Chapter 13 - Crisis and Renaissance: 1340-1492

Background:

500 BCE - 500 CE - “Classical” Era of Western Civilization

Greeks:

- established artistic, architectural, scientific, cultural standards
Romans:
- conquered Greeks in 146 BCE
- borrowed from and expanded upon Greek learning
- politically united a vast, multi-ethnic region
- Spread their language, culture, and eventually Christianity throughout the empire
500 CE - 1200 CE - The Dark Ages

- Barbarian invasions shattered the empire

- Greco-Roman culture nearly eliminated, largely forgotten
Fall of Rome (circa 500 CE) - Christianity remained the only common denominator in Europe
- Christian clergy filled the political void, acquired wealth and power in exchange for their leadership

- Pope became most powerful person in Western Europe

- They struck alliances with newly emerging kings who exchanged protection for Papal recognition

- power struggles occurred between popes & kings throughout Dark Ages

Charlemagne crowned HRE by Pope Leo III
Economics of the Middle Ages:

FEUDALISM

European Feudal System

King

Nobles

Knights

Peasants
BY 1100:

1. Merchants set up shop in deserted Roman towns and sought autonomy from the Nobles

2. Towns formed around merchant outposts, attracted craftsmen and discontented peasants
Developments:

“Law Merchants” - Lawyers emerged to establish norms of commerce

Guilds - Craft unions emerged to standardize vocational training and regulate product quality
The Towns:

1. Offered serfs an alternative lifestyle

2. Sought self government & autonomy from lords

3. Sometimes fought for, sometimes bargained/paid for a CHARTER - a document that provided the town with governing and taxation rights
bourgeois | boʊrˈz̩ wä; ˈboʊr z̩ wä |

adjective
of or characteristic of the middle class, typically with reference to its perceived materialistic values or conventional attitudes: a rich, bored, bourgeois family | these views will shock the bourgeois critics.

• (in Marxist contexts) upholding the interests of capitalism; not communist: bourgeois society took for granted the sanctity of property.

noun (pl. same)
a bourgeois person: a self-confessed and proud bourgeois.

ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: from French bourg. Compare with burgess.

BOURGEOIS = “Townies” - a wealthy “middle class” - NOT of the nobility (land-owning inheritors) OR of the Clergy (Church officials)