

MARC BLOCH

Feudal Society

Translated from the French

by L A Manyon

Foreword by M M Postan

(2) Social Classes and Political Organization

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XXXII

FEUDALISM AS A TYPE OF SOCIETY

1 HAS THERE BEEN MORE THAN ONE FEUDALISM?

IN the eyes of Montesquieu, the establishment of 'feudal laws' was a phenomenon *sui generis*, 'an event which happened once in the world and which will perhaps never happen again'. Voltaire, less experienced, on doubt, in the precise formulation of legal definitions, but a man of wider outlook, demurred. 'Feudalism', he wrote, 'is not an event; it is a very old form which, with differences in its working, subsists in three-quarters of our hemisphere.'¹ Modern scholarship has in general rallied to the side of Voltaire. Egyptian feudalism, Achaean feudalism, Chinese feudalism, Japanese feudalism—all these forms and more are now familiar concepts. The historian of the West must sometimes regard them with a certain amount of misgiving. For he cannot be unaware of the different definitions which have been given of this famous term, even on its native soil. The basis of feudal society, Benjamin Guérard has said, is land. No, it is the personal group, rejoins Jacques Flach. Do the various exotic versions of feudalism, which seem to abound in universal history today, conform to Guérard's definition or to Flach's? The only remedy for these uncertainties is to go back to the origins of the problem. Since it is obvious that all these societies, separated by time and space, have received the name 'feudal' only on account of their similarities, real or supposed, to Western feudalism, it is the characteristics of this basic type, to which all the others must be referred, that it is of primary importance to define. But first it is necessary to dispose of some obvious instances of the misuse of a term which has made too much noise in the world not to have undergone many perversions.

In the system which they christened 'feudalism' its first godfathers, as we know, were primarily conscious of those aspects of it which conflicted with the idea of a centralized state. Thence it was a short step to describing as feudal every fragmentation of political authority; so that a value judgment was normally combined with the simple statement of a fact. Because sovereignty was generally associated in the minds of these writers

¹ *Esprit des Lois*, XXX, I; Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, II (ed. Garnier, XXIX, p. 91).

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with fairly large states, every exception to the rule seemed to fall into the category of the abnormal. This alone would suffice to condemn a usage which, moreover, could scarcely fail to give rise to intolerable confusion. Occasionally, indeed, there are indications of a more precise notion. In 1783 a minor municipal official, the market-watchman of Valenciennes, denounced as responsible for the increase in the price of foodstuffs 'a feudality of great country landlords'.¹ How many polemicists since then have held up to public obloquy the 'feudalism' of bankers or industrialists! Charged with more or less vague historical associations, the word with certain writers seems to suggest no more than the brutal exercise of authority, though frequently it also conveys the slightly less elementary notion of an encroachment of economic powers on public life. It is in fact very true that the identification of wealth—then consisting mainly of land—with authority was one of the outstanding features of medieval feudalism. But this was less on account of the strictly feudal character of that society than because it was, at the same time, based on the manor.

Feudalism, manorial system—the identification here goes back much farther. It had first occurred in the use of the word 'vassal'. The aristocratic stamp which this term had received from what was, after all, a secondary development, was not strong enough to prevent it from being occasionally applied, even in the Middle Ages, to serfs (originally closely akin to vassals properly so called because of the personal nature of their dependence) and even to ordinary tenants. What was then only a kind of linguistic aberration, especially frequent in somewhat incompletely feudalized regions like Gascony or Leon, became a more and more widespread usage, as familiarity with genuine vassalage faded. 'Everyone knows', wrote Perreciot in 1786, 'that in France the subjects of lords are commonly called their vassals.'² Similarly it became customary, in spite of etymology, to describe as 'feudal rights' the burdens to which peasant holdings were subject. Thus when the men of the Revolution announced their intention to destroy feudalism, it was above all the manorial system that they meant to attack. But here again the historian must interpose. Though an essential element in feudal society, the manor was in itself an older institution, and was destined to last much longer. In the interests of sound terminology it is important that the two ideas should be kept clearly separate.

Let us therefore try to bring together in broad outline what we have learned about European feudalism, in the strict sense of the word, from its history.

¹ G. Lefebvre, *Les paysans du Nord*, 1924, p. 309.

² For example, E. Lodge, 'Serfdom in the Pyrenees', in *Vierteljahrschr. für Soz. und W. G.*, 1905, p. 31; Sanchez-Albornoz, *Estampas de la vida en Leon*, 2nd ed., p. 86, n. 37; Perreciot, *De l'état-civil des personnes*, II, 1786, p. 193, n. 9.

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2 THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN FEUDALISM

The simplest way will be to begin by saying what feudal society was not. Although the obligations arising from blood-relationship played a very active part in it, it did not rely on kinship alone. More precisely, feudal ties proper were developed when those of kinship proved inadequate. Again, despite the persistence of the idea of a public authority superimposed on the multitude of petty powers, feudalism coincided with a profound weakening of the State, particularly in its protective capacity. But much as feudal society differed from societies based on kinship as well as from those dominated by the power of the State, it was their successor and bore their imprint. For while the characteristic relationships of personal subjection retained something of the quasi-family character of the original companionship, a considerable part of the political authority exercised by innumerable petty chiefs had the appearance of a usurpation of 'regalian' rights.

European feudalism should therefore be seen as the outcome of the violent dissolution of older societies. It would in fact be unintelligible without the great upheaval of the Germanic invasions which, by forcibly uniting two societies originally at very different stages of development, disrupted both of them and brought to the surface a great many modes of thought and social practices of an extremely primitive character. It finally developed in the atmosphere of the last barbarian raids. It involved a far-reaching restriction of social intercourse, a circulation of money too sluggish to admit of a salaried officialdom, and a mentality attached to things tangible and local. When these conditions began to change, feudalism began to wane.

It was an unequal society, rather than a hierarchical one—with chiefs rather than nobles; and with serfs, not slaves. If slavery had not played so small a part, there would have been no need for the characteristically feudal forms of dependence, as applied to the lower orders of society. In an age of disorder, the place of the adventurer was too important, the memory of men too short, the regularity of social classifications too uncertain, to admit of the strict formation of regular castes.

Nevertheless the feudal system meant the rigorous economic subjection of a host of humble folk to a few powerful men. Having received from earlier ages the Roman *villa* (which in some respects anticipated the manor) and the German village chiefdom, it extended and consolidated these methods whereby men exploited men, and combining inextricably the right to the revenues from the land with the right to exercise authority, it fashioned from all this the true manor of medieval times. And this it did partly for the benefit of an oligarchy of priests and monks whose task it was to propitiate Heaven, but chiefly for the benefit of an oligarchy of warriors.

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As even the most perfunctory comparative study will show, one of the most distinctive characteristics of feudal societies was the virtual identity of the class of chiefs with the class of professional warriors serving in the only way that then seemed effective, that is as heavily armed horsemen. As we have seen, of the societies where an armed peasantry survived, some knew neither vassalage nor the manor, while others knew them only in very imperfect forms—as in Scandinavia for example, or the kingdoms of north-western Spain. The case of the Byzantine Empire is perhaps even more significant because its institutions bore the stamp of a much more conscious directing thought. There, after the anti-aristocratic reaction of the eighth century, a government which had preserved the great administrative traditions of the Roman period, and which was furthermore concerned to provide itself with a strong army, created tenements charged with military obligations to the State—true fiefs in one sense, but differing from those of the West in that they were peasant fiefs, each consisting of a small farm. Thenceforth it was a paramount concern of the imperial government to protect these 'soldiers' properties', as well as small-holdings in general, against the encroachments of the rich and powerful. Nevertheless there came a time towards the end of the eleventh century when the Empire, overwhelmed by economic conditions which made independence more and more difficult for a peasantry constantly in debt, and further weakened by internal discords, ceased to extend any useful protection to the free farmers. In this way it not only lost precious fiscal resources, but found itself at the mercy of the magnates, who alone were capable thereafter of raising the necessary troops from among their own dependants.

In feudal society the characteristic human bond was the subordinate's link with a nearby chief. From one level to another the ties thus formed—like so many chains branching out indefinitely—joined the smallest to the greatest. Land itself was valued above all because it enabled a lord to provide himself with 'men' by supplying the remuneration for them. We want lands, said in effect the Norman lords who refused the gifts of jewels, arms, and horses offered by their duke. And they added among themselves: 'It will thus be possible for us to maintain many knights, and the duke will no longer be able to do so.'¹

It remained to devise a form of real property right suitable for the remuneration of services and coinciding in duration with the personal tie itself. From the solution which it found for this problem, Western feudalism derived one of its most original features. While the 'men of service' who surrounded the Slav princes continued to receive their estates as outright gifts, the fief of the Frankish vassal, after some fluctuations of policy, was in theory conceded to him only for the term of his life. For among the highest classes, distinguished by the honourable profession of arms,

¹ Dudo of Saint-Quentin, ed. Lair (*Mém. Soc. Antiquaires Normandie*, XXIII), III 43-4 (933).

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relationships of dependence had assumed, at the outset, the form of contracts freely entered into between two living men confronting one another. From this necessary personal contact the relationship derived the best part of its moral value. Nevertheless at an early date various factors tarnished the purity of the obligation: hereditary succession, natural in a society where the family remained so strong; the practice of enfeoffment which was imposed by economic conditions and ended by burdening the land with services rather than the man with fealty; finally and above all, the plurality of vassal engagements. The loyalty of the commended man remained, in many cases, a potent factor. But as a paramount social bond designed to unite the various groups at all levels, to prevent fragmentation and to arrest disorder, it showed itself decidedly ineffective.

Indeed in the immense range of these ties there had been from the first something artificial. Their general diffusion in feudal times was the legacy of a moribund State—that of the Carolingians—which had conceived the idea of combating social disintegration by means of one of the institutions born of that very condition. The system of superposed protective relationships was certainly not incapable of contributing to the cohesion of the State: witness, the Anglo-Norman monarchy. But for this it was necessary that there should be a central authority favoured, as in England, not only by the fact of conquest itself but even more by the circumstance that it coincided with new material and moral conditions. In the ninth century the forces making for disintegration were too strong.

In the area of Western civilization the map of feudalism reveals some large blank spaces—the Scandinavian peninsula, Frisia, Ireland. Perhaps it is more important still to note that feudal Europe was not all feudalized in the same degree or according to the same rhythm and, above all, that it was nowhere feudalized completely. In no country did the whole of the rural population fall into the bonds of personal and hereditary dependence. Almost everywhere—though the number varied greatly from region to region—there survived large or small allodial properties. The concept of the State never absolutely disappeared, and where it retained the most vitality men continued to call themselves 'free', in the old sense of the word, because they were dependent only on the head of the people or his representatives. Groups of peasant warriors remained in Normandy, in the Danelaw, and in Spain. The mutual oath, strongly contrasting with the oaths of subordination, survived in the peace associations and triumphed in the communes. No doubt it is the fate of every system of human institutions never to be more than imperfectly realized. Capitalism was unquestionably the dominant influence on the European economy at the beginning of the twentieth century; yet more than one undertaking continued to exist outside it.

Returning to our feudal map, we find between the Loire and the Rhine, and in Burgundy on both banks of the Saône, a heavily shaded area which,

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in the eleventh century, is suddenly enlarged by the Norman conquests of England and southern Italy. All round this central nucleus there is an almost regular shading-off till, in Saxony and especially in Leon and Castile, the stippling becomes very sparse indeed. Finally the entire shaded area is surrounded by blank spaces. In the most heavily shaded zone it is not difficult to recognize the regions where the regularizing influence of the Carolingians had been most far-reaching and where also the mingling of Romanized elements and Germanic elements—more pronounced here than elsewhere—had most completely disrupted the structure of the two societies and made possible the growth of very old seeds of territorial lordship and personal dependence.

3 A CROSS-SECTION OF COMPARATIVE HISTORY

A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of a salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority—leading inevitably to disorder; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and State, of which the latter, during the second feudal age, was to acquire renewed strength—such then seem to be the fundamental features of European feudalism. Like all the phenomena revealed by that science of eternal change which is history, the social structure thus characterized certainly bore the peculiar stamp of an age and an environment. Yet just as the matrilineal or agnatic clan or even certain types of economic enterprise are found in much the same forms in very different societies, it is by no means impossible that societies different from our own should have passed through a phase closely resembling that which has just been defined. If so, it is legitimate to call them feudal during that phase. But the work of comparison thus involved is clearly beyond the powers of one man, and I shall therefore confine myself to an example which will at least give an idea of what such research, conducted by surer hands, might yield. The task is facilitated by the existence of excellent studies which already bear the hall-mark of the soundest comparative method.

In the dark ages of Japanese history we dimly perceive a society based on kinship groups, real or fictitious. Then towards the end of the seventh century of our era, under Chinese influence a system of government is founded which strives (exactly as the Carolingians did) to maintain a kind of moral control over its subjects. Finally, about the eleventh century, the period begins which it has become customary to call feudal and whose advent seems (in accordance with a pattern with which we are now familiar) to have coincided with a certain slackening of commercial activity. Here, therefore, as in Europe, 'feudalism' seems to have been

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preceded by two very different forms of social organization; and, as with us, it was profoundly influenced by both. The monarchy, though it had less connection than in Europe with the feudal structure proper—since the chains of vassalage terminated before reaching the Emperor—subsisted, in law, as the theoretical source of all power; and there also the fragmentation of political authority, which was fostered by very old habits, was held to be a consequence of encroachments on the State.

Above the peasantry a class of professional warriors had arisen. It was in these circles that ties of personal dependence developed, on the model furnished by the relations of the armed retainer with his chief; they were thus, it appears, marked by a much more pronounced class character than European 'commendation'. They were hierarchically organized, just as in Europe; but Japanese vassalage was much more an act of submission than was European vassalage and much less a contract. It was also more strict, since it did not allow plurality of lords. As these warriors had to be supported they were granted tenements closely resembling the fiefs of the West. Sometimes even, on the pattern of our *fiefs de reprises*, the grant was purely fictitious and involved in fact lands which had originally belonged to the patrimony of the pretended recipient. These fighting-men were naturally less and less willing to cultivate the soil, though as in Europe there were to the end exceptional cases of peasant 'vavasours'. The vassals therefore lived mainly on the rents from their own tenants. There were too many of them, however—far more, apparently, than in Europe—to admit of the establishment for their benefit of real manors, with extensive powers over the people. Few manors were created, except by the baronage and the temples, and being widely scattered and having no demesne, they recalled the embryonic manors of Anglo-Saxon England rather than those of the really manorialized regions of the West. Furthermore, on this soil where irrigated rice-fields represented the prevailing form of agriculture, the technical conditions were so different from European practice that the subjection of the peasantry assumed correspondingly different forms.

Although far too brief, of course, and too absolute in its appraisal of the contrasts between the two societies, it seems to me that this outline nevertheless enables us to reach a fairly firm conclusion. Feudalism was not 'an event which happened once in the world'. Like Europe—though with inevitable and deep-seated differences—Japan went through this phase. Have other societies also passed through it? And if so, what were the causes, and were they perhaps common to all such societies? It is for future works to provide the answers. I should be happy if this book, by suggesting questions to students, were to prepare the way for an inquiry going far beyond it.

XXXIII

THE PERSISTENCE OF EUROPEAN
FEUDALISM

1 SURVIVALS AND REVIVALS

FROM the middle of the thirteenth century onwards European societies diverged decisively from the feudal pattern. But a social system, which is simply a phase of a continuous evolution within human groups possessed of memory, cannot perish outright or at a single stroke. Feudalism had its continuations.

The manorial system, on which feudalism had left its mark, long survived it, undergoing many changes, which do not concern us here. It is plain, however, that when manorialism had ceased to form part of a closely related system of political institutions, it was bound to appear more and more pointless in the eyes of the subject populations, and consequently more odious. Of all forms of dependence within the manor, the most genuinely feudal was serfdom, and although it had undergone profound changes and become territorial rather than personal, it nevertheless survived in France till the eve of the Revolution. Who at that time remembered that among those subject to *mainmorte* there were undoubtedly some whose ancestors had voluntarily 'commended' themselves to a protector? And even supposing this remote circumstance had been known, would that knowledge have made an anachronistic state of affairs any easier to bear?

With the exception of England, where the first of the seventeenth-century Revolutions abolished all distinctions between tenure by knight-service and other forms of tenure, the obligations arising from vassalage and the fief were rooted in the soil, and they lasted, as in France, as long as the manorial system or, as in Prussia (which in the eighteenth century proceeded to a general 'allodification' of fiefs), very nearly as long. The State, which alone was capable henceforth of utilizing the hierarchy of dependence, only very slowly abandoned recourse to it for the supply of military forces. Louis XIV summoned the whole body of vassals on more than one occasion. But this was now only an exceptional measure on the part of governments in need of troops; or it might even be a mere fiscal expedient to raise funds through the medium of fines and exemptions. After the end of the Middle Ages the only characteristics of the fief which

really retained practical importance were the pecuniary burdens to which it was subject and the special rules which regulated its inheritance. Since there were no more household warriors, homage was henceforth invariably attached to the possession of an estate. Its ceremonial aspect, 'empty' though it might seem in the eyes of jurists nurtured in the rationalism of the new age,¹ was not a matter of indifference to a noble class with a natural concern for etiquette. But the ceremony itself, formerly charged with such profound human significance, now only served—apart from the monetary levies of which it was sometimes the occasion—to establish the ownership of the property, a source of rights which were more or less lucrative, according to the 'custom'. 'Feudal matters' were essentially contentious and a preoccupation of jurisprudence. They supplied a prolific literature of legal theorists and practitioners with splendid themes for dissertations. But that in France the edifice was very decayed, and the profits which its beneficiaries expected from it mostly rather poor, is clearly demonstrated by the ease with which it was overthrown. The disappearance of the manorial system was effected only at the cost of much resistance and not without seriously upsetting the distribution of wealth; that of the fief and of vassalage seemed the inevitable and almost insignificant termination of a long death-agony.

Nevertheless, in a society which continued to be beset with many disorders, the needs which had given rise to the ancient practice of companionship, and then to vassalage, had not ceased to be felt. Among the various reasons which led to the creation of the orders of chivalry which were founded in such great number in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, one of the most decisive was undoubtedly the desire of the princes to attach to themselves a group of highly-placed retainers by an especially compelling bond. The knights of Saint-Michel, according to the statutes drawn up by Louis XI, promised the king *bonne et vraie amour* and pledged themselves to serve him loyally in his just wars. The attempt was to prove as vain as that of the Carolingians in an earlier day: in the oldest list of persons honoured by the famous collar, the third place was occupied by the Constable of St. Pol, who was so basely to betray his master.

More effective—and more dangerous—was the reconstitution, during the disorders of the closing years of the Middle Ages, of bands of private warriors, very much akin to the 'satellite' vassals whose brigandage had been denounced by the writers of the Merovingian age. Frequently their dependence was expressed by the wearing of a costume displaying the colours of their chieftain or emblazoned with his arms. This practice was condemned in Flanders by Philip the Bold,² but it seems to have been especially widespread in the England of the last Plantagenets, of the

¹ P. Hévin, *Consultations et observations sur la coutume de Bretagne*, 1724, p. 343.

² P. Thomas, *Textes historiques sur Lille et le Nord*, II, 1936, p. 285 (1385 and 1397); cf. p. 218 (no. 68).

Lancastrians and the Yorkists—so much so that the groups thus formed round the great barons received the name of 'liveries'. Like the household vassals of former days they did not consist exclusively of low-born adventurers, and in fact, the majority were probably recruited from the 'gentry'. When one of these men was involved in a law-suit, the lord extended his protection to him in court. Although illegal, this practice of 'maintenance' was extraordinarily tenacious, as is attested by repeated Parliamentary prohibitions; it reproduced practically feature for feature the ancient *mithium* which the powerful man in Frankish Gaul had extended over his retainer. And since it was also to the advantage of the sovereigns to make use of the personal bond in its new form, we find Richard II seeking to spread through the kingdom—like so many *vassi dominici*—his personal followers, distinguished by the 'white hart' with which their uniform was emblazoned.¹

Even in the France of the early Bourbons the nobleman who in order to make his way in the world became the servant of a great man assumed a status remarkably akin to primitive vassalage. In a phrase that recalled the vigour of the old feudal language, one said of so-and-so that he 'belonged' to Monsieur le Prince or to the Cardinal. True, the ceremony of homage was no longer performed, though it was often replaced by a written agreement. For, from the end of the Middle Ages, the 'promise of friendship' was substituted for the dying practice of homage. See, for example, this 'letter' addressed to Fouquet on the 2nd June, 1658, by a certain Captain Deslandes. 'I promise and give my fealty to My Lord the Procurator-General . . . never to belong to any but him, to whom I give myself and attach myself with the greatest attachment of which I am capable; and I promise to serve him generally against all persons without exception and to obey none but him, nor even to have any dealings with those whom he forbids me to deal with . . . I promise him to sacrifice my life against all whom he pleases . . . without any exception whatsoever.' It is as though we were hearing, across the ages, the echoes of the most absolute of the formulas of commendation: 'thy friends shall be my friends, thy enemies shall be my enemies'²—without even a reservation in favour of the king!

2 THE WARRIOR IDEA AND THE IDEA OF CONTRACT

To the societies which succeeded it the feudal era had bequeathed knight-hood, which had become crystallized as nobility. From this origin the dominant class retained pride in its military calling, symbolized by the right to wear the sword, and clung to it with particular tenacity where, as

¹ T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England*, IV, 1928, p. 62.

² Colbert, *Lettres*, ed. P. Clément, II, p. xxx. For an old example of a promise of friendship see J. Quicherat, *Rodrigue de Villandrando*, 1879, Documents, no. XIX.

in France, it derived from this calling the justification for valuable fiscal privileges. Nobles need not pay *taille*, explain two squires of Varennes-en-Argonne about 1380; for 'by their noble status, nobles are obliged to expose their bodies and belongings in wars'.¹ Under the Ancien Régime, the nobility of ancient lineage, in contrast with the aristocracy of office, continued to call itself the nobility 'of the sword'. Even today, when to die for one's country has altogether ceased to be the monopoly of one class or one profession, the persistence of the feeling that a sort of moral supremacy attaches to the function of professional warrior—an attitude quite foreign to other societies, such as the Chinese—is a continual reminder of the separation which took place, towards the beginning of feudal times, between the peasant and the knight.

Vassal homage was a genuine contract and a bilateral one. If the lord failed to fulfil his engagements he lost his rights. Transferred, as was inevitable, to the political sphere—since the principal subjects of the king were at the same time his vassals—this idea was to have a far-reaching influence, all the more so because on this ground it was reinforced by the very ancient notions which held the king responsible in a mystical way for the welfare of his subjects and deserving of punishment in the event of public calamity. These old currents happened to unite on this point with another stream of thought which arose in the Church out of the Gregorian protest against the myth of sacred and supernatural kingship. It was the writers of this clerical group who first expressed, with a force long unequalled, the notion of a contract binding the sovereign to his people—'like the swineherd to the master who employs him', wrote an Alsatian monk about 1080. The remark seems even more full of meaning when taken in the context of the indignant protest of a (moderate) partisan of monarchy: 'the Lord's anointed cannot be dismissed like a village reeve!' But these clerical theorists themselves did not fail to invoke, among the justifications for the deposition to which they condemned the bad prince, the universally recognized right of the vassal to abandon the bad lord.²

It was above all the circles of the vassals which translated these ideas into practice, under the influence of the institutions which had formed their mentality. In this sense, there was a fruitful principle underlying many revolts which on a superficial view might appear as mere random uprisings: 'A man may resist his king and judge when he acts contrary to law and may even help to make war on him. . . . Thereby, he does not violate the duty of fealty.' These are the words of the *Sachsenspiegel*.³ This

¹ C. Aimond, *Histoire de la ville de Varennes*, 1925, p. 50.

² Manegold of Lautenbach, in *Libelli de lite* (M.G.H.), I, p. 365; Wenrich, *ibid.*, p. 289; Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii*, c. 97 in Watterich, *Pontificum Romanorum vitae*, I, p. 532.

³ Landr., III, 78, 2. The meaning of this passage is disputed by Zeumer in *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung, G.A.*, 1914, pp. 68–75, but is fully confirmed by F. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im früheren Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1914.

famous 'right of resistance', the germ of which was already present in the Oaths of Strasbourg (843) and in the pact between Charles the Bald and his vassals (856), resounded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from one end of the Western world to the other, in a multitude of texts. Though most of these documents were inspired by reactionary tendencies among the nobility, or by the egoism of the bourgeoisie, they were of great significance for the future. They included the English Great Charter of 1215; the Hungarian 'Golden Bull' of 1222; the Assizes of the kingdom of Jerusalem; the Privilege of the Brandenburg nobles; the Aragonese Act of Union of 1287; the Brabantine charter of Cortenberg; the statute of Dauphiné of 1341; the declaration of the communes of Languedoc (1356). It was assuredly no accident that the representative system, in the very aristocratic form of the English Parliament, the French 'Estates', the *Stände* of Germany, and the Spanish *Cortés*, originated in states which were only just emerging from the feudal stage and still bore its imprint. Nor was it an accident that in Japan, where the vassal's submission was much more unilateral and where, moreover, the divine power of the Emperor remained outside the structure of vassal engagements, nothing of the kind emerged from a regime which was nevertheless in many respects closely akin to the feudalism of the West. The originality of the latter system consisted in the emphasis it placed on the idea of an agreement capable of binding the rulers; and in this way, oppressive as it may have been to the poor, it has in truth bequeathed to our Western civilization something with which we still desire to live.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WHEN the English edition of *Feudal Society* was in preparation, we had to consider what was to be done with the bibliography, which was compiled in 1938-9.

One of two courses seemed open to us: either to attempt to bring it up to date by the inclusion of more recent material, or to print it as it stood, with a supplementary list of titles. There was a strong argument against the first of these alternatives. Bloch's bibliography is a work of personal selection and classification, intended to serve not only as a guide for students, but also as an acknowledgement of his debt to other scholars.¹ To have introduced additional titles into this framework would have been, it seemed to us, an unwarranted interference with Bloch's design, especially as he had made it a principle not to include works of which he had no personal knowledge. We have therefore adopted the second course and reproduced his bibliography as he left it, with the omission of one section only: a list of general histories, the majority of which, we believed, would already be familiar to students of medieval history. A supplement lists more recent publications.²

Although this book is based on a profound study of original sources, many of which are referred to in the footnotes, the author in his bibliography has confined himself to listing the standard guides to such material except in the case of the legal sources, which he has enumerated separately. Again, for the intellectual and social 'climate' which he has discussed from a particular point of view in Part II, his list of secondary authorities is limited to a few special questions. The bibliography is much fuller, however, on the subject of the last invasions and, as might be expected, on the special aspects of social and political development which form the central theme of the book.

Except where otherwise indicated, the place of publication is Paris for a book in French, or London for a book in English.

L. A. Manyon

PLAN OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

I THE EVIDENCE

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II MENTAL ATTITUDES

- (1) Modes of Feeling and Thought. (2) 'Terrors' of the Year 1000.

III THE LAST INVASIONS

- (1) General. (2) The Saracens in the Alps and the Italian Peninsula. (3) The Hungarians. (4) The Scandinavians. (5) The Conversion of the North. (6) Effects of the Scandinavian Invasions.

IV LEGAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

- (1) Original Sources. (2) Modern Works on the History of Law and Institutions. (3) The Legal Mind and the Teaching of Law. (4) Political Ideas.

V TIES OF KINSHIP

- (1) The Family and the Vendetta. (2) Economic Solidarity.

VI FEUDAL INSTITUTIONS PROPER

- (1) Feudalism in General; Frankish Origins. (2) Feudalism by Countries and Regions. (3) 'Companionage', Vassalage and Homage. (4) *Precaria*, 'Benefit', Fief, and Allod. (5) The Law of the Fief. (6) Plurality of Lords and Liege Homage.

¹ See p. xxi, n.

² Pp. 478-81.

³ Excluding literary sources in the vernacular.