CHAPTER 10

The Worlds of Christendom: Contraction, Expansion, and Division
500–1300

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• To examine European society after the breakup of the Roman Empire
• To compare the diverse legacies of Rome in Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire
• To explore medieval European expansion
• To present the backwardness of medieval Europe relative to other civilizations, and the steps by which it caught up

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Opening Vignette
   A. Over the past 30 years millions have converted to the Christian faith in East and South Asia.
   1. similar process in non-Muslim regions of Africa
   2. 60 percent of Christians today live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America

B. In 500s and 600s, Christianity also had flourishing communities across large regions of Afro-Eurasia.
   1. but over next 1000 years African and Asian communities largely vanished, declined, or were marginalized
   2. Christianity became a largely European phenomenon

C. By 1300 C.E. Christianity provided common ground for third-wave societies in western Eurasia.
   1. but Christendom was deeply divided: Byzantine Empire and West
   2. Byzantium continued the traditions of the Greco-Roman world until conquered in 1453 C.E.
      a. Eastern Orthodoxy evolved within this third-wave civilization
   3. Roman imperial order disintegrated in the West
   4. Roman Catholic Church of the West established independence from political authorities; Eastern Orthodox Church did not
5. Western Europe emerged, at an increasing pace after 1000, as a dynamic third-wave civilization.

6. Western Europe was a hybrid civilization: classical, Germanic, Celtic.

D. The story of global Christendom in the era of third-wave civilizations is one of contractions and expansions.

1. sharp contractions in Asia and Africa
2. expansion in Western Europe and Russia
3. Christian Byzantium contracted and ultimately disappeared
4. Western Europe contracted but later expanded

II. Christian Contraction in Asia and Africa

A. Islam’s spread was a driving force in the contraction of Christianity.

B. Asian Christianity
1. within a century or so of Muhammad’s death, Christianity almost disappeared from Arabia
2. Islamic forces seized Jerusalem and its holy sites
3. in Syria and Persia many Christians converted voluntarily
   a. those that didn’t were granted the right to practice their religion for payment of a special tax
   b. experiences of individual communities varied
4. Nestorian Christians or the Church of the East survived but shrank in size in Syria, Iraq, and Persia
   a. Nestorians had some success in Tang China, before ultimately withering
   b. brief revival under Mongols

C. African Christianity
1. coastal North African Christians largely converted to Islam
2. in Egypt Coptic Church survived
   a. tolerated by Muslim rulers
   b. until the Crusades and Mongol threat when repressed
   c. most rural Coptic Christians convert, survived in urban areas and remote monasteries

3. Christianity taking shape in fifth and sixth centuries in the kingdoms of Nubia
   a. thrived for a time, but largely disappeared by 1500 C.E.

4. Ethiopian Christianity an exception
   a. rulers of Axum adopted Christianity in the fourth century
   b. geography protected from surrounding Muslim world
   c. developed distinctive traditions in isolation

III. Byzantine Christendom: Building on the Roman Past

A. The Byzantine Empire has no clear starting point.
1. continuation of the Roman Empire
2. some scholars date its beginning to 330 C.E., with founding of Constantinople
3. western empire collapsed in fifth century; eastern half survived another 1,000 years
4. eastern empire contained ancient civilizations: Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Anatolia
5. Byzantine advantages over western empire
   a. wealthier and more urbanized
   b. more defensible capital (Constantinople)
   c. shorter frontier
   d. access to the Black Sea; command of eastern Mediterranean
   e. stronger army, navy, and merchant marine
   f. continuation of late Roman infrastructure
   g. conscious effort to preserve Roman ways

B. The Byzantine State
1. Arab/Islamic expansion reduced size of Byzantine state
2. politics centralized around emperor in Constantinople
3. territory shrunk after 1085, as western Europeans and Turks attacked
   a. fell in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks
C. The Byzantine Church and Christian Divergence
1. The Church was closely tied to the state: caesaropapism
   a. Byzantine emperor was head of both the state and the Church
   b. emperor appointed the patriarch, sometimes made doctrinal decisions, called church councils
2. Orthodox Christianity deeply influenced all of Byzantine life
   a. legitimated imperial rule
   b. provided cultural identity
   c. pervasiveness of churches, icons
   d. even common people engaged in theological disputes
3. Eastern Orthodoxy increasingly defined itself in opposition to Latin Christianity
   a. Latin Christianity was centered on the pope, Rome
   b. growing rift between the two parts of Christendom
   c. sense of religious difference reflected East/West political difference
   d. with rise of Islam, Constantinople and Rome remained as sole hubs of Christendom
   e. important East/West cultural differences (language, philosophy, theology, church practice)
   f. schism in 1054, with mutual excommunication
   g. Crusades (from 1095 on) worsened the situation
   h. during Fourth Crusade, Westerners sacked Constantinople (1204) and ruled Byzantium for next 50 years

D. Byzantium and the World
1. Byzantium had a foot in both Europe and Asia, interacted intensively with neighbors
2. continuation of long Roman fight with Persian Empire
   a. weakened both states, left them open to Islamic conquests
   b. Persia was conquered by Islam; Byzantium lost territory
3. Byzantium was a central player in long-distance Eurasian trade
   a. Byzantine gold coins (bezants) were a major Mediterranean currency for over 500 years
   b. Byzantine crafts (jewelry, textiles, purple dyes, silk) were in high demand
4. important cultural influence of Byzantium
   a. transmitted ancient Greek learning to Islamic world and West
   b. transmission of Orthodox Christianity to Balkans and Russia

E. The Conversion of Russia
1. most important conversion was that of Prince Vladimir of Kiev
2. Orthodoxy transformed state of Rus; became central to Russian identity
3. Moscow finally declared itself to be the “third Rome,” assuming role of protector of Christianity after fall of Constantinople

IV. Western Christendom: Rebuilding in the Wake of Roman Collapse
A. Western Europe was on the margins of world history for most of the third-wave millennium.
   1. it was far removed from the growing world trade routes
   2. European geography made political unity difficult
   3. coastlines and river systems facilitated internal exchange
   4. moderate climate enabled population growth
B. Political Life in Western Europe
   1. traditional date for fall of western Roman Empire is 476 C.E.
   2. with Roman collapse:
      a. large-scale centralized rule vanished
      b. Europe’s population fell by 25 percent because of war and disease
      c. contraction of land under cultivation
      d. great diminution of urban life
      e. long-distance trade outside of Italy shriveled up
      f. great decline in literacy
g. Germanic peoples emerged as the dominant peoples in West
h. shift in center of gravity from Mediterranean to north and west
3. survival of much of classical and Roman heritage
   a. Germanic peoples who established new kingdoms had been substantially Romanized already
   b. high prestige of things Roman
   c. Germanic rulers adopted Roman-style written law
4. several Germanic kingdoms tried to recreate Roman-style unity
   a. Charlemagne (r. 768–814) acted “imperial”
   b. revival of Roman Empire on Christmas Day 800 (coronation of Charlemagne); soon fragmented
   c. another revival of Roman Empire with imperial coronation of Otto I of Saxony (r. 936–973)
C. Society and the Church
1. within these new kingdoms:
   a. highly fragmented, decentralized society
   b. great local variation
   c. landowning warrior elite exercised power
2. social hierarchies
   a. lesser lords and knights became vassals of kings or great lords
   b. serfdom displaced slavery
3. Catholic Church was a major element of stability
   a. hierarchy modeled on that of the Roman Empire
   b. became very rich
   c. conversion of Europe’s non-Christians
   d. most of Europe was Christian (with pagan elements) by 1100
4. Church and ruling class usually reinforced each other
   a. also an element of competition as rival centers of power
   b. right to appoint bishops and the pope was controversial (the investiture conflict)
D. Accelerating Change in the West
1. a series of invasions in 700–1000 hindered European development
   a. Muslims, Magyars, Vikings
   b. largely ended by 1000
2. weather improved with warming trend that started after 750
3. High Middle Ages: time of clear growth and expansion
   a. European population in 1000 was about 35 million; about 80 million in 1340
   b. opening of new land for cultivation
4. growth of long-distance trade, from two major centers
   a. northern Europe
   b. northern Italian towns
   c. great trading fairs (especially in Champagne area of France) enabled exchange between northern and southern merchants
5. European town and city populations rose
   a. Venice by 1400 had around 150,000 people
   b. still smaller than great cities elsewhere in the world
   c. new specializations, organized into guilds
6. growth of territorial states with better-organized governments
   a. kings consolidated their authority in eleventh–thirteenth centuries
   b. appearance of professional administrators
   c. some areas did not develop territorial kingdoms (Italian city-states, small German principalities)
7. new opportunities for women
   a. a number of urban professions were open to women
   b. widows of great merchants could continue husbands’ business
c. opportunities declined by the fifteenth century

d. religious life: nuns, Beguines, anchoresses (e.g., Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich)
e. but opportunities for religious women were also curtailed

8. new ideas about masculinity: from warrior to “provider”

E. Europe Outward Bound: The Crusading Tradition

1. medieval expansion of Christendom after 1000
   a. occurred at the same time that Byzantium declined
   b. clearance of land, especially on eastern fringe of Europe
   c. Scandinavian colonies in Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland
   d. Europe had direct, though limited, contact with East and South Asia by thirteenth–fourteenth centuries

2. Crusade movement began in 1095
   a. wars at God’s command, authorized by the pope, for which participants received an indulgence (release from penalty for confessed sins)
   b. amazingly popular; were religious wars at their core

3. most famous Crusades aimed to regain Jerusalem and holy places
   a. many waves of Crusaders to the Near East
   b. creation of four small Christian states (last fell in 1291)
   c. showed Europe’s growing organizational ability

4. Iberian Peninsula Crusade
5. Baltic Crusade
6. attacks on Byzantine Empire and Russia
7. Crusades had little lasting political or religious impact in the Middle East
8. Crusades had a significant impact on Europe
   a. conquest of Spain, Sicily, Baltic region
   b. Crusaders weakened Byzantium
   c. popes strengthened their position for a time
   d. tens of thousands of Europeans made contact with the Islamic world
   e. Europeans developed taste for luxury goods of the East
   f. Muslim scholarship and Greek learning flowed into Europe
   g. hardened cultural barriers between peoples

V. The West in Comparative Perspective

A. Catching Up

1. the hybrid civilization of Western Europe was less developed than Byzantium, China, India, or the Islamic world
   a. Muslims regarded Europeans as barbarians
   b. Europeans recognized their own backwardness

2. Europeans were happy to exchange with/borrow from more advanced civilizations to the east
   a. European economies reconnected with the Eurasian trading system
   b. Europeans welcomed scientific, philosophical, and mathematical concepts from Arabs, classical Greeks, and India
   c. the most significant borrowing was from China

3. Europe was a developing civilization like others of the era
4. by 1500, Europe had caught up with China and the Islamic world; surpassed them in some areas
5. 500–1300 was a period of great innovation
   a. agriculture
   b. new reliance on nonanimal sources of energy
   c. technological borrowing for warfare, with further development
   d. Europe developed a passion for technology
B. Pluralism in Politics
   1. Europe crystallized into a system of competing states
   2. political pluralism shaped Western European civilization
      a. led to frequent wars and militarization
      b. stimulated technological development
   3. states still were able to communicate economically and intellectually
   4. rulers were generally weaker than those to the east
      a. royal-noble-ecclesiastical power struggle allowed urban merchants to win great independence
      b. perhaps paved the way for capitalism
      c. development of representative institutions (parliaments)

C. Reason and Faith
   1. distinctive intellectual tension between faith and reason developed
   2. intellectual life flourished in the centuries after 1000
      a. creation of universities from earlier cathedral schools
      b. scholars had some intellectual freedom at universities
   3. in the universities, some scholars began to emphasize the ability of human reason to understand divine mysteries
      a. also applied reason to law, medicine, and world of nature
      b. development of “natural philosophy” (scientific study of nature)
   4. search for classical Greek texts (especially Aristotle)
      a. were found in Byzantium and the Islamic world
      b. twelfth–thirteenth centuries: access to ancient Greek and Arab scholarship
   5. deep impact of Aristotle
      a. his writings were the basis of university education
      b. dominated Western European thought between 1200 and 1700
   6. no similar development occurred in the Byzantine Empire
      a. focus of education was the humanities
      b. suspicion of classical Greek thought
   7. Islamic world had deep interaction with classical Greek thought
      a. massive amount of translation in ninth–tenth centuries
      b. encouraged a flowering of Arab scholarship between 800 and 1200
      c. caused a debate among Muslim thinkers on faith and reason
      d. Islamic world eventually turned against natural philosophy

VI. Reflections: Remembering and Forgetting: Continuity and Surprise in the Worlds of Christendom
A. Many features of medieval Christendom have extended into the modern era.
   1. crusading motivated Spanish and Portuguese explorers
   2. merchants’ freedom and eagerness to borrow technologies helped lead to capitalism and industrialization
   3. endemic military conflict found terrible expression in twentieth century
   4. ongoing “faith and reason” controversy
   5. Eastern Orthodox/Roman Catholic division of Christianity remains
   6. universities were a medieval creation
   7. as was the concept of a separation between religious and political authority
B. But knowing outcome of story can be a disadvantage for historians.
   1. historical actors do not possess such knowledge
   2. few in 500 C.E. would have predicted that Europe would be the primary center of Christianity
   3. or that Christian communities in Africa and Asia would wither away
   4. or that Western Europe would overtake Byzantium
   5. or Europe’s rising importance after 1500 C.E.
CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Following are answer guidelines for the Big Picture Questions, Seeking the Main Point Question, Margin Review Questions, Portrait Question, and Documents and Visual Sources Feature Questions that appear in the textbook chapter. For your convenience, the questions and answer guidelines are also available in the Computerized Test Bank.

Big Picture Questions

1. What accounts for the different historical trajectories of the Byzantine and West European expressions of Christendom?
   - The survival of a powerful imperial state in the Byzantine Empire resulted in greater state control over the Orthodox Church.
   - Cultural differences also played a role. For instance, in the Eastern Orthodox Church, Greek became the language of religious practice instead of the Latin used in the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, more so than in the West, Byzantine thinkers sought to formulate Christian doctrine in terms of Greek philosophical concepts.
   - The Eastern Orthodox faith expanded into Eastern Europe when the Byzantine Empire was at its height, but it was driven from other regions, particularly in North Africa and the Near East, by the expansion of Islam. After 1000 C.E., the Roman Catholic tradition became the more expansive of the two expressions, as its influence spread into Islamic Spain, non-Christian northern Europe, and Orthodox Eastern Europe.

2. How did Byzantium and Western Europe interact with each other and with the larger world of the third-wave era?
   - Byzantium and Western Europe interacted frequently; for instance, in the 500s C.E., the Byzantine emperor Justinian succeeded in reconstituting parts of Western Europe in his effort to reconstitute the Roman Empire.
   - The two societies were both Christian, which led to frequent interactions, disputes, and ultimately a schism between the two confessions.
   - The revival of Western Europe after 1000 C.E. brought it into a closer trade relationship with Byzantium.
   - The crusading movement in Western Europe inspired hundreds of thousands of Western Europeans to travel to the eastern Mediterranean and even led to the sack of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204 C.E.
   - In terms of the wider world, Byzantium and Western Europe were both part of the Eurasian long-distance trade network. Byzantium participated actively throughout the period, while Western Europe did so increasingly after 1000 C.E.
   - Both interacted with the Islamic world through military conflict, trade, and the exchange of ideas.
   - Both had a profound impact on Eastern Europe, especially through their promotion of rival versions of the Christian faith.

3. In what respects was the civilization of the Latin West distinctive and unique, and in what ways was it broadly comparable to other third-wave civilizations?
   - The book argues strongly that the Latin West shares many of the same features of other third-wave civilizations, especially in its willingness to borrow and then modify and improve upon ideas, business practices, and technological innovations. Therefore, it is broadly comparable to other third-wave civilizations.
   - That said, the book also makes the point that the Western European experience had distinctive features, including a fragmented political structure, unusually independent towns, and an acceptance of the study of natural philosophy, which ultimately helped to define a distinctive Latin West.

4. Looking Back: How does the evolution of the Christian world in the third-wave era compare with that of Tang and Song dynasty China and of the Islamic world?
   - The Western Catholic Christian world was less developed in comparison to Tang and Song dynasty China and the Islamic world in that the former had smaller cities, weaker political authorities, a more fragmented political structure, a less commercialized economy, and inferior technology. It also, possessed more privileged cities and a more favorable environment for merchants. By 1500, however, Western Europe had come a long way in catching up, though it depended more on borrowing than did its Chinese or Islamic counterparts.
   - The Orthodox Christian world was more similar to Tang and Song dynasty China and the Islamic world in that it possessed comparable cities, a powerful emperor, a unified government, a professional bureaucracy, a commercialized economy, and a technologically advanced society.
• The Orthodox Christian world was similar to the Islamic caliphates in that both did not distinguish as clearly between religious and state authority as in Western Europe.
• Western Catholic Christendom was a more militarized society than Tang and Song China.

Seeking the Main Point Question

Q. In what different ways did the history of Christianity unfold in various parts of the Afro-Eurasian world during the third-wave era?

• Christianity contracted sharply in Asia and Africa.
  • It expanded in Western Europe and Russia.
  • Christian Byzantium flourished for a time, then gradually contracted and finally disappeared.
  • The West followed an opposite path, at first contracting as the Roman Empire collapsed and later expanding as a new and blended civilization took hold in Western Europe.

Margin Review Questions

Q. What variations in the experience of African and Asian Christian communities can you identify?

• In much of Arabia, the Near East, and coastal North Africa the arrival of Islam led to widespread voluntary conversion of Christians to the Muslim faith.
  • For the most part the surviving communities in these regions were guaranteed the right to practice their religion with restrictions on some activities.
  • Christianity did spread into new regions, including China, Nubia, and Ethiopia. But only in Ethiopia did it ultimately survive and thrive.
  • In Egypt and Nubia Christians experienced increased oppression from the thirteenth century leading to a decline in the Egyptian Coptic church and the disappearance of the Nubian church.

Q. In what respects did Byzantium continue the patterns of the classical Roman Empire? In what ways did it diverge from those patterns?

• Continuance can be seen in Byzantium’s roads, military structures, centralized administration, imperial court, laws, and Christian organization.
  • It can also be seen in Byzantium’s pursuit of the long-term Roman struggle with the Persian Empire.
  • Byzantium diverged through the development of a reformed administrative system that gave appointed generals civil authority in the empire’s provinces and allowed them to raise armies from the landowning peasants of the region. It also diverged through the new ideas encompassed in caesaropapism that defined the relationship between the state and the Church.

Q. How did Eastern Orthodox Christianity differ from Roman Catholicism?

• Unlike Western Europe, where the Catholic Church maintained some degree of independence from political authorities, in Byzantium the emperor assumed something of the role of both “Caesar,” as head of state, and the pope, as head of the Church. Thus the Byzantine emperor appointed the patriarch of the Orthodox Church, sometimes made decisions about doctrine, called church councils into session, and generally treated the Church as a government department.
  • In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Greek became the language of religious practice instead of the Latin used in the Roman Catholic Church.
  • More so than in the West, Byzantine thinkers sought to formulate Christian doctrine in terms of Greek philosophical concepts.
  • The Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches disagreed on a number of doctrinal issues, including the nature of the Trinity, the relative importance of faith and reason, and the veneration of icons.
  • Priests in Byzantium allowed their beards to grow long and were permitted to marry, while priests in the West shaved and, after 1050 or so, were supposed to remain celibate.
  • Orthodox ritual called for using bread leavened with yeast in the mass, but Catholics used unleavened bread.
  • Eastern Orthodox leaders sharply rejected the growing claims of Roman popes to be the sole and final authority for all Christians everywhere.

Q. In what ways was the Byzantine Empire linked to a wider world?

• On a political and military level, Byzantium continued the long-term Roman struggle with the Persian Empire.
Economically, the Byzantine Empire was a central player in the long-distance trade of Eurasia, with commercial links to Western Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Islamic world, and China.

Culturally, Byzantium preserved much of ancient Greek learning and transmitted this classical heritage to both the Islamic world and the Christian West.

Byzantine religious culture spread widely among Slavic-speaking peoples in the Balkans and Russia.

Q. How did links to Byzantium transform the new civilization of Kievan Rus?

Kievan Rus borrowed Byzantium architectural styles, the Cyrillic alphabet, the extensive use of icons, a monastic tradition stressing prayer and service, and political ideals of imperial control of the Church.

Q. What replaced the Roman order in Western Europe?

Politically, the Roman imperial order collapsed, to be replaced by a series of regional kingdoms ruled by Germanic warlords.

But these states maintained some Roman features, including written Roman law and the use of fines and penalties to provide order and justice.

Some of the larger Germanic kingdoms, including the Carolingian Empire and the empire of Otto I of Saxony, also had aspirations to re-create something of the unity of the Roman Empire, although these kingdoms were short-lived and unsuccessful in reviving anything approaching Roman authority.

In the West, a social system developed that was based on reciprocal ties between greater and lesser lords among the warrior elites, which replaced the Roman social structure.

Roman slavery gave way to the practice of serfdom.

The Roman Catholic Church increased its influence over society.

Q. In what ways was European civilization changing after 1000?

The population grew rapidly.

New lands were opened for cultivation.

Long-distance trade was revived and expanded.

The population of towns grew and attracted new professional groupings that introduced a new and more productive division of labor into European society.

Women found substantial new opportunities because of economic growth and urbanization, but by the fifteenth century, many of these opportunities were declining.

Territorial states grew in this period and established more effective institutions of government, commanding the loyalty or at least the obedience of their subjects.

The Roman Catholic Church expanded the area in which Roman Catholicism was practiced into Eastern Europe and Islamic Spain.

Q. What was the impact of the Crusades in world history?

They marked an expansion of the influence of Western Christendom at the same time that Eastern Christendom and Byzantium were declining.

They stimulated the demand for Asian luxury goods in Europe.

They also allowed Europeans to learn techniques for producing sugar on large plantations using slave labor, which had incalculable consequences in later centuries when Europeans transferred the plantation system to the Americas.

Muslim scholarship, together with the Greek learning that it incorporated, flowed into Europe.

The Crusades hardened cultural barriers between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. Moreover, Christian anti-Semitism was exacerbated.

European empire building, especially in the Americas, continued the crusading notion that “God wills it.”

The Crusades have also on many occasions proved politically or ideologically significant when the worlds of Europe and Islam have collided over the past two centuries.

Q. Summing Up So Far: How did the historical development of the European West differ from that of Byzantium in the third-wave era?

Western Europe collapsed politically in the fifth century never to come together again as a single political entity, whereas Byzantium survived as a single political entity until its conquest in 1453 C.E.

The Byzantine emperor exerted greater control over the Orthodox Church than political authorities in Western Europe did over the Catholic Church.

The Byzantine Empire maintained a prominent role in the long-distance trade networks of Eurasia throughout the period, whereas Western Europe’s role declined precipitously following the collapse of
the Roman Empire in the fifth century, only to reengage with those trade networks after 1000.

- After 1000, Western Europe’s influence in the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe expanded, while the influence of the Byzantine Empire contracted (especially in the Mediterranean basin) after 600 C.E.

Q. In what ways did borrowing from abroad shape European civilization after 1000?

- Borrowing from abroad played a critical role in establishing a significant tradition of technological innovation that allowed Europe by 1500 to catch up with, and in some areas perhaps to surpass, China and the Islamic world.
- A more efficient horse collar, which probably originated in China or central Asia, contributed to European efforts to plow the heavy soils of northern Europe.
- Gunpowder from China, combined with cannons developed in Western Europe, gave Europeans a military edge over other civilizations.
- Improvements in shipbuilding and navigational techniques, including the magnetic compass and sternpost rudder from China and adaptations of the Arab lateen sail, enabled Europeans to build advanced ships for oceanic voyages.

Q. Why was Europe unable to achieve the kind of political unity that China experienced? What impact did this have on the subsequent history of Europe?

- Geographic barriers, ethnic and linguistic diversity, and the shifting balances of power among Europe’s many states prevented the emergence of a single European empire like that of China. As a result, European nations engaged in many conflicts and Europe was unable to achieve domestic peace for many centuries.

Q. In what different ways did classical Greek philosophy and science have an impact in the West, in Byzantium, and in the Islamic world?

- In the West after 1000 C.E., a belief in the ability of human reason to penetrate divine mysteries and to grasp the operation of the natural order took shape, and that in turn stimulated a renewed interest in Greek philosophy and science. During this period, European scholars obtained copies of Greek texts from both the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic world. At first this new confidence in human reason was applied primarily to theology, but increasingly it was also applied to the scientific study of nature, known as “natural philosophy,” which ultimately became a foundation for the Scientific Revolution.
- In the Byzantine Empire, scholars kept the classical tradition alive, but their primary interest lay in the humanities and theology rather than in the natural sciences or medicine. The Orthodox Church had serious reservations about classical Greek learning, sometimes persecuting scholars who were too enamored with the ancients. Those who studied Greek philosophy and science did so in a conservative spirit, concerned to preserve and transmit the classical heritage rather than using it as a springboard for creating new knowledge.
- The Islamic world undertook a massive translation project in the ninth and tenth centuries that made many Greek texts available in Arabic. This contributed to a flowering of Arab scholarship, especially in the sciences and natural philosophy, between roughly 800 and 1200 C.E., but it also stimulated debate among Muslim thinkers about faith and reason. Unlike church authorities in Western Europe, learned opinion in the Islamic world did not come to regard natural philosophy as a wholly legitimate enterprise. Because of this, the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, while never completely disappearing, receded from Islamic scholarship after the thirteenth century, and natural philosophy did not become a central concern for Islamic higher education as it did in Western Europe.

Portrait Question

Q. In what ways did class, family, gender, and natural catastrophe shape Cecilia’s life?

- In terms of class, being born into the peasantry rather than serfdom allowed her greater freedom, but living as a commoner rather than a noblewoman or nun ensured that she owed deference to social superiors.
- Her large and prosperous family gave her important advantages, helping her to acquire property and providing her with support and protection.
- Her decision not to marry gave her greater independence than most women.
- Her gender meant that she could not hold office in her community, was paid about one-third less than men when she worked as an unskilled day laborer, and could not serve as an official ale taster.
• She also suffered from the sexual double standard and may have chosen not to marry in order to keep control over her property.
• She lost her parents during the famine years of 1315 to 1322 which dramatically changed her life.
• She also profited from the famine buying land at favorable prices.
• During the famine years she experienced tensions with her neighbors over scarce resources.

Using the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Following are answer guidelines for the headnote questions and Using the Evidence questions that appear in the documents and visual sources essays located at the end of the textbook chapter.

Headnote Questions

Document 10.1: The Conversion of Clovis

Q. According to Gregory, what led to the conversion of Clovis?

• Queen Clotilda encouraged Clovis to convert and baptized their son. These actions made Clovis more fully aware of the Christian faith but did not persuade him to convert.
• Clovis made the decision to convert on the battlefield because he believed that his Gods had abandoned him.
• Shortly after winning this battle he was baptized.

Q. What issues are evident in the religious discussions of Clovis and his wife, Clotilda?

• Clotilda believed the gods of Clovis possessed magical powers rather than being the true God. Clovis believed his gods to be the creators of the world; in his view the Christian God was not one of the family of traditional gods, and therefore had no power.
• Clotilda understood baptism to be critical to the salvation of her son’s soul when he died shortly after being baptized. Clovis saw the death of their son after his baptism as a sign of the lack of the Christian God’s power.

Q. Notice how Gregory modeled his picture of Clovis on that of Constantine, the famous Roman emperor whose conversion to Christianity in the fourth century gave official legitimacy and state support to the faith (see Chapter 4). What message did Gregory seek to convey in making this implied comparison?

• By modeling his account of Clovis’s conversion on that of Constantine, Gregory linked Clovis’s life story with that of a powerful Roman emperor, enhancing his status.
• Gregory attributed to Clovis and his successors the position of patron and supporter of the church that Constantine represented.
• He linked Clovis to the Roman Catholic tradition rather than the rival form known as Arianism.

Q. How might a modern secular historian use this document to help explain the spread of Christianity among the Franks?

• A modern historian would point out that conversion began at the royal court and then spread. Clotilda played a significant role in introducing Christianity into the Frankish kingdom and in inspiring Clovis’s conversion.
• The conversion of Clovis immediately led to the conversion of much of his army, and military victory over the Alamanni was an important catalyst for the conversion.

Document 10.2: Advice on Dealing with “Pagans”

Q. What can we learn about the religious practices of the Anglo-Saxons from Bede’s account?

• The Anglo-Saxons worshipped idols in temples, and they ritually sacrificed oxen.

Q. In what specific ways did the pope urge toleration? And why did he advocate accommodation or compromise with existing religious practices? Keep in mind that the political authorities in England at the time had not yet become thoroughly Christian.

• Pope Gregory urged toleration by asking missionaries to alter their pagan custom of ritually sacrificing oxen in the temples at their feasts, and instead celebrating the day of the dedication of the church or the nativities of the holy martyrs whose relics are deposited in the new church. By reshaping, rather than banning feasting, the people might be less opposed to conversion. Also, offering sacrifices to the true Christian God was acceptable and did not need to be forbidden.

• He advocated compromise by urging missionaries to occupy temples rather than destroy them, because it would make conversion easier for
the population to embrace; they would adore the Christian God in the places where they were accustomed to worshipping.

- The pope believed people are better able to embrace change by degrees rather than all at once.

Q. What implication might Gregory’s policies have for the beliefs and practices of English converts?

- The retaining of their temples and the alteration, rather than outright banning, of some of their ceremonies made Christianity potentially more appealing.

- These policies made the new religion more familiar to the English and therefore easier for them to convert.

- However, the policies may have led to converts who did not fully understand or were less committed to their new faith.

Document 10.3: Charlemagne and the Saxons

Q. What does this document reveal about the kind of resistance that the Saxons mounted against their enforced conversion?

- Saxons looted and burnt churches; failed to follow the Lenten fasting rules; murdered clerics; and continued to believe in witches.

- Saxons also burned bodies of the dead and committed human sacrifice.

- They conspired in groups against the Christian faith; failed to observe the Lord’s day; and failed to baptize their infants.

- They continued to make vows at springs, trees, and groves.

Q. How did Charlemagne seek to counteract that resistance?

- Charlemagne counteracted with harsh punishments and by relying on Christian clerics to oversee and police their flocks.

Q. What does this document suggest about Charlemagne’s views of his duties as ruler?

- Charlemagne was committed to supporting the spread and universal practice of Christianity in his realm.

- He was committed to suppressing other religious practices in his realm.

- He viewed the state as having an important role to play in the protection and promotion of Christianity.

Documents 10.4 and 10.5: The Persistence of Tradition

Q. What practices of the Hessians conflicted with Boniface’s understanding of Christianity? How did he confront the persistence of these practices?

- Boniface objected when Hessians continued to offer sacrifices to trees and springs; inspect the entrails of victims; practice divination, legerdemain, and incarnation; and pay attention to auguries, auspices, and other sacrificial rites.

- To confront these practices, he cut down a holy oak revered by pagans with miraculous results and built an oratory out of its wood; and he addressed the elders and chiefs of the people.

Q. What do these documents reveal about the process of conversion to Christianity?

- The experiences of Saint Boniface indicate that newly converted Christians sometimes continued to also practice older religious traditions.

- The Leechbook reveals that elements of Christian practice were integrated into traditional medical remedies.

- People perceived power in Christian beliefs, but did not immediately reject the usefulness of other remedies.

Q. How might Pope Gregory (Document 10.2), Charlemagne (Document 10.3), and Boniface (Document 10.4) have responded to the cures and preventions described in the Leechbook?

- Pope Gregory would be more likely to tolerate at least some of the Leechbook remedies, since these remedies relied on the Christian God for their supernatural power to heal.

- Pope Gregory might see these remedies as a positive step toward full conversion, one that allowed the people to adopt Christian elements through the continued use of familiar remedies.

- From the evidence provided, Boniface would be likely to reject this mixing of Christian and traditional remedies as he did the Hessians who mixed pagan with Christian practices.

Visual Source 10.1: Christ Pantokrator

Q. What differences can you notice in the two sides of Christ’s face? (Pay attention to the eyebrows, the irises and pupils, the hair, the mustache, and the cheeks. Notice also the difference in color between the face and the hands.)
• On the right side (as compared to the left) of Jesus’ face, his hair sweeps down the side of his neck rather than the back; his eyebrow is raised further; his pupil is focused further to the left; his cheek is gaunter; and his mustache swoops more directly downward.

Q. How does this image portray Jesus as an all-powerful ruler?

• Jesus is wearing a dark purple robe; has a halo of light over his head; is holding the gospels; and is blessing the viewer.

Q. How does this depiction of Jesus differ from others you may have seen?

• The image differs markedly from depictions of Jesus as a baby, Jesus performing acts recorded in the gospels, and Christ suffering on the cross.
• It differs from but is closer in nature to depictions of Christ seated in judgment.

Q. Which features of this image suggest Christ’s humanity and which might portray his divinity?

• Images suggesting Christ’s humanity are his depiction in human form; the two unextended fingers on his right hand, symbolizing his dual nature; and the gospels held in his left hand, which recount his time in human form on earth.
• His divinity is represented by the halo of light; the two unextended fingers on his right hand, symbolizing his dual nature; the gospels held in his left hand, which recount his resurrection; and the differing features of the two sides of his face, which also represent his dual nature.

**Visual Source 10.2: The Nativity**

Q. Why do you think Mary is pictured as facing outward toward the viewer rather than focusing on her child?

• Mary’s pose may suggest that she is offering her maternal assistance to the viewers, rather than focusing exclusively on her own child. Such a reading would represent her role as an important sympathetic intercessor for the faithful in the Christian tradition.
• Her posture may suggest a contemplative attitude, perhaps reflecting Luke 2:19, “But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.”

Q. Notice the three rays from heaven, symbolizing the trinity—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—represented by the three figures at the top. What other elements of the biblical story of Jesus’ birth can you identify in the image?

• Jesus is behind the Virgin Mary and is swaddled, and animals are present.
• Joseph is represented to the lower left with either a shepherd or Satan (see last question).
• The angels above the scene are glorifying the nativity, as is the shepherd to the right.
• To the left the three wise men are shown, who have come bearing gifts for the baby Jesus.
• In the lower right is a depiction of the Ablution of the Infant Jesus. This story of the washing of Jesus is not found in the gospels or other written sources, but is commonly depicted in the Russian iconic tradition.

Q. The figure in the bottom left is that of a contemplative and perhaps troubled Joseph, Mary’s husband-to-be. What do you imagine that Joseph is thinking? Why might he be troubled?

• Joseph is most likely concerned about the pregnancy of his wife.
• He is likely troubled by the news of the virgin birth.

Q. Facing Joseph is an elderly person, said by some to represent Satan and by others to be a shepherd comforting Joseph. What thinking might lie behind each of these interpretations?

• If the figure represents Satan, then he could be present as the tempter casting doubt on the virgin birth and seeking to turn Joseph against Mary.
• If he represents an elderly shepherd, then he may represent wise counsel for Joseph during this difficult time—symbolically shepherding him toward accepting Mary’s virgin birth, and toward his role as protector and earthly father of Jesus.

**Visual Source 10.3: Ladder of Divine Ascent**

Q. How does this icon portray the spiritual journey?

• The spiritual journey is portrayed as a climb up a ladder, while surrounded by demons representing the dangers of sins, including lust, anger, and pride.

Q. What sources of help are available for the monks on the ladder? Notice the figures in the upper left and lower right.

• Potential sources of help include the figure, most likely Jesus, at the top of the ladder; the angels
to the top left of the image; and the clerics, who most likely represent the church, at the bottom right.

Q. What message might beginning monks have taken from this image?

• The path to spiritual union with God in heaven is fraught with dangers.
• The path is a long one that needs to be taken step by step.
• Satan and his demons actively sought to derail efforts by believers to reach this spiritual union.
• At times, Satan and his demons succeed, and some who begin this quest for spiritual union end up damned instead.
• The path to spiritual union with God is undertaken individually, but the support of the angels and the church is of some help.

Using the Evidence Questions

Documents: The Making of Christian Europe

1. Describing cultural encounters: Consider the spread of Christianity in Europe and China from the viewpoint of those seeking to introduce the new religion. What obstacles did they encounter? What strategies did they employ? What successes and failures did they experience?

• The obstacles they faced included societies that already possessed vibrant religious traditions; difficulties explaining Christian ideas in very different cultural traditions; and the active hostility of some portions of society.
• Pope Gregory’s strategy was to develop, whenever possible, compromise and assimilation of local cultural and religious traditions.
• Charlemagne employed the coercive power of his state.
• Boniface confronted and rejected persistent pagan practices, and pressured local elites in an effort to end pagan activities.

2. Describing cultural encounters...from another point of view: Consider the same process from the viewpoint of new adherents to Christianity. What were the motives for or the advantages of conversion for both political elites and ordinary people? To what extent was it possible to combine prevailing practices and beliefs with the teachings of the new religion?

• For political elites, Christianity brought legitimacy; a Christian clerical establishment to support their rule; a single religion under which to unify their kingdom; traditions from the later Roman Empire that bolstered the prestige of their rulers; and a more powerful God to support them in battle.
• For ordinary people, Christianity provided an alternative source of divine help; a religion with a focus on the afterlife. Because of the manner in which it spread, Christianity often allowed adherents to keep much of their older religious tradition, if in an altered form.
• The documents in this feature emphasize how flexible the Christian message was as it spread, allowing for prevailing practices and beliefs to persist wherever they did not directly contradict Christian teachings.

3. Defining a concept: The notion of “conversion” often suggests a quite rapid and complete transformation of religious commitments based on sincere inner conviction. In what ways do these documents support or challenge this understanding of religious change?

• Boniface’s statement that some Hessians had converted, fully abandoning their pagan practices, supports this understanding of conversion.
• Clovis’s conversion was rapid and sincere, even if his motivations on the field of battle may not be considered purely religious.
• However, Charlemagne’s law code indicates that many Saxons only converted slowly and reluctantly.
• Gregory felt that full conversion was best achieved in stages and with the maintenance of as many local customs and traditions as possible.
• The Leechbook provides evidence that Christian practices did not supplant traditional practices after the conversion of Anglo-Saxon society; rather, traditional practices assimilated Christian beliefs.

4. Noticing point of view and assessing credibility: From what point of view is each of the documents written? Which statements in each document might historians find unreliable and which would they find most useful?

• Document 10.1 was written by a Christian bishop a century after it occurred, so many aspects of the story may be unreliable, including the motivations of major characters and the exact wording of their exchanges. Moreover, its modeling on the conversion of Emperor Constantine might leave one skeptical as to its historical accuracy, especially those features that most closely parallel Constantine’s experience. It is most likely to be
reliable on the public events recounted and the form of Christianity adopted by Clovis.

- Document 10.2 was written by the Venerable Bede, an eighth-century monk who lived in what is now the north of England. Written over a century after the fact and far from Rome where Gregory resided, it may be unreliable in the exact wording of Gregory’s letter. It might also misrepresent or not fully understand the pagan rituals described. If Bede’s account was drawn from a copy of Gregory’s letter, then the pagan practices attributed to the Anglo-Saxons may not be correct because Gregory was writing from Rome. It is most likely to be accurate in its account of the general message of the letter, which encouraged compromise and assimilation of local traditions and sacred sites rather than rejection of local practice. In its descriptions of the occupation of pagan temples and of early Christian feasts it is likely to be accurate, because Bede would have been able to observe the results of missionaries in promoting these policies in the religious sites and practices of the eighth century.

- Document 10.3 was issued by Charlemagne in the ninth century. Its depiction of pagan practices that the law seeks to end is not likely to be accurate, since there would be an incentive to represent the practices in the worst possible light in the laws. It may also be inaccurate in representing the motivations of Saxons. It is most accurate in identifying those activities in the Saxon lands that most concerned Charlemagne and in providing a sense of how Charlemagne sought to force his Saxon subjects to convert.

- Document 10.4 was written by Willibald, one of Boniface’s followers. Its account of the miraculous felling of the oak tree might be unreliable, since it was written by a committed missionary who had a pedagogical role in inspiring others to convert. It is likely to be accurate in its account of Boniface’s movements, the problems with persistent pagan practices among the Hessians, and the decision by Boniface to fell the tree in an effort to dissuade pagans that their gods were powerful.

- Document 10.5 was written by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon author or authors. It is not clear from this text that the spells recounted were in widespread use, and therefore may not be representative of beliefs and practices in Anglo-Saxon England. The document’s strength is in showing how traditional remedies in Anglo-Saxon society had taken on Christian components following the arrival of Christianity. It also provides a sense of how natural and supernatural remedies mixed freely during this period.

Visual Sources: Reading Byzantine Icons

1. Viewing icons from opposing perspectives: How might supporters and opponents of icons have responded to these visual sources?

   - Supporters of icons might argue that they are useful because they serve as pedagogical tools; they are able to inspire piety among those who see them; and because of their aesthetic beauty.

   - Opponents of icons might note God’s prohibition against false idols in the Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 20:4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” Opponents might also warn of their potential to be worshipped as sources of magic or divine aid.

2. Identifying religious ideas in art: What elements of religious thought or practice can you identify in these icons? In what ways were these religious ideas represented artistically?

   - The Trinity is represented in Visual Source 10.1 by the three upright fingers in the blessing offered by Jesus’ right hand, and in Visual Source 10.2 by the rays coming down from on high.

   - The dual nature of Christ is represented in Visual Source 10.1 by the differences between the two sides of his face and the two unextended fingers on his right hand.

   - Visual Source 10.3 represents in a literal fashion the pathway to spiritual salvation as mapped out by Saint John Climacus.

3. Comparing images of Jesus: In what different ways is Jesus portrayed in the three icons? What similarities can you identify?

   - In Visual Source 10.1, Jesus is portrayed as a powerful ruler in adult human form.

   - In Visual Source 10.2, Jesus is portrayed as a baby.

   - In Visual Source 10.3, Jesus is portrayed as the gateway to spiritual union with God and as a gatekeeper of heaven.

   - All three figures depict Jesus in human form.

   - Visual Sources 10.1 and 10.3 both present Jesus in adult form and as a powerful ruler or mediator.
4. **Comparing religious art cross-culturally:** How might you compare these icons to the Buddha images in Chapter 4? Consider their purposes, their religious content, and their modes of artistic representation.

- Christian icons are less naturalistic in their artistic style when compared to the Buddha images in Chapter 4.
- The Christian icons are paintings, whereas a majority of the Buddhist works are sculpted.
- Both sets of images served devotional purposes; include iconographic features; and have pedagogical uses, particularly for the illiterate.

**LECTURE STRATEGIES**

**Lecture 1: The fall of Rome and creation of the Germanic successor states**

Students tend to be very interested in the fall of the (western) Roman Empire, and since exploration of the matter provides an excellent opportunity to look more deeply at the factors that make empires fall, this is a topic that can be expanded very profitably from the textbook coverage.

A good place to start is with two maps of Europe, ca. 300 C.E. and ca. 500 C.E. (excellent maps of Europe for each century from year 1 to year 2000 can be found at www.euratlas.com), which will show more clearly than mere words could that the eastern Roman Empire survived but that the western empire was carved into a number of states labeled with various Germanic ethnic names (Kingdom of the Franks, etc.). Then pose the question, “What happened to change the picture between 300 and 500?” People have written extensively on this topic, so of course be selective. As much as possible, though, compare what happened to the Roman Empire to circumstances in other empires (comparison to the fall of the Han dynasty is particularly useful). Some issues to consider:

- Edward Gibbons’s classic argument that it was all the fault of the Christians, who drained top talent from the administration and were too fond of “turning the other cheek.” (It’s important to note that a number of fourth-century bishops, such as Ambrose, actually spent part of their career as administrators and that Christians in fact have always had an extremely poor track record when it comes to cheek-turning.) A comparison to the implication of Daoists in the fall of the Han dynasty is instructive.
- the issue of hiring mostly Germanic mercenaries to staff the armies of Rome (note that this was not a new phenomenon)
- the theory that, as soon as the empire stopped expanding, its fall began (which cannot be supported if one looks at a basic chronological chart)
- the weakness of Roman bureaucracy (especially compared to that of Han China), with very few bureaucrats and a system that was largely militarized and that gave much of the responsibility for governance to unpaid members of the elite
- the role of Germanic pressure in bringing down the empire, especially considering that Roman-trained armies could easily defeat Germanic tribal forces
- the great Visigothic crisis of 375–378, with the Visigothic defeat of Emperor Valens at Adrianople, and consideration of how badly this issue really affected the empire
- the division of the empire into eastern and western units, finalized in 395 C.E.

You may care to include, if you have time, some sense of why the eastern empire survived (shorter frontiers, higher population and thus larger tax base, military reforms). And of course you should include at least one of the “silly” reasons sometimes given for the fall of Rome. My personal favorite is that, thanks to lead-based glaze for storage containers, all of the Roman upper class suffered from lead poisoning. It is very important to note the ways in which the Germanic peoples who eventually established successor states had already adopted Roman ways and perspectives. It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Document feature during your lecture.

**Lecture 2: Charlemagne and the last wave of “barbarian” invasions**

Recently, the historian Pierre Riché subtitled a book on the Carolingians (Charlemagne’s dynasty) “a family who forged Europe.” Charlemagne, his immediate predecessors, and his successors as kings of the Franks do indeed stand out in the history of the early Middle Ages for their bold efforts at state building, creating an amalgam of Christian, Germanic, and Roman practices to create a surprisingly strong state that influenced all later European states. This consolidated Kingdom of the
Franks suffered heavily under the onslaught of the last wave of invasions of Europe (by Vikings, Magyars, and Muslims), but much of what these figures created survived.

Begin with a discussion of conditions in the early Germanic successor states—low literacy, gradually dissolving vestiges of Roman administration, and a high degree of decentralization. From there, follow the story of the Carolingians, emphasizing that this was only the most successful example of a phenomenon that occurred elsewhere in Europe (such as Mercia under King Offa or Visigothic Spain). Important points to include:

- Charles Martel’s consolidation of power in Francia as protector of the Church and leader against Muslim invasions from Spain
- the role of Anglo-Saxon missionaries and an alliance with the papacy in consolidating the Carolingian hold on power
- Pepin the Short’s usurpation of the Frankish throne
- Charlemagne’s highly successful military campaigns, which made him so wealthy that he could experiment with governmental reform
- the Carolingian renaissance: what it set out to do, its scope, and its impact on society
- Charlemagne’s coronation as emperor on December 25, 800
- Charlemagne’s efforts to build a Christian empire modeled on that of Constantine
- the civil wars during the reign of Charlemagne’s son Louis the Pious, including both reasons for this centrifugal pull and its effects
- why Vikings liked to raid, what real damage they did, and why they were difficult to fight
- the effect of the larger-scale Viking attacks on England in encouraging centralization
- the effect of the large-scale Magyar raids on East Francia in encouraging the emergence of a strong German state
- the role of Muslim raids on Italy in creating strong Italian city-states
- a comparison of this last wave of invasions with the Germanic invasions that brought the western Roman Empire to an end

It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Document feature during your lecture.

**Lecture 3: The medieval expansion of Europe**

This lecture examines in greater detail the remarkable expansion of French-influenced Western Christendom in the period after the year 1000. Begin with an examination of Europe’s “core lands” (most notably France) at the turn of the millennium. Be sure to include the following points:

- the preeminence of heavy cavalry (“knights”)
- economic recovery
- beginnings of significant population growth
- religion around the year 1000

Time is always limited in a world civilization class, so this lecture certainly would not be able to include all the major expansion areas, such as:

- the English conquest of Ireland and Wales
- Scandinavian efforts to conquer Finland
- the Christian conquest of Spain (reconquista)
- the conquest of Prussia and much of the Baltic, especially by the Teutonic Knights and their allies
- the maritime expansion in the Mediterranean
- the Holy Land Crusades and establishment of the Crusader principalities
- Western efforts to seize Byzantine territories

For a short lecture, a thematic approach may serve you better. For example, consider a lecture using some of the following themes as your organizational base:

- the militarism of later medieval Europe (including the high level of training of knights, the social importance of knights, the integrated nature of medieval armies with heavy reliance on infantry) and comparison to the military capability of their enemies
- the role of political decentralization in encouraging expansion by private entrepreneurship (e.g., Strongbow’s original plan to carve out a state in Ireland, the role of nobles in carving out states in the Near East, the Teutonic Knights’ seizure of Prussia) and how kings could take advantage of this private enterprise (most notably when the king of France gained control of Languedoc in the wake of the Albigensian Crusade)
- the role of a rising merchant class (essential to the story of the Italian trading states in the
Mediterranean, the Crusades, and the European expansion into the Baltic
• the role of religion as a catalyst in the various crusading movements

THINGS TO DO IN THE CLASSROOM

Discussion Topics

1. Comparison (large or small group). “Caesaropapism or ecclesiastical independence?”

This chapter presented two styles of Christian Church development—the caesaropapism of the Byzantine Empire and the greater independence of spiritual authorities in Western Europe. Choose two teams, and ask them to debate with each other which system has the greatest advantages. Make sure they stay medieval as much as possible!

2. Misconception/Difficult Topic (large or small group). “That the era of the Middle Ages in Europe was a ‘Dark Age.’”

Few things annoy scholars of medieval Europe more than calling their era a “Dark Age.” Yet one still finds the term in the realm of popular history, no matter how hard we try to discourage it. The purpose of this discussion is to consider what truth, if any, there is in that old stereotype.

Begin with a brief explanation of how the term “Dark Ages” came into use for Europe during the period of third-wave civilizations. (It was invented by Renaissance scholars who had a strong stake in implying that nothing worthwhile had happened between antiquity and their own glorious time.) Then ask students to discuss the following:

• What are various reasons why a civilization could be called “dark”?
• Using those criteria, are there any civilizations we have studied that fit the description?
• Are there parts of the European Middle Ages that could be defined as “dark”?
• If you were to draw a timeline, which part of the period covered in this chapter would fit your definition?

3. Contextualization (large or small group). “Faith or reason—the longest argument.”

This chapter presents the development of tension between faith and reason in medieval Europe. Ask students to:

• lay out the main reasons why this tension developed in the medieval context
• discuss which medieval factors are still part of the modern faith/reason debate
• discuss which factors are unique to the modern world

Classroom Activities

1. Role-playing exercise (small group). “Converting Russia.”

Most of the class consists of advisers to Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev, who has decided that the time has come to align his state with one of the dominant religions of the tenth century. Select groups of students to enact delegations from the four religions he is considering—Judaism, Islam, Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Let each delegation try to convince the class that its religion is the best. Make sure that the students performing the reenactment (1) do some research beyond the textbook and (2) remain true to their tenth-century context (i.e., not presenting modern Reform Judaism or any other religious branch that had not yet been invented).

2. Clicker question.

Would you rather live in Song China or in later medieval Europe?

3. Map-analysis exercise (large or small group). “A fragmented Europe.”

If possible, display to the class a physical map of Europe that includes modern political borders. Ask your students to:

• identify the geographical elements that contributed to European political fragmentation (mountains, major rivers, etc.—but be sure to remind them that rivers and bodies of water can often facilitate contact)
• identify the regions where separate states formed for no clear geographical reason (look especially at Eastern Europe for this)
• discuss what other factors made for
fragmentation in regions where no physical
reason is apparent

Class Discussion for the
Documents and Visual
Sources Features

Comparison: Teaching Buddhism to Christians
(large or small group)

An important thread in this feature is that conversion
to Christianity was often facilitated by the
assimilation of the holy sites, customs, practices, and
religious language of the region in which
missionaries sought converts. The purpose of this
discussion is:
• to strengthen student understanding of these
conversion strategies
• to broaden student understanding of Buddhist
thought.

Ask students to consider in broad terms the
similarities between Buddhism and Christianity as
universal missionary religious traditions. Review the
techniques used by Christian missionaries in their
efforts to spread their faith into Western Europe.
Then ask students which of these techniques might
productively be employed by Buddhist missionaries
if they had sought to convert pagan western Europe.
Would the Buddhist religious message likely receive
the same reception? Would the techniques of
Christian missionaries also work for Buddhist
missionaries?

Finally, ask students to consider whether the
Buddhist message could be made comprehensible to
Christians in a converted Western Europe. How
might Buddha’s message be explained using
Christian concepts? Could you imagine a form of
Buddha gospels (rather than Jesus sutras) being
composed in the West? You might also consider how
the stance of Charlemagne, as compared to Emperor
Taizon, might impact the success or failure of
Buddhist missionaries.

Role-Playing: Converting Western Europe to
Christianity

Using the visual sources as guides, ask students to
take on the personae of various members of Anglo-
Saxon society: kings and queens, warriors,
commoners, pagan priests, and so on. Then ask other
members of the class to develop missionary
strategies to convert their classmates. What
techniques would they use? Which members of
society would they target first? Would they use the
approaches of Boniface or Gregory? Once they have
come up with their strategies, ask the “missionaries”
present them to the Anglo-Saxon students.

Encourage the Anglo-Saxon role-players to research
the society they come from in order to develop
questions for the missionaries. What reasons would
they find compelling when deciding whether to
convert? To prompt students, you might ask them to
to consider the potential dangers of converting for their
characters. You might also ask them to consider what
the traditional religion of the region already
accomplishes for them.

Classroom Activities
for the Documents and
Visual Sources Features

Comparison (large or small group): Religious
Art in the Buddhist and Christian Traditions

Expand on Using the Evidence question 4 to
compare the uses, stylistic conventions, and
iconography in religious art from the Buddhist and
Christian traditions. Ask students to compare and
contrast the Christian icons in these visual sources
with the depictions of Buddhist art found in the
Visual Source feature in Chapter 4. Some specific
questions to consider include:
• What different stylistic conventions can one
identify?
• What role does iconography play in both
traditions?
• What from the essays accompanying the
features can one discover about the uses of
these religious images?
• Which images do the students find most
engaging?
• Which to they find most difficult to engage
with?

Make sure students consider which questions
religious art can and cannot help historians to
answer.
Analysis: Religious Art in the Christian and Muslim Traditions

Both the Christian and Muslim faiths have produced traditions that embrace art and traditions that reject it. Explore the two traditions using the visual source in this chapter and in Chapter 9, supplemented with other Persian Mughal and Ottoman miniatures.

Ask students to compare the religious art of the two traditions and list the similarities and differences. Prompt them by asking questions such as, if or how is God represented? How are Jesus and Muhammad represented? What other subjects are depicted? You may want to point out to students that ultimately, the Christian faith proved more inclined to embrace religious art than the Islamic faith.

Conclude by asking students to consider what arguments exist in the Yahweh tradition against religious art. What do they think of these arguments? Do the critics have a valid concern? Because this activity is intended to act as a bridge between Chapters 9 and 10, be sure to emphasize the shared cultural tradition out of which both Christianity and Islam emerged.

WHAT’S THE SIGNIFICANCE?

Byzantine Empire: Term used by modern historians to refer to the surviving eastern Roman Empire during the medieval centuries; named after the ancient Greek city Byzantium, on the site of which the Roman emperor Constantine founded a new capital, Constantinople, in 330 C.E. (pron. BIZ-an-teen)

caesaropapism: A political-religious system in which the secular ruler is also head of the religious establishment, as in the Byzantine Empire. (pron. SEEZ-ar-oh-PAPE-ism).

Cecilia Penifader: An illiterate peasant woman (1297–1344) from the English village of Brigstock, whose life provides a window into the conditions of ordinary rural people even if her life was more independent and prosperous than most.

Charlemagne: Ruler of the Carolingian Empire (r. 768–814) who staged an imperial revival in Western Europe. (pron. SHAHR-leh-mane)

Constantinople: New capital for the eastern half of the Roman Empire, established by Emperor Constantine in 330 C.E. on the site of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium; Constantinople’s highly defensible and economically important site helped assure the city’s cultural and strategic importance for many centuries. (pron. con-stantih-NO-pul)

Crusades: Modern term meaning “ventures of the cross,” used to describe the “holy wars” waged by Western Christendom from 1095 until the end of the Middle Ages and beyond; Crusades could only be declared by the pope and were marked by participants swearing a vow and receiving an indulgence in return.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity: Branch of Christianity that developed in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and gradually separated, mostly on matters of practice, from the branch of Christianity dominant in Western Europe; noted for the subordination of the Church to political authorities, a married clergy, the use of leavened bread in the Eucharist, and insistence on church councils as the ultimate authority in Christian belief and practice.

Ethiopian Christianity: Emerging in the fourth century with the conversion of the rulers of Axum, this Christian church proved more resilient than other early churches in Africa. Located in the mountainous highlands of modern Eritrea and Ethiopia, it was largely cut off from other parts of Christendom and developed traditions that made it distinctive from other Christian Churches.

Holy Roman Empire: Term invented in the twelfth century to describe the Germany-based empire founded by Otto I in 962 C.E.

Icons: Holy images venerated in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Jesus Sutras: The product of Nestorian Christians living in China, these sutras articulate the Christian message using Buddhist and Daoist concepts.

Justinian: Byzantine emperor (r. 527–565 C.E.), noted for his short-lived reconquest of much of the former western Roman Empire and for his codification of Roman law.

Kievan Rus: State that emerged around the city of Kiev in the ninth century C.E.; a culturally diverse region that included Vikings as well as Finnic and Baltic peoples. The conversion of Vladimir, the grand prince of Kiev, to Orthodox Christianity in 988 had long-term implications for Russia. (pron. key-YEV-an ROOS)

Nubian Christianity: Emerging in the fifth and sixth centuries in the several kingdoms of Nubia to the south of Egypt, this Christian church thrived for six hundred years but had largely
disappeared by 1500 C.E. by which time most of the region’s population practiced Islam.

**Prince Vladimir of Kiev:** Grand prince of Kiev (r. 978–1015 C.E.) whose conversion to Orthodox Christianity led to the incorporation of Russia into the sphere of Eastern Orthodoxy. (pron. vlad-IH-mir)

**Roman Catholic Church:** Western European branch of Christianity that gradually defined itself as separate from Eastern Orthodoxy, with a major break in 1054 C.E.; “Roman Catholic” was not commonly used until after the Protestant Reformation, but the term is just because, by the eleventh century, Western Christendom defined itself in centralized terms, with the bishop of Rome (the pope) as the ultimate authority in matters of doctrine.

**Western Christendom:** Western European branch of Christianity that gradually defined itself as separate from Eastern Orthodoxy, with a major break in 1054 C.E. that has still not been healed.

**FURTHER READING**

- Halsall, Paul, ed. Internet Medieval Sourcebook. [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html). A vast array of primary sources available on the Internet. Many of them are short excerpts that are well suited to use in the classroom.
- The Labyrinth: Resources for Medieval Studies, [http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/](http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/). This site, sponsored by Georgetown University, is a comprehensive resource for material on medieval Europe available on the Internet.

**LITERATURE**

A vast array of medieval primary sources is available in English translation; the works listed here were selected as particularly suitable for classroom use.

- Burgess, Glyn S., trans. *The Song of Roland*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990. Written about the time of the First Crusade, this is widely regarded as the greatest of all medieval epics, telling of the defeat of Charlemagne’s rearguard at the Battle of Roncesvalles.
- Hamilton, Rita, and Janet Perry, trans. *The Poem of the Cid*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. A magnificent tale of border warfare in eleventh-century Spain; the hero of this tale is the historic commander Ruy Díaz, better known as “the Cid.”
- Magnusson, Magnus, and Hermann Pálsson, trans. *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965. Although not written until the thirteenth century, the two short sagas included in this volume provide valuable material about Leif
Eriksson’s attempt to establish a Scandinavian colony in America.


**FILM**

- *Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire: Christianity in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1999. 48 minutes. Compares Byzantium to Western Europe during this critical period in which Islam spread across the Near East and North Africa.
- *Byzantium from Splendor to Ruin*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1989. 43 minutes. Traces the rise and decline of Byzantium, from the founding of Constantinople to its conquest by the Ottoman Turks.
- *Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1989. 31 minutes. Examines the emergence of the Carolingian Empire in the eighth and ninth centuries.
- *The Crusades*. Discovery Channel, 2003. 50 minutes. Examines the Crusades with an eye toward addressing the myths that surround the phenomenon.
- *The End of Rome, the Birth of Europe*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2002. 52 minutes. Explores the conquest and settlement of Western Europe by Germanic peoples.
- *The Luttrell Psalter: Everyday Life in Medieval England*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1998. 22 minutes. Uses the evidence in the richly illuminated Luttrell Psalter to reconstruct everyday life on an early fourteenth-century English estate. The film also includes details about how and why the Luttrell Psalter was made.
- *The Middle Ages*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1996. 25 minutes. Provides a brief overview of the Middle Ages.

**ADDITIONAL BEDFORD/ST. MARTIN’S RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER 10**

**PowerPoint Maps, Images, Lecture Outlines, and i>clicker Content**

These presentation materials are downloadable from the Media and Supplements tab at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer/catalog, and they are available on an Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM. They include ready-made and fully customizable PowerPoint multimedia presentations built around lecture outlines that are embedded with maps, figures, and selected images from the textbook and are supplemented by more detailed instructor notes on key points. Also available are maps and selected images in JPEG and PowerPoint format; content for i>clicker, a classroom response system, in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint formats; the Instructor’s Resource Manual in Microsoft Word format; and outline maps in PDF format for quizzing or handouts. All files are suitable for copying onto transparency acetates.

**Documents and Essays from Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Fifth Edition**

The following documents, essays, and illustrations to accompany Chapter 10 are available in the following chapters of this reader by Kevin Reilly:

Chapter 9:

- Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *The Service of Ladies*
- Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*
- Procopius, *The Secret History*

Chapter 10:

- Fulcher of Chartres, *An Account of Pope Urban’s Speech at Clermont*
- *Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*
- Ibn al-Athir, *Causes of the Crusade*
- Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*
- Fulcher of Chartres, *The Siege of Antioch*
- Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle*
- Raymond of St. Giles, Count of Toulouse, *The Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders*
- Ibn al-Athir, *The Conquest of Jerusalem*
- *Letter from a Jewish Pilgrim in Egypt*
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The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the textbook as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. Each chapter contains specific testing exercises, including a multiple-choice self-test that focuses on important conceptual ideas; a flashcard activity that tests students on their knowledge of key terms; and two interactive map activities intended to strengthen students’ geographic skills. Instructors can monitor students’ progress through an online Quiz Gradebook or receive email updates.

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This test bank provides over fifty exercises per chapter, including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, and full-length essay questions. Instructors can customize quizzes, add or edit both questions and answers, and export questions and answers to a variety of formats, including WebCT and Blackboard. The disc includes correct answers and essay outlines.