

ACTIVITY 14.1

Feudalism: What Is It and Why Did It Emerge?

Beginning in the late 700s C.E., large numbers of invaders raided villages throughout Europe. This resulted in a collapse of law and order, a decline in trade, and collapse of local economies. To counter these threats, Frankish kings needed warriors. They created a system of military and political relationships called feudalism.

Feudalism was the medieval model of government. Paying for troops was impossible because society at this time lacked a money system. Without a money system, collecting taxes was difficult. The kings offered land or estates to warriors, also called knights or lords, in exchange for military service. They agreed to 40 days of service each year in times of peace and more days in times of war.

The land given to knights or lords came with peasant farmers, known as serfs. The serfs provided the lords or knights with labor to produce food and other goods they needed to maintain their lifestyles. The knights and lords were in charge of maintaining order, protection, and enforcing rules and laws on their estates or manors. In exchange, serfs were given protected land to grow crops to support their families. This economic arrangement was known as the manorial system.

ACTIVITY 14.2

Cloze Activity

Use the words in the box to complete the sentences below.

land	strips of land	markets	what	manorial	
50%	what	economic system	lord	two-field crop rotation	
for whom	communal	3-4 days	when	how	fee

In Medieval Europe, the economic system was the _____ system.

The institutional framework a society uses to answer the basic economic questions is called an _____.

The three economic questions every society must answer are _____ to produce, _____ to produce, and _____ to produce.

Serfs were bound to the _____ and worked for the lord _____ per week. Goods produced during this time belonged to the _____.

Serfs had _____ scattered across the manor on which to grow food for their family.

Serfs of a manor all had to agree on _____ and _____ to harvest. This was called _____ farming.

Leaving half of the fields fallow each year to preserve soil fertility was called _____.

The serfs were required to produce goods and services for the lord because there were few _____.

Serfs were required to grind their grain at the lord's mill and bake bread in his ovens for a _____.

Fees collected by the lord could be as high as _____ of the goods a serf produced.

ACTIVITY 14.3

Innovations and Incentives

Heavy-Wheeled Plow

This iron plow allowed the peasants to turn the heavy soil of northwestern Europe. Although expensive, lords invested in this capital good because it resulted in more fields being tilled and increased output per worker.

Draft Animals

Teams of two to four oxen were used to pull the heavy-wheeled plows. The invention of the horse collar and the practice of using horseshoes to protect horses' hoofs made it possible to use horses as draft animals. Horses were more expensive but were also stronger and faster than oxen. Draft animals made it possible to till more fields and increase output per worker.

Watermill

The lords provided watermills. In 1086, England had 6,082 mills. The watermill meant the women didn't have to mill grain by hand, and their labor could be used for other purposes. Eventually, mills were used to saw lumber and hammer metals.

ACTIVITY 14.3, CONTINUED

Three-Field Rotation

The two-field rotation method was a method in which half the land was planted each year and the other half was not used. The next year, farmers planted the fields that had lain fallow. If 600 fertile acres were available, 300 acres each year were not used. Under *three-field rotation*, the land was divided into three parts. Two fields were planted and the third was left unused. Every third year, a field would “rest” unplanted. If 600 fertile acres were available, 400 acres could be planted and harvested each year. In addition, the three-field system usually involved a crop that enriched the soil, e.g., peas, beans, and especially clover, which not only enriched the soil but also was a good forage crop for work animals.

Lord/Peasant Cooperation

To encourage peasants to move to the farther reaches of the manor and cultivate wasteland, lords provided special privileges, capital (tools and equipment) and incentives. In return for paying a small rent, peasants gained control over their land as well as rights that resulted in more personal freedom.