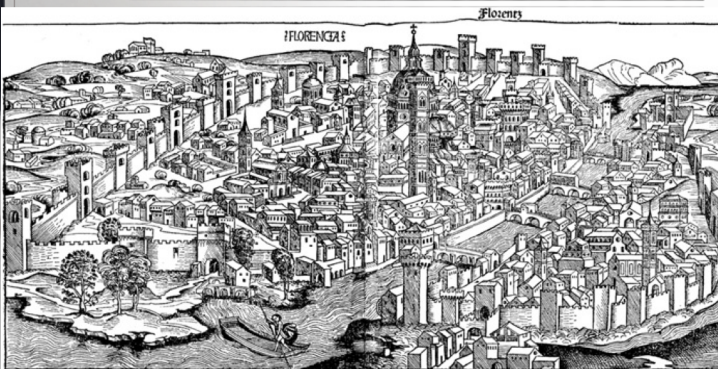


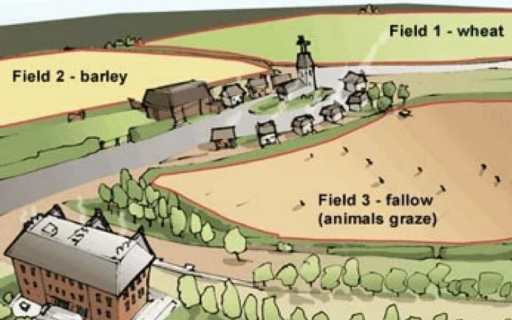
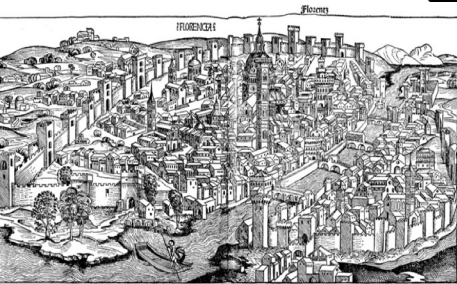
SSWH7: ANALYZE EUROPEAN MEDIIEVAL SOCIETY WITH REGARD TO CULTURE, POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND ECONOMICS



Element C: Describe how increasing trade led to the growth of towns and cities, include: the impact of the Bubonic Plague.

COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION

- ❑ The increase in trade and urbanization of Europe was precipitated by population growth that began around 800 CE.
- ❑ This population growth was the product of the convergence of climatic conditions and technological innovations which led to an increase in the food supply.



- From about 800 to 1200 CE Europe experienced a warm spell that allowed a fairly dramatic increase in land available for cultivation and an extension of the growing season.
- Sometime around 800 CE several new farming technologies were either developed or diffused to Europe from North Africa.
 - These include the horse collar and breast-strap harness.
 - These technologies allowed Europeans to replace oxen with horses in agricultural work, a major advance because a horse can plow about three times faster than an ox.
- Other agricultural innovations around 800 include the heavy plow and the three field system.
 - The heavy plow used a large metal blade to cut into the soil thus increasing the efficiency of farmer's work.
 - Likewise, the three field system improved efficiency by increasing the amount and fertility of land under cultivation.
- ❑ The mild climate and improvements in technology led to rapid population growth which in part spurred what historians term a “Commercial Revolution” in Europe around 1000.

GROWTH OF TOWNS TO CITIES



- ❑ During the early years of this commercial revolution regional fairs emerged.
 - These fairs were generally held on religious holidays in or near the few small towns that existed in Medieval Europe.
 - Peasants from nearby manors would travel to the fairs to buy and sell goods with each other and traveling merchants that brought exotic goods from the east.
 - As these fairs became larger and more frequent they spurred the growth of these towns.
 - As the towns grew they became increasingly independent existing largely outside of the authority and traditions of the feudal system.
 - With time towns grew into cities, particularly in areas with access to seaborne trade like Italy and Flanders.
 - At the height of this commercial revolution several new business institutions developed that further spurred urbanization and economic growth, these include the guild and banks.
 - Guilds were organizations of merchants and artisans that worked together to regulate business practices to ensure the profitability and viability of their respective commodities.
 - Banking provided loans and infrastructure for the monetization of the economy.

BOURGEOISIE AND BURGHERS



□ The commercial revolution and urbanization in Europe gave birth to a new social class in the region.

- This class, made up of artisans, merchants and bankers lived in cities that were outside of the jurisdiction of the feudal system.
- Many feudal monarchs attempted to bring these cities under their authority, however few were successful, particular in Italy and Flanders.
- Cities like Venice and Florence became independent republics ruled by this new class that became known as the bourgeoisie or burghers.



“THE BLACK DEATH” OR BUBONIC PLAGUE



- ❑ In 1347 a Genoese merchant fleet carrying the bubonic plague docked in Sicily, four years later the plague spread to almost all of Europe, killing about one-third of the population.
- ❑ Bubonic plague both fostered and reversed the trends set in motion by the commercial revolution.



- While fear and death diminished populations in European cities, decreased trade and drove up prices it also severely undermined the feudal system in the countryside.
- This weakening of the feudal system led to economic growth and development in the long-term.
- The massive deaths brought on by the plague increased the demand for peasant labor which in turn increased their ability to demand higher wages.
 - When nobles refused to increase wages, serfs and peasants fought back in violent rebellions in England, France, Italy, and Belgium.
 - In the end the grip of the nobility of the peasantry of Europe was forever weakened allowing this population greater freedom to pursue their own economic self-interest.

