

Chapter 8
Regional and
Transregional
Interactions:
c. 600 C.E. to
c. 1450

I. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter picks up where the last one left off—kind of. You'll notice that a few things discussed in this chapter actually occurred before 600 C.E. We included them because they fit in better with the topics covered here.

Remember: Read through this chapter once, then go back and focus on the things that you're not entirely clear about. Here's the chapter outline.

I. Chapter Overview

You're reading it.

II. Stay Focused on the Big Picture

Organize the many events that occurred during the 800 or 900 years covered in this chapter into some big-picture concepts.

III. Review of History Within Civilizations from 600 C.E.–1450

This is the largest section of the chapter. In it, we'll delve into developments in each region or major civilization. If you're totally clueless on any part of this section, consider also reviewing the corresponding topic in your textbook. After all, we're talking about 850 years of history, and this section is intended as a review, not as a primary source. Here's how we've organized the information.

- A. The Rise of Islam
- B. Developments in Europe and the Byzantine Empire
- C. Developments in Asia
- D. The Rise and Fall of the Mongols
- E. Developments in Africa
- F. Developments in the Americas

IV. Review of Interactions Among Cultures from 600 C.E.–1450

To do well on the AP World History Exam, you need to understand more than just the events that occurred within each region or civilization. You need to understand how they interacted with and affected each other. This gets very complicated, so we've given the topic its own section. Make sure you review the material in Section III first. Once you have a firm understanding of the developments within each region of the world, this section will make a lot more sense. Here's how we've organized it:

- A. Trade Networks and Cultural Diffusion
- B. Expansion of Religion and Empire: Culture Clash
- C. Other Reasons People Were on the Move

V. Technology and Innovations 600 C.E.–1450

Major advances in navigation, warfare, and ship building as trade expands and interaction increases.

VI. Changes and Continuities in the Role of Women

The wealthier a society is, the less public presence and freedom women have.

VII. Pulling It All Together

A review of the review.

VIII. Timeline of Major Developments 600 C.E.–1450

Major developments organized by time and place.

II. STAY FOCUSED ON THE BIG PICTURE

As you review the details of the civilizations in this chapter, stay focused on the big-picture concepts and ask yourself some questions, including the following:

1. Do cultural areas, as opposed to states or empires, better represent history? Cultural areas are those that share a common culture and don't necessarily respect geographical limitations. States, like city-states, nation-states (countries), and empires, have political boundaries, even if those boundaries aren't entirely agreed upon.
2. How does change occur within societies? As you review all the information in this chapter, you'll notice a lot of talk about trading, migrations, and invasions. Pay attention to why people move around so much in the first place and the impact of these moves. Furthermore, don't forget that sometimes change occurs within a society because of internal developments, not because of external influences. Pay attention to that too.
3. How similar were the economic and trading practices that developed across cultures? Pay attention to monetary systems, trade routes, and trade practices. How did they link up?
4. How does the environment impact human decision making? Pay attention to the way states respond to environmental changes. Do they move or send out raiding parties? Are they able to respond quickly and successfully to environmental changes?

III. REVIEW OF HISTORY WITHIN CIVILIZATIONS

600 C.E.—1450

This period is defined by what rises out of the collapse of the classical civilizations and by the interactions—both positive and negative—that develop between these new states. This period is one of tremendous growth in long-distance trade: the caravans of the various Silk Routes, the multi-ethnic Indian Ocean sailors, the trips across the Sahara to West Africa, and continued trade in the Mediterranean all occur from 600 to 1450 C.E. These 850 years were also defined by a long period of decentralization in Western Europe and expansion on the trading empires of the Middle East and China. Remember interaction!

A. The Rise of Islam

In the seventh century, a new faith took hold in the Middle East. This faith, called Islam, was monotheistic, like Judaism and Christianity. The followers of Islam, called **Muslims**, believe that Allah (God) transmitted his words to the faithful through **Muhammad**, whose followers began to record those words in what came to be called the **Qu'ran**, or “recitation” (also spelled *Koran*). Muslims believe that salvation is won through submission to the will of God, and that this can be accomplished by following the **Five Pillars of Islam**. These five pillars are

- confession of faith
- prayer five times per day
- charity to the needy
- fasting during the holy month of Ramadan
- pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during one's lifetime (if finances permit)

Islam is also guided by the concept of *jihad*, which means “to struggle.” This refers to both the struggle to be a better Muslim and the struggle against non-believers.

Islam shares a common history with Judaism and Christianity. It accepts Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as prophets (although it does not accept Jesus as the son of God), and holds that Muhammad was the last great prophet. Like Christians, Muslims believe that all people are equal before God and that everyone should be converted to the faith. Early on, Islam split into two groups: Shia and Sunni. The split occurred over a disagreement about who should succeed Muhammad as the leader of the faith.

Allah Be Praised: Islam Takes Hold

Growing up in the city of Mecca in the Arabian desert (present-day Saudi Arabia), Muhammad was exposed to many different beliefs, in part because Mecca lay on the trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. He was exposed to both Judaism and Christianity as a child, as well as the many polytheistic

faiths that had traditionally influenced the region. Once he began preaching the monotheistic religion of Islam, which, as stated above, shares a foundation with Judaism and Christianity, he came into conflict with the leaders of Mecca, who had both a religious and economic interest in maintaining the status quo. In other words, the leadership in Mecca wanted to maintain the polytheistic shrines that attracted pilgrims and brought wealth to the community. Persecuted and threatened with death, Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina in 622 c.e. in what is known as the *hijra* (which also marks year 1 on the Muslim calendar). Muhammad and his followers found support in Medina and, in 630, he returned to Mecca and destroyed the pagan shrines—except for the Ka’aba, which became a focal point of Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

From Mecca, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. The tenets of Islam came to be officially practiced in Arab culture, similar to the way the tenets of Christianity were practiced in the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Lands where Islam was practiced were known as “Dar al Islam,” or House of Islam. As Islam spread rapidly through the Middle East and Africa and toward Europe, Christian leaders became increasingly alarmed. More on that later.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

When Muhammad died unexpectedly in 632, **Abu Bakr**, one of his first followers in Mecca, became *caliph*, the head of state, military commander, chief judge, and religious leader. You can think of the caliph as a sort of emperor and religious leader wrapped up in one person. He ruled an empire, but he also made pronouncements on religious doctrine. In other words, the Islamic empire was what’s known as a *theocracy*, a government ruled by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as being divinely guided. Because it was ruled by a caliph, the theocratic Islamic Empire was referred to as a *caliphate*. Islam would eventually branch out beyond the boundaries of the Islamic Empire and therefore exist independently as a religion, but in these early years, the growth of Islam was inextricably linked to the growth of this empire.

As time went on, the caliphs began to behave more like hereditary rulers, like those in a monarchy, except that there was no clear line of succession. The lack of clear succession caused a great deal of trouble down the road. The first four caliphs were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. The last of the four, Ali, was assassinated and was succeeded by his son, Hasan. But under pressure from a prominent family in Mecca, Hasan relinquished his title, making way for the establishment of the **Umayyad Dynasty**. This dynasty would enlarge the Islamic Empire dramatically, but it would also intensify conflict with the Byzantine and Persian Empires for almost a century.

During the Umayyad Dynasty, the capital was moved to Damascus, in modern-day Syria, although Mecca remained the spiritual center of the Islamic world. Also during the Umayyad reign, Arabic became the official language of the government; gold and silver coins became the standard monetary unit; and conquered subjects were “encouraged” to convert to Islam in order to establish a common faith throughout the empire. Those who chose not to convert were forced to pay a tax.

As noted above, the Islamic Empire grew enormously under the Umayyads, expanding as far as northern Africa and Spain, where they ruled the southern Iberian peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal) from the city of Córdoba. Numerous times during the early eighth century, the Umayyads attacked the Byzantine capital of Constantinople but failed to capture the city. That didn't stop them from going elsewhere, and in 732 c.e., the Islamic Empire began to make a move on Europe by way of the Iberian Peninsula. At the time, Muslims held most of the Iberian peninsula and southern parts of Italy, while Christians dominated all the regions to the north. **Charles Martel** (686–741 c.e.), a Frankish leader, stopped the Muslim advance in its tracks as Muslim armies tried to advance toward Paris, so the Islamic Empire never flourished in Europe beyond parts of Spain and southern Italy. (More on the Franks and their activities a little later in the chapter.)

Despite the success of the Umayyad Dynasty (the **Dome of the Rock** was built on Temple Mount in Jerusalem during this time, and Córdoba was one of the richest and most sophisticated cities in Europe), problems with succession started to emerge. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, after the death of Muhammad the Muslims split into two camps, Shiite and Sunni. **Shiite (Shia) Islam** holds that Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the rightful heir to the empire based on Muhammad's comments to Ali. **Sunnis**, in contrast, though they hold Ali in high esteem, do not believe that he and his hereditary line are the chosen successors; rather, they contend that the leaders of the empire should be drawn from a broad base of the people. This split in Islam remains to this day.

As the Shia began to assert themselves more dramatically, the Umayyad Dynasty went into decline and ultimately demised. In a battle for control of the empire against the forces of Abu al-Abbas (a descendant of Muhammad's uncle who was supported by the descendents of Ali, the Shia, and the Mawali—non-Arab Muslims), the Umayyad Empire was defeated (punctuated by the slaughter of some members of the family). It was replaced by the Abbasid Dynasty around 750 in all areas except Spain.

The Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember

The Abbasid Dynasty reigned from 750 to 1258, that is, until the Islamic Empire was defeated by the Mongols (more on them later). Throughout this time, like all major empires, the Abbasids had many ups and downs, but they oversaw a golden age beginning in the early- to mid-ninth century, during which the arts and sciences flourished. The Abbasids built a magnificent capital at **Baghdad** (modern-day Iraq), which became one of the great cultural centers of the world.

Like most of the other ancient civilizations we've discussed so far, the Islamic Empire was built around trade. The merchants introduced the unique idea of credit to the empire's trade mechanisms to free them of the burden—and the danger—of carrying coins. Necessarily, they also developed a system of itemized receipts and bills, innovations that were later used in Europe and elsewhere.

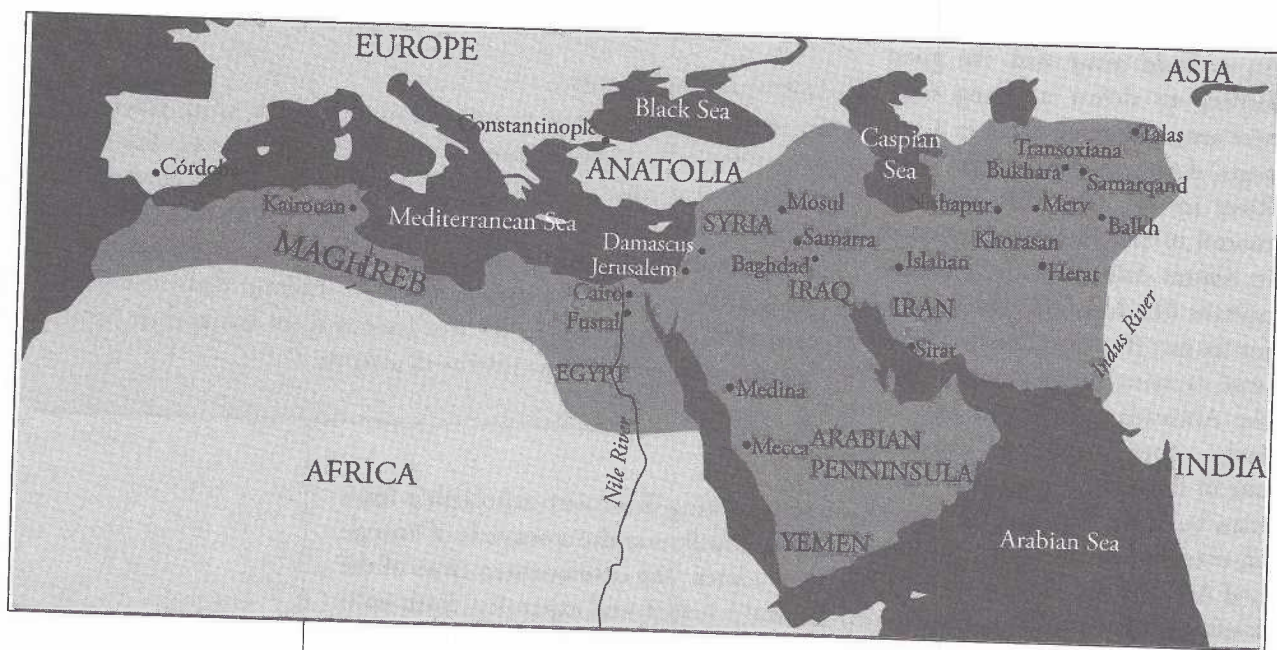
An Abbasid army had the good fortune to defeat a T'ang Chinese army (more on them in a few pages) during the Battle of the Talus River in 751 c.e. This fight for control of Silk Road trading posts in central Asia is relatively unimportant (the Muslims won) except for the fact that the Chinese POWs were carrying paper money. Once the Abbasids figured out how to make paper, they could continue one of their most important activities, building libraries and universities and stocking them with scholarship from all over the known world. The location of the Muslims at the crossroads of Europe and Asia allowed them to monopolize trade routes. The cosmopolitan cities of the Islamic caliphs thrived on trade, international scholars, and expansion, both military and cultural.

Despite the hostility between the European and Islamic worlds, the Islamic Empire is credited with playing a significant role in preserving Western culture. (Recall that the Byzantines did this too.) In contrast to European civilizations during the Middle Ages, which were often decentralized and reluctant to embrace the teachings of "pagan" authors from antiquity, the Arabs kept the Western heritage of the region alive. For example, when the Muslims encountered the classic writings of ancient Athens and Rome, including those of Plato and Aristotle, they translated them into Arabic. Later, when Muslims and Christians battled for control of the Levant (present-day Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and points north and south) during the European Crusades, Europe found its own history among the other treasures preserved in Arabic libraries and museums. This again demonstrates how the interaction between two peoples (even when violent) can lead to trade and cultural exchange.

The Muslims, like the Romans, were often tolerant of the local customs of the areas they conquered—although Christians and Jews were often persecuted in the Levant. That's not to say that the Islamic Empire didn't make every effort to convert the people it conquered (remember the tax we mentioned)? The point is that though it was a theocracy, the Islamic Empire's more flexible approach contributed to its rapid growth. The Sufis, Islamic mystics, were effective missionaries. They stressed a personal relationship with Allah, in contrast to other religions that emphasized a particular form of ritual. As you might guess, this made Islam highly adaptable to many different circumstances. By allowing, and even encouraging, followers to practice their own ways to revere Allah, and by tolerating others who placed Allah in the framework of other beliefs, the Sufis succeeded in converting large numbers of people to Islam.

Islamic Advancements

In addition to the importance of trade, manufacturing played an important role in the expansion of the Islamic Empire. Steel, for example, was produced for use in swords. Islamic advancements were also seen in the medical and mathematics fields. **Muhammad al-Razi**, for example, published a massive medical encyclopedia that was unlike anything compiled before it. Islamic mathematicians expanded the knowledge they had learned from India; their contributions are especially noteworthy in algebra.



Map of the Abbasid Caliphate, ca. 850 C.E.

Women and Islam: For Better, for Worse

In Arabia, women traditionally did not have property rights or inheritance rights; rather, women were essentially viewed as property themselves—of men. If a man divorced a woman, for example, he would keep her dowry (the money and property from her father that she brought with her into the marriage). This widespread—really, institutionalized—low status for women eventually led to a culture in which baby girls were seen as less valuable than baby boys. Tragically this often translated into female infanticide, the killing of an unwanted baby girl. (This gender bias was, by the way, common in many patriarchal societies.)

The Quʿran, the sacred book of Islam, established between 651 and 652, changed much of this. Although women remained subservient to men and under their direction and control, they began to be treated with more dignity, had some legal rights, and were considered equal before Allah. If a man divorced his wife, he would have to return her dowry to her. More important, infanticide was strictly forbidden. Women gained considerable influence within the home—and in early Islamic society, women sometimes had influence outside it. Khadija, Muhammad’s first wife, had been a successful businesswoman, for example.

Islamic society was still a man’s world, however. Men were permitted to have as many as four wives as long as they were able to support them and treated them equally. Women, on the other hand, had to be faithful to one man—in part because in this society land was passed through the males, and the identity of a boy’s father couldn’t be disputed. Legally, women were treated unequally; a woman’s testimony in court, for example, was given only half the weight of a man’s. Restrictions for women even included what they wore: Women sometimes had to be veiled in public—although this custom began in Mesopotamia and Persia, Islamic society adopted and adapted it.

Over time, Islamic society became more structured and more patriarchal. A woman's primary duty was singular: to be loyal to and care for her husband and family. Within that structure, however, women were highly protected, and in some ways more respected, under the Qu'ran than they previously had been.

Decline of the Islamic Caliphates: Internal Rivalries and Mongol Invasions

The Islamic Empire regularly endured internal struggles and civil war, often arising from differences between the Sunni and Shia sects, and from ethnic differences between diverse groups in the rapidly expanding Muslim world. Numerous rival factions and powers developed, and although none of these threatened Islam, they did destabilize the central authority at Baghdad and cut tax revenues. The final blows came when Turkish warrior slaves revolted and established a new capital at Samarra in central Iraq, while other groups carved out pieces of the empire. There was a new Shia dynasty in northern Iran and constant threats from the Seljuk Turks, a nomadic Sunni group. Like the Romans before them, weakened by internal problems, the Abbasids also had external foes: the Persians, Europeans, and Byzantines.

However, it would be the Islamic Empire's most distant enemy, the Mongols, who would defeat it. During the crusades, in 1258, the Mongols overran the Islamic Empire and destroyed Baghdad, thereby signaling the end of the Abbasid Dynasty. Its people would flee to Egypt, where they remained intact but powerless. Eventually, the Ottoman Turks would reunite Egypt, Syria, and Arabia in a new Islamic state, which would last until 1918.

B. Developments in Europe and the Byzantine Empire

Developments in Europe and points east became quite complicated during the Middle Ages, which is the period after the fall of Rome and before the Renaissance. As you might recall from the last chapter, the Roman Empire, and eventually Christianity, was divided into two factions that split, reconnected, then split again. Ultimately, the eastern Roman Empire, centered in Constantinople, became the highly centralized government known as the Byzantine Empire; in the west, on the other hand, the empire collapsed entirely, although the Christian religion retained a strong foothold. The important point to remember about all of this is that even though both segments of the empire followed Christianity, they practiced different forms of the religion; moreover, their populations competed for supremacy.

Note the Change: As the Empire Turns

They meet. They flirt for a long time, and then marry and settle in Rome. Things get tough, so they take a short break from each other, but get back together in Constantinople where they build a new house. After a time they separate from each other geographically, but remain married by religion. Eventually, they get a divorce and follow their own religious paths. Will they ever be able to rekindle the romance?

The history of the Roman Empire reads a lot like a bad soap opera. Recall that the Roman Empire united the entire Mediterranean for centuries. However, it became too unwieldy to govern as a whole, so in 286 C.E., the empire was split into an eastern half and a western half, in what were hoped to be more manageable administrative regions. Then, in 313, Constantine converted to Christianity and made the religion legal in the empire. By the end of his reign, in the year 330, Constantine reunited the empire in Constantinople. It was still the Roman Empire, but it wasn't centered in Rome. The empire split again in 395, while the western half of the empire was sliced and diced by incoming barbarian tribes and disintegrated as a political unit in 476, at which time the eastern half became known as the Byzantine Empire. Almost 400 years later, in 800, the Pope attempted to revive the Western Empire by crowning Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans." His empire continued to consider itself Roman throughout the Middle Ages. The Byzantines continued on as before in the east. So again there were two empires, but still one religion. That, however, was to change as well some two hundred years later when, in 1054, Christianity split, for both theological and political reasons, into two subgroups: Roman Catholicism and Christian Orthodoxy.

As you review the events in this region, the important points to remember are

- the Byzantine Empire was a lot more centralized and organized than the Western empire
- both practiced Christianity, though not in the same way

The Byzantine Empire: The Brief Details

The **Byzantine Empire** was distinct from the Roman Empire. It used the Greek language; its architecture had distinctive domes; its culture in general had more in common with Eastern cultures like those of Persia; and its brand of Christianity became a separate branch known as **Orthodox Christianity**.

Compared with what was going on at the height of the Roman Empire, much of Europe at the time was fragmented into small feudal kingdoms with limited power and fewer cultural and intellectual advancements. The Byzantine Empire, like the Islamic Empire to the south, was significantly different. The Byzantine emperors ruled by absolute authority, especially over the economy, whose industries, such as silk production (a trade learned from China), they monopolized. The Byzantines also used coined money, the value of which remained remarkably stable, making it a very desirable currency for business.

Under **Justinian**, who reigned from 527 to 565, the former glory and unity of the Roman Empire was somewhat restored in Constantinople. The region flourished in trade and the arts. Christian Constantinople and Islamic Baghdad rivaled each

other for cultural supremacy. The Justinianic period is perhaps most remembered for three things: (1) the **Justinianic Code**, a codification of Roman law that kept ancient Roman legal principles alive (in the West these went unused for a time), and (2) the flourishing of the arts and sciences, evident in the construction of major buildings and churches, most notably **Hagia Sophia**, an enormous cathedral that still stands today (but now as a museum and former mosque). Finally, and most importantly, Justinian is known for his ambitious plan to reconquer the lost provinces of the western half of the Roman Empire. His plans went smoothly when his armies reconquered Africa from the Vandals, but intense siege warfare against the Ostrogoths in Italy that lasted 20 years halted Justinian's plans for further conquests. By the end of his reign, his empire was indeed larger, but at the cost of destroying what remained of Roman infrastructure in Italy, as well as bankrupting his coffers and exhausting the sources of his soldiers.

In contrast to the Roman Catholic emperors of the West, who regarded the Pope as the leader of the See of Rome, the Byzantine emperors nominated their own Patriarchs of the See of Constantinople. For centuries the two churches managed to tolerate each other while they butted heads for primacy over the whole of the Christian flock, but in time the differences, both political and religious, became too great. They disagreed over the sacrament of communion, whether priests should be allowed to marry, and the use of local languages in church. They were even at odds regarding the nature of God, specifically God as a trinity, and they disagreed over the placement of icons during worship. In 1054 C.E., unable to reconcile their differences, the Pope excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople, who did the same to the Pope. From that point forward, the Church of Constantinople (otherwise known as Eastern Orthodoxy) influenced the East and Roman Catholicism influenced the West. Keep this schism in mind as you review the Crusades, Christian Europe's war with the Islamic world; the Byzantine Empire is right in the middle!

Byzantine Artistry

The Byzantines are also remembered and admired for their mastery of the mosaic art form they used to decorate churches.

Contrast Them: Religion and State in Roman Catholicism and Christian Orthodoxy

Remember that we said the secular empire was more centralized in the East (Byzantine Empire) than in the West (Roman Empire) during the Middle Ages? Interestingly, the reverse was true in terms of their religions. Christianity as practiced by Catholics was very centralized, with power stemming from Rome and services held in the Roman (Latin) form. In the East, Orthodox Christianity was more localized. Russian churches, for example, conducted services in their own language. In this sense local customs merged with Christian practices in the Orthodox Church.

A great deal of the evolution of these religious factions in these two empires centered on control. For stability, either the heads of the church or the heads of the state needed to be in control. During the Middle Ages, the West centralized power in the church, thereby decentralizing political power. Essentially this meant that the existing political leadership was blessed by the church, hence often under the control of the church as well, at least in the early centuries of the Middle Ages. In the East, the situation was the exact opposite: Political emperors were in control of both politics and the church, and while church practices were localized, political authority was not. The point to remember here is that in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, the East was more of a secular empire with an official church religion; the West was more of a religious empire with subservient political units.

Impact of Orthodoxy on Russia: Feast in the East

In the ninth century, the Slavic peoples of southeastern Europe and Russia were converted to Christianity by **St. Cyril**, an Orthodox Christian who used the Greek alphabet to create a Slavic alphabet known as the Cyrillic alphabet, which to this day is used in Russia and other parts of the region. Most of these areas were not part of the Byzantine Empire itself, but were influenced by it. When **Vladimir**, a Russian prince from Kiev, abandoned the traditional pagan religion and converted to Christianity, he also considered Islam, Judaism, and Roman Catholicism. Rumor has it that he chose Christian Orthodoxy because it had no restrictions about when or what he could and could not eat.

The dominance of Christian Orthodoxy in this region is significant because while western Europe followed one cultural path, eastern Europe followed another, and this had a tremendous impact on the development of Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church was aligned with Byzantine but not Roman traditions. So, when the Roman church reformed later (discussed in Chapter 7), the Russian and Greek churches did not. As a result of this and the Mongol invasion (coming up soon), Russia became culturally different from the other great powers of Europe, which grew out of the Catholic tradition.

Meanwhile Out West: The Franks versus the Muslims

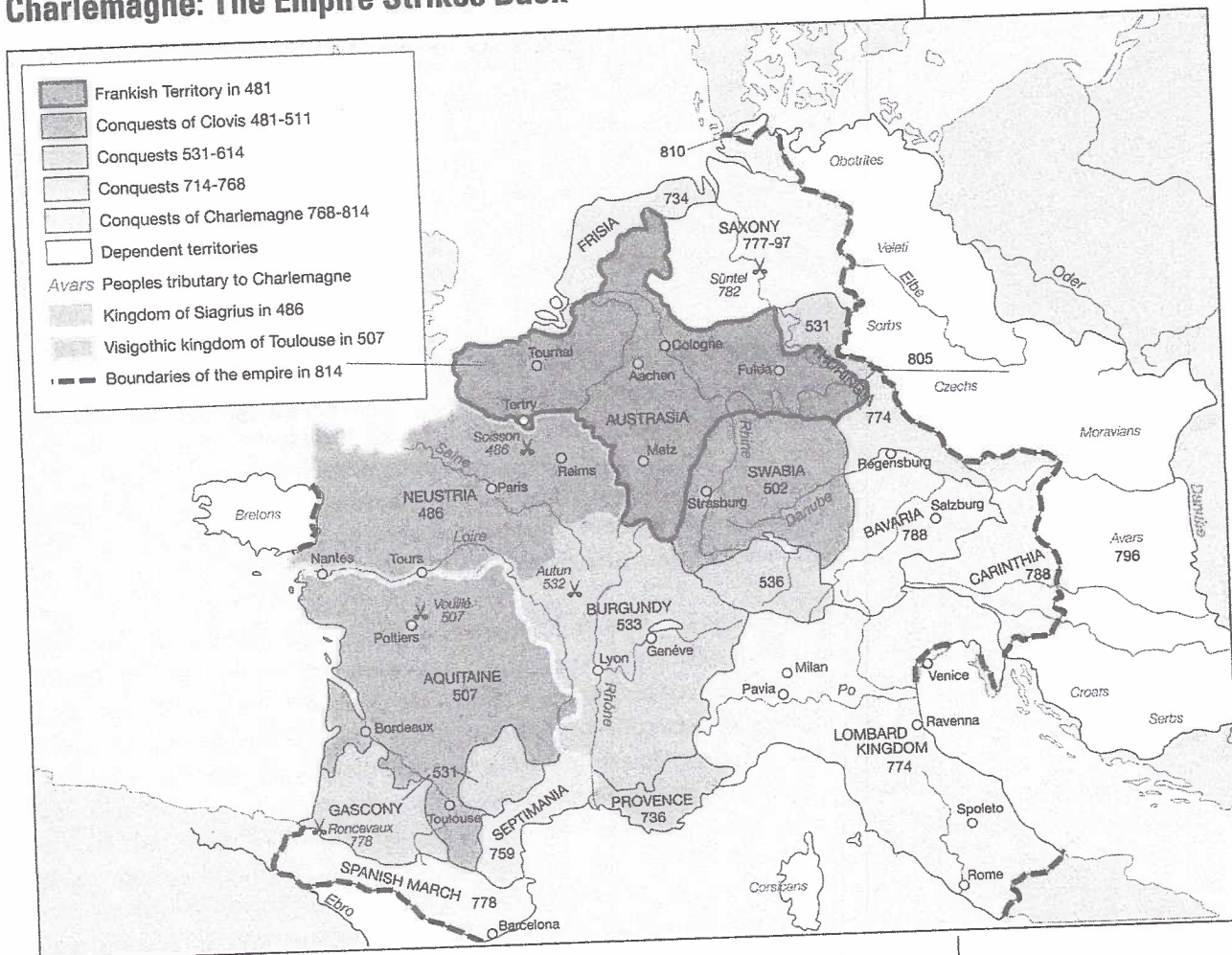
The best place to begin a discussion of political developments in western Europe in the Middle Ages is with the Franks. After the classical Roman Empire fell apart, due in part to invasions from Germanic tribes, these tribes settled throughout western Europe. Most of the tribes converted to Christianity relatively quickly, though politically they continued to run their own shows. That meant they came into regular conflict with each other, and they formed alliances and expanded, sometimes enough to be considered kingdoms. The most significant of these early kingdoms was the Franks.

The **Franks** were a Germanic tribe that united under the leadership of **King Clovis** in the late fifth century. He built a rather large empire that stretched from present-day Germany through Belgium and into France. He converted to Christianity and established his capital in Paris. After he died, his empire was divided among his sons, after which it declined in influence.

Nevertheless, the empire did help the various peoples of western Europe solidify under a common culture, which made it easier for them to unify against Muslim invasions, which in the eighth century took over parts of Spain and Italy. **Charles Martel** (remember we mentioned him at the beginning of the chapter?) led the revolt against the advancing Muslim armies and in 732 defeated them at the **Battle of Tours**, not far from Paris. Again, interaction through conflict.

Martel then used his position as a political and military leader under the declining Frankish Merovingian Dynasty to put his sons forth as successors, thus founding the Carolingian Dynasty ("Carolus" is Latin for Charles). Martel had worked during his tenure to reunite the region under his control, and when his son **Pepin the Short** (there were several Pepins in Frankish history) ascended to the throne in 752 c.e., Charles chose to have his succession certified by the pope, a significant step that sent the clear signal that an empire's legitimacy rested on the Rome's approval.

Charlemagne: The Empire Strikes Back



Central Europe around the Thirteenth Century

In the centuries following the breakup of the Roman Empire, no true empire existed in western Europe. The Franks had built a large kingdom, but it could hardly be considered an empire by historical standards. It would be Pepin's son, Charles (747–814 c.e.), who would revitalize the concept of the empire in western Europe. Like his father, Charles was crowned by the pope in 800 and became known as **Charlemagne** ("Charles the Great").

The empire Charlemagne built would come to be called the **Holy Roman Empire** upon the coronation of Otto the Great in 962. It's important to point out that this empire had little in common with the original Roman Empire, other than the fact that power was once again centralized and Rome began to think of itself as a world center again. The size of the Holy Roman Empire, in comparison to its namesake, was relatively small. It included northern Italy, Germany, Belgium, and France. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of western European ambition in terms of empire-building, especially among those in the church.

Under Charlemagne, a strong focus was placed on the arts and education, but not surprisingly with a much more religious bent—much of this effort centered in the monasteries under the direction of the church. Although Charlemagne was very powerful, his rule was not absolute. Society was structured around feudalism (more on feudalism shortly). Charlemagne had overall control of the empire, but the local lords held power over the local territories, answering to Charlemagne only on an as-needed basis. Because Charlemagne did not levy taxes, he failed to build a strong and united empire. After his death and the death of his son Louis, the empire was divided among Charlemagne's three grandsons according to the **Treaty of Verdun** in 843.

The Vikings: Raiders from the North

During this time, western Europe continued to be attacked by powerful invaders, notably the Vikings from Scandinavia and the **Magyars** from Hungary. Although the **Vikings** were not the only raiders, they were perhaps the most successful. Beginning around 800, they used their highly maneuverable, multi-oared boats to raid well beyond their borders—on the open seas, up and down the North Atlantic coast, and along the inland rivers.

The Vikings got a bad reputation for raiding the Catholic monasteries, but don't blame the Vikings. Raiding was a normal consequence of the pressures on a growing society and the need for resources. The monasteries held much wealth and food, so they were natural targets. Raiding was just one aspect of Norse economy. The Vikings were also merchants and fishermen and developed some of the earliest commercial fisheries in northern Europe. These activities, along with the raids, led to settlements as diverse as Newfoundland, Canada around 1000 C.E., inland Russia, and northern France. The Vikings even got as far south as Constantinople, raiding it at least three times. In France, the Vikings were known as Normans (or north-men), the most famous of whom is William, who conquered Anglo-Saxon England in 1066.

Remarkably, however, in spite of their various victories, the Vikings, too, were converted to Christianity. This continued in a pattern of invading tribes assimilating to a common civilization in western Europe because of religion, not political power. Catholicism became institutionalized at every level of life. By the middle of the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had become the most powerful institution in western Europe and one of the most powerful institutions in the world.

The Normans

Vikings, in the form of the Normans, had an enormous influence on England, particularly on the English language.

European Feudalism: Land Divided

Feudalism, the name of the European social, economic, and political system of the Middle Ages, had a strict hierarchy. At the top was a king, who had power over an entire territory called his kingdom. Beneath him were the **nobles**, who in exchange for military service and loyalty to the king were granted power over sections of the kingdom. The nobles, in turn, divided their lands into smaller sections under the control of lesser lords called **vassals**. The vassals could also split their lands into smaller pieces and give custody of them to subordinate vassals, who could divide their lands into even smaller pieces in the custody of even more subordinate vassals, and so on. Below the vassals were **peasants**, who worked the land. For this system to work, everyone had to fulfill obligations to others at different levels in the hierarchy: to serve in the military, produce food, or serve those who were at a higher level. If, say, you were a lesser-lord, you were obliged to your lord, and you were obliged to your vassals as well.

The estates that were granted to the vassals were called **fiefs**, and these later became known as **manors**. The lord and the peasants lived on the manor. The peasants worked the land on behalf of the lord, and in exchange the lord gave the peasants protection and a place to live. Many of the manors were remarkably self-sufficient. Everything that was needed to live was produced on them. Food was harvested, clothing and shoes were made, and so on. Advances made in the science of agriculture during this time helped the manors to succeed. One such advance, called the **three-field system**, centered on the rotation of three fields: one for the fall harvest, one for the spring harvest, and one not-seeded fallow harvest (the latter allowing the land to replenish its nutrients). In this way, manors were able to accumulate food surpluses and build on the success. Lords directed what was called the “Great Clearing,” the clearing of huge areas of forest for the creation of more farmland.

Compare Them: Ancient Civilizations and Those of the Middle Ages

You have no doubt noticed that European civilizations during the Middle Ages evolved in much the same way as the Mediterranean, Indus, and Shang civilizations a couple of thousand years earlier, and for the same reason: Agricultural surpluses enabled the early civilizations to build cities, which then made it possible to form complicated institutions and promote the arts and sciences.

In western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, the practice of feudalism caused life to be centered on small, self-sustaining communities that didn't initially generate much of a surplus. But as they subsequently built up storehouses of food and supplies, and as people came into greater contact with each other, they were freed to pursue other endeavors (at the discretion of their overseer, of course). As a result, we begin to see the emergence of craftspeople, individuals skilled in highly specialized ways. Towns and cities, too, began to grow, and, eventually the Middle Ages came to an end.

The lord, as noted, owed his allegiance to the king but only had direct contact with him when the king called upon the lord to provide a service. Otherwise, the lord was in charge of his own manor—his own life. And though the various fiefs were, in theory, self-sustaining, and the lords all beholden to the same ruler, conflicts erupted between feudal lords on a regular basis (this is where the term feud comes from). The etiquette of these disputes and rules of engagement was highly refined and flowed from the **code of chivalry**, an honor system that strongly condemned betrayal and promoted mutual respect. Most of the lords (and knights, who were also considered part of the nobility) followed the code of chivalry.

The feudal system, like most of the civilizations we've discussed so far, was male-dominated. Land equaled power, and only males could inherit land, so women were pretty much powerless. Specifically, when a lord died under the feudal system his land and title passed down via **primogeniture**, to his eldest son. Even noblewomen had few rights, though they were socially elevated (and have come to be romanticized in literature). Women could inherit a fief, but they could not rule it. Furthermore, women's education was limited to domestic skills. As usual in most early societies, noblewomen were admired and valued primarily for their "feminine" traits—their beauty or compassion—but were regarded essentially as property to be protected or displayed.

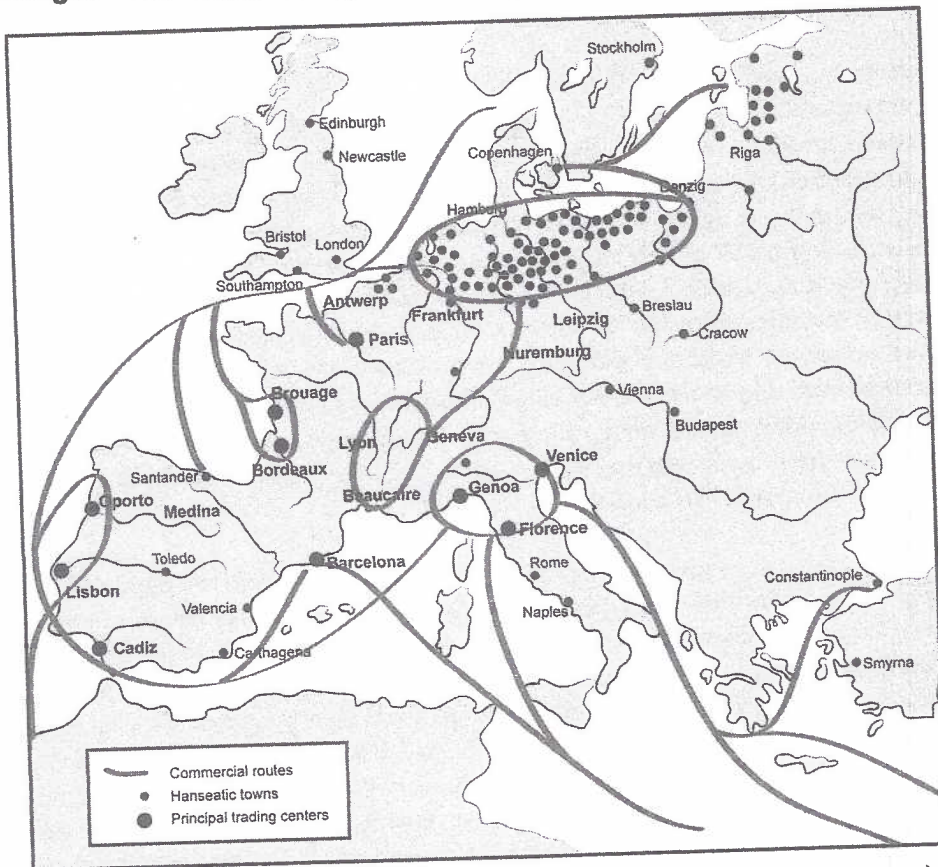
Peasants (called **serfs**) in the feudal social system, whether male or female, had few rights. As manorial life evolved, an increasing number of peasants became tied to the land quite literally: They couldn't leave the manor without permission from their lord. Peasants were not quite slaves, but not free either. Ironically, however, it was this "imprisonment" on the land that led to the serfs becoming highly skilled workers. In short, they learned how to do whatever it took to make the manor on which they worked self-sufficient.

Contrast Them: Feudal Europe and the Islamic Empire

Remember the Abbasid Dynasty? It flowered in the Islamic world at the same time that feudalism was taking root in western Europe. Islamic merchants were trading with the world while European lords were governing their manors. Baghdad became a center of learning and art in the Islamic Empire, whereas small, secluded monasteries became centers of learning in the early Holy Roman Empire. In summary, it can be said that in the early Middle Ages, educated Europeans became very provincial, while educated Arabs became more worldly.

As many of the serfs became skilled in trades other than farming, and Europe slowly but surely started trading with the rest of the world, some of these skilled craftspeople began to earn extra income. Over time, this elevation in the status of craftspeople chipped away at the rigid social stratification of the manor system. When banking began in Europe, towns and cities started to gain momentum. The result was the emergence of a "middle class" made up of urban craftsmen and merchants. The success of this new middle class lured more people into towns in the hopes of making more money or learning new skills. By the eleventh century, western Europe was re-engaging with the world.

Height of the Middle Ages: Trading and Crusading



Trade Routes of the Hanseatic League (Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries)

Given the new importance of trade, towns with wealthy merchants arose near the once all-powerful manors. Towns were chartered on lands controlled by feudal lords (the charters gave the townspeople certain rights), and within the towns, the middle-class merchants, or *burghers*, became politically powerful. Like their manorial predecessors, the towns had a great deal of independence within the empire but were intrinsically more interdependent than the self-sufficient manors of the feudal system. Eventually, towns formed alliances, not unlike a city-state structure. One of the most significant alliances, the **Hanseatic League**, had an economic basis; established in 1358, it controlled trade throughout much of northern Europe. One effect of the interdependence of the towns was to initiate a drive toward nationhood; another was to increase social mobility and flexibility among the classes.

Among the greatest artistic achievements of the Middle Ages was its architecture, specifically its cathedrals. In the early Middle Ages, churches were built in the bulky Romanesque style; later architectural advancements led to what came to be called the Gothic style. Gothic cathedrals were designed to draw worshippers closer to God. To achieve this, architects of the day used "flying buttresses," which gave support for tall windows and vaulted ceilings. Over time, the cathedral became more than a place of worship; it became an art form and

an arena for art. The church sponsored artists to adorn the inside of cathedrals with paintings and sculpture. Music, too, such as Gregorian chants, became an intrinsic part of ceremonies.

European contact with the Muslim world during the **Crusades** (military campaigns undertaken by European Christians of the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries to take over the Holy Land and convert Muslims and other non-Christians to Christianity) and over the trade routes helped spur new thought and broadened the perspective of these previously insular people (more on the Crusades in Section IV of this chapter). In time, people began to question organized religion (citing “reason”), which of course the church found threatening. This process of reasoning gave rise to **heresies**, religious practices or beliefs that do not conform to the traditional church doctrine. Sometimes what became defined as heresies were simply older beliefs that did not adapt to more mainstream changes in religious thought. In what may seem an irony today, many heretics wanted a return to the simpler ways of early Christianity; they rejected how worldly and wealthy the church had become.

Doubts about the supremacy of religious dogma continued to emerge until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when **Pope Innocent III** issued strict decrees on church doctrine. Under Innocent III, perceived heretics and Jews were frequently persecuted, and a fourth, ultimately unsuccessful crusade was attempted. During this crusade, which seemed motivated by greed, the Crusaders conquered—and sacked—the already Christian Constantinople, and declared a

Latin Empire. (This empire was short-lived, lasting only some fifty years, and ended when the Byzantines overthrew the Latins in 1261). A few years later, Pope Gregory IX set into motion the now-notorious **Inquisition**, a formalized interrogation and persecution process of perceived heretics. Punishment for so-called nonbelievers ranged from excommunication and exile to torture and execution. Due to the pervasiveness of the church and its ultimate power at this time, it is sometimes referred to as the **Universal Church** or the **Church Militant**.

The Birth of Scholasticism

Another important effect of people thinking more openly was the founding of universities, where men (not women) could study philosophy, law, and medicine, and learn from the advances made in Muslim cultures. In science, the ideas of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and other Greeks were brought to Europe through contacts with Islamic and Byzantine Empires (again, via trading and crusading). This progression, called **scholasticism**, also sometimes came into conflict with the church because it relied on reason rather than faith as its basis.

Late in the thirteenth century, **Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274 c.e.), a famous Christian theologian, made significant inroads in altering Christian thought. He wrote the *Summa Theologica*, which outlined his view that faith and reason are not in conflict, but that both are gifts from God and each can be used to enhance the other. His writings had a major impact on Christian thought, although the church remained a strict guardian of its own interpretations.

Focus On: The Bubonic Plague

Referred to as the Black Death, this epidemic originated in China, where it killed an estimated 35 million people. It spread rapidly through Europe in the mid-fourteenth century. Its transmission was facilitated by new forms of commerce and trade, including Mongol control of the central Asian Silk Routes, that increased the interaction between Europe and Asia. First occurring in the 1330s, the epidemic spread westward with traders and merchants and arrived in Italian port cities as early as 1347. Crowded conditions in Europe's cities and the lack of adequate sanitation and medical knowledge all contributed to its rapid spread. Within only two years, more than a third of Europe's population was dead, and traditional social structures nearly collapsed. The dramatic changes brought by the epidemic sped up social and economic movements that were already impacting Europe. These included a shift toward a commercial economy, more individual freedoms, and development of new industries.

The Emergence of Nation-States: Power Solidifies

Keep in mind that during the Middle Ages, western Europe wasn't organized into countries (nation-states); rather, it was broken up into feudal kingdoms. However, by the close of the Middle Ages, western Europe began to organize along cultural and linguistic lines. People who spoke French aligned themselves with France. Those who spoke English united under the banner of England. We'll be talking a lot more about this in the next chapter, but for now just keep this general concept in mind.

The various parts of Europe took different paths to achieve statehood during the thirteenth century. In Germany, for example, the reigning family died out without a suitable successor to the emperorship, so the region entered a period known as an *interregnum* (a time between kings). Germany and Italy became decentralized in a group of strong, independent townships and kingdoms, similar to city-states. In this environment, merchants and tradespeople became more powerful. In northern Germany, for example, the Hanseatic League (the influential association of merchants mentioned earlier) led the region's progress in international trade and commerce.

England, by contrast, unified much more quickly. Since the time of **William the Conqueror**, England had followed a tradition of a strong monarchy. However, during the rule of King John, powerful English nobles rebelled and forced him to sign the *Magna Carta* (1215 c.e.). This document reinstated the feudal rights of the nobles, but also extended the rule of law to other people in the country, namely the growing burgher class, laying the foundation for the Parliament. Initially, an assembly was established made up of nobles who were responsible for representing the views of different parts of England on law-making and taxation issues. After a trial period, the Parliament was established. Later, it was divided into two branches: the House of Lords (nobles and clergy) and the House of Commons (knights and wealthy burghers). The House of Lords presided over legal issues and advised the king; the House of Commons was concerned with issues of trade and taxation. The result was that England established its identity pretty early on.

Bourbon Beginnings

After the Hundred Years' War, royal power in France became more centralized.

Under a series of monarchs known as **Bourbons**, France was unified and became a major power on the European continent.

The formation of France was bound up with England. In 987, **King Hugh Capet** ruled only a small area around Paris; for the next couple of hundred years, subsequent French kings expanded the territory. Beginning in the twelfth century, England began to claim large parts of present-day France. The English occupation of the French-speaking territories led to revolts and, eventually, to French statehood. (The goal was to unite France under its own leadership.) This effort was spearheaded by an unlikely candidate.

As a teenager, farm girl **Joan of Arc** claimed to have heard voices that told her to liberate France from the hands of the English, who had by the early fifteenth century claimed the entire French territory. Remarkably, this uneducated youngster somehow managed to convince French authorities that she had been divinely inspired to lead men into battle, and they supplied her with military backing. With her army, she forced the British to retreat from Orleans, but was later captured by the French, tried by the English, and burned at the stake by the French. Nevertheless, she had a significant impact on the **Hundred Years' War** (1337–1453) between England and France, which eventually resulted in England's withdrawal from France.

At around the same time, Spain was united by **Queen Isabella**, the ruler of Castile (present-day central Spain). Power in the Spanish-speaking region of Europe had been divided for two reasons: first, Castile was one of three independent Spanish kingdoms, and therefore no single ruler controlled the region, and second, the peasants were split along religious lines (mostly Christian and Muslim), due to the lasting influences of the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. To overcome these obstacles, Isabella married **Ferdinand**, heir to the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon, in 1469, thus uniting most of Spain in a single monarchy. Rather than compete with the church for authority, Isabella and Ferdinand, both Christians, enlisted the Catholic Church as a strong ally. Spanish statehood thrived under the new monarchy, and the alignment with the Catholic Church effectively ended religious toleration in the region. The result was that non-Christians (predominantly Muslim and Jewish people) were forced to convert to Christianity or leave the country. This policy marked the beginning of the **Spanish Inquisition**. The consequences for non-Christian Spaniards were tragic; the consequences for the Spanish monarchy were huge. Newly unified and energized, Spain embarked on an imperial quest that led to tremendous wealth and glory, eventually resulting in the spread of the Spanish language, Spanish customs, and Christianity to much of the New World (as you will see in the next chapter).

What About Russia?

Recall that eastern Europe and Russia at this time were very different from the West. The Eastern Orthodox Christians of this area spent much time and effort defending themselves from the colonization of various western invaders. It wasn't until 1242 that Russia succumbed to the Tatars (a group of Mongols from the east) under Genghis Khan. The Tatars ruled a large chunk of Russia for two centuries, leading to a cultural rift that further split eastern and western Europe.

By the fourteenth century the Mongol power started to decline and the Russian princes of Muscovy grew in power. By the late 1400s, Ivan III expanded Muscovy territory (the area surrounding Moscow) into much of modern-day Russia and declared himself czar, the Russian word for emperor or Caesar. As the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Moscow was declared the Third Rome, after the real Rome and Constantinople. By the mid-1500s, Ivan the Terrible had centralized power over the entire Russian sphere, ruling ruthlessly and using the secret police against his own nobles. The next chapter will go into more of the details about Russia. By this time, nationalism in Russia was well underway.

Focus On: Urbanization

If trade is the way you make your living, chances are you are spending lots of time in cities. Traders and merchants needed a place to meet and conduct business and this period saw the growth of urban culture throughout the world, mostly as a result of trade contacts and networks. Along with trade, cities showcased the wealth and power of the rulers who both controlled and benefited from the trade. Urban centers usually developed along trade routes or in locations necessary for strategic defense.

In the early years, the most populous cities were in the Muslim world and China—cities that were part of the network of Silk Routes: Baghdad, Merv, and Chang'an. Prior to 1400, Constantinople was the only European city of any size and it was really considered part of the Eastern world. Along with their economic role, these cities became political and cultural centers for the new trade empires. After 1400, European cities began to grow with Paris and the Italian city-states emerging as new trading powers.

C. Developments in Asia

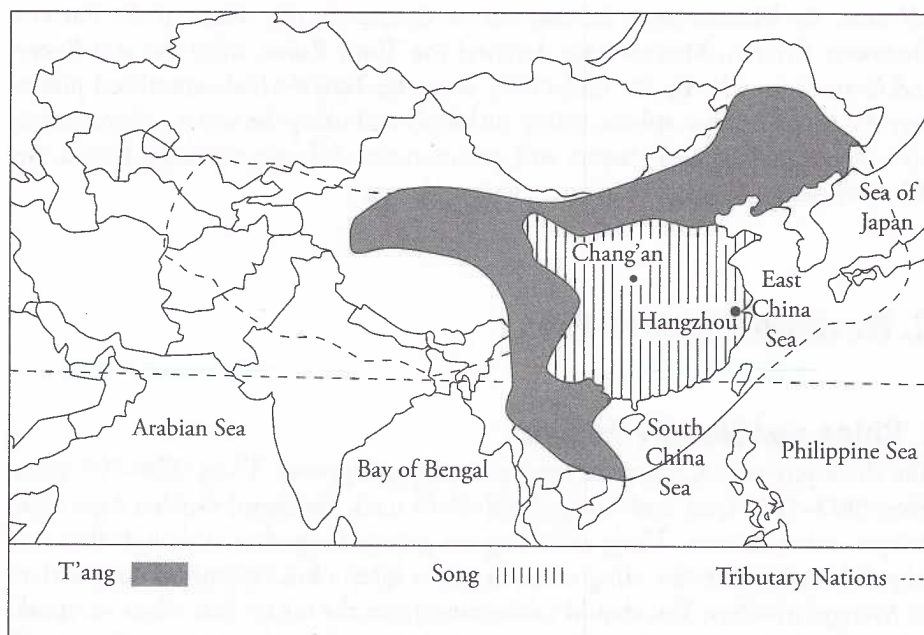
1. China and Nearby Regions

The three powerful Chinese dynasties during this period, T'ang (618–907 C.E.), Song (960–1279 C.E.), and Ming (1368–1644 C.E.), developed Golden Ages with unique characteristics. T'ang and Song are grouped together (although they are very different) while the Ming came to power after a brief period of domination by Mongol invaders. You should understand from the outset that when we speak of China, we're actually talking about its influence throughout much of east and southeast Asia. We'll talk more specifically about Korea, Vietnam, and Cambodia in a minute. For now, you just need to understand that China had an enormous impact on cultural and political developments in those civilizations.

A Quick Review of the Rise and Fall and Rise and Fall and Rise

The T'ang Dynasty ruled China beginning in 618 C.E. Under Emperor Xuanzong, the T'ang expanded Chinese territory into parts of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, and Korea. By 907, however, the empire had become so large that local warlords gained more and more power, and the T'ang dynasty collapsed. In 960, after a brief era of restlessness, China was reunified under the Song Dynasty and Emperor Taizu. Despite a long period of peace and prosperity, the Song eventually fell to the Jurchen and then the Mongols until finally in 1279, the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty in its place. That dynasty lasted less than a century. The Mongols were driven from China, and in 1368 the Ming Dynasty restored traditional Chinese rule to the empire.

From the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, the T'ang and then the Song Dynasties in China were accomplished in virtually every category of human endeavor—art, architecture, science, philosophy, porcelain-making, silk-weaving, construction of transportation systems, and more. Yet, it is probably poetry that made the T'ang Dynasty truly unique. Today, T'ang poetry tells us about daily life in China during that time. The Song built on the T'ang Dynasty's talent for poetry with more practical applications of words in the form of encyclopedias and histories. Under the Song Dynasty, China developed printing processes that facilitated the spread of its literary accomplishments throughout Asia and later influenced the development of literature in Korea and Japan.



Extent of the T'ang (618–907 C.E.) and Song (960–1279 C.E.) Dynasties

At the height of both the T'ang and Song Dynasties, China was relatively stable. One of the many reasons for the stability was the bureaucratic system that was based on merit through the use of the civil service examinations (remember which dynasty created it? The Han Dynasty—see previous chapter for review). The T'ang and Song rulers continued to modify the civil service examination, but kept it focused on Confucian principles, which created a large core of educated, talented, and loyal government workers. The T'ang and Song also built an extensive transportation and communication network, including canals. They developed new business practices, including the introduction of paper money and letters of credit (hmmm...where have we seen these before?). All of this, of course, led to increased trade and cultural diffusion.

Because the power of the dynasties was based on trade and expansion, each developed an urban base to pursue its economic and political strategies. T'ang power was based on military garrisons along the central Asian trade routes and their capital at Chang'an (today Xi'an), the eastern terminus of the Silk Road and the largest city in the world at this time. This cosmopolitan city hosted a multinational and multireligious population. It was also the center of the T'ang tribute system, through which independent countries including Vietnam, Korea, Tibet, and various central Asian tribes acknowledged the supremacy of the Chinese emperor and sent ambassadors to the city with gifts. Indirect rule of these vassal states spread Chinese influence far and wide and brought religion, among other things, into China. A similar tribute system would be repeated during the early years of the Ming Dynasty.

Focus On: Civil Service in China

The bureaucracy contributed to China's stability in huge ways because it generally stayed in effect even as dynasties changed. Regardless of who was in charge, the leaders generally depended on the bureaucracy to carry out the functions of government. Remember, since appointment to a civil service position was earned by a strong performance on the civil service examination, the civil service was a meritocracy (earned) as opposed to an aristocracy (inherited). When power changed from ruling family to ruling family, it didn't impact the earned positions in the civil service.

Think about it in terms of the U.S. bureaucracy. No matter who gets elected president, most of the bureaucracy remains the same. Most CIA agents, Department of Agriculture employees, and IRS agents are going to keep their jobs regardless of who is president. Some of the higher-up positions get newly appointed leaders when a U.S. administration changes, but the underlying functions of the government remain remarkably stable.

Even when the Mongols ruled in China, the underlying bureaucracy remained. The Mongols brought in foreign government administrators, but the lower-level support and service jobs were kept by locals. Thus the system returned and stayed intact.

The Song Dynasty, under pressure from northern nomads, withdrew to the south and established a capital city at Hangzhou, the southern end of the Grand Canal. Here they concentrated on developing an industrial society, building on many of the ideas of the previous dynasty. An early form of **moveable type** resulted in an increase in literacy and bureaucrats among the lower classes. Printed books also spread agricultural and technological knowledge, leading to an increase in productivity and population growth. By the 1100s, the Song were an urban population with some of the largest cities in the world. Their wealth was based in part on their powerful navy and their participation in international trade throughout southeast Asia.

During the Song Dynasty, new technologies were applied to the military. Gunpowder started to be used in primitive weapons. The magnetic compass, watertight bulkheads, and sternpost rudders made the Chinese junks, as their ships were called, the best of their time. The junks were also used as merchant ships, of course.

Between 800 and 1100, iron production increased tenfold to about 120,000 tons per year, rivaling the British production of iron centuries later (in the 1700s). Song technology also included the production of steel using water-wheel-driven bellows to produce the needed temperatures.

The introduction of Champa, a fast-ripening rice from Vietnam, linked with new agricultural techniques, increased food supplies. This led to a rapid population rise from 600 to 1200 C.E. China's population more than doubled, increasing from 45 million to 115 million. The urban centers expanded greatly.

Chinese Women Under the T'ang and Song Dynasties

One of the more incredible events during the T'ang Dynasty was the rise of **Wu Zhao**, who became the first (and to date, only) Empress of China at the death of her husband, Emperor Gaozong. An able ruler, she was both ruthless toward her adversaries and compassionate toward peasants. The vast majority of women in China, however, never gained that kind of power. Highly patriarchal, Chinese men considered women inferior, and like European men of the Middle Ages, they considered a woman's beauty and femininity as virtues worth protecting. During the Song Dynasty, adherence to a new Confucianism justified the subordination of women, and **foot binding** became a widespread practice. A woman's feet would be bound shortly after birth in an effort to keep them small—if kept bound for a long enough time, they wouldn't grow even as the rest of the body did. Large feet were considered masculine and ugly. This practice, which lasted for centuries among elite families, was not only painful, but also often deforming and sometimes crippling.

Religion in China: Diverse Beliefs

Following the fall of the Han Dynasty, there were a number of different religious influences in China, such as Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam. The religion that had the greatest impact by far was Buddhism, especially in two of its forms: Mahayana and Chan. Mahayana Buddhism appealed to many because of its emphasis on a peaceful and quiet existence and a life apart from

worldly values. With its emphasis on meditation and appreciation of beauty, Chan (or Zen) Buddhism won converts in the educated classes, who generally followed the tenets of Confucianism.

Both the Confucians and the Daoists reacted strongly to the spread of Buddhism. Many Confucians saw Buddhism as a drain on both the treasury and the labor pool, especially because Buddhism dismissed the pursuit of material accumulation. The Daoists saw Buddhism as a rival religion that was winning over many of its adherents. In the mid-800s under Emperor Wuzong, a wave of persecutions destroyed thousands of monasteries and reduced the influence of Buddhism in China.

2. Japan

Because Japan consists of four main islands off the coast of mainland Asia, it was relatively isolated for thousands of years. Ideas, religions, and material goods traveled between Japan and the rest of Asia, especially China, but the rate of exchange was relatively limited. Only in recent centuries has Japan allowed Western influences.

Little is known of early cultures in Japan prior to 400 C.E., except that they were influenced by Korea and China. The first important ruling family was the Yamato clan, whose international connections helped them emerge as leaders in the fifth century. One of the unique things about Japan is that the Yamamoto clan was both the first and the only dynasty to rule it. The current emperor is a descendent of this same clan.

Early on, the Shinto religion took hold in Japan. Under Shinto, which means “the way of the gods,” the Japanese worshipped the *kami*, which refers to nature and all of the forces of nature, both the seen and unseen. The goal under Shinto is to become part of the *kami* by following certain rituals and customs. The religion also encourages obedience and proper behavior. The Yamamoto clan claimed that the emperor was a direct descendant of the sun goddess, one of the main forces in the Shinto religion. This claim helped the Yamamoto stay in power—if you believe the emperor is divine, you’re probably going to want to keep him around.

Can’t Get Enough of China? Go to Japan.

In the sixth century, the influence of China in Japan increased dramatically. In 522, Buddhist missionaries went to Japan and brought with them Chinese culture. In no time, Chinese things were all the rage. Buddhism spread quickly, but interestingly, it didn’t replace Shinto. Instead, most Japanese adopted Buddhism while also hanging on to their Shinto beliefs. In other words, they followed both religions simultaneously.

Neo-Confucianism in China

As China turned away from otherworldly ideas of the Buddhists during the late T’ang and early Song, new ideas about Confucian philosophy developed. Where older Confucianism had focused on practical politics and morality, the neo-Confucianists borrowed Buddhist ideas about the soul and the individual. This new tradition became the guiding doctrine of the Song Dynasty and the basis for civil service. At its core was a systematic approach to both the heavens and the role of individual. Filial piety, the maintenance of proper roles, and loyalty to one’s superiors were again emphasized.

By the early seventh century, Chinese influence increased yet again. **Prince Shotoku** borrowed bureaucratic and legal reforms, which were modeled on the successes of the T'ang Dynasty in China. These reforms were enacted after his death as the **Tai-ka Reforms** (645 c.e.). In the eighth century, when the Japanese built their new capital, they modeled it on the T'ang capital. At the risk of giving the impression that Japan became a "Little China," you should keep in mind one thing: the Japanese largely rejected Confucianism, as well as the idea of the civil service examination. Why? Both of these systems held the educated in high esteem. In Japan, education wasn't nearly as important as birth. The noble classes were hereditary, not earned.

Contrast Them: China and Japan

Even though China influenced Japan enormously, it didn't penetrate Japanese identity. Birth was more important than outside influence or education. The aristocracy remained strong. Despite the widespread influence of Confucianism and Chan (now Zen) Buddhism, the Japanese continued to observe the rites of their indigenous religion, Shintoism. Even at the height of T'ang influence, it can be said that Japan drew inspiration from China, but maintained its own distinctive traditions.

Here Come the Fujiwara: At Home in Heian

In 794, the capital was moved to Heian, and a new era of Japanese consciousness began. The Chinese influence abated, while the power of aristocratic families increased. One of the most powerful families, the **Fujiwara**, intermarried over several generations with the emperor's family and soon ran the affairs of the country. The emperor remained as a figurehead, but the real power had shifted to members of the Fujiwara family.

Under the Fujiwara, Japanese society experienced something like a golden age, especially in terms of literature. Japanese noblewomen were particularly prolific, especially when compared to women of other cultures. By the twelfth century, however, power in Japan had spread among a larger and larger pool of noble families, and soon they were fighting with each other for control over their small territories. In other words, Japan had devolved into a feudal system not unlike the one in Europe.

Feudal Japan

The interesting thing about feudalism in Japan is that it developed at around the same time as feudalism in western Europe, but it developed independently.

In 1192, Yoritomo Minamoto was given the title of chief general, or **shogun**, by the emperor. As with the Fujiwara family, the emperor was the figurehead but didn't hold the real power, which was in the hands of the shogun.

Below the shogun in the pecking order were the **daimyo**, owners of large tracts of land (the counterparts of the lords of medieval Europe). The daimyo were powerful samurai, who were like knights. They were part warrior, part nobility. They, in turn, divided up their lands to lesser samurai (vassals), who in turn split their land up again. Peasants and artisans worked the fields and shops to support the samurai class. Just as in European feudalism, the hierarchy was bound together in a land-for-loyalty exchange.

The samurai followed a strict code of conduct known as the **Code of Bushido**, which was very similar to the code of chivalry in Europe. The code stressed loyalty, courage, and honor, so much so that if a samurai failed to meet his obligations under the code, he was expected to commit suicide.

Interestingly, unlike under European feudalism, women in Japan were not held in high esteem. Remember that in Europe, noblewomen were given few rights, but they were adored, at least to the extent that they were beautiful and possessed feminine traits. In contrast, Japanese women lost any freedom they had during the Fujiwara period and were forced to live harsher, more demeaning lives.

Compare and Contrast Them: European and Japanese Feudalism

They were similar in terms of political structure, social structure, and honor code. They were different in terms of treatment of women and legal arrangement. In Europe, the feudal contract was just that, a contract. It was an arrangement of obligations enforced in law. In Japan, on the other hand, the feudal arrangement was based solely on group identity and loyalty. In both cases, the feudal arrangement was based on culture, and so the feudal system stayed around for a very long time.

3. Vietnam and Korea

Because China's dynastic leaders were intent on expanding by means of trade and force, Chinese armies had been in Korea and Vietnam as early as the Han Dynasty. However, it was the large-scale military campaigns of the T'ang that resulted in cultural exchange in both regions.

Korea had its own independent and powerful dynasty, but in order to maintain the appearance of cordial relations with their powerful Chinese neighbors, it became a vassal-state of the T'ang. The gift-giving and exchanges resulted in Korean schools and the imperial court being organized like those of the Chinese, although

the power of the royal houses and nobility in Korea prevented the development of a true bureaucracy based on merit. The tribute relationship was also responsible for the spread of both Confucianism and Chan Buddhism to Korea.

The Viet people of Southeast Asia were much less willing to accept even the appearance of a tribute relationship with their northern neighbors and actively resisted the T'ang armies. Although a tribute relationship was eventually established, Confucian education was accepted, and an active trade relationship existed between the two entities, the Vietnamese maintained local traditions and continued to actively revolt against T'ang authorities. After the fall of the T'ang, the Vietnamese maintained their independence in the face of later Chinese expansion.

4. India

As you should remember from the last chapter, India was the birthplace of two major religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. In the tenth century, another major religion made its way to the Indus valley: Islam.

The Delhi Sultanate

After defeating the disorganized Hindus, the Islamic invaders set up shop in Delhi under their leader, the sultan. Hence, this kingdom is referred to as the **Delhi Sultanate**. For over three hundred years beginning in about 1206, Islam spread throughout much of northern India. While many Hindus held on to their religious beliefs under this theoretically tolerant regime, individual sultans were highly offended by Hinduism's polytheistic ways and did their best to convert them. Like non-Muslims under the Umayyads in Arabia, non-Muslims under the sultans in India had to pay a tax. But more than that, the sultans were capable of religiously motivated destruction. Hindu temples were sometimes destroyed, and occasionally violence erupted in communities.

Contrast Them: Hinduism and Islam

Islam on top of Hinduism was a strange concoction. Hinduism is polytheistic while Islam is monotheistic. Islam holds that all people are equal under God, while Hinduism upholds the caste system. To Islamic people, cows are food; to Hindus, cows are sacred. Hinduism sees itself as universal and exclusive; Islam sees itself as tolerant of other beliefs and even mixed with other beliefs. These two religions have often clashed. If you don't remember how bad things got between the two groups in India, you'll review the consequences later in this book.

Despite the differences between the Islamic and Hindu cultures, an amazing amount of progress occurred in India under the sultans. Colleges were founded. Irrigation systems were vastly improved. Mosques were built, often with the help of Hindu architects and artists. Many Hindus in northern India converted to Islam. Sometimes the conversions were genuine; other times, they just made life easier. In any case, a considerable number of Hindus in northern India converted to Islam while the vast majority of Hindus in southern India held on to their traditions.

D. The Rise and Fall of the Mongols

The Mongols, the epitome of a nomadic culture, existed as a society for a long time before they became a force on the broader world scene. The Mongols were superb horsemen and archers and probably could have been a world power early on in the development of major civilizations. However, rivalries between tribes and clans kept them from unifying, so for centuries they fought with each other and remained fairly isolated from the rest of the world.

In the early 1200s, all that changed. Using his tremendous military and organizational skills, **Genghis Khan** (also spelled Chingiss Khan) unified the Mongol tribes and set them on a path of expansion that would lead to the largest empire the world had ever seen.

Genghis Khan unified several nomadic tribes of Mongolia and led the Mongol invasion of China in 1234, which was the beginning of the enormous Mongolian conquests. The **Mongol Empire** eventually spanned from the Pacific Ocean to eastern Europe. Following the death of Ghenghis Khan, his followers splintered off into different groups they called hordes. The members of these hordes elected a new Great Khan after Ghenghis and his successor, but by the election of Kublai Khan these hordes, or Khanates, were largely independent of any sort of central leadership from the homeland in Mongolia proper. The **Golden Horde** conquered the region of modern-day Russia. In China, **Kublai Khan** ruled. Mongols destroyed cities and were ruthless warriors, but once their domain was established, the empire was relatively peaceful. (This peace is sometimes called the *Pax Mongolica*.) The continuous empire allowed for the exchange of goods, ideas, and culture from one distant region to another. Mongols, who were illiterate, nomadic people prior to their conquests and education reforms brought about by Genghis Khan, eventually became assimilated into the cultures of the people they defeated.

Warning! You Are Now Entering a Golden-Age-Free Zone

One of the most striking things about the Mongols is that their empire was one of territory, infrastructure, and conquest, but not one of “culture.” Because the Mongol Empire was so enormous and conquered so many different kinds of civilizations, it did not attempt to force a unified religion or way of life on its people. That being said, although the Mongols did not make many advances in the arts and sciences themselves, their superior infrastructure allowed for the exchange and spread of ideas. Genghis Khan also established the first pony express and postal system and gave tax breaks to teachers and clerics within his empire. In other ways, however, the Mongol Empire had a profoundly negative impact on conquered cultures, stifling cultural growth rather than contributing to it by having been so brutal in their initial raids.

Contrast Them: The Mongol Empire and All Other Major Civilizations

We've seen the golden age of Gupta. The golden age of Shang. The golden ages of Greece, Rome, and Islam. The Mongol Empire was larger than any of the empires that produced those golden ages. Yet rather than imposing their own cultural developments on the areas it conquered, it generally accepted or ignored those of the people they conquered. Unlike the sultans who took over India, the Mongols allowed their subjects to practice their own religions without interference. It should be pointed out that because the Mongol empire was so expansive, it tied much of the world together and served as a conduit across which ideas and culture spread from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and vice versa. It's just that it wasn't the Mongols' own culture.

Timur Wasn't Timid

In addition to invading Russia, Persia, Central Asia, and China, the Mongols also found time on their itinerary for a layover in India. They swept in under their leader, the untamed Timur Lang, who destroyed just about everything in sight and massacred thousands, and then just as quickly swept out. The sultanate was destroyed, but after **Timur Lang** (sometimes referred to as **Tamerlane**) returned to his capital in Samarkand, the Mongols pulled out as well. Just a few years later, the sultanate was restored. Islam continued to grow in India for the next few centuries under the Mongol Empire, even as many Hindus hung on to their beliefs. Look for more on this later.

How the Mongols Did It: No Rest Until Conquest

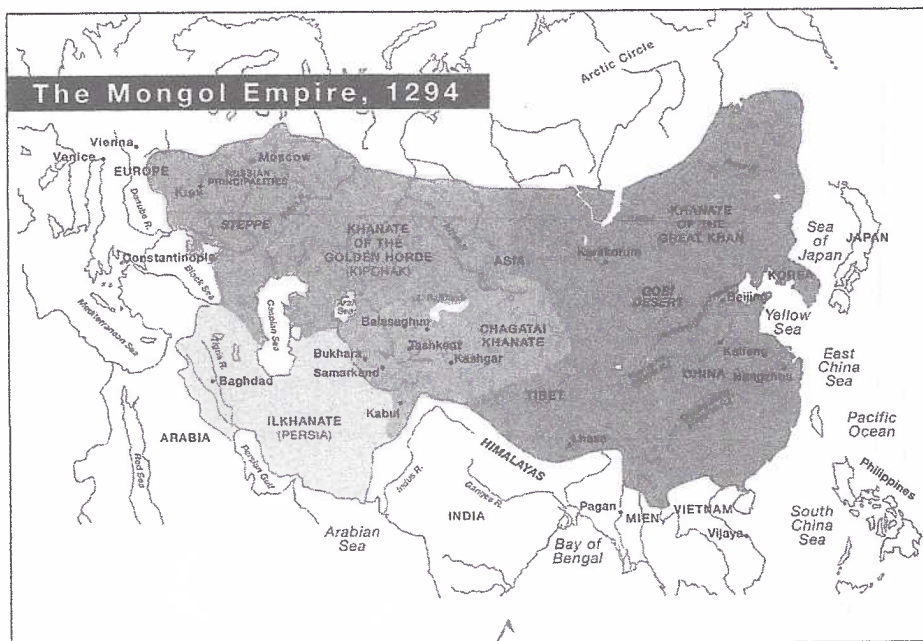
Imagine that you live in a village that lies in the path of an advancing Mongol horde. You've heard the stories. If you put up a fight, they'll pummel you. If you retreat to your house, they'll burn it. If you organize a resistance in your place of worship or civic building, they'll level it. You've also heard that if you just give in, they might spare your city, but they also might not. They're not really interested in changing your culture. So your only real choice, if you want to stay alive, is to give in. If you do, you may or may not be able to keep your life and your culture, but if you don't, you'll suffer a certainly grotesque death. What would you do?

In the 1200s and 1300s, a lot of people gave in, and those who did not met their death. The Mongols weren't called ruthless warriors for nothing. They knew how to fight, but they were more than fierce fighters. They were also highly organized and highly mobile. Unlike the much-feared Roman army, which in its heyday could cover about 25 miles per day, the Mongol horsemen could cover about 90. Their bows, designed to be launched from horseback, had a range of up to 300 yards, way more than anybody else's. Their armies were divided into units, which were further separated into light and heavy cavalries and scouting units. They were extremely motivated—Genghis Khan punished traitors swiftly and rewarded the courageous generously. They were stealthy—they had an extensive network of spies who scouted their enemies before battle. Finally, their goals were made unmistakably clear—the consequences of putting up a fight against the Mongols meant certain destruction of the entire village, so most learned not to resist. In short, they were really, really good at what they did: conquering.

The Mongol Impact

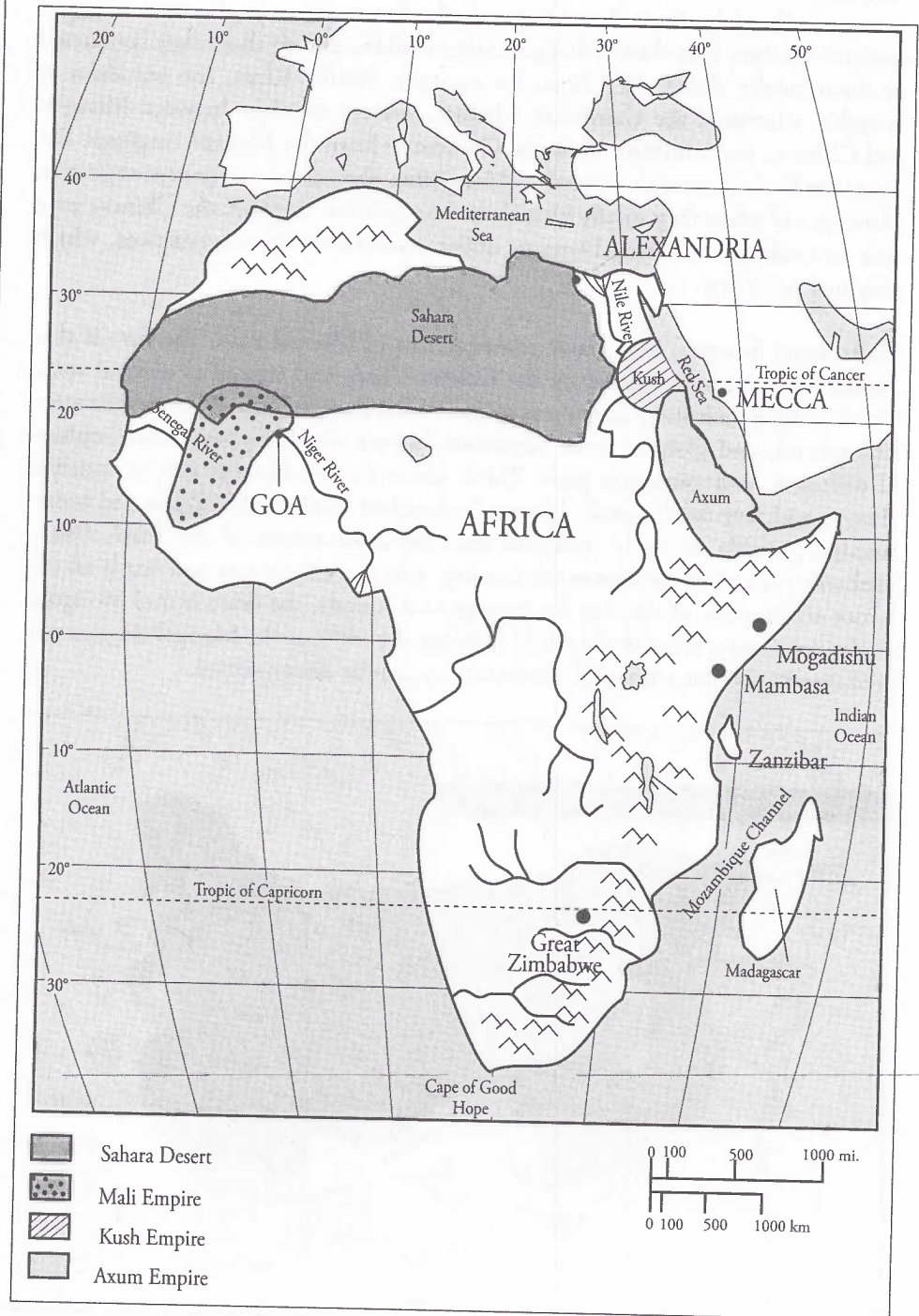
As mentioned earlier, the Mongols were great diffusers of culture. Some Mongols were assimilated by those they conquered. In Persia, for example, most Mongols became Muslim. Elsewhere, Mongols either couldn't absorb those they conquered or intentionally didn't. In China, for example, Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis, dismissed the Confucian scholars, forbade marriage between Mongols and Chinese, and wouldn't allow the Chinese to learn the Mongol language. Because the Chinese weren't allowed to Mongolize, they didn't. They kept their own identity, and when they finally kicked the Mongols out in 1368, the Chinese were able to establish the Ming Dynasty under traditional Chinese practices, which they had never lost.

There were, however, two major consequences of Mongol rule. The first is that Russia, which was conquered by the Golden Horde and treated as a vassal state, didn't unify or culturally develop as quickly as its European neighbors to the west. The second, and globally more important impact was that world trade, cultural diffusion, and awareness grew. Think about it: The Mongol empire touched Europe and very nearly touched Japan. It stretched southward to Persia and India, making possible not only trade but also the transmission of the Black Death (bubonic plague) in the fourteenth century. This one empire touched nearly all the major civilizations of the day. So, strange as it sounds, the often brutal Mongols, in their own way, brought the world together. By 1450, as the Mongol Empire was well into its decline, the world would never again be disconnected.



Map of the Mongol Khanates

E. Developments in Africa



African Empires and Trade Cities

The most significant early civilizations in Africa for AP purposes were Egypt and Carthage, both of which were discussed in the previous chapter. Both of these civilizations were located in North Africa along the Mediterranean, north of the Sahara Desert. But there were other civilizations in Africa too. Some of them existed long before 600 c.e., but we've included them in this section (rather than in the previous chapter) so that you can study them as a group.

Interaction Among Kush, Axum, and the Swahili Coast

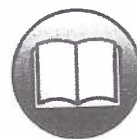
The Kush and Axum civilizations developed to the south of Egypt in the upper reaches of the Nile River. Kush developed at about the same time as ancient Egypt, and at one point around 750 b.c.e. actually conquered part of it. Less than a hundred years later, however, Kush retreated southward back to its capital at Meroe, which became a center for ironworks and trade.

After the Kush decline around 200 c.e., another empire, Axum, rose to greatness to the south (in modern-day Ethiopia). Although Axum never conquered any other civilization, it traded with others frequently, especially in ivory and gold. In the fourth century, Axum converted to Christianity, and in the seventh century, many converted to Islam. These conversions illustrate that the people of Axum were in constant contact with the empires of the Mediterranean world. This contact has had a long-standing impact. Ethiopia's large Christian community in present times is a direct result of the Axum conversion.

Remember that this entire period is dominated by interactions. In addition to interaction with the Mediterranean world through the Red Sea, the eastern coast of Africa was linked to India and Southeast Asia through the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean trade. The east coast of Africa was populated by Bantu-speaking peoples who settled into lives of farmers, merchants, and fishermen. This area is known as the Swahili Coast, from the Arabic word for "coasters" or traders, and indeed the Swahili language is a mix of the original Bantu language supplemented by Arabic. Trade with the Muslims began in the early tenth century as Swahili traders brought gold, slaves, ivory, and other exotic products to the coast.

The incredible wealth generated by this trade resulted in the growth of powerful kingdoms and trading cities along the coast in advantageous locations. Like wealthy trading cities throughout the world, they became cultural and political centers. By the fifteenth century, what had previously been mud and wooden outposts had become impressive coral and stone mosques, public buildings, and fortified cities with trade goods from all over the world.

To facilitate political and economic relationships, the ruling elites and merchant classes of the eastern African kingdoms converted to Islam but maintained many of their own cultural traditions. Eventually, Islam spread throughout most of East Africa.



Need More Review?

Are a ton of different names swirling around in your brain? To help with memorization, pick up a box of our flashcards: Essential AP World History.

The Other Side of the Sand: Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

Kush and Axum were in eastern Africa, along the Nile River and near the Red Sea. Therefore, they had easy access to other cultures. The cultures of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, however, were in west Africa, south of the Sahara.

When the Islamic Empire spread across North Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries, these African kingdoms began trading with the larger Mediterranean economy. Islamic traders penetrated the unforgiving Sahara desert and reached the fertile wealthy interior of Africa, called sub-Saharan (beneath the Sahara), while African traders pushed northward toward Carthage and Tripoli. Previously, the desert had acted as one gigantic “don’t-want-to-deal-with-it” barrier, so people typically didn’t. Increasingly, however, caravans of traders were willing to do what they had to do to get to the riches on the other side of the sand. At first, the west Africans were in search of salt, of which they had little but which existed in the Sahara. When they encountered the Islamic traders along the salt road, they started trading for a lot more than just salt. The consequence was an explosion of trade.

Why were the Islamic traders so interested in trading with west African kingdoms? Because in Ghana (about 800–1000 C.E.) and Mali (about 1200–1450 C.E.), there were tons, and we mean tons, of gold. A little sand in your eyes was probably worth some gold in your hand. So the Islamic traders kept coming.

The constant trade brought more than just Islamic goods to Ghana and Mali; it brought Islam. For Ghana the result was devastating. The empire was subjected to a Holy War led by an Islamic group intent on converting (or else killing) them. While Ghana was able to defeat the Islamic forces, its empire fell into decline. By the time Mali came to power, the region had converted to Islam anyway, this time in a more peaceful transition.

One of the greatest Malian rulers, **Mansa Musa**, built a capital at Timbuktu and expanded the kingdom well beyond the bounds of Ghana. In 1324, Musa made a pilgrimage to Mecca (remember the Five Pillars of Islam?) complete with an entourage of hundreds of gold-carrying servants and camels. The journey was so extravagant, so long, and so impressive to everyone who saw it that Musa became an overnight international sensation. Had the Musa moment occurred in the social media age, you can bet it would have been all over Facebook and Twitter.

The largest empire in west Africa was formed in the mid-fifteenth century, when Songhai ruler Sonni Ali conquered the entire region and established the Songhai Empire. The Songhai Empire lasted until around 1600 c.e., and during its reign, Timbuktu became a major cultural center, complete with a university that drew scholars from around the Islamic world.

The Arts in Africa

Oral literature was an important part of life in most African communities. History and stories were passed from one generation to the next, not through written texts, but through storytelling. The storytelling wasn't just Grandpa sitting next to the fire, but rather was a production akin to a dramatic performance. The stories were told the same way for so many generations that people knew the lines. Everyone was able to participate in the storytelling by reciting responses at the appropriate times. Think about what it's like to watch *Star Wars* with a room full of people—parents, grandparents, kids—who've already seen it; that will give you a good sense of what oral literature meant to those cultures.

Early sub-Saharan African cultures are also known for their sculptures, particularly out of pottery and bronze. The Benin culture (near present-day Nigeria) mastered a bronze sculpting technique. They made clay molds around a wax carving, melted the wax, filled the mold with melted bronze, and, after breaking the clay mold, revealed some of the most beautiful early bronze work created by any civilization.

F. Developments in the Americas



The American Civilizations

There were three great civilizations in what is now Central America and South America that developed before the arrival of the Europeans. One of the civilizations, the Maya, actually began around the time of the major classical civilizations and were discussed in the previous chapter. The other two civilizations, the Incas and Aztecs, were conquered by the Europeans after 1450. They will be discussed again in the next chapter. That said, we are including all three of them in this chapter so that you can review the cultural characteristics of these three civilizations in one place. We'll talk about their conquests in the next chapter.

Mayan Decline: Where Did They Go?

As a review, the Maya were organized in city-states ruled by a single king. Their largely agricultural peasant population was bound to nobility by ties of loyalty and religion. They occupied poorly drained lowlands in Central America and adapted by building terraces to trap the silt drained by numerous rivers. Some of these cities grew to be quite sizable—10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants, and engaged in long-distance trade as far north as central Mexico. The cities were often at odds with one another and in Mayan territory, war was about capturing slaves or sacrificial victims.

The decline of the Maya remains a source of debate. They began to abandon their cities around 800 C.E. Environmental degradation and overuse of land, political dissension and social unrest, natural disaster, and outside invaders have all been proposed as causes of their decline.

The Aztecs: Trade and Sacrifice

The Aztecs, also known as the Mexica, arrived in central Mexico in the mid-1200s and built their capital at Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City). More than anything else, the Aztecs are known for their expansionist policy and professional army, which allowed them to dominate nearby states and demand heavy taxes and captives. Warriors were the elite in the Aztec social structure (the majority of the people were peasants and slaves). Through conquest and alliances, the Aztecs built an empire of some 12 million people. Despite the huge size, they didn't use a bureaucratic form of government. The conquered areas were generally allowed to govern themselves, as long as they paid the tribute demanded of them. Roads were built to link the far-flung areas of the huge empire, and trade flourished.

Aztec women had a subordinate public role but could inherit property. Like women in most all other traditional civilizations, Aztec women were primarily charged with running the household, but they were also involved in skilled crafts, especially weaving, and—to some extent—in commerce.

Notably, the Aztec religious system was tied to the military because one of the purposes of the military was to obtain victims for human sacrifice. Tens of thousands of men and women were killed annually; many would be sacrificed simultaneously for an important religious occasion, such as the dedication of a new temple.

Compare Them: The Aztec Civilization and the Roman Empire

Although the Aztecs and Romans developed large civilizations, continents and centuries apart, they were similar in at least two major respects. First, they tied together their vast empires by building roads. Second, they generally allowed the people they conquered to govern themselves, as long as they paid their taxes or tributes. Because of the improved transportation systems (roads) and the diversity of cultures under their control, both the Aztecs and the Romans were able to adapt ideas from the people they conquered and use them for their own purposes. In other words, the Aztecs and the Romans were conquerors, but also borrowers.

The Inca: My Land Is Your Land

The Inca Empire, set in the Andes Mountains in Peru, was also expansionist in nature. At its zenith, it is thought to have controlled more than 2,000 miles of South American coastline. The Inca controlled this territory using a professional army, an established bureaucracy, a unified language, and a complex system of roads and tunnels.

Like the Maya (and the Aztecs), the Incas had no large animals, so the prime source of labor was human. A large proportion of the population was peasants, who worked the land or on construction projects. They were expected to give a proportion of their harvest to support the ruling classes and to provide famine relief. These surpluses eventually became large enough to support large cities. The capital at Cuzco may have had as many as 300,000 people in the late 1400s.

Incan women were expected to help work the fields, weave cloth, and care for the household. They could pass property on to their daughters and even played a role in religion. The Inca were polytheistic, but the sun god was the most important and was at the center of the state religion. Like the Aztecs, the Inca practiced human sacrifice, but in much smaller numbers, usually choosing instead to sacrifice material goods or animals. Incan religion also had a very strong moral quality, emphasizing rewards for good behavior and punishments for bad. Like the Egyptians, Incan rulers were mummified after death and became intermediaries between the gods and the people.

For the Inca, the concept of private property didn't exist. Rather, the ruler was viewed as having descended from the sun and, therefore, owning everything on Earth. The military was very important because each new ruler needed to ensure his place in eternity by securing new land, and that meant conquest. There was a state bureaucracy, manned by the nobility, which controlled the empire by traveling on a complex system of roads.

The Inca were excellent builders, stone cutters, and miners. Their skills are evident from the ruins of the **Temple of the Sun** in Cuzco and the temples of **Machu Picchu**. They never developed a system of writing. However, they were able to record census data and keep an accounting of harvests on *quipu*, a set of knotted strings.

IV. REVIEW OF INTERACTIONS AMONG CULTURES 600 C.E.–1450

The purpose of this section is to help you pull together the history from this time period and view it from a global perspective. The examples below are by no means an exhaustive list of the ways that civilizations or groups of people interacted from 600 to 1450 C.E. To the contrary, they are examples that serve as a starting point in your studies. We strongly suggest that you add examples to the ones below as you work your way through this review and your materials from your class.

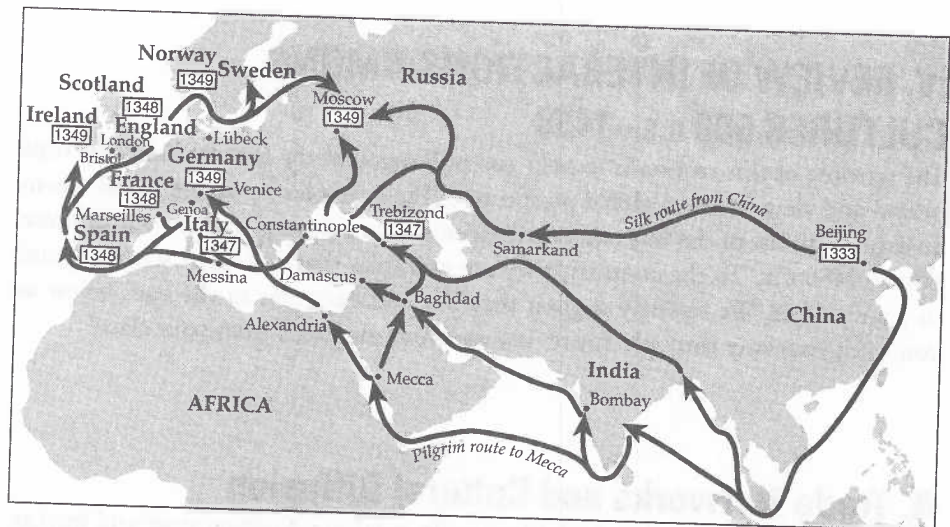
A. Trade Networks and Cultural Diffusion

Trade has always been a big deal, historically speaking. Getting stuff and buying stuff is a huge incentive behind interactions. If you have everything you need and want, you can live in isolation. If you don't, and somebody else down the road has what you want, you've got two choices: take it or trade for it. If you're not into the whole conquest thing, then trading is probably your best option.

From 600 to 1450, trade exploded onto the world scene—so much so that the world after 1450 is inseparable from global interaction. Let's quickly review the global trade routes that you read about in this chapter.

- The Mediterranean Trade between western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic Empire
- The Hanseatic League (more details in this chapter)
- The Silk Road (used heavily again from about 1200 C.E. until about 1600 C.E.—more on that later)
- The land routes of the Mongols
- Trade between China and Japan
- Trade between India and Persia
- The Trans-Saharan trade routes between west Africa and the Islamic Empire

Remember, too, that trade was not only aided by better boats and better roads, but also by monetary systems, lines of credit, and accounting methods that helped business boom. Record keeping and money management are key. If you're able to keep records or borrow money, you are by definition establishing a business relationship that extends into the future. Once you start thinking about a regular business-trade relationship extending into the future, you can get people to invest in that future, and pretty soon the wheels of international business are going 'round and 'round.



Spread of the Black Death (1333–1349 C.E.)

The trade routes are important, of course, not just because of their impact on business, but also because of their role in cultural diffusion. It is over the trade routes that religions and languages spread. It is over the trade routes that literature and art and ideas spread. And, unfortunately, it is over the trade routes that disease and plague sometimes spread. The **Bubonic Plague** (also called the Black Death) started in Asia in the fourteenth century and was carried by merchants along the trade routes all the way to Europe, where it destroyed entire communities and killed as many as one out of every three people in western Europe. The plague quickened the decline of feudal society because many manors weren't able to function.

In addition to the trade routes mentioned above, there's one that we haven't discussed in detail yet—the Indian Ocean Trade. It's important, so we'll go into it in some detail.

Indian Ocean Trade

Throughout the period covered in this chapter, the Persians and the Arabs dominated the **Indian Ocean Trade**. Their trade routes connected ports in western India to ports in the Persian Gulf, which in turn were connected to ports in eastern Africa.

Unlike boats that were used on the Mediterranean Sea, boats that sailed the Indian Ocean were, necessarily, more resilient to the large waves common in those waters. The traders learned to understand the monsoon seasons and direction of the winds and scheduled their voyages accordingly. Despite these difficulties, the Indian Ocean trade routes were relatively safe, especially when compared to those on the Mediterranean, where constant warfare was a problem.

Since sailors often married the local women at the ends of their trade routes, cultures started to intermix rapidly. Many sailors took foreign wives home and created bilingual and bicultural families.

More on the Silk Road

You already know that the Silk Road connected China to the Mediterranean cultures even way back in the early days of the Roman Empire. You also need to know that the Silk Road was used heavily again from about 1200 c.e. until about 1600 c.e., during the reign of the Mongols.

The important thing to know about the Silk Road is that it carried so much more than silk. It carried porcelain and paper. It carried military technologies. It carried religions, such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. It carried food. Because it extended so far and was used for so long, it's safe to say that East met West on the Silk Road. It's impossible to have a discussion about international trade and cultural diffusion without mentioning it by name.

More on the Hanseatic League

As you already know, the Hanseatic League was a collection of city-states in the Baltic and North Sea regions of Europe that banded together in 1241 to establish common trade practices, fight off pirates and foreign governments, and essentially establish a trade monopoly from the region to much of the rest of the world. It worked for a few hundred years. More than 100 cities joined the league. The result was enormous for two reasons. First, it resulted in a substantial middle class in northern Europe, a development that would drive changes in that region in later centuries (more on that in the next chapter). Second, it set a precedent for large, European trading operations that profoundly affected the Dutch and the English, which would also deeply affect the broader world in later centuries.

Was There a Global Trade Network?

If you think about it, after about 1200 c.e. or so, the world was very interconnected. Europe was trading with the Islamic world and Russia. The Islamic world was trading with Africa, India, and China. India was trading with China and eastern Africa. China was trading with Japan and southeast Europe. If you link up all the trade routes, goods could make their way from England to Persia to India to Japan. They could also travel to points north and south, from Muscovy to Mali.

The global network wasn't entirely controlled by one entity or laid out by one trading organization. It was more like a web of interconnected but highly independent parts. It required lots of managers at each site. It required people to be linked up through third and even fourth parties. No one person was managing it, yet almost all major civilizations (except those in the Americas) were a part of it. In short, it was like the Internet, only in geographic space instead of cyberspace.

B. Expansion of Religion and Empire: Culture Clash

One of the most significant influences on cultural interaction and diffusion has been the expansion of empires and the intentional diffusion of religion. Keep in mind that when we say intentional diffusion of religion, we mean methods like missionary work or religious warfare. This is opposed to the natural spread of religious ideas that occurs when people come into contact with each other, such as over trade routes.

Here's a quick listing of some of the examples discussed in this chapter.

- The Mongol expansion into Russia, Persia, India, and China
- The Germanic tribes into southern Europe and England
- The Vikings' expansion from Scandinavia into England and western Europe
- The Magyars' push from eastern Europe into western Europe
- The Islamic Empire's push into Spain, India, and Africa
- The Crusades
- Buddhist missionaries to Japan
- Orthodox Christian missionaries into eastern Europe

When you think about it, the bulk of this chapter is about two things: the expansion of religion and empires leading to cultural contact, or the relative isolationism that resulted under the feudal systems in Europe and Japan. Another way to encapsulate this period: a time fueled by conquest and religious expansion. We've talked a lot about the efforts of expansionists that succeeded. We need to give you some more details about the efforts of some expansionists that didn't succeed, namely, the Crusaders.

Crusaders and Jihad

You'll recall that in the Middle Ages, the Islamic Empire expanded, and the Muslims conquered much of Spain. The Christians felt threatened by the expansion of the Muslims, especially as Islam became entrenched in areas that the Christians identified with historically. So, in 1096 C.E. Pope Urban initiated the **First Crusade** in response to the success of the Seljuk Turks, who took control of the Holy Land (present-day Israel and Palestine). The Pope wanted Jerusalem, the most important city in Christianity, to be in the hands of Christians. He was also hoping that the efforts would help reunite the Catholic Church with the Eastern Orthodox Church in Constantinople, which had split apart 50 years before the start of the crusades. The Crusaders immediately set out to conquer the Holy Land, and initially captured several cities, including Antioch and, most important, Jerusalem. However, both cities quickly fell back into the hands of the Arabs.

Through the year 1204 C.E., a total of four crusades failed to produce results, and the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church separated even further (five more crusades followed but were not successful in achieving major goals). As mentioned earlier, in the Fourth Crusade the Catholic Church sacked Constantinople and established a short-lived Latin Empire there (most of the Crusaders either died or returned to Europe). The impact on the Holy Land was violence and uncertainty. Most of the region remained in the hands of the Muslim Arabs, and the whole mess led to centuries of mistrust and intolerance between Christians and Muslims.

As you think about global interaction through conquest, there's much to point out about the Crusades. First, the Crusades were not only motivated by religious beliefs and purposes. There were economic and political incentives as well. No doubt there were some who fought for religious reasons, especially in the early crusades, but the lure of empire and wealth was certainly a major factor for many.

Second, even to the extent that it was a religious effort, the Crusades illustrate that religion, when combined with conquest and feelings of superiority, can be a very bloody enterprise. The death, rape, pillaging, and slavery perpetrated in the name of religion was startling. The same, of course, was true of Islamic conquests in India, Persia, and Africa. Because the religiously devout are sometimes willing to be martyred for their beliefs, intentional religious expansionism can be just as devastating and powerful as a politically driven military invasion.

Third, and perhaps most importantly for the AP World History Exam, the Crusades prove that even the efforts of conquest and expansion that fail to reach their goals still have a major impact on world history: They lead to interaction between cultures that might not otherwise interact. The Crusades put Europe back into the sphere of the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries. That interaction fueled trade and an exchange of ideas. It also led to western Europe's rediscovery of new aspects of its ancient past, which was being preserved by the Byzantine and Islamic Empires. That rediscovery fueled huge changes in Europe, which we'll talk about in the next chapter.

C. Other Reasons People Were on the Move

Interaction among and within civilizations occurred during this period in history for many reasons other than trade or conquest. As populations grew, people needed more room to spread out. This not only led to huge movements of people, such as the Germanic tribes into southern Europe, but also to more crowded conditions on the manor or in small towns. The result was the burgeoning of ever-larger cities; once the cities became larger, more opportunities were created there, which pulled more and more people in from the countryside.

Some cities grew not just because of a general population increase, but because they were intentionally established as centers of civilization. Think about the empires in this chapter. The eastern Roman Empire, which of course became the Byzantine Empire, was headquartered at Constantinople, which was specifically built as a center to draw people. In fact, capitals were moved all the time to create an aura of a rising empire. The Islamic Empire moved to Baghdad under the Abbasid Dynasty. The Fujiwara moved the capital of Japan to Heian. The Mongols built a city at Samarkand, as did the Malians at Timbuktu, and the Maya at Tikal. The list goes on and on. Every time an empire built a new city to flaunt itself, it drew thousands of people. This is true especially to the degree that these civilizations built universities, which by their nature drew people from around the empire. That meant people who weren't living in the same city in the past were now living together. The result? More cultural diffusion.

Pilgrimages were a third reason that people during this time period were constantly on the move. Rome and Constantinople certainly attracted thousands to their grand cathedrals, but the Islamic duty to travel to Mecca was no doubt the most significant destination of religious pilgrimages. Imagine the thousands upon thousands who traveled from the vast reaches of the Islamic world. Imagine the amount of cultural diffusion that occurred as a result. Just think of Mansa Musa and you'll be convinced.

V. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS 600 C.E.–1450

Once again, it is interaction that leads to innovation. This period is marked by expanding trade, expanding empires and expanding interactions. All lead to increased wealth, frequent cultural borrowing, and the development of new ideas. Many of these new innovations came from the eastern societies—China and India, filtered through the Islamic world. By 1450, most of these new ideas had made their way back to Europe, following the Crusaders, merchants, and missionaries.

Islamic World	China
paper mills (from China)	gunpowder cannons
universities	moveable type
astrolabe and sextant	paper currency
algebra (from Greece)	porcelain
chess (from India)	terrace farming
modern soap formula	water-powered mills
guns and cannons (from China)	cotton sails
mechanical pendulum clock	water clock
distilled alcohol	magnetic compass
surgical instruments (syringe etc.)	state-run factories

Trade Networks and Agriculture

In addition to ideas that began to move around the world, trade networks moved agricultural products. Some of these would result in great environmental changes, influence trade networks, and motivate exploration and conquest.

VI. CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The spread of Islam, the openness of Christianity and Buddhism, the development of new empires based on wealth and acquisition of property, and the revitalization of neo-Confucianism impacted the status of women around the world. Continuing from the previous time period, restrictions on women's freedoms depended on which caste or class they belonged to. At the uppermost levels, a woman could overcome the status of her gender and assume leadership roles if there was no male heir or if the male heir was very young. Generally, however, as societies became more urban and wealthy, women, especially those of the elite or upper classes, had their freedoms further restricted even as their status in society rose. This can be seen in the increased veiling of women in the Islamic world and among Christians in the Mediterranean world (especially Italy and Spain), the custom of foot binding in neo-Confucian China, and the young age of marriage in South Asia.

Trade and the arrival of new religions did not significantly change the role of women in African societies—as pastoral nomads, many of the African societies were relatively egalitarian. Even when sedentary lifestyles developed, women had a great deal of freedom and societies were sometimes matrilineal and matriarchal. Women commanded a bride-price rather than having to give a dowry, and were considered a valuable source of wealth. “Mother of the King” was a political office in many African societies, and women participated in specific religious rituals controlled solely by women. Although both Islam and Christianity found converts in Africa, women were less eager to convert than men and the practice of veiling was met with mixed reactions.

Changes in the status and role of women included access to more education as societies continued to prosper and interact. This is true of the Confucian cultures of China and Japan, where women were highly literate and expected to understand proper virtue and their role in the household. Overall, however, even when they were educated and wealthy, most women had far less power than their male counterparts and were subject to any number of cultural and legal restrictions.

Women's Status in Ancient Societies			
Europe	Islam	India	China
strict and patriarchal social divisions	equality in religion, but separate in mosque	strict patriarchal caste system	strict Confucian social order and guidelines for virtuous behavior
could inherit land and take oaths of vassalage, but property belonged to husband	received half inheritance of male children	child marriages	access to dowries and owned businesses
could bring a court case, but not participate in decision	testimony had less weight than male	practice of <i>sati</i> for widows (See Chapter 9.)	widow to remain with son; no property if remarried
division of labor; women in textiles		family textile labor	silk weaving as female occupation
Christian monogamy	concubines and seclusion in harems	marriage limited to caste members	concubines and seclusion in harems
education limited to upper class males	literate society	education limited	literate society, but state education limited to men
did not recognize illegitimate children	all children are seen as legitimate		
veiling of upper class	veiling in public	<i>pardah</i> : veiling or seclusion	foot binding

VII. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

In the previous section, we hope that you were able to pull a lot of the history from this time period together in some meaningful ways, especially as it relates to cultural interaction.

There's no question that the spread and growth of religion had enormous consequences during this time period. That should be clear to you. There's also no question that the issue of centralization versus noncentralization seems to have an impact on a civilization. Look at what it meant for Europe, Japan, China, and India. Beyond the issues of interaction, centralization, and the growth of religion, there's also something else you should be thinking about: how to organize the world in your head.

In modern times, we have clear boundaries between countries, but in addition to using those political boundaries, we talk of cultural regions all the time. We'll say things like "the West" or "the East." That's fine, but where's the dividing line? Is modern-day Russia part of the East or the West? What about Saudi Arabia? What about Japan?

In addition, we'll split even our own country into manageable pieces that don't have specific, exact geographic boundaries. We'll say "the South" and what we're referring to is a culture more than a place. Is Florida part of "the South?" Northern Florida probably is, but the rest of Florida has a very different feel.

We bring all this up because this kind of stuff is a big deal for the AP test writers. Sometimes it's easier to think about and write about history in terms of cultural areas, rather than political boundaries. "The Islamic World," for example, would mean not just countries that are predominately Muslim, but communities or individuals within non-Muslim countries who participate in the culture of Islam. Or think about the "Jewish community." In the time period covered by this chapter, Jews were scattered throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia. There was no Jewish state, only a Jewish culture. Nevertheless, the Jewish culture maintained its identity.

In terms of the era that you've just reviewed, you might want to think of the world in terms of major cultural divisions. Religions help. You can think of developments in the Christian sphere, the Islamic sphere, the Hindu sphere, and the Buddhist sphere. Don't forget, though, that some of these spheres overlap, and some of them coexist with other religions or belief systems (Confucianism and Buddhism, for example). You can also think of developments in terms of expanding empires and feudal systems. Even more generally, think of the world in terms of cultures that interacted and those that didn't.

However you choose to think about the world in terms of cultural areas or structural similarities, the important thing is that you try to analyze the history. Doing so will force you to make comparisons and contrasts among the cultures. And doing that will get your brain cranking in the way the AP exam will expect you to demonstrate. The more you think about how these cultures can be organized, the more familiar you'll be with world history.

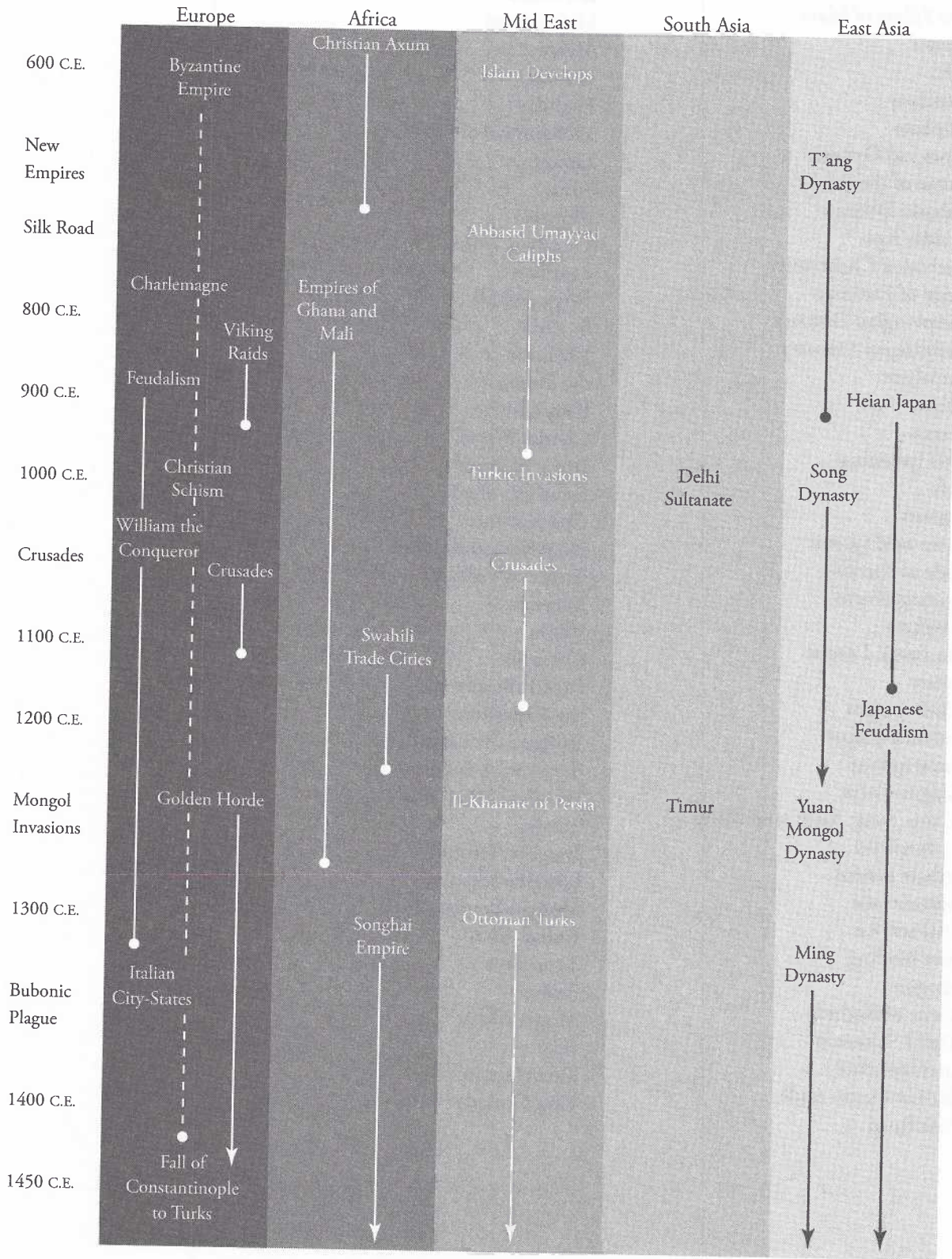
Key Terms

Islam (Shiites and Sunnis)
Five Pillars of Islam
Qu'ran
hijira
theocracy
caliphate
Umayyad Dynasty
Dome of the Rock
Abbasid Dynasty
Middle Ages
Orthodox Christianity
Code of Justinian
Merovingian Dynasty
Carolingian Dynasty
feudalism
nobles
vassals
serfs (peasants)
fiefs
manors
three-field system
code of chivalry
primogeniture
burghers
Hanseatic League
heresy
scholasticism
bubonic plague
interregnum
Magna Carta
T'ang, Song, Yuan, and Ming
dynasties
tribute system
bureaucracy
civil service
foot binding
shogun
Code of Bushido
Delhi Sultanate
oral literature
Indian Ocean trade
Silk Road

Key People, Places, and Events

Muhammad
Mecca
Medina
Baghdad
Mohammad al-Razi
Levant
Sufis
Mongols
Ottoman Turks
Justinian
Hagia Sophia
St. Cyril
Vladimir
the Franks
King Clovis
Charles Martel
Battle of Tours
Pepin the Short
Charlemagne
Holy Roman Empire
Treaty of Verdun
Magyars
Vikings
Crusades
Pope Innocent III
the Inquisition
William the Conqueror
the Spanish Inquisition
Hundred Years' War
Tatars
Ivan the Terrible
Genghis Khan
Mongol Empire
Kublai Khan
Tamerlane
Axum
Mansa Musa
Benin
Tenochtitlan
First Crusade

VIII. TIMELINE OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS 600 C.E.—1450



REFLECT

Respond to the following questions:

- For which content topics discussed in this chapter do you feel you have achieved sufficient mastery to answer multiple-choice questions correctly?
- For which content topics discussed in this chapter do you feel you have achieved sufficient mastery to discuss effectively in a short-answer response or essay?
- For which content topics discussed in this chapter do you feel you need more work before you can answer multiple-choice questions correctly?
- For which content topics discussed in this chapter do you feel you need more work before you can discuss effectively in a short-answer response or essay?
- What parts of this chapter are you going to re-review?
- Will you seek further help outside of this book (such as a teacher, tutor, or AP Students) on any of the content in this chapter—and, if so, on what content?

REPORT

Submitted to the Board of Directors

- 1. The first objective of the study was to determine the extent of the problem.
- 2. The second objective was to identify the causes of the problem.
- 3. The third objective was to propose effective solutions.
- 4. The fourth objective was to implement the proposed solutions.
- 5. The fifth objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions.