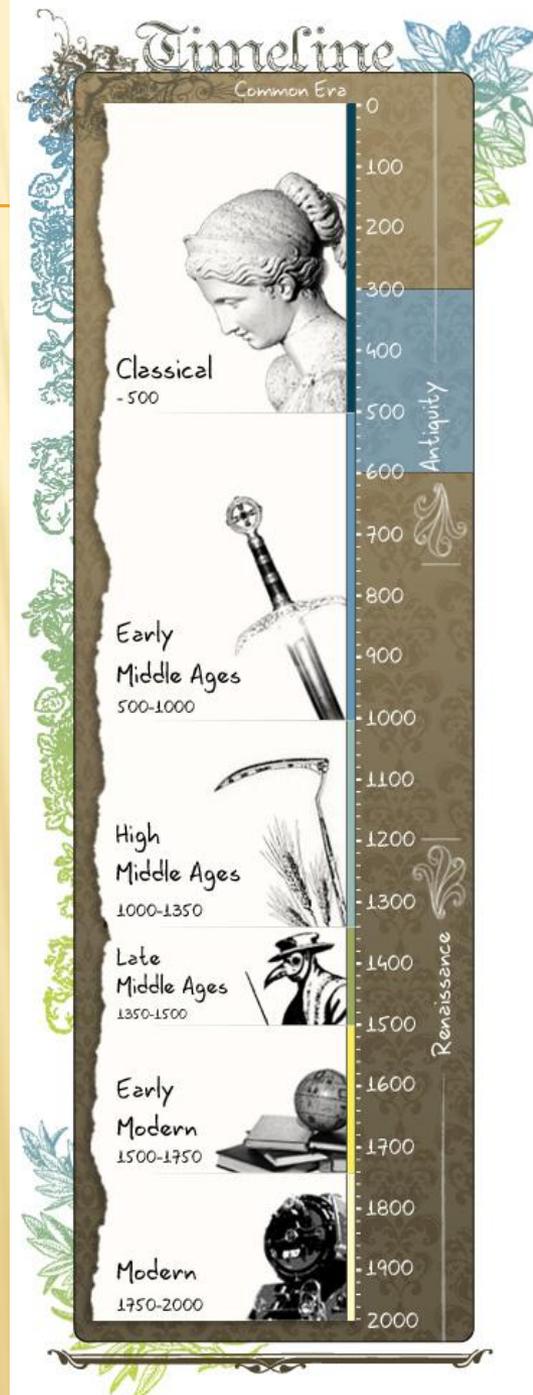


What's so "middle" about it?

INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE AGES

WHAT ARE THE MIDDLE AGES?

- ✘ The period of the Middle Ages begins in roughly 500 CE and lasts up to about 1450.
- ✘ Why do historians use this periodization?
 - + Thank you Leonardo Bruni!
- ✘ What is historical periodization?
- ✘ What two periods bookend the Middle Ages?



THE FALL OF A MIGHTY EMPIRE

- ✘ The Ancient Roman Emperors controlled most of Europe for roughly 500 years
- ✘ After Constantine created a capital at Byzantium, the West began to crumble
- ✘ Rome fell to barbarians in 476 CE



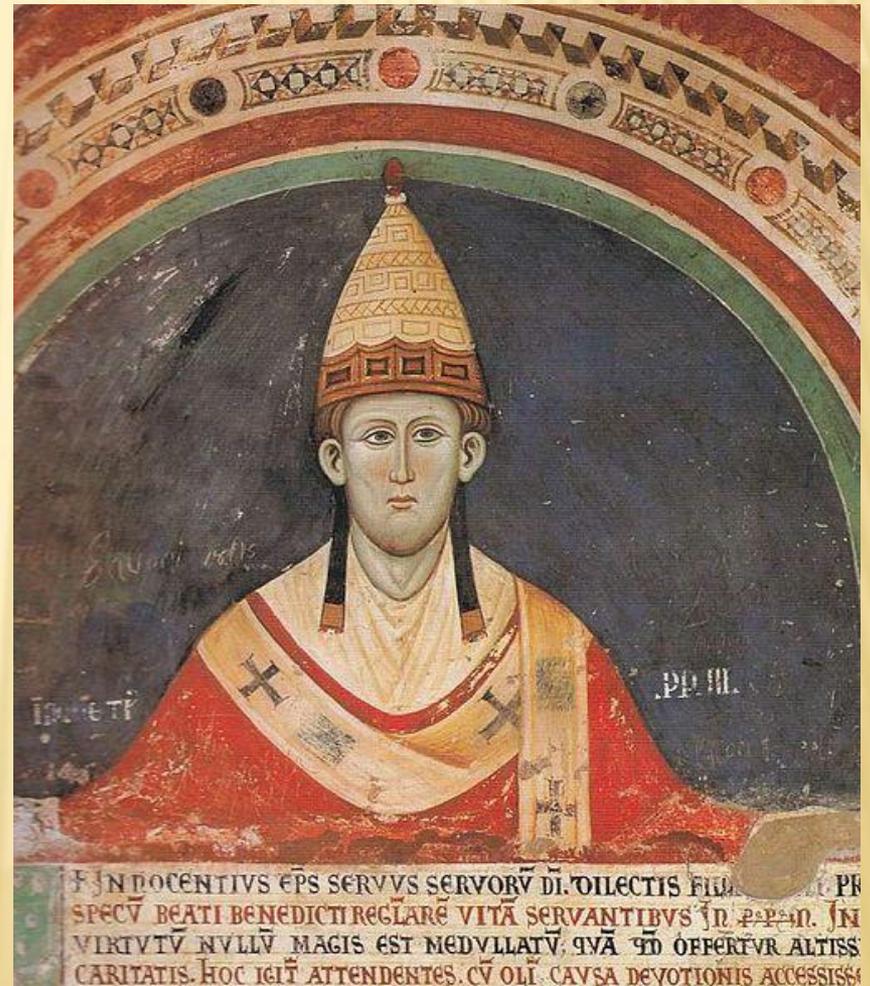
“THE DARK AGES” - PETRARCH

- ✘ As life in Europe became localized, trade virtually disappeared
 - + Villages became self-sufficient
 - + Towns were basically non-existent
- ✘ All contact with the flourishing east (Byzantine and Islam) had been lost!
 - + The greatness of antiquity had been forgotten!



ONE UNIFYING FORCE

- ✘ Politically, Europe was a mess during the Middle Ages!
- ✘ However, by the 11th century, Western Europe was unified religiously by the Latin Church centered in Rome
- ✘ 1054 – Great Schism of East and West
 - + Western Europe had now emerged under the centralizing power of the Roman Pontiff!

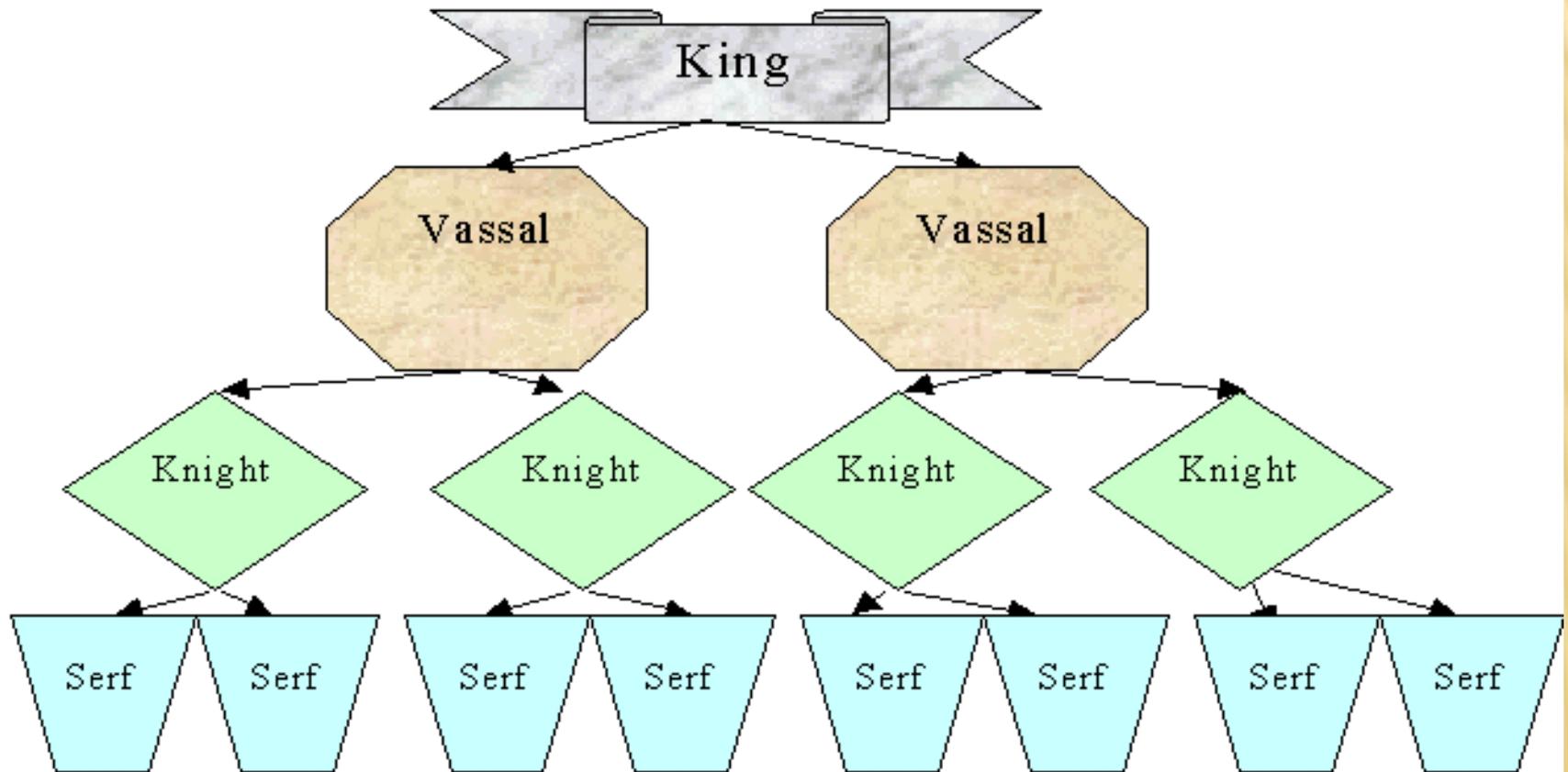


A VIEW OF SOCIETY IN MIDDLE AGES

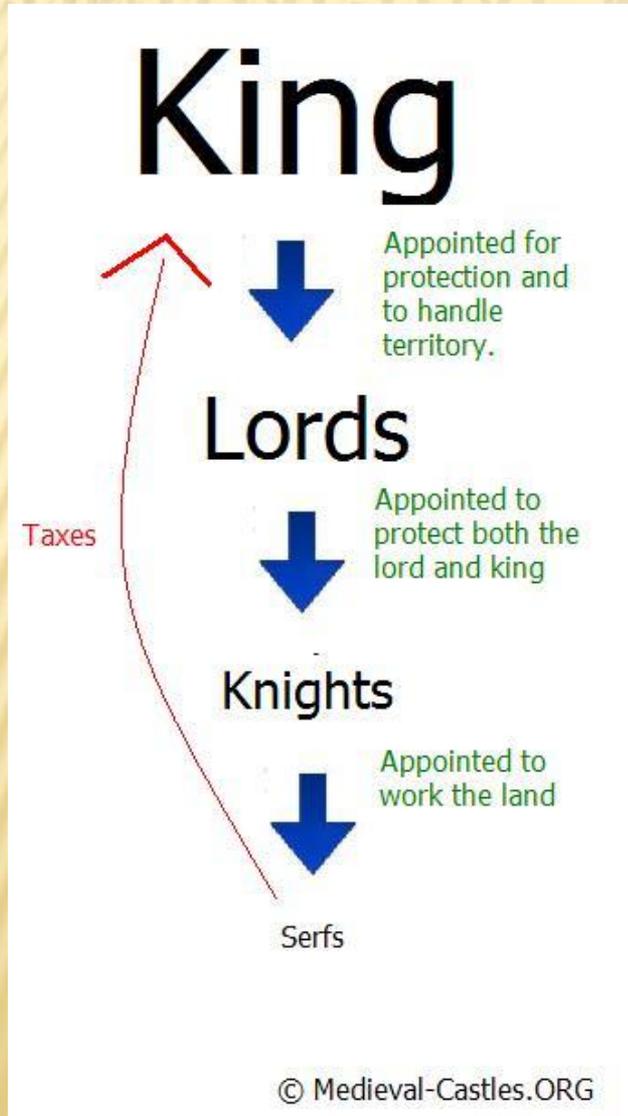
- ✘ After the fall of the Carolingian Empire and the subsequent invasions of the 9th Century, the system of feudalism was firmly established
- ✘ Three broad groups existed within this system
 - + Those Who Pray
 - ✘ Monks living in monasteries across Europe
 - + Those Who Work
 - ✘ Peasants vs. Serfs
 - + Those Who Fight
 - ✘ Lords and their vassals, including knights



SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN THE MIDDLE AGES



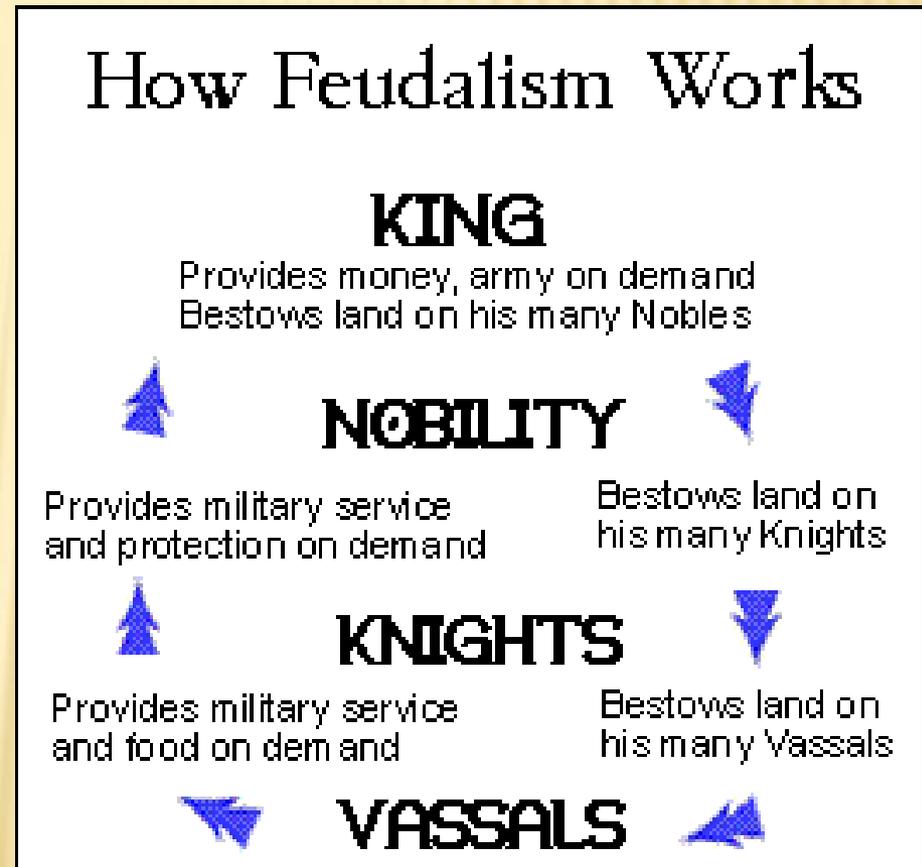
CONTRACTUAL NATURE OF FEUDALISM



- ✗ Feudal Europe existed at two broad levels.
 - + 1. The Lord/Vassal relationship
 - + 2. The feudal noble and those that lived on his estate or fief – the peasants, most of whom were serfs.

WHAT EXACTLY IS FEUDALISM?

- ✘ Feudalism defined:
 - + A social and political system based upon bonds of loyalty and grants of a fief by a mighty lord to a lesser lord, his vassal.
- ✘ In return, the vassals promised to fight and protect the greater lord
 - + Is this really a hierarchical structure?

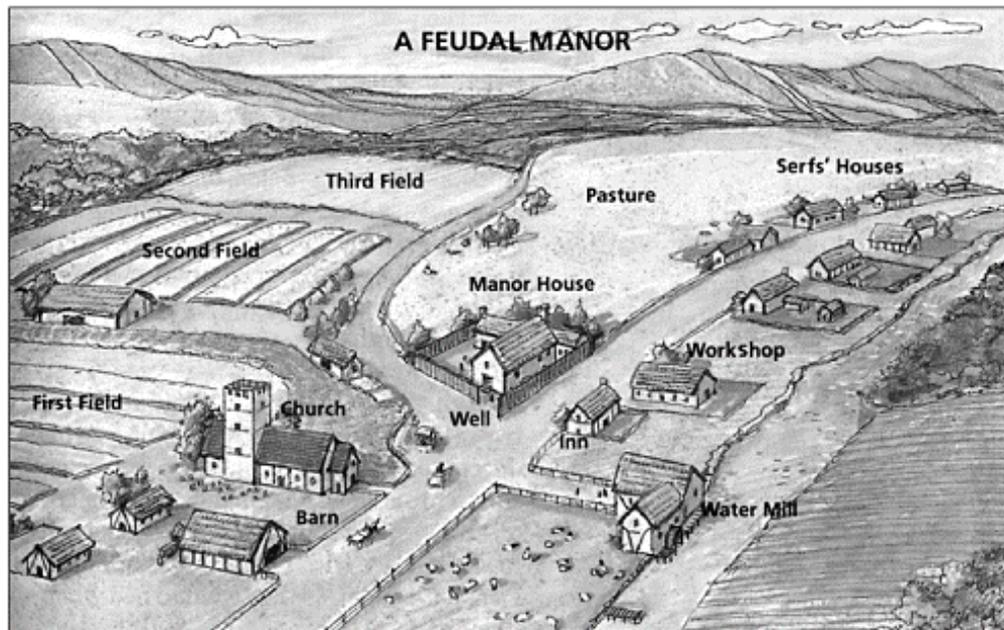


THOSE WHO WORKED - SERFDOM

- ✘ Serfdom defined:
 - + A non-free person residing on the lord's land, who while retaining certain rights of personage, was required to perform labor service on the lord's land.
- ✘ A slave – the human property of the lord.
- ✘ Serfdom was a hereditary condition and serfs had to pay their lord a variety of taxes



WHAT DID THE FIEF LOOK LIKE?

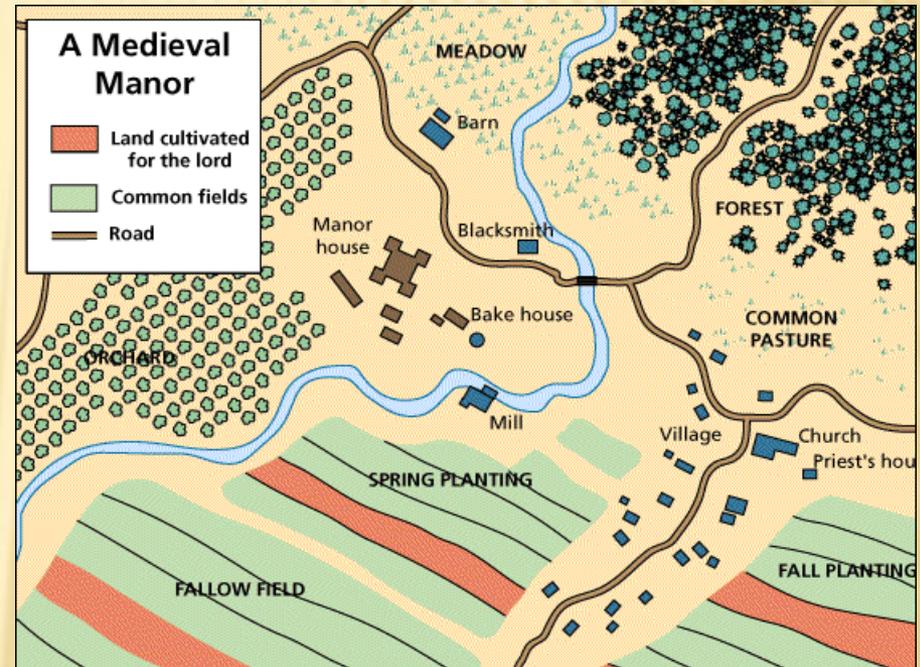


Source: Michael B. Petrovich et al., *People in Time and Place: World Cultures*, Silver, Burdett & Ginn, 1991

- ✘ Manor House – Where the lord or his representative lived.
- ✘ Fields were worked communally, with two fields planted yearly.
 - + Third field would lay fallow.
- ✘ What else is in the picture?

ECONOMY OF MIDDLE AGES - MANORIALISM

- ✘ Because the economic power of the lords and vassals was linked to landed estates, they needed a group of people to work the land
- ✘ Manorialism was based upon the services and obligations of the peasant classes.
- ✘ Hence, feudalism gave rise to manorialism!

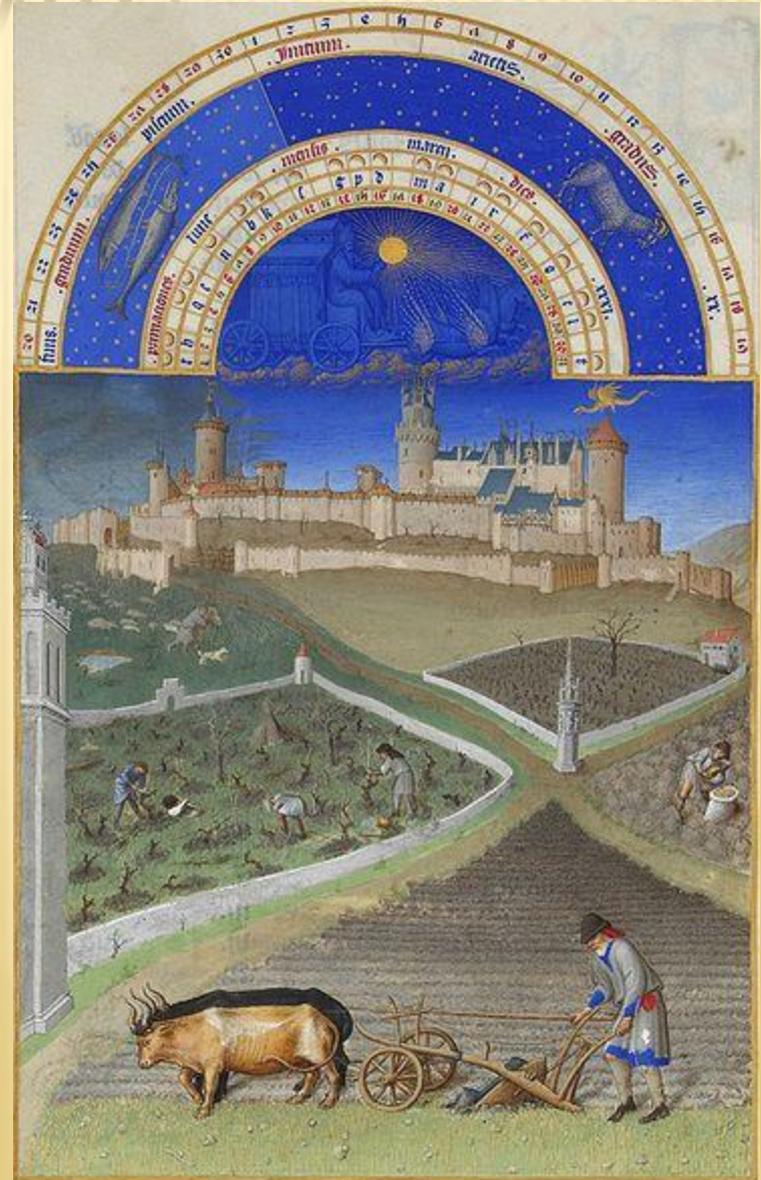


TIED TO THE LAND! BUT WHY?

- ✘ “By the year 800, perhaps 60 % of the population of western Europe – completely free a century before – had been reduced to serfdom.”

McKay, A History of Western Society, p. 262

- ✘ Why would peasants surrender themselves to the lord’s jurisdiction?
 - + For protection! From whom?



CHECK YOUR COMPREHENSION

- ✘ Why are the Middle Ages so called?
- ✘ What are some synonyms for the Middle Ages?
- ✘ What is the periodization for the Middle Ages?
- ✘ Describe the social structure of the Middle Ages.
- ✘ Describe the link between feudalism and manorialism.

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

- ✘ Renaissance or rebirth, seeks to (re)capture the emphasis and brilliance of learning and literature that existed back during....?
- ✘ Is it a true break from the Middle Ages or an evolution?
 - + First, the upheaval of the 14th Century!

