for feudalism in the West. The rise of the nation-states meant the end of the Middle Ages. BIOGRAPHY: Marie de France is something of a historical mystery. Scholars believe the Frenchwoman was educated in Latin, French, and perhaps English, but was not a nun, although she lived in an era when few women save those in the monasteries or on the royal throne could read. She published poetry and fables of her own and translated other works from Latin. Evidence suggests she knew and was encouraged in her work by Eleanor of Aquitaine, first queen of France by marriage to Louis VII and later queen of England by marriage to Henry II. Eleanor was a great patron of the arts, and she supported authors and songwriters who extolled the virtues of chivalry and values of feudalism. One of Marie de France's most well-known works did just that."The Fable of A Man, His Belly, And His Limbs" describes how lords and vassals worked together in a balance of dependence. The lord (the belly) might be wealthy, but he was nothing if his men did not support and defend him; likewise, the vassals (hands, feet, and head) might have the greater numbers, but without the justice and stability provided by the lord, their world crumbles. Together, the superior and his subordinates created a unified whole. Marie de France borrowed from Livy's History of the Romans and Aesop's

fables to mold a classical parable into a modern poem about feudalism. "The Fable of A Man, His Belly, And His Limbs" appeared in approximately 1160. Its popularity was compounded by the fact that she wrote it in the common language of the people instead of in Latin, and thus made it accessible to a wider audience. The Fable of A Man, His Belly, and His Limbs" appeared in approximately 1160. Its popularity was compounded by the fact that she wrote it in the common language of the people instead of in Latin, and thus made it accessible to a wider audience. The Fable of A Man, His Belly, and His Limbs appeared in approximately 1160. Its popularity was compounded by the fact that she wrote it in the common language of the people instead of in Latin, and thus made it accessible to a wider audience. The Fable of A Man, His Belly, and His Limbs appeared in approximately 1160. Its popularity was compounded by the fact that she wrote it in the common language of the people instead of in Latin, and thus made it accessible to a wider audience. The Fable of A Man, His Belly, and His Limbs appeared in approximately 1160. Its popularity was compounded by the fact that she wrote it in the common language of the people instead of in Latin, and thus made it accessible to a wider audience. The Fable of A Man, His Belly, and the people instead of the people in

And His LimbsOf a man, I wish to tell, As an example to remember, Of his hands and feet, and of his head—they were angry Towards the belly that he carried, About their earnings that it ate. Then, they would not work anymore, And they deprived it of its food. But when the belly fasted, They were quickly weakened.

Hands and feet had no strength To work now as they were accustomed. Food and drink they offered the belly But they had starved it too long. It did not have the strength to eat. The belly dwindled to nothing And the hands and feet went too. From this example, one can see What every free person ought to know: No one can have honour Who brings shame to his lord. Nor can his lord have it either fe wishes to shame his people. If either one fails the moth. In her widely-read poetry, as well as other works, Marie de France instructed readers on the nature of feudalism and chivalry. She also paved the way for other works, Marie de France instructed readers on the nature of feudalism and chivalry. that accompanied the High Middle Ages. Feudalism Outside Europe The phenomenon of feudalism was not limited to Europe. Pre-Columbian Mexico developed a variation of feudalism. The East had its own versions of feudalism and Confucianism. Like Western feudalism, the Japanese system included reciprocal duties and responsibilities between lords and vassals. European feudalism borrowed from its religious tradition to create the chivalry, bushido emphasized honor, loyalty to one's lord, selfsacrifice, courage, and indifference to pain. The two versions of feudalism were nearly contemporaries: the code of bushido developed during the Kamakura period in Japan (1185-1333), which roughly correlates to the High Middle Ages. Like its western counterpart, Japanese feudalism evolved in practice long before theorists committed it to the page; the code was not written down until the sixteenth century, or even termed bushido until the seventeenth century, or even termed bushido until the seventeenth century, or even termed bushido until the seventeenth century. Unlike feudalism in the West, however, Japanese feudalism in the West, however, however Bushido even served as the basis for emperor worship in Japan until 1945. Today the samurai and knights of the feudal system remain potent images in our mythology, but the impact of feudalism extends beyond the codes of chivalry and bushido. In constitutions and laws and contracts, and the ideas of obligation, mutual duties, and responsibilities that they contain, the legacy of feudalism has spread and survived throughout the world. THEORY IN DEPTHFeudalism seemed to be either evolving or devolving over a period of centuries. It is nearly impossible to pinpoint when full feudalism seemed to be either evolving or devolving over a period of centuries. It is nearly impossible to pinpoint when full feudalism seemed to be either evolving or devolving over a period of centuries. It is nearly impossible to pinpoint when full feudalism seemed to be either evolving or devolving over a period of centuries. It is nearly impossible to pinpoint when full feudalism seemed to be either evolving or devolving over a period of centuries. historical examples, however, to reveal the theory behind the system. Gender Roles Feudalism was largely a male-dominated system. As lords and vassals, property holders at some level of the feudal pyramid, the relationship between superior and dependent almost always included only male parties. Women did not own land; instead, they were considered property by most legal systems. Only a few women monarchs such as Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) were exceptions to the rule. The military nature of the feudal order with its emphasis on personal combat and training further excluded women from the feudal system's hierarchy. For the most part, feudal decisions were male decisions. That is not to say that women were not involved in the feudal order. From agricultural workers among the serfs to heroines of song and story, women were indispensable in the related code of chivalry that supported and complemented feudalism. For example, the chaste and pious dictates of courtly love celebrated exemplars of feminine virtue by using them as the inspiration for quests, jousts, and good knightly deeds, as well as the focus for the protection of innocents. The Arthurian legends, which explored and refined chivalric themes, recognized women as powerful figures capable of extraordinary—and sometimes superhuman—acts of faith, magic, and even statecraft. Perhaps most importantly, the chivalric code opened opportunities for real women, as opposed to ideal or fictional ones, to gain fame as powerful figures capable of extraordinary—and sometimes superhuman—acts of faith, magic, and even statecraft. Perhaps most importantly, the chivalric code opened opportunities for real women, as opposed to ideal or fictional ones, to gain fame as powerful figures capable of extraordinary—and sometimes superhuman—acts of faith, magic, and even statecraft. associated with the age of chivalry allowed some gifted and visible women new opportunities for artistic recognition and self-expression. BIOGRAPHY: Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the best-known woman of the feudal era, Eleanor of Aquitaine Perhaps the Barbara era, Eleanor era, Eleanor era, Eleanor era, Eleanor era, Eleanor era, Eleanor era, El influence to patronize poets, artists, balladeers, and authors who created new interpretations of the code of chivalry. Eleanor was the daughter and heiress of William X, Duke of Aquitaine. She married Louis VII and be came queen of France. Strong-willed and adventurous, she convinced her husband to allow her to accompany him and his troops to the Holy Land during the Second Crusade (1147-1149). In 1152, Eleanor and Louis received an annulment to their marriage and Eleanor wed Henry, duke of Normandy and count of Anjou, who soon became Henry II of England. Among their sons was Richard I, also known as Richard the Lionhearted, and John I. After an unsuccessful revolt against her husband Henry in 1173, Eleanor was held under house arrest until 1185. She backed Richard's bid for the throne after his father's death and helped maintain his position when he was captured during the Third Crusade (1190–1194). She also helped to orchestrate his eventual ransom and release. After Richard's death, Eleanor supported John's bid for the throne. She was active in court political presence in the reigns of four different kings, Eleanor is best known as an enthusiast of the chivalric code, a patron of the arts and, as such, an inspiration in the development of the music, art, and literature of the feudal era. The queen supported authors such as Wace, Chrestien de Troyes, and quite probably Marie de France, among others, in their endeavors to glorify courtly manners and chivalric virtues. Through her example and her benevolence, Eleanor of Aquitaine became one of the chief architects of and inspirations for the feudal renaissance of arts. Nevertheless, feudalism itself wore a distinctly male face. At its most basic, feudalism was local, personal, and hierarchical. All three of these characteristics sprang from the fact that the feudal system relied on the land, but divided itamong his nobles, who in turn divided it among their supporters, who in turn divided it among their workers. This is known as a manorial system. The Manorial system, the land granted by a superior to his dependent was known as a fief.

the personal relationship between the lord and his vassal and sealed the feudal contract between the two.

By pledging his loyalty, the vassal promised to fight for and defend his lord and lands, and also offer the lord part of his earnings from the land through gifts, percentages of crops, etc. The contract also bound the lord to give the vassal a fief for his sustenance, the individuals attached to the fief, and the promise of order (in this decentralized system, the lord served as the main instrument of justice, and thus heard disputes and decided sentences). This feudal contract had several important characteristics. First, it was reciprocal. It bound both parties so each had duties and responsibilities toward the other. If one side did not follow through, the mutually beneficial relationship fell apart. Second, it was informal. The contract relied on self-interest—since each party had good reason to live up to the agreement—and an understood code of honor for enforcement. The values of chivalry, then, played a part in socializing lords and vassals to become good contract-keepers. Third, and perhaps most important, the contract was not exclusive: in fact, feudal contracts were stacked upon each other to create the feudal pyramid.

The dependent, or vassal, pledged his loyalty to his superior, also known as lord or suzerain, in a ceremony of homage. In this ceremony, like the earlier commendation, the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty. In turn, the lord kissed the vassal and accepted his loyalty via an oath of fealty.

In other words, the fact that one individual was lord to a vassal did not keep that same individual from being vassal to a greater lord at the same time, and so on. The feudal pyramid This pyramid ended at its top with the king.

Beneath him were his tenants-in-chief, counts and barons who had received their fiefs from the sovereign.

Below the counts and barons were mesne-tenants, or vassals who received their fiefs from the counts and barons. Several levels of mesne-tenants might exist, each swearing oaths of fealty to the lords who gave them their fiefs.

At the bottom of the pyramid were the villains, or serfs. The serfs remained attached by heredity to the land the lord set aside for his own use.

a fief. He located the capital of his manor in Edo, later known as Tokyo. Through a combination of wealth and wise administration, Tokugawa became a powerful fiefholder, or daimyo.

land for generations. The heart of the feudal system rested not at the top of the pyramid, with the king, but at the pyramid's base, on the land. Most people during the feudal era were peasants, either free or servile serfs. Their world, and the world of their immediate lords, revolved around the fief. The fief in its smallest form consisted of a manor. The lord retained the manor house and its surrounding demesne for the use of himself and his family. The rest of the fief land was divided. Serfs held the arable, land divided in a system decided by each individual peasants on which to live and work). Serfs usually held the meadow in common. The lord traditionally retained ownership of the woodland, but allowed serfs to hunt, fish, and cut wood on the land as long as they compensated the lord when they used this privilege.

In this manner, peasant and aristocrat, vassal and lord, coexisted on the land. The legal system. The manor served as the political and economic unit of the feudal system.

Politically, the manor offered justice, protection, and administration. Each field developed a set of manorial courts where disputes about property or crimes could be heart of the surface of the standard to address the specific concerns of the protection of the particular retained and becames the specific concerns of the particular and the particular retained and becames the land. It is the large of the food large transferred a particular retained and the particular retaine

On the demesne, they owed their lords work in two forms: week-work, a specified number of days per year, and boon days, or periods of extra effort such as harvest time. Free serfs could move to another fief of their own accord if they wished to leave the fief; most serfs remained on the same

manor, with its courts and conventions, remained intact. The king also maintained courts, but these heard only a small fraction of the cases in the legal contract. This system also provided for the rights of those on the land. Lords and vassals, by virtue of the feudal contract, had specific claims against each other: the lord had to provide sustenance and the vassal loyalty and protection. Serfs, too, had such claims. Even the servile serfs were not in fact slaves. Through the implied contract between manor lord and serf, recognized by the manorial court system, the lord expected goods from his workers—labor, loyalty, dues, payment for use of the lord's woodlands, etc.—but the lord also owed the serfs safety, sustenance, and basic human rights. In a sense, the manor system acted like a primitive insurance policy. In the good, productive times, serfs owed the lord of the manor fees, payments, and part of the fruits of their labors. If crop failure or illness plagued the manor's lands, however, the lord was expected to liquidate assets to provide for those who served him.

A lord faced shame and public censure if he turned away from the chivalric code and behaved inappropriately; moreover, if he lost his work force, he also faced financial ruin.

Content and motivated serfs brought honor and material success to the lord. The manor therefore served as the economic unit of the farming of the land. Internal improvements—the building and repair of roads,

Self-sufficiency was a goal of the system, for at any time war or disease could cut the manor off from its neighbors and leave its tenants to provide for themselves. The Church Intertwined with the manor off from its neighbors and the pope was a goal of the system, for at any time war or disease could cut the manor off from its neighbors and leave its tenants to provide for themselves. The Church Intertwined with the manor off from its neighbors and the pope was a goal of the system.

in Rome, but also to other lay leaders, as well.

At the local level, the Church reinforced the feudal system by offering it instruction—including support of the code of chivalry—and charity, itself another form of insurance for the most humble of society. Through the Crusades and other events, the Church also remained involved with the final unit of the feudal system: the military. Among the responsibilities of vassals to lords was the duty of defense. If a lord required military help, the vassal was sworn to respond.

bridges, dams, and other pathways for people and information—also took place at the manor level. Taxes and surveys, when taken, were funneled through the manor, as well. Many manor economies also included modest forms of small manufacturing such as the production of cloth, ironwear, and other staples needed for daily life.

For the great lords who served even greater overlords and/or the king, the duty of defense meant more than appearing at a battle with a sword. These vassals owed their superiors forces, numbers of men, trained and fit and able to win a war.

Kings, for example, asked tenants-in-chief for military support, and they in turn raised armies by calling on their pledged mesne-tenants. The result was private armies and career knights. Knighthood Perhaps no single figure represents the Middle Ages to the modern mind more than the knight. Some were landholders, and others accepted fiefs in other forms, such as money or similar gifts. All required their own support staffs for training and help. Boys who expected to become knights, often sons of knights themselves, began their military apprenticeship as young children sent to the courts of lords or kings. There the pages, or young students, learned about weaponry, hunting, falconry, dogs

and the code of chivalry.

By puberty, knights in training became squires. Each served a knight and learned firsthand about warfare and courtly society. By 21, squires with sufficient skill, reputation, and wealth could become knights. For these men, trained for more than a decade before even reaching knighthood, war was a lifetime occupation. As various knights—and beneath them, common soldiers—were loyal to specific lords, a balance of power often emerged among the highest level of counts and barons.

When this balance failed, internal fighting broke out until the medieval arms race returned to equilibrium. The high number of knights and military men who relied on the patronage of lords and/or kings led to war by necessity: if the forces existed, then they would find someone to fight. The military manpower was too expensive and time-consuming to maintain simply to leave it inactive. Thus war, external and civil, as well as invasions and boundary disputes typified the feudal system served to make society local, personal, and hierarchical. The manor, the smallest unit of feudal society, served key political and economic roles by providing justice, protection

When this balance failed, internal fighting broke out until the medieval arms race returned to expensive and time-consuming to maintain simply to leave it inactive. Thus war, external and civil, as well as invasions and boundary disputes typified the feudal system served to make society portections, and in primitive form of insurance. The church and the military, bound to the feudal system as well, had their own forms of the relationships that built the relationships that built the relationships that built the relationships that built they did form the enduring backbone to fteudalism for centuring backbone of feudalism for centuring backbone of feudalism for centuring backbone of feudalism don and then set in place, major writings on feudalism did not appear before or even during the development of the system; instead, they appeared after feudalism was in widespread practice. Perhaps the most important writings were not the examinations of the feudal system and the celebrations of the contract. Otherwise, feudalism did not have theorists as much as it had commentators, or thinkers who observed the system after its development and artists, or those who used its rhetoric to further their own goals, and of Clairvaux's "Letter to Pope Eugenius III." Bernard of Clairvaux's "Letter to Pope Eugenius III." Bernard of the Church and state is

clear: Bernard wants the Pope to launch a military campaign and gather lay leaders behind its banner. The influence of chivalric thought is also evident—Bernard praises courage, criticizes cowardice, and underscores the values of faithfulness and spirituality: The news is not good, but is sad and grave. And sad for whom? Rather, for whom is it not sad! Only for the sons of wrath, who do not feel anger, nor are they saddened by sad events, but rejoice and exult in them.... I tell you, such a general and serious crisis is not an occasion to act tepidly nor timidly. I have read [in the book of] a certain wise man: 'He is not brave whose spirit does not rise in difficulty.' And I would add that a faithful person is even more faithful in disaster. The waters have risen to the soul of Christ, and touch the very pupil of his eye. Now, in this new suffering of our Lord Christ, we must draw the swords of the first Passion.... An extraordinary effort. The foundation is shaken, and imminent ruin follows unless resisted. I have written boldly, but truthfully for your sake.... But you know all of this, it is not for me to lead you to wisdom.

I ask humbly, by the love you particularly owe me, not to abandon me to human caprice; but ask eagerly for divine counsel, as particularly incumbent upon you, and work diligently, so that as His will is done in heaven, so it will be on earth.Bernard's writings, such as his influential letters to Pope Eugenius III embody the very soul of feudalism.

Eugenius III and other officials listened to Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of his day, and in 1170, only 17 years after his death, Bernard was canonized. If Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of his day, and in 1170, only 17 years after his death, Bernard was canonized. If Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of his day, and in 1170, only 17 years after his death, Bernard was canonized.

Eugenius in and other officials instened to Bernard's advice. The Church appreciated Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of first day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of his day, and in 177, only 17 years after his death, Bernard's outspoken example as a leader of his day, and in 177, only 17 years and the four bar and the four his plants of the political bedy should of the facility in all matters, on the least, his point of the political systems and the religious exhibition of the line of the death of the superiors of his life. John is possibly in the possibly in th

exposed to injuries it is as if the republic is barefoot; there can be nothing more ignominous for those who administer the magistracies. Indeed, and air few fuels respond likewise to the legal rights of their superiors, so that each individual may be likened to a part of the others reciprocally...Bernard of Clairway's letter and John of Salisbury's treatise, one a glimpse of feudal thought in superiors, so that each individual may be likened to a part of the others reciprocally...Bernard of Clairway's letter and John of Salisbury's treatise, one a glimpse of feudal thought in the uniform of the ear.

The High Middle Ages, however, was known as a renaissance in poetry, music, and fiction. Perhaps the most long-lived contribution of the age is the birth of Arthurian literature. One of the earliest examples of King Arthur's exploits appeared in the tenth- or eleventh-century collection known as The Black Book of Carmathen.

The author and exact date of the work is unknown, but the impact of it and its Arthurian contemporaries cannot be overestimated. Not only did the stories entertain, but they also instructed readers in the political tenets of feudalism and the crresponding values of chivalry. In one power, a dialogue between Arthur and a porter known as Glewhyd Highty-gripp, Arthur introduces his men and counseling him. In return, Arthur is portion and counseling him. In return, Arthur is portion and the orresponding values of chivalry. In one power lord with their superior. The reciprocal relationship for him and counseling him in return. Arthur is looking after his duty toward them, reminding flower hem and counseling him. In return, Arthur is portion and a feeting and the orresponding him in return. Arthur is looking after him by fighting for him and counseling him. In return, Arthur is looking after him by fighting for him and counseling him. In return, Arthur is looking after him by fighting for him and counseling him by fighting him by fighti

John did not originate the idea of the charter; on the country, he signed it under compulsion from his barons and the Church in 1215. The impulse for the combined lay and religious demand for the same law as his subjects. The claims against John flowed directly from the notion of the feudal contract. John's signature not only reinstated the monarch's acceptance of his feudal relationships, but it also paved the way for the English and U.S. constitutions.60. Moreover all the subjects of our realm subjects of

nation-states. Even as John agreed to the demands of the barons and the Church, the days of the Middle Ages were numbered. THEORY IN ACTIONRegardless of where it was found, feudalism in all of its forms shared certain characteristics. It was localized, not centralized; it was based on personal relationships; and it outlined hierarchies of people from superiors to subordinates. What this meant for the lands in which feudalism developed, however, differed according to the place and its past history. One of the debates surrounding feudalism is the question of its true source: Roman organization as widely implemented by the Roman Empire, or Germanic Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as precursors to the feudal systems of feudalism. One the West might not have needed the local hierarchies or personal relationships; and it outlined hierarchies of people from superiors to subordinates. Whithout the vacuum of authority is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of Germany? Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of Germany? Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of Germany? Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of Germany? Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of Germany? Perhaps the best answer to this is to accept both foundations as found in the tribal systems of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, or Germanic Traditions as found in the tribal systems of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, or Germanic Traditions as found in the tribal systems of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, or Germanic Traditions as found in the tribal systems of the Both the Germanic Comitation of the Roman Empire, or Germanic Traditions as found in the tribal systems of the Both the Germanic Comitation of the Roman Empire, or Germanic Traditions, and the Irial Systems of the Germ

potentially violent campaign against the count.

The duke was a sworn vassal of Louis VI and was also the lord of the count, who was a sworn vassal to him. According to the feudal contract, William reminded his lord and his vassal, the king could not decide who was guilty and punish that party. Justice required a trial, and it was the duke's responsibility as the count's lord to provide it. The court of Auvergne was summoned, and the issue was decided by the feudal court procedure. Even the king was constrained by the due process of the feudal justice system. The fact that he was a king—and a foreign one at that—did not absolve him from the law.BIOGRAPHY:William the ConquerorWilliam I of England was the illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy and a tanner's daughter. After the death of his father in 1035, William became duke.

The young boy had to fight off many challenges to his rule, but as he grew his resourcefulness and ambition became evident. He fought off French invasions and planned to expand his power to England, where his cousin Edward the Confessor was king. When Edward died and Harold, Earl of Wessex was crowned his successor, William received the

blessing of the Pope and took his Norman army to England. The Norman Conquest under William had important repercussions for England. The King established separate ecclesiastical courts, brought foreign officials to replace some English ones, and conducted a survey known as the Domesday Book, which documented statistics about the country. The Anglo-Saxons in England rebelled but were unsuccessful in their attempts to overthrow their conquerors. William II succeeded him in England (his son Robert succeeded him in Normandy). William 's reign affected feudalism in two ways. First, it placed another layer on top of the existing lord/vassal structure. William considered England his by right of conquest, and he distributed land in manors to his supporters and loyal subjects. These vassals of William in turn were lords to other vassals, and so on. Rather than evolving naturally and locally, William's redistribution represented the first—and, to some degree only—top down reordering of the feudal relationships by a king. Although this changed the names of some of the lords, though, this did not change the system itself or the way the superior/dependent partnership functioned. The second way William influenced feudalism was by clarifying the nature of the system's pyramid; vassals were lords to men who were in turn vassals to greater lords, and as power increased, the numbers decreased. At the top of the pyramid of power stood the king. William established the precedent that loyalty to the king superseded all other feudal obligations to lesser lords or kingdoms. This suggested that power was far more centralized, personal nature of feudal relationships. Though few kings in the following years were strong enough to exploit this development, William's clarification of the weight of subjects' loyalty to sovereigns sowed the first seeds of feudalism. For generations, the kings of England held French lands that had been donated to them by French kings, for example. The infamous King John, King of England from 1199 to 1216, lost these lands because he had failed his duties as a vassal to the King of France. English experience with feudalism was different. William the Conqueror's insistence that the feudal oath did not outweigh the loyalty a subject must feel for his sovereign set the stage for the ultimate trumping power of the monarchs over the standard feudal system. The Norman Conquest introduced the idea that all of the land belonged to the king, so even if land had been granted as a fief in several transactions, stepping down the feudal pyramid with each one, no one could claim the land was his alone, inde pendent of the crown. William therefore insisted that all vassals holding fiefs take the Oath of Salisbury (1086), which meant they had to swear an oath of fealty to the king. Henry I, King of England from 1100 to 1135, later insisted that all oaths of fealty include a reservation proclaiming lovalty to the king. The balance of power tipped from feudal courts to royal decisions, and the monarch's power grew. By the time of King John's reign (1199-1216), the monarch could afford his own army independent of those raised by lords from among their vassals. In a real sense, the conspiracy of the barons that led to the Magna Carta in 1215 was based on an assertion of feudal rights: the Magna Carta stated that the king was not above the law. Even the Magna Carta stated that the king was not above the law. Even the Magna Carta stated that the king was not above the law. Even the Magna Carta stated that the king was not above the law. Even the Magna Carta stated that the king was not above the law. declined. Feudal Germany In still a third variation of feudalism, Germany's version was characterized by an emphasis on the role of princes. Feudalism evolved in Germany from 1152 to 1190. In 1180, Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bayaria, failed to appear as required before the royal court, which was acting in its feudal due process against Henry received their reward when Frederick reorga nized the state apparatus to more closely follow a feu dal model. These aristocrats became princes of the em pire, a new order of privileged lords whose vassals by law had to be of lesser class and rank. Although fiefs usually reverted to lords—and, in the case of the princes, to the king—upon the death of the vassal, these princes built a custom of inheritance among themselves that took increasingly more land out of the monarch and remained dedicated to many, if not all, feudal processes.

The fiefs owned by the major feudal princes later became the modern German states such as Austria and Prussia. BIOGRAPHY: Ieyasu Tokuqawa The founder of the influential Tokuqawa shoqunate began as a vassal in Japan, a warrior and military leader. He helped Nobunaga and Hideyoshi unify Japan and received a healthy amount of land in return as

When Hideyoshi died and left a vacuum of power in Japan, the ambitious Tokugawa defeated rival barons in the Battle of Seki gahara (1600). His victory led him to become shogun, or military dictator, of the country. As shogun, Tokugawa centralized and institut tionalized a unique brand of feudalism. Among his de cisions was the choice to make his former opponents hereditary vassals to his supporters. He also made at tendance at court compulsory, encouraged interna tional trade, and controlled the building of castles within Japan. He revived Confucianism as well, graft ing the reverence for the family to concern for per sonal honor to further strengthen the ties of the feu dal contract. His authority as a military leader with a loyal army to back his position trumped that of the emperor. After his death in 1616, the Tokugawa shogunate continued, as did the trend of power col lecting in the hands of the emperor. The daimyo remained the primary powerhouse behind Japanese feudalism for more than 250 years after Ieyasu Tokugawa. Feudalism in JapanThough England, France, and Germany experienced variations on the theme of feudalism, none was quite as different as the form that developed in Japan, if for no other reason than its longevity. The Japanese system evolved in the religious climate of Confucianism and Zen Buddhism, with an emphasis on the family and its honor. Beginning in the eighth century, the royal court could not afford to maintain all of the members of the Japanese imperial family in regal style. Some family members therefore obtained tax-free estates in lieu of court support. Territorial barons known as daimyo administered these lands. By the twelfth century, the daimyo had amassed power as great if not greater than the emperor. Eventually one would rise up to become shogun, a feudal military leader who served as the emperor's deputy and in effect ruled Japan. The rise of the shogunate system led to an institutionalized, imposed feudalism based around military leadership. The Japanese civil wars of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries did not dissolve feudal thought; after Ieyasu Tokugawa reunified Japan, the daimyo of both sides relied on the samurai, the parallel of European knights, to maintain military and civil administration on their lands. The bushido, like the code of chivalry in the West, developed to explain and express the values and virtues of the system. Though the Tokugawa shoguns tried to shift authority away from the daimyo, eventually those in Western Japan overthrew the shogunate in 1868 in what is known as the Meiji Restoration. The emperor then accepted the fiefs back from the barons and expanded his own authority. By 1871, the feudal privileges of the daimyo were no more. The last vestiges of feudal thought, however, survived with the practice of emperor worship until 1945. ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL RESPONSE Feudalism in its historical context and in the abstract, as a political theory. These two different windows into feudalism provide useful means of assessing its positive and negative traits. Benefits In the historical view, feudalism had many benefits. First and foremost, it provided a form of order to fill the vacuum in the West created by the fall of the Roman Empire. Internal strife, civil wars, and territorial disputes might have been more frequent and more violent had the system of personal, binding relationships not connected the people of each region. Of course feudalism brought with it its own form of personal, binding relationships not connected the people of each region. brought to the West was far better than the chaos that might have reigned. The localized nature of the system also allowed a certain natural defense for the manor. As a nearly self-sufficient unit, the manor sustained those who lived on it; they could be cut off from contact with others due to the spread of fighting or disease and survive. In an era of sporadic hostilities and virulent plagues, the manor was a protective harbor for many individuals. This order in the West developed a symbiotic relationship with the institution of the Church, relying on it for its infrastructure at times, competing with it for authority at other times, and sometimes even helping to preserve its own internal hierarchy. Such a relationship allowed groups such as the monks and nuns of the monastic orders to focus their energies on learning and education. Many of the classical works from antiquity survived through the work of monastics who translated and protected copies of the texts. Without these efforts, modern civilization would have lost much of the classical knowledge of the Greeks and Romans, among others. The code of chivalry that grew up in support of and in harmony with the feudal system also spawned a cultural renaissance in the High Middle Ages. Monarchs such as Eleanor of Aquitaine were inspired by the values of courage, loyalty, and courtly love, and they supported artists and authors and poets who extolled chivalric virtues. Women authors and artists were published and celebrated, and new heroes of history and fiction became larger than life. The feudal era gave birth to the legends of King Arthur, among others, and left an indelible mark on the imagination of the West. Feudalism therefore provided important opportunities for the literate elite. It also, however, provided new protection to the less educated. Although the lords still exercised great control—and, in the wrong hands, even tyranny—against the lowest individuals in the feudal hierarchy, the serfs who worked the land, these peasants enjoyed more rights protection under the feudal system than elsewhere. For example, the Roman system recognized human slavery and expected that some classes of people had little if any claim to certain basic living standards. The manorial system of feudalism, however, provided for courts to solve disputes and even a primitive form of insurance against crop failure, disease, and other disasters. Serfs had responsibilities to their lords, but in return the lords also had certain duties toward the serfs. This system wasn't perfect, but it did represent an evolution in the notion of individual rights. Weaknesses Historically speaking, feudalism also had its negative traits, as well. Internally, it carried the seeds of its own destruction, in the West and elsewhere. The lords—or, depending on the place, the Church or princes or barons—became powerful fiefholders who in many circumstances altered the feudal rules to concentrate more wealth and power in their class. As the status of these groups grew, they threatened the authority of those above them. Monarchs responded by trying to shift authority back to their side and centralize power in the meselves. This inherent instability in the feudal system disrupted the balance on which the feudal pyramid relied and eventually led to the rise of the towns threatened the very fabric of feudalism. The manorial system, with its local economy of agriculture and manufacturing, led to the rise of the town, in which specialist artisans pursued their trade and eventually became financially independent. Like the manors themselves, these towns grew into partial self-sufficiency. With freedom, money, and accomplishment, the townspeople formed a new middle class that somehow did not fit in the traditional hierarchical pattern of the feudal pyramid. Were the townspeople formed a new middle class that somehow did not fit in the traditional hierarchical pattern of the feudal pyramid. Were the townspeople formed a new middle class that somehow did not fit in the traditional hierarchical pattern of the feudal pyramid. most townspeople fell under the rule of a monarch, but this indicated a sovereign/subject relationship, not necessarily a lord/vassal one. The towns, in a sense, outgrew the feudal system and helped to enable the rise of the powerful monarchies. Feudalism also had a weakness externally. The same decentralization that offered benefits at the time also meant that feudalistic lands were susceptible to attacke from the outside. With private armies attached to lords and their manors, and communication difficulties when trying to offer coordinated resistance to attackers. In Europe, invasions from the north, east, and south contributed to the fall of feudalism. The localism of the system made its lands easy to divide and conquer.MAJOR WRITINGS: Feudalism in FictionWith two Nebula awards for novels than any author except the late Robert A. Heinlein—the celebrated Lois McMaster Bujold is one of the great literary success stories of the present day. She has broken new ground for women science fiction writers and, in the process, she has brought military science fiction and space opera new twenty-first century sensibilities and respectability. Bujold first took up her pen in 1969 as an author of Star Trek fan fiction. She then fell in love with heroes of her own making. In 1985, Baen bought her first three novels set in the Vorkosigan universe, and a modern-day epic was born. Significantly, the award-winning Vorkosigan novels examine the planet of Barrayar. Though the culture of the planet reflects a Russo-Germanic society, the planet's feudalism in practice represents a more English model. This feudalism is a devolution of politics, an ad hoc system filling the void left by another way of life; Barrayar, suddenly cut off from its fellow planets, experienced a Dark Age much as England experienced great changes after the fall of Rome. Bujold's story lines explore the values of the code of chivalry, and the hierarchy of the feudal pyramid, in contrast to a twenty-first century model of a liberal democracy known as Beta Colony. Although Bujold concludes that feudalism as a political system is primitive in many ways, especially in its militaristic and antifeminist tendencies, she also sees aspects to admire, including the emphasis on individual and family honor, and the reciprocal responsibilities binding lord to vassal. Through her series of novels—including Shards of Honor and A Civil Campaign—Bujold highlights her fascination with the personal justice of the feudal court. Many history texts deal with the specific context of the feudalism of the past, but Bujold's use of fiction to study feudalism offers a unique take on the subject. Of course, if feudalism is judged ahistorically, one of the most obvious criticisms it would face is that of its exclusive nature. With the exception of certain aspects of the code of chivalry, feudalism applied only to men. Women were treated as property, not as property, not as property holders. The equation of lord and vassal, superior and dependent, did not include women as a factor at all. In the context of history, however, this exclusivity is no more surprising than the class-consciousness that pervaded the system. In the Roman Empire and elsewhere, women often were treated with the same degree of political dismissal. It is worth note, however, that the feudal era did provide several stunning examples of women in positions of power and Pisan, and even fictional characters of import such as Guinevere and Morgan of Arthurian romance—not necessarily flattering images of femininity, but certainly powerful ones. Moreover, the code of chivalry provided protection, if not equality, for women as long as their birth was somewhat noble. These small improvements notwithstanding, feudalism's strength did not lie in its inclusiveness. Contract Theory Apart from its historical context, feudalism also had strengths and weaknesses as a theory. Perhaps its greatest contribution is the formulation of contract theory. Feudal lords and vassals owed each other if the compact was not followed. This principle remained in common law and not only government—the idea that government—the idea that government—the idea that government and the written Constitution of the United States. Ironically enough for a system that for centuries lacked a formal, written political theory, feudalism influenced modern political and legal thought in a key and lasting manner. Decentralized spontaneous order allowed hierarchies to exist due to the intense personal nature of the relationships involved. Vassals did not pledge allegiance to a symbol; they placed their hands in the hands of their lords and looked them in the eye. The appeals to loyalty, honor, and personal reputation needed to ensure that both sides met their obligations were much more likely to be motivating factors when those involved really knew each other. The system survived as long as it did due to this built-in personalized process. Moreover, the decentralization of feudalism meant that each manor and its court could tailor social and legal traditions around the specific needs of the people involved. Regional preferences regarding behavior and religion survived because no general, external law applied to everyone across the continent This informal, organic system streamlined processes and contributed to the self-sufficiency of the manors. Just as social and legal traditions were military personnel. The decentralization of armed forces meant that organized, devastating warfare was very difficult and expensive to undertake. The Crusades notwithstanding, this lack of unity meant that large- scale violence was less prevalent under the feudal systems and private armies of feudalism did make it difficult for nationalism to take hold across Europe. As the feudal era was in decline, monarchies faced the tremendous task of standardizing the law, consolidating the military, and constructing smooth lines of communication. The resulting nation-states gained many capabilities—coherent policy, exploration, diplomacy, etc.—but lost the personal relationships, tailored legal precedents, and, in some cases, individual liberty enjoyed under the feudal system. The rise of the great monarchs made widespread technological and scientific achievements possible, but it also made large-scale persecution and warfare equally viable. The increased stability of the nation-states was bought at the price of the freedom enjoyed under the more local and informal nature of feudalism. The manorial court? The Round Table? The samurai? Is it the provincialism of the French serfs or the extravagance of the German princes? The adaptiveness of feudalism, its ability to show different faces in different times and places, makes its study a unique challenge. This adaptiveness made it possible for feudalism to survive for more than 1,500 years. TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDYIn what ways do the legends of King Arthur reinforce the principles of feudalism? Consider what the Norman Conquest meant for England. Did William the Conqueror help or hurt the cause of feudalism? Explain. Investigate the way of knights and samurai. How did the code of chivalry in Europe compare to the cause of feudalism? Explain. Investigate the way of knights and samurai. How did the code of chivalry in Europe compare to the cause of feudalism? Explain. Investigate the way of knights and samurai. How did the code of chivalry in Europe compare to the code of chivalry in Europe Anthology Rochester: The Boydell Press, 1979. The Bayeux Tapestry. Available at of Clairvaux. "Letter to Pope Eugenius III." In Cary J. Nederman and Kate Langdon Forhan, eds. Readings in Medieval Political Theory, 1100-1400. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993, 21-23. Cavendish, Marshall, ed. All About Knights. London: Children's Books Limited, 1981. Ganshof, F. L. Feudalism. 3rd English Ed. 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Totman, Conrad. Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun. Torrance, CA: Heian International Publishing, 1988. This work investigates the most important figure in Japanese feudalism. SEE ALSOCapitalism, Nationalism views updated May 14 2018 Feudalism in other areas Emergence and demine of feudal systems DIBLIOGRAPHYFeudalism in other areas Emergence and demine there during the greater part of the Middle Ages. However, the term is also applied to other societies and systems of government with similar characteristics, in antiquity and in modern times; in the Marxist usage it refers to a type of society and preceding capitalism. The word from the Germanic fehu-od (from which is derived the English and French fief)—that is, "property in cattle" and, later, "tenure" or "property in land"-stresses the importance, in the system, of land tenure and the rights and privileges attached to it. Since the seventeenth century, the complex of tenurial and personal relationships and economic, social, and political dependencies that centered on the fief have increasingly been regarded as a scaffold of social stratification and political and social problems in eighteenth-century England and France, created the notion of a period dominated by "feudal laws" (Montesquieu) that were comprehensive enough to denote a regime and to dominate and rule a society. The later meaning of the word, although basically rooted in eighteenth-century usage, came to denote a regime and to dominate and rule a society. The later meaning of the word, although basically rooted in eighteenth-century usage, came to denote a regime and to dominate and rule a society. powerful. It also came to denote any political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fractioning of political system in which the powerful political power, or by the opposition of powerful political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fractioning of political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fractioning of political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fractioning of political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fraction of powerful political system in which the power of the state was weakened or paralyzed by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fraction of powerful political system in the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fraction of powerful political system in the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fraction of powerful political system in the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the fraction of powerful political system in the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the few and made inefficient by the privileges of the and more of the variety of economic, social, and political forms to be found in feudal societies at any one time, as well as the changes inevitable in any social and political framework lasting over five hundred years. Nevertheless, some major features do recur, and a certain rhythm of evolution seems to have been common to rather large areas as they reacted to similar economic, social, and political changes. Hence, it is possible to speak about feudal institutions without implying that all aspects of economic, social, and political life predominant in the greater part of the European Middle Ages were always present. Such institutions can also be found in other societies; sometimes they evolve from similar conditions, but often they are isolated phenomena in different frameworks or without the interrelations deemed essential in the European system. (In these cases the term "feudal tendencies" might be a better description.) Despite the great variety of definitions of feudalism, some minimal common characteristics of a fully developed feudal system would be accepted by most scholars. These include: (1) lord-vassal relationships; (2) a personalized government that is most effective on the local level and has relatively little separation of political functions; (3) a system of landholding consisting of the granting of fiefs in return for service and assurance of future services; (4) the existence of private armies and a code of honor in which military obligations are stressed; and (5) seignioral and manorial rights of the lord over the peasant (see Coulborn 1956; Hall 1962). Perhaps the fullest definition of feudalism in the political sphere was given by Weber ([1922] 1957, pp. 375-376), who considered feudalism one type of "patriarchal authority." According to Weber: (1) The authority of the chief is reduced to the likelihood that the vassals will voluntarily remain faithful to their oaths of fealty (2) The political corporate group is completely replaced by a system of relations of purely personal loyalty between the lord and his vassals and between the lord and his vassals (subinfeudation). (3) Only in the case of a "felony" does the lord have a right to deprive his vassal of his fief. (4) There is a hierarchy of social rank, corresponding to the hierarchy of fiefs, but it is not a hierarchy of authority are "subjects"-that is, patrimonial dependents. (6) Powers over the individual budgetary unit (domains, slaves, and serfs), the fiscal rights of the political group to the receipt of taxes and contributions, and powers of jurisdiction and compulsion to military service are all objects of feudal grants. In the social sector an important element of feudalism is the bearing of arms as a class-defining profession. Here feudalism is distinguished by a relative closing of the social status system in which (for the groups dependent primarily on the land) the distribution of goods and services is closely integrated with the hierarchy of social statuses. Within the economic sector feudal government and society appear uniformly to rest upon a landed, or locally selfsufficient, economic base as distinguished from a pastoral, commercial, or industrial one. The merchant community, although it may play a significant role in the economy, notably centralized communications and means of large-scale major institutional spheres. The classical age of feudalism is usually dated from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries and located in northern France. Other society to determine the extent to which feudal institutions and tendencies developed within them. Feudalism in western EuropeThe specific features of feudalism were the outcome of the encounter of two types of society, the Romanic and the Germanic. Their fusion into a new society, the Romanic and the Germanic and the traditions were homogeneous, and throughout central and western Europe they differed according to the strength of the local (often pre-Roman, Celtic) institutions and the distance of the new Germanic societies from their earlier, preinvasion habitats, on the other. At the time of their encounter, both societies were in a state of transition. The late Roman or Romanized West was passing through the profound crisis of a disintegrating empire, a weakening of central power, and a dislocation of the bureaucratic state machinery; the economic breakdown was seen in the diminishing importance of cities as centers of administration and of specialized economic activities, in the process of devaluation, and in the slowing down of the money economy. State and society were groping for new norms of existence. Public authority over their immediate dependents; economic life was shifting from city to countryside and was concentrated on the larger estates, which tried to achieve autarchy in supplying their needs; insecurity was creating private warrior bands; freed slaves were being absorbed into the peasantry, who lost their status as free men to become the dependent semiservile "colonate." The Germanic tribes (Sippen), through migration and settlement, had loosened or lost their tribal ties. There remained the cohesion of families and of the newer and weaker village communities, which in time came to represent territorial units rather than strong kinship relations. The transition from tribal to state organization continued in the fifth and sixth centuries, but the lack of a competent administration combined with an extremely low level of literacy and restricted money circulation helped to weaken the traditional units; nowhere was a state structure able to take over and to fulfill its public duties. The early medieval state, like that of the Frankish Merovingians (end of the fifth to beginning of the eighth century), presents, consequently, a juxtaposition of divergent elements of state and society (hardly ever integrated into a coherent whole). From this point of view, the features associated with feudalism are the direct outcome of a society striving for patterns of organization and cohesion in a period of declining state power and the disruption of traditional kinship security groups. The most striking feature of the developing system is the new stratification of society. Roman social hierarchy was far more polarized than that of the Germanic tribes. The latter, although not egalitarian, as some nineteenth-century historians claimed, was basically a society of free men with a charismatic and hereditary chieftainship. The new administrative and military needs had already singled out the royal Merovingian entourage of warriors and officials and had sanctioned their standing by a higher Wergeld. At the beginning of the eighth century, however, the permanent need for professional, highly trained military men (mounted warriors) brought about a radical change in society. The former peasant-warrior lost his military value. Private bands of warriors, a phenomenon that had its antecedents as much in the emperial bodyguard and in the private armies of the Roman senatorial class as in the ancient Germanic followers (Gefolgschaft) of the chieftain, sprang up around the king and local magnates. Vassalage. The nexus between the chieftain and his free followers was taken over by the institution of vassalage (although the word itself points to a more humble origin, as "vassal" derives from the Celtic gwas, meaning "youngster" or "servant"). Beginning in the early Carolingian period (eighth century), the new institution was integrated into the framework of

state and society until it became official, recognized and sanctioned in public law and put to the service of the state. With the tremendous expansion of the empire of Charles the Great and for two centuries thereafter, vassalage as a type of social cohesion became the normal way of assuring not only military service but also public authority. Although the ancient oath of fealty of subjects to the ruler remained, it was felt that it did not sufficiently assure either loyalty or political allegiance. Consequently, an oath of vassalage, more binding and directly linked with the ruler, was demanded from appointed officials. The heads of military and administrative circumscriptions—dukes, marquis, and counts—became vassals of the king. This new type of relation, which abandoned the charismatic character of the earlier period, was based mainly on the notions of fealty and absolute loyalty, strengthened by the religious element inherent in the contracting parties in a contracting parties in a contracting parties in a contracting parties and royal officials assured their own standing and the performance of the services of their office by contracting vassals, and the same process continued downward to the simple warrior and local administrative officer. Thus, a pyramidal structure of bonds and dependencies arose, a scaffold of state structure and state machinery, the apex of which, ideally, was the king. Economic and social relations. The economic premises of the new social order were rooted in early medieval economy and grew out of the same social changes that made vassalic relations possible. The weakening of the Sippe not only created insecurity but also changed the economic bases of existence. The village community, far weaker than the Sippe organization, could not offer adequate security, and social cohesion took the new form of individuals seeking the protection of the Roman tradition and on the Germanic notion of Grundherr, the rich and strong proprietor, whose influence transcended the boundaries of his property and his direct dependents. Such proprietors included ecclesiastical institutions as well as secular lords. The peasants—and often whole villages—commended themselves into the protection of the powerful, relinquishing their property and receiving it back as a "precarium" (from preco, "to beg for"), a possession (later, hereditary tenure) burdened by certain economic obligations. Conversely, they received the protection of the establishment or the lay lord. This protection against outside (fiscal, administrative, military, or juridical) pressures not only made the peasant economically dependent but also initiated the process through which he lost his standing as free man and citizen. His dealings with state authority were henceforth channeled through his overlord. In this sense, the king, who combined competences of state sovereignty (often theoretical in the ninth and tenth centuries) and vassalic suzerainty, lost his subjects, whom he could reach only through the mediation of their overlords. The material basis of the vassalic contract was the fief. This was usually an agricultural territory (but there existed also money fiefs) granted by the lord to the vassal at the "homage" (from homo, "man") ceremony when invested with public powers of administration, and jurisdiction. A seigniory might comprise anything from a single village to a large complex of immunity from the interference of an overlord which differentiated it from a simple fief and fixed its place in the hierarchy of fiefs in the kingdom. The seigniory comprised, as a rule, a large territory where the exercise of public rights was shared, in different degrees, by the lord and the men who became an object of inheritance, since it accompanied the inheritance of the fiefs and seigniories. At the bottom of the feudal ladder was the simple knight who owed to the overlord his own service and was supported by a fief just large enough to assure him a living in keeping with the standards of his class. Such a fief could coincide with a village or part of it, and its economic organization was usually described as a manorial economy. The lord of the manor also had noneconomic rights over the tenants on his manor, the most characteristic being the rights of jurisdiction deriving from land tenure. The movement of commendation, common to all strata of society, brought about a complete transformation of its social stratification and cohesion and, finally, of the concepts of the state and its authority. Thousands of links of dependence ran from the apex to the lowest echelons of society. Their scope, meaning, and aim changed from step to step. Whereas in higher echelons commendation created a professional caste of warriors soon to become the nobility, in the lower echelons it created a class of people serving the lords in different capacities. As long as the service was basically military, the link of commendation created serfdom of varying degrees, but always connoting economic dependence, social degradation, and exclusion from the community of free men and subjects. The hierarchy of land and by the fixed relation of men to land. Only where feudalization did not penetrate the depth of society were there free communities, direct subjects of royalty, and allodial (entirely independent) property. Ireland and Scotland preserved independent communities; in Saxony and parts of Spain there were free men; and German nobility kept allodial property late into the twelfth century. In all other territories all land except the royal domain had the legal status of tenure or dependent possession. The main economic feature of the fief was the holder's privilege not to work the land himself but to receive income in specie, money, and work from the peasants themselves held their land as servile tenures astricted as to

payments and services, which varied widely according to the type of servile tenure. But it is a striking feature of the system that the obligations of the peasant were those deriving from his own legal status and that of his holding was soon destroyed by marriage and inheritance. A serf might, for example, be the tenant of a "free mansus" (mansus, "a unit of family holding"), his duties deriving from his status as serf and the obligations inherent in the free mansus. Stabilization of the system. Yet, complete integration was never achieved. Rights of possession, economic privileges, and public authority often remained undefined, consequently competing and overlapping. Starting in the second half of the twelfth century, political theoreticians with legal training tried to describe the institutions of government and society as forming a logical whole. One of the stabilizing factors was the general rule linking vassalage with fiefs and their regular, hereditary transmission. Occurring on all levels of the feudal hierarchy, it assured a solid scaffold of social structure. Not only were the simple knight, his immediate overlord, and every lord up to the apex of the feudal hierarchy henceforth concerned with fiefs and seigniories, as pure vassalage links would have postulated, but the family as a whole became a major factor in the feudal mechanism. On the upper level of the hierarchy, that of the great tenants-in-chief of the dynasty were often regarded not only as members of the household (maisnie) but as a part of the noble lineage (lignage). The relations between lords and vassals were often conceived in terms of family relations, and the competences of the lord were not unlike the Germanic mundeburdumor the Roman patria potestas. The custom of sending the vassals' children to be raised at the court of the overlord strengthened this type of relation, as did the meetings of the vassals at the lord's court in times of festivity, which were held as much for business reasons as for socializing. Rise of the nobility. The old warrior class of the eighth century was by then a class pursuing the profession of arms, which assured it a privileged place in society and a major share in political power; moreover, it was a class which could transmit its economic, social, and political standing to its descendants, becoming, consequently, a hereditary nobility. Despite the marked differences within the class itself, differences based primarily on the extent of political power and the control of economic resources, all fief holders regarded by others, as the highest class in society. The most characteristic feature of the military nobility was its new warrior ideal—the knight. "Knighthood" was a designation of rank and dignity; it was, by implication, the expression of the new ethical teachings of the "heroic age" with newer concepts of ecclesiastical origin, chivalry (from chevalier, "a mounted warrior") expressed the worldly ideals of the fighting class and the new ethical teachings of the church. Fighting should not be an end in itself but should serve social and religious ideals in a basically other-world-oriented society. Biblical virtues—the protection of women, the weak, and the poor and the defense of religion— were the aims that enabled the church to sanction war and bloodshed. The ideal of the "Christian knight" (miles Christianus) which represented the ethos of the warrior caste, imprinted its character on the period. Its early, extreme theoretical formulation was by Bernard of Clairvaux, who regarded the knight as a permanent candidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was in the military orders created at the time of the Crusades in the Holy Landidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was by Bernard of Clairvaux, who regarded the knight as a permanent candidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was by Bernard of Clairvaux, who regarded the knight as a permanent candidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was in the military orders created at the time of the Crusades in the Holy Landidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was by Bernard of Clairvaux, who regarded the knight as a permanent candidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was by Bernard of Clairvaux, who regarded the knight as a permanent candidate for martyrdom, and its early institutionalization was in the military orders. and the Christian reconquest of Spain. The ideals of monasticism and warriorship merged into the ideals of the Christian knight par excellence. Chivalry became institutionalized, adopting a military-ecclesiastical initiation rite ("dubbing") and elaborating a code of behavior and a set of virtues fitting a member of the class. Henceforth, membership in the nobility depended not only on origin but on the formal act of "knighting." The chivalrous virtues and rules of behavior and the image the class had of itself were perpetuated by upbringing and education. The noble child passed a period of graded apprenticeship, living with a noble family (very often the vassal's overlord) before dubbing, which could be given only by someone who was himself a knight. The introduction of chivalrous behavior made the noble class more exclusive, thus affecting social mobility. The code became, especially after the fourteenth century, extremely formalized and served to exclude non-members who acquired economic position in non-noble pursuits (commerce and banking) and who, by buying fiefs, tried to penetrate the ranks against outsiders, its own internal differentiation proceeded swiftly. The baronial class, in many cases, split into magnates, "greater barons," or grandes; beneath them "smaller barons," or hidalgos; and below them simple knights. Although social mobility existed, it tended to be rather limited. Marriages and dowries were usually contracted in a closed class market, and marriage with a lower-born noble was regarded with disdain. Local variations always existed—for example, social mobility was greater in England than on the Continent, and German ministeriales (sometimes serfs but in any case not nobles) in royal military service were ennobled and could exercise the highest state functions, even at the end of the twelfth century (although Germany at this time was not yet entirely feudalized). The features and ideals of the nobility that are described above survived long after the class lost its political standing and parts of its economic position or even economic privileges. Growth of political units. As the links o'f cohesion strengthened, the administrative framework, grouping fiefs and seigniories into larger political units, became clearer. Generally speaking, there were two main lines of development. One was the creation of strong local principalities (Anjou, Normandy, Flanders), which at the turn of the eleventh century succeeded in

officials. Their power was strengthened at the beginning of the century when the "quarrel of investiture" weakened the standing of royalty. To create stronger cohesion and forge links of dependence, the crown tried to bring the highest nobility into direct vassalic dependence, in the process resigning to it public authority in the principalities. The principalities, by forging vassalic links with the local nobility, were supposed to become well-ordered administrative units directed by the crown never succeeded in bringing them into a rigid state framework. Germany, especially after the interregnum at the end of the Hohenstaufen dynasty (middle of thirteenth century), was made up of principalities and their rulers (Länder and Landesherren) within a loose framework of the empire. Legislation forced the emperor to enfeoff noble escheats, which could otherwise have enlarged the royal domain and thus strengthened his position at the expense of the princely class. Finally, the principle of election of the emperor by the imperial electors (Kurfürsten) assured their dominance. Consequently, Germany never reached any degree of state unity. On the contrary, the principalities became independent, strongly organized states, with princely power based on authority delegated by the emperor and on vassalic links obligatory within their territories. In England, after the Norman conquest, sovereignty and suzerainty assured a preponderant power to the troine, were quickly checked, leaving royalty in full possession of its powers. In Italy the development followed the lines of Germany, but the place of the principalities was taken by the emerging cities, the "communes," which created territorial units virtually independent of the central power. The decline of feudalism was a general phenomenon of European history that owed as much to the economic transformations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as it did to features inherent in the feudal system itself. The economic transformations were the result of the twelfth-century "urban revolution." The revival of money economy, the rise of the new social stratum of burgesses—all proclaimed new needs and new possibilities. They enabled the state to perform and enlarge its functions without constant recourse to feudal services. The new market situation enabled the peasants to accumulate money from the sale of surplus production and initiated the commutation of manorial services into money payments. The final result was the disruption of the manorial economy and a profound change in the standing of the nobility. Insecurity decreased in the far better policed states of the central Middle Ages, and the rural population did not depend for its survival or defense on the local magnate. The political power he wielded could be, and was, more efficiently used by state officials Inherited political power consequently lost its practical and moral justification. The change in the position of the feudal lord is even more marked when compared with the all-important lord-vassal relations of the earlier period. As already mentioned, the inheritance of fiefs greatly contributed to the solidity of the system. At the same time, it brought with it a notable change in the feudo-vassalic establishment. As heredity was the rule and the renewal of the vassalic oath usually only a formality, the economic element in the relationship overshadowed the personal and intimate elements. Previously undefined and unlimited duties of service were replaced by fixed and measured in stereotyped proportions according to the size of the fief. The fact that from the end of the tenth century a vassal could hold fiefs from different lords created a problem of multiple, often opposed, loyalties. The weakening of the ties of dependence in the upper strata of society and the process of dissolution on the manorial level brought about a complete transformation in patterns of social cohesion and state organization. Different strata of society became crystallized in the pattern of "estates." The estate grouped people of the same social class, who had a similar economic standing and enjoyed the same privileged position in the state in relation to the crown and to other estates. Unlike the former feudal links of cohesion, which were vertical, the new links binding man to man were horizontal. Men joining others of their own class sought assurance and confirmation of their privileged position more than security and protection. A man's standing was no longer described in terms of dependence on a feudal overlord, but in terms of his belonging to a given "estate." The hierarchic pattern continued to exist but as a hierarchy of strata of society rather than a hierarchy of

dominating the different seigniories in their territories, recapturing some of the public authority (control of castles and mints—in some places a monopoly of the princely dynasty), and often developing princely bureaucratic administrations. This process built up the strong centralized provinces, which during the next hundred years were taken over by the Capetians and became the foundations of the kingdom of France. The second line was followed by Germany, less feudalized than France, public authority was often still in the hands of local princely dynasties with allodial possessions, who exercised their competences not as the king's vassals but, theoretically, as his

1192. Although vassalage and enfeoffment may have existed even before the twelfth century, only a small portion of Japanese society was organized around these practices by 1192. In Japan during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) the legal government was still centered on the emperor. It operated through the traditional civil administration (greatly weakened) and an expanding system of semipublic domains (shōen) Independent of these administrative and fiscal relationships, there were numerous more informal hierarchies based upon clan ties and military allegiances. Military hierarchies of such allegiances as they came to center upon the office of shogun, or military dictator (or on certain other high military posts), that feudal institutions crystallized. Yoritomo's importance to the development of feudalism in Japan lay in regularizing and extending the practice of pledges of military allegiance combined with protection of landholdings. Yoritomo's authority to appoint shugo, or "constables," and jito, or "stewards," and to interfere in the shoen system was based on his assertion of supreme military command in a time of national crisis. Through such appointments and through the increase of legal powers, the feudal nexus in government and society steadily encroached upon the imperial-shoen complex, giving rise to a new type of institutional nexus. At the apex of the state structure military authority, and during the thirteenth century the balance between civil and military power shifted steadily in the direction of the latter. Similarly, at the provincial level, military interests gained over civilian as the shugo increasingly took on the stature of military

Locally, the shugo were able to build up their economic support largely through the plural holding of jito rights to numerous shoen. They used their superior status in the shogunal hierarchy to assert their influence among local bushi, or members of the military class. Before long the shugo had absorbed many civil administrative powers at the same

individuals. Moreover there were no formal links of dependence between the different estates. In a sense, all were in direct relation to the crown, and all claimed a share in political power, whether on the national or the local level. Feudalism in other areas Japan. various institutional spheres probably occurred in Japan, where it developed at the end of the twelfth century and persisted in its "pure" form until the Tokugawa regime. Here we may follow Hall's analysis (1962). The origin of feudalism in Japan seems to have coincided with the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate by Minamoto Yoritomo in

that they achieved personal leadership of province-wide military bands, which they organized increasingly on a ford-vassal basis. Below the shugo the step-by-step expansion of the jito's land rights among the bushl also served to extend the second the shugo the shug divide these lands among family members or retainers, extending the practice of combining grants of land with ties of military loyalty. The new military bonds forged between shugo and proprietary jito or between jito and vassal families became the basis of this ever-widening feudal system of social and political organization. The warfare that embroiled most of Japan during the middle of the fourteenth century hastened feudal trends in all parts of the country. Under the Ashikaga shogunate, now located at the very seat of the imperial court in Kyoto, absorbed most of the powers and functions of the civil government, although even now the emperor continued to play a crucial role as the ritual symbol of sovereignty and the source of the shogun's delegated authority. In the provinces the key figures were the shugo, who by the end of the former civil and military governors. They held title, under the shogun, to territories the size of entire provinces, serving as the ultimate authority in both civil and military affairs. By 1500, however, most of the jurisdictional territories of the shugo had disappeared and with them not only a generation of bushi leaders but also the last remnants of imperial law and civil land management based on the feudal structures and to some extent perpetuating them, this regime, through its policy of centralization, in fact froze the feudal institutions, depriving them of vitality and autonomy. Japanese feudalism differed from the European pattern in several important respects: (1) the continuous importance of the imperial center in spite of its loss of political function; (2) the weakness, perhaps even total absence, of contractual elements in the relations between lords and vassals; (3) the full, personal, familistic expression of these relations; and (4) the lack of any representative institutions. Nevertheless, like the European pattern, it is a major example of feudalism, since it clearly demonstrated a relatively high degree of convergence of feudal characteristics in the different institutional spheres. Russia . In other societies the extent of such convergence was smaller. The regime of the feudal (patrimonial) principality in medieval Russia was accompanied by a certain immunity from political authority, conferred by private possession of land. The connection became firmly established because of the importance of military functions in local politics in pre-Muscovite central Russia and, later, its national importance in Muscovy. Whenever possession of land was hereditary, the authority connected with it was also hereditary, the authority connected with it was also hereditary. the nonhereditary pomest'e ("benefice" or "military holding") being merely a historical interlude, even if a rather long one. In pre-Muscovite Russia the essential sociopolitical relation was not between the votchinnik ("patrimonial lord") and the population of his votchina ('landed possession" or "patrimony"), which came close to that of ruler and subject. There was no link between the prince's service was not hereditary, and subjects were free to leave their principalities. Yet, even though the pomest'e was not hereditary, there was a connection between military function and possession of land. It was based not on a feudal contract involving mutual fealty between a suzerain and a vassal, but rather on the absolute sovereignty of the tsar, who, requiring service from any of his subjects, granted a pomest'e in return for such service (Szeftel 1956). Three distinct types of sociopolitical structure are relevant to Russian feudalism: the votchina regime, and Western feudalism. The votchina regime was characterized by the growth of the manorial power of the lord of the estate over the population laboring on it or merely settled in its vicinity. Such power could be enforced by immunity privileges. The votchina estates were owned by political rulers (princes), by private persons, or by the church. Although it represented, to a certain extent, the social aspects of feudal tendencies the votchina system did not contain a counterpart to the political connection between the vassal's service and the control of the land. The pomest'e regime tended to make the control of the land depend on service rendered to the state by the landholder. There was no dispersion of political power in this regime as it grew up in the Muscovite state of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The power was concentrated in the person of the supreme ruler, the tsar. In the standard type of feudalism (Western feudalism) some characteristics of both the votchina and the pomest'e regimes are essential. Like the votchina

regime, the standard type of feudalism presupposes the expansion of the manor and the growth of the manor and the growth of the land. The control of the land by the lower-class landlord depends on the service he renders to the seignior. The important point of difference between the pomest'e regime and feudalism of the standard type is that while in the former political authority is usually dispersed. Thus, no lord-vassal relationship of the western European type could develop in pre-Muscovite Russia, no code of chivalry was based on it, and there could be no consistent heredity of functions. The key to understanding the differences between the Russian and Western developments is the great migratory and resettlement movement in medieval central Russia. This mobility of the rural population was fundamentally caused by the rapid exhaustion of soil that was not too fertile to begin with and by extensive primitive agriculture. Although the movement produced some feudal traits in Russian life, it was also the source of instability in social relationships. In Russian life, it was also the source of instability in social relationships. In Russian life, it was also the source of instability in social relationships. protection for his liberty than the temporary character of his service and the right of free departure. Byzantium. The constellation of feudal characteristics in the Byzantium empire was rather different from that found in Russia, centering primarily on the system of the pronoia ("providence," "foresight," "care"). To give lands to a person in pronoia is to give lands into his care. In practice it meant that estates were given for administration to high officers of the state or army, to monasteries, and to private persons, as a reward for services. The grants differed from simple donations in that the pronoia land was bound to the recipient, the pronoiarios; that he received it for a definite period only, usually for life; that he could not sell the pronoia estate; and that it was not hereditary. The system developed under the eleventh-century Byzantine rulers who tried to reduce the power of the military class and to increase that of the civil bureaucracy by demilitarizing the administration. This policy clearly reflected the decay of the former organization of the military-peasant colonies (themes). The military commander (strategos), who usually served as governor of a province, was replaced by the practor, of course, was a civilian, and thus, the primacy of the military command in the themes gave way to the primacy of a civilian administration based upon the new aristocracy of scholars and civilians in the capital. But the preponderance of the civilians aristocracy in the capital did not lead to a strengthening of the civilians in the capital did not lead to a strengthening of the civilians. The emperors of the Ducas dynasty had already been compelled to give great privileges both to their civilian adherents and to their military or landowning adversaries; with the accession of Alexius Comnenus, 1081-1118, the military aristocracy took over the state. It was under the Ducas that the pronoia owners became liable for military service, replacing the former class of peasant soldiers of the decaying system. The owner of a pronoia estate, when summoned, had to appear with a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned, had to appear with a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen, according to the size of the pronoia estate, when summoned is a certain number of horsemen is a certain number jurisdiction of the pronoiarios, although this jurisdiction was restricted. The central government, thus, gave up many of its prerogatives including that of direct taxation, and the pronoiarios became small rulers, whose estates appeared as little kingdoms within the empire. The crown became more and more dependent on them, which contributed to the weakening of the central government and to the decline and disintegration of the empire (Ostrogorski 1940; Kantorowicz 1956). In sum, Byzantine feudalism was characterized by the relative predominance of economically independent small estates combined with a growing political decentralization—without, however, the concomitant development of an over-all system of vassalage, a feudal-chivalrous military class, or special feudal political institutions. Parallel cases. The Byzantine type of feudalism is found in many other societies, especially in periods of the decline of great empires—to some extent at the end of the Roman Empire, in the later Sassanid period in Iran, and in the aftermath of Asoka's kingdom in India. In many cases institutions of this type of feudalism (usually many politically self-sufficient patrimonial units having some interrelations and an orientation toward one budding center) were more highly developed than feudal economic characteristics. Such cases can be found in China under the Kassites, in Mittani, in the Iran of the Parthian regime, in the iqtâ' institution of medieval Islam, and possibly in ancient Egypt. In none of these cases, however, was there a fully developed system of vassal-lord relations or a full-fledged social organization of a military-political class. At most, only rudiments of each existed. Emergence and demise of feudal systems of the various societies analyzed above—and many more could be included —manifest some common characteristics. Perhaps most important is that they played a major role in the development of "high" cultures or civilizations. Feudal systems can be found, even if in varying degrees, in almost all of the great civilizations of the past, where they were central in keeping and developing great traditions under circumstances often inimical to their maintenance. The importance of this characteristic can best be seen by examining the varying conditions under which feudal institutions develop. One such set of conditions under which feudal institutions develop. One such set of conditions under which feudal institutions develop. One such set of conditions under which feudal institutions develop. One such set of conditions under which feudal institutions develop. One such set of conditions under which feudal institutions develop. The reasons for such dismemberment may vary greatly: the clash of cultures, the invasions of nomads, or the development of feudalism; rather, it is the combination of the dismemberment and the persistence or development of the ideals of a "great empire" and of orientations toward broader societal frameworks among some of the elite groups (such as the church or the new military class) who gain control over the governmental and economic functions and the contradictions between the idea of an empire and the lack of material and administrative positions to administer one. In some cases, such as that of Chinese feudalism, these orientations were developed by active groups that were unable to establish any viable broader system but, nevertheless, developed some vision of such a system. [See EMPIRES.]Within most feudal systems, ideological orientations to such broader frameworks were of great importance, even if they were only partially institutionalized. Any feudal system is, thus, always characterized by some inherent imbalances in its structure, as it contains more and less differentiated centripetal and centrifugal structures and orientations. However, the exact location of such institutional imbalances in any feudal system—whether in the economic, political, or cultural sphere—varies greatly. The demise of the feudal system is predicated on changes in those conditions—technological, political, and economic—that increase the effectiveness of the wider frameworks and

In less differentiated societies this can give rise to a restoration of patrimonial or imperial systems. In more differentiated societies—as in western Europe and in Japan—the feudal background made the later transition to modernity easier and more stable, and in some cases, it might have facilitated —after a period of the "estate" system or of absolutism—the development of a relatively pluralistic system. JOSHUA PRAWER AND SHMUEL N. EISENSTADT[See also BUREACRACY; EMPIRES; MANORIAL ECONOMY; VILLAGE. Other relevant material may be found in EVOLUTION, article on SOCIAL; and in the biographies of BLOCK; BUCHER; FUSTEL DE COULANGES; GIERKE.BIBLIOGRAPHYBarraclough, Geoffrey (editor) (1938)1948 Mediaeval Germany, 911-1250: Essays by German Historians. 2 vols. Paris: Colin.Bloch, Marc 1932 Feudalism, European. Volume 6, pages 203-210 in Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. New York: Macmillan. Bloch, Marc (1939-1940) 1961 Feudal Society. Univ. of Chicago Press. \rightarrow First published in French. Bloch, Marc (1941) 1942 The Rise of Dependent Cultivation and Seigniorial Institutions. Volume 1, pages 224-277 in The Cambridge Economic History of Europe From the Decline of the Roman Empire. Cambridge Univ. Press. Bodde, Derk 1956 Feudalism in China. Pages 49-92 in Rushton Coulborn (editor), Feudalism in History. Princeton Univ. Press. Boutruche, Robert 1959 Seigneurie et féodalité. Volume 1: Le premier áge des liens d'homme a homme. Paris: Aubier. Brundage, Burr C. 1956 Feudalism in History.

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Its focus has conventionally been the fief (land as well as the rights and obligations attached to its possession), given conditionally by a lay or clerical lord to a lay or clerical vassal in return for the vassal's oath of homage and fidelity aristocracy (clerical vassals might provide military service or acts of piety that benefited the lord) thus created expressed its identity by rituals of homage and oaths (and by rituals that dissolved the relationship or accommodated loyalty to more than one lord) and by adopting a particular style of life and behavior. It lived from the labor of peasant cultivators whom it reduced from free status to serfdom. The implication of the suffix "-ism" is that these institutions were far more coherent and systematic than historians have found them to have been. In casual use the term is sometimes used adjectively to characterize medieval European society as a whole. In a specialized sense derived partly from anthropology it is sometimes used comparatively for the study of features believed to be common to western Europe and In a distinctive Marxist sense the term designates a stage of socio-economic history between the slave mode of production of antiquity and the capitalist mode, characterized by the extraction of material resources from an obligated class of inferior agricultural laborers by a class of lords which had appropriated to itself key elements of public authority between the slave mode of production of antiquity and the capitalist mode, characterized by the extraction of material resources from an obligated class of inferior agricultural laborers by a class of lords which had appropriated to itself key elements of public authority between the slave mode of production of antiquity and the capitalist mode, characterized by the extraction of material resources from an obligated class of lords which had appropriated to itself key elements of public authority between the slave mode of production of antiquity and the capitalist mode, characterized by the extraction of material resources from an obligated class of lords which had appropriated to itself key elements of public authority between the slave mode of production of antiquity and the capitalist mode, characterized by the extraction of material resources from an obligated class of lords which had appropriated to itself key elements of public authority between the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of production of antiquity and the capital slave mode of antiquity a The Maxist thesis is now sometimes termed the tributary mode of production. Different and clerical privilege and royal government in France, as well as their origin and constitutional meaning, between the sixteenth and the late eighteenth centuries. Because different meanings of the term are historically derived, this article will begin with an account of the changing history of the term and its meanings, then isolate the elements that have been thought constitutive of it, outline a typology of definitions, and conclude with a survey of current research. THE DEBATES OVER FEUDAL LAW AND THE ORIGINS OF FRANCE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE (1539-1789). The Libri Feudorum, or Books concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and opinions from northern Italy concerning Fiefs, was a compilation of twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal texts and the concerning Fiefs, was a universities after the twelfth century. The fifteenth-century jurist Giacomo Alvarotto (1385-1453) claimed that the Libri Feudorum represented universal property law, was a feudalis scientia, and that different customs concerning landholding and noble status in different parts of Europe could be reconciled to the principles of that "feudal science."Legal scholars long debated whether this law and the institutions it described and dealt with were originally Roman or an independent post-Roman creation of the Lombards or Franks, and hence Germanic in origin; it therefore became an essential problem for determining the origins of France. The first modern commentary on the work was written by the French jurist Charles Dumoulin in 1539, as part of the debate as to whether French law was independent of Roman law, and therefore autonomous, or indebted to Roman or Lombard law. Dumoulin denied the authority of the Libri Feudorum, arguing that it had no standing in France, but he also asserted that the Frankish invention of the fief and therefore of the French nobility of France was directly descended from the subjugated Gauls. The problem of the fief and therefore of the French nobility became a question for both historians and jurists. This argument was taken up vigorously by the jurist-publicist François Hotman, who argued for the validity of the living force of customary law as an expression of national identity and the rejection of Roman law. The jurist Jacques Cujas published his edition of the Libri Feudorum in 1566 (reissued and revised in 1567 and reprinted in 1773), and Hotman expressed his theory in the Tripartite Commentary on Fiefs and the Francogallia in 1573. The views and authority of Dumoulin, Cujas, and Hotman were acknowledged by later French jurists, particularly those specialists known as feudistes, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The feudistes specialized in the highly technical law concerning the property and privileges of the nobility and supported the efforts of the nobility to maximize its income by expanding and strictly enforcing ancient claims of privilege. Their work also contributed to the association of the technical legal term féodalité with the increasing general hostility to noble and clerical privilege. At the same time, a number of historians dealt with the origin of the fief from the political perspectives of both nobility and royalty. Particularly influential was the book, État de la France, published in 1727 by H. de Boulainvilliers, that claimed for the nobility certain sovereign rights independent of those of the king. According to Boulainvilliers, the nobility was descended from the free and equal Franks who had conquered the enslaved Gauls and elected one of their own, clovis, as king. Boulainvilliers' chief critic, the Abbé Dubos, countered in 1742 with a royalist version of Frankish history according to which the king, not the nobles, originally controlled and distributed lands and rights of justice. Dubos' royalist arguments in turn attracted the criticism of Montesquieu, who, in 1748 in Books XXX and XXXI of The Spirit of the Laws, replaced Dubos' strongly royalist interpretation with a mediated history that saw considerable historical cooperation between king and nobles. On the very eve of the French Revolution of 1789, therefore, the questions of the ancient constitution of France and the rights of the mobility which held them and the rights pertaining to them were still being vigorously debated. The debates in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France were echoed in Scotland and England where Thomas Craig (1538-1608) in his Jus Feudale of 1603 and Henry Spelman applied the systematic teaching terminology of French jurists concerning the rules of land tenure, the forfeiture of tenure, and the hereditability of tenure to the property laws of Scotland and England. In England, too, legal arguments of this kind were used in the service of both sides in the debates over the limitedrovalist idea of the ancient constitution and the strongly royalist idea of a king-imposed feudal law in France and England in the seventeenth century. From the very outset of discussions of feudal law in France and England in the seventeenth century. Aug. 4 and 11, 1789, the National Constituent Assembly of France claimed that it had "completely abolished the feudal regime" that it demolished were personal servitude (mainmorte), such aristocratic and lordly rights as pertained to restricted areas for hunting, all judicial courts held by aristocrats and their agents, tithes to churches and monasteries as well as perquisites of local priests and financial contributions to Rome, the purchase of public office, unequal payment of taxes because of social or legal status, all judicial courts held by aristocrats and their agents, tithes to churches and monasteries as well as perquisites of local priests and financial contributions to Rome, the purchase of public office, unequal payment of taxes because of social or legal status, all judicial courts held by aristocrats and their agents, tithes to churches and monasteries as well as perquisites of local priests. and access to employment. Other critics even included the survival of numerous regional and local dialects of French and various patois as vestiges of a feudal society. As diverse in origin and character as these elements were, the assembly saw in their combination, nevertheless, a feudal world that had to go. Its most abhorrent features were, according to the Preamble to the Constitution of 1791, "the institutions that offended against liberty and equal rights." According to Alexis de Tocqueville, they "were

commonly referred to under the heading of feudal institutions." In early French revolutionary thought it was feudalism that separated the nobles and clergy from the essential French nation—the Third Estate and the king. The assembly's use of the term "feudal" in this context was broad enough to include ecclesiastical property and privilege as well, and it signalled the massive assault on the Roman Catholic church in France (including its Gallican version) that continued under the successive regimes of the revolution and had already appeared among enlightenment thinkers, especially voltaire. Clerical privilege also became one of the themes in the criticism of reactionary regimes after 1815, especially during the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Such thought also crossed the Atlantic; from his reading of English and French literature on the subject, for example, the American John Adams wrote his treatise On the Canon and Feudal Laws. HISTORIANS AND FEUDALISM IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES. In the early nineteenth century the adjective feudal (French, féodal) was gradually applied by historians to other areas of medieval society, expanding the original seventeenth century meaning of the French term féodalité, originally translated as feudality, but by 1817 converted to feudalism. Already in the late eighteenth century Scots economic theorists—Adam Smith in 1763 and John Millar in the 1790s—had begun to characterize the earlier European economy as based on a system of property and government which conflicted with commercial. In his Wealth of Nations of 1776, Smith appears to have been the first writer in English to use the phrase "the feudal system" as a social and economic category. By 1800 féodalité /feudality had come to mean a form of government characterized by the fragmentation of central authority, a socio-economic order, and a general term of contemporary abuse of practices that

resembled those of the past. Anti-nobility also became the theme of a number of works by economists in the early nineteenth century, those of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and the historian Augustin Thierry (1795-1856), and their views were broadened by the philosopher G.

1848, Marx and Friedrich Engels constructed their sequence of stages in the oppressive modes of production that preceded Socialism, in which feudalism found its Marxist place: Primitive Communist, Asiatic, Slave, Slavonic, Germanic, Feudal, and Capitalist. But most nineteenth -and early-twentieth-century historians considered feudalism either as a legal, political, or military phenomenon from the perspective of legal or political history, as a socio-economic system possessing a particular social structure. The sociologist Max Weber, who posited three forms of legitimate government in human history—the rational, the traditional, and the charismatic—located feudal government in the traditional category, lacking rationality and bureaucracy. It became one of Weber's sense. With the growth of academic, professional history in the later nineteenth century, scholars adopted a narrower and less pejorative view of feudalism, one characterized in 1875 by the French scholar Numa Fustel de Coulanges as a conditional possession of land which has been substituted for property in land, the existence of lordships that divided up the land and were ruled by men who had ceased to obey the king, and the dependence of these lordships on each other. The critical elements of the system were the benefice, the request for it and the precarious character of its tenure, patronage, the immunity, and fidelity between man and lord. Both academic historians rejected general theory and ideology, edited and published enormous numbers of texts, chiefly chronicles and private charters conveying land, and they withdrew from the older, broader characterizations of feudalism as a blanket term for the entire middle ages, narrowing to the general period from 800 to 1300 and focusing primarily on western Europe, particularly France. They also greatly expanded the study of the history of the nobility, rulership, and state building. But they remained divided as to whether the phenomena they studied were purely legal and political, on the one hand, or social and economic, on the other. The legal and political aspect of the problem was reflected in the work of the German constitutional historian, Heinrich Mitteis, and his followers. Mitteis considered the consolidation and ordering of the feudal system the basis for the modern constitutional state. Other historians, like the French scholar Henri Sée, insisted on the primarily economic and social character of feudalism. These two views were most strongly expressed in two works published within five years of each other, Marc Bloch's ambitious and immensely wide-ranging Feudal Society, published in two volumes in 1939 and 1944. Bloch attempted to combine both the legal/political and social/economic views, including discussions even of the psychology and emotional life of the period, in a vast panorama of European social life between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries. Some of his views were published in an American encyclopedia as early as 1931. Ganshof offered the most concise and abstract institutional-legal account ever written. Bloch posited two feudal ages, the first extending from the eighth century until around 1050 and the second from 1050 to the early thirteenth century. Bloch hinged the division between the two ages on the devastation caused by the invasions of the ninth and tenth centuries and their impact on the European economy, creating regimes of arbitrary lordship over an oppressed peasantry, the desertion of settlements, the displacement of agricultural populations, and general impoverishment. These in turn led to a privatizing of public authority, the collapse of public justice, the multiplication of knights and castles, the need of powerful men to recruit military servants, and the creative force of what Bloch termed "the bonds of dependence" between fighting men and their lords: homage, fief-giving, security of tenure, and the increasing heritability of the fief as an expression of dynastic consciousness. All of these became systematized during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, giving kings the opportunity to resume a process of state building from the systematized base of the preceding centuries. Bloch included in his idea of feudal society the following elements: A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement instead of a salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority leading inevitably to disorder; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and State, of which the latter, during the second feudal age, was to acquire renewed strength. (Feudal Society, 443-445)TYPOLOGY OF ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH FEUDALISM. Since the work of Bloch and Ganshof, the following elements have Some or all of them are spoken of as expanding between the Loir and Rhine rivers north into the Low Countries, west to England (especially after the Norman Sicily, east to Germany and then to the Latin Christian kingdom of Jerusalem during the twelfth century, and southwest into Catalonia. Chronology and social conditions: The arguments for both the continuity from the analysis of political, economic, and social conditions during the ninth and tenth centuries. Castellans and warlords,

F. hegel. The influence of this approach on Karl marx produced Marx's savage characterization of feudalism as the seedbed of capitalism, in which the German Ideology of 1845, and continuing with The Communist Manifesto of

Specialized warriors who assume control over a small or large territory by building private castles and dominating the countryside, assembling a group of warriors around themselves, and depressing the status of the local free peasantry by brute coercion. Ties of dependence. The establishment of a relationship by an oath-taking and giving ritual between two free men, acknowledging one of them to be superior and the other to be inferior (homage, from Latin, homagium [from homo, man], French hommage) and owing loyalty (fidelity) to the superior, may be understood to indicate the disintegration of a previously stable large-scale society or simply a changing relationship among members of the ruling orders of society. The provision of military service. As weapons and the expense of acquiring them and training with them increased the need for specialized warriors, lords (from Latin, dominus; Old English hlaford [the giver of the loaf]; French seigneur) who could command and reward specialized warriors could use them to expand their own bases of power and territory. The fief (from Old High German fihu, Latin feedum, French fief, German Lehen, Old English læn). Landed property with its attached rights, obligations, and revenues. Although neither fief nor beneficium, French fief (from Old High German fihu, Latin feedum, French fief, German Lehen, Old English læn). way of providing the necessary support for fighting men in service to another. The term feudalism itself derives from the fief. Sufficiently large fiefs could be in turn beneficed to vassals of the vassal (from Celtic qwas, Latin vassus, French vassal), a process known as subinfeudation. A vassal might also hold fiefs from more than one lord, leading to the distinction between liege homage and simple hommage, the former taking precedence over the latter. The joining of fief and vassalage. Reinforces the superior-inferior relationship by the conditional transfer of property from lord to vassal in return for specified services from the vassal, often military. Aids, Obligations, and Services. Besides military have reverted (escheated) to the lord. Other services and obligations included castle-guard, payments to the lord upon the knighting of his eldest son and marriage of his eldest son and marriage when they were itinerary, and to offer the lord advice on matters of common interest to lords and vassals. The segmentation of public authority. The assumption that something resembling a centralized monarchical government disintegrated, opening the way for the appropriation of formerly public powers by individual, selfinterested lords. In the thirteenth century the existence of the elements listed so far enabled rulers as the basis for a new kind of centralizing state. Rights of justice. Attached to fiefs, they parallel political decentralization by decentralizing the law, since formerly public rights of justice (the ban, those of the king or his agents, the counts) are now attached to fiefs and administered largely for purposes of personal profit by those who hold them. Nobility. By linking lords and vassals in relationships based on the military culture of both, the warrior, or knight (Latin, miles; French, chevalier, German, Ritter; Old English, cniht) is slowly assimilated to the ranks of the nobility, which include even the highest-ranking dukes and counts, and in some cases the king. Mentality. The expression of the values and temperament of noble warriors. At the upper levels of this society it is reflected in marriage patterns and dynastic consciousness and the growth of courtly values and a distinctive courtly literature. At the lower levels it characterizes the deliberate distancing on the part of knights from the peasantry. The oppression of disarmed peasants is one sign of the knightly status of the individual. Seigneurialism. The rule of a local lord over the peasant population from whose compulsory, tributary labor he sustains himself. Lord and peasants together constitute the manorial system, in which the manor court and the power of the lord dominate the agricultural economy. Some historians argue that seigneurialism and manorialism constitute an area of social and economic life distinct from feudalism. Feudal anarchy or alternate kinds of order? The elements described above have led to very different interpretations of their character. Earlier historians consistently characterized their various combinations as reflections of feudal anarchy, the nearly complete privatization of formerly public, governmental institutions for purely personal benefit. Other historians regard them rather as the imposition of an alternative form of order, one with its own rules and its own forms of stability. FEUDALISM AFTER BLOCH AND GANSHOFDuring the second half of the twentieth century, most historians concentrated more on Bloch's second feudal society, generally discounting Bloch's earlier period as an archaic society with some of whose surviving institutions the lords of the eleventh and twelfth century worked differently. Other historians criticized Bloch's assumptions about the extent of the tenth-century crisis and argued for a much greater degree of continuity between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century, thereby posing the problem as one debated between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century, thereby posing the problem as one debated between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century, thereby posing the problem as one debated between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century, thereby posing the problem as one debated between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century, thereby posing the problem as one debated between Late Antiquity and the twelfth century. revolution" or "feudal mutation" occurring around the turn of the second millennium. Under the influence of anthropology, a number of scholars have also attempted to consider feudalism as a comparative subject that had European parallels elsewhere in Eurasia, particularly Japan.

scholars are also more reluctant to assume the existence of all of the elements discussed above as essential to a feudal system. Seigneurialism and manorialism, which focus on the estate or village community and its internal rule, especially tend to be considered independently of those elements that characterize the life of nobles or those rising into the nobility. Instead of feudal anarchy, historians are beginning to find both a cultural and political order in the world of eleventh- and twelfth-century nobles and rulers. In spite of the twentieth century, a number of articulate scholars have continued to urge that the term feudalism be dropped from the historian's vocabulary and mind. Since a famous and widely debated essay published by Elizabeth A. R. Brown in 1974, and especially since the highly critical book by Susan Reynolds, Fiefs and Vassals, in 1994, a line has been drawn between historians who accept the idea of a feudal revolution or mutation around the turn of the second millennium and are willing to use the adjective feudal to describe the society that emerged from it, and those who find the abstract term feudalism too imprecise and overloaded with implications of homogeneity and consistency in a period and place that had neither, or else possessed some features that may be properly termed feudal but lacked others. Like most complex scholarly questions, the history ends in a lively and continuing debate. Bibliography: On the origins of the debate. e. carcasonne, Montesquieu et le problème de la constitution and the Feudal Law (Cambridge 1957; repr. New York 1967), esp. chs. 1 and 4. d. kelley, The Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship (New York 1970), esp. chs. 6 and 7. j.q.c. mackrell, The Ancien Régime: French Society 1600-1750, tr. s. cox (New York-Evanston 1973). t. craig, Jus Feudale, tr. j. a. clyde (Edinburgh 1934), with an appended translation of the Libri Feudorum. On nineteenth-century development. o. brunner and o. hintze in Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe, ed. f. l. cheyette (New York 1968). r. boutruche, Seigneurie et féodalité: le premier âge des liens d'homme à homme (Paris 1968) 1: 11-25. p. ourliac, "La féodalité et son histoire," Revue historique du droit français et étranger 73 (1995) 1-21.

The new dynamics of the study of Late Antiquity and early medieval Europe made earlier discussions of feudal institutions virtually a dead letter and encouraged the new focus on the study of the nobility, lesser military ranks, the peasantry, studies of particular regions, and a reassessment of the tenth- or eleventhcentury origins of the new forms of lordship and community. The influential work of Georges Duby and his students, associates, and successors after 1953 represents the current state of research on the new chronology, based on detailed regional studies, studies of family structures, the study of ecclesiastical grants of land by great monasteries and powerful bishops, not only in northern France and the Rhineland, but in the French Midi, Catalonia, central and southern Italy, and the Low Countries, with England now considered less an exceptional case than it traditionally had been, chiefly because of the strong central rule imposed by william i (the Conqueror) and his immediate successors. Most

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c. wickham, "The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism," Past & Present 103 (1984) 3-36. r. coulborn, ed., Feudalism in History (Princeton 1956). e. leach, s. n. mukherjee, and j. ward, eds., Feudalism: Comparative Studies (Sydney 1985), valuable especially for Ward's detailed typological analysis. h. mukhia, The Feudalism Debate (Manohar1999).[e. peters] views updated May 23 2018FEUDALISM. Strictly speaking, feudalism refers to the medieval dependency/service relationship between lords and their vassals or to the political subordination and service of lesser lords to higher lords or princes. These medieval relationships faded in the early modern centuries as princes developed institutionally complex states and replaced unreliable feudal levies with mercenaries and, eventually, standing armies. Although the properties of lords and knights, called fiefs, often retained distinct laws that governed their transmission, feudalism in the early modern centuries. What most commentators and detractors called feudalism between 1500 and 1800 was technically lordship Karl Marx and modern Marxist historians considered feudalism an oppressive economic system, a means of production. While feudalism in some settings assumed the appearances of an economic system, notably in the large noble and ecclesiastical estates of eastern Germany, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary that were worked by serf labor, feudalism was actually a much broader institution. It was both a fiscal system for the support of the governing classes and a system of local governance. One of the oldest and most durable institutions in European history, feudalism emerged in the early medieval centuries, reproduced and reshaped itself century after century, and spread into newly colonized regions. Retaining many of its medieval features until its violent demise in the wake of major political revolutions, feudalism survived in France until the Revolutions of 1848. FEUDALISM IN THE MIDDLE AGESIn the Middle Ages, feudalism/lordship was the institutional and territorial expression of the unlimited governing authority of lords: princes, high aristocrats, bishops, and abbots. Lords exercised governing authority by birthright or by office, and the inhabitants of the lords' domains were their subjects. Feudalism expressed itself in many institutions, which, like a fine net, covered the entire landmass of urban centers, rural villages, mountain ranges, rivers, and roads. Feudalism was a fiscal system that supported the governing class. Lords in turn assigned part of their fiscal assets to agents as remuneration for their administrative tasks and to knights for military services. There were direct taxes on men and land as well as a variety of indirect taxes such as tolls on rivers or roads and taxes assessed in markets and fairs. Lords collected taxes when new tenants assumed possession of landholdings. There were fees for the obligatory use of feudal grain mills, grape and olive presses, and ovens. Feudalism was also a system of local governance. All-purpose agents of the lords, such as mayors in the villages and towns, not only collected the lords as provosts

years of history behind it in the core lands of the old Roman Empire and at least two or three hundred years in the most recently settled areas. At the end of the Middle Ages there were already distinct regional patterns of feudalism, which became more pronounced between 1500 and 1800. These regional variations affected feudalism mainly as a fiscal systems of Europe in their fiscal expressions fell into three broad zones that extended from west to east. These regional variations were the result of differences in economic development, population density, and political organization. The first zone included England, the Netherlands, and the lower Rhineland area of Germany as well as France, Spain, and Italy. This first zone encompassed the most densely populated, the most economically developed, and the most politically advanced areas of Europe. The customary laws viewed the holdings under the feudal authority of lords as secure, usually perpetual, tenures. Consequently, those who actually possessed the land and used it had rights tantamount to property ownership. Lords could not dismiss their tenants and confiscate their property without due cause, such as the failure to pay annual dues for a number of years, and even then only with formal judicial procedures. Likewise, once established, the regular annual feudal taxes were normally viewed as immutable. Kings, princes, and central governments generally reserved for themselves the right to assess new taxes and to increase rates. In most of Europe, serfdom had largely disappeared by 1500. The most common burdens of marriage outside the lordship, mandatory residence, and unregulated taxes and labor services. Although remnants of these practices survived here and there, they were largely governed by the provisions of customary law. Powerful economic forces that emanated from expanding urban centers and international trade produced significant changes in property ownership and land use in this zone in the early modern era, but these changes occurred slowly at a pace measured in generations and even centuries. Nobles, well-to-do urban residents, state officials, and even prosperous peasants bought perpetual tenures near cities, in rural villages, even in remote areas with easy access to commercial routes. From piecemeal purchases of land that often stretched over generations, they assembled large farms and vineyards that produced for the expanding markets. The physical appearance of the landscape changed as consolidated capitalist farms partially replaced peasant villages. Economically, the newly created or expanded farms of the better-off

then higher officials often called bailiffs, and a corresponding hierarchy of fiscal, judicial, and administrative offices. At the apex stood the lord with his household and central administrative offices and princes such as dukes and counts normally had more extensive and complex lordships than bishops, abbots, barons or lesser lords, these

Rent rolls, urban and village charters, the day-to-day administrative, fiscal, and judicial records of lords, as well as the public inquiries and the highest courts. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, judicial officials of kings and princes held public inquiries and assembled written compilations of provincial customary law in France and in the western parts of the Holy Roman Empire, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy. In Prussia, the codifications appeared later in the eighteenth century. In England, manorial records served the same purpose. By the beginning of the early modern era, about 1450 or 1500, feudalism already had a thousand

classes were market-oriented, capitalist enterprises worked by tenant farmers or sharecroppers on short-term leases. Although the new owners of former peasant lands sometimes cleared their lands of the old feudal taxes by paying for their abolition, more often than not they simply stacked short-term market leases over the perpetual tenures. The network of feudal fiscal rights assigned to landed property were so deeply imbedded in law, especially when they belonged to ecclesiastical lords, charitable organizations, or towns, that the old feudal burdens survived but took on an increasingly archaic appearance. In heavily urbanized northern Italy, the partial elimination of the perpetual tenures and the more widespread stacking of short-term renewable leases over preexisting tenures were already very advanced by 1500. Elsewhere, the changes occurred mainly between 1500 and 1750 or 1800. Roughly half the land held by peasant perpetual tenants in 1500 passed into the hands of nonpeasants by the 1780s. In England this process was called enclosure. Enclosure began in the late Middle Ages and peaked in the eighteenth century. Normally, English enclosure brought with it the elimination of the feudal fiscal rights. In the areas of England unaffected by enclosure, feudal tenures, called copyholds, survived until 1922. The second zone encompassed the most anciently settled core lands of the Holy Roman Empire, those areas that had been settled prior to the thirteenth century, with the notable exception of the lower Rhineland (Cologne, Mainz, the Rhenish Palatinate, etc.), which belonged to the first zone. This zone included Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Alsace, Hesse, Brunswick, Saxony, Thuringia, and Franconia. The determining factor here was the modesty or mediocrity of any force, whether demographic, economic, or political, that could have produced significant change. Although there was a dense network of rural villages, the cities and towns were very small and quite undynamic between 1500 and 1800. Most of Germany lay well outside the major trade routes in Europe. Politically the area was fragmented into hundreds of small states. Feudal estates here consisted of clusters of peasant villages or scattered peasant holdings subject to an array of feudal taxes. Lords rarely had directly held farms of notable size in 1500 or in 1800. The forces that partially transformed the landscape in the first zone were too weak to produce similar results here. Upper-class investors such as nobles, ecclesiastical institutions, and burghers lent money to peasant tenants and piled new rents on old feudal taxes. They even bought up feudal tenures, often by foreclosing on bad peasant debts. But they did not disturb peasant farming. Although much of the land in many peasant villages near the larger towns technically belonged to burghers who were legally the tenants, the investors almost always immediately retroceded the foreclosed lands to the existing peasant farmers. Capitalist, freestanding farms worked by tenant farmers on short-term leases were very uncommon. In the absence of strong market forces, the short-term leases or life leases that multiplied in the rebuilding of this part of Germany after the Thirty Years' War faded into perpetual arrangements by the eighteenth century. Lords were content to retain peasants to farm their tenures and pay feudal taxes generation after generation. The third zone extended eastward along the Baltic from Denmark and Holstein through the German states of Mecklenburg, and the two Pomeranias to Prussia and the nother possessions of the Habsburgs in the southeastern Alps. This entire zone was very lightly populated and both economically and politically underdeveloped. Central governments of kings and princes were weak, while nobles were comparatively strong and independent. Plagues and ruinous wars repeatedly devastated the fragile network of settlement in this zone between 1300 and 1700. Although the feudal practices here were the same as those in use everywhere in Europe, the whiplash effects of cyclical devastation did not allow feudalism to develop much beyond the stages characteristic of parts of western Europe in the Carolingian era of 750 to 950. Lords in this third zone, whether princes, ecclesiastical institutions, barons, or knights, had an abundance of land but could find little peasant labor. They made heroic efforts century to colonize their lands, but no sooner had settlement begun to produce its first fruits than some fresh calamity undermined it. Out of necessity, lords relied primarily on their own directly held lands to support themselves. Such farms expanded between 1500 and 1800, not principally through consciously planned depopulating enclosure, but because abandoned peasant tenures and entire villages fell back into the hands of the lords. The most heavily damaged regions in the era of the Thirty Year's War, for example, lost on average half their population. To work their directly held lands, lords in this zone hired landless day laborers as permanent staff and as temporary wage labor, and they relied on feudal labor services assessed on peasant farmers and cottagers.

Normally, lords did not simply impose arbitrary labor services on their existing subjects, but rather offered lands to new colonists with labor services as a condition of tenure. With each new wave of devastation, feudal labor services as a condition of tenure. of their subjects. The result was a new form of serfdom, born of insurmountable poverty and underpopulation. It was only after 1750 that the positive pull of markets for grain and livestock had much of an impact on these eastern European forms of feudalism. FEUDAL COURTS Everywhere in Europe, lords retained wide rights of local jurisdiction and local governance. Although the polemical literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries painted a very unflattering portrait of the feudal courts, in fact they performed indispensable services as lower courts of first instance with jurisdiction over civil and criminal affairs. They survived because the states had neither the political need to abolish them nor the revenues to replace them. From at least the sixteenth century in the more advanced states and from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries elsewhere, the men who staffed the feudal courts were legally trained professionals who received an annual salary. The feudal courts were incorporated into the judicial hierarchy of the state with rights of appeal in western Europe by 1500 or shortly thereafter, but in Austria, Bohemia, and Brandenburg-Prussia this did not occur until the middle of the eighteenth century. Feudalism also survived as a system of local governance. Feudal officials retained their traditional supervisory role in the administration of the smaller towns and the rural villages, while royal or princely officials usually controlled the important cities. THE DEMISE OF FEUDALISMOpposition to the feudal system and the tithe, the obligatory feudal tax for the support of the church. While most nobles everywhere understandably defended feudalism, members of the non-noble elite were of two minds. On the one hand, anyone who aspired to assimilation into the nobility routinely purchased feudal rights and estates since they were increasingly that the feudal system and the legal nobility were hopelessly antiquated institutions. Opposition to feudalism among the non-noble elites was based on the overall transformation of society, not on the economic burden of feudalism per se. Consequently, opposition was much more vocal in France and Italy than in Prussia, Austria, or Bohemia. Enlightened reformers began to eliminate feudalism here and there from the middle of the eighteenth century. The task was monumentally difficult. Rulers such as Frederick II of Prussia could abolish personal serfdom or improve conditions of tenure on their own domain lands, but not on the lands of other lords. Lords had legitimate property rights that could not simply be dismissed without compensation. The reforms began timidly with the removal of restrictions on personal freedom that were degrading but that produced little revenue for the lords. In 1778 Louis XVI of France abolished all forms of serfdom on directly held royal estates and the right of pursuit of serfs for the entire realm. From the 1770s, enlightened rulers in Denmark, Piedmont-Sardinia, and Austria promoted the liquidation of feudal fiscal rights with elaborate and costly schemes to make redemption payments to lords that were financially beyond the means of most peasants. Political revolutions eventually swept aside the remnants of the feudal system. See also Aristocracy and Gentry; Estates and Country Houses; Landholding; Property; Serfdom in East Central Europe .BIBLIOGRAPHYAymard, Maurice. "From Feudalism to Capitalism in Italy." Review 6 (1982): 131-208. Blanning, T. C. W. Joseph II. London and New York, 1994.Blum, Jerome. The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe. Princeton, 1978. Carsten, F. L. The Origins of Prussia. Oxford, 1954.

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lordships were all remarkably similar.REGIONAL PATTERNS OF FEUDALISMFeudalism was absolutely unassailable in law in the early modern centuries. Normally the king or prince himself was the principal lord and still derived significant revenues from his feudal holdings

The French Peasantry in the Seventeenth Century, Translated by Ian Patterson, Cambridge, U.K., and New York, 1986, Ritter, Gerhard. Frederick the Great: A Historical Profile, Berkeley, 1968, Thirsk, Joan, ed. Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1750. Cambridge, U.K., and New York, 1990, James L. Goldsmith views updated Jun 11 2018FEUDALISM The word "feudalism" inevitably brings to mind a number of images: an aristocratic class of landed warrior-nobles constantly at war among themselves, a preponderantly agrarian economy serviced by an impoverished peasantry, and a religious establishment emphasizing values of hierarchy and submission to authority. While the images may have a pronounced European and Indian, have for some time debated whether there could be an "Indian feudalism." The problem, however, is first and foremost one of definitions, for it would seem that there can be as many conceptions of feudalism as there are historians working on the subject. Indeed, in European writing alone, the term has had an exceedingly complex history over the last three hundred years. Two general features, however, seem to unite most concepts of feudalism. First, feudalism is deemed the great political or social order that preceded the rise of the absolutist or colonial state, which, arguably, in turn gave birth to key features of recognizably modern societies and economies. Second, representations of feudalism have rarely been simply neutral descriptions. Many early writings on feudalism were written with a strong reformist agenda, and were part of the liberal project of defeating the political order of the ancien régime. Later, concepts of feudalism or semifeudalism or semifeudalism have been regularly invoked in Marxist political thought as part of their own accounts of the rise of bourgeois society. The first systematic argument for the existence of feudalism in India was forwarded by Lieutenant Colonel James Tod, who served the British East India Company at the turn of the nineteenth century and first published what would become a famous work on western India, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan in 1829-1832. Inspired by Henry Hallam's recently published History of the Middle Ages, Tod argued that the Rajputs of India had a system of "pure feuds" analogous to those of medieval Europe. For Tod, this was the case because the Rajputs, being of "Scythian" racial stock, were descended from the same Central Asian peoples who formed the forebears of the tribes in early Europe. The feudal compact that emerged in both places was based on obligations between vassal and sovereign secured through bonds of kinship or personal loyalty. The claims by Rajput kings to have descended from either the sun or the moon created a factional political system, in which disputes were resolved through feuds. Though a strong king might reduce such internecine warfare, it remained a systemic feature of Rajput society. Tod admitted that the Rajputs, as he encountered them, had been subjected to an exterior despotic force from North India, and he counterposed Rajput feudalism to the Centralized rule of powers like the Marathas and the Mughals. Tod believed that if the Rajputs could be restored to their original prosperity, they would not only pose no threat to British interests (with their own divisive tendencies keeping them in check), but that they would also prove potential allies against any Russian encroachment on Britain's valuable possessions in India, but some of its features tended to become absorbed into a more generalized notion of ancient and medieval Hindu polities as atomistic, divisive, and entropic, which often mixed uneasily with notions of Oriental despotism. Soon, this image itself became associated with a putative "medieval" period emerging among historians in both imperialist and nationalist circles. According to Vincent Smith's famous history of early India, the great ancient imperial experiments of the Mauryans and the Guptas collapsed by the seventh century, giving way to a medley of petty states

engaged in unceasing internecine warfare. Smith's stance was that this was the natural state of affairs among Indian princes unless they were checked by some superior authority like the British. Nationalist historians mapped representations of feudalized political chaos onto the idea of the fall of the golden age and medieval decline, often using political chaos as an explanation for "national weakness" before invading Islamic armies. Though such notions of a vague political feudalism have persisted in some historical circles, they have been largely overtaken by a more systematic treatment of feudalism from an entirely different angle since the 1950s, when scholars of Marxist persuasion sought to come to terms with pre-colonial Indian society. The classification of societies through the "mode of production" concept had been an integral feature of Marxist historical thought from its inception. Its impetus came from Marx himself, who in order to develop a better understanding of the rise of capitalism, proposed a sequence of modes of production in Europe, beginning with primitive communism, which evolved sequentially into a capitalist mode of production unique was its peculiar combination of forces of production (tools, materials, and labor processes) and relations of production (the ownership of productive forces), and following from this, the particular means by which a ruling class extracted surplus from the laboring class. Feudalism, from this point of view, could be characterized on the one hand as an agrarian society composed of small-scale peasant producers who met their own subsistence needs with a labor force based on the family, and on the other as a society in which a class of landed lords extracted surplus from these peasants through rent. Feudal rent was deemed "noneconomic" because it was not settled through rent. Feudal rent was deemed "noneconomic" because it was not settled through rent. This class was a military aristocracy whose ranks were divided into great lords and free vassals who entered into feudal "compacts," whereby a piece of landed property (fief) was held by the vassal from the lord in return for military service or counsel. In contrast to the life of the aristocracy was the unfree condition of peasants or "serfs," who had no property rights (save that of use), were restricted in movement, and were obliged to surrender the product of their labor over and above what was needed for the reproduction of the peasant household. Marxist Interpretations were and above what was needed for the reproduction of the peasant household. Marxist Interpretations were also as a vexed and complex topic. traced to Karl Marx himself, who wrote several pieces on British imperialism in India from the 1850s. Drawing on diverse sources, Marx argued that Indian society, as elsewhere in Asia, differed substantially from that of European absolutist states, saw Asiatic governments as despotic in nature. Other sources included Henry Maine's theory of the self-sufficient, isolated village community in India and the general notion, championed by G. W. F. Hegel and others, that Asian societies were static and unchanging. On these bases, Marx concluded that India and other Asiatic societies could not be placed in the developmental continuum of European society (slave or feudal) and instead developed the controversial concept of the "Asiatic mode of production." The key features of the Asiatic mode of production included the absence of production included the absence of production included the controversial concept of the "Asiatic mode of production." irrigation and public works, and the decentralized and communal nature of production at the village level.

The absence of private property, combined with despotic (as opposed to feudal) rule, prevented India from development, a process which was only brought about through the external force of colonialism. Despite its obvious moorings in the Orientalist perception of the East, the Asiatic mode of production suggested by Marx and Friedrich Engels represented an important and often neglected contribution to further social analysis—the attempt to account for the specificity of societies outside Europe. The congress of different communist parties across the globe, and during the anti-imperialist movements of the unilinear development from primitive communism to capitalism. It is against this background, and the additional context of a robust nationalist historiography, that a number of Indian Marxist historians in the 1950s and 1960s reassessed early Indian society in terms of Marxist categories. A vast amount of new information on precolonial Indian society and much of this evidence contradicted the premises of the Asiatic mode of production. It suggested in the first instance that while the village remained to some extent an independent economic unit, it possessed a far greater degree of economic differentiation than Marx had assumed. Also, Marx's idea that all of the surplus product of the village went entirely into the hands of the state was incorrect. There was, in fact, a whole class of hereditary claimants to shares in rent: courtiers, military retainers, provincial lords, and religious institutions in earlier times, and in later times Mughal zamindars (landowners). Such claims further

and trade and commodity production underwent change over time in pre-colonial India, contradicting the presumed stasis of Asiatic society before the coming of European imperialism. Indian FeudalismMarxist historians subsequently developed the theory of "Indian feudalism" to explain the social formation emerging with the Guptas in the fourth century and extending down to the establishment of the Turkish power in Delhi during the thirteenth century. Marxist historians of later medieval India have been more reticent in applying the category of feudalism to the great Muslim empires of northern India. For the earlier period, the pioneering study of D. D. Kosambi suggested two phases of development: an initial phase of "feudalism from above," in which a class of landed intermediaries emerged at the village level. Kosambi's observations were supplemented by the more detailed and comprehensive works of R. S. Sharma and others in the 1960s. Sharma began with the point that the alienation of tax revenues in the land grants from the Gupta period was accompanied by the surrender of administrative and judicial powers, resulting in the parcelization of sovereignty and the decentralization of state power. While most of the extant land grants preserved on permanent materials (copper plate

indicate the presence of what Marx had thought was absent in India, the private ownership of land-shares, placed between the king and the peasants, suggests an arrangement generally akin to feudal land ownership. Most importantly, it is clear that political and economic structures, land ownership,

or stone) were made to religious institutions, evidence suggests that royal functionaries and servants were also remunerated in land revenues. Numerous officials and military retainers from the sixth century appear to take titles that imply land ownership (bhogika, bhogapati). Part of the argument here has also rested on wider economic factors. There is a well-documented contraction of the larger urban centers, a decline in trade networks and petty commodity production, and an apparent paucity of coinage in North India during post-Gupta times. In such an increasingly ruralized economy, payment for services, whether religious or secular, was necessarily in land revenue rather than cash. The royal charters and records, which by the sixth century begin to include genealogical introductions in high poetic style, do seem to suggest considerable evidence for the growth of "lord-vassal" relationships among ruling elites, though no single feudal compact can be attested in the legal literature of the period. The famous Allahabad pillar inscription of the Gupta king Samudragupta (ruled c. 330-380) mentions that subordinate kings were expected not only to pay tribute and offer themselves for military assistance, but were to provide daughters (in marriage), and attend court to pay physical obeisance to the Gupta monarch. The emphasis on personal submission and courtly hierarchy was highly pronounced in political life, from the proliferation of increasingly calibrated titles (sāmanta, mahāsamanta, mandalesvara) for ranks of subprotae gestural, verbal, and sumptuary protocols (like the bearing of insignia and possession of five musical instruments in public procession), which were enacted between men of different rank at court. Literary and genealogical records also suggest the existence of a loose code of warrior ethics that emphasized a fierce but honorable heroism as well as a compassionate irenism. The latter tendency may have been the influence of religious and monks) who regularly attended or served at the more important aristocratic households. Religious institutions, however, tended to reinforce rather than undermine feudal social relations, and the symmetry between religious and political ideologies in this period is notable. Hindu temples, for example, were much like palaces in their spatial arrangement—the central god of the temple was surrounded by subordinate forms and divinities in a carefully calibrated fashion to reflect perceived rank and hierarchy. The major religious ideology of the period, bhakti, or devoted participation in the majesty of god, conceived of lordship as an encompassing yet hierarchical mastery that mirrored the nested rights which obtained between lords and their inferiors in the secular realm. Religious and political real mastery that mirrored the nested rights which obtained between lords and their inferiors in the secular realm. Religious and political relations, however, tended to relations and directive vocabulary to encode relations between lords and subordinates across other legious and political relations, however, tended to relations between lords and their inferiors in the secular realm. Religious and political relations, however, tended to relations and subordinates across and political relations and subordinates across and political relations, and the produce relations between lords and subordinates across across across across across acros

The proliferation of intermediaries thus placed a continual burden on the actual cultivator, as the increase in rents and imposts drained all but the bare minimum of produce necessary for the reproduction of the peasant household.

Sharma and others have additionally pointed out the existence of corvée or forced labor-rent (vishti) as well as legal restrictions on the movement of the peasantry (villages were granted with their inhabitants, and donees could restrain them) as indications of their serflike status. Historians of Indian feudalism recognized deficiencies in the evidence, differences on a number of points with the European model, and significant variations in regional development within the subcontinent itself. While the system of land grants was well-established in central India and Maharashtra, for example, it seems to have been significantly weaker in the Punjab, where very few land records have survived from medieval times. The explanation (not altogether satisfactory) for this state of affairs has been the existence of a more robust money economy in the region under the Hindu Shahi dynasty.

circulation. Challenges and DebateBy the late 1970s a number of dissenters to the theory of Indian feudalism had emerged from within the ranks of Marxist historians in India, and they were joined by scholars of various disciplines from outside the Marxist tradition working on such topics as monetary history, urbanization, and "state formation" in early India.

The challenges to the feudalist thesis were twofold. The first was evidentiary. There were long-standing critiques by epigraphists that the evidence of vassalage, but only of religious "landlordism" at best. The theory of a demonetized economy was challenged as resting on weak methodology, and it was suggested that North India, during the period between a.d. 600 and 1000, had just as many coins in circulation as in earlier times. Similarly, the fact that while archaeology seemed to demonstrate that the great cities of early historic India did witness a marked contraction in

It was generally held that the feudal system that evolved from Gupta times was effectively disrupted in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the establishment of the feudal class to petty landlords, and a new invigoration of trade and commodity

size, the period also saw considerable urban growth, as new regional capitals and smaller urban settlements emerged throughout many regions in the subcontinent.

served to solemnize the fief. The vassal knelt before the lord and placed his hands between those of the lord as a sign of subordination.

settlers to the area. The settlers then became tenants subject to the landlord's rule.

The other challenges to the feudalist position were theoretical. It was pointed out that the evolution of feudal structures was attributed entirely to state action instead of class relations, as in Europe. The notion of a subject peasantry was also challenged. These arguments combined with an unimber of other critiques, which suggested that the entire theory of Indian feudalism had borrowed too heavily from European precedents, and had a tendency to force the Indian evidence. Such instorical case studies rather than using Marxist theoretical tools to deal with the Indian situation. Needless to say, these critiques and alternatives elicited a vigorous debate, which featured in the pages of history journals sporadically for nearly two decades. The discussions have led to the question of whether there can be variants of feudalism, and if so, what degree of variation in any practicular instantiation might risk rendering the concept so inclusive as to lose any discriminatory meaning. The debates took place in the concept which has been the emphasis on reading the evidence of the period as "productive" —mostly in criticizing the thesis of political fragmentation and urban decay—that is, inquiring into what gree wu in medieval India and the entire than under the evidence of the period as "productive" as productive in the concept so inclusive as to lose any discriminatory meaning. The debates took place in the concept so inclusive as to lose any discriminatory meaning. The debates took place in the concept so inclusive and the production of one of these elater approaches, which has been the emphasis on reading the thesis of political fragmentation and urban decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what gree we have a decay—that is, inquiring into what free we have a decay—that is, inq

The term is controversial and has been said to be overapplied by historians and social scientists. Feudalism was never a single monolithic system practiced by all societies in Europe. There was a great deal of variation across societies in the practice and rites of the feudal order in nations such as France, the German states, England,

Spain, and Russia. Although feudalism in Japan, India, China, and Africa had a few common elements, those systems differed significantly from the European systems of social, economic, and political organization. THE ORIGINS OF FEUDALISMFeudalism emerged as a form of social, economic, and political organization after the fall of the Roman Empire between 300 and 500 CE and especially after the death of the Holy Roman emperor Charlemagne in 814. The origins of feudalism are numerous and debated but tend to be identified as an intermixture of Germanic and Roman law as well as Catholic doctrine. However, its origins were as practical as they were legal or philosophical. Repeated invasions and attacks from the north and east had made the lands of the former Roman and Holy Roman empires insecure. New patterns of governance and security were required to protect crops, animals, and persons. The feudal system was one of hierarchy in which nobles, who were sovereign over the most valuable commodity of that time—land—ruled over peasants (serfs) who were tied permanently to the land. The system was social in that it divided the major means of production—land for agriculture—among the elite nobility; and political in that it created a hierarchical power structure than ran from kings and other high nobles down to middle and lower nobles and finally to peasants, who had limited or no social, economic, and political power. THE FEUDAL CONSTITUTIONThe feudal system was based on what later would be called a contract, or constitution, encompassing the obligations and allegiances that bound king to lord. The feudal contract consisted of homagium and investitures, in which a tenant an investiture, or title over the land, for a specific tenure in return for payments. Thus, it was a mutual relationship: The lord extended his protective services to his new vassal and his lands, and the tenant agreed to pay dues of wealth, food, arms, and military service to the lord. The lowest rung on the feudal ladder was occupied by the peasantry. Before the tenth and eleventh centuries most farmers held tenancy of their own land through contracts with regional lords or nobles. However, as invasion and attack became more significant and the costs of security increased, lords began making higher demands of their tenants. This forced more tenants into direct servitude as serfs: peasants tied to the land and in service to the lord for an extended and perhaps permanent period. Although slavery generally had disappeared from medieval Europe, the economy was dominated by labor-intensive agricultural production, and peasants were needed to perform those tasks. THE RISE AND FALL OF FEUDALISMThe feudal system expanded and became the dominant form of social, economic, and political organization in Europe because of both its success in providing security and stability and its promotion by the Catholic Church. The feudal order received strong support in the church and among the clergy, who saw its social and political hierarchy as a desirable form of governance and its economic organization as one of potential profit. The sovereignty and legitimacy of kings and nobles were tied closely to the Catholic Church, which thus was able to prosper by supporting and expanding the feudal order in Europe. The ascendancy of the church to great wealth and power coincided with the expansion of feudalism. Feudalism began to decline in parts of western Europe by the fourteenth century as a result of pressure from a number of interrelated events. The Renaissance (starting in the late fourteenth century), the Reformation (beginning in 1517), and the Industrial Revolution (beginning in the mid-1700s) led to significant philosophical, social, economic, and political transformation across western Europe. The Reformation and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) challenged and upended the Catholic Church's monopoly of spiritual and political authority, and the Industrial Revolution made the feudal agricultural order an anachronism. City-states and other feudal arrangements no longer were capable of providing social, economic, and political order and security in a more individualist and industrialized western Europe. The emergence of the modern state system based on nationality and the conceptions of popular and state sovereignty replaced that of the feudal state. The French Revolution of 1789 often is cited as supplying the death blow to the remnants of the ancient feudal regime. Although feudalism all but disappeared from western Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, it survived in eastern Europe and Russia, which were affected far less by the progressive influences of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution. Feudalism has remained a topic of debate and study in the social sciences. In his early works, Karl Marx (Marx and Engels 2006) argued that feudalism, as a mode of production, was a necessary condition of societies on their way to capitalism and eventually communism.

Some elements of feudal thought can be found in modern Catholic political doctrine and the principles of Christian democracy in many European societies and political parties. In addition, the feudal order has had long-standing social implications for class division, hierarchy, and identity in many European societies to the present day. Beyond Europe, feudalism has been widely used to describe systems of elite-peasant socioeconomic and political arrangements in China, India, Japan, and especially Latin America. In the latter, latifundia relationships between landlords and peasants established during Spanish colonization survived the independence of the Latin American states. While resembling the European model imported from Spain, the feudalism of Latin America was also characterized by racial divisions between the white Spanish elite and the Indian or mixed-race peasantry, as well as imported African slaves. This, as well as other differences, have led to these systems being described as "semi-feudal" or "proto-feudal." In conclusion, while feudalism has primarily been used in the European context, there have been numerous comparable systems in Latin America, East Asia, South Asia, and elsewhere, where the concept of feudalism may be applicable. SEE ALSO Agricultural Industry; French Revolution; Hierarchy; Landlords; Latifundia; Marx, Karl; Mode of Production; Monarchy Peasantry; Roman Catholic Church; Sovereignty; StratificationBIBLIOGRAPHYLaclau, Ernesto. 1977. Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism. London: New Left Books. Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels.

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of contractual relationships between the upper classes, designed to maintain control over land. Feudalism flourished between the tenth and thirteenth centuries in western Europe.

At its core, it was an agreement between a lord and a vassal. A person became a vassal by pledging political allegiance and providing military, political, and financial service to a lord.

A lord possessed complete sovereignty over land, or acted in the service of another sovereign, usually a king. If a lord acted in the service of a king, the lord was considered a vassal of the king. As part of the feudal agreement, the lord promised to protect the vassal and provided the vassal with a plot of land. This land could be passed on to the vassal's heirs, giving the vassal tenure over the land. The vassal was also vested with the power to lease the land to others for profit, a practice known as subinfeudation. The entire agreement was called a fiefdom. The feudal bond was thus a combination of two key elements: fealty, or an oath of allegiance and

pledge of service to the lord, and homage, or an acknowledgment by the lord of the vassal and made on mutual consent, and it fostered the allegiance necessary for royal control of distant lands. The bond between a lord and a vassal was made in a ceremony that

Immediately afterward, the lord raised the vassal to his feet and kissed him on the mouth to symbolize their social equality. The vassal. In the seventeenth century, more than three centuries after the death of this particular social practice, English scholars began to use the term feudalism to describe it. The word was derived by English scholars from foedum, the Latin form of fief. The meaning of feudalism has expanded since the seventeenth century, and it now commonly describes servitude and hierarchical oppression. However, feudalism is best understood as an initial stage in a social progression leading to private ownership of land and the creation of different estates, or interests in land. Before feudalism, the European population consisted only of wealthy nobility and poor peasants. Little incentive existed for personal loyalty to sovereign rulers. Land was owned outright by nobility, and those who held land for lords held it purely at the lords' will. Nevertheless, the feudal framework was preceded by similar systems, so its exact origin is disputed by scholars. Ancient Romans, and Germanic tribes in the eighth century, gave land to warriors, but unlike land grants under feudalism, these were not hereditary. In the early ninth century, control of Europe was largely under the rule of one man, Emperor Charlemagne (771-814). After Charlemagne to press for support in the late ninth century, especially in France. Lords acquiesced, realizing the importance of a faithful military. Military men, or knights, began to receive land, along with peasants for farmwork. Eventually, knights demanded that their estates be hereditary. Other persons in the professional service of royalty also began to demand and receive hereditary fiefs, and thus began the reign of feudalism. In 1066, William the Conqueror invaded England from France and spread the feudal framework across the land. The feudal framework across the land. The feudal status superior to that of peasants and were considered equal to lords in social status. They took leadership positions in their locality and also served as advisers for lords in feudal courts. The most common form being knight service. A vassal under knight service was obliged to defend the fief from invasion and fight for a specified number of days in an offensive war. In wartime, knight service, some vassals were given socage, or tenure in exchange for the performance of a variety of duties. These duties were usually agricultural, but they could take on other forms, such as personal attendance to the lord. Other vassals were given scutage, in which the vassal agreed to pay money in lieu of military service. Priests received still other forms of tenure in exchange for their religious services. A lord also enjoyed incidental benefits and rights in connection with a fief. For example, when a vassal died, the lord was entitled to a large sum of money from the vassal's heirs. If the heir came of age. A lord also had the right to reject the marriage of an heiress to a fief if he did not want the husband as his vassal. This kind of family involvement by the lord made the feudal relationship intimate and complex. The relationship between a lord and a vassal depended on mutual respect. If the vassal in feudal court to deprive him of his fief. At the same time, the lord was expected to treat the vassal with dignity, and to refrain from making unjust demands on the vassal. If the lord abused the vassal could break faith with the lord and offer his services to another lord, preferably one who could protect the vassal against the wrath of the defied lord. Predictably, the relationship between lord and vassal became a struggle for a reduction in the services required by the fief. Lords, as vassals of the king, joined their own vassals in revolt against the high cost of the feudal arrangement. In England, this struggle culminated in the magna charta, a constitutional document sealed by King John (1199-1216) in 1215 that signaled the beginning of the end for feudalism. The Magna Charta, forced on King John by his lords, contained 38 chapters outlining demands for liberty from the Crown, including limitations on the rights of the Crown over land. Other circumstances also contributed to the decline of feudalism. As time passed, the power of organized religious leaders pressed for freedom from their service to lords and kings. At the same time, the development of an economic wealth apart from land led to the rise of a bourgeoisie, or middle class. The middle class established independent cities in Europe, which funded their military with taxes, not land-based feudal bonds. Royal sovereigns and cities began to establish

Under it, peasants worked and lived on a lord's land, called a manor. The peasants could not inherit the land, and the lord owed them nothing beyond protection and maintenance. Feudalism should also be distinguished from the general brutality and oppression of medieval Europe. The popular understanding of feudalism of the medieval Europe. The popular understanding of feudalism of the period (500–1500) with feudalism because feudalism was a predominant social framework for much of the period. However, feudalism was a relatively civil arrangement in an especially vicious time and place in history. The relationship of a vassal to a lord was servile, but it was also based on mutual respect, and feudalism stands as the first systematic, voluntary sale of inheritable land. For example, a rental agreement is made between a landlord and a tenant, whose business relatively evering and a vassal. State property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a vassal, and like the old feudal lords, state governments may take property taxes on landowner dies with no will or heirs. further readingsAmt, Emilie, ed. 2000. Medieval lords, state governments may take property taxes on landowner dies with no will or heirs. further readingsAmt, Emilie, ed. 2000. Medieval lords, state governments may take property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a vassal, and like the old feudal lords, state governments may take property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a lord at a vassal. State property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a lord and a vassal. State property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a lord and a vassal. State property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a lord and a vassal state property taxes on landowners resemble the services required of a lord at landowners resemble the services required of a lord at landowners resemble the services required of a lord at landowners resemble the services required of a lord at landown

parliamentary governments that made laws to replace the various rules attached to the feudal bond, and feudal courts lost jurisdiction to royal or municipal courts. By the fourteenth century, the peculiar arrangement known as feudalism was

way, as a general method of political organization, and one which can therefore be identified in other times and places (such as Tokugawa Japan). The term to refer to the type of society from whence capitalism has described in the founders of sociology. Although the founders typically used the term to refer to the type of society from whence capitalism have described in this way entered the vocabularies of both Karl Marx and Max Webern. There have been and there remain disputes about how the concept of feudalism should be formulated. All of the specifically sociological conceptualizations are nomothetic (generalizing) in character. The best-known ideographic (individualizing) formulation is that arrived at by the French historian Marc Bloch in his Feudal Society (1961).

Bloch's account deserves some attention, not only because it has been highly influential in itself, but also because the contrast between it has been highly influential in hist arrived and humanist in Louis Althouser's senses of these terms. The consequences of these premisses are apparent in his formulation of the core

relation of feudalism-vassalage. In the course of a highly detailed study of France during the Middle Ages, he defines vassalage as 'the warrior ideal', or a contract of mutual benefit freely entered into 'by two living men confronting each other'. From this relationship all the other characteristics of feudal societies follow: hereditary succession; enfeoffment (the granting of land by lords to their vassals); the fragmentation of authority; and the existence of a confinable and taxable but otherwise self-disciplining peasantry. What inevitably (but regrettably in Bloch's view) followed from the institutionalization of vassalage, was the tarnishing of 'the purity of the (original) obligation', and the

gradual dissolution of the way of life constructed around it.Almost by definition, no properly sociological approach to social phenomena is likely to start from the assumption that each society must be considered separately and as wholly unique, and this certainly has proved to be the case in the literature relating to feudalism in History, 1956), alarge name of sor offer the concepts upon of formulation, respectively. Where the mode of formulation is empiricist, as in the case of the contributors to the collection edited by Joseph Strayer and Rushton Coulborn (Feudalism in History, 1956), a large number of cases of possible feudalisms are compared and any shared characteristics are then formed into a generalization.

Interestingly, in this case the generalization is to all intents and purposes the same as that produced by Bloch, minus the romanticism and, by the same token, any means of grasping the internal dynamics of the system. Because it is not a straightforward empirical generalization Weber's ideal type of feudalism does not share this weakness. Although it is nowhere explicitly formulated, this ideal-type may be extracted relatively easily from the discussions of feudal social relations to be found in Weber's Economy and Society (1923) and General Economic History (1923).

In Weberian terms, feudalism represented an instance of the routinization of charisma, in the context of a traditional mode of domination. Thus, power was organized in a patrimonial manner, underpinned by a system of exploitation whereby serfs (unfree peasants) were forced, in exchange for the right to work land, to pay varying and often multiple forms of rent (in labour, cash, or kind) to their lords. According to Weber it was the last of these, the struggles over rent, that gave the system its internal dynamic. There are striking similarities between the two concepts, as well as in the reasoning used in their support. Most importantly, both theorists explain why exploitation took Precapitality by a ground that the lords have, or at

By the end of the 1930s, however, it became the entrenched dogma in the Soviet Union that Russia had experienced a feudal period. Post-Soviet Russian historians have been unable to rid themselves of this erroneous interpretation of their own history, in spite of Western arguments to the contrastic mode and until after World (her product) and that most of the population lives in the contrastic mode and that most of the population lives in the contrastic mode and that most of the population lives in the contrastic mode and that most of the population lives in the contrastic mode and that most of the predominance of a natural, i.e., nonmarket, economy; (5) the presence of serfdom. Presumably all of these criteria, not just one or two, should be present for there to be feudalism in a locality. The first historian to posit the existence of feudalism in Russia was Nikolai Pavlov-Silvansky (1869-1908), who based his theory primarily on the political fragmentation of Russia from the collapse of the Kievan Russian state in 1132 to the consolidation of Russia by Moscow by the early sixteenth century. The basic problem with that thesis is that there was no serfdom until the 1450s. Moreover, there were no fiefs. In 1912 Lenin defined feudalism as "land ownership to det historian to posit some problem with that thesis is that there was no serfdom until the 1450s. Moreover, there were no fiefs. In 1912 Lenin defined feudalism as "land ownership and the privileges of lords over serfs." Mikhail Pokrovsky (1868-1932) worked out a "Soviet Marxist" understanding of Russian feudalism and traced its origin and major cause (large landownership) to the thirteenth century. "Feudalism: (3) imperialism: (5) imperialism: (5) imperialism: (5) imperialism: (6) socialism: (7) communism. The fact that Russia in reality never experienced a few years later in the Great Purges), with the claim that Russia had bypassed the slave-owning stage (as in Greece and Rome). This "problem" was worked out in the later 1930s, and that remained the official

As a result, nearly all of Russian and Ukrainian history was deemed feudal and succeeded by "capitalism" with the freeing of the serfs from seignorial control in 1861. See also: marxism; peasantry; slaverybibliographyHellie, Richard. (1971). Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Vernadsky, George. (1939). "Feudalism in Russia." Speculum 14:302-323. Richard Hellie views updated May 29 2018FEUDALISM. The origins of European feudalism are in eighth-century France, where estates were granted in exchange for military service. In England, feudalism evolved into the manorial system, in which a bound peasantry was subject to the rule of landlords. English feudalism was a system of rights and duties binding an upper class (nobility) in loyalty and responsibility to a king or lord in exchange for their labor, peasants received the protection and rule of the landowner. This system benefited the nobility, as they essentially held public power privately, and the monarchy, to whom the moles were bound in both civil and military capacities. The peasant class functioned as a slave labor (fiefs) worked by peasants received the monarchy, to whom the monarchy to whom the monarc

The system did not thrive, however, and eventually the English took over the Dutch colonies. Proprietary colonies originally resembled the European feudal system only in part. New settlers were a mix of self-sufficient farmers who did not own their land and wealthy planters who brought serfs with them. These settlers brought feudalistic customs that strongly influenced the society, culture, and economy developing in the southern colonies, which, in true feudal style, were organized around a mercantile economy while the northern colonies guickly began to rely on slavery. Despite the apparent conflict with America's emerging democracy, feudal elements such as local rule, a class system dictated by social customs, and an economy based on forced labor survived in the Fourteenth American Revolution (1775–1783). Slavery continued to be a linchpin of the U.S. economy until the Fourteenth American Revolution (1775–1783). Slavery continued to be a linchpin of the U.S. economy until the Fourteenth American Revolution (1775–1783).

which allowed the lords to extract surplus product from the serfs. views updated May 18 2018According to the nearly unanimous consensus of Western scholars, and most Soviet scholars until the mid-to late-1930s, feudalism never appeared in Russia.

America's emerging democracy, feudal elements such as local rule, a class system dictated by social customs, and an economy based on forced labor survived in the Southern colonies slowly industrialized. Feudalism depends on plentiful free labor, and the southern colonies slowly industrialized. Feudalism depends on plentiful free labor, and the southern colonies slowly industrialized. Feudalism the fourteenth colonies slowly industrialized. Feudalism the southern colonies slowly industrialized. Feudali

lanner, Lou... Villein , villein (vil'an) [O.Fr.,=village dweller], peasant under the manorial system of medieval Western Europe.

The term applies especially to serfs in Engl... Serfdom is fee person, but is not a slave. While the slave is an object of... House of Lords, House of Lord

period, from the mid-8th to the early 9th century, the Carolingian rulers, especially Pippin (reigned 751-768) and Charlemagne (reigned 751-768) and Charlemagne (reigned 768/771-814), had remarkable success in creating and maintaining a relatively unified empire. Before and afterward, however, political units were fragmented and political authority diffused. The mightier of the

later Carolingians attempted to regulate local magnates and enlist them in their service, but the power of local elites was never effaced. In the absence of forceful kings and emperors, local lords expanded the territory subject to them and intensified their control over the people living there. In many areas the term feudum, as well as the terms beneficium and casamentum, came to be used to describe a form of property holding. The holdings these terms denoted have often been considered essentially dependent tenures, over which their holders' rights were notably limited. As the words were used in documents of the period, however, the characteristics of the holdings to which they were applied are difficult to distinguish from those of tenures designated by such words as allodium, which has generally been translated as "freehold property." Charles IIFiefs still existed in the 17th century, when the fief was a piece of property, usually land, that was developed.

At that time, the fief was a piece of property, usually land, that was taken was called homage (from the Latin, homo; "man"). These institutions survived in England until they were abolished by Parliament in 1645 and, after the Restoration, by Charles II in 1660. Until their eradication by the National Assembly between 1789 and 1793, they had considerable importance in France, where they were employed to create and reinforce familial and social bonds. Their pervasiveness made students of the past eager to understand how they had come into being. Similarities of terminology and practice found in documents surviving from the Middle Ages—especially the libri feudorum ("Book of Fiefs"), an Italian compilation of customs relating to property holding, which was made in the 12th century and incorporated into Roman law—led historians and lawyers to search for the origins of contemporary feudal institutions in the Middle Ages. Headed the rendering of services by local lords' bestowen la pervalence of bonds between lords' bestowen la pervalence of bonds between the

Learned legal commentaries on the laws governing the property called "fiefs" also affected interpretation of the sources. These commentaries, produced since the 13th century, focused on legal theory and on rules derived from actual disputes and hypothetical cases. They did not include (nor were they intended to provide) dispassionate analysis of historical development.

Legal commentators in the 16th century had prepared the way for the elaboration of the feudal construct by formulating the idea, loosely derived from the Libri feudorum, of a single feudal law, which they presented as being spread throughout Europe during the early Middle Ages. The terms feudalism and feudal system enabled historians to deal summarily with a long span of European history whose complexities were—and remain—confusing.

The Roman Empire and the various emperors' accomplishments provided a key to understanding Roman history, and the reemergence of states and governmental practices can be presented as antecedents of modern nations and institutions. The feudal construct neatly filled the gap between the 5th and the 12th century. Although Charlemagne may seem an anomaly in this evolution, he was presented as "sowing the seeds" from which feudalism emerged. A variety of Roman, barbarian, and Carolingian institutions were considered antecedents of feudal

practices: Roman lordship and clientage, barbarian war chiefdoms and bands, grants of lands to soldiers and to officeholders, and oaths of loyalty and fidelity. In the 17th century, as later, the high point of feudalism was located in the 11th century.

Later rulers who adopted and adapted feudal institutions to increase their power were labeled "feudal" and their governments called "feudal monarchies." Despite the survival of institutions and practices associated with the medieval feudal system as declining in importance in the 17th century, historians of that time presented medieval feudal system as declining in importance in the 14th and 15th centuries. This period was later dubbed an age of "bastard feudalism" because of the use of said dependents. Those who formulated the contracts between lords and dependents. Those who formulated the contracts between lords and virtue contracts of the loud institutions were universal and winter the universe associated with the medieval Europe for feudal institutions were universal and virtue contracts of the loud institutions. Adopting a similar position, Voltaire (1694–1727). H

Historians using the feudal model for comparative purposes emphasized those characteristics which resemble or seem to resemble western feudal practices and neglected other, dissimilar aspects, some of which were uniquely significant in shaping the evolution of the areas in question. For Westerners, the use of the feudal model necessarily created a deceptive sense of familiarity with societies that are different from their own.