



Suffer this Midterm in

# THE MEDIEVIAL WORLD

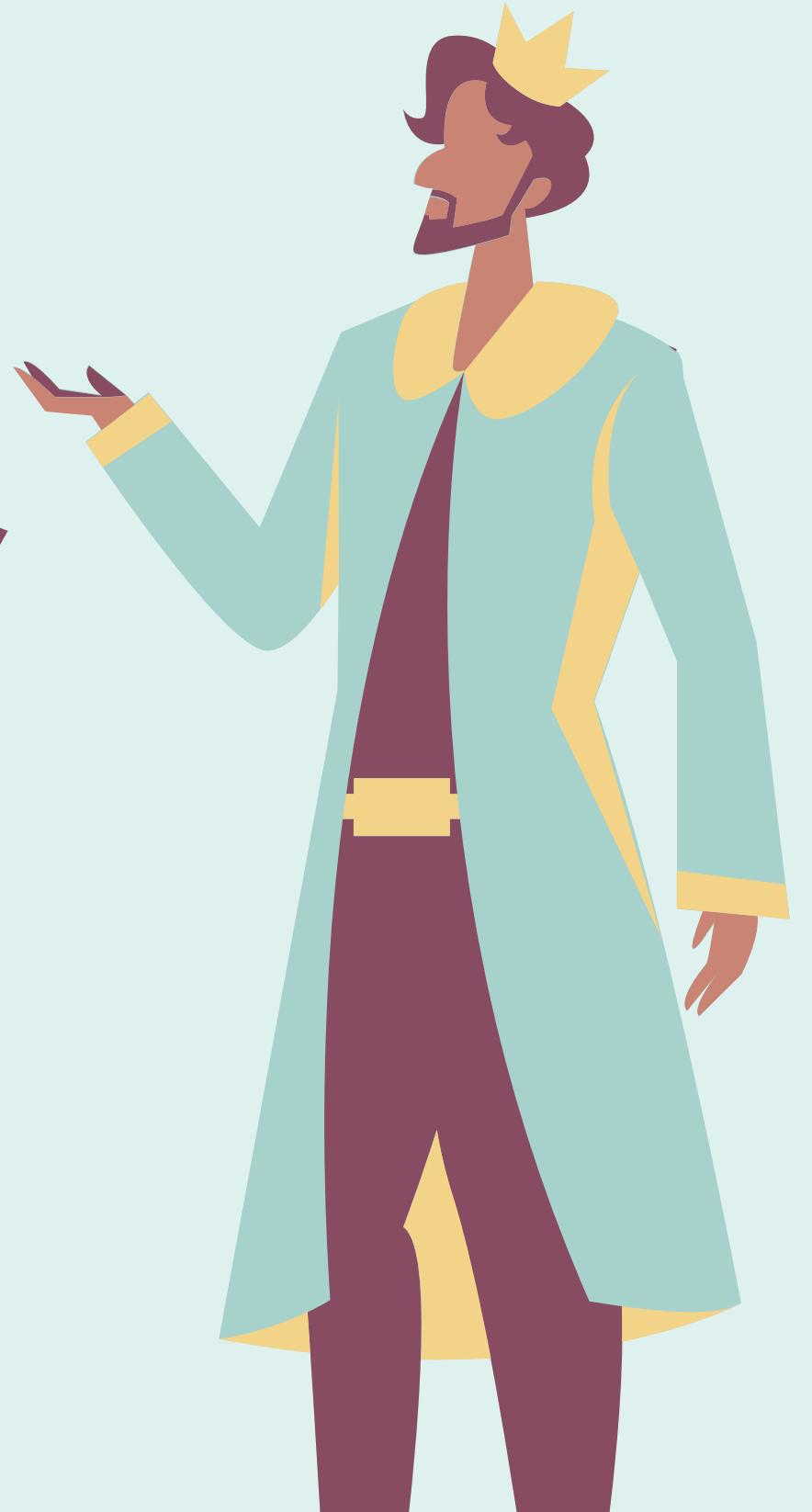
with Mr. Pawat Kurovat



## INTRODUCTION

### 900-1400 AD

- Diverse civilizations across Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas
- Main FOCUS: political systems, social structures, economic development, international relations





# MEDIEVIALISM



## Definition

**Medievalism** is a later historical construct used to describe the period between the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the Renaissance.

## Contexts

The term is often linked with notions like Feudalism and the “**Dark Ages**,” but these are shaped by later intellectual fashions rather than reflecting actual medieval conditions.

- English historians emphasize **Anglo-Saxon** and **Tudor** history
- European historians focus on transitions between **antiquity** and **modernity**
- US historians emphasize cultural, social history, and historiography, often criticizing “medieval” as a misleading term.

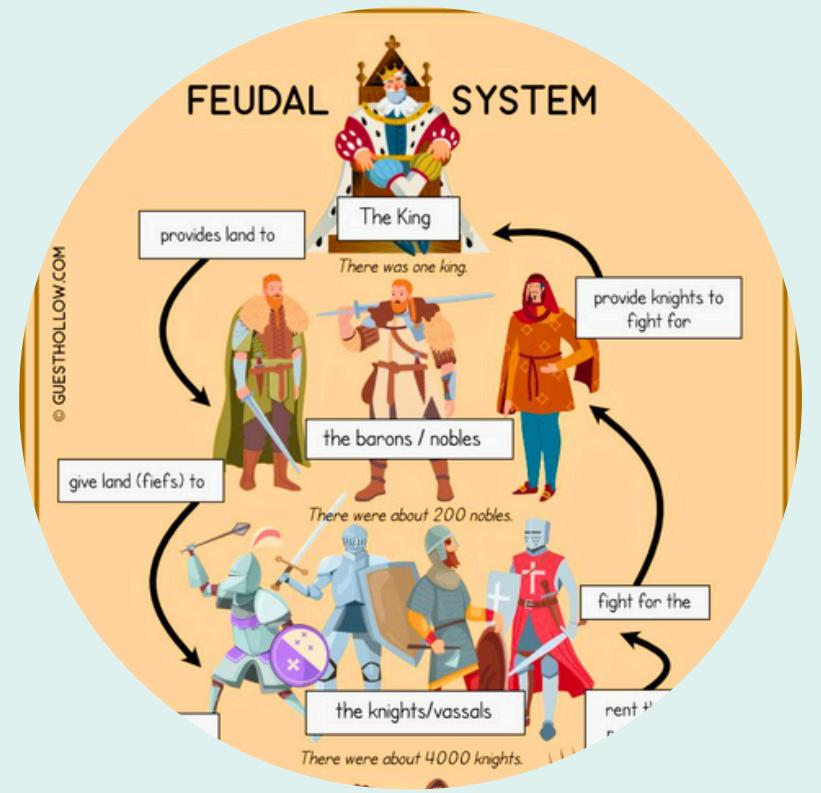
## Critique

Medievalism can distort the understanding of medieval societies by imposing modern assumptions and oversimplifying complex social realities.

## MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

- “Dark Ages” as cultural stagnation — NOT accurate
- Medieval = regressive or brutal (pejorative modern use)
- European-focused; ignores coexisting advanced civilizations globally
- Oversimplifies diverse social and political realities

# POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND POWER



Medieval governance featured various concepts of legitimacy, including divine right, charismatic leadership, and legal authority.

European medieval power was characterized by fragmented kingdoms, feudal-like arrangements, and evolving legal frameworks like the Magna Carta



The Byzantine Empire maintained significant influence through centralized authority and church-state relations.

# POLITICAL WORLD OF MEDIEVAL EURASIA

ROME

Legacy of Rome shapes medieval power notions

CONCEPTS OF LEGITIMACY

Latin ideas like Auctoritas, Translatio Imperii, Translatio Studii

NON-WESTERN LEGITIMACY

Mandate of Heaven (China), Chakravartin (India), Caliphate (Islam)





## POWER AND LEGITIMACY



**Concepts of power:** coercion vs legitimate authority



European medieval power was fragmented;  
**Magna Carta** as key legal milestone



Divine right, charismatic leaders, and  
legal authority key in legitimacy



Non-Latinized concepts: **Mandate of Heaven**  
(China), **Caliphate succession** (Islam),  
**Chakravartin ruler** (India)

# CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

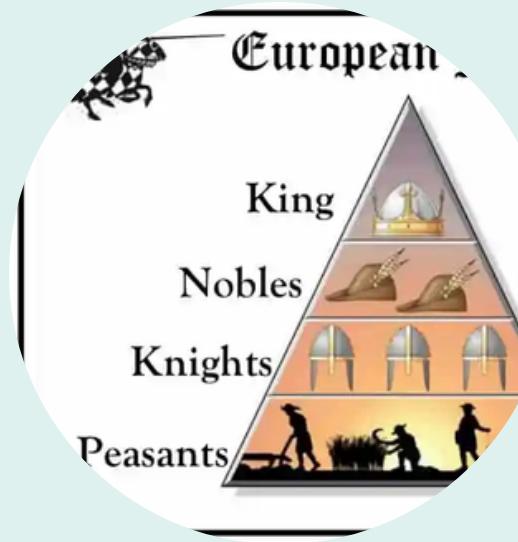
Leadership based on personal qualities perceived as extraordinary, setting leaders apart from ordinary people.

## CHARACTERISTICS

- **Personal Magnetism:** Ability to inspire loyalty through personality.
- **Visionary:** Articulates compelling solutions to challenges.
- **Emotional Appeal:** Mobilizes followers emotionally, fostering strong commitment.
- **Crisis Leadership:** Emerges forcefully in times of crisis, providing decisive direction.
- **Personal Sacrifice:** Willing to endure hardship for the greater good.

## EXAMPLES

- **Louis IX of France** (Saint Louis) – seen as saintly and just.
- **Wu Zetian** (China) – only female emperor in Chinese history.
- **Joan of Arc** – inspired troops and legitimacy during the Hundred Years' War.
- **Charlemagne** – founder of the Holy Roman Empire, unifying much of Western Europe.



## FEUDALISM: THE COMMON DEFINITION



Land granted by king to lords in exchange for military service



Lords granting to vassals



Serfs working the land



## FEUDALISM: REVISITING REALITY



**Not dominant political organization**



**Lack of structured lord-vassal hierarchy and subinfeudation**



**Manorialism as the principal system**



## CHALLENGING FEUDALISM AS A CONSTRUCT



**Elizabeth A.R. Brown's critique**



**Historians' recognition of diversity in  
medieval land agreements**



**Importance of context and time**

# ECONOMIC AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



Europe's urban population doubled or tripled 1100–1200 AD (Paris, Venice, Milan)



Black Death → population decline but boosted urbanization, guilds growth

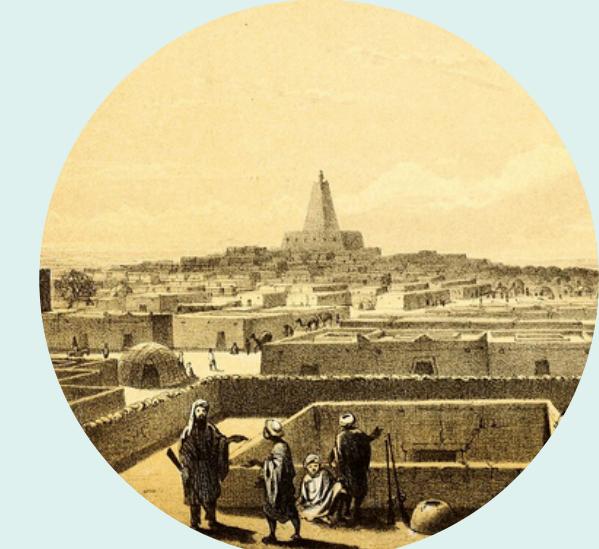


Song China: technological and commercial peak; civil service exams

African trade and learning centers (Timbuktu) flourished



Islamic Golden Age: scholarship, trade networks, administration





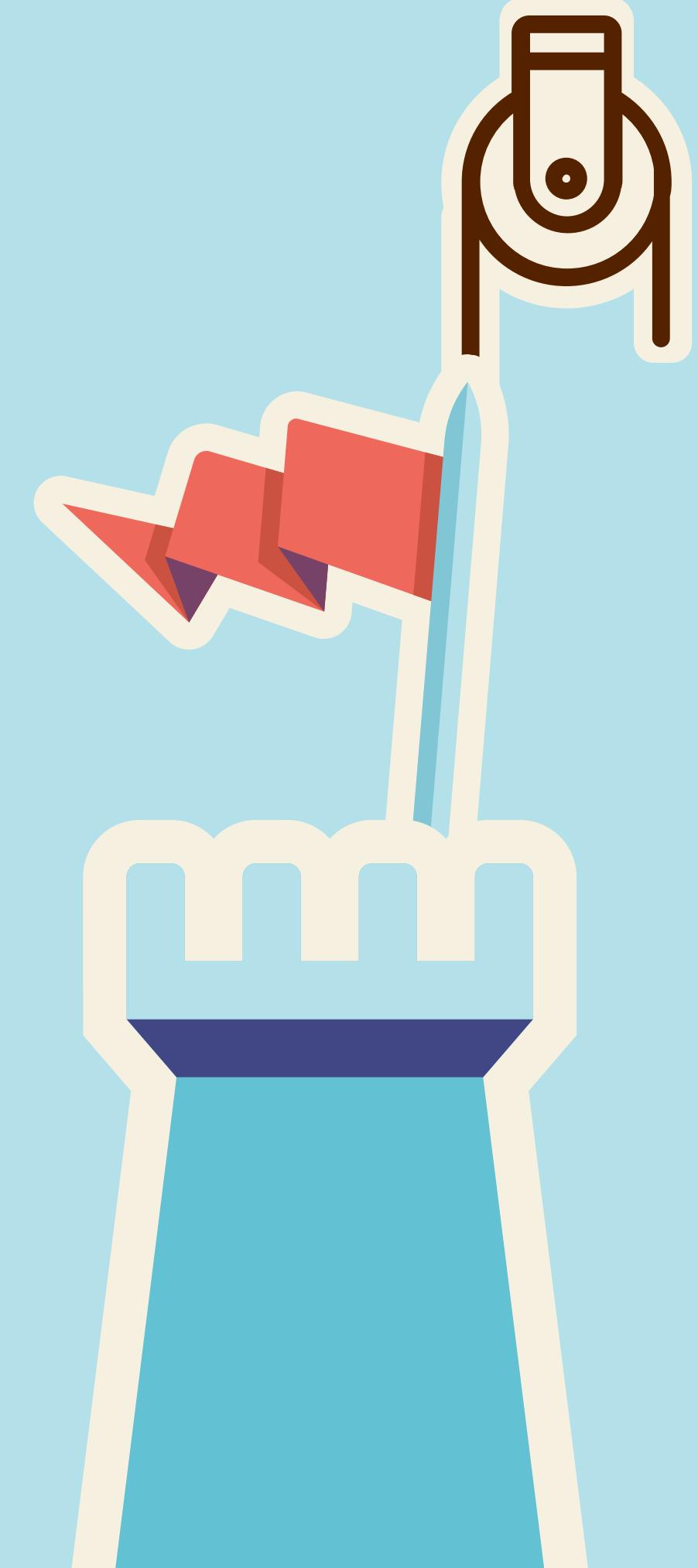
## BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND JUSTINIAN REFORMS

- Eastern Roman Empire: centralized power and church-state relations (Caesaropapism)
- Justinian's Corpus Iuris Civilis codified Roman law influencing Europe
  - Schism with Western Church marks religious divide

# ISLAMIC CALIPHATE

Political-religious unity centered on Caliph figures (Sunni and Shi'ite divergence)

- Sharia law and principles of governance emphasize justice, consultation, and public welfare
- Golden Age of intellectual, scientific, and cultural flourishing





- Centralized bureaucratic state with decentralized governance (tributary system)
  - Mandate of Heaven legitimized dynasties
  - Cultural diplomacy shaped East Asia

## INDIA AND DHARMASASTRA

- Complex social structure anchored in caste systems and Vedic legal texts
  - Rajput-Mughal Empire emphasized divine right and religious tolerance
  - Cultural and legal traditions influenced Southeast Asia

# PRE-COLUMBIAN CIVILIZATIONS IN THE AMERICAS



**Mississippian culture and major urban centers like Cahokia**

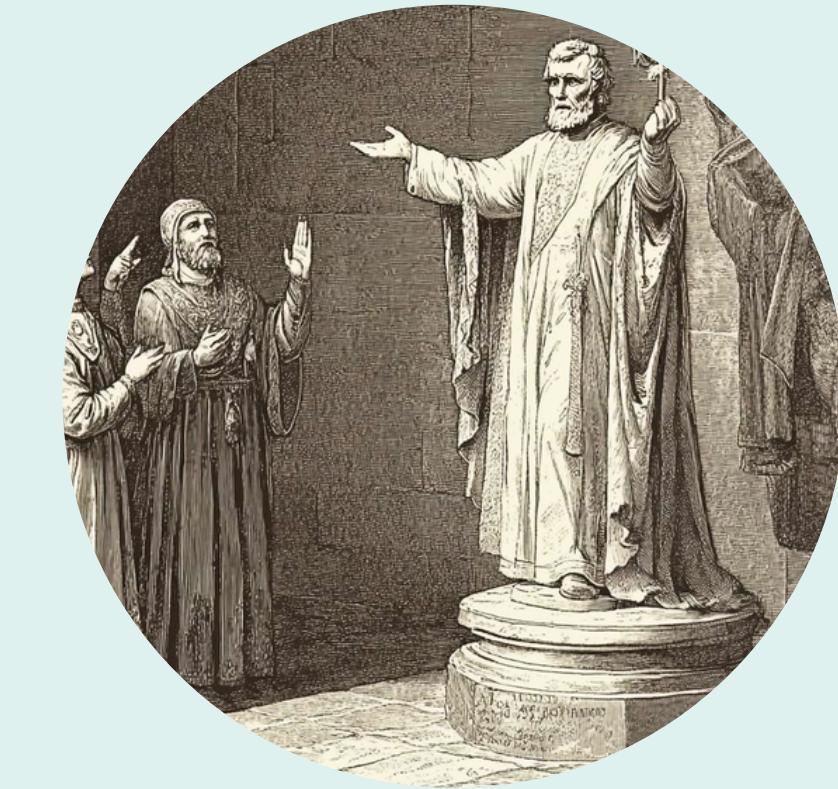
**Mesoamerican empires: Maya, Aztec, Inca**

**Social stratification and decentralized polities**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS



Intellectual and cultural exchanges occurred through transfers of empire (*Translatio Imperii*) and knowledge (*Translatio Studii*) across civilizations.



Religion and law played central roles in legitimizing power and shaping social order.



Different schools of historical thought analyze medievalism, feudalism, and power legitimacy with varying perspectives.

# SOCIAL HIERARCHIES AND RELATIONS



**Social structures varied, with feudalism being less dominant than traditionally believed; manorialism was a key system involving serfs and lords.**

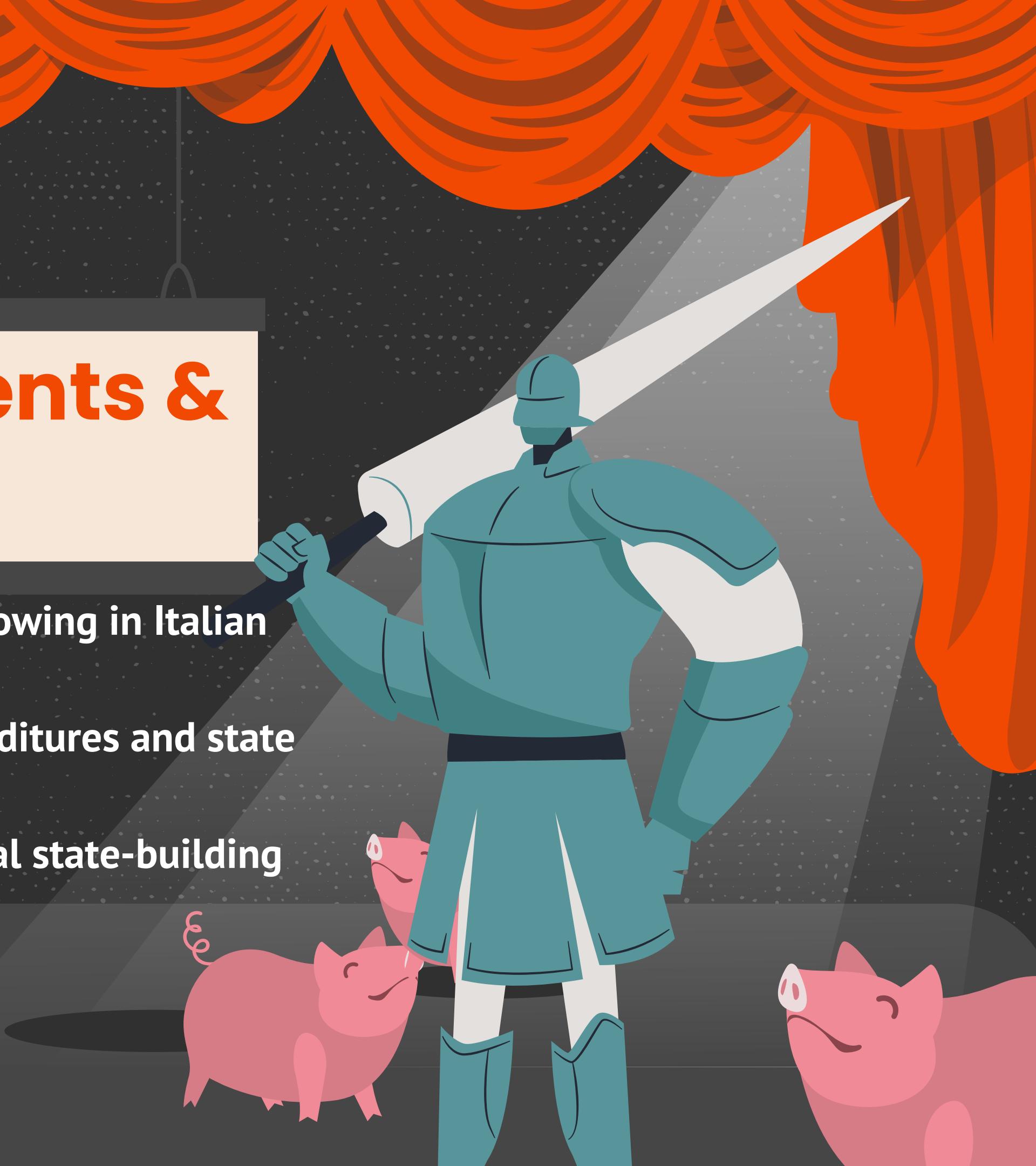
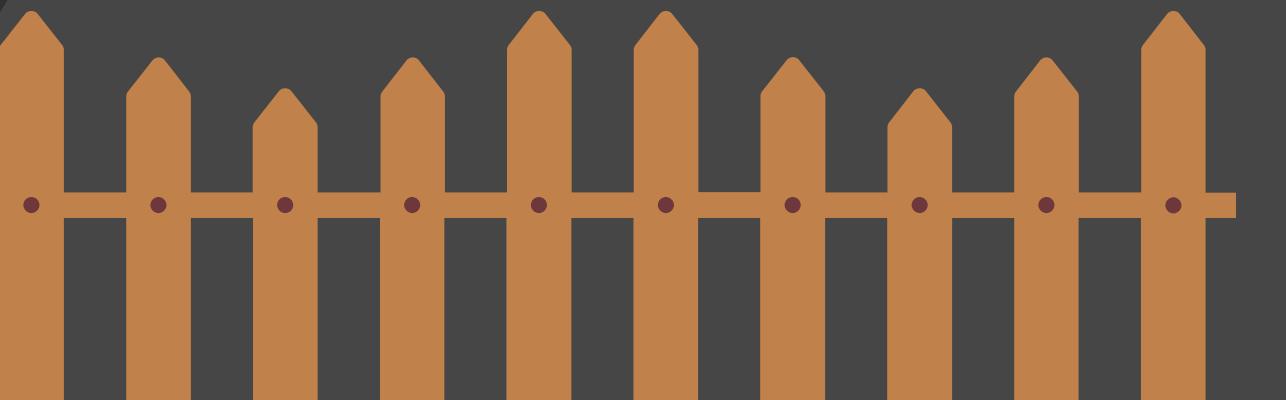
**In China, social order hinge on the emperor, gentry, peasants, and merchants, shaped by Confucian ideals.**

**The Indian subcontinent had a complex caste system influenced by Sanskritization and Hinduism.**

**Women in early Islamic societies played significant roles in law, business, and politics.**

# Economic Developments & Sovereign Debt

- Growth of trade networks, banking, and state borrowing in Italian city-states
- Sovereign debt emergence linked to military expenditures and state power
- Taxation and fiscal innovations central for medieval state-building



# Hundred Years' War and Nation-States

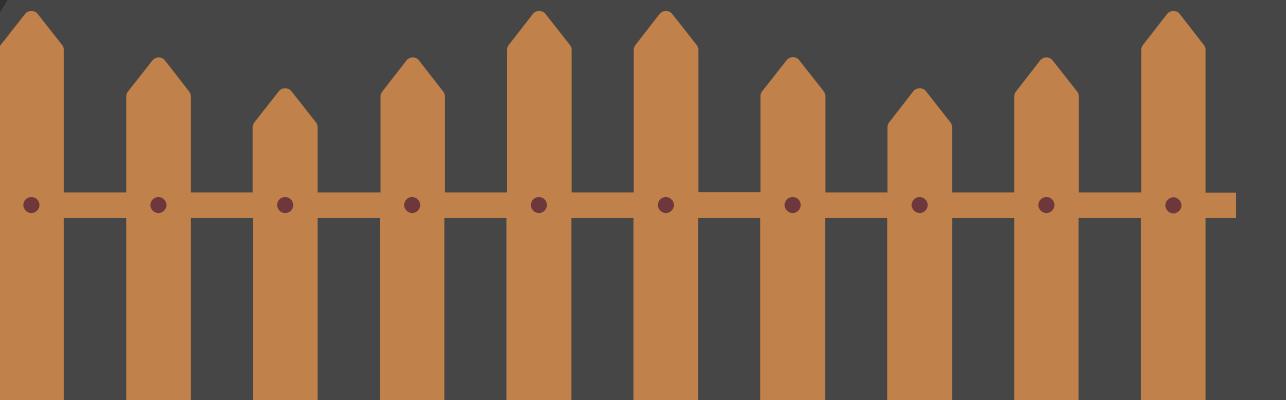
## Hundred Years' War and Nation-States

- Conflict between England and France over territories
  - Rise of national identities and standing armies
  - Joan of Arc's role in unifying France



# Changing Global Centers of Gravity

- Medieval Eurasia as globally dominant economic and political space
- Islamic world, China as centers of innovation and trade
  - Shift away from Eurocentric views toward broader global narratives





## LEGACY AND LEGACIES



**Islamic Caliphate: governance,  
trade, cultural integration**

**Chinese imperial model:  
meritocracy, state centralization**

**Indian empires: cultural diplomacy  
and trade networks**

**Americas: complex societies  
disrupted by conquest**

# THANK YOU

