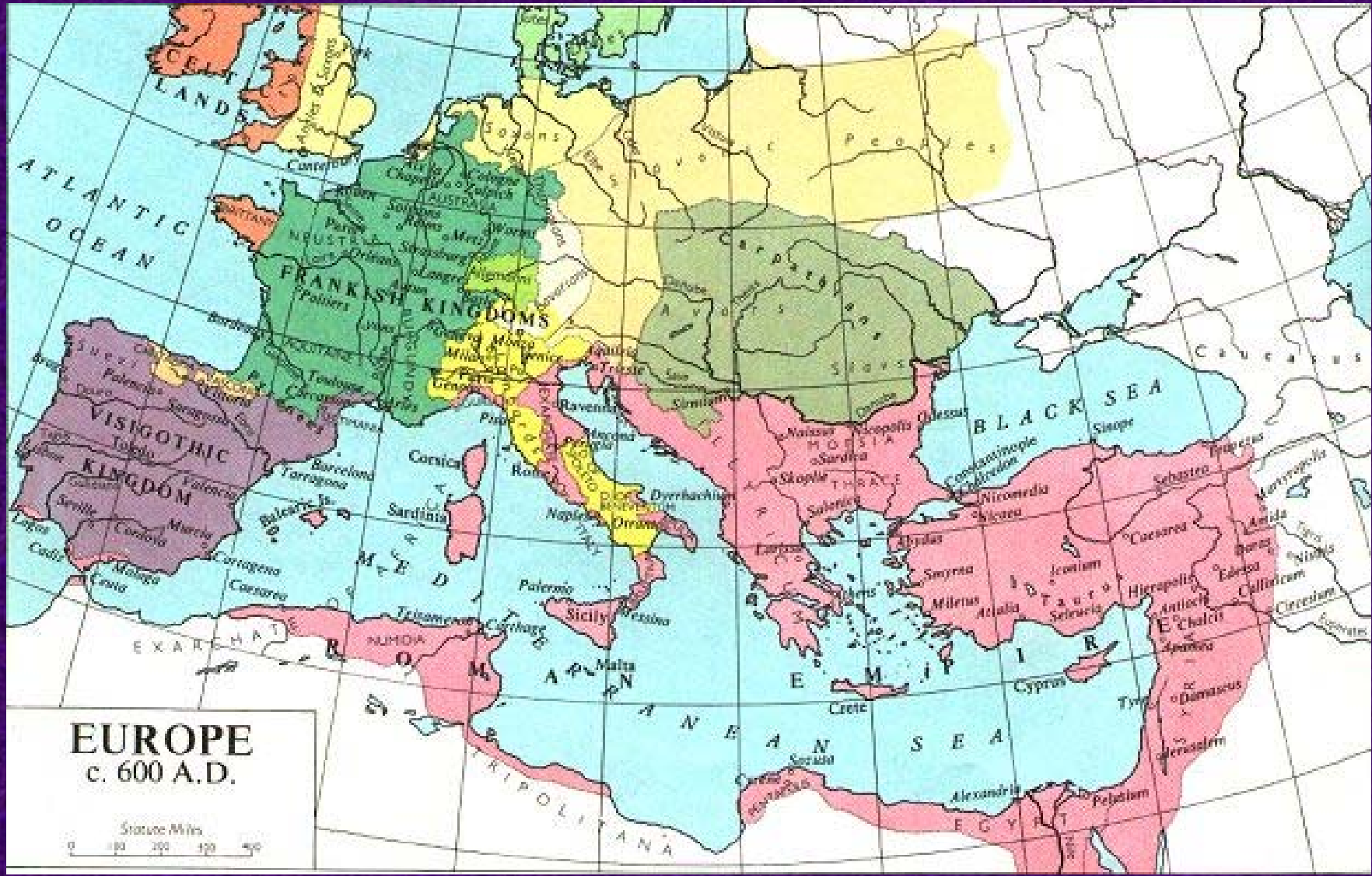


# Medieval Europe & the Western Church

AN AGE OF ACCELERATING CONNECTIONS (600 – 1450)



- The order of the old Roman Empire in the west had fallen to Germanic barbarians (things in the east continued on through Constantinople) causing the rise of various kings and nobles.
- People flocked to the countryside to avoid urban areas that attracted looters and pillagers and sometimes plague.
- Other changes in these *Medieval times*:
  - Decline of learning
  - Loss of common language as new dialects emerged
  - Disruption of trade



**EUROPE**  
c. 600 A.D.

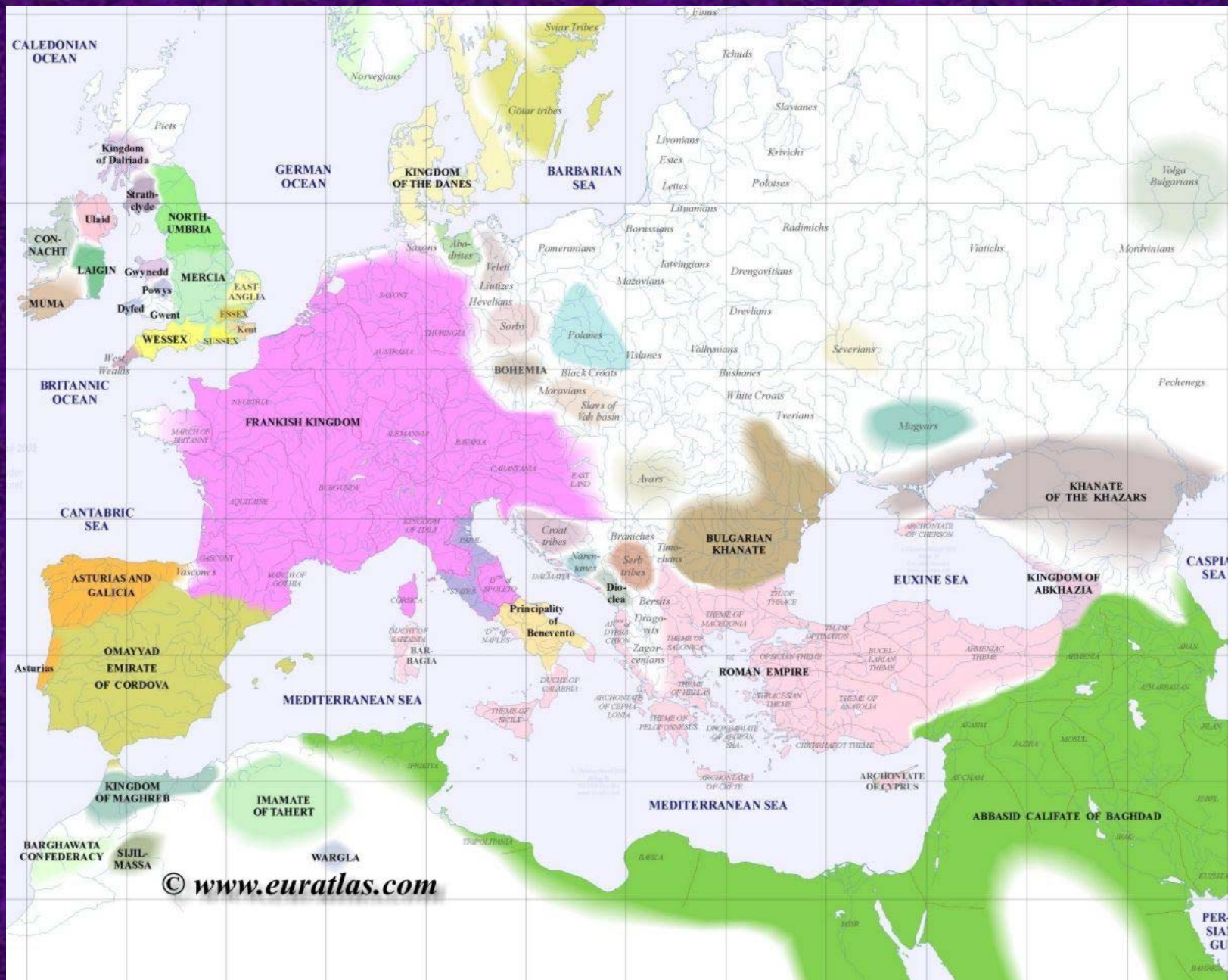


- Islam and Muslim armies entered Europe through Spain and pushed into France.
- They were stopped by Christian soldiers led by Charles Martel (aka Charles the Hammer) at the Battle of Tours in 732 (significance: Islam will not become a dominant religion in Europe).



- Charles Martel and the Carolingian family rose to prominence, eventually becoming king of the Franks (a Germanic group that became influential in the former Roman province of Gaul, think France).
- The family obtained power by cooperating with the Pope (one could not consider themselves king unless they had the backing of God so the pope's endorsement was crucial).
- Martel's grandson Charlemagne ruled at the peak of the Carolingian / Frankish power in Europe (Carolingian Dynasty 751-987).





- When Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious died he left his three sons (Lothair, Louis the German, & Charles the Bald) the empire. The territory was split up under the Treaty of Verdun, 843.



- The three regions (modern France, northern Italy, & Germany) would never be reunited.
- However, the economic system based on landed wealth did continue (feudalism is coming!).



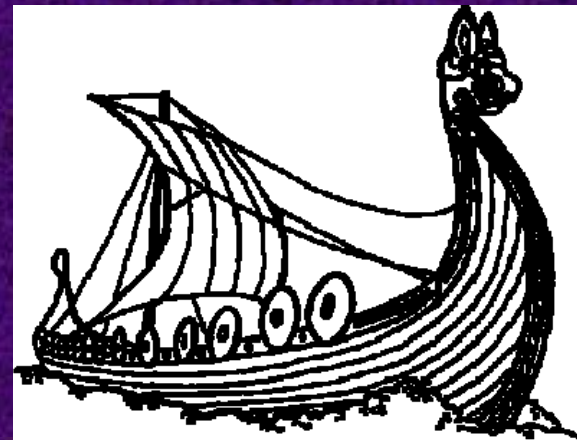


Map 10-2  
*Ways of the World, First Edition*  
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Map 10-3  
*Ways of the World, First Edition*  
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- Another threat to the security of Western Europe came from Scandinavian Vikings who carried out hundreds of raids into England, France, and Spain.
- They were capable of taking their multi-oared “dragon-prowed” boats through the North Atlantic and up continental rivers to attack coastal and inland towns.



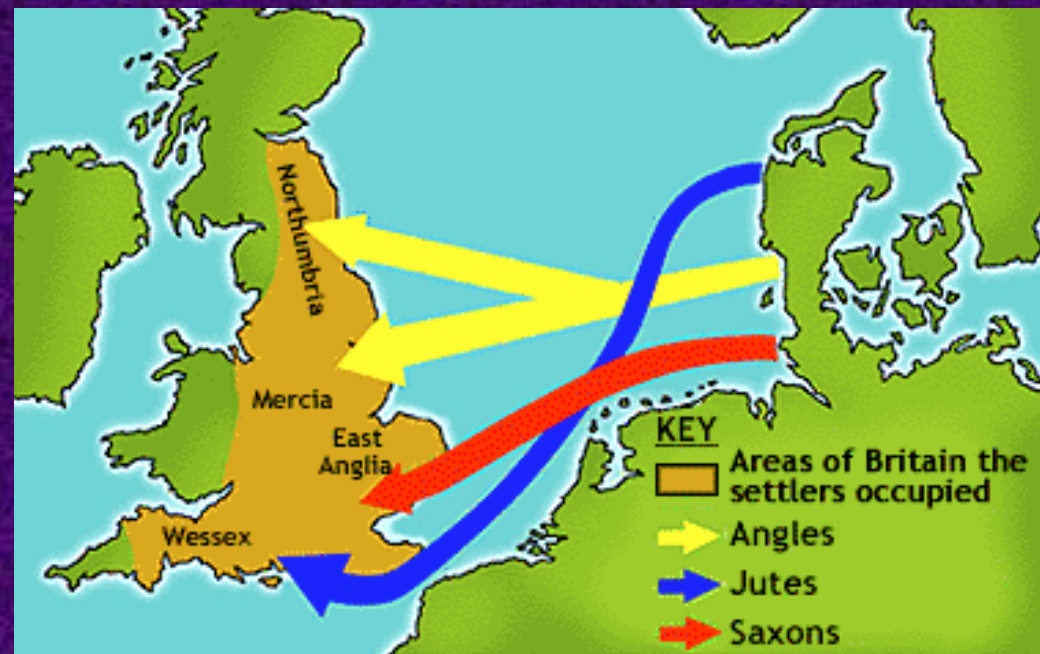
- However, the Vikings didn't just carry out raids, they did establish trading connections and the occasional settlement.

Probably didn't have helmets like this



- Most notably William of Normandy (William the Conqueror) took over Normandy, France and then successfully invaded England in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings and brought Anglo-Saxon dominance in Britain to an end.

- He made all of England his personal property, granted nobles land in return for their loyalty, and as a result unified England under one centralized government.

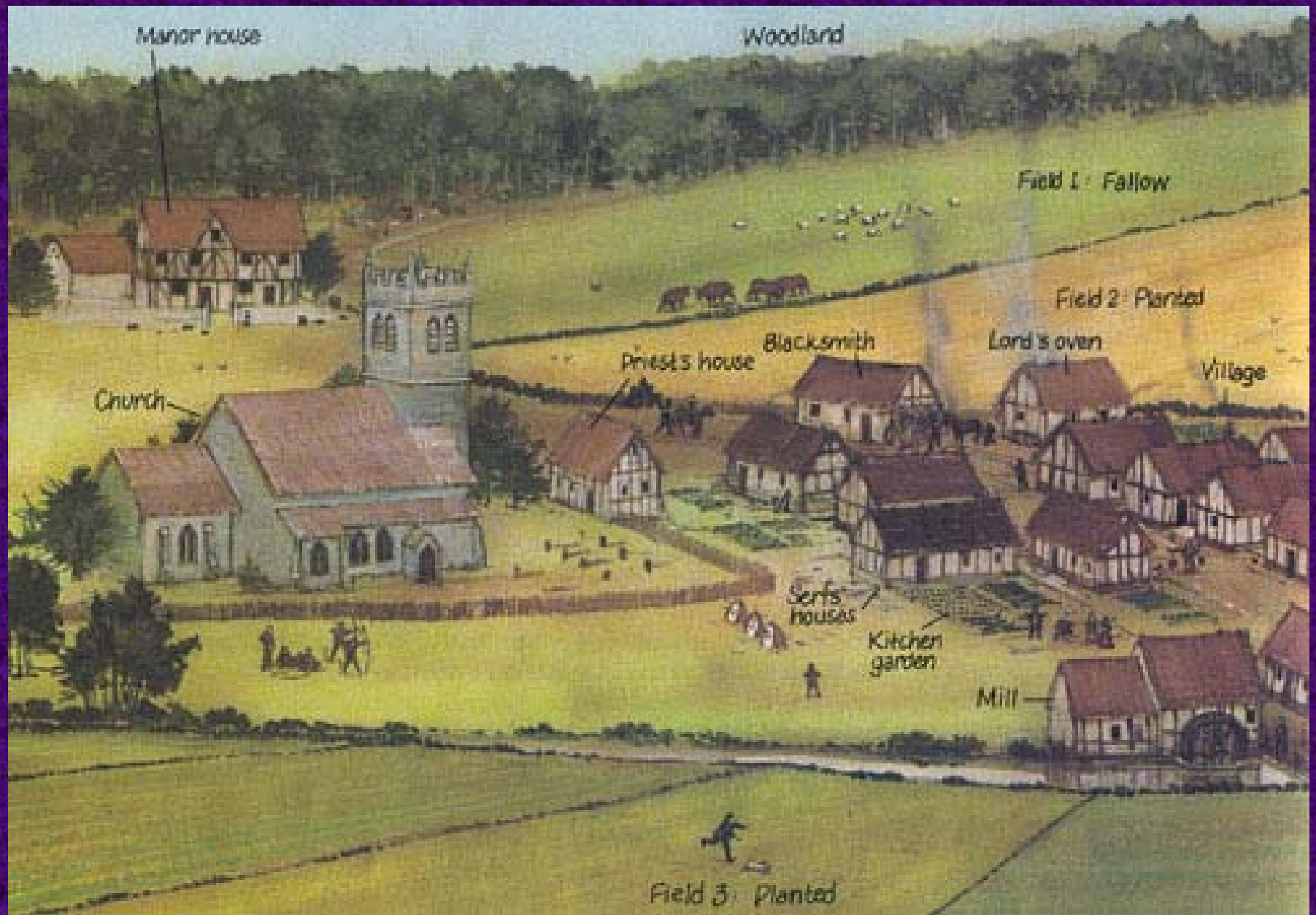


- The new Germanic political order in Europe saw the decline of the urban-based civilization and the rise of scattered thatched housed villages.
- Local sufficiency and the barter system replaced the Roman network of trade and use of coins.



- The diet in northern countries consisted of beer, butter, bread, pork, and forest game. In the south wine, wheat, and olive oil were staples.
- Self-sufficient farming estates (manors) became the primary centers of agricultural production in Europe.



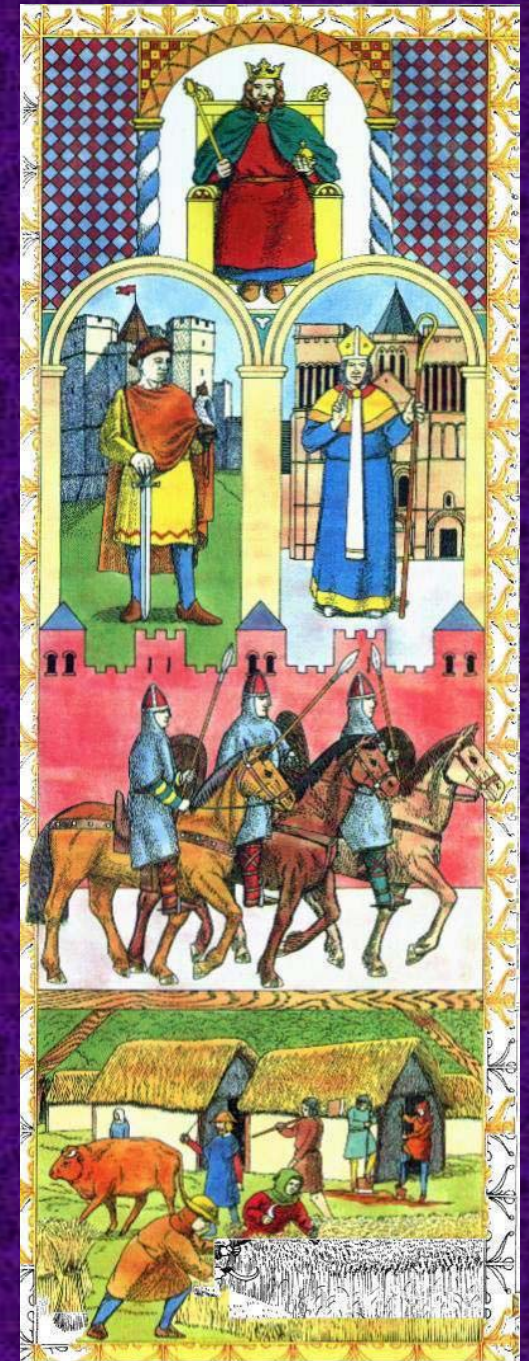




- Small farmers gave up their lands to a large landowner in return for protection from pillagers.
- Nobles exercised unlimited power over the serfs, who were not permitted to leave the manor. (Slavery, an important part of the Roman Empire had been replaced with a new type of system).



- Under feudalism, “mounted” warriors (eventually we will just call these people knights) were given a piece of land (fief) in return for military service.
- The nobles and lords were given land in return for sworn loyalty to the king. (Generally this land could be inherited).



- Kings seldom exercised legal jurisdiction at the local level (leaving it to nobles), nor did they interfere with lands owned by the Church clergy.
- Nobles frequently arranged marriages with other noble families to secure their power for future generations.



- Noblewomen could own land and even administer an estate while her husband was away.
- Peasant women usually worked alongside their menfolk (raked hay, picked vegetables, spun cloth, sheared sheep).



- However, the peasants accepted this life for themselves because like most Christians during medieval times they believed that God determined a person's place in society.





- The Bayeux Tapestry (done by women) is 230 feet long, and 20 inches wide. It depicts William the Conqueror's invasion of England.

- In a time of disunity in Europe, the Church became a unifying force (ex: people may have lived under different nobles, but Europeans in general were becoming nearly all Christian; there were pockets of polytheism).



- However, the Church had a rocky relationship with European kings:
  - Investiture controversy: During the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> centuries popes challenged monarchs' authority on the appointment of bishops.
  - The Holy Roman Empire (think Germany / Central Europe) was formed in 962 (German states had already formed a confederation), emperors were crowned by popes, but popes struggled to exert influence.
  - Both kings and popes saw themselves as ultimate authorities, thus political life in western Europe was more complicated than in the east.



- Monasteries (religious communities apart from secular society) housed monks or nuns who took oaths of celibacy and poverty.
- Monasteries preserved literacy and learning in early medieval times. The copied manuscripts and ancient Latin works (the survival of Greek works depended more on Byzantine & Muslim scribes in the east).

