

FILM 1- SOCIETY IN ROMANESQUE PERIOD

Focus : The Lords: « those who wage battle»

In the kingdom of the Franks, the 11th and 12th century corresponds to the strengthening of the feudal system. The fall of the royal power structure, in the 10th century, enabled the development of the great noble families who controlled territories of varying size. They created fiefdoms by often conceding these lands to lower-ranking lords. These vassals, who promised their loyalty in return, were often turbulent and questioned the authority of their suzerains.

The Guillaume family dynasty - which included the Counts of Poitou and the Dukes of Aquitaine and which progressively extended its domination over the areas of Angoumois and Saintonge - was contested by some vassals, such as the Lusignan family, the Counts of Marche, the Sires of Pons...

The lords expressed their power through the construction of castles ; over two hundred castles were built in the region. They were often built on mounds and were composed of a main tower (the dungeon) and an inner courtyard. The entire structure was protected by moats and earthen walls. The castles could be used for defensive purposes, or as a residence for the lord, as a hunting lodge...

The lords resided in the dungeons or in a dwelling in the courtyard. From there, they ruled over their fiefdoms. They would also organize celebrations there, with jugglers and musicians, engage in chess games... They regularly trained for battle, organizing tournaments and hunting outings, one of their favorite hobbies.

They had peasants work the land they owned. In exchange for their protection, the lords required the peasants to serve in the armed forces and perform tasks. They also imposed a tax, as well as fees for the use of the mills and ovens.

At the heart of feudal society, the Lords also had the duty to defend the Church – the clergymen as well as its properties and holdings. They also had to respect the values of the Church and contend for the faith.

The paintings and sculptures of Romanesque churches are precious testimony to the life of the Lords : clothing, furnishings, weapons, musical instruments,

Romanesque treasures of Poitou-Charentes, Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, 2014.

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games...



Illustration 2 : *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Countess of Poitou, and her husband Henry II, King of England. Cathedral of Poitiers (Vienne).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / C. Rome, 2000.



Illustration 1 : *The castle of Angles-sur-l'Anglin (Vienne), property of the Lord-Bishop of Poitiers.* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / C. Rome, 2010.

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Illustration 3 : *Two knights. Cathedral Saint-Pierre of Angoulême (Charente).*

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Illustration 4 : *Soldiers in battle. Capital of the church of Airvault (Deux-Sèvres).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / C. Rome, 2010.

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Illustration 5 : Noble lady hunting falcons, a lordly leisure. Tomb of Javarzay (Museum of Agesci, Niort). ©
Communauté d'agglomération de Niort. Musée Bernard d'Agesci-Olivier Drilhon.



Illustration 6 : A game of tric-trac, which the lords enjoyed. Tomb of Javarzay (Museum of Agesci, Niort). ©
Communauté d'agglomération de Niort. Musée Bernard d'Agesci-Olivier Drilhon.

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Illustration 7 : *Acrobats and musicians : fiddlers, rote-harp players. Church of Surgeres (Charente-Maritime).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / C. Rome, 2009.



Illustration 8 : 12th century dress and hairstyles. Church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande, Poitiers (Vienne). © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / G. Beauvarlet, 2010.

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Illustration 9 : 12th century furnishings and dress. Church of Saint-Pierre, Aulnay (Charente-Maritime).
© Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / R. Jean, 2012.



Illustration 10 : Fortified city and knights. Mural painting at the templar chapel of Cressac-Saint-Genis (Charente).
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