Medieval Women in Feudal Europe: Property of Men, Chattels of Husbands or the Privileged Sex of the Middle Ages?

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Among many others, one of the main characteristics of the Gynocentric culture that has started in the 12th century in medieval Europe is that it gave rise to a millennia of an intense and exclusive focus on female suffering with the aim at offering women a solution to overcome it while ignoring male suffering. It has also given rise to the dynamic especially seen in third wave feminism which made a goal not only to hide but specifically to mock and ridicule every expression of male suffering. While dealing with suffering as well as the associated pursuit of happiness is a noble cause in itself the problem was that being part of its divisive nature, Gynocentrism dismissed the fact that suffering is a universal phenomenon, not a possession of one specific group in society, thus ignoring the truth that there's not only female suffering but also male suffering which both of them are in fact a heritage of our human nature. Consequently, Gynocentrism attempted not just to solve the problem of female suffering but by creating a "contest of suffering" and an "Olympics of oppression attitude", its goal was to alleviate the suffering of women and particularly at the expense of men.

It is only that in the late 200 years, feminism joined the wagon of this policy not only by alleviating female suffering at the expense of men, while ignoring, dismissing and ridiculing the suffering of men but in fact by being happy to create more male suffering by celebrating and advocating a culture of misandry based on the compassion gap as well as the disposability of men and by using methods of cherry picking and selective interpretation of reality to fabricate a world where female suffering was taken out of proportion and the male one dismissed. Alongside with the tactics such as selective interpretation of reality as well as cherry picking - in fact as derivative of both - feminists blamed all men as an oppressive entity, namely the patriarchy, whose aim was to subjugate and exploit women. Specifically, while targeting the Roman concept of "Pater Familias" and the subsequent law feminist claimed that women were nothing more than mere possessions or "chattels" in the ancient world as well as in medieval Europe under the reign of feudalism. This article aims at examining those claims and see if they are substantial, have truth to them or on the contrary are misandrist myths that are, in fact, no corresponding reality.

Hence, Medieval law was largely based on, embodied a Heritage and was an extenuation of the Roman law it is important to examine here a few aspects as to the status of women in the Roman Empire. As Douglas Ghalbi writes and correctly points out in his website "PurpuleMotes": "The reality of men’s guardianship (meaning protection, responsibility and supervision) over women is instructive. A close analysis suggests that guardianship over women (tutela mulierum) was a burden that men sought to avoid. Ng (2008) pp. 690-1. With apparent contempt for men’s welfare, a leading, early twentieth-century scholar of Roman history declared: *"He {Augustus} devised an ingenious system of rewards and penalties to overcome the selfishness of bachelors; there were to be rewards for the responsibilities and cares inseparable from marriage, and penalties to outweigh the obvious conveniences of celibacy"*. Ferrero et al. (1909), vol. 5, pp. 60-1. The conveniences of celibacy are obvious only in misandrist and gynocentric societies. Marriage could be very attractive to men in the right circumstances". So, why is it so. If the alleged patriarchy has offered so many perks and bonuses for men in marriage they should have been eager to marry women. However, being reluctant to marry and avoiding guardianship means that marriage as well as the subsequent conditions were a trap for men serving as honey pot to trap them into marriage and the plantation of slavery and exploitation. Now, let's scrutinize the dynamics that will enable us a glimpse into this reality that led men fled marriage, abandon women and what were the reasons for this kind of behavior.

1. Most men in Roman empire lacking any form of formal political power and especially the financial and material means to assert this power over women (as it were men who were responsible for the family member's misbehavior for instance) as well as having no informal power (as proven by Susan Carol Rogers in her research on ancient peasant societies), means the absolute power granted to men over the family was a power dynamic regarding and affecting only the relationship as in regard to men and state which in fact wanted to give up its responsibility (for its female citizens) and place this burden on the shoulders of men for the reason to be discussed in the paragraphs below. It had nothing to say or any effect on the relationship between men and women in the personal domestic sphere.

2. However, the same dynamics made men more subservient to women and dependent on them in a personal relationship because being unable to assert their power as the Roman state apparatus denied them any meaningful tool for asserting their guardian status whether by lack of material (financial) means as well by the virtue of legal and social acceptance, again for the reasons to be discussed below, they had practically to go with every female whim to keep them silent and productive so that they won't reap the consequences of their misbehavior. For the Roman empire this was a way to keep men in check too so that they will be silent and subservient to the state.

3. Roman politics were well known for their policy of dividing and ruling. The dynamics described above is the application of this tactic as in regard to the gender dynamics between men and women which still more favored women and discriminated men.

4. This further shows and not only refutes the claim that women were property and chattels as already done in my previous post the status of women in medieval time but that the idea that men benefit from the "patriarchy" is plain and simple a deluded lunacy. In fact, given the research of Martin van Cleveld it proves there was never a patriarchy but a privileged status of aristocracy, made up of queens and kings, that oppressed everyone while within the group of the majority of oppressed masses women were still the privileged sex.

5. In such a system men were not only disposable but a mere tool of complete slavery of both women and the system. They were not only subordinate to the Empire/Kingdom/Monarchy but to their wives too while the wife was only subordinate to the Empire/Kingdom/Monarchy.

6. This dynamic still exists today both as a cultural norm and its practical application in law, economics and especially family courts while the modern state apparatus only replaces the structures of the more ancient Roman empire. Additionally, the Roman law laid here practically the basics to the principle of hypo-agency for both the medieval gynocentrism as well as gynocentrism 3 which is the modern feminist society and well-fare state. So, we can trace what I use to call proto gynocenterism back to the Roman Empire. The roots of all those concepts like hypo-agency, men are eager to fulfil any whim of the women (putting women on the pedestal, the code of chivalry, men paying financially and by law for female misbehavior (men who are arrested for DV even if a woman was the perpetrator or the practice of Charivary), all of those dynamics can be already observed in Rome and its law as well as society.

7. All of the above forces at work here, as we will immediately see, can be found as the very power dynamics of medieval feudalism too which encapsulated the basic cultural, legal, social, societal as well as economic foundation of our modern society now a day! In fact, both ancient Rome as well as ancient Egypt, all of those culture and dynamics can be seen as proto-gynocentrism which was followed by classic gynocentric culture beginning in the 12th century in medieval Europe under the reign of queen Eleanor from Aquitaine

Moreover, hypo-agency, as we have pointed out above, originated in the Roman empire. However, we should also remember that it was never intended as a "grant of privilege" as it is today in modern culture. Hypo-agency arose in Rome only because men and fathers were given absolute authority over the family unit. Now, because (even in an artificial way) they were given absolute authority, then they were also given absolute responsibility (relieving women of responsibility only because the fathers and husbands had the responsibility to keep them under control instead of the State). To counter act this artificial dynamic (and as a part of the proto gynocentric culture) Romans created a more balanced system not in terms of responsibilities but other duties women had to perform in society (although men were still more oppressed than women). In that sense we should always bear in mind that one of the main characteristic about proto development is that it is not as bad as the culture it precedes. It is normally more balanced. Yet, one can observe many of the elements in X culture as being at the seed level in its preceding proto culture. For instance, proto gynocentrism was not as bad as gynocentrism itself. Proto feminism which partly overlaps with gynocentrism was not as bad as modern feminism. The first waves of feminism were not as bad as the third wave. In later development feminism worsened the situation because in our current culture, men still have the responsibility to keep the family under complete control (or the State intervenes and imposes punishment on the Fathers and Husbands). However, men have no authority to keep the family under control while women on the other side were given a "grant of privilege" and access to overwhelming formal power enabling them to tighten the grip of oppression and exploitation over men (a big difference between our current culture and Rome). Additionally, feminism removed all of men's authority in the family, but, none of men's responsibilities in family matters. Feminism, in modern culture, also retains the hypo-agency that women had in ancient Rome, while at the same time, men are subtly held responsible for anything and everything that women commit as misconduct (especially sexual or procreative misconduct). In addition, feminism has removed any protection from men as well as the few duties women did have towards men within the traditional frame of gender roles. As it was in ancient Rome we can see and observe now even stronger revival of movements like MGTOW – Men Going Their Own Way as a response to such dynamics!

Now, after having discussed gender roles within the frame of Roman empire, let's look at the feudal system of medieval Europe and its gender roles. Here, despite the massive lies we've been fed by feminist bureaucrats, governmental officials, the mass media, the schools and universities, the truth is that in a feudal system it was first of all the king/queen who ultimately owned the land and granted it to the noble ones and warriors like knights. More specifically the king or the queen allocated land to their barons in return for their military service. This was the medieval reality due to the political constellation of the Middle Ages as well as various circumstances of that time. Therefore, land ownership in the Middle Ages was closely tied to national security not gender. As we said under the feudal system all land was owned by the king or queen. It was either the queen or king who granted territories to their earls and barons in return for military aid in need. They in turn granted lands to men who agreed to fight often having no other choices and being indoctrinated by the society to die under the banner of God, King and (the benefit) of women. Thus the great benefit for the king was the ability to protect the land and its people without a standing army and the massive costs relating to it at the expense of men and not women of course (that were safely protected at home). It was the medieval root of the gynocentric code of chivalry that granted women the privilege of being protected by men without being expected to any compensation and doing something in return. Only to be later replaced by a more oppressive feminist state apparatus, this specific exploitative system of men broke down in the later Middle Ages as for instance the feudal tenure was finally abolished in England, Ireland and Wales in 1660 which is also the period of time that the lower aristocracy began slow reforms to make an overall change in laws of ownership and inheritance. Till then the basic administrative unit was the manor. Ideally a manor was enough land to support a cavalryman - a knight's fee. He needed not only food and clothing for himself and his family, but weaponry, arms and horses too. The land required varied according to the quality of the land. England for example had about 5,000-6,000 knights' fees.

In English common law for example (as everywhere else) allocating land ownership was basically based on the matrifocal gynocentric feudal system. The emperor, king or ruler who owned all of the land allowed favored individuals to use it as tenants in exchange for service. Those tenancies were called "feuds", "fees", or "fiefs". The tenants in them self would further also convey rights down to others. It went from King to overlords; from overlords to vassals; and from vassals to serfs! The service one extracted in exchange for land 'ownership' could be anything from military service to the King or any other benefit the king or ruler could derive from it on a regular basis. Over time, the giving of service was replaced by something we're all accustomed with today namely the taxation and the tax system! However, the key points of the feudal system were that ultimately the King remained the land owner and that a routine compensation of some kind was made to him. True personal land ownership was impossible because the aristocratic title one held was always acquiescent and subservient to the King. Now, an important issue in this system was whether the tenancy one enjoyed was "heritable", that is, able to be passed to an heir or heirs and if so what was the nature of "inheritance” in a system the "tenant/renter" does not own the land but still the ruler or the king. As a result in ancient times a diversity of numerous types of 'ownerships' came into being to allow for flexibility in this regard. For example, land held in 'fee simple' was heritable, meaning that the heirs would continue to enjoy the tenancy (provided of course they continued to render service). However, as we will see all of those changes occurred within aristocracy and weren't accessible to most people, peasants and others.

In this same feudal society being a combination of sub-categories of matrifocal and patrilineal elements to ensure the exploitation of men, it was natural for a son to "inherit" the father, to follow in his father's footsteps, taking over a manor and the duty to fight. But once it was accepted that fees were inherited then a manor could be held by a disabled man. Or it could be divided between daughters. "So", as we read, "it could be more suitable to exchange military service to money compensation. Over the centuries this increasingly became the norm. Therefore, knighthood was not inherited with the manor. As the code of chivalry developed in the middle Ages, so that the prestige of the knight rose and with it the expense of maintaining armor and accessories. Knighthood became an honor, but one that some manorial lords preferred to avoid. Even today a knighthood remains an honor to an individual person. It is not inherited. The lord or lady of a manor was simply the person who held it. Manorial lordships are not part of the peerage".

Moreover, we find the following explanation and description about the reality in the Middle Ages: "Those holding manors direct from the Crown were called tenants-in-chief. Mainly these were barons and earls. In 1086 they held half of England. However, the king kept about a fifth in his own hands. His manors could be granted direct to knights, who would then be tenants-in-chief. The rest of the English manors were held by the Church - mainly by monasteries or cathedrals. The lord of the manor kept some land in demesne - farming it himself. The rest he let, or left as common pasture and wasteland. (For more details and a generic plan, see [Wikipedia: Manorialism](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FManorialism&h=AT0oMuZvpGj57CKlGl3yfXGxQPKJCPCjpE4R7HMxhKMs-9dGX219YCEYbmSf1Aq2-8bZM00lHEMVfmOFa2gTjj8MOtCuxNsEyi-qzbxBSrdWcvqxuj2Xq3_82RATbKW5ANA).) There were two types of manorial tenant: villein and free. The freeman held land by deed and paid a fixed money rent. After centuries in which the rent remained unchanged while its value fell, such rents were nominal. The villein worked on his lord's land for certain days in return for his own"

It continues: "All tenants had to attend the manorial court, held usually in the manor house. (House names like Westbury Court are reminders of those days.) The lord or his representative presided. From the 13th century onwards the business done was recorded on court rolls. That included the lord's decisions on which villein would hold what land. As it became usual for the villein to be given a copy of the entry in the court roll relating to his holding, such a tenure became known as copyhold. In Tudor times copyholds began to be replaced by leaseholds. The 1922 Law of Property Act finally abolished copyhold tenure. Because manorial rolls might be needed as evidence of former copyhold tenure, it was decreed in 1924 that all manorial documents should be under the superintendance of the Master of the Rolls, who set up a Register of Manorial Documents to record their ownership and location.

A further description expands: "Not all manors had a resident lord. A lord who held several manors might chose to live in one, and place a resident bailiff in charge of each of the others. Or the demesne farm could be let on a leasehold. In either case a chief house for the manor would still be needed, but it might be known as the barton, grange or manor farm. The manorial lord not only built the manor house, but frequently founded a church beside it or chapel within it. He could be involved in much other building in the manor too - see villages. Any building expenses would be recorded in the manorial accounts. Sometimes a survey of the lord's land would be made. A medieval survey was not a map, but a written record of property, listing tenants and their acreages, rents and/or services to the lord. Little if any mention of the tenants' houses can be expected, but the manorial mill should be listed. One type of survey - the extent, made on the death of any manorial lord or baron holding land directly from the Crown, did briefly describe the manor house and its surrounding farm buildings. A detailed inventory including contents might be made for special purposes, but medieval examples are very rare".

As we have seen and discussed it above in most European countries, the aristocracy which mainly meant the king and queen, other parts of the nobility as well as the church owned most of the land, while the peasants were totally dependent on their landlords. But as time went on, and these lords became established in their manors, they grew more confident and more independent. Later, as we will see, they were the link through which in a well ahead development around the 16th century land ownership gradually began to change when they started to set up their own legal system to rival the King's one. Then at the bottom of the pyramid were the peasants yet they not really owned the land. So, to demonstrate in easier way let's say that in such a system X granted land to Y. The grant was by way of subinfeudation (as almost all grants in this period were). X remained lord of the land. Y was required to discharge the free external service (liberum forense servicium) for this amount of land. The meaning of the phrase free external service refers to the services that X owed to his lord for the land (while Y continued to pay services to X). So, not only did X (and his lord up to the king) remain the lord of the land, he also remained vitally concerned about who was on the land. When Y died, his son for instance might to ought to have "inherited" the land which in fact means more that he was allowed to stay on the land with his family in a subordination to the lord paying him money, taxes and defending the land in war times yet the land was not his and wasn't granted automatically. So, an "inheritance" does not take place automatically in medieval times, it does not equal land ownership too in the Middle Ages. And this means that the feudal system wasn't patriarchal where the everyday man owned land and property inheriting it to his son but he was allowed to stay on the land to work for his feudal lord giving his sons only the duties, none of which the women had, but without any benefits and rewards coming out of it. And ultimately he had to be slaughtered on the battlefields too so that God, King and women could benefit from it.

In the feudal matrifocal society, the only right a father had was that to inherit the "right" to die in the name of God, King and women while and for the sake of his functioning not to be throw out from there. Therefore, eldest son inherited nothing of the same infamous "rights", but having zero opportunities to enjoys the alleged perks of this wealth as feminists want us to believe Childhood as we know it did not exist. At the age of ten, the child was considered to be an adult who might dress as his or her elders and most importantly, work. The child, exactly as his parents had no rights, only duties. Thus given all of the circumstances child custody, which we will further discuss down the paragraphs of our discourse in a more detailed way, does not also existed as we may know it today, as the children belonged to the lords not their parents. The alleged custody given to the father was nothing but a kind of tutorship, a ward-ship, so that he can prepare him as instructor for the war. Therefore, once again the mother was not discriminated based on her gender bot both of the genders were taken advantage by the nobility. So, based in the Roman law, as contrary to the common myths, English law on "child custody" for example did not reflected the image of patriarchy but that of a gynocentric feudal society. Despite the different adaptations as there were no land and property ownership other than that of the king (also queen) as well as the nobility neither land nor household property belonged to the family or the "man". Thus having neither land nor property ownership to enslave wife and children, none of these alleged family members "belonged" to man. They all solely belonged to the lord of the manor and were his property. It was the manor lord who chose a woman's husband and her children belonged to him, not their father and they became in time, vassals who would protect his wealth. This was true in general for all the medieval law.

Moreover, the roles of women in the middle ages are inextricably associated with the Church. The Catholic Church was not only a system which struggled with secular leaders as well as the King/Queen for governing power, it also well-maintained an ideal of morals. From the earliest times there seems to have existed among the Teutonic and Celtic civilizations and cultures so much respect and veneration for women as to build a foundation on which the Christian creed of marriage, virginity and equality of sexes could be built and which in return refutes the notion that even in pre-historic times women were treated as "chattels". In fact, it is a proof that our society, even in pre-historic time, was never patriarchal but a gynocentric one. In other words, the church and especially its male cleric and priesthood was a huge extra source that participated in the creation of the gynocentric culture alongside with the troubadours who spread it all over Europe and then practically all over the world and were in fact the most earlier form of the Gynocentric pop culture and the modern mass media. This doctrine of the spiritual equality of women has later served as the theological basis on which Agrippa, the first male misandrist and feminist, has created the dogma of female superiority by blending it with Jewish Mysticism and the Kaballistic concepts of God's name. Those Teutonic and Celtic concepts as well as Agrippa's doctrine of female superiority alongside with the theory of the sacredness and holiness of the marriage as well as the rules of consanguinity, divorce and remarriage, though sometimes corrupted to ruthless purposes, nevertheless were powerful apparatuses influencing the status of women in the Middle Ages, not only raising their condition in the society but practically elevating them to a level of Goddesses. In fact, this is the earliest source of the Judeo-Christian tradition or heritage as to the modern western understanding of female superior nature over men. In other words, it marks the shift from proto – misandry as expressed in Greek mythology into modern misandry. Therefore, it can be also said that proto - feminism also encapsulated the shift into misandry as a culture which makes both of the theories practically synonymous.

As women are also generally more traditional, more conformist, less adventurous, less rebellious, later on the more the priesthood bestowed protection to the women, the stronger grew the bond of sympathy between women and the church who found in them more devotion, more reflection, and more capability of culture, then in the soldiers whose business was war. This was the first foundation of the triangle built of women – aristocracy (church) – knights which can be observed till our modern days where only the aristocracy is replaced by the modern well-fare state and it perfectly fitted into the cultural image of the feudal society who needed men as disposable cannon fodder that on behalf of medieval social contract will die in the name of God, king and the benefit of women. The sponsorship of literature and music for example, the cultural heritage of society, was passed therefore in the Middle Ages into the hands of women. There is no better example of this interaction between women and the Church then Hildegard von Bingen. The scholarly preeminence of clergy to the laity is shown by the fact that the leaders, justiciars, and accountants of the Middle Ages are for the most part not soldier, but clerks or lawyers, drawn from the lower nobility, and educated in monasteries or universities, not at the court of princes. The work of civilization was left to priests and scholars. And those priests were of course close friends with women. This bond between, priests, clergy and the church as a whole had determined the roles of women in the Middle Ages and asserted itself much advantage to Christianity in the parameters of marriage and the defense of women’s rights. The power of Church elevated the standard of feeling in regard to women. The nuns in England for example, were often high-born women, experts in the needlework and trained in book-learning. Their nunneries were homes of refinement and learning, privileges not acceptable for the most masses of poor men as we may see from the letters of St. Boniface to Eadburge, and other holy women, which resembles those of St. Jerome to Paulla and Eustochium. It was also the source that gave the rise to the misandrist dynamic where women were morally as well as emotionally seen superior to men. A social and spiritual idea that resonates with the concept of the beauty and the beast.

In Germany, the incentive of Carolingian reawakening was kept burning by nuns and other educated ladies among whom the dramatic poetess Hrotswitha is well known. Among the Normans, a civilization with an extraordinary impact in influencing the medieval world, the women were held in honor. Moreover, the roles of women in the Middle Ages were not limited to spirituality. As we have seen and will see even more in the further discourse, women could inherit land and hold fiefs in the same frame as men could do. They were assigned with the charge of castles when their lords went on crusade. Such a chatelaine in later days was Jeanne de Montfort, who held the castle of Hennebon in Brittany. Often they were heavily involved in politics, like Emma, wife of Edward the Confessor, who did more than anyone else to make the Norman Conquest to last or the most known queen namely Eleanor from Aquitaine who gave rise to classic gynocentrism itself. Furthermore, culturally and socially, there never was a time when women were more frequently made the subject of poetry, nor venerated and adored with greater devotion, then the age of chivalry. It was a time when the obligation and preference of every gentleman was to be the slave of some woman, and when passion of love was studied more enthusiastically, and communicated in more gentle and genuine language then at any other time. The primer among the rules of chivalry of the so called "Science of Love" brought into the customs and ideas of medieval society a new element which became almost immediately dominant, side by side with the purely warlike element and the religious element. The highest expression of this was the Eleanor from Aquitaine's court d'amour who saw men as "the thing of a woman" and that was codified and the code of Pointevan.

This innovative creed, when brought in from Provence, France and spread by means of crusaders returning from the Holy Land, found a friendly atmosphere in the North of France and among the Normans, where women already encapsulated a dignified and independent position. The influence of the troubadour poetry (being largely also Knights) originating from Provence, the new relation of men to women, or knights to ladies, cannot be over-estimated. Fully developed by the Provençal poets, and received by the chivalry of Southern France as a rule of life, it was accepted by the northern French and the Normans as a new gospel. The brotherhood of the chivalry looked upon a new definition of love, and found it in the poetry of troubadours, the fashionable literature of the time. As we have said it gave the cultural frame and the basis for both modern pop culture in music as well as the genre of romance literature through which also modern gynocentrism and feminism continues to carry its misandrist and anti-male message. Mainstream feminist media today is another powerful derivative which was born out of the medieval troubadour culture and continues to carry the message of female superiority over men. In medieval time, life was worshiped by the discovery that it could be built upon romantic love and that the highest purpose of a man was even not its spiritual or personal growth but the desire and willingness to own the domination of a lady. Chivalry developed to be a law of knightly demeanor and took its place by the side of honor and religion as one of the main motives of action, the ethics to which all behavior must be referred. The imperative of chivalry structured the romanticism of soldiers separated for long periods from their wives, gave the fair to the brave, gave a new position to women, and was justified by authority.

In the bottom line, while those were men that were degraded to mere chattels, possessions and property of church, king and wives, the roles of women in the Middle Ages were profoundly changed between the middle of the 11th Century and the middle of the 12th Century, when women were elevated, literally, to the condition of goddesses. In earlier times, especially the middle and the far east, with the almost the only exception of ancient Egypt, women had reigned, been honored, but there had been no chivalry in a world where relation of the sexes had been more natural, simple and much more equal especially in terms of the actual outgrowth of material and social conditions. From this period onwards, a new sentiment takes its place as a leading motive of life, connected with rank, wealth, and pride of place, and which found its natural development in a society governed by a warlike nobility, for whose convenience the trading and laboring classes existed. Such was the dynamic of this change in the roles of Medieval women that even the three motives of chivalry changed priorities so that now honor, chivalry and after them religion were the motivating factors of the medieval knightly life. Modern chivalry is a run down from the medieval gallantry and owes to it the touch of romance which is either absent from the love literature of the antiquity or where the manifestation of love is expressed more equally like in the "Song of Songs" or the Indian love as it is even expressed in Modern Bollywood movies which mirrors the Indian culture and traditions.

So, as far as we have seen at this point by our discussion, women were never properties of men nor chattels to their husbands so it is interesting to see and discuss it from another angle namely in the frame of child custody. Anyway, here as we will see immediately, although both parents debarred from any right to "custody" as we know and understand it today, also in this area women as opposed to men were not weak creatures without a recognized place in the medieval feudal society but had enough power to assert their influence over the life of their children. While neither men or women of the lower masses of society had any rights as in regard to their children, property and land, especially as we understand them today in our modern world, noble women who could possess and inherit land either due to their dower rights, a term describing the wife's share of her husband's estate, or by any other means could also claim and gain custody over their children. Such female feudatories often claimed custody over their children in the medieval courts. As we have said it is important to understand that all women here were all mothers of medieval aristocracy and holders of feudal land. Most of these women and mothers could have probably purchased the right to ward-ship of their sons but there is no real reason to assume the medieval woman within the feudal context of society had any reasonable reason to do so as the ward-ship meant practically tutorship which prepared the son for wars and military training.

If they did wish to do so they had two option to purchase the guardianship over their sons, a privilege neither men nor women of the lower classes had, from the overlords that held the custody of the children and as the noble women was himself a part of the aristocracy. The first one was by retaining de facto the control of the child at the guardian's discretion or by buying or receiving the guardianship of their heir from the feudal overlord who had the right of custody. As we have said feudal women did not make greater attempt to secure control over their children because of the specific conditions of the middle ages which had nothing to do with gender bur rather preparation for war and therefore it does not suggest and support the feminist narrative of women as being possessions, chattels, weak and deprived of any right based on their sex or gender. It was rather their wise and pragmatic acceptance of medieval reality as well as societal attitude making no difference between men and women. Historically the Family Law was based on much the same principle everywhere. In the early nineteenth century, Mrs. Caroline Norton, a prominent British feminist, social reformer author, journalist began to campaign for the right of women to have custody of their children and at the expense of fathers. Norton, who had undergone a divorce, worked with the politicians of those times and eventually was able to convince the British Parliament to enact legislation to protect mothers’ rights. The result was the Custody of Infants Act 1839, which gave some discretion to the judge in a child custody case and established a presumption of maternal custody for children under the age of seven years. In 1873 the Parliament extended the presumption of maternal custody until a child reached sixteen years of age. This is the historical background of the feminist tender year doctrine a pseudo-scientific approach who for the first time exclusively favored one parent over the other namely the mother over the father which made men even more a chattel to the wife than rather the other way around – a historical fact that came clearly to light in our essay here and refuted feminist myths, factoids and lies as in regard to the discrimination, exploitation and oppression of women. Never were women "chattels" nor possessions of their husbands but a privileged sex – even within the poor and deprives masses of society!

References:

**Why were men reluctant to marry in ancient Rome?**

[https://www.purplemotes.net/2014/06/08/men-reluctant-marry/](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.purplemotes.net%2F2014%2F06%2F08%2Fmen-reluctant-marry%2F&h=AT3LgX6WecWYYc0H0vBsc80uPDLtGvjMfnIkMI0ld_2m45AOhXu5tXZrYYAtfyzJpB-ECPEg_glwVNaiBQvoH5hZCjT42ik8jcG0uDPo_415hO2jUXxMZAKVqoYAHAasaRM)

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