**RS Notes: Feudalism**

The Invaders

* The Treaty of Verdun divided the Carolingian Empire into three parts
	+ One for each of Charlemagne’s grandsons
		- With no strong central government, this allowed invaders to seize lands.
	+ **Vikings**- attacked present-day Britain, France, Germany, Iceland
		- Superb shipbuilders, warriors, and sailors
		- The Franks tried to assimilate the Vikings by making them Christian
			* One ruler gave them land that became known as Normandy

Feudalism

* Because of the invaders, people began to look to local landed aristocrats, or nobles, for protection
	+ This led to **feudalism**
		- Similar systems were found in Japan and among the Aztec
		- At the heart of feudalism is the idea of **vassalage**
			* A man who served a lord militarily was known as a **vassal**
		- Many vassals were knights- heavily armored cavalry
			* They became the backbone of the medieval aristocracy
		- **Feudal contract**- rules that determined the relationship between lord and vassal
* At the top of feudal society was the king
	+ He controlled all of the land in the kingdom
* Nobles were granted large **fiefs** by the king
	+ They would swear an oath of loyalty
	+ Provide troops for the king
* **Knights** were considered lower nobles
	+ They would swear an oath of loyalty to their lord
	+ Provide military service
	+ To stay ready they would compete in **tournaments**
		- The joust became the main attraction
	+ Were to uphold an ideal of civilized behavior, known as **chivalry**
	+ Had to be noble to become a knight
		- Many started as squires around 14-15 years of age
* Peasants were dependent on the lord and lived on the manor or fief
	+ There were two kinds:
		- **Serfs**- they could not leave the fief
			* Worked without getting paid
			* Owed the lord part of their harvest
		- **Freemen**- they could leave
			* They worked on the lord’s land and paid rent
			* They kept some of their harvest
			* Paid a percentage to the Church- **tithe**
	+ Life as a peasant was very difficult
		- Work was hard, they used rudimentary tools, illnesses were often fatal, and disasters (droughts or floods) destroyed lives and harvests

Economics

* The number of people almost doubled from 38 m to 75 m in Europe
	+ Increased stability and a larger food supply
		- There was a climate change
		- Moved from a two-field to a three-field system
			* Able to produce more food
			* One field for fall harvest, one for spring harvest, and one left untouched
		- New technologies, like the *carruca* (iron plowshare), allowed farmers to more easily harvest crops

The Manor

* **Manors** were self-sufficient
	+ Trade and transportation was almost non-existent
	+ Own court of law (headed by the lord)
	+ All food, clothing, etc. was produced on the manor
* Manors were comprised of a manor house (where the lord lived), cultivated lands, woodlands (to hunt), pastures (for cattle), fields, a village, a church, a priests house, a mill (used to grind grains into flower, and an oven.
	+ Ideally were located along a stream or river to provide power for the mill.