

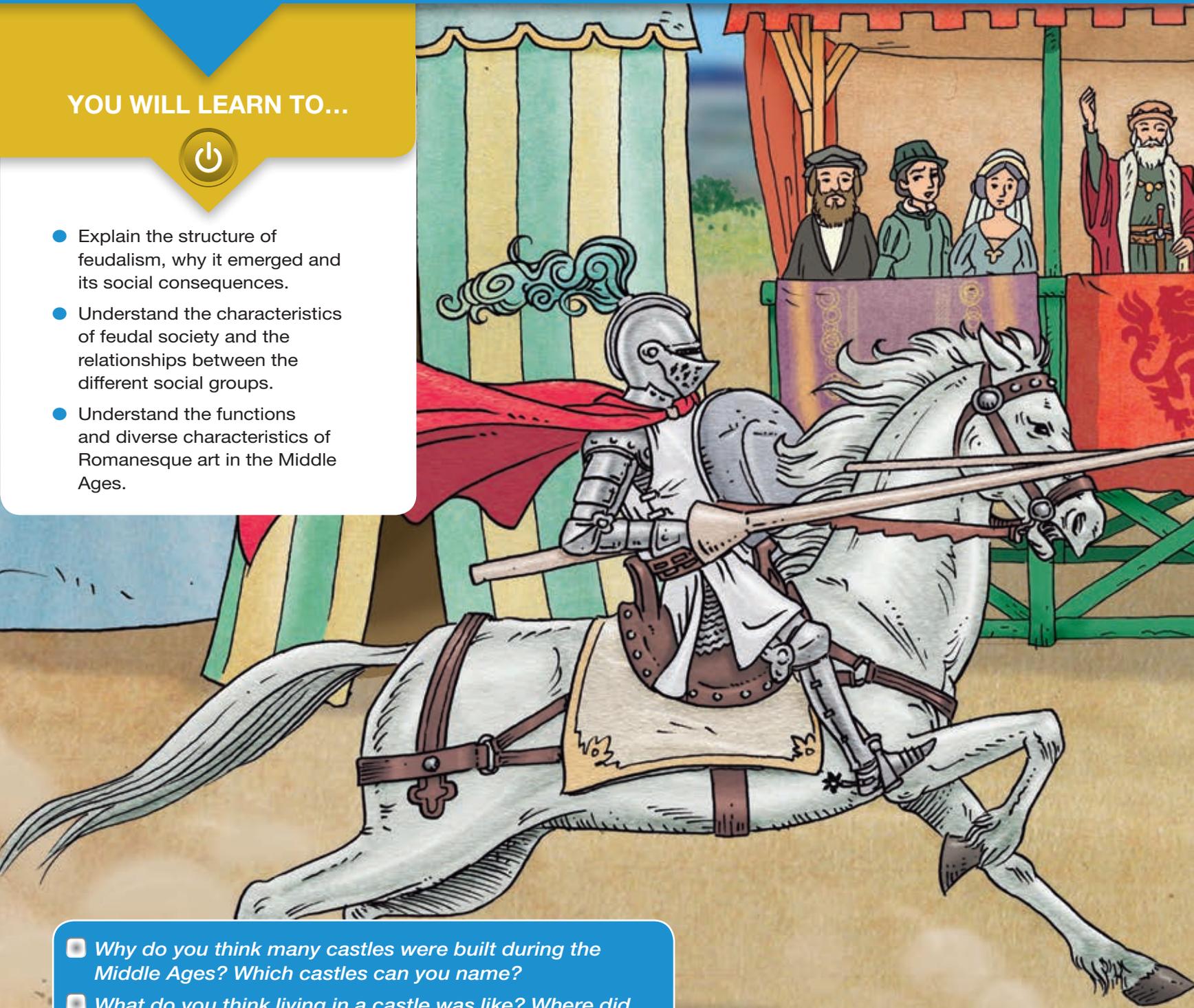
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THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES AND FEUDALISM

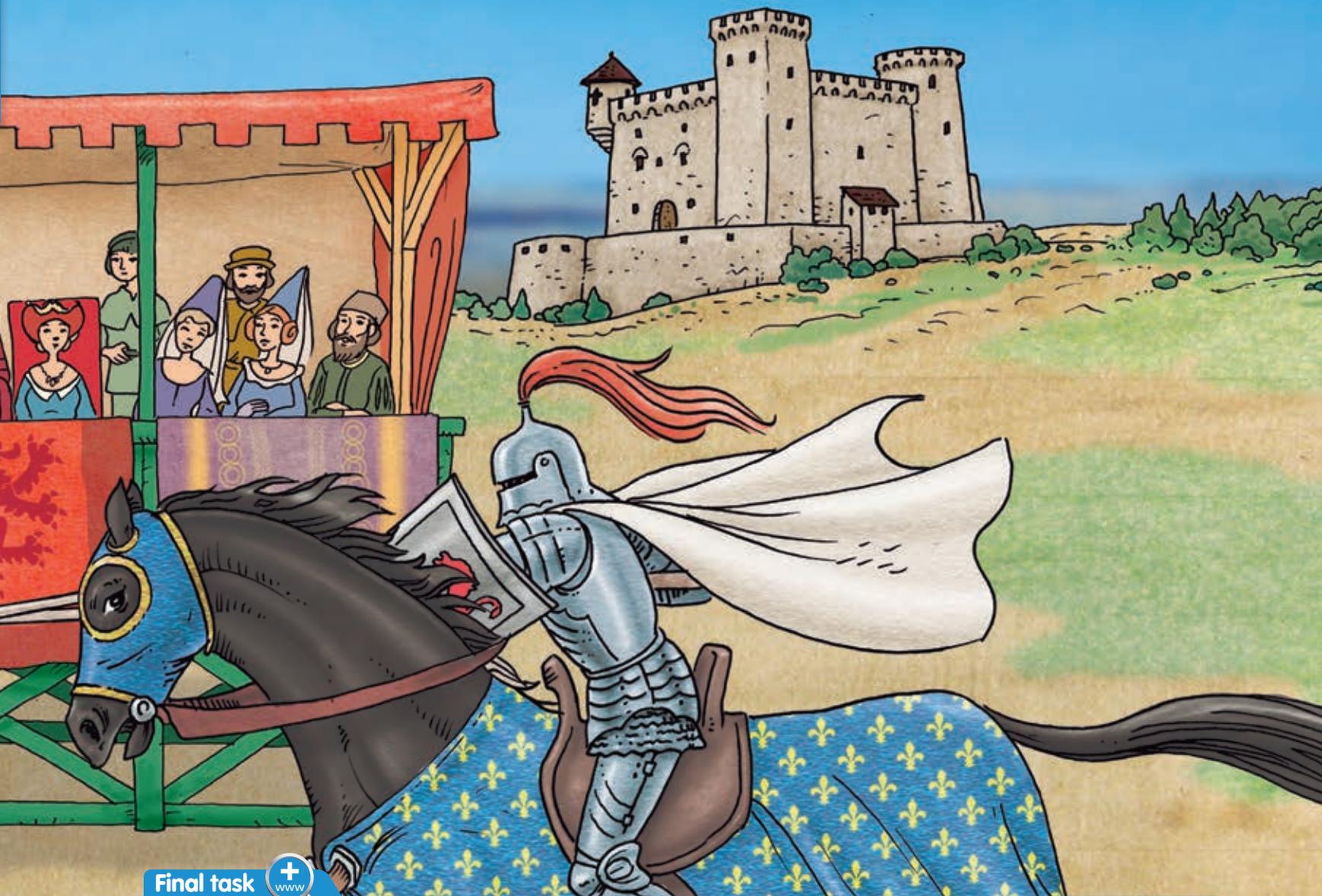
YOU WILL LEARN TO...



- Explain the structure of feudalism, why it emerged and its social consequences.
- Understand the characteristics of feudal society and the relationships between the different social groups.
- Understand the functions and diverse characteristics of Romanesque art in the Middle Ages.



- Why do you think many castles were built during the Middle Ages? Which castles can you name?
- What do you think living in a castle was like? Where did the inhabitants obtain their food from? Who defended the castle against attacks?
- Who became Medieval knights? What did knights do?



Final task



Life in a fiefdom

As you can imagine, people's lives in the Middle Ages were very different from ours nowadays. There was no electricity, no television and there were no mobile phones. Many things that form part of our everyday lives did not exist at that time.

If you had lived in the Middle Ages, what do you think your profession would have been? What would it have been like to be a knight, serf or lord? In this task, you will discover how people lived in the Middle Ages by assuming one of these roles.



1. THE POLITICAL SITUATION FROM THE 11TH TO THE 13TH CENTURY

1.1. The Muslim world

The Muslim caliphate was divided due to internal fighting and civil wars. The **Turks**, who were from Central Asia and had converted to Islam, became the most powerful group. They took control of the central and eastern zone of the Muslim world and created various independent states, which were governed by a **sultan** (king). The most important state was the **Seljuk Sultanate**, which eventually spanned the present-day countries of Iraq, Iran, Arabia and Syria. New caliphates were also created in the western zone of the Muslim world: the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt and the Almoravid Caliphate in North Africa.

From the 10th to the 13th century, the Muslims suffered attacks from the Christians (the crusades), and in the 13th century their lands were invaded by the Mongols.

1.2. The Christian world

In **Eastern Europe**, the **Byzantine Empire** survived with difficulty due to attacks from the Turks. In the 13th century, crusaders crossed its lands to fight against the Muslims. In the same century, the **Slavic kingdoms** to the north of the Byzantine Empire were invaded by the Mongols.

In **Western Europe**, the Carolingian Empire was divided up and many duchies, marches and counties became independent. In the year 962 A.D., the Carolingian Empire became the **Holy Roman Empire**, although it covered less territory. The emperor held less power than the Carolingian kings had had in the past. He was chosen by election and the nobles voted for a new candidate when their emperor died.

England was invaded by the Normans, descendants of the Vikings, who occupied the Duchy of Normandy, an area in the north of the Frankish Kingdom. This resulted in the union of England and part of France.

The **Christian kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula** continued their territorial expansion, reducing the size of al-Andalus.

- Alfonso I of Aragón conquered **Zaragoza** in 1118 and turned it into the capital of his kingdom.
- In the year 1139, Count Afonso I declared himself King of **Portugal**, turning it into a kingdom that was independent of León. Years later, he conquered Lisbon.
- In the mid 13th century, the Almoravids were replaced by another Berber dynasty, the **Almohads**, who were even stricter regarding religious matters. They formed their own empire, which included al-Andalus and North Africa. **Sevilla** became their capital on the Iberian Peninsula.

The Christians were concerned about the impact this new empire might have. Therefore a coalition was formed between Castilla, Navarra and Aragón, which also counted on the aid of the crusaders who had arrived from other European countries. The Christians, led by Alfonso VIII, King of Castilla, confronted the Almohad army and defeated them at the **Battle of Navas de Tolosa** (1212). This was the last great battle between Christians and Muslims on the peninsula.



The Torre de Oro, the ancient watchtower built by the Almohads in Sevilla



Photo of the world map from the Saint-Sever Beatus (1050–1060)

1.3. The rest of the world

■ Africa

As a result of trading activities, numerous kingdoms prospered in the Sahel zone (south of the Sahara Desert): **Ghana**, **Hausa**, **Ethiopia** and later, **Kanem** and **Mali**. Many of their inhabitants converted to Islam and their lands were incorporated into the Muslim trade routes.

■ Asia

The **Mongols** inhabited Central Asia. In the 13th century, they invaded China, the Muslim caliphate and Eastern Europe. They created a vast empire, which extended from the Mediterranean to the Pacific Ocean. In East Asia, the great **Chinese Empire** remained strong. In South Asia, there were various small kingdoms in India and Indochina.

■ America

In Central America, the **Toltec** and **Mayan** civilisations dominated. In South America, the **Inca** civilisation became the most important in the 13th century.



Mayan Temple of Kukulcan (12th century)

Understand

1. Explain the situation at this time in:
 - the Muslim world.
 - the Christian world.
2. What were the origins of the Holy Roman Empire? How were its emperors chosen?
3. Who were the Almohads?
4. Which groups fought against each other at the Battle of Navas de Tolosa? What caused this battle?

Apply

5. Mark the main civilisations at this time on an outline world map.

Analyse

6. Select one of the American, African or Asian civilisations mentioned on this page and research it (when it began and ended and how it was structured). Explain the most important and the most interesting facts to your classmates.

2. THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

During the High Middle Ages, a political, social and economic system called **feudalism** was established in the Christian kingdoms. This system was characterised by the monarchs' **loss of power**, **relationships based on personal loyalty** and **an economy based on small self-sufficient areas of land called fiefdoms**.

2.1. The feudal monarchy

The monarchs governed with the aid of:

- the **court**, consisting of trusted nobles who advised them in governmental matters.
- **royal officials** served the monarch. They carried out different tasks and duties. For example, the officials who formed part of the **chancery** recorded the decisions of the monarch in writing to ensure they were implemented. These documents carried the royal stamp and copies were kept in the chancery.

When there was a war, the monarch summoned the **host**, an army composed of the private armies of the monarch and of the nobility.

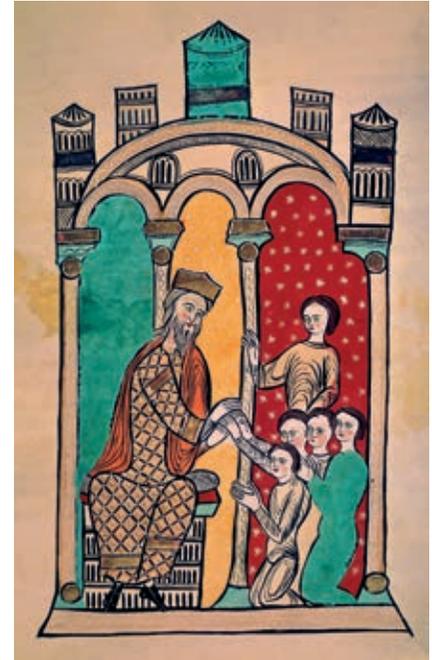
2.2. The origins of feudalism

After the division of the Carolingian Empire, Europe was raided by different peoples, who sacked the villages and cities. The monarchs had few resources and found it difficult to help their subjects. Therefore, they had to ask the nobles for assistance. Initially, the monarch divided up lands among trusted nobles to reward them, thereby making them lords (landowners). However, realising that the monarch was weak, the nobles later managed to achieve the following:

- their power became **hereditary** and they founded dynasties.
- their power over the inhabitants of their lands became absolute and included being able to **hand out justice** and **collect taxes**.

This area of land was called a manor or **fiefdom** and the landowning noble was called a **feudal lord**. **Serfs** and free peasants lived in the fiefdom.

The nobility's military power increased so much that they were able to **deny military aid to the monarch** or even oppose him. The feudal lords also used their armies to fight each other in order to gain more lands. They built castles from which to defend their possessions and tried to extend their domains through wars or arranged marriages. The violence caused by these internal **feudal wars** and external attacks generated **great insecurity** among the population. People migrated from the cities to the countryside, seeking the protection of a feudal lord.



Miniature representing a king with his vassals

Did you know?

The feudal wars

The army consisted of heavy (armoured) cavalry and light cavalry (both of which came from the lower nobility), foot soldiers or infantry (consisting of conscripted peasants) and mercenaries. Some of the infantry fought at close range with swords and some from a distance with bows and arrows. Their military strategy was to occupy and sack the lands and pillage the castles.



2.3. Vassalage relationships

A vassal was a person who voluntarily promised his loyalty to someone more powerful than himself (a noble or the monarch) in return for them protecting and providing for him. A noble swore his loyalty to someone more powerful than himself (or the monarch) in an official act known as a **commendation ceremony**, thereby becoming their vassal. The ceremony was carried out in the following way:

- the vassal knelt before his lord, put his hands together and swore his loyalty. He thereby promised to give him military aid and advice when it was required.
- the lord took the vassal's hands in his and kissed them, signifying his acceptance. He promised to protect and provide for his vassal.
- in some cases, another act, called **investiture**, was carried out. In this case, the lord granted his vassal an additional privilege, such as a post or fief.

Nearly all the nobles had vassals and were also the vassals of more powerful people.

Another ceremony that took place at this time was the **knighthood ceremony**. It was performed when an apprentice, called a **squire** or **armour bearer**, had learnt to handle weapons and horses. The ceremony was carried out in the following way:

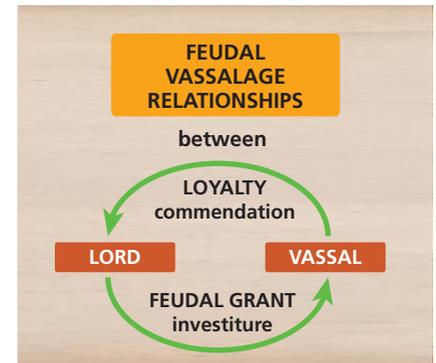
- the future knight spent the night meditating and praying.
- the following day, the official ceremony was performed, in which the lord presented a sword and spurs and the knight swore his loyalty to him.
- Finally, after he had learnt to fight, he was awarded the title of knight in a ceremony in which the noble dubbed him on the shoulder with a sword. Then the spurs were put on him and his sword was girded on.

Lower vassals' status was officially recognised through the **bond of servitude** between a noble and his serfs.

2.4. Later developments in the feudal system

Many elements of the feudal system remained in place during the whole of the Middle Ages. However, from the Late Middle Ages onwards, this system went into decline due to three circumstances that changed the political, economic and social structure:

- an increase in the **monarchs' power and authority**.
- the development of trade and the **growth of the cities**.
- **peasant revolts**.



Did you know?



Some knights applied the idea of vassalage to their romantic relationships, creating the concept of courtly love. The knight submitted himself to his loved one, promising his fidelity and considering her his mistress. His loved one was often married to another noble and their relationship was impossible. However, they met in secret and he recited romantic poems to her.



Illustration of courtly love

Remember

7. Why did the monarchs need the nobles' help?
8. Why did many nobles, who were the monarch's vassals, eventually disobey their monarch?
9. What demands were made of the vassal and what was he offered?
10. Explain which circumstances affected the feudal system and had an impact on its future.

Apply

11. Find a poem that refers to courtly love. Explain what it is about and who the main characters are. Compare the relationship between the knight and his loved one to vassalage relationships.

Analyse

12. Analyse the differences between a commendation ceremony and an investiture.

2.5. Characteristics of the fiefdom

Many fiefdoms were **self-sufficient**, since they were able to provide everything their inhabitants needed.

A fiefdom consisted of various areas:

- the **castle**, which was situated up high or next to a river to make it easier to defend. It was the lord's residence, which he shared with his family, vassals (knights) and servants. His servants consisted of a chaplain (a priest who was responsible for the castle chapel and heard confessions) and serfs, who had various duties. They were soldiers, domestic servants, maidservants (who served the lord's family), cooks and stable hands, among other things. The head servant was the major-domo.
- the **demesne** was the lord's land, which was cultivated by his serfs and, during some months of the year, the free peasants. The forests and meadows also belonged to the lord. They provided grazing land for the animals, wood, wild berries and game. Large game, such as deer, foxes and wild boar, was reserved for the lord.
- the **village**, which was situated quite near to the castle. The main building was the church, which was made of stone. The farmers, both the serfs and the free peasants, lived together with their animals in huts made of mud, wood and straw. There were usually taverns in the village, where food and drink was sold. There were also traders' stalls and workshops where craftsmen and their apprentices worked.
- **tenements** were the plots of land the lord rented to the peasants in exchange for part of their harvest.
- **other places in the fiefdom** were for communal use, such as bridges, mills, the forge and the furnace. They belonged to the lord, and the inhabitants of the fiefdom usually had to pay a fee to use them.

Travellers who were passing through also formed part of the population of the fiefdom. They included traders, beggars, pilgrims, acrobats (who did tumbling and juggling) and *jongleurs* (poets who told stories).

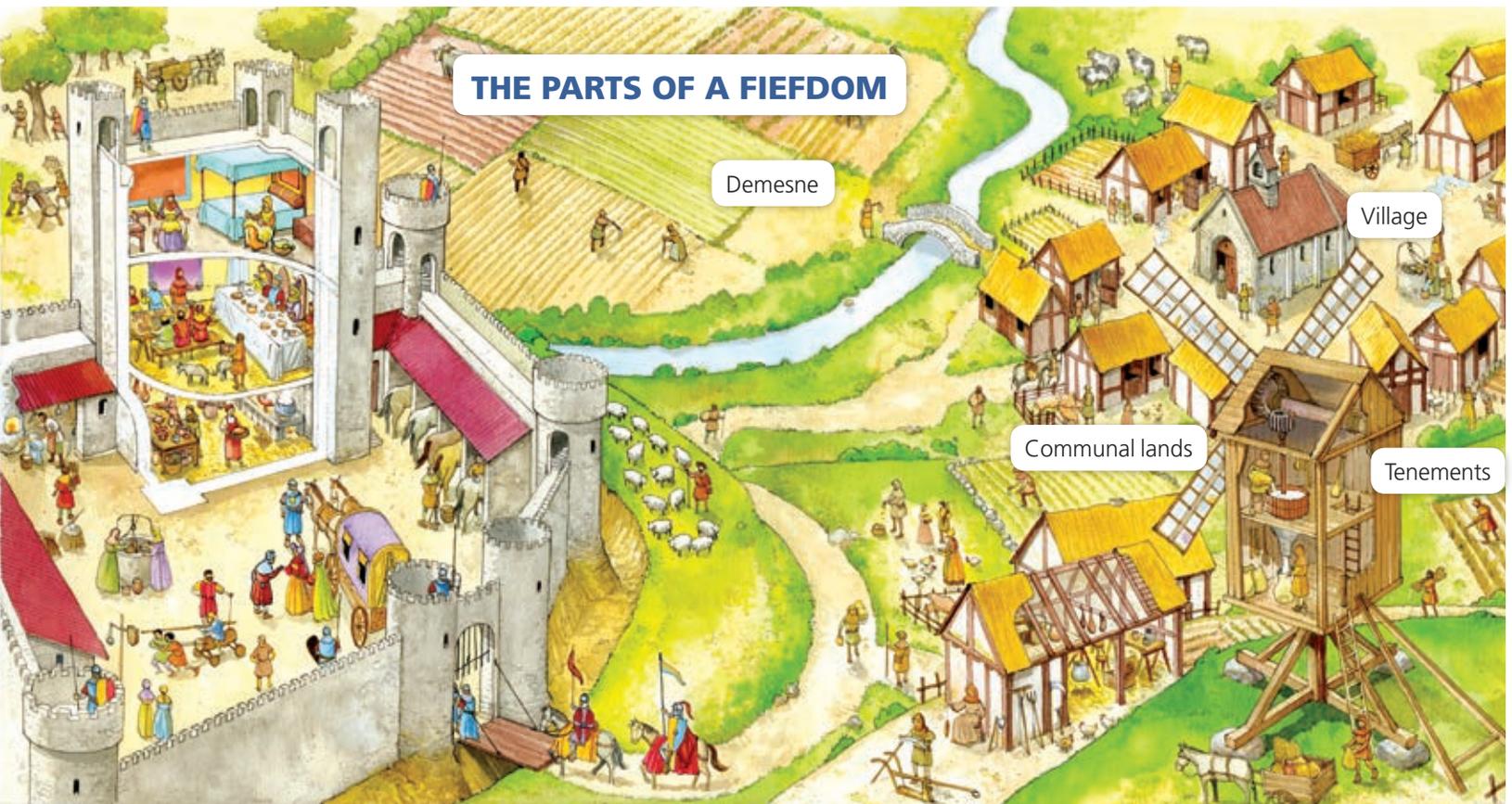
Women wore long skirts and headscarves and men wore short tunics and tights. They also wore hats and leather or wooden shoes. The quality of the cloth used to make the clothes depended on the social group the person belonged to.



Medieval peasant ploughing the earth



Almodóvar del Río Castle (Córdoba)



LIFE IN A FIEFDOM

The life of the privileged estates

- The nobles spent their time **hunting** and **training** to use weapons and handle horses.
- Both men and women learned to read and write and received a cultural education.
- The **dames** (noblewomen) were not generally involved in political matters and were in charge of the servants. They did not go outside much, as they wanted their skin to remain pale because dark skin was associated with the women who worked the land.
- The chaplain who lived in the castle prayed and looked after the chapel.
- The clothes worn by the privileged estates were mainly made of **linen, velvet and silk** in bright colours, especially red. They were carefully made and decorated with embroidery. They also wore jewellery. The chaplain wore specific clothing.
- In the castle, the nobles attended **banquets** or feasts, at which they ate large amounts of meat with their hands. Occasionally they participated in tournaments, which were simulated battles.

The life of the unprivileged estate

- The unprivileged estate worked from sunrise to sunset. Before they went to bed, they gathered around a **fire** to warm themselves, talk and tell stories. They did not know how to read or write and passed their culture on orally.
- The **female peasants** looked after the children, in addition to working the land with the men.
- They wore clothes made of **wool and cotton**, which were grey or brown and coarsely made.
- They made **simple meals**, such as soups, stews and bread, from agricultural products.
- Occasionally, they held simple **celebrations** for weddings and births, at which they ate some meat.

Understand

13. Draw a social pyramid of all the inhabitants of a fiefdom: serfs, servants, free peasants, knights, squires and the feudal lord.
14.  Listen to the sentences about the differences between the lives of the privileged and unprivileged estates and write true or false.

Create

15. In your notebook, draw a diagram of a fiefdom and mark the different places on it. Add a path going across it and features such as a river, forest, meadows, bridges and wells.

3. THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

3.1. Economic activities

The main economic activity continued to be agriculture: **cereal crops** were cultivated, from which people made the food they consumed, such as black bread and porridge. They also cultivated and consumed products from the vegetable garden, such as vegetables (cabbages and onions) and pulses, with which they made soups and stews. They drank wine in Mediterranean Europe and beer on the rest of the continent. Agricultural produce was complemented by other products:

- **those obtained from farm animals** (sheep, goats, cows, poultry and pigs), such as milk, eggs and cheese, as well as honey from bees.
- **those obtained from nature**, such as game and wild berries from the forest, as well as fish in the coastal areas.

Meat was rarely consumed by the majority of the population, as it was reserved for the privileged minority. As well as food, **livestock** provided:

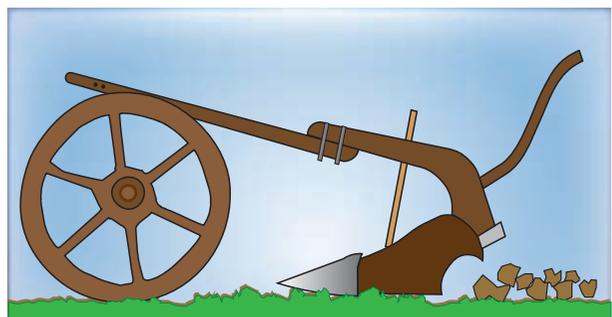
- **wool and leather** (tanned hide) for making products such as clothes and shoes.
- **draught animals** such as horses, oxen, asses and mules, which were used for transport, pulling carts and ploughs.
- **war horses**, which were trained to be used in warfare.

It was a **subsistence economy** because the people consumed nearly everything they produced. The small surplus was sold at local or regional markets and fairs. Craftwork, tools and fabrics were also traded at these events.

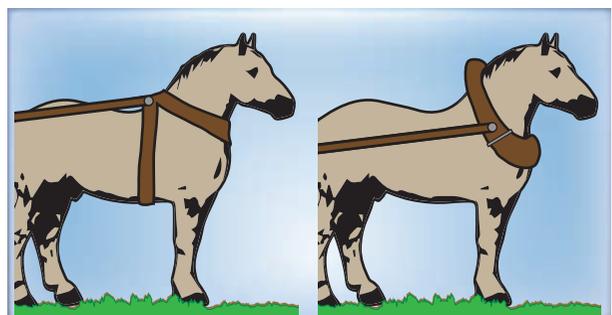
Agricultural techniques hardly changed. People mainly used hand-held tools, such as hoes (for digging), sickles (for harvesting cereals) and scythes (for reaping and weeding). They used water or wind **mills** to grind the cereals. However, **production increased slowly** for two reasons: cutting down the forests increased the amount of cultivated land and there were some **technological advances**. These included:

- **three-year crop rotation**, which consisted of dividing the land into three zones. A winter cereal (wheat or rye) was cultivated in one zone, a spring cereal (barley or oats) in another, and the third was left fallow (uncultivated) to allow the soil to recover. Every year the zones were alternated.
- the spread of **irrigation techniques**.
- the arrival of the **mouldboard plough**. This was a heavy plough with wheels, which contained a curved iron blade (mouldboard) that turned the soil over and aerated it, increasing its fertility.
- the use of manure (animal excrement) as a fertiliser.
- the **harness** (the device that attached the animal to the plough) was placed around the animal's chest instead of its neck and stomach (as it had been in the past). This meant that the animals were able to pull harder.

As a result of this increase in production, the **population grew**.



Mouldboard plough

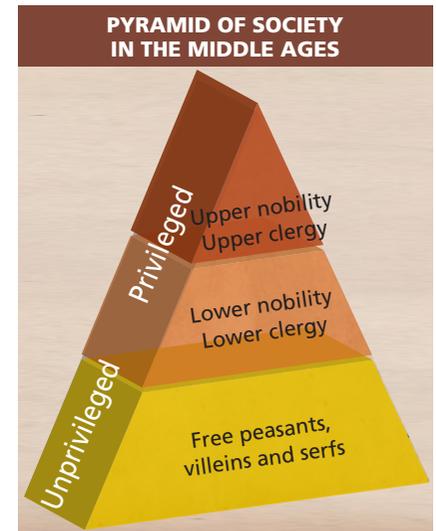


Old-style harness (left) and new-style harness (right)

3.2. Social organisation

Society was divided into three large groups called **estates**, which were hereditary: people were born into them.

- The **nobility**, *bellatores* in Latin (those who wage war), were those whose task was to defend the rest of society in times of war. They formed the dominant minority and within the nobility there was a hierarchy.
 - The **upper nobility** consisted of the monarch, dukes, marquises and counts.
 - The **lower nobility** consisted of knights, who depended solely on their weapons and horses.
- The **clergy**, *oratores* in Latin (those who pray), were those whose task was to pray for everyone to guarantee their salvation. They also provided the population with a cultural education. There was also a hierarchy within the clergy.
 - The **upper clergy** consisted of the Pope, bishops (leaders of the Church in a diocese or territory) and abbots, who were in charge of monasteries. These posts were only accessible to the most powerful noble families. They were often assigned to the second son of a noble, as the first-born inherited his lands.
 - The **lower clergy** consisted of priests and monks. These posts were occupied by people of humble origin.
- The **peasants and other workers** (*laboratores* in Latin) were obliged to work for the rest of society. They included:
 - the **serfs**, who worked as farmers and servants of a lord on his land. They were partly free and could not be sold, but they had to obey their lord and were not allowed to leave the fiefdom without his permission.
 - the **villeins**, free peasants, craftsmen and traders who lived in towns or villages. They were not serfs, so they were free to leave their lord's land.



Important

In Medieval society, there were two main groups: the **privileged** (the nobility and the clergy) and the **unprivileged** (the rest of the population: over 90%).

The **privileged estates** (the nobility and the clergy):

- did not work.
- had different laws applied to them. They could hand out justice in their domains.
- did not pay taxes and collected those paid by their serfs and peasants.
- fought in wars on horseback (cavalry). This was the case for the nobility and some members of the clergy.

The **unprivileged** (the rest of the population):

- worked in the town or countryside.
- had to obey stricter laws than the privileged estates.
- had to pay taxes to the privileged estates and the monarch.
- were recruited to fight in wars as foot soldiers (infantry).

Understand

16. Explain how each of the economic changes influenced the increase in the population. Why did the population grow when production increased?

Analyse

17. What differences are there between the Medieval diet and today's diet?

Evaluate

18. Do you think it was easy for the two main groups in society to coexist? Why (not)? Choose a section of society and write a list of their grievances.

4. THE CHURCH

4.1. The organisation of the Church

The Pope (the Bishop of Rome) was the leader of the Christians in the West. He served for the whole of his life and when he died, the cardinals appointed his successor. There were two branches of the clergy:

- the **secular clergy**, consisting of **bishops** and **priests**, who were in charge of ceremonies and the religious education of Christians.
- the **regular clergy**, consisting of **abbots** (who were in charge of an abbey or monastery), **monks** and **nuns**. Unlike the secular clergy, its members had to follow the rules that applied to their particular order. There were two types of orders:
 - **religious orders** (such as the Cluniac, Benedictine and Franciscan orders), who devoted their time to praying and working in the monastery.
 - **military orders** (such as the Templar, Teutonic and charitable orders). As well as praying, these monks fought to defend or spread Christianity.

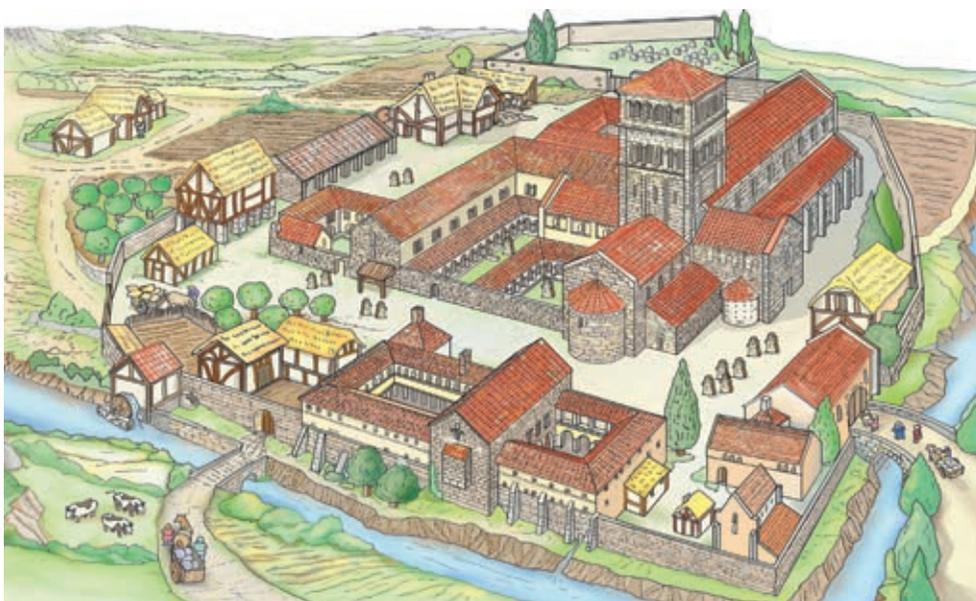
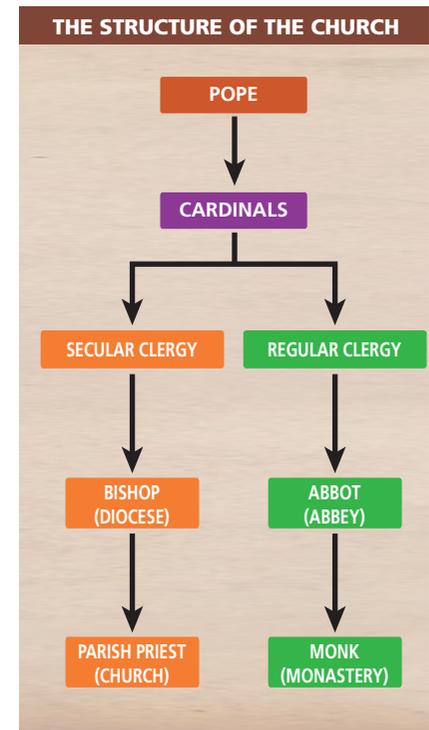
4.2. The political power of the Church

The Church and political power were closely connected. Monarchs had the right to intervene in **appointing the bishops** and other religious positions. The bishops and other religious figures also attended the **cortes** or **parliament**, which was responsible for advising the monarchs.

The Pope could **excommunicate** (remove from the Church) whoever he wished, including monarchs. Excommunication condemned the victim to hell and the Christian subjects of an excommunicated monarch no longer had to obey him. Therefore, excommunication became the Pope's means of threatening the monarchs who opposed him.

4.3. The economic power of the Church

Many monarchs and nobles gave lands and fiefs to the Church to win its favour or obtain salvation. Therefore, the Church became the **main landowner** and benefited from an exclusive tax: the **tithe**, a tenth of agricultural production, which the peasants had to pay.



Medieval monastery

4.4. Culture and the Church

The Church continued to be responsible for spreading culture. The monks **copied ancient texts** by hand (manuscripts) to prevent them from disappearing and to preserve ancient knowledge. The Church was responsible for **education** and the spreading of religious beliefs. In this way, ideas were spread among the population, such as the following:

- a **fear of hell**, to fight against sin (bad actions).
- a **fear of the end of the world** and God's judgement, which served to generate interest in religious matters. Some claimed that this would happen in the year 1000, causing panic among those who believed it.
- **hope for the mediation of saints and the Virgin Mary**, which resulted in a greater number of **pilgrimages**:
 - to the **holy cities** – Rome (the Church's capital), Santiago de Compostela (where, according to tradition, the apostle St James was buried) and Jerusalem (where important events in Jesus Christ's life occurred).
 - to the churches that contained **relics**, which were sacred items and remains associated with a saint.

The Church had the authority to prevent feudal wars in certain places and on certain dates, due to:

- **the Peace of God**, which prohibited churches and holy places from being attacked and sacked.
- **the Truce of God**, which temporarily suspended fighting on important dates in the religious calendar, such as Christmas, Easter and Lent.

To maintain unity in the Christian faith, the Church was very strict and persecuted **heretics**, those who diverged from the official doctrine. It also promoted the crusades, which were expeditions ordered by the Popes to recover the **Holy Sepulchre**¹, which was in the hands of the Muslims.

¹**Holy Sepulchre**: the place where Jesus Christ was crucified



Important

The crusades

The Turks (who were more intolerant than the Arabs regarding religious matters) had occupied Jerusalem, thereby endangering Christian pilgrimages to this city. Pope Urban II summoned the First Crusade to conquer Jerusalem and free it from Muslim control. Christian knights from all over Europe came forward and formed an army. In the year 1099, they conquered Jerusalem and massacred the whole population (Muslims and Jews). Small Christian states were created in these lands. As the neighbouring Muslim states began to seize their lands, new crusades were organised during the 12th and most of the 13th century. However, the Christians were eventually expelled.



Understand

19. What differences were there between the regular and secular clergy?
20. Explain what political and economic power the Church held.

Analyse

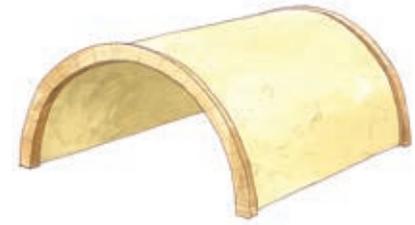
21. Study the drawing of a monastery and state what differences there are between this and the areas in a fiefdom.

5. ROMANESQUE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

5.1. General characteristics

The main artistic style from the 11th to the 13th century was called Romanesque. It was the first Medieval **European** artistic style. It had the following characteristics:

- it was a **rural** style of art, meaning that the majority of the works of art were situated in the countryside and small villages.
- the **nobility and the Church** promoted these works of art. The main buildings were religious ones: **chapels** (small churches), **monasteries and cathedrals**.
- Romanesque style was started and spread by Cluniac monks and extended along the **pilgrimage routes**.
- the churches looked like **fortresses** due to their thick walls. Occasionally, they served as refuges when the population was under attack. The lack of windows made Romanesque churches very dark, which was considered more appropriate for worship.



Barrel vault



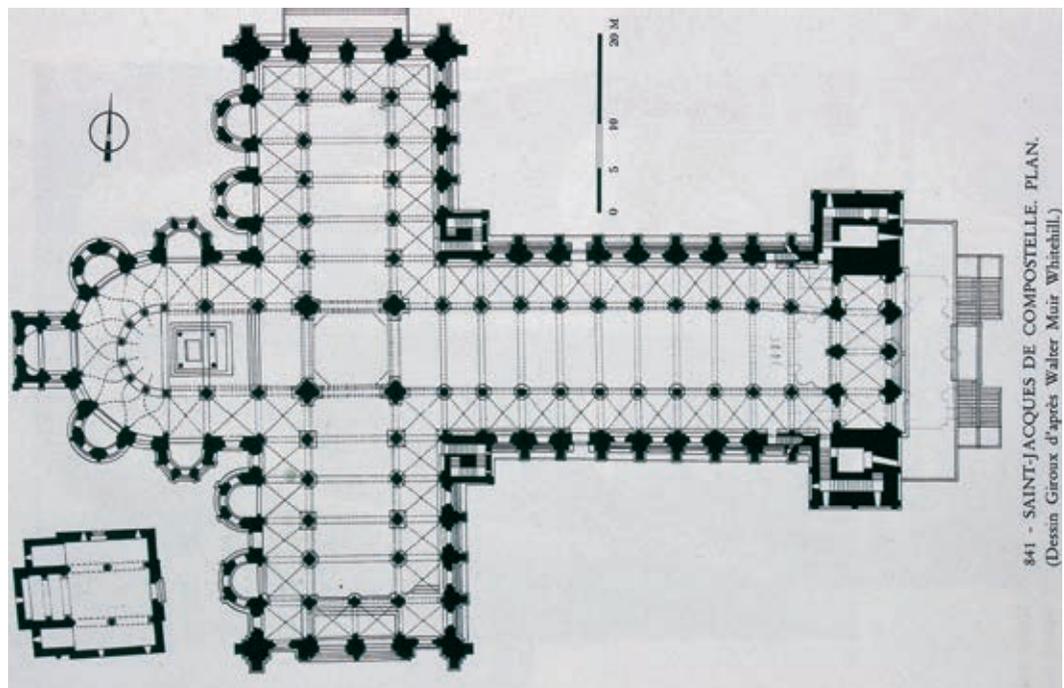
Groin vault

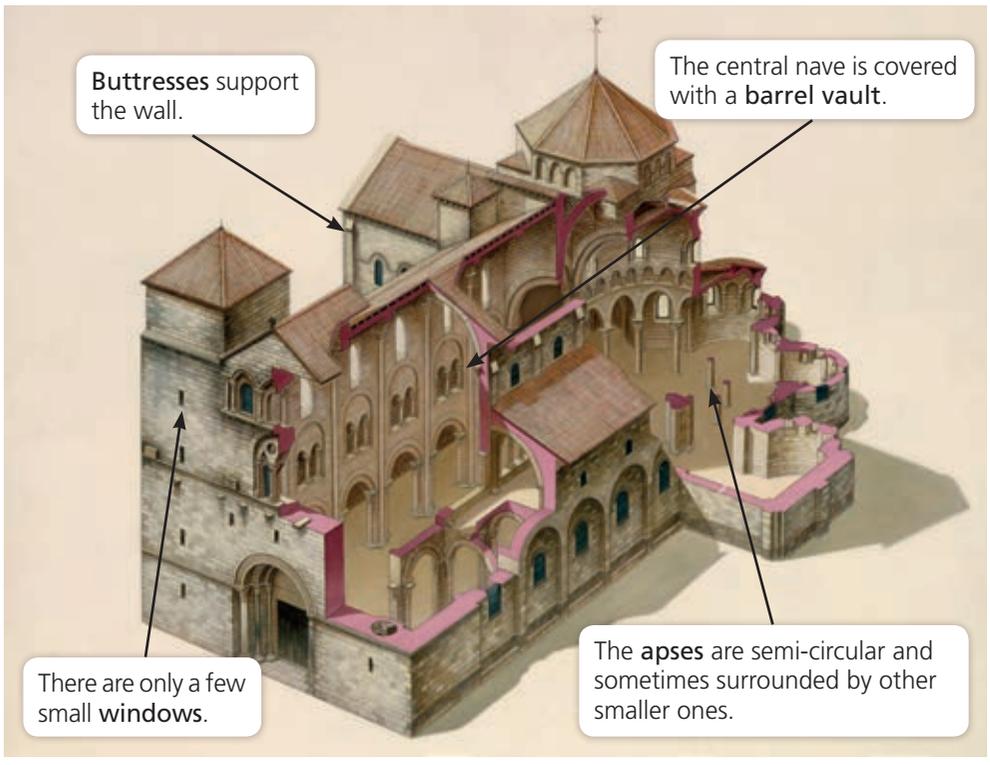
5.2. Romanesque architecture

The main characteristics of Romanesque architecture were:

- the use of **thick stone walls** and a small number of narrow windows. The buildings were supported by **buttresses** (pillars built against the exterior walls), and cylindrical **columns** and **pillars** on the inside.
- features from Roman art were used (which is where the name of this style comes from), such as **semi-circular arches**. The buildings were covered with **barrel vaults, groin vaults and domes**.
- the **floor plan** (two-dimensional drawing of the building) was usually in the shape of a **Latin cross**, in which one arm (the transept) was shorter than the others. The part where both arms cross was called the **crossing**. Above the crossing, a tower called a **spire** was built. The columns and pillars divided the interior of the temple into aisles called **naves**. There were usually three of them, the **central nave and two lateral ones**, although some churches contained more. At the end of the church was the **apse**, containing the **altar**. Occasionally, there was a passage called an **ambulatory**, which went around the altar. The semi-circular recesses were called **apses**.
- the façades of Romanesque churches contained **portals**, which were richly decorated doors. One or two towers containing the **belfry** were built next to these.

Latin cross floor plan of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral





The Church of St Étienne (Nevers, France)



Remember

- 22. Was Romanesque an urban or rural style of art?
- 23. Who started Romanesque style and how did it spread?

Understand

- 24. Listen and match the definitions to terms in this section.
- 25. In your notebook, draw a Romanesque church and mark the most important characteristics on it.

Apply

- 26. Study the illustration of the Church of Saint Étienne. Describe its floor plan and name the main features of Romanesque architecture that it contains.

Create

- 27. Research why the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela continues to be a very popular activity nowadays. What are people's motives for going on this pilgrimage?

5.3. Romanesque painting and sculpture

Romanesque painting and sculpture had an **educational** as well as a decorative purpose. Images were used so that the population (the majority of whom were illiterate) could learn about the Bible stories and religious beliefs.

In many cases, the images had a **symbolic character**, meaning that ideas were represented through drawings. These symbols enabled the priests to explain more complicated religious concepts through images.

They had a **schematic style**, with barely defined detail. To highlight the **solemnity** of the subject, the figures were depicted in rigid positions with **inexpressive faces**. The **size of the figures** varied depending on their importance. The more important they were, such as Christ or the Virgin Mary, the bigger their size.

Sculptures were made of **stone** or carved in **wood**, especially images of Christ on the cross and the Virgin Mary with baby Jesus. Stone sculpture was **adapted to architecture**, meaning that sculptures were made on church portals, façades and columns.

Paintings were made on exterior and interior **walls**, in the apses and interior vaults of churches and on **slabs** and in **miniatures** to decorate books. Drawings were made using **lines** and **flat colours** (without volume), so they had no depth. Landscapes were not portrayed in them either.



Portal of the Church of San Miguel Arcángel (Estella, Navarra). Christ Pantocrator is depicted (God surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists).



Paintings in the Chapel of Santa Cruz de Maderuelo (Segovia) (12th century)



Virgin from Ger (12th century)

Apply

28. Study the mural painting from the chapel of Santa Cruz de Maderuelo, in which a passage of the story of Adam and Eve is depicted. Imagine you are a Medieval priest. Explain this story to your congregation using the drawings.

Evaluate

29. Explain why you think Romanesque sculptures were called Bibles in stone.



THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE 11TH, 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES

- During the High Middle Ages, there were extremely diverse civilisations on each continent, some of which became very culturally and politically developed.
- The **Muslim world** was divided due to internal fighting and the **Turks** became the most powerful group.
- In the **Christian world**, the **Byzantine Empire** continued and in the 10th century, the **Holy Roman Empire** was created in Central Europe. Meanwhile, the **Christian kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula** continued to expand towards the south, reducing the amount of land under Muslim control.
- In **Africa**, there were numerous kingdoms, many of which converted to Islam. In **Asia**, the Mongol Empire and the Ancient Chinese Empire dominated. In **America**, important civilisations emerged, such as the Mayans and Incas.

The economy and society during the High Middle Ages

- The **economy** was based on the **production of cereals and livestock farming**. There was very little trade.
- The increase in the amount of agricultural land and the improvement of some techniques resulted in an **increase in production**. Consequently, the **population grew**.
- Medieval society was strictly divided into **estates**: the privileged (the nobility and the clergy) and the unprivileged (the people who worked).

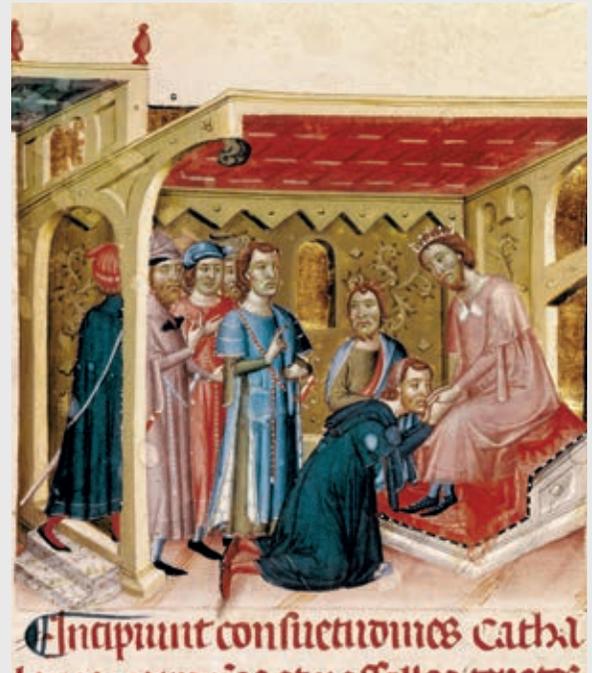
The Church

- The Church was led by the **Pope** and consisted of the **secular clergy** (bishops and priests) and **regular clergy** (abbots, monks and nuns).
- The Church and political power were closely connected. The Church owned land and was responsible for spreading culture.
- The number of **pilgrimages** (such as the Camino de Santiago) and **crusades** increased.



Portal of La Gloria in Santiago de Compostela Cathedral

The feudal system



- During the High Middle Ages, a political, social and economic structure called feudalism became well established in the Christian kingdoms. It was characterised by the monarchs' loss of power, relationships based on personal loyalty and an economy based around small self-sufficient territories called fiefdoms.
- The **feudal monarchs** were helped by their court and public officials in the chancery, but they depended on their nobles.
- The frequent **feudal wars** generated great insecurity among the population.
- **Vassalage relationships** were established, in which the nobles swore their loyalty to the monarch or other more powerful nobles, occasionally in exchange for a fief.
- The **fiefdom** consisted of various areas: the castle, the village, tenements and the demesne.

Romanesque art and architecture

- **Romanesque** was a rural style. The main characteristics of Romanesque **architecture** were the use of semi-circular arches, barrel vaults and thick walls supported by buttresses.
- Romanesque **painting and sculpture** served an educational purpose. They were characterised by a schematic style, inexpressive faces and their adaptation to architecture.

30. Define the following terms:

- sultan.
- Almohads.
- subsistence economy.
- three-year crop rotation.
- serfs.
- demesne.
- royal officials.
- court.
- host.
- feudalism.
- fiefdom.
- vassalage relationships.
- courtly love.
- *jongleur*.
- secular clergy.
- regular clergy.
- military orders.
- mouldboard plough.
- tithe.
- relics.
- heretics.
- harness.
- crusades.
- buttress.

31. Match each feature with the corresponding part of the fiefdom. Some features may correspond to more than one part.

demesne	peasants' houses
castle	plots of agricultural land rented from a lord
tenements	a fee had to be paid to the lord for its use.
forest	lord's residence
village	place where the serfs worked
mill	place where the peasants obtained firewood

32. Copy and complete the table in your notebook.

High Middle Ages	Privileged groups	Unprivileged groups
Economy and work		
Social groups		
Food and clothing		
Entertainment and free time		

33. Study the images of art on this page and the following one. Write a list of the characteristic features of Romanesque art for each. Include these aspects.

- Architecture: walls, windows, pillars, apses and towers.
- Painting and sculpture: location, images, colours and functions.



Mural of the apse of the Church of San Clement de Tahull (Lérida, 12th century)

34. Copy these sentences into your notebook. Write true or false and correct the false sentences.

The feudal system is characterised by a self-sufficient agricultural economy, a society divided into estates and a powerful monarchy.

The castle, village, demesne and forests were the main areas in a fiefdom.

The members of the privileged groups did physical work, unlike the unprivileged.

The military orders were formed by monks, who had to obey specific rules.

The most important crusades were fought against heretics.

The relics of saints were greatly valued and pilgrims made journeys to visit them.

Romanesque art was urban, as was the feudal system.

The architectural features were adapted to the forms and sizes of the sculptures.



The doubts of St Thomas, 11th-century Romanesque relief



Monastery of Irache (Navarra, 11th century)

35. Read the two texts and answer the questions below.

Christian Chronicle of Abelda, based on the Chronicles of Alfonso III

In the name of the Lord, I, Rogelio de Besiers, grant you, Arnaldo de Corleano, your son-in-law Beltrán de Peirala, your children and their descendants my castle, Claramont, in fief. This I fortify and order to be fortified in my honour in my county, Rodense, with the fortifications that are in the castle and those which will be built in the future. The only exception is a house, which I will keep to do with as I wish. I hand you the castle so you have what is mine in fief, except my faith, my rights as a lord and my justice.

Year 1138 of the Incarnation of Christ, the 15th day of the Julian calendar, under the reign of King Louis.

Historia general del Languedoc, Editorial Privat

A new vassal (12th century)

On the seventh day of the ides of April, Thursday, homage was paid to the count again. Firstly, homage was paid in the following way: the count asked the man if he wanted to fully commit to becoming his vassal and he replied: Yes, I do. Then the count put his hands together and held them in his while they bound themselves to each other through a kiss. Secondly, the man who had promised vassalage swore his loyalty in these terms: I promise to be loyal from now onwards to Count William, pay homage to him at all times, protect him from everyone in good faith and never cross him. Thirdly, he swore his loyalty on the relics of the saints.

R. BOUTRUCHE,

Señorio y feudalismo

Siglo XXI de España Editores

- In your own words, briefly summarise what happens in each text.
- Which ceremony is each text about?
- What role does each person play in these ceremonies?
- What references are made to religion?
- Why do you think religion formed a part of these types of ceremonies?

As you can imagine, people's lives in the Middle Ages were very different from our lives nowadays. There was no electricity, no television and there were no mobile phones. Many things that form part of our lives nowadays did not exist at that time.

What do you think you would have done if you had lived at that time? What would it have been like to be a knight, serf or count? In this task, you are going to discover how people lived in the Middle Ages by assuming the role of someone living in feudal times.



In a large group and individually

MATERIALS

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet access
- Encyclopedias, historical atlases, books, documentaries

Preparation



■ Division of roles

The teacher will divide up the roles, which will depend on the events selected and the preferences of each student. In the column on the right of this page, there are some examples of possible roles.

■ Preparation of the scenery

The background scenery can be drawn on the board on the day of the performance. You can also wear clothes and bring in props related to the scene you are performing.

■ Preparation of the story line

Each student who participates in the performance will need to improvise, but also respect the particular characteristics of their role.

■ The performance

The performances will begin with one of the opening scenes described below.

The teacher will gradually add new events, which will alter how things develop. These events can be acted out as they occur. The participants will need to react to the changes while also respecting their role.

POSSIBLE ROLES

The privileged: they do not respect the unprivileged and believe they have more rights than them because of their position.

- The high nobility: they want their serfs to obey them and work hard and their vassals to comply with their obligations. Their ambition is to increase their possessions.
- Knights: they obey their lord and fight in wars.
- Chaplain or priest of the castle: he is the most highly educated and teaches the nobles. (There can only be one.)

The unprivileged: they respect and fear the privileged, because they are punished by them harshly (through physical punishments and even death).

- Domestic servants: they are usually serfs.
- Soldiers: they are recruited from the peasants. They protect the castle and fight on foot.
- Serfs: they work in the demesne their whole life.
- Free peasants: they also work their plots of land and are free to leave the fiefdom.
- Village priest: he teaches religious concepts to the unprivileged.
- Craftsmen, bakers, miller, blacksmith and bridge watchman: they carry out specific tasks, which the lord charges taxes for.
- Travellers: traders, beggars, acrobats, *jongleurs*, mercenaries, crusaders on their way to the East and pilgrims on pilgrimages.

Procedure



■ Scenes and roles that can be performed

Harvesting season: it is time to harvest the cereal crops. The peasants prepare for reaping. The sun has just risen and the free peasants and serfs begin their task.

New knight: a squire has finished his training and is going to become a knight.

The lord's vassal: the lord appoints a baron to govern a fief he has just obtained.

Feudal war: a war breaks out between the lord and another lord because they cannot agree on who a bordering forest belongs to. He summons his vassals and serfs.

An impassioned monk appears: the monk claims the end of the world is coming soon and criticises the privileged estates for being sinners, including the chaplain of the castle. The peasants admire him.

An unjust lord: the lord decides to increase taxes, making it difficult for his peasants to survive.



Viking attack: a group of Vikings arrives in the county intending to sack its riches. The lord summons his private army.

The Pope organises another crusade to recapture the Holy Sepulchre: this news receives great support from the inhabitants of the fiefdom.

A knight falls in love with the count's daughter: however, their relationship is impossible because she is engaged to a marquis.

Conversations during the feast: the lord and his knights converse during a banquet in the castle, while the servants talk around the fire.

A serf escapes from the fiefdom: he goes in search of a better life and takes refuge in the village of a neighbouring county. The lord decides to pursue him.

A peasant hunts and kills a deer in the lord's forest: this angers the lord and he punishes the peasant.

A royal official visits: he has come to collect taxes, but the lord does not intend to pay him.

A group of travellers arrive at the fiefdom: there is a *jongleur*, an acrobat and a trader. They visit the village and the castle.

Communication and publication



When the performances have finished, each student can vote for the one they think was the most convincing, as well as which students played their roles most convincingly. They must justify their decisions.

Finally, the class will evaluate the experience as a whole by sharing their opinions.



Serfs working the land

EXAMPLES OF A PERFORMANCE IN WHICH A SERIES OF EVENTS OCCUR IN A SPECIFIC ORDER

Example 1: Opening scene:

- **conversations** during the feast between the lord and his nobles about the hunting incident the day before, in which they criticise the neighbouring count.

Events that follow:

- **a serf escapes from the fiefdom.** The neighbouring lord protects the fugitive.
- **feudal war.** The lord is victorious and conquers this territory.
- **the count's vassal.**
- **an evil baron.**

Example 2: Opening scene:

- **harvest time.**

Events that follow:

- **an unjust lord.** He abuses his power.
- **the arrival of an impassioned monk.** The peasants revolt under his leadership.
- **a new knight.** The revolt is brought under control.
- **a knight falls in love with the count's daughter.**
- **the Pope organises another crusade.**

SELF-ASSESSMENT



1. What have you learnt about life in a fiefdom?
2. What differences were there in the way of life of the different inhabitants of the fiefdom?
3. Did the task help you to understand the behaviour of the people who lived at that time?
4. Do you think you have learnt to give an improvised performance?
5. Do you think you played the role you were given convincingly? Why or why not?
6. What was the most difficult thing you had to do in your role?
7. Was the performance your class gave well organised?
8. Did all the members of your class participate constructively? Explain your answer.