

Chapter 9 Emerging Europe and the Byzantine Empire 400-1300

Section 1: Transforming the Roman World

The New Germanic Kingdoms

- Germanic peoples began moving into Roman territory by the third century.
- The **Visigoths** occupied Spain and Italy until the **Ostrogoths** took control of Italy in the fifth century.
- **By 500 the Western Roman Empire had become a number of states ruled by German kings.**
- Although these kingdoms kept the Roman governmental structure, Germanic warriors dominated the native populations and eventually excluded Romans from holding power.
- The Germanic Angles and Saxons moved into Britain in the fifth century.
- Eventually these people became the **Anglo-Saxons**.
- The only German kingdom to last long was the Franks.
- Clovis, who converted to Christianity around 500, established the Frankish kingdom.
- Clovis had resisted the pleas of his wife to convert, but during a battle that was going badly he called on Jesus, promising to believe and be baptized if Jesus came to his aid.
- After his plea, the enemy fled and Clovis converted.
- **Germans and Romans intermarried and created a new society in which German customs had an important role.**
- The extended family was the center of German society.
- They worked the land together and protected each other in violent times.
- The German concept of the family affected crime and punishment, say for murder.
- In the Roman system, as in ours, most crimes are considered offenses against the state, not the person.
- Thus, a court hears evidence and makes a judgment.
- Germanic law, however, was personal.
- One person injuring another often led to a savage blood feud.
- **A system using a fine called a wergild (“money for a man”) developed to avoid bloodshed after crimes such as murder.**
- The wrongdoer paid the injured party’s family a set amount of money, which varied by social status.
- **The ordeal was one Germanic way of determining guilt.**
- The practice was based on the belief that the gods would not let an innocent person be punished.
- **If the accused was unharmed after a physical trial (ordeal), he or she was presumed innocent.**

The Role of the Church

- The bishop of Rome came to claim he was the leader of what was now called the Roman Catholic Church.
- The claim was based on the belief that Jesus gave Peter the keys to Heaven.
- Peter was considered the chief apostle and the first bishop of Rome.

- The bishops that succeeded him in Rome came to be called **popes**, from the Latin word *papa*, “father.”
- Western Christians came to accept the pope as the Church’s leader, but they could not agree on the extent of the pope’s power.
- **Pope Gregory I strengthened the power of the papacy.**
- He was pope from 590 to 604.
- He took political control of Rome and its surrounding territories, later known as the Papal States.
- **A monk is a man who separates himself from worldly, everyday life to dedicate himself entirely to God.**
- **Monasticism is the practice of living the life of a monk.**
- **In the sixth century, Saint Benedict founded an order of monks and wrote rules for their practice.**
- An abbot (“father”) ruled each Benedictine monastery.
- Monks were to obey the will of the abbot. Monks took a vow of poverty.
- The monks’ dedication made them the new heroes of Christian civilization.
- **They also were the social workers of the community, and monasteries became centers of learning.**
- **Women, called nuns, also began to withdraw from the world to dedicate themselves to God.**
- **Nuns lived in convents headed by abbesses.**
- Many of them belonged to royal houses.
- The abbess Hilda founded a monastery in Whitby in 657, where she was responsible for giving learning an important role in the monastery.
- Five future bishops were educated under her direction.

Charlemagne and the Carolingians

- In the 600s and 700s, the Frankish kings lost their power to the chief officers of the king’s household, called **mayors of the palace**.
- One of these mayors, **Pepin**, assumed the kingship.
- His son became king after Pepin’s death in 768.
- **Pepin’s son was Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, one of history’s greatest kings.**
- Charlemagne was curious, driven, and intelligent.
- He was a strong warrior and statesman, and a devout Christian.
- Although possibly unable to write, he strongly supported learning.
- He ruled from 768 to 814.
- **He expanded the Frankish kingdom into what became known as the Carolingian Empire, which covered much of western and central Europe.**
- Charlemagne’s power and prestige grew.
- **In 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the Romans.**
- **This testifies to the enduring nature of the idea of the Roman Empire.**
- The coronation also symbolized the coming together of the Roman, Christian, and Germanic elements that forged European civilization.
- **The spiritual leader of western Christendom –the pope–had crowned a Germanic king Roman emperor.**

Section 2: Feudalism

The Invaders

- The Carolingian Empire began to fall apart soon after Charlemagne's death in 814.
- By 844, the empire had been divided into three kingdoms by Charlemagne's grandsons.
- Invasions also added to the disintegration.
- Muslims invaded southern France, and the **Magyars** from western Asia settled on the plains of **Hungary** and invaded western Europe.
- **The most far-reaching attacks were from the Norsemen (Northmen) of Scandinavia, also called the Vikings.**
- The Germanic people's love of adventure and the spoils of war probably led them to invade areas of Europe.
- They sacked towns, destroyed churches, and defeated armies.
- The Vikings were superb warriors, sailors, and shipbuilders.
- Their famous ships were long and narrow with carved, arched prows.
- These dragon ships carried about 50 men.
- Their construction allowed sailing up shallow rivers to attack inland.
- By the mid-ninth century, Vikings began to settle areas of Europe.
- **The Franks had a policy of settling and Christianizing the Vikings.**
- **In 911, a Frankish ruler gave a band of Vikings the land that became known as Normandy.**

The Development of Feudalism

- Invaders posed a threat to the safety of the people, especially in the absence of a strong central government.
- **People began to turn to local landed aristocrats or nobles to protect them.**
- **This change led to the new political and social system called feudalism.**
- It arose between 800 and 900 and thrived for four hundred years.
- Similar systems were found in Japan and among the Aztec.
- At the heart of this system was the idea of vassalage.
- It came from Germanic society, where warriors swore an oath to their leader.
- **By the eighth century, a man who served a lord militarily was known as a vassal.**
- The Frankish army initially was made up of foot soldiers in mail (armor made of metal links or plates) armed with swords and horsemen who threw spears.
- In the eighth century, larger horses and the stirrup were introduced.
- Horsemen now wore mail and used long lances as battering rams.
- **For the next five hundred years, heavily armored cavalry called knights dominated warfare.**
- They had great prestige and formed the backbone of the European aristocracy.
- In the Early Middle Ages (500–1000), wealth was based on owning land.
- There was little trade.
- When nobles wanted men to fight for them, the nobles granted the vassal a piece of land that supported the vassal and his family.
- The relationship between lord and vassal was made official by a public act of homage of vassal to the lord.

- Loyalty to one's lord was feudalism's chief virtue.
- **By the ninth century the land the lord granted to a vassal was known as a fief.**
- Vassals had political authority in their fiefs.
- The number of separate powerful lords and vassals increased; many different people were now responsible for keeping order.
- Feudalism became complicated.
- Kings had vassals who themselves had vassals.
- **Feudalism came to be characterized by a set of unwritten rules known as the feudal contract.**
- These rules determined the relationship between lord and vassal.
- The major obligation of a vassal was military service, about 40 days a year.
- The growing number of castles made visible the growth of the nobility in the High Middle Ages (1000 to 1300).
- They were permanent residences and fortresses.
- Castles had two parts, the *motte*—a natural or artificially created hill—and the *bailey*—an open space.
- The castle's central building, the *keep*, was built on the motte.
- All were encircled by large stone walls.

The Nobility of the Middle Ages and Aristocratic Women

- In the Middle Ages, nobles dominated European society.
- The main concern of many was warfare.
- The nobles were kings, dukes, counts, barons, and even bishops and archbishops.
- They formed a wealthy aristocracy, or nobility, with political, economic and social power.
- The institution of knighthood united lords and knights in the aristocracy.
- **In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, under the influence of the Church, an ideal of civilized behavior among the nobility evolved.**
- **It was called chivalry.**
- Knights were to defend the Church and defenseless people, treat captives as honored guests, and fight for glory and not material rewards.
- Women could legally hold property, but most women still remained under the control of men—first their fathers, then their husbands.
- **The lady of the castle commonly had to manage the often large household, the estate, and the financial accounts.**
- **Feudalism saw many strong women who advised, and sometimes dominated, their husbands.**
- **One of the most famous was Eleanor of Aquitaine.**
- An heiress to the duchy of Aquitaine in southwestern France, at 15 she married King Louis VII of France.
- The unhappy marriage was annulled, and only eight weeks later Eleanor married the duke who became Henry II of England.
- They also had a stormy relationship.
- Eleanor spent most of her time in Aquitaine, where she created a brilliant court.
- **Two of her eight children became kings of England.**

Section 3: The Growth of European Kingdoms

England in the High Middle Ages

- Since King Alfred the Great had united various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the late ninth century, Anglo-Saxon kings had ruled England.
- **In 1066, an army commanded by William of Normandy defeated King Harold of England at the Battle of Hastings.**
- **William was crowned king of England.**
- He gave fiefs to Norman knights, and all nobles had to swear loyalty to him as the ruler of England.
- The French-speaking Normans and the Anglo-Saxon nobility gradually merged into a new English culture.
- **William took the first census in western Europe since Roman times, known as the Domesday Book.**
- He also developed the system of taxation and royal courts earlier Anglo-Saxon kings had begun.
- **Henry II**, who ruled from 1154 to 1189, enlarged the power of the English monarchy.
- He expanded the royal courts' powers to cover more criminal and property cases.
- **Because royal courts were all over the land, a body of common law—law common to the whole kingdom—began to replace varying local codes.**
- Resenting the monarchy's expanding power, many nobles rebelled against King John.
- **In 1215 at Runnymede, John was forced to agree to a document of rights called the Magna Carta, or Great Charter.**
- **The Magna Carta recognized the longstanding feudal idea of mutual rights and obligations between lord and vassal.**
- **In the thirteenth century, during the reign of Edward I, the English Parliament emerged.**
- Parliament was an important step in developing a representative government.
- Under Edward I it granted taxes and passed laws.
- It was composed of two knights from each county, two people from each town, and all of England's nobles and bishops.
- Later, nobles and church lords formed the House of Lords, and knights and townspeople formed the House of Commons.
- These two houses still make up the British Parliament.

The French Kingdom

- The west Frankish lands formed the core of the eventual kingdom of France.
- After the death of the last Carolingian king in 987, the west Frankish nobles chose Hugh Capet as king, establishing the Capetian dynasty of French kings.
- The Capetians had little power.
- Their domain included only the area around **Paris**.
- Many of the French dukes were more powerful than the Capetian kings.
- **The French monarchy's power grew under King Philip II Augustus, who ruled from 1180 to 1223.**

- Through making war, Philip took back the French territories of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, and Aquitaine from the English.
- He thereby greatly increased the income and power of the French monarchy.
- Capetian rulers after Philip continued to add lands to the royal domain.
- Philip IV, also known as Philip the Fair, greatly expanded the royal bureaucracy.
- **He also began the first French parliament, the Estates-General, by meeting with representatives of the three estates (classes): clergy (first estate), nobles (second estate), and townspeople (third estate).**

The Holy Roman Empire

- In the tenth century, powerful Saxon dukes became kings of the eastern Frankish kingdom.
- The best-known was **Otto I**, who was crowned emperor of the Romans by the pope in return for protecting him.
- **As leaders of a new Roman Empire, the German kings tried to rule both German and Italian lands.**
- **Frederick I considered Italy the center of a “holy empire,” hence the name Holy Roman Empire.**
- An alliance of northern Italian cities and the pope defeated Frederick’s army in 1176.
- They were afraid he wanted to rule all of Italy.
- The struggle between popes and emperors had profound effects on the Holy Roman Empire.
- With the emperor gone to war, the German nobles created many independent states.
- The German monarch could not maintain a strong monarchy.
- **Unlike England and France, neither Italy nor Germany created a national monarchy in the Middle Ages.**
- **They both consisted of small states and did not unify until the nineteenth century.**

Central and Eastern Europe and The Development of Russia

- **The Slavic peoples of central Europe gradually divided into three groups: western, southern, and eastern Slavs.**
- Western Slavs formed the Polish and Bohemian kingdoms.
- German monks had converted the **Czechs** in Bohemia and the Slavs in Poland to Christianity.
- Non-Slavic **Hungary** was also converted.
- The Poles, Czechs, and **Hungarians** accepted western Christianity—the Roman Catholic Church.
- The southern and eastern Slavs took a different route.
- **Beginning in 863 two Byzantine missionary brothers, Cyril and Methodius, converted the eastern Slavs to Eastern Orthodox Christianity.**
- The southern Slavs included the Croats, Serbs, and Bulgarians.
- The Croats accepted the Roman Catholic Church, but the other two groups accepted Eastern Orthodoxy.
- **Eastern Slavs had also settled in present-day Ukraine and Russia.**
- They encountered Swedish Vikings, who came for plunder and trade.

- **The Vikings came to dominate the native peoples, who called the Viking rulers the Rus.**
- **The name Russia is derived from this term.**

Section 4: The Byzantine Empire and the Crusades

The Reign of Justinian

- In the fifth century, as Germanic tribes moved into the western part of the Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire continued to exist.
- Justinian became emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire in 527.
- He wanted to restore the full Roman Empire.
- By 552 he almost had, but only three years after his death in 565, the Lombards had conquered much of Italy.
- Other areas were soon lost.
- **Justinian's most important contribution was his codification of Roman law in *The Body of Civil Law*.**
- It was the basis of imperial law until the Eastern Roman Empire ended in 1453.
- It also became the basis for much of the legal system of Europe.

From Eastern Roman Empire to Byzantine Empire

- Justinian's conquests left the Eastern Roman Empire in serious trouble: too much territory far from **Constantinople** to protect, an empty treasury, a population decline due to plague, and renewed threats along its frontiers.
- The most serious challenge was Islam, which created a powerful new unified Arab force that invaded the Eastern Roman Empire.
- **By the beginning of the eighth century, the much-reduced Eastern Roman Empire consisted only of the eastern Balkans and Asia Minor.**
- **Historians call this smaller Eastern Roman empire the Byzantine Empire.**
- It was its own distinctive civilization and lasted until 1453.
- The emperor's power was absolute because he was seen as chosen by God and crowned in sacred ceremonies.
- **He exercised political control over the Eastern Orthodox Church because he appointed the head of the Church, called the patriarch.**
- Byzantines believed that God had commanded their state to preserve the true Christian faith.

Life in Constantinople

- **Justinian rebuilt Constantinople in 532 after riots had destroyed much of the city.**
- Constantinople was the largest city in Europe during the Middle Ages, with a population estimated in the hundreds of thousands.
- Constantinople's appearance in the Middle Ages is due largely to Justinian's sixth-century rebuilding program.
- He built an immense palace, hundreds of churches, a Hippodrome, and extensive public works, including immense underground reservoirs for the city's water supply.
- **His greatest building was the Hagia Sophia—Church of the Holy Wisdom—completed in 537.**
- An enormous dome crowns four large piers.
- The dome seems to float in space. Forty-two windows ring the base, which creates an incredible play of light in the church.

- The light symbolizes the presence of God in the world.

New Heights and New Problems

- The Byzantine Empire was also troubled by a growing split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
- The Eastern Church would not accept the pope as the head of the Christian faith.
- **In 1054 Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicated each other.**
- **This created a schism, or separation, between these two branches of Christianity.**
- The schism has not completely healed even today.
- The empire was threatened from abroad as well.
- The **Seljuk Turks**, who moved into Asia Minor, were the greatest threat.
- Asia Minor was the empire's chief source of food and workers.
- In 1071 a Turkish army defeated Byzantine forces at Manzikert.
- **Emperor Alexius I turned to Europe for help.**

The Crusades

- **From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, European Christians went on a series of military campaigns to regain the Holy Land from the Muslims, regarded as infidels (nonbelievers).**
- **These expeditions are known as the Crusades.**
- They started when Pope Urban II agreed to Alexius I's request.
- Among other reasons, the pope wanted to provide papal leadership for a great cause.
- At the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II urged Christians to take up arms in a holy war.
- Warriors from western Europe, especially France, joined up.
- Some were moved by the cause; others were moved by adventure, the prospect of fighting, and an opportunity to gain territory, riches, or even a title.
- **The First Crusade had an army of several thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry.**
- **The crusaders went down the Palestinian coast and reached Jerusalem in 1099.**
- **They took the city and massacred thousand of inhabitants.**
- **The victors formed four Latin crusader states, which were surrounded by Muslims.**
- These kingdoms depended on supplies from Europe coming through Italian cities.
- Genoa, Pisa, and especially Venice grew rich and powerful.
- By the 1140s, the Muslims began to strike back.
- **When one of the Latin states fell, the monastic leader Saint Bernard of Clairvaux attained the help of King Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III of Germany in a Second Crusade.**
- **It failed entirely.**
- **In 1187, Jerusalem fell to the Muslims under Saladin.**
- **Three Christian rulers then agreed to lead a Third Crusade: Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany; Richard I (Richard the Lionhearted) of England; and Philip II Augustus of France.**

- **The Crusade was not successful.**
- Frederick drowned in a local river, Philip went home, and Richard negotiated an agreement with Saladin allowing Christian pilgrims access to Jerusalem.
- About six years after Saladin's death in 1193, **Pope Innocent III** started a Fourth Crusade.
- **The Venetian leaders of the Fourth Crusade, however, used this situation to weaken their largest commercial competitor, the Byzantine Empire.**
- **The crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204.**
- **As a final gasp of the Crusades, there were two "children's crusades."**
- In 1212, a German youth named Nicholas of Cologne brought thousands of children to the pope, saying that God had inspired him to lead the children to the Holy Land.
- The pope sent them home.
- At about the same time, a group of twenty thousand French children sailed for the Holy Land.
- **Two ships went down at sea, and the remainder of the children were sold into slavery on reaching North Africa.**
- **Historians disagree on the effects of the Crusades.**
- **Certainly they benefited some Italian cities economically, but the states probably would have grown economically anyway.**
- One unhappy effect was that the first widespread European attacks on the Jews began during the Crusades.
- Perhaps the greatest impact of the Crusades was political.
- **They eventually helped to break down feudalism, which led to strong nation-states.**