

Section 3

The Development of European Feudalism

Key Ideas

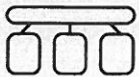
- Invasions by Vikings and other groups created disorder in Europe.
- Feudalism brought social and political order to Europe.
- Manorialism created many small, self-sufficient economic units.

Key Terms

- vassal
- fief
- knight
- chivalry
- manor
- serf



Visual Glossary



Reading Skill Identify Main Ideas and Details Take notes using the graphic organizer in your journal.

Charlemagne was able to unite much of Western Europe. After his death, however, his empire split apart. The collapse of Charlemagne's empire left Western Europe open to invasion. It also led to the development of a new system of life called feudalism.

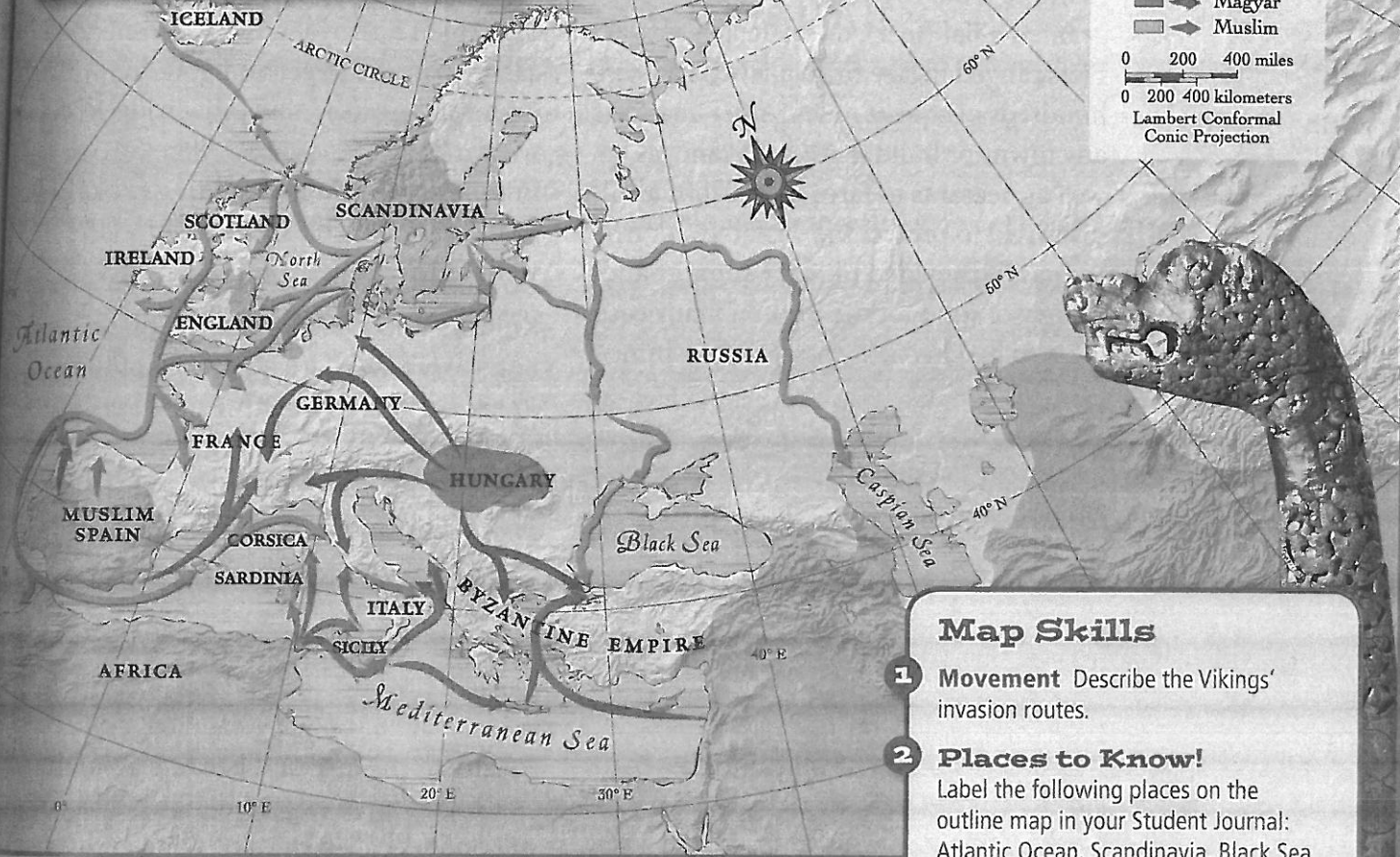
A Violent Time

During the years between 800 and 1000, invaders threatened Western Europe from all directions. From the east came a people called the Magyars, who conquered what is now Hungary. They made fearsome raids into Germany, Italy, and other parts of Western Europe. From the south and east came Muslim soldiers from Spain, North Africa, and southwest Asia. In the late 800s, they conquered the island of Sicily, which became a thriving center of Muslim culture.

Viking Invasions The boldest and most successful invaders were the Vikings. They were from Scandinavia, a region of northern Europe that now includes Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In the late 700s, Viking sailors began raiding monasteries in Scotland, England, and Ireland. Monasteries were ideal targets because they were often wealthy and poorly defended. Viking raiders also looted and burned farms and villages. They sailed up rivers into the heart of Europe, where they attacked villages and burned churches in Paris.

▲ A Viking helmet, about 800–900

Invasions of Europe, 700–1000



Map Skills

- 1 **Movement** Describe the Vikings' invasion routes.
- 2 **Places to Know!** Label the following places on the outline map in your Student Journal: Atlantic Ocean, Scandinavia, Black Sea.

Viking Exploration and Trade The Vikings were not just destructive raiders. They were also farmers, traders, and explorers who sailed throughout the North Atlantic Ocean. Some ventured into the Mediterranean Sea. Around the year 1000, Vikings established a short-lived colony in North America. They also settled in England, Ireland, northern France, and parts of Russia, where they mixed with the local populations. Viking travel in Russia helped open up trade routes between southwest Asia and Western Europe.

Reading Check What areas of Europe did the Vikings invade?

A Feudal Society

In the early Middle Ages, kings and emperors were too weak to protect their people from Magyar, Muslim, and Viking invasions. Instead, powerful local lords took over the responsibility of protecting people's homes and lands. The result was a system of feudalism that had some similarities to that of medieval Japan.

Lords and Vassals European feudalism was a system of rule in which powerful lords divided their lands among lesser lords, or **vassals**. In exchange for the land, a vassal pledged his service and **loyalty** to the more powerful lord.

▲ The carved head of a beast from a Viking ship

loyalty, *n.*, the state of being faithful



▲ A medieval seal shows a knight fighting a dragon.

In the feudal system, a powerful lord granted a **fief** (feef), or estate, to a vassal. Fiefs ranged in size from a few acres to hundreds of square miles. A fief included any towns or buildings on the land, as well as peasants to farm it. The lord also promised to protect the vassal. In return, the vassal provided military support and money or food for the lord. In many cases, a vassal had his own vassals below him.

European lords built castles from which they ruled nearby lands. Over time, these castles became larger and grander, with high walls, towers, and drawbridges over wide moats. These castles were fortresses in times of war. When fighting broke out, local peasants took shelter behind the walls of the castle.

Knights and Warfare For medieval lords and vassals, warfare was a way of life. Lords battled constantly for power. As a result, many boys and young men from noble families trained to become **knights**, or warriors mounted on horseback.

Around the age of seven, a boy who was to become a knight was sent to the castle of his father's lord. There, he learned how to fight and ride a horse. After years of training, he pledged his loyalty to the lord and became a knight.

Knights were expected to live by a code of conduct called **chivalry**, which required them to be brave, loyal, and generous. They had to fight fairly in battle. A medieval poet described the ideal knight:

“A knight there was, and that a worthy man,
Who . . . vowed himself to chivalry,
Honour and truth, freedom and courtesy . . .
He was a very perfect gentle knight.”

—Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

During war, knights served their lords in battle. Knights usually fought on horseback. They used swords, axes, and lances, or long spears. Early medieval knights wore armor made of chain mail with thousands of small metal rings.

Feudalism in Medieval Europe



King

Provides money, recruits army on demand, grants land to his many lords



Lords

Protect the king and manage territory



Knights & Vassals

Protect both the lords and the king



Peasants and Serfs

Work the land

Chart Skills

Describe the relationships among different levels of society under feudalism.

KNIGHTS AND CASTLES

Medieval knights fought to protect their lord's lands and castle. Early castles were often built on raised land, such as the castle at right in this illustration. They were surrounded by ditches, which were sometimes filled with water, and wooden fences. The lord's servants lived in the enclosed courtyard below the castle.



▲ An English knight's helmet

◀ A suit of armor

▲ Knights usually fought on horseback.

Later in the Middle Ages, knights wore heavy plate armor made of solid metal.

Comparing European and Japanese Feudalism Japan also had a feudal system. European and Japanese feudalism shared some features. Both began during a time of warfare and involved an exchange of land for services. Both European knights and Japanese samurai were expected to show honor, bravery, and loyalty.

The two forms of feudalism had a major difference: religion. Most Europeans were Christian. Japanese feudalism was influenced by ideas from Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism. As a result, Europeans and Japanese had very different spiritual beliefs and views of the world.

Reading Check In what ways did lords have power over medieval life?

The Medieval Manor

The heart of the medieval economy was the **manor**, or the agricultural estate of a medieval lord. Manors were centered around the lord's house or castle. In addition to the lord's house, a manor usually included one or more villages and the surrounding fields and forests.

Peasants and Serfs Peasants made up the majority of the medieval population. Most people who lived and worked on a manor were peasants. Many of these peasants were **serfs**, or peasants who were legally bound to the lord's land. Serfs were not slaves who could be bought and sold, but they were not free. They could not leave the manor without the lord's permission. If the manor was given to a new lord, the serfs went along with it.

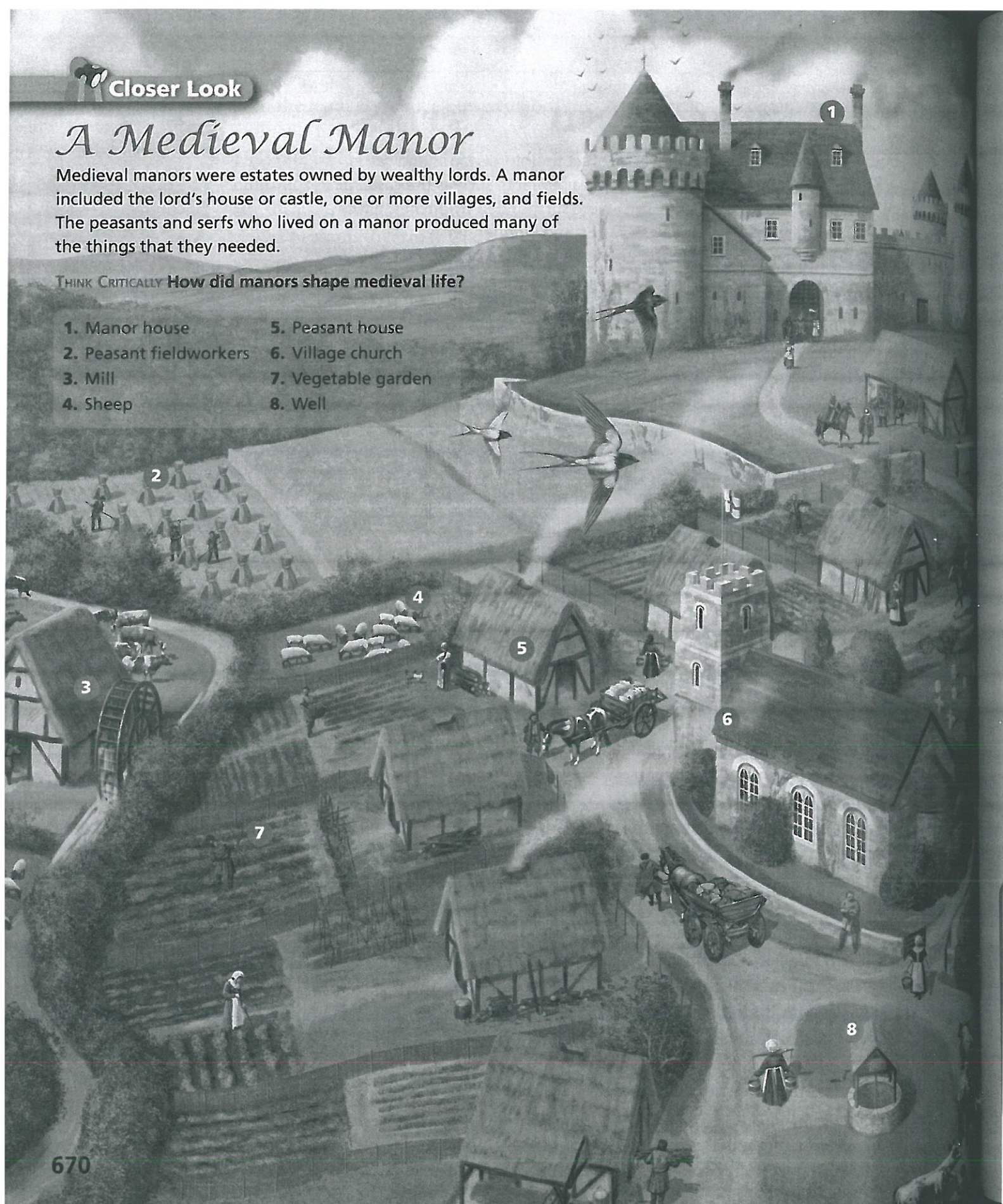


A Medieval Manor

Medieval manors were estates owned by wealthy lords. A manor included the lord's house or castle, one or more villages, and fields. The peasants and serfs who lived on a manor produced many of the things that they needed.

THINK CRITICALLY **How did manors shape medieval life?**

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Manor house | 5. Peasant house |
| 2. Peasant fieldworkers | 6. Village church |
| 3. Mill | 7. Vegetable garden |
| 4. Sheep | 8. Well |



Life on the Manor Manors produced a wide range of goods and services, but they could not produce everything people needed. For that, people traveled to nearby market towns. Still, in the early Middle Ages, most peasants spent much of their lives in the places where they were born.

The peasants on a manor worked together to plant, care for, and harvest crops on the lord's lands. They generally worked about two or three days a week on the lord's land. At planting and harvest time they worked longer.

Peasants spent much of the remainder of their time growing crops for themselves and their families. They did so on land that the lord allowed them to use for this purpose. Peasants were also allowed to cut wood from the lord's forests to use for fuel and for building. They ground grain into flour at the lord's mill.

Peasants raised sheep, pigs, and cattle for meat. Women spun sheep's wool or linen fibers into thread. They wove woolen and linen cloth into clothing. Specialists

such as carpenters and blacksmiths also lived and worked on the manor.

Managing the Manor In the early Middle Ages, the lord's wife ran the household. Because the lady was from a noble family, she probably was educated. She had learned Latin and her own language, as well as music, astronomy, and herbal remedies.

As the manor system developed during the Middle Ages, male officials gradually took over the running of the manor. The lord of the manor judged minor crimes and settled arguments among people on his manor. His officials looked after day-to-day affairs. The bailiff kept the estate's accounts and served as judge when the lord was away. The bailiff also collected taxes from the peasants, often in the form of farm products. Another official was the reeve, who was usually elected by the villagers. He had jobs such as repairing buildings and overseeing peasants at work.

Reading Check Why did ordinary people rarely leave the manor on which they lived?



Today, people move more often than in the Middle Ages.

Nearly **12%** of Americans moved in **2008**.



myWorld Activity
Matching Game

Section 3 Assessment

Key Terms

1. What was a manor?
2. Did serfs or vassals have more power in medieval Europe?
3. What was a fief?

Key Ideas

4. What groups of invaders threatened Europe between 800 and 1000?
5. How were manors self-sufficient?
6. How did the concept of chivalry affect knights?

Think Critically

7. **Compare and Contrast** How were European and Japanese feudalism similar and different?
8. **Synthesize** How did feudalism shape medieval Europe?



Essential Question

What is power? Who should have it?

9. How did feudalism and the manor system affect the lives of people in medieval Europe? Go to your Student Journal to record your answer.