Chapter 2: Europe’s High Middle Ages

I. William the Conqueror and the Feudal System

 1. WtC introduces feudal system to England

 a) knights need land to support them

b) take land away from defeated earls and given to Norman knights

 2. Norman feudalism is different from Eng system

a) English ppl don’t like change

 b) WtC forces feudalism on English

 c) WtC establishes feudalism w/in 5 yrs

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1. The Feudal Contract

1. feudal system is based on 3Fs

 a) FIEF (land)

 i) land is basis of all wealth

 ii) land given to nobles for loyalty

 b) FEALTY (loyalty)

 i) nobles swear oath of loyalty

 c) FAITH (religion)

 i) religious faith binds nobles to their oath of loyalty

2. nobles in return for land have obligations to their lord

 a) serve in king’s army for x number of days (usually about 40)

 b) supply king w/ knights during war

 c) serve in king’s court

 i) giving advice

 d) give $$$$ to king on special occasions

 i) marriage of king’s children

 ii) son gets knighted

3. king’s responsibilities

 a) protect and provide justice

4. oath of allegiance seals feudal contract

 a) king has vassals 🡪 these lords take their own vassals 🡪 who take their vassals etc…

 b) peace is maintained as long as each lord and vassal live up to their oath

5. all vassals are tenants who have land under their direct control

 a) vassals of king aka barons aka tenant-in-chief

 i) vassals of baron 🡪 tenants…and their vassals 🡪 sub-tenants

 b) nobles keep land for themselves 🡪 aka lord of the manor

 i) serfs/freeholders work the land

6. serfs & freeholders make up 90% of population

 a) have no power

 b) freeholders own their land

 i) have to pay yrly fee to lord of the manor

 c) serfs are property = part of land

 i) land cannot be taken away from them

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II. Medieval Life and Custom

 A. The Manor

 1. manor is self-sufficient

 a) each manor has farmlands, woodland, common pasture and at least

 one village

 a) made up of: farmland

 woodland

 common pasture

 village

 b) provides enough food for everyone

 c) manor village: church

 mill

 blacksmith

 tannery

 d) have skilled ppl to do most jobs: thatching a roof

 fletching an arrow

2. manor villages usually located near water source

 a) water provides: drinking water

 power (mills)

 b) access to hay fields 🡪 feed for livestock

 c) forest 🡪 firewood and for hunting

3. demesne is land under direct control of lord

 a) made up of: gardens

 orchards

 strips of land (farms)

 b) rest of manor fields used by/belong to serfs/freeholders

 c) bailiffs are hired to manage the estate

 B. Ordinary People

 1. serfs/freeholder provide labour on estate, have lowest standard of living

 a) serfs are part of property can’t leave land

 b) serfs’ duties: work 2-3 days/week for lord: ploughing

 planting

 weeding

 harvesting

 c) strips of land given to serfs to farm…everyone has access to river

 d) strips of land was passed on generation to generatn

 e) % of produce given to lord of manor…the rest is for family consumption

 and to sell

 2. serfs diet was supplemented with small vegetable/herb garden

 a) owned livestock: cows

 sheep

 horse

 pigs

 chickens

 ducks

 b) average males consumes 5000 calories/day (bread and beer)

 c) also ate: herring

 onions

 leeks

 cheese

 fruit

 peas

 eggs

 milk

 d) manure was used as fertilizer