



1. Western Europe and the Mediterranean (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)

I

WESTERN EUROPE ON THE EVE OF THE CRUSADES

The crusades had their origin in eleventh-century western Europe and to understand them one must know something of the environment in which they emerged. No mere static description of the land and its people can serve this purpose. The picture must be a moving one that shows the basic forces that were slowly molding medieval civilization, for the crusades were a natural product of these forces. The eleventh was the first of the three great creative centuries of the Middle Ages — an era of pioneers, soldiers, and statesmen. During its span the political and economic institutions that had been gradually taking shape since the sixth century were firmly cemented together to form the foundations of medieval civilization. While many of those who were to make the twelfth century an age of saints, scholars, artists, and creative literary men were born before the first crusaders set out for Palestine, their day lay in the future. The great lay figures of the eleventh century, William the Conqueror, the emperors Henry III and Henry IV, Roger I of Sicily, and Alfonso VI of Castile, were soldier-statesmen, and their ecclesiastical counterparts, pope Gregory VII, the early abbots of Cluny, and archbishop Lanfranc, were priestly statesmen. They sought essentially power, order, and efficiency. Even the chief monastic order of the period, that of Cluny, represented administrative rather more than spiritual reform. The hardy peasants who cleared forests and drained marshes to bring new land under cultivation and the Genoese and Pisan seamen who swept the Moslems from the coasts of Europe must have been moved by the same vigorous spirit as their conquering lords. In short, both expansion and organization marked the eleventh century. The crusades were a part of the former and were made possible by the latter.

Medieval western Europe had two basic patterns of settlement — the hamlet and the village. In general the hamlet was found in the least productive regions such as Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Brittany, and the mountainous districts of France. While it is possible that the hamlet was essentially a Celtic institution, it seems just as likely that it was simply the natural form of settlement in the barren lands into which the Celts had been driven by their Germanic foes. The rest of western Europe was a land of villages. There would be a cluster of houses, or rather huts, each with a small fenced garden and perhaps a fruit tree, a church, and usually a manor house or castle. Around the village lay its arable land and meadow — beyond lay the pasture, waste, and woodland. The men who lived in these villages and hamlets used three fundamentally different ways of cultivating their arable land. The crudest of these is commonly called the infield and outfield system. Although it was not completely confined to the regions of hamlets, it was most common there. Under this system the farmer had a small garden or infield near his house that he kept in continuous cultivation by using the manure from his animals. Then he would go out and plow a piece of land some distance away, grow crops on it until it lost its fertility, and then abandon it and plow another piece. This method of exploitation was suited to a region with a large amount of available land, none of which was very fertile.

Another system was to divide the arable land of a village into rectangular plots assigned to the various houses. This was the standard practice in southern France and in Italy. But over the major portion of western Europe the dominant method of cultivation was what we call the two- or three-field system. The arable land of the village was divided into two or three large fields. When there were two fields, one was cultivated and one allowed to lie fallow each year. When there were three fields, two were cultivated and one lay fallow. It seems likely that originally all villages used the two-field system and that the third field was adopted as an improvement in the more fertile regions. These large fields were divided into long, narrow strips and each house in the village had an equal number of strips in each field. The region of the two- and three-field systems comprised the richest and most populous part of western Europe, extending from the border of Wales through England, northern France, and the major part of Germany.

The agricultural methods of the eleventh century were not very

efficient. As the plows were heavy and clumsy and the harness poorly designed, from four to eight oxen were required for a plow team. Moreover, the slowness of the oxen made the area that a team could care for rather small. The sole crop in the arable fields was grain. It was sown broadcast to the delight of the birds. The seed was simply a part of the previous year's crop. The land as a rule received no fertilizer beyond the manure deposited by the cattle that grazed upon it while it lay fallow. Hence the production per acre, per bushel of seed, and per man was extremely low. This meant that if the people of the village were to have enough to eat, all land that could be plowed had to be utilized. As good meadow should be as fertile as arable land, there was nearly always an acute shortage of meadow and therefore of hay. Most villages could only hope to gather enough hay to keep their plow teams and a few breeding cattle alive through the winter. The pasture land was usually poor and often simply waste. In summer the cattle found a meager living in the pastures and in the fall most of them were slaughtered.

In some regions such as England and parts of Germany the grain grown on the arable supplied both food and drink. It is estimated that in England about half the grain was used for bread and the other half for ale. The wine-growing districts were more fortunate, as land too steep to plow would grow vines. From the gardens behind their houses the villagers obtained a few common vegetables. The cattle were valued for their hides, milk, and meat. The milk was made into cheese. Every village had a few sheep to supply wool for clothing and chickens for meat and eggs. But the chief source of meat was the pig. Pigs could find their own food in the woods in both summer and winter. In Domesday Book the size of a village's woodland is commonly measured by the number of pigs it could feed.

Each house or tenement in the village had its strips in the fields and a share of the meadow. The other resources of the village territory were used in common. The villager pastured his cattle in the common pasture and waste, fed his pigs and gathered his firewood in the common woodlands, and fished in the village stream. All the agricultural activities of the village were conducted by the community as a whole. The villagers decided when to plow, when to plant, and when to harvest, and all worked together. Certain men were assigned special tasks such as herding.

The villager lived in a rude hut with a thatched roof. A hole in the roof let out some part of the smoke from the fire. His clothes were

crudely fashioned from the hides of his cattle and the wool from his sheep. He was never far removed from the threat of starvation. In general, throughout the village region thirty acres of arable land seems to have been considered a normal tenement and experts have calculated that this would support a family in ordinary years. But many tenements were smaller than thirty acres and there were bound to be bad years. And the high cost of transportation by ox-cart over bad roads meant that even a local crop failure would result in a famine.

For the mass of the population of western Europe the village was the political, economic, social, and religious unit. The villager found his amusement in the village fetes. The village priest performed the sacraments and gave his flock what little knowledge they had of the world of ideas. As he was likely to be barely literate, this knowledge was bound to be slight. The villagers were both devout and superstitious. The countryside abounded in miracle-working springs and trees and its people venerated a multitude of local saints never officially recognized by the church.

The legal status of the villagers and the proportion of their produce that they could keep for their own use differed sharply from region to region and even from village to village. By the end of the third quarter of the eleventh century the seignorial system was firmly established in England, France, and western Germany. In these broad regions almost every man who worked the land owed some form of rent or service to a lord. In Saxony and parts of eastern Germany the villagers still depended directly on the king, but the seignorial system was spreading rapidly, aided by the political anarchy of the last quarter of the century. But even where the seignorial system reigned there were striking differences in conditions. In southern England, most of France, and Alsace and Lorraine, the vast majority of the villagers were unfree, bound to the soil and with no property rights against their lords. In eastern and northeastern England, the ancient Danelaw and East Anglia, a fair proportion, probably over half, of the villagers were freemen who paid rents and certain carefully defined services to their lords. Some parts of France such as the region about Bordeaux contained many freemen. In eastern Germany the free villagers were gradually being reduced to serfdom but the process was by no means complete.

The seignorial system was a set of institutions through which the feudal class, soldiers and prelates, drew their support from those who tilled the land. In most of the vast region occupied by

villages using the two- and three-field systems it was based on what we call manorial organization. The lord of the village had his demesne, strips in the fields that his tenants cultivated for him. The villagers plowed the demesne, sowed it, harvested the crops, and stored them in the lord's barns. The demesne might occupy as much as a third of the arable land, but was usually rather less. Then the villagers paid the lord a percentage of the crops grown on their own strips. The lord considered that he owned the common resources of the village and charged his tenants for their use. Thus the villager paid a rent in pigs for feeding his swine in the woodlands and in cheese for having his cattle in the common pasture. When the villager fished, the lord got a share of the catch. In short, the tenants owed a rent in kind for the use of every resource of the village. In addition, they worked for the lord at cultivating his demesne, harvesting his hay, or any other task he might set. Sometimes these labor services occupied as much as three days a week. The lord and his household obtained their food from the rents and the produce of the demesne. The lord's clothes were made from the wool of his sheep spun and woven by the village women under his wife's direction. His dwelling was built by his tenants' labor services.

The rents and services mentioned in the last paragraph were due to the lord as the owner of the land. In addition, the lord usually had extensive and profitable rights that were essentially political. As the feudal system developed, the functions and powers of government had been parceled out among the members of the feudal hierarchy. Although in strict theory they exercised these rights as representatives of the king, the fact that the powers were hereditary made them regard them as their own property. The extent of these seignorial powers differed according to the custom of the land and the status of the lord. In England the king kept a firm grip on the higher criminal jurisdiction and the lords of villages could have little more than what we would call police-court justice. In Normandy the duke was equally jealous of his rights. But in most of France and western Germany a man of importance in the feudal hierarchy would have complete jurisdiction over the people of his villages. A lesser lord would have more limited rights. These rights of jurisdiction were important to a lord from several points of view. For one thing they contributed to his prestige — lords with powers of life and death considered their gallows one of their prized possessions. Then they gave a firm control over tenants and complete freedom to discipline them at

will. Finally they were extremely profitable. When a man was hanged, the lord could seize all his possessions, and the penalty for many offenses was a fine. The possession of seignorial authority gave a lord many opportunities for profit. He could hold a market in his village and collect a toll or sales tax on all goods sold. He could establish fees for crossing a bridge or sailing down a stream. He could also establish monopolies. Thus many a lord compelled his tenants to have their grain ground at his mill and to bake their bread in his ovens, paying generous fees in grain and flour. He forbade his tenants to keep doves while his waxed fat on their crops.

The unfree villager was almost completely subject to his lord, especially when the latter had rights of jurisdiction. In theory criminal justice was a function of the state and the unfree as well as the free were subject to it. In England this theory was a reality. Except in minor offenses the lord had no criminal jurisdiction over his unfree tenants and if he committed a crime against one, he could be haled into a royal court. But in France and western Germany the governmental powers were so distributed that if the lord of a village could not hang his serfs, the lord next above him could, and would be delighted to do so at his request. Nowhere did unfree tenants have any civil rights against their lord. He could demand any rents and services he desired and take any of their property that struck his fancy. The arbitrary authority of the lord was, however, restrained by several circumstances. The men of the Middle Ages were basically conservative — their tendency was to do what their ancestors had done and distrust innovations. Hence a lord hesitated to increase the customary dues of his villagers. Then it was obviously to his interest to keep his labor supply alive and this in itself limited the rents and services he could demand. Finally the church insisted that serfs had souls and urged the lords to treat them as fellow Christians. Rather grudgingly the lords admitted that serfs could marry, but they insisted on calling their families *sequelae* or broods.

Throughout history progress in agricultural methods has been slow and gradual. As our information concerning the eleventh century is extremely scanty, it is almost impossible to say to what extent and in what ways agricultural techniques were improved. There is some evidence that villages were changing from the two- to the three-field system and thus increasing their utilization of their arable land. It seems likely that improvement in the design of plows and the harnessing of oxen was allowing a reduction in

the size of the plow teams and by this means lessening the demands on the meadows. Perhaps the chief problem connected with eleventh-century agriculture is the extent to which the available arable land was increased by reclamation. We have clear evidence that in the early twelfth century there was extensive clearing of wood and brush land and that some inroads were made on the edges of the great forests. There was also some draining of marshes, especially when it could be done by a system of dikes. In the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries colonists from all over Europe settled the lands to the east of the Elbe in Germany. There is evidence that this great reclamation movement started early in the eleventh century, at least to the extent of returning to cultivation the lands that had been deserted during the Viking invasions, but it is impossible to estimate how much was accomplished. It seems clear that the initiative in this movement was taken by lords who wanted to utilize as much of their lands as possible. They made attractive offers to peasants who would reclaim land and settle it — greater personal freedom and lower rents and services. The result was an increase in the lord's resources both material and human. His total rents were larger and more people lived on his lands. In short, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the productive capacity of western Europe and its population were greatly increased by colonization and reclamation, but it is impossible to say how far this process had gone when the crusades began.

Although western Europe in the eleventh century was overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, the revival of industry, commerce, and urban life was well under way. This development was particularly marked in Italy. There urban life had never disappeared to the extent that it had in the north. Even though they might have little industry and trade, the Italian towns had remained populated. And a number of Italian towns had maintained a flourishing trade with Constantinople. Under the protection of the Byzantine fleet, ships plied steadily between the capital of the empire and such Italian ports as Amalfi and Venice. By the second half of the eleventh century Venice had a powerful fleet of her own. At about this same time Genoa and Pisa began to trade along the Mediterranean coast to Marseilles, Narbonne, and Barcelona. These two cities also took the offensive against the Moslem fleets that had been raiding their harbors and seizing their vessels. Naval expeditions were made against Corsica, Sardinia, and even Tunis. In the inland towns of Tuscany and Lom-

bardy, industry, particularly the manufacture of textiles, began to flourish. The last years of the century saw the beginnings of the communal movement that was to break the power of the bishops and transform the towns of north Italy into independent if rather turbulent republics. In short, the towns were an important element in the civilization of eleventh-century Italy. Two of them at least, Genoa and Pisa, were to play a vital part in the First Crusade.

Outside the Mediterranean region the revival of urban life had made far less progress. Unfortunately, lack of evidence makes it extremely difficult to be very specific. It seems clear that great lay and ecclesiastical lords were encouraging their tenants who lived in their chief seats to acquire specialized skills. Thus there were craftsmen living around castles, cathedrals, and monasteries who made articles for the use of their lords. In Flanders the spinners and weavers were already manufacturing more woolen cloth than they could use and were selling it to others. There were also merchants engaged in inter-regional commerce. Men of Rouen carried wine to England to satisfy the thirst of the Norman favorites of king Edward the Confessor. When William of Normandy conquered England, Norman merchants swarmed over to settle in the English boroughs. By the end of the century, certainly, London was a great town with several rich and powerful merchant families. But all these phenomena were merely the beginnings of the movement of urban revival that was to mark the twelfth century. Although western Europe had industry, commerce, and urban life, these were still insignificant elements in its civilization.

One of the most important features of the eleventh century was the crystallization and extension of the feudal system. Feudal institutions had been developing since the eighth century. Charles Martel had given benefices to men who swore loyalty to him and were ready to serve him as soldiers. By the time of Charles the Bald benefices were becoming hereditary in practice if not in theory and the same tendency was affecting the countships and other royal offices. In eleventh-century France the benefice had become the hereditary fief. Although the office of count was not absolutely hereditary, a competent heir was practically certain of the inheritance. When an office changed hands, this was less likely to be the result of royal action than of the successful aggression of a powerful rival. Moreover, during the ninth and tenth centuries when civil war combined with Viking raids to keep France in a

state of anarchy, the landholders had but two practical alternatives. One could obtain military support and protection by becoming the vassal of a powerful neighbor or one could sink into the category of an unfree villager. Almost every landholder whose resources permitted him to equip himself as a soldier chose the former course. Only the most powerful and most stubborn could stay outside the feudal system. Although eleventh-century France contained *allods*, that is, lands held from no lord, they were quite rare and most of them disappeared in the twelfth century. In short, eleventh-century France, especially in the north, was almost completely feudalized and the principle so dear to feudal lawyers of "no land without a lord" was nearly true of it.

As the feudal system spread over France its members became arranged in a hierarchy. At the head stood the Capetian king, who was suzerain of the great lords of the land. Below him came a group of feudal potentates who may best be described as feudal princes — the men whom a later age called the "peers of France". According to the theory developed in the twelfth century, there were six lay peers — the count of Flanders, the duke of Normandy, the count of Champagne, the duke of Aquitaine, the count of Toulouse, and the duke of Burgundy. The powerful counts of Anjou were not called peers because they were considered vassals of the Capetian king in his capacity of duke of France, the title held by the family before its elevation to the throne, but they were far more important than the vassals of the royal demesne in the Île de France such as the lords of Coucy and Montmorency. Each of these great lords who held directly of the king had his own vassals many of whom were counts or had usurped that title. It was by no means uncommon for a vigorous lord to wake up some bright morning and decide he was a count, and usually no one bothered to dispute the claim. These secondary vassals in turn had their own vassals and rear-vassals, and the hierarchy continued down to the simple knight who had just enough land and peasant labor to support him. This minimum unit of the feudal system, the resources that would enable a man to be a knight, was called the knight's fief or fee. To make this hierarchy clear let us cite a concrete example. In the lands along the Bay of Biscay known as Bas-Poitou the simple knights held their fiefs of two barons, the lords of La Garnache and Montaigu. They in turn were vassals of the viscount of Thouars, who held his fief from the count of Poitou, who was in turn a vassal of the duke of Aquitaine, a peer of France. Actually the same man

was count of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine, but the offices were distinct.

Each member of the feudal hierarchy had obligations to his lord and his vassals. These obligations were defined by feudal custom. Whenever a dispute arose between lord and vassal, it was settled in the lord's *curia* or court. There the lord acted as presiding officer and the vassals rendered the decision. In every fief the feudal custom for that fief was created by these decisions in the lord's court. Thus feudal custom varied from fief to fief. Moreover, in the eleventh century the formation of this custom was far from complete, for questions were decided only when they arose and many came up but rarely. Take for instance the customs governing inheritance. It was generally accepted that if a man had sons, one of them was his heir, but in the eleventh century the idea of primogeniture was by no means absolutely accepted. If the eldest son looked unpromising as a warrior, the vassals felt free to choose one of his younger brothers. If the two eldest sons were twins, the fief might be evenly divided between them. When a man died leaving a son under age, who cared for the fief and performed the service due from it? Sometimes it was the nearest male relative on the mother's side, sometimes on the father's side. In other fiefs the custody of minors belonged to the lord. But despite the variations from fief to fief it is possible to make certain general statements about feudal obligations that are reasonably valid.

The fundamental purpose of the feudal system was coöperation in war. Every lord was bound to protect his vassal from enemies outside the fief and every vassal owed military service to his lord. In some cases the vassal owed only his own personal service; in others he was bound to lead a certain number of knights to his lord's army. By the thirteenth century the military service owed by vassals was carefully defined and limited, but this process was not complete in the eleventh century. In most fiefs a distinction was made between offensive and defensive campaigns and the length of time a vassal had to serve in the former was limited — forty days was usual in the thirteenth century. When the fief was in danger, obviously the vassals were bound to stay in service as long as they were needed. Then the feudal system was political as well as military. When there was a question of feudal custom to be decided, the vassals were bound to obey the lord's summons to his court. Moreover, as the vassals had a strong interest in the welfare of their lord and his fief, they expected him to consult them before making an important decision. When their lord was

about to marry, he was expected to summon his vassals to aid him in deciding what lady had the most useful marriage portion and the most potent relatives. If a lord wanted his vassals to serve him with enthusiasm in a war against a neighbor, he sought their counsel before embarking on it. In short, the important business of the lord's fief was conducted in his court. Finally a man's prestige in the feudal world depended very largely on the number and importance of his vassals. When he wanted to display his power and dignity, he summoned his vassals to "do him honor". Thus attendance at the lord's court was second in importance only to military service as a feudal obligation.

In addition to service in his lord's court and army the vassal had certain obligations that were essentially economic. One of these was known as relief. By the twelfth century, relief was a money payment due to the lord when an heir succeeded to a fief, but there is evidence to indicate that in some fiefs at least in the eleventh century it was also demanded when a new lord came into his inheritance. Moreover, in the eleventh century it was often, perhaps usually, paid in horses and armor rather than in money. When a lord had a need for additional resources for some purpose that he considered important for his fief as a whole, he asked his vassals for an aid. By the twelfth century feudal custom defined very strictly the occasions on which a lord could demand an aid — for other purposes he could simply request one. The accepted occasions were the knighting of the lord's eldest son, the wedding of his eldest daughter for the first time, and the paying of ransom for the lord if he were captured. In all probability this clear definition had not been achieved by the eleventh century. When a lord wanted an aid, he asked his vassals for it and unless the request seemed too unreasonable, he received it. This form of income probably played a large part in financing the crusades. Vassals could hardly refuse to assist their lord in so worthy an enterprise. Finally, in some fiefs in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the vassals were obliged to entertain the lord and his household when he visited them, and there is reason for believing that this obligation had been more general and more important in the eleventh century.

Beyond the actual services owed by the vassal the lord had certain rights over the vassal and his fief. As the marriage of a vassal's daughter gave a male from outside the family an interest in her father's fief, the bridegroom had to be approved by the lord. If a vassal died leaving an unmarried daughter as an heir,

it was the lord's right and duty to choose a husband for her. This was a valuable prerogative as it allowed the lord to reward a faithful knight at no cost to himself. When a vassal died leaving children under age, the lord could insist that someone be found to perform the service due from the fief unless custom gave him the custody of the heirs and their lands. If a vassal died without heirs that were recognized by the custom of the fief — second cousins were rarely accepted and more distant relatives practically never — the fief escheated, that is, returned to the lord. In case a vassal violated the feudal bond by some offense against his lord and was condemned by his fellow vassals in the lord's court, he could forfeit his fief. Forfeiture was rather rare. The assembled vassals hesitated to declare a fief forfeited because each of them felt that he might be in the same position some day.

When a man became a vassal, he did homage and swore fidelity to his lord. There has been a great deal of essentially fruitless discussion about the distinction between homage and fidelity. The fact that prelates often were willing to swear fidelity but refused to do homage would seem to indicate that fidelity was personal loyalty while homage represented a promise to perform the services due from a fief. But household knights who held no fief often swore fidelity and did homage. Actually it seems doubtful that there was any clear, generally accepted distinction. Ordinarily the two were part of a single ceremony. The vassal knelt before his lord, put his hands between his lord's hands, and swore to be faithful to him "against all men living or dead". Often the lord then gave the vassal a clod of earth to symbolize the granting of the fief. The personal relationship between lord and vassal was an important element in feudalism — each was expected to be loyal to the other. It was a horrible crime for a vassal to slay or wound his lord or seduce his wife or daughter, but a lord was also bound not to injure his vassal in person or honor. The vassal was expected to aid his lord in every way possible.

As a form of government feudalism had both advantages and disadvantages. It supplied a military force of heavy cavalry at every stage in the hierarchy. Thus each barony, each county, and each kingdom had its army. It also furnished vigorous and interested local government. The extensive reclamation of land and the founding of towns were largely the result of the desire of feudal lords to increase their resources. It is highly doubtful that mere agents working for the benefit of a central government could have accomplished so much. But as a means of keeping peace and

order the feudal system was no great success, for it was based on the assumption that there would be continual warfare. In theory, quarrels between lords and vassals and between vassals of the same lord were settled in the feudal courts. Actually when two vassals of a lord quarreled, they went to war and the lord did not intervene unless he thought one might be so seriously weakened that he could not perform his service. And no spirited vassal accepted an unfavorable decision by his lord's court until he was coerced with armed force. Between vassals of different lords there was no hindrance to war. In short, in eleventh-century France, feudal warfare was endemic and it was a fortunate region that saw peace throughout an entire summer. The church tried to limit this warfare by declaring the Peace and Truce of God. The Peace of God forbade attacks on noncombatants, merchants, women, and peasants while the Truce prohibited fighting on weekends and on religious days. Unfortunately, neither Peace nor Truce was taken very seriously by the feudal lords.

Fighting was the chief function of the feudal male. From early youth he was conditioned to bear the weight of knightly armor and drilled rigorously in the use of arms. He had to learn the extremely difficult feat of hitting a target with his spear while riding at full gallop with his shield on his left arm. When he was considered adequately mature and trained he was made a knight. This was a simple ceremony in the eleventh century. An experienced knight gave him his arms and then struck him a terrific blow with his hand or the flat of his sword. Throughout his life the knight spent most of his time in practising with his arms or actually fighting. Dull periods of peace were largely devoted to hunting on horseback such savage animals as the wild boar. The knight ate enormous meals of pastry and game washed down with vast quantities of wine or ale. He kept his wife continuously pregnant and saw that his house was well supplied with concubines to while away his leisure hours. In short, the ordinary knight was savage, brutal, and lustful. At the same time he was, in his own way, devout. He accepted without question the teachings of the church and was deeply interested in the welfare of his soul. He had a private chaplain, commonly chosen for the speed with which he could say mass, who performed the sacraments in his chapel and heard his confessions. Most knights scrupulously observed the rites of religion. They were, however, little troubled by Christian ethics. The giving of generous gifts to a family monastic establishment or even the founding of a new one was the usual way of

atoning for one's sins. The crusades with their plenary indulgences were particularly useful for this purpose.

The women of the feudal class held a rather ambiguous position. A woman was never her own mistress. Before marriage she was in the care of her father; then she passed into the custody of her husband; if he died, she was the ward of her lord or her eldest son. A woman could not do homage or hold a fief in her own hands though she could carry one to her husband. Her testimony was unacceptable in court except in respect to a rape committed on her or the murder of her husband in her presence. She had no rights against her husband. He could dispose of her property and beat her whenever she annoyed him. The *chansons de geste* show clearly that feudal husbands beat their wives savagely with no qualms of conscience. Moreover, the marriage bond was far from firm. Although the church consistently preached the permanence of marriage, by the eleventh century it had still failed to convince the feudal class that unwanted wives could not be calmly laid aside. Yet there is a brighter side to the picture. Although a wife had no rights against her husband, she enjoyed his status as against all others. When her lord was away, the lady was the mistress of the fief. She also ruled her side of the household — the women and girls who spun and wove. Here it seems she was little gentler than her husband. Church councils continually decreed that it was mortal sin for a lady to beat her maids to death. Moreover there is evidence that the feudal lady used the bottle as gaily as her spouse. The *chansons* abound in tales of drunken ladies and their misadventures.

A simple knight and his lady usually lived in a crude wooden house surrounded by a moat and palisade. A baron would possess at least one castle. In the eleventh century most castles were of what is termed the motte-and-bailey type. The lord's peasants would dig a circular ditch some nine or ten feet deep and perhaps thirty feet wide, piling the excavated earth into a mound encircled by the ditch. On the inner edge of the ditch or moat and around the top of the mound they would erect palisades. Then on the summit of the mound inside the palisade would be built a wooden tower of two or three stories. The lowest floor would be used for storing supplies and prisoners. On the second floor would be the hall where the lord transacted business, entertained guests, and feasted with his retainers. In it the retainers and servants slept at night. On the third floor the lord and lady would have their chamber where they reposed in a great bed, while their personal servants slept

on the floor. A few great lords had some stone work in their castles — perhaps a stone gate with towers. Others built great stone *tours* or towers like the White Tower in the Tower of London built by William the Conqueror. These had massive walls ten to twenty feet thick. The door was on the second floor and was reached by a wooden stairway easily cut away in time of danger. If an enemy appeared, the door would be closed and the inhabitants of the tower would sit quietly inside. The enemy could not get at them, but neither could they get at him unless he came so close to the walls that stones or boiling oil could be dropped on him from the roof.

The castle was an extremely vital factor in feudal politics. If adequately supplied and garrisoned a castle could hold out almost indefinitely against the siege methods of the day. Rarely could a feudal army be held together long enough to take a resolutely defended castle. Hence its lord was practically independent. If a baron was so unfortunate as to be condemned by his lord's court, he could simply retire to his castle until his discouraged suzerain was ready to make peace. Not until the advent of mercenary troops who would stay in service as long as they were paid and the invention of improved siege engines was it possible for a lord to exert any effective authority over a vassal who possessed a strong castle. And the castle was an integral part of feudalism. When feudal institutions spread to a new land, castles soon appeared. Within a century of the Norman conquest there were some twelve hundred castles in England.

At the beginning of the eleventh century France was the only feudal state in Europe. The Capetian king was essentially a feudal suzerain supporting his court on the produce of his demesne manors and raising his army from his vassals in the duchy of France and the tiny contingents that the great lords were willing to send him. The peers of France readily acknowledged that they were the king's vassals, but rarely bothered to render him any services. Actually France was not a single state but an alliance of feudal principalities bound together by the feeble suzerainty of the king. In real power the king was weaker than most of his great vassals. His demesne was small and he could not control the barons of the *île de France*. The monarchy survived largely because of the support of the church, which was inclined to prefer one master to many, and the resources that could be drawn from church fiefs. While some of the great lords such as the count of Flanders and the dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine had obtained

control of the bishops within their lands, the prelates of Burgundy and Champagne depended on the king. The bishops had large, rich fiefs with many knightly vassals. Hence the man who appointed the bishops had the use of extensive resources. Nevertheless, the Capetian monarchy of the early eleventh century could do little more than survive. In the *île de France* it had little authority and outside none whatever.

Along the borders of France feudal institutions had spread into other regions. The county of Barcelona, once Charlemagne's Spanish March, was a thoroughly feudal state and there were strong feudal elements in the kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre. In Germany, Lorraine and Franconia were essentially feudal. The kingdom of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire ruled by the emperors of the Saxon dynasty did not constitute a feudal state. The base of the royal power lay in the duchy of Saxony, which was almost untouched by feudalism. It was a land of free farmers, noble and non-noble, who were always ready to follow their duke to war. Outside Saxony the imperial authority depended almost entirely on the prelates. The bishops and abbots of Germany, Lombardy, and Tuscany were imperial appointees with wide, delegated authority. Their great fiefs and their resources were at the emperor's disposal. Although the counts of Germany were non-hereditary royal agents, they were essentially judicial officers, and the military control rested in the hands of the dukes. The emperors, dukes, counts, and other landholders occasionally granted fiefs, but the offices of duke and count were not fiefs. The power of a duke depended on the extent of his estates and his ability to inspire the loyalty of the people of his duchy. Thus the dukes of Franconia, Swabia, and Bavaria were usually powerful figures while the duke of Lorraine was likely to be a mere figurehead. In this same period England was still a Teutonic monarchy. Small men commended themselves to great men, swore oaths of fidelity to them, and occasionally held land in return for military service, but there were neither vassals nor fiefs in the continental sense.

During the course of the eleventh century feudalism expanded rapidly. The conquest of England by duke William of Normandy created a new feudal state. King William retained the powers that had been enjoyed by his Anglo-Saxon predecessors. In every shire there was a sheriff appointed by the king and removable at his pleasure who presided over the popular courts, supervised the king's demesne manors, and collected his dues. William also col-

lected the land tax called Danegeld and was the only monarch of western Europe to have a source of revenue of this type. Moreover, when king William established a complete and formal feudal hierarchy in England, he made certain innovations in feudal custom. In France a vassal's primary obligation was to his lord, and if the lord waged war against the king, it was the vassal's duty to follow him. William insisted that every freeman owed basic allegiance to the crown. In the famous Salisbury Oath the freemen of England swore fidelity to him as against all others. If an English baron rose in revolt, his vassals were expected to desert him. Then William absolutely forbade private warfare. The vassals of an English baron owed him military service only when the baron himself was engaged in the king's service. Finally the Conqueror was extremely niggardly in granting rights of jurisdiction. All lords of any importance were given "sac and soc" or police court authority over their own tenants. A few great lords had the right to have their agents preside over local popular courts. But the higher ranges of justice were kept firmly in the hands of the crown. In short, William created a feudal state, but it was one in which the monarch had extensive non-feudal powers and resources and in which feudal custom was modified to favor royal authority.

At about the same time that William of Normandy established a feudal state in England a group of Norman adventurers were doing the same thing in southern Italy and Sicily. In the third decade of the eleventh century William, Drogo, and Humphrey, sons of a petty Norman lord named Tancred of Hauteville, entered the continuous quarrels between rival factions in southern Italy. First they served as mercenary captains, but soon they established themselves in lands and fortresses. They then sent for their younger brothers, Robert Guiscard and Roger. When Humphrey, the last of the elder brothers, died in 1057 the Hautevilles were masters of Apulia. Robert Guiscard took the title duke of Apulia and set his brother Roger to work conquering Calabria. In 1061 both brothers joined forces to attack Sicily, which was held by the Moslems.¹ After some thirty years of continuous war the conquest was completed and Roger became count of Sicily as his brother's vassal. Robert, duke of Apulia and overlord of Sicily, did homage to the pope for his lands and was a firm ally of the papacy against the German emperors. But the possession of southern Italy failed to satisfy his ambition. He and his turbulent son Bohemond viewed with greedy eyes the Byzantine lands across the

¹ See below, chapter II, section C.

Adriatic and contemplated the conquest of Greece if not that of the whole Byzantine empire. Robert and Bohemond invaded Greece and might well have conquered it if their communications had not been cut by the Venetian fleet, which aided the emperor in return for extensive commercial rights in the empire. Robert Guiscard and Roger of Sicily built a strong feudal state on much the same lines followed by William of Normandy. There was a feudal hierarchy strictly controlled by a strong and effective central government.

In Germany the two great emperors of the Salian house, Henry III and Henry IV, attempted to build a strong, centralized monarchy on the foundations laid by the Saxon emperors. Already master of Franconia and with extensive estates in Swabia, Henry III planned to add Thuringia and south Saxony to the family domains and thus gain a firm basis of power in the heart of Germany. He built a strong castle at Goslar, the chief town of south Saxony and the site of valuable silver mines, and strewed the neighborhood with fortresses garrisoned by troops from his Swabian lands. His son Henry IV continued his policy. But the nobles and freemen of Saxony fiercely resented the king's intrusion into the duchy and, led by the Billung family, which claimed the ducal dignity, they rose in revolt against Henry IV. At the same time the great pope Gregory VII chose to attack the very cornerstone of the imperial government — the emperor's control over the prelates. The German lords, who had no desire to see a strong monarchy, combined with the pope and the Saxon rebels against Henry. The emperor held his own and died victor over his foes in the year 1106. But the long struggle had ruined the hopes of the Salian kings for establishing a strong monarchy. The first half of the twelfth century was to be a period of anarchy in Germany in which feudal institutions were to spread rapidly until the Hohenstaufen emperors created a feudal state. On the eve of the crusades the so-called Roman empire of the Saxon and Salian emperors was crumbling.

What had earlier been border lands of western Europe also evinced marked activity in the eleventh century. In Spain, for example, the Christian kingdoms of the north were taking the offensive against the Moslem masters of the rest of the peninsula. This will be treated at length in a later chapter.² It will suffice here to observe that, as all the energies and resources of the Spanish states were needed for their internecine wars and the

² See below, chapter II, section A.

struggle against the Moslems, they took part neither in the affairs of Europe as a whole nor in the early crusades to the Holy Land.

The eleventh century was a high point in the history of the Scandinavian states, but, except for the conquest of England by king Swein of Denmark and Canute his son, they had little to do with the rest of western Europe. During the century Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were evangelized and their kings built reasonably firm national governments. Under the vague overlordship of these kings the Viking chieftains ruled their vast island domain — the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, and the Isle of Man. It was also the age of the Viking settlements on the North American coast, while princes of Kiev, descendants of Swedish adventurers, ruled a large state on the Russian plains. A great proportion of the vigor of the eleventh century was centered in the Scandinavian blood. The Normans, who were only a century removed from their Viking ancestors, ruled the strongest feudal principality in France, the kingdom of England, and southern Italy and Sicily. It is interesting in this connection to notice that of the eight chief lay leaders of the First Crusade four were Normans and a fifth had a Norman wife who supplied most of his ardor. Robert, duke of Normandy, and Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard, are easily recognizable as Normans, but in addition Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, and his brother Baldwin were sons of the Norman count of Boulogne.

To the east of the German empire lay the vast Slavic lands cleft in twain by a wedge of Magyars who occupied the Hungarian plain and Pechenegs in the steppes north of the Black Sea. To the north of this wedge were three important Slavic states — Bohemia, Poland, and Russia. The Přemyslid dukes of Bohemia and Moravia had a status that is hard to define. They were masters of their own lands and dealt as they pleased with their eastern neighbors, but they acknowledged themselves vassals of the kings of Germany and supported their policy in the west. Duke Vratislav II (1061–1092) was a loyal follower of the emperor Henry IV. Poland was an independent state ruled by its own kings. To the east of Poland lay the Russian principalities. Yaroslav the Wise, the last powerful prince of Kiev, died in 1054. Under his descendants the state was divided into a number of principalities under the vague suzerainty of the prince of Kiev.

In religion and culture Bohemia and Poland were part of the Latin west. Their bishops acknowledged the pope at Rome and

their political organizations were essentially borrowed from the German state. Russia on the other hand was thoroughly Byzantine. The princely descendants of the Viking Rurik had been converted to Christianity by Byzantine missionaries and their commercial and diplomatic relations were largely with Constantinople. Kiev was a Byzantine city. Its churches were Byzantine in style and its scholars pursued Byzantine learning. By the latter part of the eleventh century the conquest of the steppes north of the Black Sea by the Pechenegs made actual communication with Constantinople difficult, but this did not affect the basic tone of Russian culture.

The Asiatic wedge that divided the Slavic peoples consisted of two distinct elements. The Pecheneg masters of the Black Sea steppes held the northern bank of the Danube as far as the Carpathian mountains. The Hungarian plain was occupied by the Magyars. After their crushing defeat by the emperor Otto I the Magyars had gradually settled down in Hungary. Toward the end of the tenth century prince Géza united the Magyar clans and brought in missionaries — chiefly from Bohemia. His son Stephen organized Hungary as a Latin Christian state. The land was divided into counties and dioceses, and in the year 1000 Stephen was crowned king with the approval of the pope. On the eve of the crusades Hungary enjoyed a period of prosperity and comparative peace under the strong hand of king Ladislas I (1077–1095). His successor, Coloman, was to face the problem of handling the crusading armies marching down the Danube.

This period saw the southern Slavs largely dependent on other peoples. In 1018 the Byzantine emperor Basil II, called “the Bulgar-slayer”, finally crushed the Bulgarian state and incorporated it into his empire. Despite fierce revolts in 1040 and 1073 the Bulgars remained Byzantine subjects for over a century. The Serbs were divided into many tribes under local princes. Sometimes one of these princes would be recognized as a paramount chief, but such authority was usually short-lived. All the Serbian princes acknowledged the overlordship of the Byzantine emperor, but only under extremely strong rulers did this relationship have any meaning. As a rule the Serbs were independent and divided. To the north of Serbia lay Croatia. In the last years of the eleventh century Croatia was a separate state ruled by the Hungarian kings. In culture and religion the Bulgars and Serbs were Byzantine while the Croats were Latin.

While the peasants were improving their agricultural methods

and reclaiming forest, marsh, and waste, and the knights were developing and extending feudal institutions, the churchmen were making similar progress. The local administration of the church was clarified and strengthened and an effective central government was created. At the same time missionaries converted the Scandinavian lands and labored among the Slavs. Christian Europe was both strengthened and extended. One of the most interesting developments in local church organization was the development of cathedral chapters. The bishops had always had officers and clergy who aided them in serving their cathedrals. In the eleventh century the more important members of the cathedral clergy began to form corporations. Of great assistance to this movement was the inclination of lay lords to endow seats or canonries in the cathedral that could be used as refuges for unwarlike sons. The chapter was composed of the episcopal officials such as the chancellor, treasurer, sacristan, and archdeacon and a number of priests or canons. The chapter had an elected head called a dean. The chapter soon became the body that formally elected the nominee of the lord when an episcopal vacancy was to be filled. In the eleventh century also the itinerant agents of the bishop called archpriests settled down as parish priests with supervisory powers over their fellows.

During the ninth and tenth centuries the church had become deeply involved in secular affairs. The extensive lands of the bishops and abbots were held of lay lords by feudal services, and the prelates had to perform the functions of vassals either personally or by deputy. Some doughty bishops led their troops in battle wielding a mace, which they insisted did not violate canon law as it drew no blood, but most had secular agents called advocates to head their levies. But the prelates were appointed by the secular lords and invested by them with the insignia of their holy office. They served the lords as counselors and administrators. As we have seen, the Capetian monarchy owed what little power it had to the prelates it controlled and the German empire was based on an episcopacy devoted to the emperor. This situation was harmful to the spiritual functions of the church. A bishop should be primarily devoted to his episcopal duties rather than to the service of a lay prince, and an abbot who was essentially a baron was unlikely to be an effective father to his monks.

As early as the tenth century this situation had alarmed many devout men. In the hope of improving the monastic system duke William of Aquitaine had in 911 founded the abbey of Cluny. Cluny was forbidden to hold lands by feudal service. A donor to

this foundation had to make his gift in free alms — that is, the only service owed was prayers for his soul. Cluny adopted a modified form of the Benedictine rule. St. Benedict had directed his monks to spend long hours at manual labor, but once a monastery grew rich in land and peasant labor, it was impossible to get the monks to work in the fields. The Cluniac rule greatly extended the hours to be devoted to performing the services of the church in the hope of keeping the monks occupied in that way. By the eleventh century Cluny had many daughter houses. Some were new foundations while others were old monasteries that were more or less willingly reformed by Cluniac monks. The order also developed a highly centralized administration. There was only one abbot — the abbot of Cluny. Each daughter house was headed by a prior who was subject to the abbot of Cluny, who was supposed to visit regularly and inspect every house of the order. In the eleventh century Cluny had enormous influence. With the support of the emperor Henry III Cluniac monks reformed many German monasteries and men inspired by Cluny revived English monasticism. All enthusiastic and devout churchmen tended to gravitate toward Cluny.

These enthusiasts were not willing to limit their reforms to the monasteries. They were anxious to remedy the abuses that were common among the secular clergy. The most serious of these was lay appointment of ecclesiastics. The great lords appointed bishops and abbots, and the lords of villages appointed the parish priests. Closely related to this was the sin of simony, the payment of money to obtain church offices. The lay lords were extremely inclined to bestow offices on the highest bidder. Another abuse that seriously troubled conscientious churchmen was the marriage of priests. To some extent this was a moral question — canon law required priests to be celibate. But it also vitally concerned the material interests of the church. A married priest was inclined to think of his family before his priestly duty and was most likely to use church property to endow his children even if he did not succeed in making his office hereditary. There were, of course, other abuses that interested the reformers, but these were the ones on which they concentrated their attention.

The reformers realized that there was but one way to achieve their ends. Even if the bishops of Europe could be made enthusiastic supporters of reform, they were as individuals helpless before the power of the lay princes. Only a strongly organized church with an effective central government could hope to make much

progress. Hence their eyes turned toward the papacy. The pope was elected by the clergy and people of Rome, which meant in practice by the dominant faction of the Roman nobility. But when a strong monarch occupied the imperial throne, his influence could be decisive. Neither of these methods of choice pleased the reformers. If the papacy was to lead in the reform of the church, it had to be removed from lay control. The emperor Henry III was a pious as well as an efficient ruler, and he gladly supported the reformers by appointing popes favorable to their aims. The first important step was the creation of the college of cardinals. The six bishops who were suffragans of the pope as bishop of Rome, the pastors of the more important Roman churches, and some of the deacons of the Roman church were formed into a corporation. When a pope died, these men were to meet and elect his successor. If outside pressure was put upon them, the election was to be void.

The next problem was to increase the pope's authority over the church as a whole. Several devices were used for this purpose. It had long been customary for the pope to summon peculiarly worthy archbishops to Rome to receive the *pallium* from his hands. If the prelate to be honored was unwilling to go to Rome, the pope sent him the *pallium*. The reformers advanced the theory that as soon as an archbishop was elected, he must go to Rome to seek the *pallium* and could not perform the functions of his office until he did so. This gave the pope an effective veto on archiepiscopal elections and a chance to instruct the new prelate. In theory it had always been possible to appeal a decision rendered by an archbishop's court to the papacy, but the journey to Rome was long and costly and only the rich could make such an appeal. The reformers established a system by which cases could be heard by local prelates appointed by the pope. If anyone wanted to appeal a case to the papal court, he wrote to the pope asking him to appoint delegates to hear the appeal. The pope then directed a group of ecclesiastics in the region where the appellant lived to hear and determine the case. This device greatly increased the business of the papal courts, and enormously expanded the pope's influence. But the most important official was the papal legate. The legate was an agent of the pope sent to carry out his master's will in some part of Christendom. Sometimes a legate was sent to deal with a particular problem, but more often he was given a broad commission to carry out papal policy in a region. Armed with the full spiritual authority of the papacy he was an

effective agent. Through his legates the pope could take an active part in the affairs of the church as a whole.

One of the ablest and most energetic members of the papal *curia* under the first reforming popes was an ecclesiastic named Hildebrand. Deeply imbued with the ideas of the Cluniac group, he was convinced that the church must be independent of all secular control and that the pope must be the absolute master of the church. In 1073 he was elected pope and took office under the name of Gregory VII. During the pontificates of Gregory's five predecessors much progress had been made. The college of cardinals had been established, papal legates and judges-delegate introduced, and stern decrees issued against simony and married clerks. The emperor Henry III was in favor of these reforms and supported them. But when reformers remarked that bishops should be chosen without lay interference, Henry turned a deaf ear. Control of the prelates was the very foundation of his power and he had no intention of abandoning it. Gregory found the imperial throne occupied by Henry IV, who had but recently come of age. The pope informed the emperor that bishops should be elected according to canon law — that is, by the clergy and people of the diocese. Henry ignored the warning and went on his way. Gregory wrote a stern letter of rebuke. The emperor replied by calling the German prelates together at Worms and having them declare Gregory a false pope improperly elected. Gregory then excommunicated Henry. This gave the emperor's enemies in Germany, the Saxons and the great lords who feared he would become too strong, a perfect excuse for revolt. They rose in rebellion and informed the emperor that unless he obtained absolution from the pope, they would choose a new ruler. To make his search for absolution impossible of success, they carefully guarded the Alpine passes. But Henry slipped through his kingdom of Burgundy into Lombardy where the bishops and their levies promptly rallied around him. The emperor met the pope at the castle of Canossa in northern Tuscany, went through a humiliating form of penance, and was absolved. All this was dramatic and picturesque but it accomplished little. Henry would not abandon his claim to the right to appoint and invest bishops and Gregory was determined to win his point. The pope continued to support the German rebels against the emperor and used his Norman vassals to check the imperial power in Italy. Gregory died in 1085 in exile with his Norman allies while imperial troops occupied Rome. After the short pontificate of Victor III, pope Urban II continued with

enthusiasm the quarrel with the emperor. This quarrel was the chief reason for the meagerness of the German participation in the First Crusade preached by Urban in 1095.

✧ Although the investiture question was the chief cause of the bitter controversy between Gregory VII and Henry IV, it was not the only point at issue. Gregory was advancing a novel concept of the proper relation between secular and ecclesiastical authority. During the ninth and tenth centuries the church had bent every effort to support the authority of the kings against their powerful subjects. It had preached that the royal office was a sacred one instituted by God and that an anointed king had priestly characteristics. Gregory maintained that the pope was God's viceroy on earth and all men were subject to him. Kings were merely high grade police chiefs to protect the church and suppress criminals. If an emperor or king refused to obey the pope, the pope could depose him.

The fact that Gregory was kept well occupied by his struggle with the emperor was a great boon to the other princes of Europe. Philip I of France was a cheerful sinner who was in continual difficulties with the church. Gregory's legates attempted to stop lay investiture in France, but they made little progress. Philip did not openly defy the pope; he simply ignored his commands. On the very eve of the First Crusade, pope Urban II excommunicated Philip for stealing the wife of the count of Anjou and making her his queen, but this did not trouble the king very gravely. Most interesting of all were Gregory's relations with William the Conqueror. As duke of Normandy William had appointed bishops as he saw fit and he continued the practice in England. Moreover, he forbade any papal legate to enter his realm without his express permission. But William, as a rule, made respectable episcopal appointments, and Gregory felt that he could not afford to be at odds with all the monarchs of Europe. When the English king complained that a papal legate was making a nuisance of himself in Normandy, Gregory hastily ordered his agent to stay out of the duchy. Incidentally, the Norman conquest of England had been a major victory for the papacy. The Anglo-Saxon church had been firmly under the control of the kings and largely independent of Rome. The conquest brought it into the orbit of the centralized government being developed by the papacy.

Although the eleventh century cannot be called a great era in the history of European culture, it was by no means unimportant even in this respect. Perhaps its most significant contribution was

in a field closely related to the work of the reforming popes — canon law. The fundamental bases of ecclesiastical law were the Bible and the patristic writings — especially those of Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. To this mass of material were added the decrees of popes and councils. From the sixth century to the eleventh the churches of the various European states had been developing their own canon law in their own local councils. Obviously if the church was to have an effective centralized administration, it needed a common, generally accepted canon law that might be applied throughout Christendom. Fortunately, the eleventh century was marked by great interest in legal studies. Roman law as expounded in the works of Justinian's jurists and practical handbooks based on them had been continuously studied and applied in Italy, but one of the most valuable parts of Justinian's monument, the *Digest*, had apparently been forgotten. It was rediscovered in the eleventh century and spurred what was probably already an active interest in law. Bologna became particularly noted as a center of legal studies. Lanfranc, abbot of Bec and later archbishop of Canterbury, had studied Roman law in Italy. Equipped with their legal training many ecclesiastics set to work to produce codes of canon law for the church. Gregory VII had a group of canonists at work on codes that would emphasize the papal authority. The complete reconciliation of the divergent versions of ecclesiastical law had to await Gratian in the twelfth century, but the process was well begun in the eleventh.

In theology and philosophy the eleventh century was completely overshadowed by the twelfth. Anselm, abbot of Bec and archbishop of Canterbury, was a powerful and rather original thinker whose proof of the existence of God was greatly admired throughout the later Middle Ages. Lanfranc and Anselm made the monastic school at Bec the chief center of scholarship in northern Europe. The great cathedral schools of Laon, Chartres, and Paris had their beginnings in the eleventh century. This period also saw the first literature in French. The *Chanson de Roland* clearly existed in some form before the end of the century, and the first troubadours were at work in the south of France at the same time. The best known of the early troubadours, duke William IX of Aquitaine, took part in the abortive crusade of 1101. In the north the eleventh century was the great age of the Norse sagas. In architecture this era saw the rapid development of the Romanesque style with its massive barrel vaults, ingeniously carved capitals,

and extensive exterior sculpture. Appropriately enough the queen of all Romanesque churches graced the abbey of Cluny.

In all the varied phases of civilization the eleventh century was a period of vital growth and energetic development. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were to see the flowering of medieval civilization, but the plant matured and the buds were formed in the eleventh. The men of western Europe had faith in God and in their own strong arms. They also had a willingness to adventure, to innovate, and to organize. The two great complexes of institutions, the church and the feudal system, had achieved the strength of maturity without losing their capacity for further development and expansion. And it was the church and the feudal system that made the crusades possible.