

FEUDAL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

5TH - 8TH CENTURY

The Seeds of Vassalage

Collapse of Western Roman authority leads to localized protection pacts. Germanic "Comitatus" traditions merge with Roman land grants.

8TH - 9TH CENTURY

Carolingian Foundation

Charles Martel and Charlemagne formalize land grants (benefices) in exchange for military service to combat external invasions.

10TH - 11TH CENTURY

Classic Feudalism

Fragmentation of central power. Construction of motte-and-bailey castles. The Norman Conquest (1066) exports structured feudalism to England.

12TH - 13TH CENTURY

High Feudal Era

Standardization of the Feudal Pyramid: Monarchs, Lords, Knights, and Serfs. Development of Chivalric codes and formal legal manorialism.

14TH - 15TH CENTURY

Decline & Transition

The Black Death causes labor shortages. The rise of a money economy and centralized monarchies replace land-based military obligations.