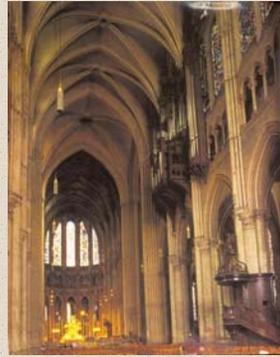# Medieval Society & Medieval Architecture

The social structure of the Medieval world

First order: Oratores, "those who pray"
- Second order: Bellatores, "those who fight"
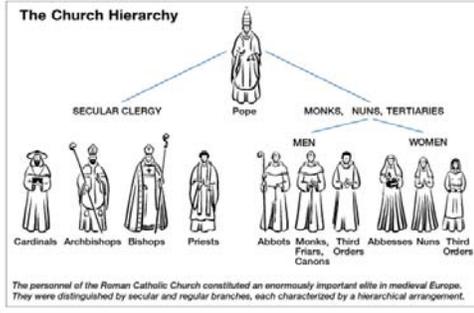- Third order: Laboratores, "those who work"

Relationships between these orders were governed by two systems:
Feudalism and Manorialism

First order: Oratores, "those who pray"
- Second order: Bellatores, "those who fight"
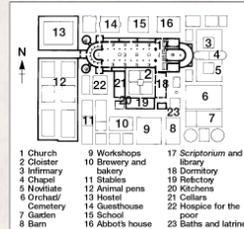- Third order: Laboratores, "those who work"

Oratores: Those who pray

- Secular clergy: those who lived in the world (Episcopal)
  – Priests
  – clerical hierarchy, from bishop → Pope
  – the more powerful members of the church hierarchy were quite powerful in the political world
    • Often related to the nobility, and even to the King
- Regular clergy: lived by a rule or "regula" in a monastery
  – Usually a variation of the Benedictine rule, which provided that a monk should pray, study, and perform manual labor
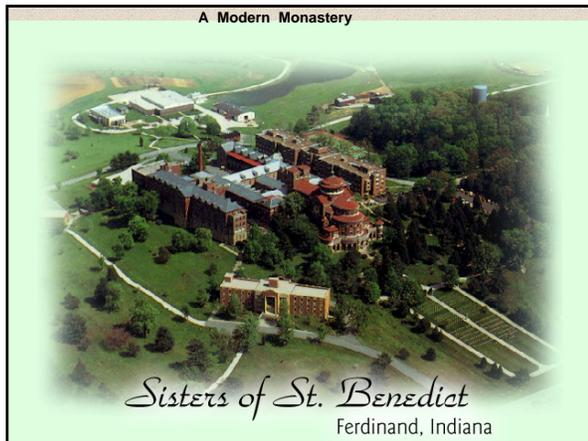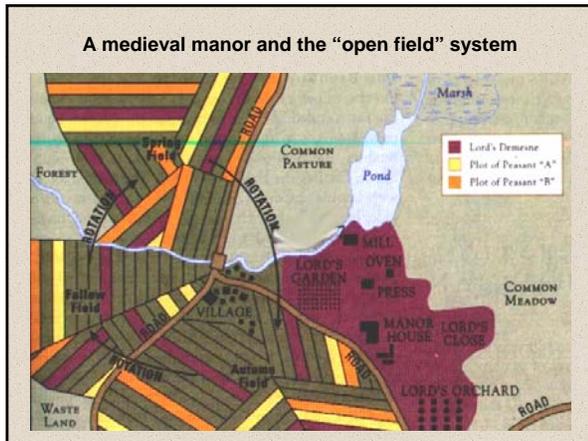 – Monks, nuns (e.g., Cluny)

A Modern Monastery

Sisters of St. Benedict
Ferdinand, Indiana

Laboratores: **those who work**

- Free peasants (e.g., Cecilia Penifader)
  - Legally free, paid rent for use of land
- Serfs
  - legally bound to the land, and legally obligated to provide certain services to the lord of the manor, but not chattel (they could not be sold)
  - 90% of the population of Charlemagne's Empire
- Slaves
  - became increasingly uncommon during the course of the Middle ages

A medieval manor and the "open field" system

- Lord's Demesne
- Plot of Peasant "A"
- Plot of Peasant "B"

Types of payments made to a lord of the manor

- Payments of service
  - 2 or 3 days/week = weekwork, harvests = boonwork)
  - cultivation of the lord's land or *demesne (e.g., Bodo's ploughing)*
  - maintenance of lord's property (buildings, fences, etc.)
- Payments in kind
  - "Taxes" (heriot = death tax; army tax), usually in kind (e.g., wheat, goose, pair of chickens, best animal, etc.)
  - payments for the use of facilities (oven, winepress, grain mill, forest, streams)
- Payments in cash (less common in M.A.)

Bellatores: Those who fight

- "to protect the church, to attack infidelity, to reverence the priesthood, to protect the poor, to keep the peace, to shed one's blood, and, if necessary, to lay down one's life for one's brethren."
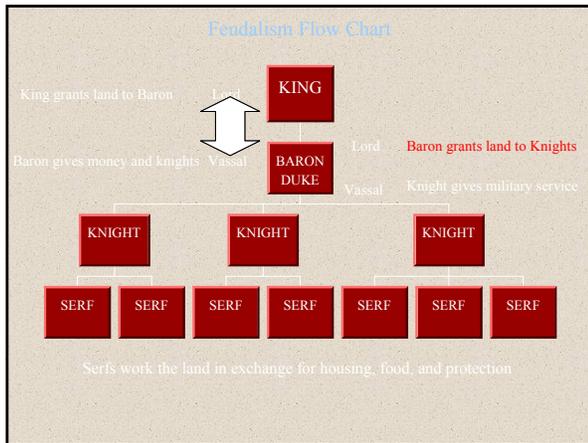 - John of Salisbury (d. 1180), as cited in Noble, p. 321.
- Chivalry (*cheval* = horse)
- Nobility:
  - Profession of arms
  - Holding of office
  - Noble lifestyle
  - Family traditions
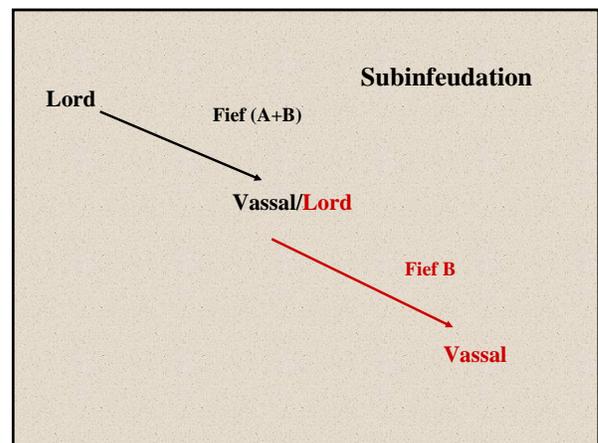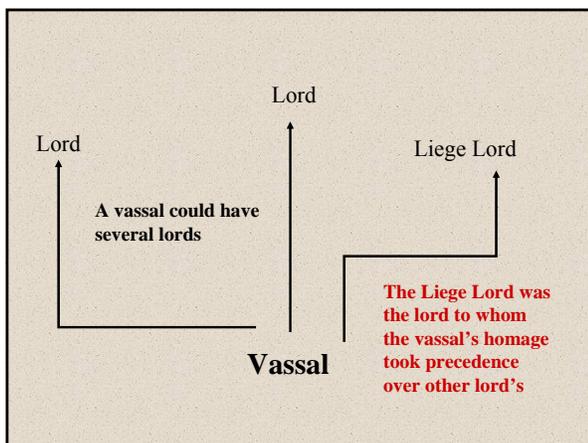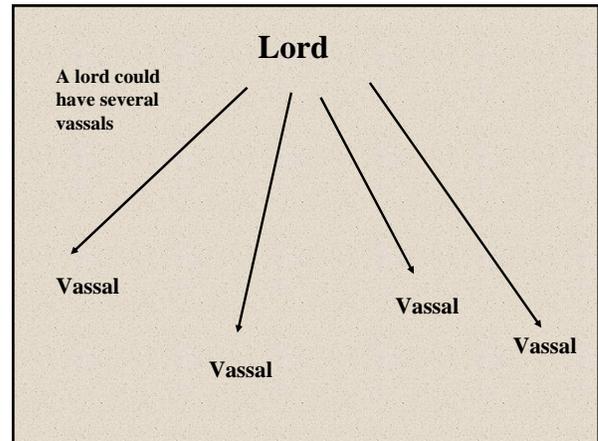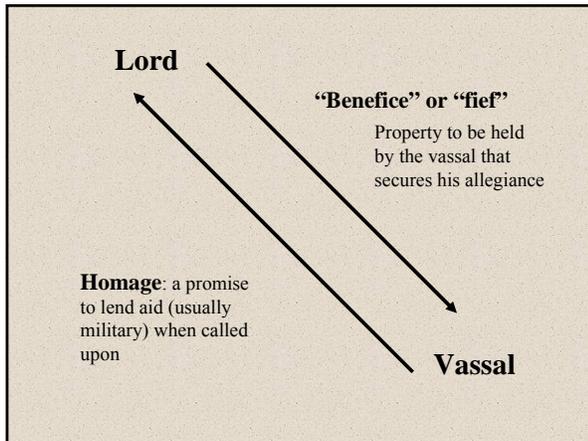- Nobles & Knights are not necessarily the same

Feudalism concerned the distribution of political and military power in the medieval world

Manorialism concerned the distribution of economic resources among the people of the medieval world

Feudalism Flow Chart

King grants land to Baron — Lord

KING

Baron gives money and knights — Vassal — Lord — Baron grants land to Knights

BARON DUKE

Vassal — Knight gives military service

KNIGHT   KNIGHT   KNIGHT

SERF SERF SERF SERF SERF SERF SERF

Serfs work the land in exchange for housing, food, and protection

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Feudalism

- A system of personal allegiances between members of the first and second orders
  - Established military, political, social obligations
  - Based on a hierarchical relationship between a *Lord* and a *Vassal*
- Feudal relationships are only possible among those with a legitimate claim to power
  - In order to participate in feudalism, an individual (or a community) had to be either a fighter or have control of land
  - Laboratores generally did not (and could not) participate in a feudal relationship

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Lord

"Benefice" or "fief"
Property to be held by the vassal that secures his allegiance

Homage: a promise to lend aid (usually military) when called upon

Vassal

Lord

A lord could have several vassals

Vassal   **Vassal**

Vassal   **Vassal**

Lord

Lord

Liege Lord

A vassal could have several lords

The Liege Lord was the lord to whom the vassal's homage took precedence over other lord's

Vassal

Subinfeudation

Lord   Fief (A+B)

Vassal/Lord

Fief B

Vassal

All of these systems overlapped in Feudalism, so things could get rather complicated…

Consider, for example, the homage oath of John of Toul

I, John of Toul, make known that I am the liege man of the lady Beatrice, countess of Troyes, and of her son, Theobald, count of Champagne, against every creature, living or dead, saving my allegiance to lord Enjorand of Coucy, lord John of Arcis, and the count of Grandpré. If it should happen that the count of Grandpré should be at war with the countess and count of Champagne on his own quarrel, I will aid the count of Grandpré in my own person, and will send to the count and the countess of Champagne the knights whose service I owe to them for the fief which I hold of them. But if the count of Grandpré shall make war on the countess and the count of Champagne on behalf of his friends and not in his own quarrel, I will aid in my own person the countess and count of Champagne, and will send one knight to the count of Grandpré for the service which I owe him for the fief which I hold of him, but I will not go myself into the territory of the count of Grandpré to make war on him.
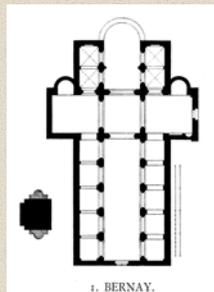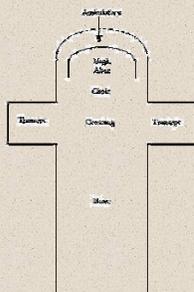
The relationship between Feudalism and Manorialism

- Fiefs were made up of one or more manors
  - Fiefs were intended to provide support to those who provided the services of fighting and praying
  - the "lord of the manor" could be an individual (knight, nobleman, king, bishop, etc.) or a religious community (monastery or convent)
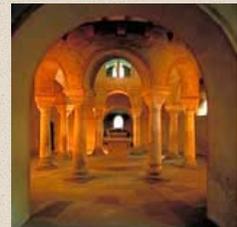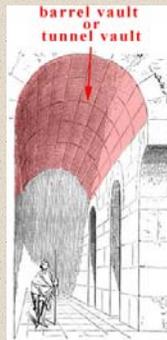
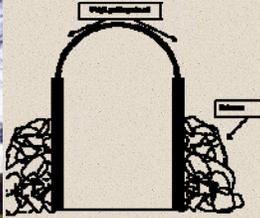## Medieval Church Architecture
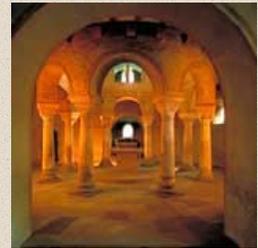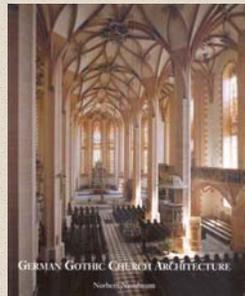
Church Layout
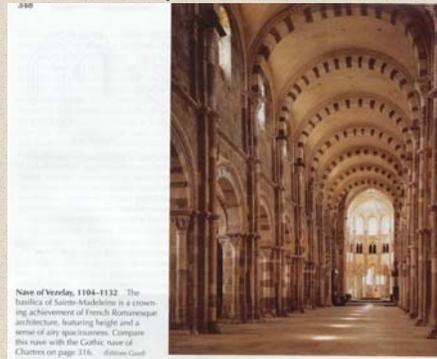

Romanesque (9th-11th c.)

Barrel vault and Roman arches
Heavy walls and sturdy construction
Little light, smaller area
Transition b/w Carolingian & Gothic
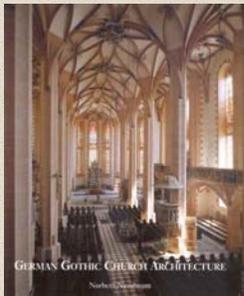Colonnades, Piers and Columns

Romanesque

Romanesque Church Interior

Nave of Vezelay, 1104–1132. The basilica of Sainte-Madeleine is a crowning achievement of French Romanesque architecture, featuring height and a sense of airy spaciousness. Compare this nave with the Gothic nave of Chartres on page 316.

Gothic Architecture (12th-14th c.)

- Enormous windows
- Stained glass
- Pointed arches (Islamic)
- Slender columns inside
- Flying buttresses outside to hold the weight
- Extensive decoration
- Neo-Gothic style very popular w/ American colleges/universities

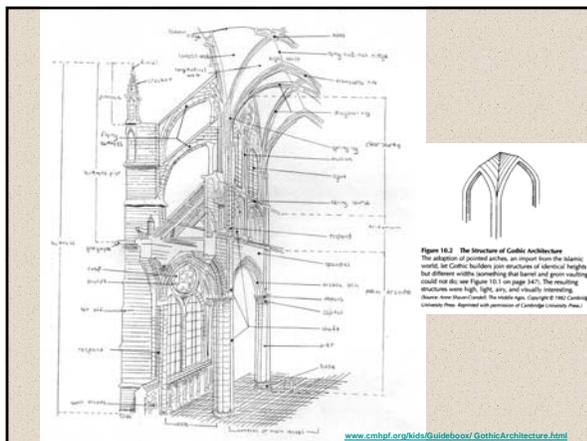- Origin of "Gothic" (from 5th c.)

Gothic Architecture

TRANSVERSE SECTION OF A TYPICAL GOTHIC CATHEDRAL. (AMIENS)

Figure 10.2 The Structure of Gothic Architecture
The adoption of pointed arches, an import from the Islamic world, let Gothic builders join structures of identical heights but different widths something that barrel and groin vaulting could not do; see Figure 10.1 on page 347. The resulting structures were high, light, airy, and visually interesting. (Source: Anne Fraser Crandell, The Middle Ages. Copyright © 1982 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press.)

www.cmhpf.org/kids/Guidebox/GothicArchitecture.html

Gothic Movement
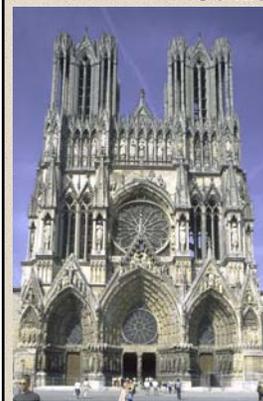
- Begun by Abbe Suger
  - St Denis

- Georgio Vasari in 1550
  - "monstrous and barbarous"
  - "invented by Goths who filled all of Italy with these damnable buildings"

- 4 main elements
  - Pointed Arch
  - Pointed Spires
  - Rose Window
  - Flying Buttress

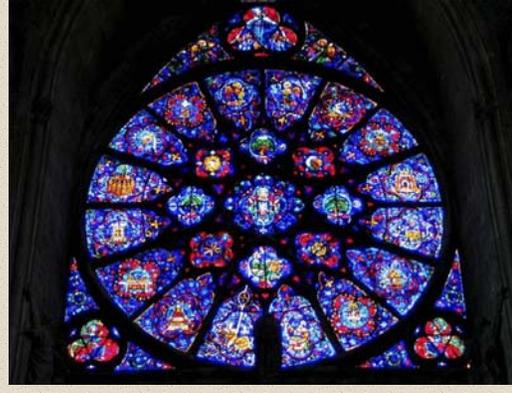Flying Buttress

Gothic Flying Buttress

Reaching for the Heavens

Stained Glass

Sainte-Chapelle, Paris