

Western Europe 500 – 1000 CE



AP WORLD HISTORY NOTES
CHAPTER 10

Political Life in Western Europe



- Western Europe = now a series of regional kingdoms instead of one united empire
- Many Germanic rulers were influenced by and embraced Roman culture
- Many leaders wanted to recreate that unity that existed with the Roman Empire

Charlemagne



- Ruled the Carolingian Empire from 768 to 814 CE
- Set up an imperial bureaucracy
- Standardized weights and measures
- Acted like an old imperial ruler
- Christmas Day of 800 CE = he was crowned the “new Roman emperor” by the Pope



Charlemagne



- His empire was divided among his sons after his death
- Attempt at unity = unsuccessful



Map 10.2 Western Europe in the Ninth Century
Chapter 10, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, First Edition
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Otto I of Saxony



- Created the Holy Roman Empire (mostly Germany and its surrounding areas)
- Ruled from 936 to 973
- Tried to regain unity in Western Europe just like Charlemagne
- Also received title of emperor from the Pope
- Unsuccessful ☹️

Medieval Europe: Periodization



Early Middle Ages: 500 - 1000

High Middle Ages: 1000 - 1250

Late Middle Ages: 1250 - 1500

A New Political System



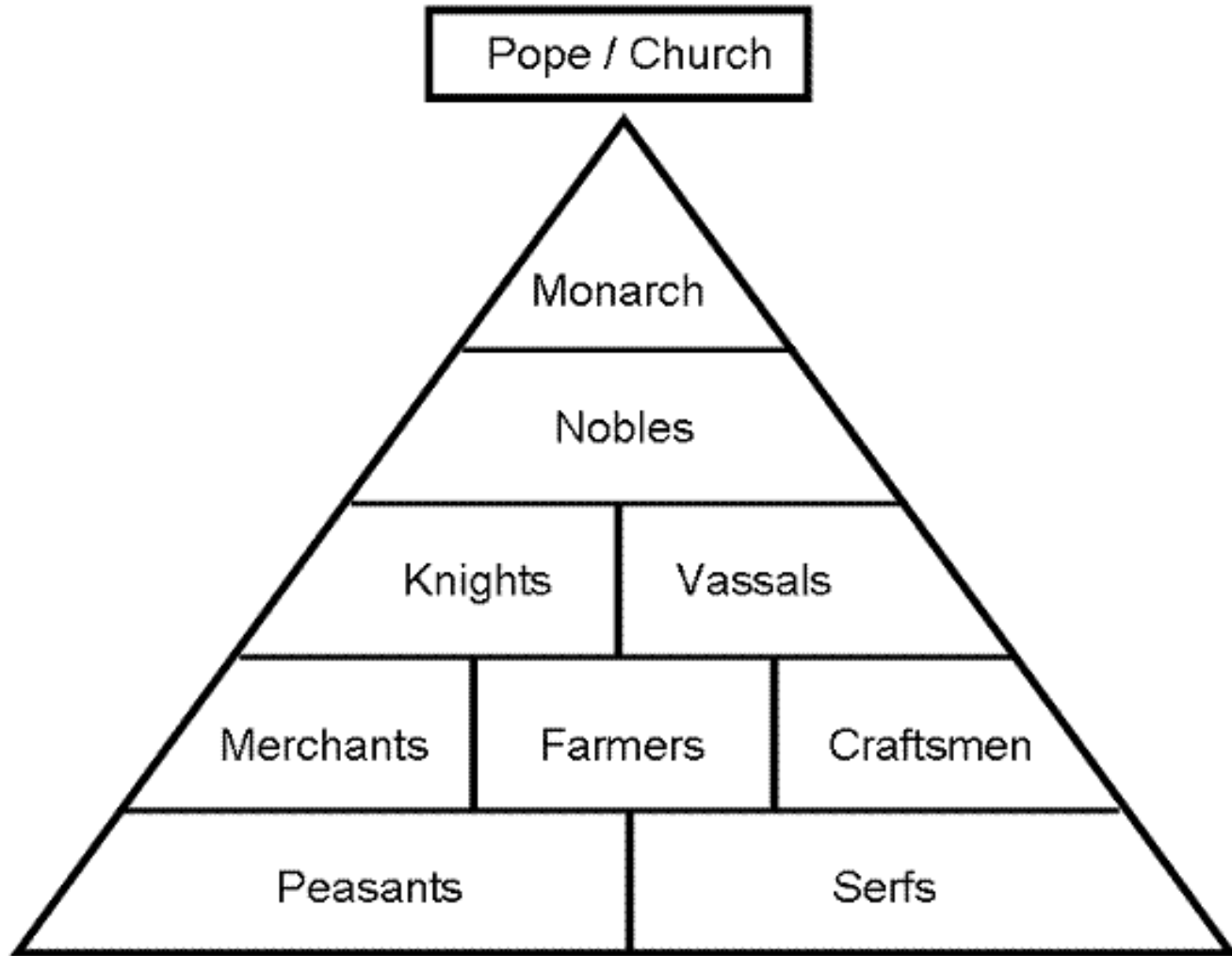
- These new kingdoms = created a highly fragmented and decentralized society
 - Europe full of thousands of independent and isolated manors (estates)
- Gave rise to a new system in Europe = **feudalism = a political, economic, and social system based on loyalty and military service**

A New Political System



- Power = exercised by monarchs and elite landowning lords
- Lesser lords and knights swore allegiance to greater lords and kings
 - Lesser lords = vassals = people who entered into a mutual obligation to a higher lord or monarch
 - Gave them: military protection and support
 - In return they got: land or fiefs
 - Fiefs = estates that came with serfs to work the land

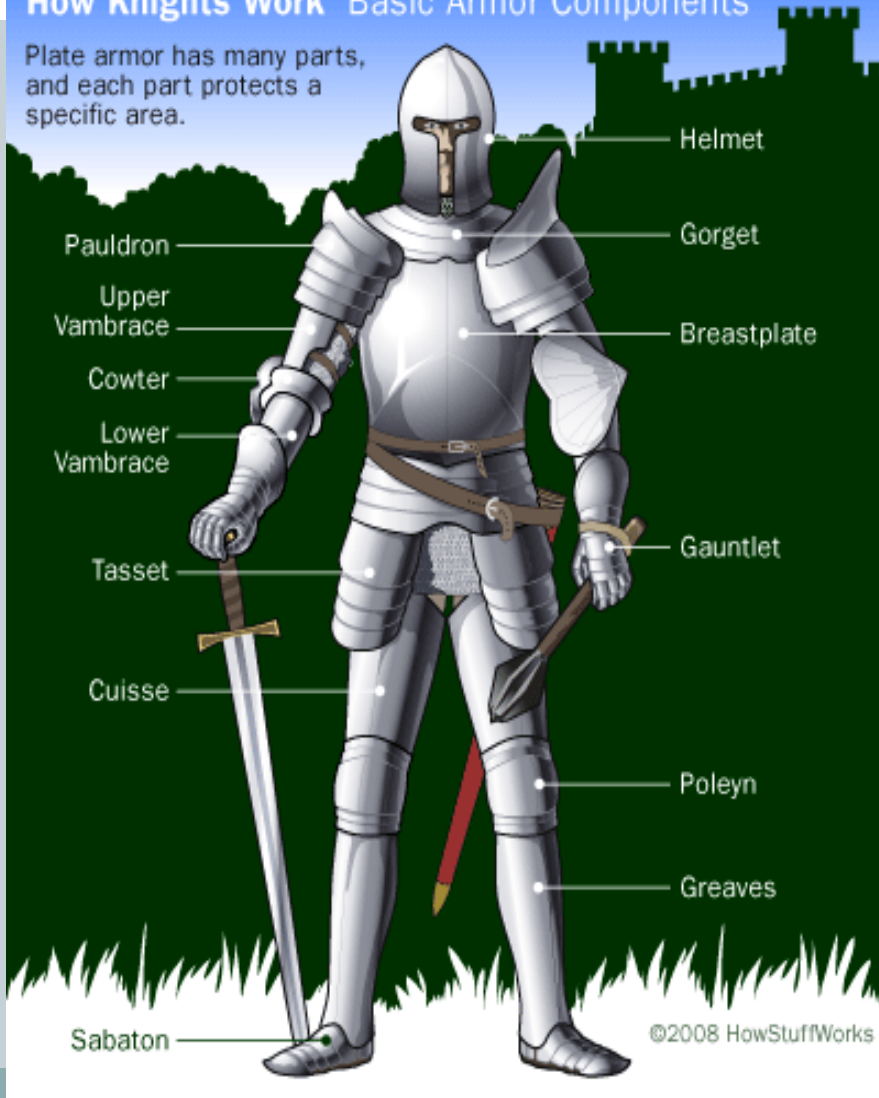
Feudalism



Medieval Knights

How Knights Work Basic Armor Components

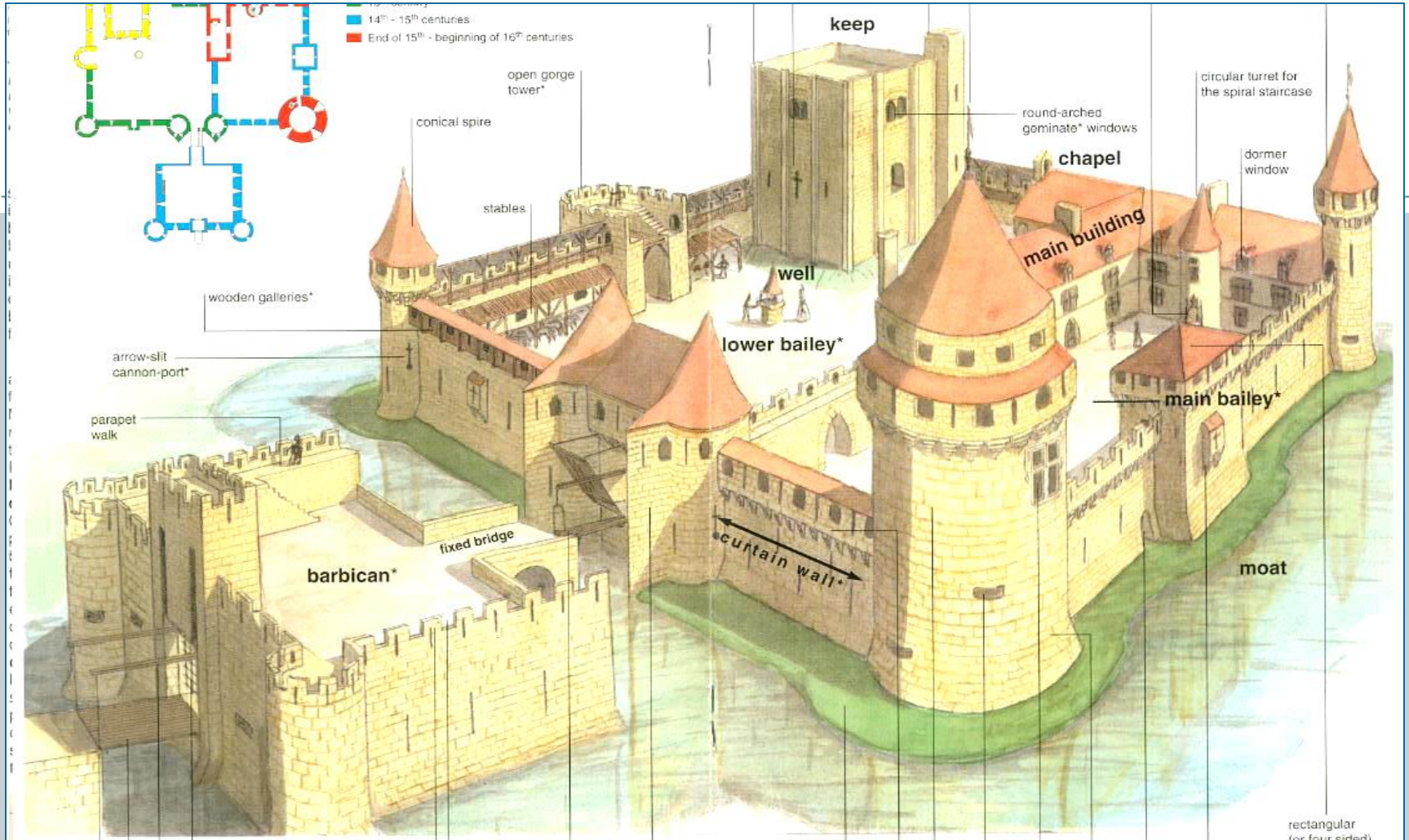
Plate armor has many parts, and each part protects a specific area.



A Medieval Castle



Parts of a Medieval Castle



Life of the Nobility



- Nobility consisted of lords, ladies, and knights
- A lord had almost total authority over his fief
- A lady had few, if any, rights
- For entertainment, **tournaments** were held
 - Mock battles between knights

Life of the Nobility



- Other entertainment = archery, big dinners, minstrels, and singers

Becoming a Knight...



- Boys became knights by:
 - Starting as a **page** (assistant) to the lord at age 7
 - At 15, he became a **squire** who assisted a knight
 - Once he proved himself in battle, he was knighted in a ceremony



Becoming a Knight...



- Knights' behavior was governed by a code of **chivalry**
 - This became the basis for good manners in western society



The Manorial System



- Peasants lived on & worked the lord's land
- This agricultural economic system is known as **manorialism**
- In return for the lord's protection, the peasants provided services for the lord
 - Farming, herding, weapon making, etc.
- Most peasants were **serfs** = **people who couldn't leave the lord's manor without permission**

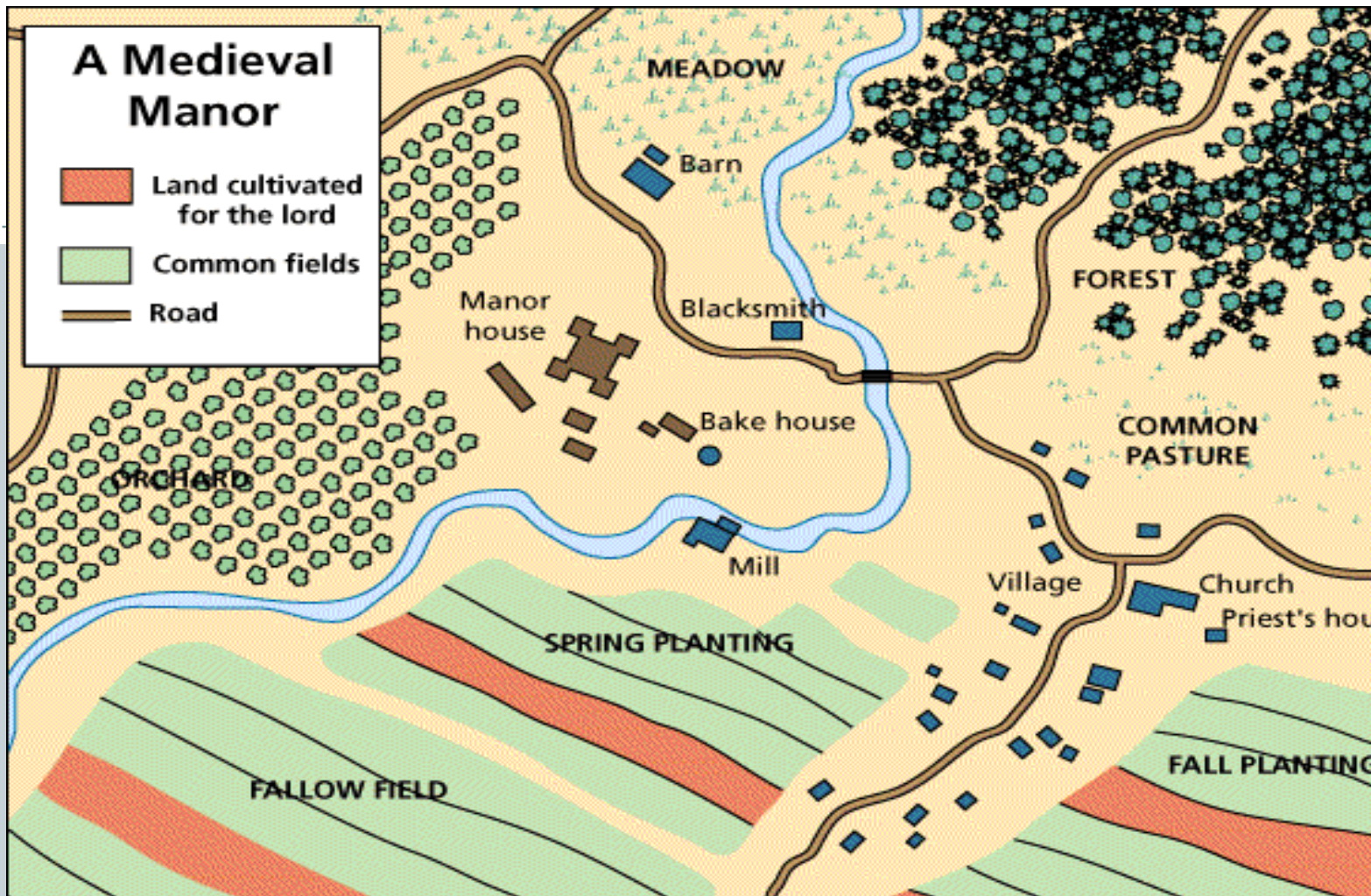
Serfs vs. Slaves



- Serfs = tied to the land; not the personal property of a specific person
- Slaves = belong to their master



The Medieval Manor



Christianity of Western Europe



- Roman Catholicism
- How did it spread throughout Western Europe?
 - Church leaders and missionaries used a “top-down” strategy
 - Converted people at the top (kings and higher lords) first → then they would persuade those below them to convert as well
 - Many kings & lords chose to convert because: they liked the Church’s connection to the “civilized” and “grand” Roman Empire

Christianity of Western Europe



- Church authorities also had a lot of political power
- They worked together with kings, nobles, and knights
 - Rulers gave the Church: protection and support of the religion
 - The Church gave the rulers: religious legitimacy for their power (“It is the will of the Creator...”)
- Sometimes they competed for power as well



A Church Leader

The Investiture Conflict



- Conflict over: who should appoint bishops and the pope himself
- The Church? Or kings and emperors?
- Compromise = the Church can select its own officials and rulers retain an informal and symbolic role in the process