

# The Late Middle Ages

AN AGE OF ACCELERATING CONNECTIONS (600 – 1450)



- In 1200 most western Europeans were serfs / peasants. Typically they were compelled to work on the manor (usually owned by nobility or the church) along with a few dozen other peasant families.



# Quick Video #1



## Medieval Lives: The Peasant

- *We often think of European peasants living during the Dark Ages, which is true, but peasants continued to be a part the late Middle Ages as well. This video is a bit long, but it does a good job of describing what life was like for peasants in both the dark ages and later stages of the Middle Ages. One thing the video presenter tries to get across is that life wasn't all bad and that some peasants even revolted against the feudal system.*
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-Z1eb4TRqs>

- By 1300 the populations of Europe & China were each around 80 million (In 1200 China had nearly twice as many people as Europe. China's fell because of the Mongols, Europe's grew because of environmental factors and lack of epidemics).
- More people required the need for more productive farming methods. Some adopted the three-field system (2/3 crops, 1/3 oats which rejuvenated the soil), yet much of Europe was late to catch up to this and continued to use crop rotation.



- As people sought to expand farming into new territories – chosen fields were often vulnerable to droughts, floods, or simply contained poor soil.
- *“By 1300, almost every child born in western Europe faced the probability of extreme hunger at least once or twice during his expected 30 to 35 years of life.”*



- At midcentury Europe suffered from the Black Death (1347-1351) which killed 1/3 of the continent (Periodic returns of the plague would occur over several decades. Not until 1500 would Europe's population be back at pre-plague levels).
- The disease traveled by fleas on rats that were inadvertently shipped along with goods on the Silk Roads, Indian Ocean trade routes, and with the Mongolian armies.

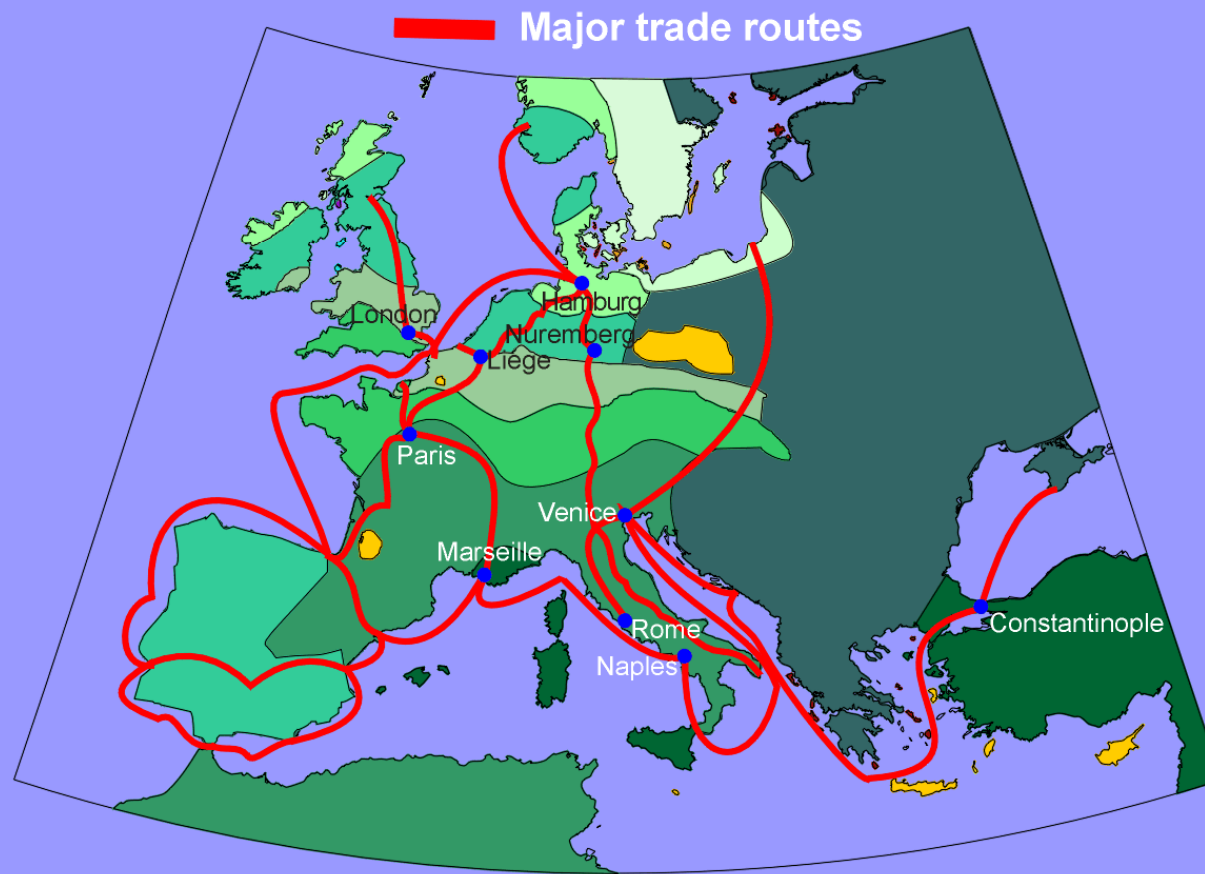


- Black blotches and boils would form on one's skin. The disease was painful and would normally kill an individual in a couple of days.
- Some entire towns were wiped out, others closed their city gates to outsiders.



# The Spread of the Black Death

December 1347	June 1349	December 1350
June 1348	December 1349	After 1351
December 1348	June 1350	Areas partially or totally spared







Map 12-2

*Ways of the World, First Edition*

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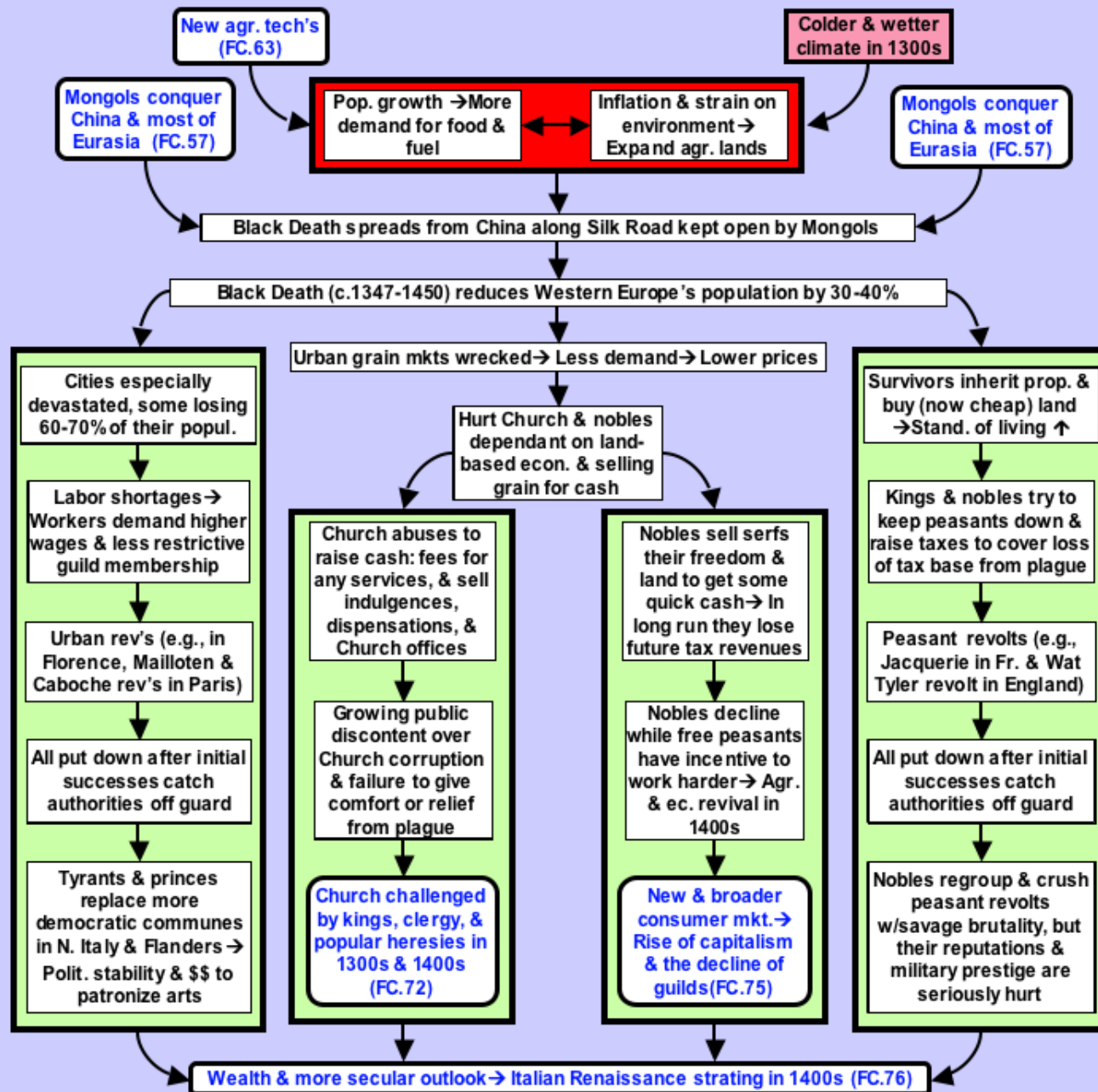
- For those who survived the welfare of the masses improved.
  - In urban areas wages went up to attract workers for positions left vacant by plague victims
  - Serfdom began to disappear in western Europe, some peasants were able to buy their freedom others revolted (ex: in 1381, English peasants invaded London calling for an end to serfdom, even killing some royal officials in the process)
  - More food was available, and animals which could be used for meat and leather for shoes



- Also there was an expansion of mining, metalworking, and simple mechanical engineering.
- For these were no longer the Medieval Times, but the High (or late) Middle Ages!

**Medieval → High Middle → Renaissance**

## FC.71 THE BLACK DEATH AND ITS IMPACT



- Mills powered by water numbered in the thousands from Paris to London. They ground grain & flour, sawed logs into lumber, and even made paper.
- Mills also enabled Europeans to master iron working (They were able to liquefy iron and pour it into molds to make nails, horseshoes, and armor).
- Windmills were more common in drier lands (Spain, Northern Europe).



- Europe's industrial growth changed the landscape of the countryside.
  - Mines were tunneled into hillsides
  - Dams and canals changed rivers
  - Towns sprouted up all over
  - Severe deforestation occurred



- The combined growth of trade and manufacturing also led to urban growth.
- Venice dominated trade in the eastern Med. following the 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade. (They imported silk and spices and exported glassware & textiles).
- An economic trading alliance of cities in northern Europe known as the Hanseatic League traded extensively throughout the Baltic and North Seas.



- Along the overland routes connecting northern Europe to Italy trading fairs develop as a place to exchange goods, livestock, and produce such as those in (ex: Champagne, France)





- European cities (large towns) began to replace the feudal / manor system that had dominated earlier generations.
- Some royal charters allowed cities to be excluded from local noble authority and even granted people freedom (from feudalism) if they lived in a chartered city for a year.



- This attracted all sorts of ambitious individuals with a variety of skills.
- Guilds developed (association of craftsmen, such as bakers or blacksmiths. They regulated their industries & prices; and also established apprenticeships).



# Quick Video #2



## Guilds

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnQlHeee9Dw>



- Many people of European descent can trace their last name or surname to medieval occupations in Europe. The name Smith for example was given to someone who worked in metal (Ex: Silversmith), in Germany Becker meant baker.

**Weinbrenner = Wine Maker**

- As traders moved from town to town trading, they needed to carry lots of cash, which brought about banks and lending institutions.
- However, the Church forbid lending money at interest (they considered it a sin), so money lending became the occupation of mostly European Jews – who in return were persecuted.



- As time went on banking and lending became more widespread. Florence, Italy became the center of banking services (ex: the Medici family).
- By 1500, the wealthiest banking family was the Fuggers of Central Europe.



- The growth of civic amenities, such as baths and water supply systems did not progress alongside the urbanization of Europe.
- As a result, unsanitary conditions were common throughout the continent.



- Nevertheless, as cities grew they attempted to outdo one another – thus the birth of Gothic architecture (spires pointing to Heaven, arches, stained glass).



# Quick Video #3

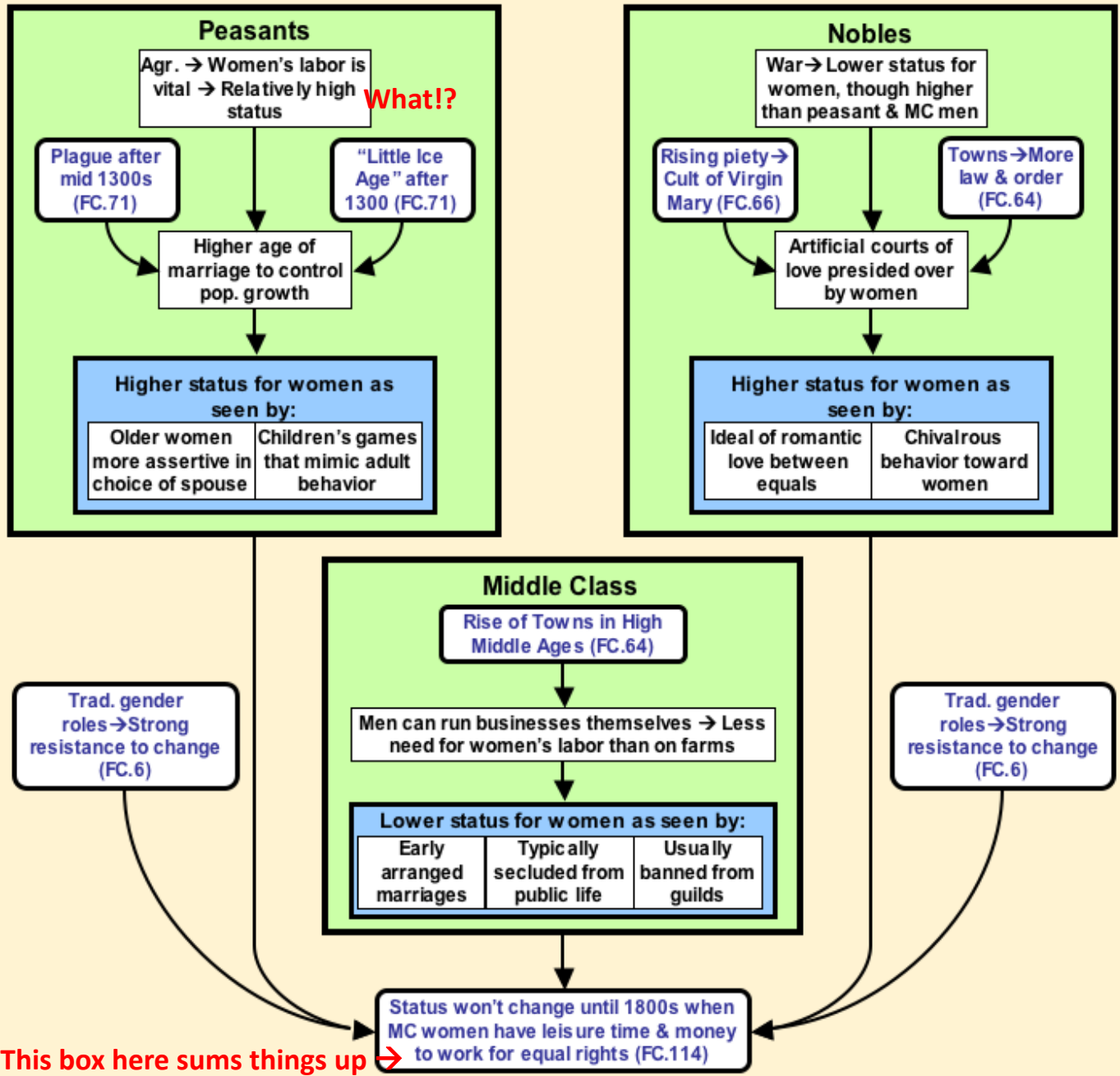


## Romanesque vs Gothic Architecture

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D20tG65TWic>
- *By now it should be quite clear to you that Europe underwent a series of changes during the Middle Ages. At first, it was the “Dark Ages” with political fragmentation, declining trade, and widespread use of manors. By 1200 manors were disappearing with the rise of towns and increased trade.*
- *Another change involved architecture. Although architectural innovation was the last thing on the minds of Dark Age peasants, they did live in the shadow of Roman triumphs. Europeans once again accomplished architectural glory during the late middle ages with the rise of Gothic designs. Watch the video to better understand this transition.*



# FC.71A WOMEN'S CHANGING STATUS IN LATE MEDIEVAL EUROPE



What!?

“So a lot of changes for Europe since the Dark Ages. How about the social status women?”

“Well . . . That’s a complicated question. Check out the flowchart.”

This box here sums things up →

Status won't change until 1800s when MC women have leisure time & money to work for equal rights (FC.114)