

REGIONAL CIVILIZATIONS**Simulation: A Medieval Manor****Background and Setting**

The European feudal system arose in the early Frankish kingdoms of the eighth century (areas that are now France and western Germany). In the feudal system, the lord granted wealthy vassals the use of land in exchange for their service, loyalty, and respect, as well as a portion of their profits. The vassals in turn controlled many serfs who were bound to their land.

The feudal system was not static—lands were inherited, changed hands through marriage, or were exchanged for other territories. Each change in land holdings meant a change in loyalties and allegiances between lords and vassals.

This simulation is set in France in the 1200s. Lord Denis has inherited the lands of his uncle, Count Stephen. Lord Denis must meet with the lesser nobles who were his uncle's vassals. These vassals must establish allegiance to their new lord. They must also either confirm or change their agreements concerning serfs, land, and duties.

Materials

Student Book Chapter: The Rise of Europe, Section 2

Handout 1: Power Struggles in France [one per student]

Handout 2: Map of the Manor Lands and Fiefdoms [one per student]

Handout 3: Medieval Texts [one per student]

Roles

Students will take on the roles of Lord Denis, his steward (the manager of the lands), and the lesser lords and ladies (vassals). The remaining students will play the servants and serfs of the various estates.

- Lord Denis, the liege lord
- Etienne de Carnet, his steward
- Lady Eleanor of Rochfort
- Lord Robert of Charlot
- Lord Philip of Marron
- Lord Hugh of Lagrange
- Servants and serfs of each manor (Rochfort, Charlot, Marron, Lagrange)

Issues and Objectives

Students will consider the issues and crises of the time [Handout 1]. After studying the map of Lord Denis's lands and their own manors, holdings, and responsibilities [Handout 2], each lesser noble must decide whether he or she is satisfied with the present division of lands, manors, and serfs. Before they swear their allegiance to Lord Denis, students should critically think about what influences a person's loyalty to an authority figure [Handout 3]. Then, they should specifically consider these:

- the fairness of the land divisions and holdings;
- their responsibilities to their lord;
- external considerations (such as wars, famine, etc.) that may affect their relationship with their lord and with one another.

Simulation: A Medieval Manor *(continued)***Getting Started**

Allow two class periods for this simulation. Assign roles by making slips of paper with the names of Lord Denis, his steward, the lesser lords (vassals), or a servant or serf of an estate. Have students draw these slips at random to determine their social status. Students should make a badge identifying themselves by character or as serfs and indicating to which estate they belong.

Distribute handouts and assign roles at least a week before discussions begin to give students time to get acquainted with the

material and for the vassals to prepare to negotiate the terms of their allegiance. Provide students with enough time to negotiate terms with one another and swear their allegiance to Lord Denis.

Conclusion

Lord Denis and his steward must work out agreements that satisfy all the nobles. Serfs, lands, and manors may change hands. Lord Denis and his steward may question the vassals, as well as the serfs and servants regarding their treatment.

HANDOUT**1****REGIONAL CIVILIZATIONS****Simulation: A Medieval Manor****Power Struggles in France****1200s**

Fairs are now an important part of trade and commerce between merchants from all parts of Europe. Available commodities include wool and tin from England, iron from Spain, wine from France.

1202

Philip II Augustus, King of France, invades Normandy, making it a French province in 1204.

1214

England invades France but is rebuffed by Philip II Augustus and his armies.

1223

Philip II Augustus dies; Louis VIII becomes king.

1226

Louis VIII brings rebellion in southern France under control but dies upon return. His son, Louis IX, becomes king at age 12; responsible for major government reforms.

1229

English forces land in Brittany, attempt to expand through western France. Louis IX, age 15, successfully leads troops against them, pushing them out.

1247

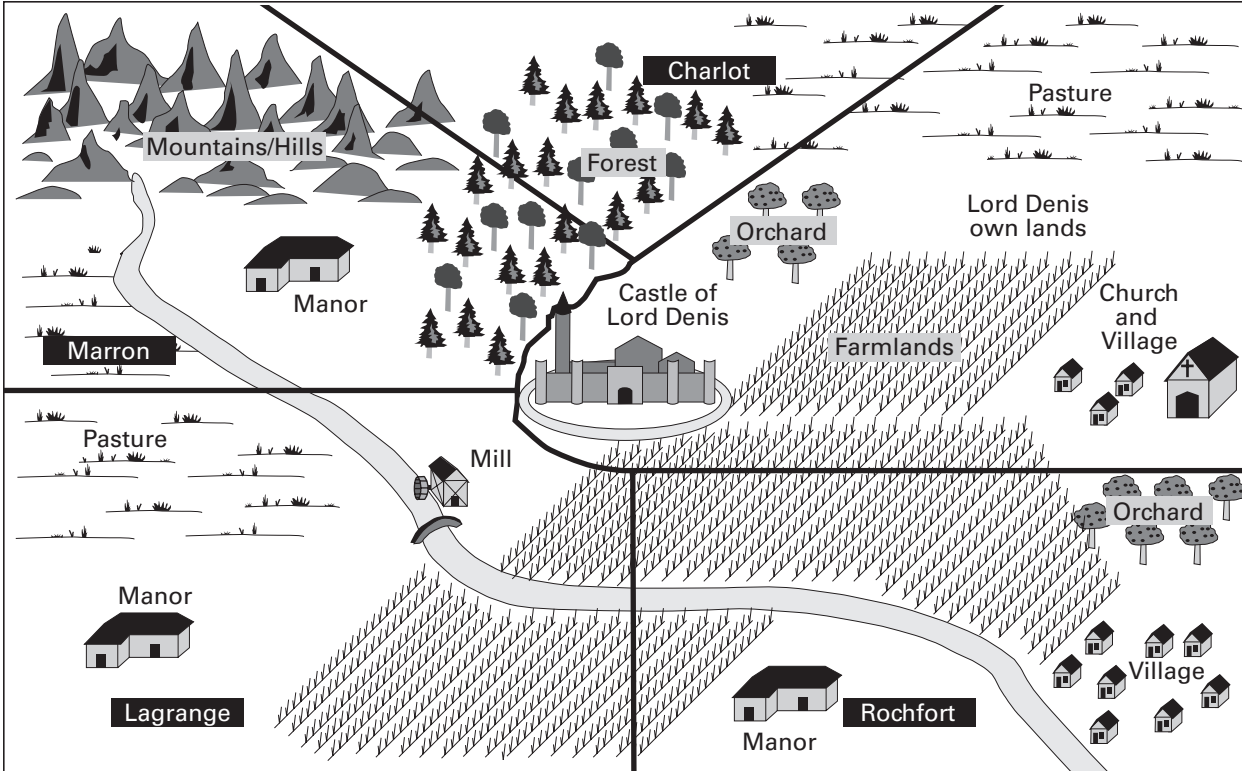
Investigations begin into abuses of power by local administrators and their subordinates, who use their royal posts for personal profit.

Late 1290s

Migration from countryside to towns increases as peasants search for better opportunities.

Simulation: A Medieval Manor

Map of the Manor Lands and Fiefdoms



Manor	Vassals	Will supply lord with
Marron	12 serfs and peasants 3 foresters	10 armed soldiers (in wartime) 30 pounds fish per month 200 pounds venison per year
Lagrange	18 serfs and peasants 2 shepherds or cattleherds 1 miller	20 pounds fish per month 300 pounds meat (pork, lamb) 100 pounds wheat flour 12 armed soldiers (in wartime)
Rochfort	30 serfs and peasants 1 blacksmith	20 armed soldiers (in wartime) 80 bushels fruit 100 yards woven cloth
Charlot	8 serfs and peasants 2 foresters	4 armed soldiers (at all times) 100 pounds venison

Simulation: A Medieval Manor**Medieval Texts****Letter of advice from King Louis IX to his son, Philip III (c. 1269)**

Dear son, since I desire with all my heart that you be well-instructed in all things, it is in my thought to give you some advice this writing. For I have heard you say, several times, that you remember my words better than those of any one else. . . .

Dear son, if you come to the throne, strive to have that which befits a king, that is to say, that in justice and rectitude you hold yourself steadfast and loyal toward your subjects and your vassals, without turning either to the right or to the left, but always straight, whatever may happen. And if a poor man have a quarrel with a rich man, sustain the poor rather than the rich, until the truth is made clear, and when you know the truth, do justice to them.

You should seek earnestly how your vassals and your subjects may live in peace and rectitude beneath your sway; likewise, the good towns and the good cities of your kingdom. . . . For it is by the strength and the riches of your good cities and your good towns that the native and the foreigner, especially your peers and your barons, are deterred from doing ill to you. . . .

Song by Bertrand de Born (c. 1140–1214), nobleman, soldier and troubadour:

My heart is filled with gladness when I see
Strong castles besieged, stockades broken and
overwhelmed,
Many vassals struck down,
Horses of the dead and wounded roving at
random.
And when battle is joined, let all men of good
lineage
Think of naught but the breaking of heads
and arms,
For it is better to die than be vanquished and
live. . . .

The Swearing of Homage

When a Freeman shall do Homage to his Lord of whom he holds in Chief, he shall hold his hands together between the hands of his Lord, and shall say thus: "I become your Man from this day forth, for life, for member, and for worldly honor, and shall [owe] you Faith for the Lands that I hold of you; saving the Faith that I owe unto our Lord the King, and to [mine other Lords.]