

Feudalism

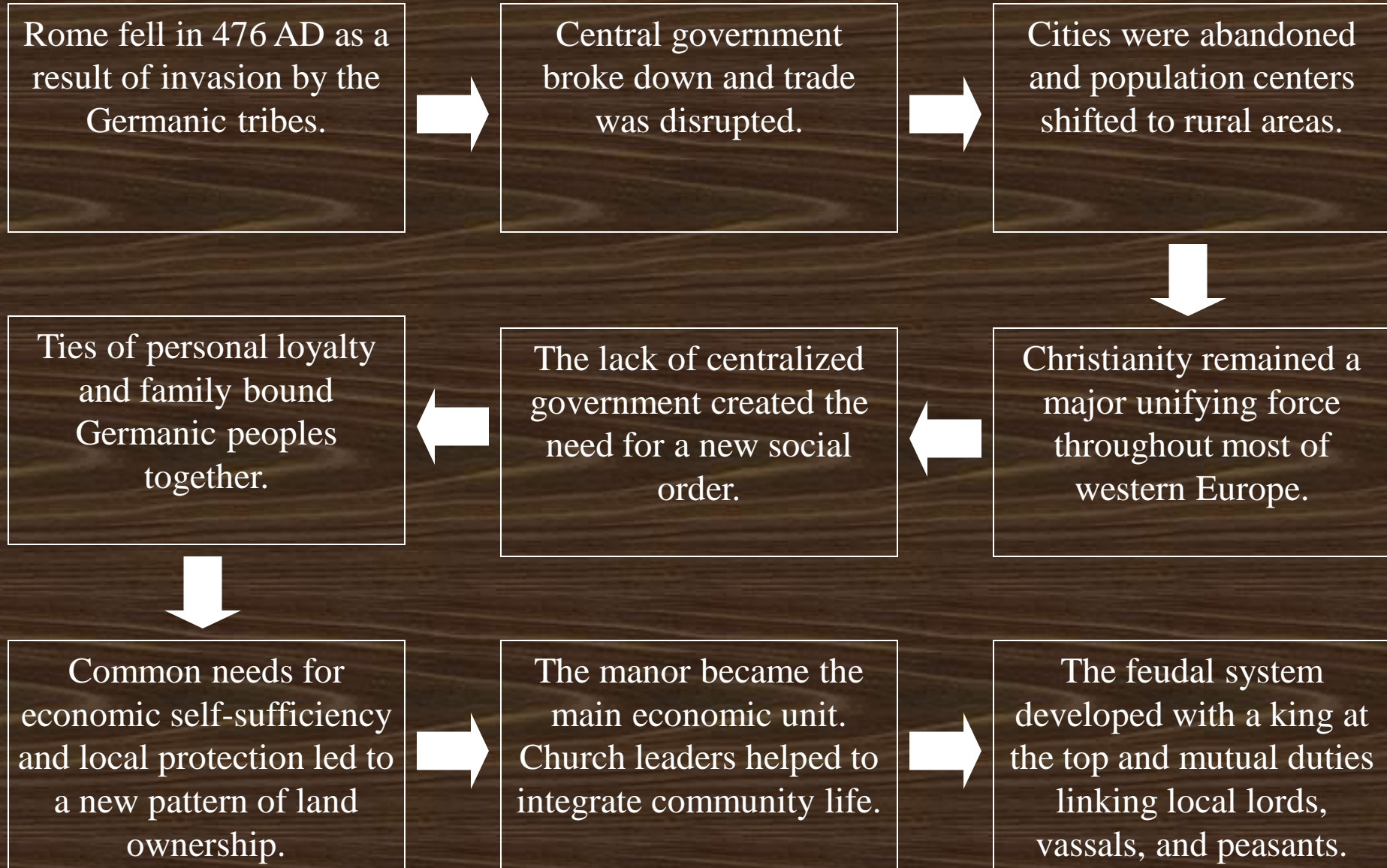


Ms. Rosenberg
Western Civilizations I

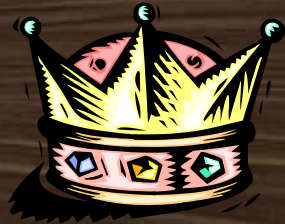
Definitions

- Feudalism – the system of mutual obligations in the middle ages, where land and property are exchanged for loyalty and service
- Manor/Fief – the land (complete with castle and serfs) provided by a lord to his vassal, usually self-sufficient
- Lord – a wealthy noble who owns large amounts of land that is divided among lower lords in his service
- Vassal – a lower nobleman or knight who is given a manor by a lord and in return pledges loyalty and military service
- Serf – a peasant with few rights, tied to the manor

The Development of Feudalism



Land Division in Feudal Society



King kept some as his royal estate.



King gave some to the church.

All land was owned by the king.



Noblemen keep some land for their own estates



King gave some to the most powerful noblemen (barons, dukes, counts)



They shared the land between less wealthy noblemen and knights who served them. The land was divided into manors



The fields of each manor were divided between the free men (who were allowed to own land) and the serfs (who were not). The amount they got depended on how important they were in the village.

A System of Mutual Obligations

The king was the chief ruler and feudal lord. He provides land and protection to his barons and noblemen



Barons and noblemen provide knights for king's army, pay taxes and duties to king to pay for armies and court. Pledge loyalty to the king. They provide land and protection to poorer noblemen and knights.



Poorer noblemen and knights (lords of the manor) provide loyalty to the barons and noblemen, and the king. They fight for the noblemen when asked and pay taxes to help noblemen keep armies. They provide protection to the serfs living on their land.





Serfs are unable to own land or leave the manor without permission. They are allowed to use facilities provided by the lord of the manor (storehouses, ovens, mills, etc). They pay dues at certain times (births, deaths, marriages, taxes, etc) and are fined if found guilty of offences by the lord of the manor. They work for the lord of the manor a set number of days each year. They must fight for their lord as needed. They are given protection by their lord in times of war.





A Medieval Fief

Key to farmland strips

 A single peasant family's holdings

 Lord of the Manor's strips

 Parish priest's strips

 Other peasants' or officials' strips

1 Barn

2 Spring field

3 Autumn field

4 Woodland

5 Orchard (vineyard)

6 Blacksmith's forge

7 Cemetery

8 Church

9 Well

10 Mill

11 Priest's house

12 Inn

13 Rough pasture

14 Lord's oven

15 Villeins' houses

16 Woodland

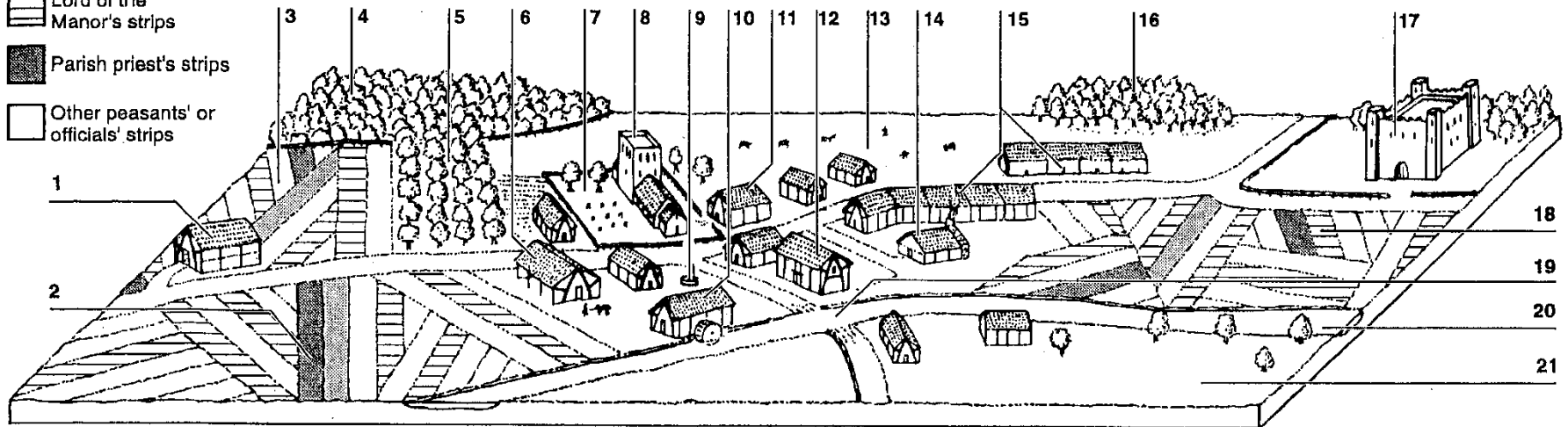
17 Manor house

18 Fallow field

19 Ford

20 River

21 Meadow



A Feudal Contract

The following selection is adapted from a feudal contract made in 1110.

Lord Percival

I, Percival Lord and viscount of Northumbria, acknowledge to my Lord Gilbert abbot of St. Mary of Scarborough that I hold as a fief in Northumbria the following castles and manors ... for all of these fiefs, I swear that I will always be a faithful vassal to thee and I will defend thee, my lord, against all invaders. Moreover, I acknowledge that, as a recognition of the above fiefs, I and my successors ought to come to the monastery of St. Stephen as often as a new abbot shall have been made. And when the abbot shall mount his horse, I and my heirs ought to hold the stirrup. The first time the new abbot enters Northumbria, I will supply him with the best fish and meat and with eggs and cheese and pay for the expense of shoeing his horse. And if I or my sons or their successors do not observe to thee or to thy successors each and all the things declared above, we wish that all the aforesaid fiefs should be handed over to thee and thy successors.

Lord Gilbert

I, therefore, and the aforesaid Lord Gilbert concede to thee all the castles and manors as a fief. And I promise to thee and thy heirs that I will be a good and faithful lord concerning all those things described above.