FILM 1- SOCIETY IN ROMANESQUE PERIOD

Focus : **The peasants, the artisans, the merchants…: « those who worked »**

The two centuries (11th and 12th) that cover the Romanesque period coincide with a period of economic and demographic expansion, and with cultural developments that were strongly tied to developments in religion and feudality. Society was then organized into three groups : the lords, the Church and the peasants, artisans and merchants.

The third group of feudal society included a class of workers. The workers were mainly peasants who worked the land of their secular or religious lord, in exchange for his protection. New agricultural techniques developed, like the triennial rotation of cultivated land and fallow land, the pulling harness and the shoulder brace for plow animals. Farmed lands expanded and production **increased so as to meet the increasing** needs of society. Mills flourished ; used in agriculture, they were also used for textiles and metallurgy.

Economic activity did not derive solely from agriculture. Artisans and merchants worked in the newly developed cities...The progressive pacification of feudal society facilitated trade and commerce, which created wealth. Cities played a greater and greater role and their residents (the « bourgeois ») obtained rights and privileges. The township charters were created in 1175 for La Rochelle and Poitiers by Henry II, King of England, husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Countess of Poitou and Duchess of Aquitaine, who confirmed the charters in 1199.

Previously not well known, the living conditions of the population in the Romanesque period are better documented today, especially thanks to archaeological digs. Romanesque paintings and sculptures bear testimony to the activities of daily life.

Illustration 1 : *Peasant reaping wheat. Capital at the church of Airvault (Deux-Sèvres).*© Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / G. Beauvarlet, 2010.

Illustration 2 Stomping grapes in September. Zodiac and monthly works at the church of Civray (Vienne).

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Illustration 4 : Scene of a meal (Wedding of Cana?). Capital at the church of Airvault (Deux-Sèvres).

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Illustration 3 : *Musician (fiddler) and acrobat. Facade of the church of Civray (Vienne).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / R. Jean, 2010.

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Illustration 5 : *Enigmatic scene with figures in bourgeois clothing. Church of Saujon (Charente-Maritime).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / R. Jean, 2010.

Illustration 6 : *Construction of the Tower of Babel : masons, manœuvers, architect... Abbey of Saint-Savin (Vienne).* © Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / J. Bonneau, 2013.

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Illustration 7 : *Servants (?) around a seated figure. Church of Vaux (Vienne).*© Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / C. Rome, 2010.

Illustration 8 : *Eleanor giving the township charter to the people of Poitiers.19th century stained-glass window. City Hall of Poitiers.*© Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, inventaire général du patrimoine culturel / A. Dagorn, 1999.

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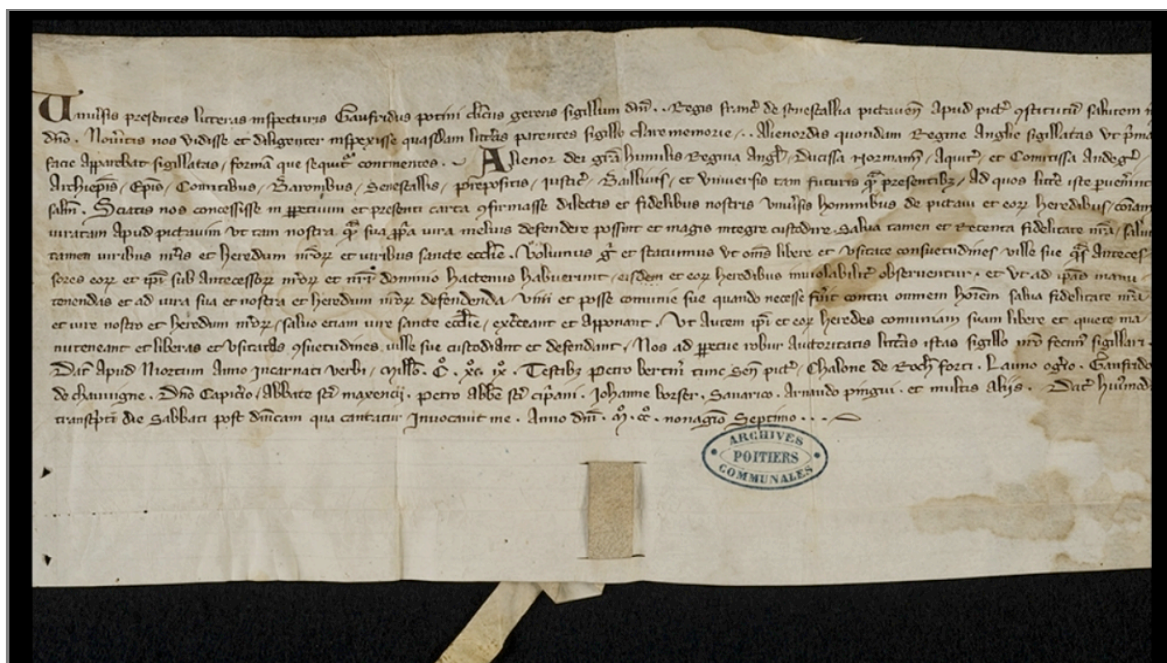www.romanesquetreasures.com   www.tresorsromans.fr

Illustration 9 : *The township charter given by Eleanor, Countess of Poitou, to the people of Poitiers in 1199.*
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