

Objective #12 - Unlike slaves, serfs had legal status and protection. They were people (albeit dirty, low people), and their lords had to provide them with justice, rights, and protection.

Serfs and Manors

Serfs

Slaves and free peasants had existed and were the majority of Western Europe's population.

Rulers and administrators recognized both groups as one category - serfs - that were tied to the land.

Serfs' Obligations

Could work in certain lands and pass this right to their heirs.

Paid rents and labor in kind to their lords.

Male serfs worked three days a week in their lords' fields, three days in their own.

Female serfs churned butter, made cheese, brewed beer, spun thread, wove cloth, and sewed clothes for lord and family.

Some women kept sheep and cattle

Serfs could only leave the land with permission from their lord.

Manors

A large estate of fields, meadows, forest, tools, and lakes/rivers.

Serfs are bound to it.

Lord of the manor is in charge.

Provided government, police services, and justice.

Settled disputes between serfs.

Manors dominated rural regions in France, western Germany, southern England, and northern Italy.

Became largely self-sufficient communities.

Maintained mills, bakeries, breweries, and wineries.

Serfs produced iron tools, leather goods, domestic utensils, and textiles.

Local markets provided goods that residents could not make themselves.