A CONCISE SURVEY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Supremacies and Diversities throughout History

BRIAN A. PAVLAC

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Brian A. Pavlac

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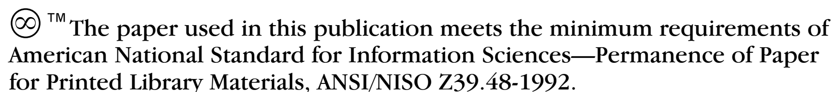
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Acknowledgments

I was interested in history from a young age, as most kids are. Too often, as they grow older, kids lose their fascination with the past, partly because it becomes another something they have to learn rather than a path of self-understanding or even just ''neat stuff.'' Wonderful teachers taught me history through the years, and partly inspired by them, I foolishly went on to study history in college. Before I knew it, history became my intended profession; and I have been fortunate to make a living from history.

In teaching courses over the years, I found my own voice about what mattered. Instead of simply sharing my thoughts in lectures, I produced this book. Former teachers, books I have read and documentaries I have viewed, historical sites I have visited, all have contributed to the knowledge poured into these pages. Likewise, many students, too many to be named, have sharpened both words and focus. I owe thanks to the many readers whose suggestions have improved the text. For their help to me in getting this project as far as it has come, I have to thank a number of specific people. I appreciate my editor, Susan McEachern, who gave the book her time and consideration, and her associate, Carrie Broadwell-Tkach, as well as Michele Tomiak and Jehanne Schweitzer. Various people have read drafts and offered useful suggestions: Mark Reinbrecht, Linae Steitz Marek, Megan Lloyd, and especially Jean O'Brien. I thank Cristofer Scarboro, Charles Ingram, Nicole Mares, and Ada Borkowski-Gunn for their feedback from teaching. Helping me with reviewing and editing have been my daughters, Helen K. Pavlac and Margaret Mackenzie Pavlac. Finally, most of all, my spouse, Elizabeth Lott, has sustained me through it all. Her skills in grammar, logic, and good sense have made this a far better book.

The final version is never complete. Every new history source I read makes me want to adjust an adjective, nudge a nuance, or fix a fact. With every reading of this text, I find room for improvement. I have made a great effort for accuracy. Should any errors have crept in, please forgive the oversight and contact me with your proposed corrections.

How to Use This Book

Learning is difficult. If it were easy, everyone would be educated. In this age of multimedia, reading still remains one of the best ways to learn something. Of course, reading well is not always easy. You cannot read a nonfiction informative work such as this in the same way as you would a Harry Potter novel. Those novels, though, are full of information with strange new terms, from *muggles* to *Hogwarts*, that people learn easily and absorb into their knowledge. The same could be true of learning history if you loved it as much as historians do.

I hope to make learning history as enjoyable as possible, even to those who are not historians, not in love with the past. Even as a survey, this book offers one person's opinion about what is good, bad, useful, and wasteful to know about our wider civilization. As it is meant to be a concise book, I have tried to keep it brief. This book covers the minimum historical information that educated adults should know, in the author's opinion, while also providing a tightly focused narrative and interpretive structure. This approach applies major themes of conflict and creativity. Other approaches might be equally as valuable. Indeed, to be truly educated, you should be looking at a variety of views about the past. History is rarely simple. This version provides a foundation for learning more.

The phrase ''supremacies and diversities'' describes the unifying theme through which this text evaluates the past. ''Supremacies'' focus on the use of power to dominate societies, ranging from warfare to ideologies. Supremacy seeks stability, order, and amalgamation. ''Diversities'' encompass the creative impulse that creates new ideas as well as people's efforts to define themselves as different. Diversity creates change, opportunity, and individuality. A tension, of course, arises between the ''supremacy'' desire for conformity and the ''diversity'' idea of individuality. This interaction has clearly driven historical conflict and change.

Fulfilling the survey function, this narrative develops political, economic, technological, social, and cultural trends, depending on the historical period. The book does not much emphasize the everyday-life aspects of people in the past. While lifestyle can offer an interesting reflection of larger issues, it in itself rarely promotes change. Five main topical themes regularly inform how this text looks at change: technological innovation, migration and conquest, political and economic decision

making, church and state, and disputes about the meaning of life. These topics have significantly altered history and are still influential in the present.

How could you best learn from this book? Read well. This time-tested advice applies to anything you might want to learn thoroughly for the rest of your life. Here are a few steps:

1. Read the text in a space and at a time conducive to reading—not in the few minutes before class, not with television and music blaring.
2. Prudently mark up, underline, highlight, and otherwise annotate your text as you study. Use the margins for notes, questions, comments, and marks to remind you of some important point.
3. Critique the book as you read; enter into its conversation. You might comment in the margins on the following points:

   Connections between themes, ideas, or subjects
   Ideas you agree with
   Ideas you disagree with
   Reactions provoked by the text
   Points or subjects of particular interest to you
   Points or subjects you would like to know more about

4. At the end of each section, jot down notes or write a brief essay about what you read. The review question at the end of each section and the open space there provide a useful opportunity.
5. Use the timelines to review and structure your knowledge according to theme or time period. The most important terms in the text appear in **boldface** and are listed in the timelines. Additionally, definitions for important terms, which appear in ***boldface italics*** in the text, are given in the glossary.
6. If you wish to deepen your experience with the past, try the "Suggested Readings" listed at the end of the book. They provide essential points of view or capture the spirit of their times, sometimes at great length. For other useful and concise sources and study information, see the website.

Finally, connect what you learn here to the rest of your experience. The more you know, the more you can know. And, according to the liberal arts credo, the more you know, the better will be your decisions about your life.

CHAPTER 1

History's Story

"Now" can never take place again. Each moment is surrendered to the past, to be forgotten or to be remembered. In our personal lives, we treasure or bury memories on our own. Our larger society, however, entrusts historians with preserving and making sense of our collective existence. Historians recapture the past by applying particular methods and skills that have been nurtured over the past few centuries. Although such processes are not without problems, the work done by historians has created the subject known as **Western civilization**.

THERE'S METHOD

"How do we know anything?" is our starting point. As **humans**, some of our knowledge comes from instinct; we are born with it, beginning with our first cry and suckle. Yet instinct makes up a small portion of human knowledge. Most everything we need to know we learn in one way or another. First, we learn through direct experience of the senses. These lessons of life can sometimes be painful (fire), other times pleasurable (chocolate). Second, other people teach us many important matters through example and setting rules. Reading this book because of a professor's requirement may be one such demand. Third, human beings can apply reason to figure things out. This ability enables people to take what they know, then learn and rearrange it into some new understanding.

The discipline of ***history*** is one such form of reasoning. History is not just knowing something—names, dates, facts—about the past. The word *history* comes from the Greek word ιστορία for "inquiring," or asking questions. The questioning of the past has been an important tool for gaining information about ourselves. Indirectly, it helps us to better define the present.

Quite often authorities, the people in charge, have used history to shape groups whose shared identities bonded them together into a community. Sharing a view of history can forge social bonds and justify a particular place in the world. For many peoples, history has embodied a mythology that reflected their relationship to the gods. Or history chronicled the deeds of kings, justifying royal rulership. History also sanctioned domination and conquest of one people over another. Most

people are raised to believe that their own country or nation is more virtuous and righteous than those beyond their borders. The history of Western civilization abounds with examples of these attitudes.

Then, about two hundred years ago, several men began to try to improve our understanding of the past. Historians began to organize as a profession based in the academic setting of universities. They imitated and adapted the scientific method (see chapter 10) for their own use, renaming it the **historical method** (see table 1.1). In the scientific method, scientists pose hypotheses as reasonable guesses about explanations for how nature works. They then observe and experiment to prove or disprove their hypotheses. In the historical method, historians propose hypotheses to describe and explain how history changes. The two main problems historians have focused on are **causation** (how something happened) and **significance** (what impact something had). Unlike scientists, historians cannot conduct experiments or run historical events with different variables.[1] Historians

Table 1.1. The Historical Method

1. Find a problem.
2. Form a hypothesis.
3. Conduct research.

Questions to ask of sources:

- A. External: Is it genuine? Is it what it says it is?
  - When and where was it made?
  - How did it get from its original recording to the present?
  - Who is the author?
  - What is the author's opportunity for making the source? Is it his/her own eyewitness information or an indirect report? Is it consistent with his/her known character?
  - Any interpolations, emendations, or insertions by others?
- B. Internal: What is its meaning? How is it significant?
  - What is the source's ostensible or intended purpose?
  - How accurate is the author (any competence, bias, prejudice)?
  - What is the source's content?
  - How does it compare with what else is known or written by the author and/or with other reliable sources?
  - What do modern scholars say about the source?

4. Make the argument and conclusions, usually in written form.
5. Share the knowledge, usually through publication.

Note: The step-by-step process of the historical method rigorously questions sources in order to reconstruct the best version of the past.

1. Alternative histories are an increasingly popular genre of fiction. Similar to science fiction's guesses about the future, alternative histories are based on "what if" issues of the past: what would have happened differently if, for example, some leader had not been killed or some nation had not lost a war? Reading good examples can help you learn history.

cannot even obtain direct observational evidence—there are no time machines. Instead, historians have to pick through whatever evidence has survived. They call these data **sources**.

At first, historians sought out sources among the written records that had been preserved over centuries in musty books and manuscripts. Eventually historians learned to study objects, ranging from needles to skyscrapers, made by people. Obviously, not all sources are of equal value. Those sources connected directly with past events are called **primary sources**. These are most important for historical investigation.

When evaluating these sources, historians face two problems. For one, evidence for many events has not survived at all or survives only in fragments. For another, some people have forged sources. Much of historical research involves questioning human character, deciding who is honest or deceitful, trustworthy or undependable. Then, through careful examination and questioning, historians try to write the most reliable and accurate explanation of past events, carefully citing their sources.

As the last and most important part of the historical method, professional historians have shared their information with one another. They produce **secondary sources**, usually books and articles. At academic conferences and in more books and articles, historians learn from and judge one another's work. They debate and challenge one another's arguments and conclusions. Often a consensus about the past emerges. Generally, agreed-on views begin to appear in **tertiary sources**, such as encyclopedias and handbooks. Although tertiary sources are several steps removed from the past, they are often the best place for a novice to begin research about a subject since they offer convenient summaries and overviews.

Because the past is so vast and its sources so numerous, historians have always divided it up into smaller, more convenient chunks. All history is about selection, choosing what to examine. Professional historians usually specialize, become experts, in one small slice of the past. Since so many historians publish books today, hardly anyone can ever read all that has been written about any single subject. New books and articles emerge each year, especially about popular topics such as the American Civil War or Hitler. The history of even one day covered in any detail would be long and confusing; the novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce, about the events of 16 July 1904, is an interesting example. Whether writing many volumes or a slim book, it is impossible to cover every detail on even a small subject. Something is always left out.

Therefore, historians prioritize to make the past manageable. They select some events or places as more important than others in answering questions about the past. For example, in one person's life, a one-time decision, such as which college to attend, would probably be more essential to include in her biography than a description about what she chose to eat for breakfast on the day the decision was made. The former probably deserves more attention, since that choice can change a life. The quality of a unique, decisive historical moment is usually more interesting than the quantity of mundane events. However, the description of breakfast choice might be valuable, if, for example, years of eating too much bacon and eggs led to heart disease or a dose of poison killed a person. Few readers, though, would want

to read a close description of every repeated meal. Selection and generalization prevent us from becoming overwhelmed.

Historians can select only a few bits of the past, leaving out the vast majority of human activities. They then categorize or organize their selections into sensible stories and arguments. For example, eating breakfast differs a lot from choosing a college or waging a war. Fighting battles and engaging in politics were once considered by historians to be the only important human activities worthy of investigation. Politics—kings, wars, treaties, and rebellions—once dominated historical writing. Within the past century, however, historians have broadened their interests to include a wider range of human activities. These days, many historians examine social matters: family, sex roles, food, and fashion. Even a shift in breakfast habits from waffles and bacon cooked by Mom to drive-in processed portions of an Egg McMuffin® can illustrate something about a **society**, a coherent group of people.

Historians categorize the past in three main ways. The first and most obvious division is **chronological**, using time as a dividing point. The most natural division of time is the day, with its cycle of sunlight and darkness. This cycle regulates us all. Some particular days, like those on which battles are waged or a notable inspiration is put to paper, can change the course of history. A larger natural unit of time is the year, especially important for people in temperate climates who experience the change of seasons. Finally, the basic human experience stretches, for each of us, over a lifetime. Some lives are short, others seem long, but all are finite and end in death. Yet history marches on.

Aside from natural portions of time, historians divide up history into manageable blocks. In the largest artificial division, historians split the past into two periods: **prehistory** and history. Prehistory includes everything humans did up to the first invention of writing, about five thousand years ago in the Middle East and East Asia. We can examine human activity before writing only through physical remains and artifacts, such as bones and shaped stones.

Technology (use of raw materials to make tools), ideology, and narrower political movements also define different eras. The names for the Stone Age or the Iron Age are based on the use of those materials for making tools during those times. The term *Middle Ages* draws on the perceptions of politics and culture that fall between the ancient and modern epochs. The titles of the ages of Renaissance or Enlightenment derive from artistic and intellectual achievements. Sometimes a country's dynasty or ruling family provides a useful marker. Given our preference for round numbers, a century fits into historical schemes, especially the more recent nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Many of the commonly used historical labels, terms such as *antiquity*, *medieval*, and *Renaissance*, were not drawn from the sources and lives of past people; instead, historians later coined those terms. Historians apply such divisions to the past to show both what the people within a period shared in common and what they have to teach us.

While chronology applies time to divide up the past, **geographical** divisions, where events took place on our planet, are equally as common. The largest unit is world or global history. Historians are increasingly finding connections and continuities among civilizations around the planet. By the twentieth century, people were clearly bound together worldwide. At the opposite end of size, the smallest

unit could be a town, a college, or even a home. Historians usually focus somewhere between these two extremes, most frequently dealing with a country, nation, or state. Indeed, history became a profession in modern times as academics constructed national stories for the modern nation-states.

The third method that historians use to slice up the past is a **topical** approach, separating the wide range of human activities into smaller groupings of human enterprise. For example, historians today often specialize in areas of intellectual, social, constitutional, gender, literary, diplomatic, or military history.

The timelines in this book apply six main divisions. First is ***science*** and technology: how we understand the universe and build tools to cope with it. Second is **economics**: how we create and manage the distribution of wealth. Third is **politics**: how people create systems to organize collective decisions. Fourth is **social structures**: the units and hierarchies (such as families and communities) within which people place themselves and the humble activities of daily life. Fifth is **culture**, especially those works and activities that people fashion in order to cope with, understand, or simply share their experiences of the world. Culture includes **art** (largely visual creations), **literature** (compositions of words to be read or performed), and recreation (acts ranging from sports to hobbies). Finally are both ***philosophy*** and ***religion***: how people understand the purpose of life and the meaning of death, which usually involves the supernatural, or beliefs in a reality beyond our senses. These six topics essentially embrace all human accomplishments. Human creativity, though, has led to a wide variety of approaches to these six topics. Collections of people, called societies, have formed and dissolved throughout human history, in various times and places, each living according to its own unique mixture of scientific, economic, political, social, cultural, and religious attitudes. Historians describe and explain these societies in and of themselves and in their conflicts with neighboring peoples. Encounters between people from different cultures have driven change, violent through war, profitable by trade and technology, inspiring from ideas.

Historians, and this text, define certain coherent large collections of peoples as civilizations, especially when they structure significant political, social, and cultural life around cities. The term *civilization* has too often conveyed a sense of sophisticated superiority of the so-called civilized over those who do not belong (see chapter 2). Try to avoid such labeling.

Even when civilization merely defines a collection of people and their practices and ideas, it remains a fluid concept. Where any civilization began (or ended), whether in time, geographic boundary, or membership, depends on who defines it or how. What makes one civilization distinct from another is the degree to which sufficient numbers of its people adopted particular attitudes. No civilization has existed in isolation. Political borders did not prevent people from bringing different beliefs and products into contact with one another. One people might change by free choice, force, or gradual assimilation, or they might continue in their traditional habits. Civilizations do not need to progress or decline (although most have). Progress reflects more power and complexity, while decline involves more disorder and vulnerability to enemies.

Most people have historically tended to view the world from their own vantage

points. Historians naturally tend to focus on their own national history. Whether in America, Europe, Asia, or Africa, historians have too rarely gazed across borders and boundaries to see how often and in what ways people have acted and believed in common. This particular text reviews the rise of the society known to many historians as Western civilization. As an academic subject it originated about one hundred years ago, after the United States had risen to become a world power. Many American historians saw a shared Western past with other European nations that had also risen to global-power status. If Americans learned only U.S. history without understanding how it fit into the larger culture of competing European powers, Americans would misunderstand their own heritage and the challenges of the future. The founders of the study of Western civilization consciously tried to weave together American with European history, showing the common origins of so much that Americans, and Europeans, took for granted. Thus Western civilization courses and texts began to multiply.

Western civilization is worth studying because it organizes a large portion of interrelated history. The West is not necessarily better in creativity or virtue than many other civilizations that arose around the world, although many past historians have thought so. This review will often point out where the West borrowed knowledge and when its moral virtue fell short of its proclaimed ideals. Undoubtedly, the West became more powerful. Western civilization also became the dominant society of the modern world. To understand it is to comprehend how many of the globe's institutions, practices, and ideologies came to function as they do, for good or ill.

The word *Western* obviously reveals a strong geographical component. The name separates it from what might be considered northern, southern, or Eastern civilizations. While historians have not created a category for northern or southern civilizations, the term *Eastern* (or *oriental*, from the Latin for where the sun rises) used to be applied to what historians now prefer to call Asian civilizations (China and India, for example). Just as the Orient comes from the place of the rising sun over the Eurasian landmass, the Occident derives from where it sets. As this book will show, the self-defined Western civilization began in the specific geographical area of **western Europe**, the northwestern extension of land from the vast landmass of Eurasia and Africa, bordered by the North Sea, the Western Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic. Sometimes the West ranges over much larger territory, however. Its first inspirations lay in the Middle East, the region including the river systems of the Tigris and Euphrates and the Nile. The core of its culture then developed around the Mediterranean Sea until it shifted toward western Europe. About five hundred years ago, bearers of Western civilization began to conquer much of Eurasia and many overseas territories. Today, Western civilization dominates societies around the whole world and is, in turn, being transformed by them. Where the West begins, endures, or ends are some of the vital questions in the world today.

Just as geography defines the West, so does its chronology. Setting an exact starting date presents as many difficulties as setting its contemporary borders. One self-defining moment in Western tradition appears in its calendar, today accepted by many people around the world. The Western chronology divides history into two periods, labeled with the initials B.C. and A.D. These large periods mark the

founding of Christianity by Jesus of Nazareth about two thousand years ago (see chapter 6). Most people can readily say B.C. means "before Christ," but fewer can explain that A.D. is the abbreviation for "anno Domini," which means "in the year of the Lord" and refers again to Jesus of Nazareth. Many current history writers, apparently uncomfortable with the religious roots of our calendar, have switched to using the terms B.C.E. and C.E., meaning "before the common era" and "common era." Nevertheless, no other event changed history around two thousand years ago to make any civilization more "common." This book's use of the terms B.C. and A.D. is not intended to privilege Christianity but merely to recognize its traditional usefulness in understanding our dating system.

Rather than this simple duality centered on Christianity, historians more sensibly divide the Western past into three or four periods. Ancient history (which includes prehistory) usually ends around A.D. 500. The Middle Ages then follow, ending any time between 1300 and 1789, depending on the historical point of view. Then early modern history might begin as early as 1400 or as late as 1660 and last until either the modern or contemporary periods take over in the past few centuries. The year 1914 seems useful as a starting point for contemporary history because of the first modern world war. To make the past still more manageable, this narrative divides up the past into fifteen parts, or chapters (with an epilogue to both sum up and point forward). The above dates and eras, of course, make sense only in relation to the history of Europe. Other civilizations need other markers, although historians often try to impose Western categories on world history.

This survey assigns the beginning of Western civilization to between fifteen and eleven hundred years ago, as western Europe recovered from the disaster of the collapse of its part of the Roman Empire. Understanding how this civilization built on previous human experiences, however, requires our reaching back beyond the fall of Rome to humanity's beginnings. Therefore, this particular book covers prehistory and the West's deep roots in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions. Sometimes coverage overlaps between chapters, and it certainly intensifies the closer it is to the present, because recent events impact our present more directly. Chapter 2 lightly skims over several million years, while chapter 15 rushes through only a few decades.

Covering much of Western history in fifteen chapters requires careful selection of the most resonant information. This narrative touches on all the basic topics of politics, economics, technology, society, culture, and intellectual cultural trends, depending on the historical period. This story does not emphasize the everyday-life aspects of people in the past, such as what children ate or how families lived in their homes. While these aspects are interesting and instructive, they in themselves rarely promote significant change in large societies. Five main topical themes regularly guide the flow: technological innovation, migration and conquest, political and economic decision making, church and state, and disputes about the meaning of life. These topics have significantly affected the past and are still influential in the present.

This book, then, covers a lot of time, over a large part of the world, involving many human events. As a concise history, it necessarily leaves out a great deal. Historians are always making choices about what they want to study, what approach

they take, and what stays in. As you learn more about history, you can choose for yourself what to learn. For a beginning, the presentation of this text should ground you in the basics of this civilization called the West.

Review: *How do historians study and divide up the past?*

Response:

WHAT IS TRUTH?

History is a human production. Every idea, institution, painting, document, movement, war, or invention originated with a human being. People believe in, fight for, die for, and kill for ideas. While natural forces such as flood, drought, and disease affect people and may influence the course of history, people choose how to react to those disasters. No ''force'' by itself works to change history.

True power comes from people joined together. People usually organize themselves so that some lead and others follow. Motivations for forming larger groups could include love, favoritism, hunger, greed, blood loyalty, defense of hearth and home, cruelty, and others. The variety of human experiences guarantees different points of view. The challenge for historians is to sort through those views and reach the best explanation of how history changes and what it should mean to us.

In this book's version of history, choices about what to include or exclude are shaped by the broad culture of the modern West, the personal judgment of recent professional historians and the author. In today's modern culture, factions of people sharply disagree about politics, economics, science, and even the meaning of words. Cultural guardians argue over which sets of facts and interpretations today's citizens and students should be required to learn. Some differences are inevitable. The vast amount of possible information imposes selection, as do individual perspectives and agendas. As people select what goes into their history, the accounts will differ from one another.

Degrees of ***subjectivity*** versus ***objectivity*** affect any accurate version of the past. Objectivity is seeing things in an impartial way, while subjectivity involves a view ranging from **bias** (inclination toward a particular point of view) all the way to **prejudice** (dismissal of other points of view). Good historians strive to be objective, but no one can entirely escape being somewhat subjective. All historians, being

human, are affected by certain mindsets. The historian Herbert Butterfield referred to the "magnet in men's minds" that attracts only information that already aligns with a person's political and social inclinations. Unfortunately for us all, few people really learn from history; most people use history only to confirm what they already believe.

This lack of perspective has been a phenomenon throughout time, shaping or reflecting the values of whole cultures. Different societies have seen their past according to shared grand concepts. In our Western civilization, the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Germans believed in both the intervention of divine beings and a powerful role of unchangeable fate. The rise and fall of people, or nations, followed according to the will of the gods. The Jews saw themselves as being chosen by one all-powerful god, who reserved for them a special place in history. The Christians of the Middle Ages supposed that they were caught in a battle of good versus evil. They condemned their enemies, even if those enemies were fellow Christians, to hell. Thinking in the Enlightenment reasoned that history conformed to unalterable laws of nature. In reaction, adherents of romanticism and nationalism embraced the jungle's competition of claw and fang and cheered on nations warring against one another for supremacy. All of these versions of history's purpose made perfect sense to people at the time. Their histories usually glorified their own achievements and diminished their own flaws. Nor are we in our time exempt from the limitations of our own points of view, which may one day seem quaint or even wrongheaded.

As for our view of the past today, the historical method gives us much of what actually happened, insofar as it can be known. The trustworthiness of history depends on whether it presents **fact**, **opinion**, or **myth**. Facts are those pieces of historical information that all reasonable people agree upon. They are the data of history, drawn from a serious examination of the sources. Once proved by historians, facts are the most reliable and least arguable information available. They come closest to anything we can call truth.

Although we rely on facts, the information can be manipulated. Facts become what people make them into. They may be blown out of proportion or neglected into nonexistence. To use a metaphor, facts are the bricks of historical work. Hard and rough, they can be used to frame a hearth or build a wall, but they can also be tossed aside or thrown through a window. Because of gaps in historical preservation, many facts will always be missing. A historian contemplating an ancient ruin has little information, since bricks have been lost, destroyed, or perhaps never even made in the first place. In contrast, a historian reviewing recent history may have too much information, piles upon piles of construction materials. Either way, we cannot really see behind the façade of the source. We try to read the minds of people in the past, attempt to see through their eyes, but perfect clarity is impossible.

Historians construct opinions using whatever facts are available. Almost all history writing consists of opinions, which historians form as they challenge one another about interpretations of the past. Opinions reveal the significance of the facts and show how they mattered to people in the past or to us today. Arguments among historians with differing opinions help to keep them honest. To extend the metaphor, a historian may say that one set of bricks belongs to a palace, yet another

historian, looking at the same bricks, might say they come from a fortress. Who is correct?

Without conclusive evidence (blueprints, foundations, eyewitness accounts), disputes may remain tangled. Usually the weight of public opinion leans one way or another. People will choose facts and opinions written by respectable historians or adopt positions that flatter their belief systems. Sometimes, new insights might lead to an alternative suggestion, such as a compromise—a palace-fortress. Good historians are ready to change their opinions, given solid evidence and cogent argument. This author might conceivably rewrite and improve every sentence of this book to respond to new information in the future. Every new source provides new nuance. This changeableness is not inconsistency, dodging, or flip-flopping, but rather a result of sound judgment.

To provide some coherence to what would otherwise be only a string of facts, historians build themes around what they think changes the course of history. They explain causation and significance in terms of the rise or decline of societies, crises or stability, the primacy of foreign or domestic policy, sex or power, or any number of drives and choices.

This book's themes of supremacies and diversities help to explain our complex past. Supremacies focus on how the use of power dominates societies. Those who want ***supremacy*** usually seek stability, order, and consolidation. They also often seek to expand their power over others by using anything from warfare to ideologies. People react to such power by accommodating and transforming themselves in obedience or by resisting in public or covert ways. Power may flow from the top down, from rulers to subjects, or from the bottom up, from the masses to the leaders. ***Diversity*** reflects the creative impulse that creates new ideas as well as people's efforts to define themselves as different. Those who promote diversity create change, opportunity, and individuality.

These two trends do not necessarily oppose each other. They are not a version of dialectic materialism (see chapter 10). The opposite of supremacy is inferiority; the contrary of diversity is uniformity. Nonetheless, both trends involve people excluding others who do not belong to the group. People who want supreme power usually demand ***universalism***, applying the same beliefs and practices to everyone. They would promote **acculturation**, where one ethnic group conforms its culture to another. Likewise, people's frequent tendency toward diversity often encourages ***particularism***, requiring that various ideas and activities differ according to location. In addition, the mixture of cultures may result in ***syncretism***, where elements of one join or blend with another. A tension thus may arise between the supremacy desire for conformity and the diversity push for variety, or the two may align together. One, or the other, or both intermingle in different societies and ages. This interaction has clearly driven historical conflict and change. Whether applied to politics, culture, or society, supremacies and diversities offer a structure in which to illustrate historical change.

Explanations based on facts and opinions can sometimes mutate into myths, which then complicate a historian's task. Myths are stories that give meaning to a society's existence. Because myths obscure the facts they draw on, they complicate getting at the truth. People embrace myths as true because they make sense of a

confusing world. Passed on from generation to generation, myths stubbornly exist beyond rational proof. These stories justify both the worst and the best behavior of individuals, societies, and states. The myths inherent in religion and the so-called lessons of history offer particular problems because they are shaping the meaning of life. Even religion, however, may not always offer clarity. In the Gospel of John (see chapter 6), Pilate asks Jesus, ''What is truth?'' and does not get an answer.

In the attempt to be objective, many modern historians try not to favor one religion or belief system as being more true than any other. Indeed, the rational and empirical historical method cannot assert any religion's validity or falsity. Religion draws on the ***supernatural***, which is beyond the limits of nature, to which historians are confined. This restriction does not deny religious truth but reasonably recognizes that no one religion has ever objectively proved to be real in all its supernatural aspects. Faith is there for those willing to believe, or not. The historian instead examines what the followers of any religion believed and, based on those beliefs, how they affected history.

People also want to believe good things about their own society. Thus, myths are often disguised as lessons learned from history. One should be cautious about them, since such myths are often too full of comforting pride. In particular, historical figures are often mythologized into heroes. Our own society promotes potent myths about figures such as Christopher Columbus or George Washington that resist change in the face of reality. Columbus was not alone in thinking the world was round; there is no evidence that Washington chopped down a cherry tree and confessed it to his father. These men might be notable, but their significance should not be based on stories that mislead.

The best history makes us self-critical, not self-congratulatory. Too often, someone's victory and satisfaction is someone else's defeat and suffering. Everyone joins in to take collective credit for victories, but resulting atrocities are done by isolated others. Cracking open myths and examining their core is essential to learning from history. This text will regularly offer ''basic principles,'' obvious statements of common historical behavior; they often contradict common myths and suppositions. The first basic principle is:

> **There is no such thing as the ''good ol' days,'' except in a limited way for a few people.**

People like to believe that there was once a golden age to which we should aspire to return. Whether in first-century Rome or early nineteenth-century Virginia, social elites have always proclaimed myths of their own supremacy to justify their status and power. Both societies, of course, benefited from slaves who did not enjoy the same luxuries as their masters. Of course, a limited number of people in some places did benefit from so-called good ol' days. Plenty of privileged people have always led lives of comfort and calm. If they lost those privileges, then they could legitimately claim that things used to be better. Yet this good life of the few has often been based on the exploitation of a much larger number of other people.

From a broader perspective, looking at the entire sweep of human history, most people have always faced difficulties. We all face our own mortality. There has probably never been a day when one individual did not kill another somewhere or when one people did not fight against another people. Disease, hunger, weather—these caused and still cause much misery. If people successfully confronted one moral problem, they failed in another. Each age has had its trials and tribulations as well as its ecstasies and excitements.

The challenge for this book is making sense of the Western past for someone unfamiliar with its history through the words of one particular author. As should be clear from the above discussion, no single view can be true for everyone, everywhere, forever. This historical account will regularly note the disputes, gaps, and disagreements of modern historians about specific interpretations. This history, however, cannot help but present an authorial voice, since its narrative follows the ebb and flow of supremacies and diversities. Like a reviewer of a book or film, this text both describes what happens and offers some value judgments. It often criticizes the flaws, failures, and contradictions inherent in the West. As the story unfolds, it points out the diverse options created during centuries of new ideas and practices by the many peoples that make up the West. Generalizations too often obscure detail and disagreement. Further reading and learning in history should reveal where this version is more or less objective, what it has omitted or overinterpreted. In a comparatively few pages, though, it offers a starting point to understand the essential people, events, and ideas of the West.

Historians offer the hope that we can learn from history to improve ourselves. The ultimate challenge for each of us is to form an opinion about history. Ask yourself: What can I learn that can give life more meaning? How can I make better decisions today based on the successes and failures of our ancestors? What knowledge of our heritage should I pass on to our descendants? This book offers some perspectives to help you answer those questions.

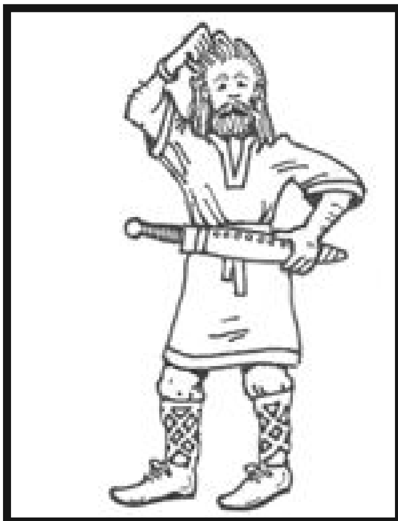
Review: *How can we evaluate history?*

Response:

CHAPTER 6

The Revolutionary Rabbi

Christianity, the Roman Empire, and Islam, 4 B.C. to A.D. 1453



While the Romans were sorting out the new imperial government of Augustus, in one small part of the Roman Empire called Palestine a series of events began whose effects would outlast the emperor's political reforms. In Palestine, many Jews resented Roman rule. A handful also began an obscure cult that later grew into the major religion called ***Christianity***. From its insignificant beginnings among a few believers in Judaea, this new faith triumphed over the whole Roman Empire, thus becoming an essential part of Western civilization.

THE SON OF MAN

Christianity started with **Yeshua** (or Joshua) **benJoseph of Nazareth**. His name has since become better known in its Latinized version, **Jesus Christ**. The Yeshua of

history became the Jesus of religion. Later myths settled the date of his birth on 25 December, the year 1 of the "Year of the Lord" (A.D., or in Latin, anno Domini). According to the best modern historians, Jesus was actually born in the springtime, in one of the years between 7 and 4 B.C. Therefore, any celebrations marking events in his lifetime two millennia later have been and will be a bit off the expected dates. As mentioned in the first chapter, medieval historians considered the appearance of Jesus in this world important enough to create the major dividing point in the calculation of the history of the universe, between B.C. ("Before Christ") and A.D.

Historically, Yeshua lived and died a Jew. The only surviving records of his life are from the writings of his followers in biographies called the **Gospels** ("Good News"). The authors of these stories, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were probably not those named in the Gospels themselves as Yeshua's disciples. These Gospels did not always clearly reveal Yeshua's teachings, complicating all interpretations about him ever since. Yeshua often used challenging parables to illustrate his teachings and did not propose an organized set of principles. Therefore, much of what we know about Jesus Christ has to be taken on faith, not facts.

Still, some general trends are easily observable. Yeshua criticized the Jewish religious establishment of his day, which he thought was not teaching people to prepare properly for the Kingdom of God. Our life in this world, he taught, determined our place in the next world, after death. The life after death, the Kingdom of God, was far more important than treasures accumulated in this existence. Yeshua constantly emphasized moral action over strictly following the letter of the Jewish religious laws. He criticized the rich, wanted to help the poor, and preached pacifism and forgiveness. According to the Gospels, he worked miracles (especially in healing the sick) to confirm and reinforce his teachings. To carry his message further, he gathered followers (disciples) and teachers (apostles).

During his three years of ministry, Yeshua generally avoided conflict with the Roman Empire ("Give to the emperors the things that are the emperors', and to God the things that are God's," Mark 12:17). The pressure of certain Jewish leaders to get rid of him swayed the local Roman imperial governor, Pontius Pilate, to convict Jesus of treason on his alleged claim to be the king of the Jews. Instead of resisting, Yeshua surrendered himself to death and ended up more powerful than ever. About the year 27, the Romans executed Jesus in the same way as they did many other condemned criminals: crucifixion. The victims of crucifixion were nailed alive to a large cross and hung on it until dehydration, hunger, exhaustion, or suffocation finally killed them in a painful ordeal that could last for days.

After Yeshua's execution by the Romans, his followers claimed that Jesus was resurrected in the body—that he physically became alive again and walked the earth until he ascended into heaven. Belief in resurrections was not unusual in those times (indeed, Yeshua is recorded as himself raising several people from the dead). Regardless of any debate about the truth of the resurrection, belief in it encouraged his followers. They multiplied from a small, persecuted group of Jews to a force that changed the course of Roman history.

"Who exactly was Jesus?" was the first question faced by his followers after Jesus' departure from this world. During his lifetime, he referred to himself most often as the "Son of Man," but that term's meaning is unclear. A few times he is

recorded as using the name "Anointed One" (**"Messiah"** in Hebrew or "Christ" from the Greek). The concept of the Messiah was a recurring theme in Jewish thought at the time. Many people in the first century were awaiting a savior who would rescue them from the troubles of this world. Jewish believers disagreed upon the exact manner of salvation, but they most often imagined a warrior-king. While Jesus certainly did not fit that view, Christians soon considered him to be much more than the Messiah. According to two of the Gospels, Jesus had a human as a mother and God as a father—but what does that actually mean? What is Jesus' connection to God and vice versa? These questions challenged the first Christians and still confuse many Christians today.

His followers' explanation about who Jesus was took four centuries to work itself out. They had to decide what was ***orthodoxy***, the genuine position supported by most of tradition, and what was ***heresy***, a belief close to, but rejected by, the religious authorities. A large group eventually identified as heretics held to ***Gnosticism***. Gnostics believed in secret knowledge that emphasized dualism, considering Jesus' human aspects as bad but his divine as good. Christian leaders eventually concluded that Jesus was not just the Christ, or the Son of God; Jesus was God himself, incarnate, in the flesh, a human being like us. He died on the cross, rose again, and after forty days ascended into heaven. Then, fifty days after his resurrection (commemorated as Pentecost, or the "fiftieth day"), the Holy Spirit came to spread the passion of faith among people. Christians, therefore, have held that the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit has ordained a universe where people live and die. After death, humans could end up in either one of two places. Righteous Christians who believed in Jesus' resurrection and behaved morally would be saved to spend eternity in blissful unity with God in heaven. Sinners would be damned to hell, surmised to be a place of horrible suffering, forever.

In coming to these conclusions about Jesus, the Christians worked their way through available sources. It took until the fourth century for Christians to agree that their Bible (which means "book") would include the Hebrew scriptures as an Old Testament and a New Testament of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one letters (epistles), and an apocalyptic text. Some writers who brilliantly expounded on the faith during the first few centuries of Christianity came to be called Church Fathers. They often took the role of apologists, which meant defending Christian viewpoints against those of Judaism, ancient philosophies, and mystery cults. Other writings, like the Gospels of Thomas or of Mary Magdalene, were banned and destroyed as misinformation.

Another early action of the Christians was to organize themselves into an institution called the Church. While all baptized Christians could be considered members of the Church, selected people became the Church's leaders and administrators. Many Christians accepted the idea of ***apostolic succession***, the belief that those whom Jesus had charged with his mission could pass on that authority to others, one to the next, and they, in turn, to still others. Thus began a distinction between the laity (normal Christians) and the **secular clergy** (Church officials). Overseers (later evolving into **bishops**) began to manage elders (priests) and servers (deacons). Each bishop had a special church called a cathedral (from the Latin for the

''bishop's chair'') from which he administered a territory called a diocese (or a see, or a bishopric). Church **councils**, starting with the first major one described in the Acts of the Apostles, brought the Christian leaders together to debate and resolve important controversies.

Through these discussions and interpretations of the scriptures, the Church leaders established several methods to help people in their heavenly pilgrimage. The Church taught that grace (God's gift of salvation) could be obtained through the beliefs, sacraments, and ceremonies of Christian worship. ***Baptism***, performed on all infants, initiated involvement in Church life, which carried through to the last rites before death. Most important was the **mass**: a performance with processions, prayers, readings, songs, and a sermon that culminated in a sacred meal, called Communion or the Eucharist. For most people it became the custom to attend mass on Sunday morning, which the Christians turned into their Sabbath, or Lord's Day. The sacraments became so important that the Church could threaten anyone who strayed from the proper path with ***excommunication***. That punishment excluded a sinner from the sacraments until he or she asked for forgiveness. The average peasant rarely worried about excommunication, though. The beliefs and rituals of Christianity did relieve some of the daily grind of life and the fear of death. The Christian calendar of the seven-day week, ending with a day of worship and rest, combined with various holidays (''holy days'') such as Easter (the day of Christ's resurrection) or Pentecost (fifty days later, when the Holy Spirit entered Christ's followers), increasingly shaped the living patterns of Christian society for the next few centuries.

In these early formative centuries, Christianity did not appear fully formed and obvious. It rose from discussions and controversy among believers. The early Christians disagreed with one another over what Jesus actually taught either about morality and behavior or about authority and obedience. These same questions confront Christians today, who have splintered into many different sects over these very issues. The solution to these questions was even more difficult in antiquity because the early Christians lived within a culture that was hostile to them.

Review: *How did the new religion of Christianity begin?*

Response:

THE CULTURAL WAR

Not surprisingly, the Jews were the first to attack the Christians, who had themselves all originally been Jewish. From Judaism the Christians had adapted the key belief system regarding Jesus as Messiah and God. For the Jews, however, Christianity was heresy. Many Jews were actively hostile to the new faith, and they had Christians arrested or stoned to death. Foremost among the persecutors was Saul of Tarsus. Then, on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus one day, Saul claimed to have had a vision of Jesus and converted to Christianity. He changed his name to **Paul of Tarsus** and became one of the leading apostles.

Encouraged by Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles (non-Jews) of Asia Minor and Greece, Christians took a decisive step away from Judaism when they opened up Christianity as a universal religion. While theoretically anyone could convert to Judaism, Jews tended to emphasize ethnic inheritance. In contrast, Christians abandoned obligations to many of the Jewish dietary rules and other restrictive laws to make their faith more hospitable to Gentiles. Paul's special success was in converting Gentiles to Christianity. Indeed, almost anyone could easily become a Christian, even among socially disadvantaged groups such as women, lower classes, outcasts, and slaves. Women even took on leadership roles as patrons, deacons, and apostles in the early Church. The Christian message of love and example of charity attracted many who found little care within other ancient religions and philosophies.

Christianity quickly spread outward from Palestine, whether to Jewish communities of the Diaspora or directly into the hellenized and Roman towns and cities of antiquity. At first, Christianity was an urban religion. The Christians relabled polytheism after the peasants of the countryside, using either ***paganism*** (after the word for farmers) or ***heathenism*** (after those who live on the heath). Unlike the Jews, Christians regularly used syncretism, adapting foreign customs to Christian practices, such as replacing pagan holidays with Christian ones. For example, the 25 December date of Christmas, the commemoration of Christ's birth, was chosen because it coincided with pagan festivals of the winter solstice. As a belief system, Christianity offered something different from the civic religions, the mystery cults, and the schools of philosophy, all sanctioned and supported by the state. The official myth-based religions were too empty of fervor, the mystery cults were too exclusive and secretive, and philosophy was too intellectually challenging. In comparison, Christianity offered a religion of passion, open to all, Greek or Roman, rich or poor, male or female, slave or free.

The Roman Empire, however, did not make life easy for Christians. As viewed by the imperial authorities, Christianity remained an illegal religion. By the first century A.D., the Romans had unified their empire through a state religion based on sacrifices to the gods of Rome, including their deified emperors. Romans believed that only diligent sacrifices prevented the gods from punishing the state with destruction. The government labeled anyone as a traitor who refused to support the state through sacrifice. Thus, all citizens and subjects were obligated to acknowledge the Græco-Roman gods through a simple act, usually burning incense or sacrificing a bird on an altar.

As explained in chapter 3, the Jews, who regarded such actions as idolatry, were exempted from performing this sacrifice. In contrast, the Romans considered that since Christianity had been founded within living memory, it deserved no special exemption. Many emperors and magistrates therefore persecuted the Christians by arresting and punishing them in various creative ways. Christians were sold for use as slaves in mines, forced to become temple prostitutes, beheaded, or even ripped apart at gladiatorial games by wild animals. Christians who suffered death for the sake of faith were believed to become **martyrs** and immediately enter heaven.[1]

Fortunately for the Christians, these persecutions failed because the Roman emperors could neither apply enough pressure nor maintain the scope of hunting down Christians for very long. The Christians were able to outlast the attention span and strength of the most powerful rulers in the ancient world. Also, the noble death of so many Christians inspired many Romans to consider Christianity more seriously. Hence, despite intermittent official and occasional popular disapproval, Christianity survived. Still, Christians had not convinced a large number of Romans to convert. By A.D. 300, Christians probably made up only 10 percent of the empire's population.

Success and security came only when the emperors themselves co-opted Christianity. In the fourth century A.D., Christians amazingly attained the pinnacles of power out of the depths of persecution. Their speedy and surprising success can be credited largely to one man: Emperor **Constantine** (r. 306–337) (see figure 6.1). His father had become Augustus in Diocletian's system of imperial succession. Upon his father's death in A.D. 306, the troops proclaimed Constantine an imperial successor. Over the next few years, Constantine successfully defeated other claimants to seize the imperial supremacy for himself.

As the sole Roman emperor, Constantine continued the strong imperial government revitalized by Diocletian, adding three improvements of his own. First, he solved the question of succession by creating an old-fashioned dynasty. A son (or sons in the divided empire) would inherit from the father. While this system had the usual flaw of dynasties (sons and cousins might and did fight over the throne), it limited the claimants to within the imperial family rather than ambitious generals proclaimed by legions. Second, Constantine built a new capital for the eastern half of the administratively divided empire. He chose the location of the Greek city of Byzantion, situated on the Bosphorus, the entrance from the Aegean to the Black Sea. Strategically, it was an excellent choice: close to key trade routes, in the heart of the vital Greek population, and easily defensible. He modestly named the new capital after himself, **Constantinople**.

His third improvement reversed Diocletian's religious policy of exterminating all Christians. Instead, Constantine decided to help them. As the story went, Constantine was fighting against a rival who was a great persecutor of Christians. Constantine had a vision and a dream of the Christian symbol of the *labarum* (similar to the letter *P* with a crossbar) in the sun (which held a special connection to his

1. Note, however, that one cannot choose martyrdom; it has to be forced on one. Thus Christians were not allowed to simply walk up to Romans and announce their faith, hoping to be executed as a consequence, although it did happen.

Figure 6.1. The colossal face of Emperor Constantine stares into the future.

family as a patron deity). He won victory over an imperial rival under this sign in a battle at the Milvian Bridge, just to the north of Rome. The victorious emperor then ordered all of the empire to tolerate Christians by issuing the **Edict of Milan** in 313. This law reinforced a previous Edict of Toleration of two years earlier. In this edict, the Christians were exempted from making sacrifices to the emperors. Although Constantine himself probably remained a pagan until his death, as of 313 Christians in the Roman Empire were no longer criminals because of their faith.

Beyond simply tolerating the Christians, Constantine showered his imperial largesse upon them. He favored them with land and buildings. The design of the new public Christian churches, basilicas, was based on the design of imperial meeting halls. Constantine bestowed special privileges on Christians, such as rights of self-government and exemptions from imperial services. He probably thought Christianity, which had proved so resistant to persecution, could help the empire through its prayers and zeal. Overnight, Christianity had moved from being the counterculture to the establishment.

Saints served as new role models for Christian society, since martyrs became a rarity without persecutions (although many martyrs came to be considered saints). Originally, a saint referred to any faithful Christian. Over time, the term *saint* became restricted to those who both lived the virtuous life in this world and proved their divine connection by working miracles after their death. Saints' lives became mean-

ingful not only in stories, but also in their physical remains. The faithful believed that parts of saints' bodies or objects associated with them channeled divine power to work miracles long after the saint's death. The relics of specific saints preserved in and around altars often gave churches their names. For example, the grill on which St. Lawrence was roasted and the headless body of St. Agnes reside at their respective churches located outside the walls of ancient Rome. These churches were being openly built in great numbers to hold all the new relics and the converts they won. They became destinations of regular worship and special veneration.

In one of those amazing ironies of history, just when they reached social acceptance, Christians began to attack one another publicly. Uncertainty raised by Gnostics about the combined humanity and divinity of Jesus burst out into the open. These conflicts threatened Constantine's aim for Christianity to provide stability, so he called the **Council of Nicaea** in 325 to help the Church settle the matter. The majority of Church leaders decided on the formula that Jesus was simultaneously fully God and fully human, embedding this idea and other basic beliefs into the Nicene Creed that is still professed in many Christian churches today. That creed became catholic orthodoxy (the universally held, genuine beliefs). The large majority believed along catholic (universal) orthodox (genuine) lines. Orthodox catholics considered those who disagreed with them to be heretics, no longer Christian.

A large group of heretics, the Arians, remained unconvinced about Jesus' complete combination of divinity and humanity.[2] They continued to spread their version of the faith and tried to convince the majority to change its mind. Over the next few decades they convinced emperors to switch sides. They even succeeded in converting many Germans along and outside the borders of the Roman Empire to their version of the Christian faith. For a long time, heretical ***Arianism*** looked like it would become the orthodox faith. The Christian leadership, convinced that the Holy Spirit worked through them, persecuted, exiled, or even executed the heretics. By the sixth century, only a few Arian Christians survived in the West, but many, called Nestorians, spread their version of Christ throughout Asia.

Christians also adopted a new relationship with the Jews, whose religion was the undoubted foundation for Christianity. Through the centuries, many Christians have respected the Jews, recognizing their position as God's chosen people. Such Christians tolerated Jews who continued to live as a religious minority within Christian cities and society. Jews maintained their distinct religion and did not have to entirely assimilate to the dominant Christian culture of the West.

Too many Christians, however, turned toward anti-Semitism. Nominal excuses for this hatred ranged from blaming Jews for killing Christ, through disliking Jewish refusal to recognize their truth of Jesus as the Messiah, to resenting Jewish religious obligations that the Christians had rejected. Nonsensical reasons included blaming the Jews for plague or for committing ritual murders. Whatever the excuses, many Christians persecuted Jews once Christianity reigned. Increasingly over the centuries, and particularly in the West, Christians restricted Jewish

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2. Arians take their name from one of their important theologians, Arius. They are not to be confused with Aryans. That term is a racist-tinged and outdated concept describing European ancestors who originated in India (see chapter 13).

civil rights. Christians limited Jews to certain occupations, had them confined in ghettoes, forced Jews to convert or emigrate, or simply killed them. Christians were, and remain, burdened by these uncomfortable relations with their Jewish brethren.

Besides deciding on orthodox beliefs and how to relate to the Jews, Christians needed to decide their attitude toward Græco-Roman culture, which dominated the Roman Empire during the centuries after Christ. With the famous question, ''What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?'' some Christians attacked and wanted to reject the classical heritage. Indeed, Christianity threatened to wipe out much of Græco-Roman civilization. Christians thought that pagans like Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle had little to say to the followers of Jesus Christ. What could the histories of Herodotus or Thucydides teach those who followed the greater history of the Hebrew people, the apostles, and saints? When Christianity became the sole legal religion of the Roman Empire in 380, the government banned paganism and many of its works. The Christians toppled temples, destroyed shrines, burned sacred groves, shut philosophical schools that had been started by Plato and Aristotle, silenced oracles, halted gladiatorial contests, and abolished the Olympic Games. A Christian mob murdered the mathematician and polytheist philosopher Hypatia by cutting her down with shards of pottery in the middle of a public street. The murderers and instigators (who may have included the bishop) went unpunished.

Eventually, however, the Christian Church embraced much from classical antiquity. This attitude was an important milestone in the West's cultural development, perhaps the most important. If narrow-minded zealots had won this culture war, Christian-led society would never have been open to ***intellectualism*** and innovation. Church leaders might have only gazed inward at the Gospels and focused on the Kingdom of Heaven alone, while rejecting human rationalism and empiricism by educated people, or intellectuals. Such ***anti-intellectualism*** would have allowed civilization to stagnate. To this day, some Christians still condemn knowledge that does not fit in with their conception of what is godly. Christianity partly succeeded, however, because it compromised with the secular world and opened itself up to the voices of others. In doing so, Christianity adapted and prospered in unexpected ways over the centuries and eventually spread around the world. Before that could happen, however, barbarians almost wiped out this newly Christian civilization.

Review: *How did conflicts among the Jews, Christians, and pagans lead to the Romans creating a new cultural landscape?*

Response:

ROMA DELENDA EST

In another of those amazing ironies of history, just after Christians overthrew the Romans' religion, various Germans triumphed over the Romans' armies. In A.D. 410, the army of the Visigoths (western Germans) sacked Rome, the first time since the Celts had done so in 390 B.C. The Visigoth armies then marched on to plunder other regions, while more Germans crossed the borders and took what they wanted. It seemed the Roman curse "*Carthago delenda est*" ("Carthage must be destroyed") came back against Rome itself. Many Romans who had not been thoroughly Christianized and still maintained their heathen beliefs in the old gods naturally blamed the Christians for this catastrophe. The coincidence of events raised suspicions: first Christianity became the state religion, and then a few years later barbarians plundered the city of Rome for the first time in eight hundred years. Some interpreted the pagan gods to have shown their anger at the rise of Christians by removing their protection from Rome. Calamities seemed a sure sign of divine wrath, as people often still believe in our own time.

To answer this charge against the Christians, Bishop **Augustine** of Hippo (d. 430) wrote the book *The City of God*. This book defended Christianity by presenting Augustine's view of its workings in history. Augustine said that people were divided into two groups who dwelt in metaphysical cities: those who lived for God and were bound for heaven and those who resided in this world and were doomed to hell. Every political state, such as the Roman Empire, contained both kinds of people. While Rome had been useful to help Christianity flourish, whether it fell or not was in the end irrelevant to God's plan. This argument emphasized the separation of church and state. God sanctioned no state, not even a Christian Roman Empire. Instead, individuals ought to live as faithful Christians, even while the so-called barbarians attacked. Indeed, shortly after Augustine's death, German armies destroyed the city of Hippo, near ancient Carthage, over which he was bishop.

How did the Gothic Germans and their allies come to destroy Hippo and so many other cities of the Roman Empire? Historians have proposed a number of explanations, some better than others. Reasons such as the poisoning of the Roman elites by lead pipes are silly. It is likewise absurd, as some cultural critics do, to blame the fall of Rome on moral corruption. When it fell, Rome was as Christian and moral a state as there ever could be. The Christians, such as Bishop Augustine, were in complete control. Many Romans may have been imperfect sinners, but a closer cooperation of church and state could hardly be imagined. Despite this, the great historian of the fall of Rome, Edward Gibbon, blamed much of the Roman collapse on this rise of Christianity, saying that its values of ***pacificism*** undermined Rome's warrior spirit. The conflicts among orthodox Christians, heretic Arians, and lingering pagans also weakened the empire. Modern historians do not embrace Augustine's eschatology (the study of the end of the world), but neither do they completely agree with Gibbon.

The best explanations of Rome's fall focus on its economic troubles, which remained unsolved by imperial mandates. First, plagues had reduced the numbers of Roman citizens. Rome was no longer strong enough to conquer and exploit new provinces. No expansion meant taxes at home burdened the smaller population.

Second, the shortage of revenues also meant smaller armies. Therefore, the Romans began to recruit the unconquered Germans living on their borders. Troop levels still fell short despite the recruitment of Germans. Transfers of warriors from one part of the border to the other left gaps in the defenses.

Imperial armies soon depended on these cheap barbarians hired to defend Rome from other barbarians. Immigrant Germans never became as integrated or romanized into Roman society as had many earlier conquered peoples. As they increased their power and influence, the Germans tended rather to barbarize the Romans, at least in their systems of politics based on personal relationships rather than complex written laws. Here, as with the Greeks, changes in military structures affected politics and society. Given the wealth of its civilization, though, the Romans stood a good chance of defending the empire against the majority of Germans, who had no serious reason to launch major assaults.

The military situation changed, however, when the **Huns**, a horse-riding people from the steppes of Asia, swept into Europe. The Huns reputedly slaughtered most people in their path, drank blood and ate babies, and enslaved the few survivors. The terrified German peoples in eastern and northern Europe fled from the Huns in the only direction possible: into the Roman Empire. They entered not as an invading army but as entire peoples—with the elderly, the women, and the young. Thus, these movements are sometimes called the **Germanic barbarian migrations**, not merely invasions. The German tribes and nations themselves were in flux, absorbing and reforming as different groups melded together under warrior-kings. Peoples came together under inspiring leaders, as long as they lasted. Some remained a force for decades or even centuries, and others broke up and rapidly reformed with different tribes and nations.

At first, the group called Visigoths by later historians crossed the boundaries of the empire with permission, as refugees from the Hun attack in A.D. 378. Two years later, their quarrels with imperial authorities culminated in the Battle of Adrianople. The Germans crushed the Roman army and killed the eastern emperor. Afterward, the divided and inexperienced Roman emperors and commanders were unwilling to risk another battle against them, so the Visigoths briefly settled along the Danube. But pressure from plundering raids by the Huns continued to push new Goths against the borders, threatening both Romans and Visigoths. The new Visigothic leader Alaric led his people through the empire looking for a place to settle. His army carried out the second sack of Rome in 410. Alaric reluctantly allowed his troops to plunder because the Romans refused to negotiate about a homeland for his people within the borders of the Roman Empire. At least the sack of 410 was not as bad as those to come: the Christian (if heretic Arian) Visigoths especially preserved the churches. Within a few years, Visigoths had settled down into a kingdom that straddled the Pyrenees from the south of Gaul into the Iberian Peninsula.

The example of the Visigoths inspired others to follow. More barbarians poured across Rome's once-well-defended borders. The frozen Rhine River allowed large numbers of Alans (mostly Asians), Alemanni, Sueves, and Vandals simply to walk into Roman Gaul in the winter of A.D. 406. The Vandals passed through the Visigothic kingdom to cross the Mediterranean and conquer North Africa (including Carthage and Augustine's Hippo). From there, the Vandals carried out one of the worst sacks of Rome in 455, lending their name to the word ***vandalism***. The

emperor left Britain defenseless by withdrawing troops to the mainland. Angles, Saxons, and Jutes who sailed across the North Sea in the mid-fifth century conquered the island, despite a defense by a leader who became the legendary King Arthur. Finally, The long-feared Huns themselves moved into the empire. Actually, they turned out not to be quite as monstrous as the tales spread about them. From their own point of view, they were just one more collection of peoples seeking a place to live and grabbing as much power as they could. The Romans even negotiated with the Huns, surrendering territory along the Danube or even paying tribute rather than fighting them.

For a time, the leader of the Huns, Attila, thought he could conquer the remnants of the Roman Empire. The massive walls of Constantinople made him hesitate to attack eastward. When he moved west into Gaul in 451 and south into Italy in 452, armies drawn from the Germans now living there provided most of the muscle to resist the Hunnic forces. The allied Romans and Germans held off Hunnic conquest (although one story goes that the Bishop of Rome, called Pope Leo, personally convinced Attila to turn back from another sack of his city). The next year Attila died of a nosebleed on his wedding night to his (perhaps) seventh bride. After Attila's unexpected death, no competent ruler followed. The Hunnic Empire dissolved, and the Huns disappeared as a people, retreating back to Asia or blending in among the diverse Europeans.

But the Germans remained. They soon advanced to finish off the Roman imperial administration in the west. The Franks, one of the largest groups of Germans, decisively took charge in Gaul by A.D. 486. By that time, Roman authority in the west had been gone for a decade. German commanders were fighting the battles. In A.D. 476, the Gothic king and Roman commander Odavacar (or Odoaker) seized power by toppling the last Roman emperor in the west, who bore the fitting name Romulus Augustulus (evoking the founder of Rome and the founder of the imperial position together with the belittling diminutive *-ulus*, meaning "small"). This unwarranted deposition annoyed the current Roman emperor in the east, so he commissioned the Ostrogoths (eastern Germans) under their king Theodoric to invade Italy on his behalf. After several years of warfare, Odavacar surrendered. The victorious Theodoric assassinated Odavacar at dinner and then proclaimed himself ruler, backed up by his Ostrogothic warriors. While the emperor in Constantinople recognized Theodoric, he ruled without restriction over an Ostrogothic kingdom in the Italian Peninsula. Although he remained an Arian, he tried to forge a society that tolerated religions and ethnic differences between Romans and Germans. The so-called **Germanic barbarian kingdoms** were ultimately supreme throughout western Europe.

The western half of the Roman Empire fell because its armies could not defend it. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Roman Empire continued for another thousand years. The barbarians' feet had trampled only the western portion of the empire. The eastern half continued to fight on and to preserve Roman civilization. For centuries the new capital of Constantinople was one of the greatest cities in the world. Later historians have designated that part of the Roman Empire as **Byzantium** or the **Byzantine Empire**, named after the Greek city Byzantion that Constantine had made his capital. The emperors maintained their roles as protector and promoter of the Christian Church, in the tradition of Constantine. Historians

call this imperial Church leadership ***caesaro-papism***. A "sacred" emperor appointed the bishops who worked with the unified Christian state. After the fall of the western half of the Roman Empire, the eastern half increasingly took on a Greek coloring, since ethnic Greeks filled the leadership positions. Once more the Greeks ruled a powerful political state.

The reign of **Emperor Justinian** (r. 527–565) marked a transition from the ancient Roman Empire to the medieval Byzantine Empire. Justinian has been considered both the last emperor of Rome and the first Byzantine emperor. He had several notable achievements. First, he built one of the greatest churches of the world in Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia, or Holy Wisdom (see figure 6.2). Second, he had the old Roman laws reorganized into the Book of Civil Laws, often called the **Justinian Code**. This legal text not only secured the authority of Byzantine emperors for centuries to come, it also helped the west rebuild its governments after the twelfth century (see chapter 8). Justinian's attempt to restore the *Imperium Romanum* was less successful. His armies, led by brilliant generals such as Belisarius and Narses, managed some reconquests, including the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and much of the Ostrogothic kingdom in the Italian Peninsula.

These victories notwithstanding, Justinian's attempt at the revival of Roman power failed. In the short term, Byzantine meddling at the court betrayed the generals. In the long run, the eastern empire also lacked the resources and power to hold onto the old western provinces of Rome. Shortly after Emperor Justinian's death, most of Italy fell back under the control of squabbling German kings. From

Figure 6.2. Justinian's Hagia Sophia, the Church of Holy Wisdom, rose over Constantinople at the emperor's command. The minarets were added later, when it was converted into a mosque after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Today it is secularized as a museum.

then on, the German kings ignored Constantinople, and Byzantium ignored them right back.

Review: *How did the Roman Empire fall in the west, yet not in the east?*

Response:

STRUGGLE FOR THE REALM OF SUBMISSION

The sudden rise of the Islamic civilization in the seventh century surprised everyone. The new religion of ***Islam*** (which means ''submission'' in Arabic) claimed the same omnipotent God as Judaism and Christianity. It originated in Arabia, an arid peninsula that had so far largely remained outside the political domination of major civilizations flourishing around the Mediterranean Sea or the river basins of Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates. Mohammed (b. ca. 570–d. 632), a merchant from the Arabian city of Mecca, became Islam's founder and only prophet. At about the age of forty, he claimed that the angel Gabriel revealed to him the message of God (called Allah in Arabic).

These messages formed the Koran or Qu'ran (meaning ''Recitation''), the book containing the essentials of Islam. These are usually summed up as five ''pillars.'' The first is *shahadah*, the simple proclamation of faith that there is no God except Allah and that Mohammed is his last prophet. Second is *salat*, praying five times a day, at the beginning of day, noon, afternoon, sunset, and before bed, always on one's knees and facing toward Mecca, whether in a mosque or not. Third is *zakat*, the obligation to pay alms to care for the poor. Fourth is *sawm*, to fast from sunrise to sunset every day during the lunar month of Ramadan. Last is a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca that should be undertaken once in one's lifetime. Everyone who keeps these pillars is a Muslim and is promised eternal life after death.

Other issues such as polygamy or restrictions on food or alcohol were less important but added to the discipline of submission to divine commands. Islam was syncretic: it combined the Arab's polytheistic religion centered on the moon (hence the crescent symbol), the Persian dualism of ***Zoroastrianism***, a common connection with Judaism via Abraham as a common ancestor, and even a recognition of Jesus as a prophet (although not God incarnate). Scholars over the next decades developed rules of behavior or sets of laws called *shari'a*, based on what

they could interpret from what they knew from Mohammed and the Qu'ran. Again, Mohammed's was the last word.

When the residents of Mohammed's hometown refused to listen to his calls for submission to God's commands, he fled to a nearby city in 622. That flight (*Hegira* or *Hijra*) marks the founding year of the calendar still used today in Islam, namely 1 A.H., from the Latin *anno Hegirae*, in the year of the emigration. His refuge became ''The City of the Prophet,'' or Medina, as he gained followers called **Muslims**. Mohammed's followers launched a series of conquests to force their neighbors' submission to the commands of God's prophet.

This was jihad, whose meaning ranges from ''struggle'' to a Muslim version of holy war. Clearly, his followers interpreted Mohammed's message to mean that Islamic submission to Allah should reign everywhere. When peaceful, voluntary conversions failed, the alternative was war to establish political supremacy over non-Muslims. Starting with Mecca, Mohammed ruled much of Arabia by the time of his death. His successors went on to conquer a third of what had been the Roman Empire (from the Iberian Peninsula, across North Africa, and over Palestine and Mesopotamia) as well as the Persian Empire. Within a hundred years of Mohammed's death, Muslim armies had won territories from the Atlantic Ocean to southern Asia into the Indian Subcontinent.

The Muslim conquest succeeded for several reasons. First, the fanaticism and skill of its nomadic Arab warriors from the desert overwhelmed many an army fighting for uninspiring emperors and kings. Second, both Roman Byzantium and Persia had exhausted themselves from their long and inconclusive wars over Mesopotamia. Third, many Muslim rulers were tolerant of the religious diversity among their new subjects. So long as Muslims ruled, Islam did not compel conversion of those who believed in the same God. Muslim rulers usually allowed Jews and Christians to keep their lives and their religions, burdening them only with paying an extra tax. So, although individuals may have converted to Islam, the Christian, Jewish, and even Zoroastrian or polytheistic communities endured for centuries within Muslim states.

With their conquests, Arabs became a new cultural contender. Islam's conquests prevented those former areas of the Roman Empire in the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and Mesopotamia from sharing in the history of the western part of the empire that had fallen to the Germans. The Muslims took the shared Græco-Roman heritage in another direction. They carried out their own ***islamicization***, encouraging the faith and practices of Islam, as well as ***arabization***, promoting Arabic culture and language. Since the Qu'ran was supposed to be read in the original language in which it was written, namely Arabic, every educated Muslim read that language. In much of Mesopotamia and North Africa, Arabic became the dominant language, replacing the German, Latin, Coptic, Aramaic, and other languages of the conquered peoples. Only in Persia did the natives resist linguistic conversion, although the Persians shared their rich civilized heritage with their fellow Muslims.

Islamic civilization drew on what the Greeks and Romans had united and mixed in Persian and other cultures. While Roman cities in western Europe crumbled under barbarian neglect, Muslim cities blossomed with learning and sophistication.

They had paved streets, plumbing, and libraries. Although their religion prohibited pictures and sculptures of people, they created impressive public buildings, especially mosques with lofty domes and towering minarets, decorated with elaborate calligraphy, patterns, and designs. Communities of scholars investigated both the Qu'ran and other facets of human knowledge. Philosophers explored issues of metaphysics, medicine, mathematics, and science. Al-Khawarizmi, whose name the West borrowed to label both the words *algebra* and *algorithm*, popularized Arabic numbers (although they were invented in non-Muslim India). Mystics called Sufis explored the religious experience of the divine. Pilgrims traveled hundreds of miles without being molested within the Muslim-Arabic Empire. Merchants ventured with their luxury goods of silks, ceramics, carpets, and spices far into Asia and Africa, by land and by sea, to bargain and trade.

This Arabic Empire surpassed Alexander's in size and civilization. It also lasted about as briefly. Mohammed and the Qu'ran left little guidance about who should lead the Muslim community after Mohammed's death. Muslims split over who should be Mohammed's successor, called the caliph or *khalifa* (deputy), the ultimate judge in all matters political or religious. The majority, or Sunni (meaning "traditional"), Muslims were willing to accept any respectable dynasty, whether established, as they would be over the centuries, in Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, or Istanbul. Hence, Sunnis were open to competing rulers and did not worry so much about political divisions among Muslims. A minority, the Shia or Shi'i (meaning "sect"), thought the heirs of Mohammed's family should unite all Muslims in Dar al-Islam (the realm of Submission to God). The last members of his family were soon dead, however. The fourth caliph, Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, had been assassinated early in A.D. 661 (or 40 A.H.) and Ali's son, Hussein, died in battle twenty years later while trying to seize the caliphate. Although no physical descendants remained, Shiites believed that a holy figure, the imam, would miraculously unite Muslims again. Also, ethnic differences among Arabs, Berbers, Persians, and romanized Egyptians and Mesopotamians weakened solidarity and loyalty toward any one empire. Shi'ites concentrated in Persia, partly as a result of Iranian ethnic pride. Islam thus lost its political unity and has been unable to regain it ever since.

And since Islam failed to triumph over all Christians, hostile borders separated Muslims from the Christians in western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. In particular, the Byzantine Empire fought off multiple Muslim attacks, helped by the early collapse of the Arabic Empire. Although the Byzantine emperors lost substantial territory south of Asia Minor to Muslims, they managed a few compensatory gains in the Balkan Peninsula. Slavic invaders had settled in eastern Europe and the Balkans after the Hunnic Empire had vanished.[3] By the eighth century, Christian missionaries from the Byzantine Empire had converted most of them in the south. The Cyrillic alphabet, modeled on Greek letters, became the written script of many southern Slavs. The Byzantine Empire then fought to gain direct rule over these Christians in the Balkans. Emperor Basil II, "the Bulgar Slayer" (r. 976–1025),

3. Because so many slaves were soon taken from those peoples during the Middle Ages, the word for *slave* in several languages referred to the Slavs.

expanded his dominion over the Albanians, Serbs, and Bulgars (an Asiatic people who had blended with the Slavs). Basil earned his harsh nickname not only by killing many Bulgarians in battle, but also by allegedly blinding thousands of Bulgarian prisoners before sending them home.

The multicultural Byzantine Empire of Greeks, southern Slavs, and other ethnic minorities straddling the Balkans and Asia Minor for a time seemed secure. Then the Seljuk **Turks** seized power in Persia in 1040. The Turks were horse-riding warriors who swept off the Asiatic steppes toward Europe, as the Huns did before and the Mongols would do later. The Seljuk dynasty's conversion to Islam allowed it to win support among non-Turkish Muslims. With surprising swiftness, the Seljuks conquered Mesopotamia and then moved into the Byzantine Empire to confront the ''Roman'' emperor at the Battle of Manzikert (1071). The decisive Turkish victory gained them Asia Minor, which became a new Turkish homeland, today the country of Turkey.

The Greek lands of Asia Minor had been some of the most important and prosperous areas of the Byzantine Empire. Their loss weakened the empire, leaving it less able to resist any further possible attack by the Turks or anyone. Confronted with this new threat, the Byzantines sought reinforcements from the west. That request unleashed the Crusades against the Muslims in the Holy Land (see chapter 8). The Crusades actually further hurt Byzantium, as western forces seized lands for themselves, increased Islamic fanaticism, and even briefly conquered much of the Byzantine Empire itself in the early thirteenth century. These attacks left the empire vulnerable to a renewed Turkish offensive in the fourteenth century led by the new Ottoman dynasty (see chapter 9). By 1453, the last ''Roman'' emperor died on Constantinople's walls, fighting alongside his handful of imperial troops and volunteers. The Ottoman Turks renamed Constantinople as Istanbul and made it the capital of their own Muslim Empire. The Greeks were a conquered people once more.

If the Roman Empire had survived intact or the attempted Muslim conquest of Europe had succeeded, the West as we know it would never have existed. In either case, the civilization would have had a very different geographic foundation, centered, like the Roman Empire, on the Mediterranean. Byzantium or Islam might have bound western Europe together with the Balkans, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Instead, the collapse of Roman power in the west combined with the rise and fall of the Byzantine and various Muslim empires meant that eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia remained outside the main development of Western civilization for the next thousand years or more. Ruling over lands once part of the Roman Empire, the Orthodox Christian Byzantine Empire and the various Muslim realms certainly enjoyed rich and powerful civilizations and drew on the mutual Græco-Roman culture of classical antiquity. Yet Byzantines and Muslims flourished on the other side of a cultural divide after the German conquest of the western portion of the Roman Empire. Only in western Europe did various elements of Græco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, and German cultures meld through many difficult centuries to become Western civilization.

***Review**: How did Islam rise as a rival civilization?*

Response:

CHAPTER 7

From Old Rome to the New West

The Early Middle Ages, A.D. *500 to 1000*

The collapse of Rome in the west during the fifth century A.D. marked the end of ''ancient'' history and the beginning of ''medieval'' history (see timeline 7.1). The intellectuals after the fifteenth century who coined the term ***Middle Ages*** (whose Latin form provides *medieval*) saw the thousand years of history between classical antiquity and their own day as one horrible detour for civilization. For the intellectuals of the so-called Renaissance (see chapter 9), the previous thousand years seemed simply barbaric when compared to the glories of Greece and Rome. Even today, ''medieval'' describes something backward, vicious, or stupid. These meanings do not actually reflect the historical truth. Rather, much changed in the course of the Middle Ages, usually for the better. Historians divide the thousand years between A.D. 500 and 1500 into three periods, hence the use of the plural ''ages.'' First came the **Early Middle Ages** (450–1050), during which Europe rebuilt after the collapse of Rome (see map 7.1). During these centuries, three cultures (Germanic, Judeo-Christian, and Græco-Roman) wove together to become the West. During the first part of the Middle Ages, western Europeans survived the

Map 7.1. Dark Ages Europe

collapse of Roman civilization and then gave birth to and nurtured the childhood of Western civilization.

GOTHS IN THE GARDEN

The Germans or Goths who had destroyed the western half of the Roman Empire settled amid the remnants of its Christianized Græco-Roman civilization. As the new political masters, they oversaw the formation of a new culture. The term *Gothic* often serves as an alternate term for the medieval period. At the end of the Middle Ages, humanist admirers of classical antiquity proclaimed that svelte Corinthian columns and bleached-white calm nudes were superior to pointed arches and the polychrome tortured crucifixions of late medieval art. They used, and art historians still use, the term *Gothic* for most of the art and architecture of the High and Later Middle Ages. Cultural critics used *Gothic* as an insult, implying that crude barbarian Germans had crushed the simple, clean beauty of Greece and Rome. In contrast, the medieval people often referred to their culture in a fashion similar to the way we refer to our own: ''modern.''

That we view the Middle Ages as unmodern, as lacking in sophistication and enlightenment, reflects its beginnings in the ruin of Roman civilization by these

alleged barbarians. The uncivilized leaders of the so-called Germanic barbarian kingdoms who replaced the officials of imperial Rome in the west were mostly illiterate and therefore left few written records. Thus, the first few centuries after the fall of Rome might justifiably be called the **Dark Ages**. We are in the dark about much that happened. Sadly, the term *Dark Ages* too often insults the entire Middle Ages as being full of ignorance, cruelty, and superstition.

Although the Germans were uncivilized, they had not intended to destroy all the benefits of civilization. Rome's wealth and comforts had attracted them in the first place. German regimes clumsily tried to continue the Roman system with the remnants of the Roman elites, but barbarians simply did not know how to manage urban life. They feared and avoided the cities. Thus, towns lost populations, sports stadiums sat empty, libraries crumbled, and forums gave way to farmland. Much was lost, unintentionally, from neglect. Ancient technology, such as water mills and glassmaking, was forgotten. Until the ruling elites learned the ways of civilization, the West lapsed into primitive rural conditions.

The barbarian conquest ended with two large groups living side by side, the ruling Germans and the former Romans. The German kings set up their own new elites, taking the best land for themselves. The early Germans preferred woodland and field. Urban life virtually vanished, as agriculture remained the mainstay of the economy and shaped society. The German lords lived in manor halls (large structures that housed warriors and dependents) and small villages throughout the countryside. The conquered Roman natives often became servile dependents, working for the German warriors in charge.

The Germans themselves were diverse, as shown by the numerous names of the tribes who had either settled what had once been Roman land or remained behind in "Germania": Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Alans, Alemanni, Vandals, Suevi, Franks, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Gepids, Lombards, Frisians, Rugians, Burgundians, Bavarians, and Thuringians. Some were not even Germans, as various peoples entering Europe from Asia attached themselves to successful leaders. Constant warfare left some groups so weak that they either quickly joined a new ethnic conglomeration or disappeared altogether. These tribes spoke in many different dialects and accents, which were almost incomprehensible to one another. In western Europe they separated into many petty realms, regularly trying to conquer one another.

Within the borders of the old empire (except Britain), the Germans were actually an ethnic minority. Gradually, they stopped speaking their German language and adopted the ever-evolving language of the Romans. Thus, Latin slowly turned into vernacular Romance languages: Spanish and Italian named after Roman geography, and French coming from the Germanic Franks. Over centuries, the distinctive German character of the elites disappeared as they intermarried with the conquered ex-Roman peoples.

Initially, though, the Germans brought with them their own laws based on blood and oath, which separated them from the subject Roman populace. The early Germans did not understand the justice of Roman law courts and evidence provided by lawyers, nor the concept that only the government could use violence. They thought of justice as personal, rather than state controlled. Instead of loyalty to some impersonal state, or to abstract ideology, or to the deity of Rome, or to the

person of the emperor, Germans were connected to one another through ties of kinship, from the nuclear family of parents and children to extended families, clans, tribes, ''folk,'' and, finally, kingdoms. Families, meanwhile, took justice into their own hands, avenging wrongs by punishing wrongdoers themselves. So if one family member had been robbed, other family members hunted down the robber and exacted punishment (usually death, of course).

Thus, the tendency to emphasize personal punishment soon escalated into larger confrontations. For example, a robber killed in vengeance probably had a family of his own who did not take kindly to his death, perhaps seeing it as murder rather than justice. Thus they might go on to kill one of the killers, and soon, reciprocal vengeance might bring on vendettas or **feuds**, as families were caught in escalating cycles of attacks against one another. The German kings and lords tried to prevent feuds through *wergild* (having guilty parties pay families money in compensation for injuries or robberies). When guilt or innocence was in doubt, the barbarians resorted to **trials by ordeal** instead of the Roman criminal court procedures. For example, an accused would carry a bar of hot iron for nine paces without dropping it. The burned hands would then be wrapped. If after three days the wounds were healing, the accused was innocent; if they festered with infection, the accused was guilty and subsequently hanged. The Germans believed that God blessed the whole procedure through the grace of ministers of the Church and guaranteed a just outcome.

Indeed, the Christian Church itself was the greatest survivor of Rome's collapse in western Europe. Its institutions and beliefs helped to sustain whatever civilization survived. Actually, when the Germans invaded Rome, many of them had already been converted to Christianity. The invaders were usually respectful of holy places. The network of Christian bishops in their dioceses that had coexisted with Roman imperial provinces continued uninterrupted in many places. The Christian order, however, was somewhat complicated by the heretical form of Christianity held by many of the ruling Germans. Arians who rejected the Nicene Creed had converted them (as mentioned in the previous chapter). The Church managed only slowly to bring back many Germans into catholic orthodoxy.

This new society built on the ruins of the Roman Empire often defined itself as a realm of Christians, or **Christendom**. Serious divisions throughout the Middle Ages, however, prevented Christendom from ever becoming more than an ideal. Various leaders dreamed of this ideal, but only one came close to turning the geographic religious unity into a political one. Royal rivalries remained more powerful than cooperation toward any Christian commonwealth. Religious unity also suffered as a rift grew between Western, or Latin-speaking, Christians in western Europe and Eastern, or Greek-speaking, Christians in the Byzantine Empire. The concept of Christendom soon excluded those orthodox Christians still in Byzantium. In addition, kings would soon be fighting with their own bishops and the Bishop of Rome over leadership in the West. The idea of Christendom during the Middle Ages remained attractive but unrealized.

In these dangerous Dark Ages of warfare and cultural collapse, many Christians turned away from the European-wide concepts typical of Christendom to live in a highly localized manner. They began to withdraw from worldly cares so that they

could better concentrate on God. A new way of life, called ***monasticism***, evolved to organize people who wanted to devote themselves to strict Christianity. The monastic movement had already begun in the late Roman Empire, as some Christians in the East imitated Jesus' wanderings in the wilderness and isolated themselves to live as hermits. As this isolationist ideology migrated to the West, religious leaders promoted cenobitic, or group, monasticism. Its participants, communities of monks led by an abbot (or, for females, nuns under an abbess), gathered together apart from the bustling world to dedicate their life to prayer and meditation.

In the 520s, Benedict of Nursia became the most important abbot when he set up the monastery of Monte Cassino in southern Italy. To guide his flock of monks, he wrote down a special set of rules or regulations to cover those in this special lifestyle. While life under the **Benedictine Rule** was not unduly harsh, it was not particularly comfortable, either. The abbot (or abbess) exercised paternal authority in leading monks (or nuns) in a life of work and prayer. Monks or nuns were to have few changes of clothing. Unless they fell ill, they ate as vegetarians. The brothers slept together in common dormitories and spent their days in constant prayer and work. They sang psalms and farmed the land. Perhaps most important for the future of civilization, they read books. Under the Benedictine Rule, monks and nuns read the pagan classics of Greece and Rome in addition to the Bible and spiritual writings of the Church Fathers. They laboriously copied these texts by hand onto parchment bound into books, thus preserving much of the literature of the ancients in their small libraries. For a while, the monasteries were isolated islands of learning in a sea of barbaric illiteracy. In time, these islands would provide fertilizer and seed for the later regrowth of civilization.

The rise of monasticism divided the ministers of the Church into two groups: first, the monks, known as **"regular" clergy** (abbots and monks guided by regulations and separated from lay communities), and second, the "secular" clergy (bishops and priests involved in the world). Of the two, the monks were the role models of the Early Middle Ages for the laity, the rest of the population of lords and peasants. Cloisters seemed to create a heavenly community here on earth. The lay magnates and lords who wanted to support monastic work donated land to them or sent their extra children (boys whose inheritance might weaken the family patrimony or girls whose marriage might do the same) to join the monastic communities. Even the roughest sinner, when he felt death's hand upon his neck, might join a monastery, renounce the world, and partake in a blessed community that seemed a sure path toward paradise.

The Christian monks and the bishops did much to educate the uncivilized Germans, but they could not easily reduce their warrior habits. Rivalry among the Germans and the desire to attain political supremacy in western Europe meant one kingdom would conquer another, perhaps only to be itself conquered in turn. The Ostrogoths seized the Italian Peninsula; the Lombards soon replaced them. The Visigoths grabbed the Iberian Peninsula only to fall to the Muslims, as did the Vandals who took North Africa. Most German kingdoms briefly rose in power only to soon vanish into history.

The ethnic differences, though, left traces in the ***regionalism*** that still flour-

ishes in many provinces of Europe today. European regions inherited their diversity both from the original peoples, such as Gauls and Celts romanized to varying degrees after Roman conquest, and from ***germanization*** following the new German conquerors. The Jews who lived scattered through the decaying cities, though, kept their culture relatively segregated and intact, as usual.

Only two large groups of Germans survived these early medieval centuries to dominate and provide the political and social framework for Western civilization, namely, the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks. Interestingly, both of these German peoples had entered the Roman Empire as pagans (not as heretics, like many other Germans) and were converted directly to orthodox, catholic Christianity.

The first of these groups, commonly called the **Anglo-Saxons**, invaded the island of Great Britain. Originally, the invaders were members of different tribes, mostly Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who attacked across the North Sea beginning around 450. Since the Roman military had largely withdrawn decades earlier, the Romano-Britons were easily overrun (although some native resistance may have left traces in the myths of King Arthur). By the sixth century, the Germans ruled most of the formerly Roman areas, except for the fringes of Cornwall and Wales. The people who dwelt in the northern third of the island, beyond Hadrian's wall, also fought off the Germans, as they had the Romans. These people soon became the Scots of Scotland, closely tied to the Irish of Ireland (who had likewise never been conquered by Rome, although they had been converted to Christianity by Saint Patrick and others). In the southern two-thirds of Great Britain, though, the Germans soon so outnumbered the Romano-Britons that the latter's Celtic and Latin languages disappeared. These German conquerors established numerous small kingdoms, such as those of the Angles (Anglia), the West Saxons (Wessex), the East Saxons (Essex), and the lands in the north around the Humber River (Northumbria).

Christian missionaries from Ireland soon targeted the pagan Anglo-Saxons for conversion. Irish monk-missionaries arrived to preach throughout the northern realms. Meanwhile, other missionaries from the Bishop of Rome succeeded in converting the king of Kent in the south. Forced to choose between the Irish and Roman versions of Christianity, the majority of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms accepted unity with Rome at the **Council of Whitby** in 663. Energized with faith, Anglo-Saxon missionaries were soon both enforcing church discipline and evangelizing other Germans on the Continent.

While the Anglo-Saxons gained religious unity, political divisiveness almost led to their downfall. Beginning in 835, the **Vikings** began raiding the British Isles. The Vikings, Norsemen, or Northmen were a new wave of Germanic peoples who had settled in Scandinavia (modern Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) outside the orbit of ancient Rome or the moderating influence of Christianity. At first, the Vikings plundered ruthlessly. Soon, however, they conquered and occupied most of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (as well as key portions of Ireland and parts of the Continent, as explained below).

Only the Kingdom of Wessex barely survived and came back to defy the invaders under **King Alfred "the Great"** (r. 871–901). As a younger son of a king, Alfred originally wanted to be a monk. After the deaths of his brothers made him king,

Alfred instead found himself at war. He led his armies to fight the Vikings to a standstill. Secure from conquest, Alfred then tried to promote culture and literacy, especially with his translation of part of the Bible into Old English. Alfred's success established the unified kingdom of **England** (taking its name from the Angles). Ancient Celts, Roman immigrants, Anglo-Saxons, and now Vikings in the region called the Danelaw grew together to become the English. In the 990s, another wave of Viking invasions again almost destroyed the kingdom. The Danish king Canute, who had converted to Christianity, even managed to seize the English crown. King Canute (r. 1016–1035) of England preserved the realm, briefly uniting it with his other possessions around the North Sea. After his death, England once more gained a dynasty separate from Denmark. Despite this shaky, vulnerable start, the English melded together from this diverse Celtic/Roman/Anglo-Saxon/Viking heritage. Another invasion and ethnic clash shortly after Canute's death would force England into the High Middle Ages and to a central role in the development of Western civilization.

Meanwhile, on the Continent, the **Franks** had asserted themselves as the second enduring group of Germans. They started out more united than the English by having a royal dynasty called the **Merovingians** after a legendary founder, Merovech. By the end of the fifth century, the Franks had expanded from their base in northern Germania across the Rhine into northern Gaul. **King Clovis** (r. 481–511) won the support of the local Roman population and elites when he (and therefore his people) converted directly to orthodox, catholic Christianity. He then used his blessing from the clergy to conquer many of his neighboring Germans, such as the Aquitainians, the Burgundians, and the Suevi, still heretical Arian Christians who rejected the Nicene Creed. The kingdom that Clovis established was ethnically diverse. It combined the various German tribes with the large population of Roman Gauls. Although Clovis and his successors committed murders, betrayals, and various atrocities, the clerics who wrote histories thought that God specially blessed the Merovingian kings because they championed orthodox, catholic Christianity and political unity. In these uncertain times, it could seem right to honor God through the brutality of warfare.

Like the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks came close to vanishing into history, as they were nearly conquered by Muslims. In 710, a combined Arab and Berber army invaded Europe by landing near the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, which then became known as Gibraltar (or ''Rock of Tarik,'' named after the Muslim commander). The Muslim army quickly crushed most of the Visigothic kingdom. Then it crossed the Pyrenees Mountains and attacked the Franks. In October 732, at the **Battle of Tours** or **Poitiers** (there has been some dispute about the location), a Frankish army led by Charles Martel (''the Hammer'') stopped and turned back the Muslim invaders. The Muslims (who soon came to be called the Moors or the **Saracens** by the western Europeans) retreated into the Iberian Peninsula, most of which they continued to control for several centuries. But the armies of Islam were not able to conquer more of western Europe. The Franks had halted the Muslim advance into Europe, at least for the moment.

The Franks had been able to stand strong only by dispensing with their other political danger: dividing up kingdoms among heirs. Since the time of Clovis, if the

king died with more than one son as heir, the realm was split up among the survivors. Before long, royal brothers and cousins were fighting against one another over the divisions of the fractured Frankish kingdoms. These kings grew weaker as they handed out lands and authorities to the aristocrats and nobles who did their fighting for them. Within a few decades, the Merovingian dynasts gained the nickname of ''do-nothing kings.'' They gloried in their semidivine royal authority but did little to govern for the benefit of the people.

Fortunately for the future of the Franks, ambitious royal servants kept Frankish power intact. Managers of the king's household soon seized the important reins of rulership. These mayors (from the Latin word *major*, meaning ''important'') of the various royal palaces soon became the powers behind the thrones. One of them, the above-mentioned Charles Martel, managed by 720 to reunify the splintered kingdoms in the name of his Merovingian king. The successes of Mayor Charles Martel helped Western civilization to form in western Europe.

Review: *How did German rule combine with the Roman heritage in the West?*

Response:

CHARLES IN CHARGE

Charles Martel, who won at Tours/Poitiers, belonged to one of the most important families in Western history. Historians call that dynasty the Carolingians, from Carolus, the Latin version of the name Charles. Members of this family rescued the Franks from infighting and made them a powerful force again. Having beaten back the Moors, Charles handed his power to his two sons (although one quickly gave up and retired to a monastery). The sole heir, Pepin or **Pippin ''the Short''** (r. 741–768), soon grew dissatisfied with ruling as mayor in the name of the officially crowned King Childeric III of the Merovingian dynasty. Pippin appealed to the person whom he considered to have the best connection to the divine, the Bishop of Rome, better known as the **pope**.

The institution of the popes, called the **papacy**, played a key role in the rise of the Carolingians and Western civilization. *Pope* comes from *papa*, or ''father,'' a name often used for bishops. A number of bishops called popes or patriarchs had risen to preeminence by the fifth century in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem,

and Constantinople. Together, in Church councils, they and the other bishops declared doctrine and settled controversies. With the division of the Roman Empire into two halves and the collapse of Roman authority in the west, four patriarchs remained under the growing authority of the Byzantine emperors in the east. Meanwhile, the Bishop of Rome claimed the title of pope for himself alone and claimed a superior place (primacy) among the other bishops and patriarchs. The other patriarchs were prepared to grant the Bishop of Rome a primacy of honor, but not authority over them and their churches. In any case, the popes lived too far away to change developments in the eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. In western Europe, though, religious and political circumstances favored a unique role for the Bishop of Rome.

The figure who embodied the early papacy was **Gregory I "the Great"** (r. 590–604). The growing importance of the monastic movement is reflected in his being the first pope who had previously been a monk. Much more important, though, were Gregory's three areas of activity, which defined what later popes did. First, the pope provided spiritual leadership for the West. Since the West lacked a literate population in comparison to the East, Gregory's manuals (models of sermons for preachers and advice on how to be a good pastor) filled a practical need. His theological writings were so significant that he was later counted as one of the four great Church Fathers, alongside Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, even though Gregory lived nearly two centuries after them. Second, after his literary endeavors, Gregory acted to secure orthodox, catholic Christianity all over the West, far outside his diocese in central Italy. Gregory sent missionaries to the Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula, to Germany, and, most famously, to the British Isles. Third, the pope was a political leader. He helped organize and defend the lands around Rome from the invading Lombard Germans, helping to found the political power of the popes.

The necessity for papal political leadership increased when later popes disagreed with some Byzantine emperors in the eighth century. The eastern Christians were caught up in the **Iconoclastic Controversy**, which interpreted literally the Old Testament commandment about breaking graven images. Those in the Church who sought to shatter religious pictures and sculptures convinced some emperors to go along with them. Those with this viewpoint were, literally, iconoclasts (today the word figuratively refers to those seeking to overturn traditional ways). Since the Byzantine emperors sponsored so many bishops with these views, the eastern patriarchs and bishops began to support iconoclasm, and actually destroyed art in churches. When the western popes refused to go along, the Byzantine emperor confiscated lands in southern Italy that had been used to support the papal troops. Meanwhile, the Lombard invaders from the North still seriously threatened Rome.

At this pivotal moment, when the pope needed a new ally in the west, a letter came from the Frankish mayor of the palace, Pippin, son and heir of Charles Martel. In the letter, Pippin coolly inquired whether it was right that the one who had the power of a king should actually be the king. The pope agreed. So the last Merovingian king was shaved of his regal long hair and bundled off to a monastery. Pippin was crowned king, not once, but twice. First, he held a ceremony in 751 only for the Franks; then Pope Stephen II came to France and consecrated him again. In exchange, Pippin marched to Italy and defeated the Lombards in 754 and 756. His

victories gave him control of the northern half of the Italian Peninsula (while the southern part remained under nominal Byzantine authority for the next few centuries). In his gratitude Pippin donated a large chunk of territory in central Italy to the pope. This **Donation of Pippin** eventually became known as the **Papal States**. These lands provided the basis for a papal principality for more than a thousand years. The arrangement also began a mutually supportive relationship, profitable to both the pope and Pippin, which historians call the **Frankish-Papal Alliance**.

The cooperation between the papacy and the Carolingians culminated under Pippin's son, Charles. He is known to history as **Charlemagne** (r. 768–814), which means ''Charles the Great.'' As his father had before him, Charlemagne at first inherited the throne jointly with his brother, but the latter soon found himself deposited in a monastery. As sole ruler, Charles continued to support the popes. First, he invaded Italy, utterly breaking the power of the Lombards. A few years later, after political rivals had roughed up the pope, Charlemagne marched to Rome to restore papal dignity.

On Christmas Day A.D. 800, the pope crowned Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans. The circumstances surrounding this act have remained unclear. People then and historians since have argued about the coronation's significance. Did it merely recognize Charlemagne's actual authority or give it a new dimension? Was the pope, by placing the crown on Charlemagne's brow, trying to control the ceremony and the office? Did it insult the Byzantine emperor, who was, after all, the real Roman emperor (even if some alleged at the time that the eastern throne was vacant, since a mere woman, Empress Irene, ruled after deposing and blinding her son)? In any case, the coronation resulted in a brief revival of ancient Roman ideology. An emperor once again ruled the West in the name of Rome's civilization (see map 7.2).

In most ways, though, Charlemagne resembles his barbaric German ancestors more than a Roman Caesar Augustus. He dressed in Frankish clothing and enjoyed beer and beef (instead of wine and fish as the Romans had). A man of action, he led a military campaign every year to one portion of his empire or another. Thus, he expanded his rulership and conquered the heartland of Europe, which became the core of the European Community more than a millennium afterward. He deposed the Bavarian duke and took over his duchy. He smashed rebellious Lombards as his father had. He also fought the Saxons in northern Germany (cousins of long-since Christianized Anglo-Saxons in Britain). For thirty years, the Christian king tried to convert the pagan Saxons to both religious and political obedience. These Saxons faced two choices: either be washed in the water of holy baptism or be slaughtered in their own blood. Many died; survivors converted. Charlemagne wiped out the Avars (Asian raiders who had settled along the Danube). The emperor successfully defended his empire's borders against Danes in the north and Moors in the south. Charlemagne's empire became bigger than any other political structure in the West since Emperor Romulus Augustulus had lost his throne in A.D. 476.

Charles was more than a bloodthirsty barbarian king. He consciously tried to revive the Roman Empire and its civilization. The government still heavily depended on his person, but he continued the efforts of his predecessors to expand governance into an institution centered on the palace. He had administrators, such as a

Map 7.2. Europe, 800

chamberlain to help manage finances. He set up ***missi dominici*** (messengers from his household), powerful counts and bishops charged with checking up on local government. He collected and wrote down laws for his various peoples. In one law, called ''A General Warning,'' Charlemagne noted that too many clergy were unlettered and going about carrying weapons, whoring, gambling, and getting drunk. The warning ended with the dire prediction that life is short and death is certain. The Christian emperor wanted an ordered realm in this world so people could gain heaven in the next. Charlemagne's government was the most ambitious western Europe had experienced in three hundred years.

To improve upon his government, Charlemagne and his international advisors, like Paul the Deacon from Lombardy and Alcuin Albinus from Northumbria, consciously sought to revive civilization. Aachen, or Aix-la-Chapelle (today located in northwestern Germany near Belgium), was built as a new capital city: it aimed to be a new Rome, the first city built in stone since the barbarians had taken over the forums. Aachen's centerpiece was a church, small but splendid and harmonious with its high octagonal walls capped by a dome. Aachen soon became an intellectual center. Scribes fashioned a new, legible script, Carolingian minuscule, which invented the lowercase letters you are reading right now. Every work of history and literature that scholars could find was rewritten in this new style, helping to preserve much of the legacy of Greece and Rome.

Charlemagne's intellectuals also revived the Roman educational curriculum of the fifth century: the **seven liberal arts**. The *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric, and logic with the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy were taught once more, this time in schools attached to monasteries and cathedrals. This so-called **Carolingian Renaissance** (780–850) hoped to use education to revitalize a way of life that had disappeared in the West since the Germans had swept away Roman rule. The Frankish/German Charlemagne used the liberal learning of Greece and Rome to establish the culture of Western civilization.

Regrettably for the cause of civilization, Charlemagne's revitalization attempt failed. The empire was too large and primitive for the weak institutions of government he could cobble together. First, he faced the difficulty of paying for art, literature, architecture, and schools with a poor agricultural economy that offered no functional taxation. Second, Frankish aristocrats saw little value in book-learning. Third, Charlemagne's own codifications of laws, written for the Alemanni, Burgundians, or Saxons, preserved ethnic differences rather than binding together a new common imperial unity. A final difficulty for Charlemagne was his own mortality. He drove the system along by force of will and sword, but death was certain. Few rulers could measure up to his abilities and achievements.

Charlemagne's vast empire actually held together for a few years after his death because of the good fortune that only one son survived him. Under Emperor Louis "the Pious" (r. 814–840), the Carolingian Renaissance peaked. Then Louis prematurely divided up his empire among his own three sons and invested them with authority during his own lifetime. Not surprisingly, they soon bickered with him and with one another. When Louis tried to carve out a share for a fourth son by another wife, civil war broke out. His heirs first humiliated Louis on the battlefield and then fought themselves to a bloody standstill. The resultant peace agreement shattered the political unity of western Europe for more than a thousand years.

The **Treaty of Verdun** in 843 broke apart Charlemagne's empire into three sections, each under its own Carolingian dynasty. The actual treaty was written in both early French and German, offering clear evidence that a linguistic division was now sealed as a political one. The treaty established a kingdom of the West Franks, out of which grew **France**; a kingdom of the East Franks, out of which rose **Germany**; and a middle realm, Lotharingia (named after Louis' grandson, Lothar). At the time, Lotharingia was the heart of the empire, including not only today's small province of **Lorraine** on the border of France and Germany, but also the Lowlands (modern Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), south through Switzerland and over the Alps into northern Italy. This mixed ethnic and linguistic middle realm had no cohesion except its prosperity and its dynasty. Both the West Franks and the East Franks targeted Lorraine after the Carolingian dynasty died out. For the next eleven hundred years, the French and the Germans fought over possession of the middle.

As if all of these political divisions were not bad enough, foreign invaders killed any hope for a unified and coherent empire. From the north, the Vikings or Norsemen sailed in on longships; from the east, the **Magyars** or Hungarians swept out of the steppes of Asia on swift ponies; and from the south, from North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, Muslim Moors or Saracens raided by land and by sea. None of

these invaders was Christian. Only the Saracens were civilized. They all plundered, raped, and burned what they could. The feuding Carolingian kings could do little to stop these marauders. The fragile and young western Christendom might have ended under these attacks.

Thus, Charlemagne's brief success at the revival of civilization crashed in the chaos of jealous children, resentful aristocrats, invading barbarians, and hostile non-Christians. Few empires could have survived such an assault from both within and without. The popes were of little help, too, as petty Roman nobles fought over the papal throne. In 897, a vengeful pope, Stephen VI, even put the corpse of one of his predecessors, Formosus, on trial. Such post-mortem vengeance did little good, since he was himself soon deposed and strangled.

Even as the Carolingian Empire died, its corpse became the fertilizer for the future. The empire left a dream of reunification, reinforcing the longing for the long-lost unity and cultural greatness of the Roman Empire. The political reality that followed, however, divided West Franks and East Franks into France and Germany. These two realms, together with England, formed the core of the West. Despite limited resources, these westerners fought off the assaults from without and established a new order and hierarchy from within. The result was the blossoming of medieval Western civilization.

Review: How did the Carolingian family rise and fall?

Response:

THE CAVALRY TO THE RESCUE

Without a central government, the peoples of the collapsing Carolingian Empire needed to defend themselves. New leaders, whether through their own achievements or using family ancestry, inspired others to follow them. To defend against the Viking attacks, they built military fortresses called **castles** (see figure 7.1). These fortifications were not simply army bases with walls; they were family homes. The quaint saying, ''A man's home is his castle,'' quite literally came from this period. Castles were originally primitive stockades or wooden forts on hills. A castle became the home of a local leader who convinced others to build it and help defend it.

Figure 7.1. The square block of an early castle dominates the town of Loches in France.

These castles became new centers of authority from which lords ruled over small areas, usually no larger than a day's ride.

Hiding out in castles was not a long-term solution, however. ''The best defense is a good offense'' is another saying appropriate to the time period. Fortunately for Western civilization, the **knight** rode to the rescue before all could be lost in the onslaughts of Vikings, Magyars, and Saracens. The new invention of stirrups, imported from Asia, secured these warriors firmly in the saddles of their warhorses. Their armor for defense and lance and sword for offense made knights effective heavy cavalry when riding together in a charge. A large group of knights and horses made up of several tons of flesh and iron overpowered all opponents.

Already by 1050, knights had won Europe a respite from foreign invasions. The three external enemies of Christendom, the Vikings, Magyars, and Saracens, ceased to be threats. The Norsemen stopped raiding, converted to Christianity, and set up the Scandinavian kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The adventurous spirit of the Norse carried some of them across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in Greenland and even, briefly, North America. The Magyars, meanwhile, became Hungarians, as they settled in the plain of Hungary along the middle Danube. Their King Stephen consolidated both his rule and the structure of the Kingdom of Hungary with his conversion and that of his people to Christianity in 1000. Only the Saracens remained hostile and unconverted. Still, they concentrated their efforts on developing their own civilization in the Iberian Peninsula, called Andalusia, rather than conquering their Christian neighbors.

Knights won because they were the best military technology of the age, dominating battlefields for the next five hundred years, long after the threats of Vikings, Magyars, and Saracens had dissipated. As we have seen before, a group with a monopoly on the military can rule the rest of society. In the Middle Ages, knights began to claim authority in the name of the public good and elevated themselves above the masses as a closed social caste of nobles. Their ethos of nobility meant that they lived the good life because they risked their lives to defend the women, children, clerics, and peasants. They lived in the nicest homes, ate the most delicious food, and wore the most comfortable clothing, and everyone else paid for it.

During the political chaos of the invasions, whoever commanded the loyalty of others became noble. Over time, though, nobles closed their ranks and limited the status of nobility to those who inherited it. After 1100, usually only those who could prove noble ancestry could become knights (with the rare exceptions of kings ennobling talented warriors). This closed social group of the nobility reinforced itself through **chivalry**, the code of the knights. The ceremonies for initiation to knighthood were surrounded with elaborate rituals. In their castles and courts, knights practiced courtesy and refined manners with one another, such as using ''please,'' ''thank you,'' and napkins. At **tournaments**, they practiced fighting as a form of sport, entertaining crowds and winning prizes. On the battlefield, they applied rules to fight one another fairly, never attacking an unarmed knight, for example.

While there was much regional variation, the organization of these knights required new structures, or ***feudal politics***.[1] The vassal (a subordinate knight) promised loyalty (fealty) and personal service on the battlefield or in the political courts to the lord (a superior knight) in return for a fief (usually agricultural land sufficiently productive for the knight to live from). A lord was as powerful as the number of vassals he could call on. Lords began to take on new titles that reflected the number of vassals each could bind to himself with fiefs. Above the simple knight at the bottom of the hierarchy were, in ascending order, barons, counts (or earls in England), dukes, and, ultimately, the king. Kings were only as strong as the number of vassals they personally controlled. The most important political units in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were the baronies, the counties, or the duchies, rather than the kingdoms. These political constellations also often reflected underlying ethnic differences, whether dating back to the German invasions or the original Roman conquests.

A network of mutual promises of fidelity provided the glue for feudal politics. All governments are ultimately based on whether or not people uphold the rules. Family interests of the knights complicated matters. Originally, fiefs were supposed to revert to the overlord upon his vassal's death. The powerful drive of family, however, where parents provided for their children, soon compelled fiefs to become virtually hereditary. Lords and vassals did break their pledges of service and loyalty, probably as often as many modern married people break their vows. When vassals defied their lords, only fights among the knights could conclusively settle the dispute. Thus, the feudal age has been renowned for its constant warfare. Yet enough lords and vassals did maintain oaths so that medieval society became stable. The web of mutual promises of loyalty, the gathering at court to give advice and pronounce judgments, the socializing at tournaments, and the shared risks of battle all forged a ruling class that held onto power for centuries.

Even the Church could not avoid being drawn into the feudal network, since dioceses and abbeys possessed so much land. Various lords demanded that the

1. The term *feudalism* carries too many different meanings to be useful as a historical concept anymore; it is best avoided. Likewise, the phrase ''feudal system'' makes these arrangements sound more organized than they were. Finally, do not confuse ''feudal'' politics with feuds or vendettas.

Church contribute its wealth to support the common defense. Rather than have knights seize control and turn Church-owned farms into fiefs, bishops and abbots became feudal lords themselves. Thus, clerics became responsible for building castles, commanding knights in battle, and presiding over courts. Some bishops and abbots even ruled as princes, similar to feudal dukes and counts. These political obligations recognized the Church's real power but often clashed with its spiritual aims.

To compensate somewhat, the Church tried to suggest that certain divinely inspired morality was part of chivalry and the rules of war (see figure 7.2). In some regions, bishops and princes proclaimed the **Peace of God**, which both classified clergy, women, and children as noncombatants and limited the reasons for going to war. Church leaders also tried to assert the **Truce of God**, which limited how often warfare could be conducted, especially banning it on Sundays, holidays, and during planting and harvesting.

Figure 7.2. This sculpture in Magdeburg Cathedral of the ancient martyr and saint Maurice portrays the saint as a black African in twelfth-century armor. The Church thus identified Christian values with knighthood, regardless of ethnicity.

Paying for all the expensive armor, horses, and castles was the agricultural production by peasants. Those who did the farm labor—namely, the vast majority of the population—did not share in the political relationships of the knights. In a connected, yet separate sociopolitical relationship called ***manorial economics***, the peasants did the farmwork that provided the food and wealth for the knights.

These medieval peasants are known as **serfs**. A medieval serf had servile status, but not as low as that of a slave. They were legally connected or bound to the land of their knightly and clerical lords. Serfs lost the right to make decisions about their own lives (such as choice of marriage partners or where to live) and owed work, taxes, and service to the landowners. These burdens kept them poor from generation to generation. Nevertheless, serfs did benefit from always being tied to land at least, since it provided food. Parents and their children lived in the same villages and farmed the same lands, season after season, according to law and custom. Neither they nor their descendants could be thrown off the land as long as they performed their customary services.

The harsh conditions of the Early Middle Ages forced many manors to become self-sufficient. Trade had nearly vanished, and the roads were too dangerous to travel. The peasants cooperated in their local communities to produce much of what everyone needed to survive, such as food, clothing, and tools. They depended on their lords for justice and defense and relied on the parish church for salvation.

Then a simple agricultural innovation on these manors soon helped Europe prosper as never before. Beginning in the dark times after the fall of the Carolingian Empire, someone came up with the idea of **three-field planting**. Previously, the custom in European farming had been a two-field system, which left half the farmland fallow (without crops) every year to recover its fertility. The new method involved planting one-third with one kind of crop (such as beans), another third with another crop (such as wheat), and letting only a third lie fallow. The following year they rotated which crop they planted in which part of the field. The result was a larger harvest for less work and an improved diet for everyone.

New technology, much of which had spread to Europe after being invented in Asia, further enlarged what the manorial peasants could accomplish. The horse collar enabled horses to pull plows without strangling. Windmills ground grain into flour without human or animal labor. These and other agricultural and technological advancements added to the wealth of Europe. The craft and farmwork of the peasants continued to produce wealth at the lord's behest. The rule of the knights defended the fragile kingdoms of France, England, Germany, and the rest. The prayers and labors of the clergy made Christianity the sole religion of the West. Western civilization appeared to be secure.

The fall of Rome in the West in the fifth century had initiated a troubled time about which much remains in the dark for historians. In such difficult times, little energy was spent on learning and intellectual endeavors. Survival mattered more than the bare minimum of culture preserved in the rituals of the Church and the epic songs of the Germans. Over the next few centuries after the chaos of the invasions, powerful rulers, such as Alfred in England or Charles Martel among the Franks, consolidated numerous barbarian kingdoms into a few realms. For a while, it looked as if the Carolingian Empire might unify the West as a revived Roman

Empire. Its failure nonetheless left the kingdoms of France and Germany strong enough to hold out against new invasions. A thousand years after Christ's birth, the West was strong and stable. The successful ordered medieval society of catholic clergy, feudal knights, and manorial peasants seemed settled forever as God's plan for humanity. The success of Christendom soon led to change, however. More sophisticated political and social structures, and even ideas, shook up accepted assumptions. New people sought supremacy. As a result, the West passed from the Early Middle Ages into the High Middle Ages in the eleventh century between 1000 and 1100.

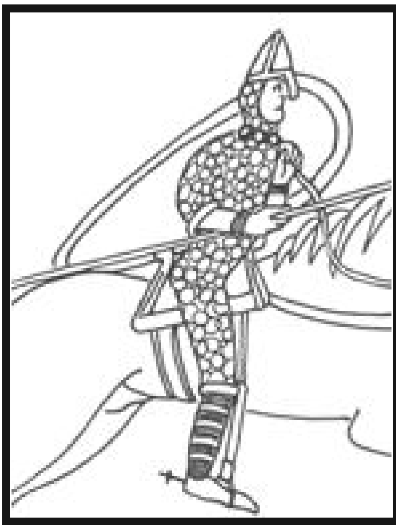
Review: *How did feudal politics and manorial economics help the West recover?*

Response:

CHAPTER 8

The Medieval Mêlée

The High and Later Middle Ages, 1000 to 1500



Christendom had grown up among the ruins of the western part of the ancient Roman Empire during the Early Middle Ages. Thus began a distinct Western civilization, having combined the surviving remnants of Græco-Roman culture and Christianity inspired by Judaism with the rule of the German conquerors. The following **High** or **Central Middle Ages** (1000–1350) represented the culmination of medieval politics and culture. The improved manorial agriculture raised the amount of wealth, while the stable feudal governments provided more security. The medieval kingdoms became civilized, as towns and cities provided new avenues to riches. At the same time, though, there seemed to be constant fighting, from the hand-to-hand mêlée of medieval knightly combat to vast wars of ideology. Institutions and ideas fought with one another over which would master the minds, bodies, and souls of Christendom. New environmental pressures shaped these conflicts in the **Later Middle Ages** (1300–1500). Medieval methods adapted to new times, reflecting the growing success and power of Europe (see map 8.1).

Map 8.1. Europe, 1200

RETURN OF THE KINGS

After the danger of Vikings, Saracens, and Magyars had passed, the knights of Christendom waged war more and more against one another. These lords ignored the kings, who represented order and sovereignty. The politics of feudal lords and vassals decentralized authority. In some areas, the local knight in his castle and what he controlled were all that mattered to people. Violence increased as private wars determined public policy. Kings clung precariously to their thrones, often controlling fewer resources than their greater vassals but still trying to pass on their dynasties from father to son. When this failed, some other aristocrat placed the crown on his own head—someone had to be king.

Despite this weakening of real royal power, kings and their special position became the focus of state building. The traditional roles of the king (warrior, lawgiver, symbol) and the new feudal structure offered certain advantages to kings. Some kings united their realms, rebuilding the fragmented feudal fiefs into a unified hierarchical state and moving from the personal oaths of fidelity to the rule of law. The old Germanic tradition that believed kings were semidivine combined with the Christian Church's desire for a stable sociopolitical order. Likewise, most kings also had attained a feudal position of the *suzerain* (supreme lord) over all others, at the

top of the hierarchy of feudal relationships. Kings pulled their unruly dukes, counts, barons, and knights with their fiefs into a coherent political system. Their key difficulty was how to delegate without losing control to feudal competitors. Conflicts between kings and their rival aristocrats and nobles over obedience shaped the various states of Europe.

The first kingdom to experience a reinvigorated royal power was that of the East Franks, which was soon called the Kingdom of the Germans and then grew into a new empire. Local military commanders, the dukes, better defended their various provinces against the Magyars and Vikings than did the distant kings. In the process, the dukes promoted feelings of regional unity under their own rule. Thus the dukes became more powerful than the nominal king. In 911, the last of the Carolingian dynasty, Louis "the Child," died and passed the kingship to the Duke of Franconia—ruler of the heartland of the East Franks. After a troubled reign, that duke in turn handed the kingship over to his strongest rival, the Duke of Saxony. The new king of the Germans was able to found a royal dynasty for Germany, passing power from father to son for several generations. The continuity of these Saxon kings managed to rebuild royal authority.

The most important king of this Saxon dynasty, **Otto I "the Great"** (r. 935–973), originally faced both rebellions and invasions. He managed to quell the revolts begun by his relatives using both successful military campaigns and the support of the bishops, to whom he granted lands and authority. Unlike dukes and counts, bishops had no heirs to whom they could pass on their power, and the king usually had the most important voice in the successors' selection. This arrangement bound together many bishops and kings in Germany. With the support of these prince-bishops, Otto broke the power of the Magyars at the Battle of Lechfeld in 955, allegedly helped by the Holy Lance that had pierced Christ's side. Afterward, the Magyars ceased to invade, settled down to establish the tame kingdom of Hungary, and converted to Christianity. Otto further extended his own rule over Italy. His pretext for invading Italy was the rescue of the young widowed Queen Adelaide, whom a usurper had locked up in a castle. Otto drove out the usurper and rescued Adelaide, making her his queen (which, of course, then supported his own claims to be "king" of Italy).

Otto confirmed his rulership in Italy eleven years later in 962, when he had the pope crown him Emperor of the Romans in the tradition of Charlemagne. This act once again employed the name of the ancient Roman Empire, reviving what had first been lost to the West in the fifth century, what had then failed with the Carolingians in the ninth century, and what technically still continued in Byzantium. The political state ruled by Otto and his successors eventually came to be called the **Holy Roman Empire** (962–1806) by its rulers and later historians. At its height, this empire included all the lands of the Germans, Italy from the Papal States northward, much of the Lotharingian middle-realm territories of Burgundy and the Lowlands, Bohemia, and some Slavic lands on the northern plains of Central Europe. The Holy Roman Empire dominated European politics for the 150 years after Otto.

While the Germans were building the Holy Roman Empire, the Kingdom of England had just managed to survive another onslaught of Vikings in the tenth century. The short rule of King Canute's dynasty from Denmark settled matters briefly. When this dynasty died out in 1066, civil war broke out. First, the native

English earl Harold Godwinson claimed the English throne. Next, Harold fought off a Scandinavian invasion by another claimant in the north. Finally, Harold had to rush to the south to fight an invasion from Normandy. There he fell at the Battle of Hastings, defeated by the army of the Norman duke **William "the Conqueror"** (or "the Bastard" from another point of view). The **Norman conquest** of England changed the course of history.

The Normans were Vikings (Norsemen) who had seized and settled a province of France along the English Channel in the tenth century, calling it Normandy after themselves. They recognized the French king as *suzerain* and soon spoke only French. This combination of Viking and Frankish heritages created a people who were extraordinarily influential in European history. Other Normans later seized southern Italy and Sicily from the slackening grip of the Byzantine Empire and created a powerful and dynamic state there. In that kingdom, unique in Christendom, the Norman-French rulers fostered prosperity and peace among diverse populations of Italians, Greeks, and Arabs. The Normans also played a leading role in the Crusades (see below).

The victorious Duke William crowned himself King William I of England (r. 1066–1087) on Christmas day. William replaced virtually all the local magnates with his own loyal vassals after he crushed several rebellions by English nobles (see figure 8.1). England therefore became less and less involved in the Scandinavian affairs of northern Europe and more tied to France and western Europe. The French-speaking Normans only slowly adopted the language of the majority of English speakers. As a result, a French/Viking influence of the Normans added to the previous Viking, Anglo-Saxon, Roman, Celtic, and prehistoric cultures to create England.

William's military victories enabled him to assert a strong monarchical rule and to bind his new land under his law. One example was his command to have the ***Domesday Book*** written in 1086. It assessed the wealth of most of his new kingdom by counting the possessions of his subjects, from castles and plowland down to cattle and pigs. William used the knowledge of this book to tax everything more effectively. This assessment was the first such official catalogue in the West since the time of ancient Rome.

William's dynasty ran into trouble, though, when his son Henry I died from eating too many lampreys in 1135. Henry sired over twenty bastards, but his only legitimate male heir had drowned in a shipwreck. The result was, of course, civil war. On one side was Henry's daughter, Matilda, the widow of German Holy Roman Emperor Henry V and current wife of the powerful Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, just south of Normandy. On the other side, most barons of England supported her cousin Stephen of Blois from northern France. Yet Matilda and her husband's forces won Normandy in battle and negotiated a truce stipulating that after Stephen's death the English throne would go to Geoffrey and Matilda's son. The young **King Henry II** (r. 1154–1189) thus founded the English royal dynasty of the **Angevins** (the adjective for Anjou), or **Plantagenets** (after a flower symbol adopted as a badge). The Plantagenets ruled England for the rest of the Middle Ages, from 1154 to 1485. In addition to England, Henry inherited Normandy and Anjou from his mother and father. Moreover, he gained Aquitaine through marriage to its duchess,

Figure 8.1. William "the Conqueror" started building the castle, the White Tower of the Tower of London, after his conquest of England.

Eleanor, who had recently divorced King Louis VII of France. Thus, Henry II reigned over an empire that stretched from the Scottish border to the Mediterranean Sea.

Being crowned king and exercising real power were two different things, however, especially since many lords in Henry's vast territories had usurped royal prerogatives during the chaos of civil war. Henry used the widespread desire of many to return to the peace and prosperity of the "good ol' days" as a way to promote innovations in government, especially in England. In a campaign similar to that of Augustus Caesar to "restore" the republic, Henry claimed he wanted to revive the ways of his grandfather, the last Norman king. By doing so, he really concentrated rule in his own hands. Henry II pursued this through four means. First, he needed

military domination, so he attacked and demolished all castles that did not have an explicit license from him. He built others in key locations, using the latest technology imported from the Crusades in Palestine (see the next section). He also preferred paid mercenaries to feudal levies. He asked his knights to pay ''shield money'' instead of feudal military service.

Second, he began a revision of royal finances to pay for this military might. His own treasurer had written that the power of rulers rose and fell according to how much wealth they had: rulers with few funds were vulnerable to foes, while rulers with cash preyed upon those without. Henry obtained good money through currency reform, creating the pound sterling: 120 pennies equaled a pound's worth of silver. If his minters made bad money, he had their hands chopped off. Circulating coins improved his people's ability to pay taxes. Further, he reinforced old sources of taxation, including the Danegeld tax imposed on the descendants of Viking invaders who had long since become assimilated with the English. He raised crusading taxes to pay for a crusade he never took part in. All these funds were accounted for by the Office of the Exchequer, which took its name from the checkerboard with which officials tracked credits and debits.

Third, in his role as law preserver and keeper, Henry improved the court system. He offered more impartial judges as alternatives to the wide variety of local baronial courts. His judges also earned a better education at new universities in Oxford and Cambridge, where they trained in a revived study of Roman law based on the Justinian Code. These judges traveled around the country (literally on a circuit), hearing cases that grand juries determined to be worthy of trial. The judges often used a **jury** of peers to examine evidence and decide guilt and innocence, rather than relying only on the allegedly divinely guided trial by ordeal. Henry's subjects could also purchase writs, standardized forms where one had only to fill in the blanks of name, date, and the like, in order to bring complaints before the sheriff and, thus, the king. These innovations increased the jurisdiction of the king's law, making it relatively quick and available to many. At the same time, people became involved on the local level, holding themselves mutually responsible for justice. This system is still used today in many Western countries.

Fourth, Henry II needed a sound administration to organize all this activity, of which the Exchequer was a part. Since he spent two-thirds of his time across the English Channel in his French provinces, Henry needed loyal officials who could exercise authority in his name but without his constant attention. The result revived government by bureaucracy. Writs and official records began to be kept, stored, and perhaps even consulted. Permanent bureaucratic officials, such as the treasurer or the chancellor, stood in for the king. London started to become a capital city, as it offered a permanent place for people to track down government officials. New personnel were hired from the literate people of the towns rather than from the traditional ruling class of nobles. These men had the protection of the king, through whom they gained wealth and advancement. The king could hold these officials accountable and hire or fire them at will, unlike nobles, who inherited offices almost as easily as they had fiefs. Henry paid the lower grades of officials with food, money, or even the leftover ends of candles, while he compensated higher-ranked ministers with Church lands and feudal titles. These civil servants made government more responsive both to change and to the will of the governed.

The challenge any king faced in controlling appointed officials came to life in Henry's infamous quarrel with **Thomas Becket** (d. 1172). Becket had risen in Henry's service to the highest office of chancellor, all the while fighting for extended royal rights and prerogatives. Henry had Thomas Becket made Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest-ranking Church official in England, believing that Becket would serve the royal will in both positions. Unfortunately for Henry, Archbishop Thomas experienced an unexpected religious conversion after his consecration. He became one of the reformers who resisted royal intervention in Church affairs (see the next section). Years of dispute ended when four knights bashed Thomas' brains out in front of his own altar. Thomas Becket's martyrdom allowed the English clergy to appeal to Rome in Church matters and to keep benefit of clergy (that clerics be judged by Church courts, not secular ones). Still, many clerics remained royal servants.

Despite bureaucratic innovations, government still remained tied to the personality of the ruler. Rebellions by his sons marked the last years of Henry II's reign. His wife and their mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, helped to organize the revolts. Henry had committed adulterous affairs and kept Eleanor under house arrest after she showed too much independence and resentment. In return, she and her sons found support among barons who resented the king's supremacy. Nevertheless, the dynastic unity of Henry's lands survived for a few years after his demise, largely due to the solidity of his reforms. His immediate heir, King Richard I "the Lion-Hearted" (r. 1189–1199), was away from England for all except ten months of his ten years of rule, and yet the system functioned without him. In contrast, Richard's heir, his younger brother King John (r. 1199–1216), pushed the royal power to its limit as he quarreled with King Philip II of France, Pope Innocent III, and his own barons, only to lose most of the Angevin territories in France.

In 1215, John's unhappy subjects forced him to agree to the famous ***Magna Carta*** (Latin for "Great Charter"). This treaty between the king, the clergy, the barons, and the townspeople of England accepted royal authority but limited its abuses. In principle, it made the king subject to law, not above it. This policy of requiring the king to consult with representatives of the people became permanent mostly because John died soon after signing it, leaving a child to inherit power. The clergy, barons, and townspeople grew accustomed to meeting with the king and his representatives. In 1295, King Edward I summoned a model assembly of those who would speak with the king, called **Parliament**. This body of representatives of the realm effectively realigned the rights of English kings and their subjects.

Meanwhile, the kings of France, who had started out in the tenth century weaker than those of England, became stronger by the thirteenth century. The founder of the Capetian dynasty (987–1328) had seized the throne from the last Carolingian king. At first, the Capetians held only nominal power, effective only over an area around Paris called the Île de France. With the rise of feudal politics, royal power had almost vanished. Only the king's position as *suzerain*, or keystone of the feudal hierarchy, barely preserved respect for the crown. More powerful than the king were the dynastic magnates, especially the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Normandy, the Count of Anjou, and the Duke of Aquitaine.

Two particular medieval French kings built France's strong monarchy. **Philip II "Augustus"** (r. 1180–1223) gained a significant advantage over the Angevins. At

the beginning of Philip's reign, Henry II's Angevin Empire seemed to doom French monarchy, since Henry's territories in France of Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine overwhelmed the French king's lands. Fortunately for France, Henry's French possessions collapsed under his son John. Philip fought a war against John, sparked by feudal complaints of the vassals. The Battle of Bouvines in 1214 sealed Philip's victory with the conquest of most of the continental possessions of the Plantagenets except for a sliver of Aquitaine called Guyenne. As conqueror (like William of Normandy in his conquest of England), Philip accumulated overwhelming authority. He then carried out reforms modeled on those of Henry II. His new administrative bureaucratic offices were settled in his chosen capital city, Paris. His only mistake was to break his first marriage to Ingeborg of Denmark and marry Agnes of Meran without permission of the Church. The papal interdict on France lasted four years.

By the reign of his descendant **Philip IV "the Fair"** (r. 1285–1314), the king's power in France was supreme. Philip IV further intensified royal authority with his own representative body, the **Estates-General**. Similar to the English Parliament, the Estates-General included representatives from the clergy, landed nobility, and commons or burghers from towns. These members gave their consent to and participation in enacting new royal taxes and laws. Philip IV also secured royal authority against even the papacy (see the next section).

Thus, the kings in Germany, France, and England had managed to restore authority and create the first three core states of Western civilization. This fragile Christendom might still have been crushed by yet another invasion, that of Mongols or Tartars, polytheist pony-riding warriors who had come to dominate Asia in the early twelfth century under their leader Genghis or Chengiz Khan. In 1241, the Mongol invaders under Genghis Khan's grandson Batu smashed multinational armies of Christians in both Poland and Hungary, paving the way for conquest of Europe. The next year, though, a fight over the Mongol dynasty ended their interest in invading the little western corner of Eurasia. Thus, Christendom survived, led by kings who worked closely with the wealth and influence of the Church, defeated powerful enemies, and promoted the rule of law. The kings had taken primitive feudal authority and brought the nobles into some order and structure, if not full obedience and subjugation. Their rivalries with one another also provided a dynamic of competition, both economic and military. Out of the diversity of these states and others to follow, Western civilization lurched forward in war and peace.

Review: *How did more centralized governments form in western Europe?*

Response:

DISCIPLINE AND DOMINATION

The feudal lords of Christendom struggled to bind people together politically, while the prelates of the Church attempted to unify the faithful religiously. The Christian Church had survived both the fall of the Roman Empire in the West and the fall of the Carolingian Empire. Most people, peasant and noble, labored on in their roles of farming and administering, attending church as best they could. Large numbers also retreated from the cares of the world to the haven of monasteries to become monks and nuns, as during the chaos of the fifth century. Since many regular clergy lacked sincere religious belief, religious dedication slipped. In numerous monasteries, the regulations of Benedict were either unheard or unheeded.

One group of monks in the wild district of Burgundy decided to change that neglectful attitude with the foundation of the new monastery of Cluny in the year 910. First, the monks of the **Cluniac Reform** dedicated themselves to a strict devotion to the Benedictine Rule, including a disciplined practice of the prayers of the Divine Office. Second, in order to maintain reform in their own cloister and in others who imitated it, they held regular meetings to set a proper tone and to correct abuses. Third, they exempted themselves from local supervision of either the nobility or the bishop, because they thought the local nobility would interfere more than they would help. Both the nobility and higher officers of the Church were too compromised by the rough-and-tumble feudal network to be trusted. Instead, the monks placed themselves under the direct supervision of the distant Bishop of Rome, the pope.

This act was done without the knowledge or permission of the pope, but it reinforced a trend with enormous consequences for the Christian Church in the West. According to tradition and **canon law** (legal rules that governed the institutional Church), a local bishop or the king assumed supervision of a monastery. Local nobles might also intrude, using their power of patronage and family connections among the monks and nuns. Charlemagne had also supported the reorganization of the Church into provinces, which united the dioceses of several bishops under the supervision of one who became an "archbishop." To weaken this trend, the supporters of bishops "found" a number of charters that documented an overarching authority by the distant pope in Rome. Later organizers of the canon law accepted these forgeries as genuine. Hence, the pope became increasingly exceptional in the canon law, a unique, superior authority. An appeal to Rome over any matter from ownership of a fishpond to possession of a benefice (a paying Church position) could transform a local fray into a fundamental legal dispute. The popes asserted their unique jurisdiction by binding themselves with clerics throughout the West.

The Cluniacs, meanwhile, had enormous success building new monastic communities and reforming old ones. People chose to abandon the pleasures of aristocratic pursuits and accept a hard life of obedience and discipline, although only aristocrats and nobles really had this choice. Medieval peasants, closely bound to the land as serfs, could not readily leave their obligations to their manorial lord to undertake new ones to the divine Lord. Over the years, so many nobles donated

land and children to the cause of monasticism that some worried about the increasing wealth and influence distracting the Cluniacs from properly focusing on divine worship.

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, many male monastics supported a new **Cistercian Reform** that sought to go beyond the dedication of the Cluniacs. In monasteries like Chartreuse, Prémontré, and Cîteaux (which gave its name to the movement), these new monks interpreted the Benedictine Rule as strictly as possible. They journeyed even farther into the hills, forests, and wastelands to build churches and farms to avoid secular temptations and concerns (see figure 8.2). This internal colonization increased the amount of arable land in the West and, therefore, its wealth. The monks often labored with their own hands, although some orders opened up opportunities to laymen, called *conversi*, who were a form of second-class monk. These *conversi* gained the benefits of communal life without being burdened with the obligations of education and prayer required of full monks. The reformed monks also took only converts older than sixteen years, refusing to accept the unwanted children of aristocrats. The new monks believed they had a true calling. They even inspired some diocesan clergy to reform as **canons regular**. As regular clergy, these men lived together in communities of prayer, and at the same time as secular clergy, they served the world as pastors and teachers.

These monastic reforms opened various options for choosing the religious life, either among regular or secular clergy. Benedictine monasteries remained largely class based, requiring members to come from well-connected and wealthy families who could afford to donate land and children. The religious life provided access to influence to nobles not using the sword. The life of Abbess Hildegard of Bingen (b. 1098–d. 1179) illustrates some of the options open even to Benedictine nuns. As the tenth child, her noble family sent Hildegard first to join an anchoress when she was only eight years old. As an adult, she became abbess of the neighboring abbey and collected enough donations to found a new nunnery. She became famous for writings of her visions (perhaps caused by migraines) as well as medicine, theology, and music.

In contrast to the Benedictines, or the reformed and disciplined Cluniacs, the Chartreusians, Premonstratentians, and Cistercians were more open to lower-class seekers. Some orders emphasized contemplation and learning, others activity in hospitals and the care of souls, and still others spirituality and mysticism. Despite such differences, all clergy remained unified in one Church under the pope.

Monks and nuns, whether reformed or not, increasingly relied on the papacy, whose practical power and authority were rapidly expanding. Whereas the Cluniacs in the ninth century could think of Rome as distant, the Cistercians in the twelfth century saw an invigorated papacy all around them. This powerful papacy had first needed to rise out of the depths of degradation. For centuries, the papal office had been the pawn of the rambunctious Roman nobility. One family or another forced its candidate into St. Peter's Chair. Thus, the popes were too often men merely interested in the power that the wealth of the papal office made possible. Many westerners, however, wanted this spiritual leader to be morally worthy. In 1046, when petty Roman squabbles created three popes at once, King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor Henry III arrived in Rome to restore order. Henry called a

Figure 8.2. This sculpture of the sin of temptation on Strasbourg Cathedral warns about what lies behind a pretty face: poisonous snakes and toads.

council held at nearby Sutri. The Synod of Sutri dismissed the three popes and then a chose a new, universally recognized pope.

This pope and his successors took inspiration from the Cluniac Reform. They believed that a strong papacy could bring the idea of a religious calling to the secular ecclesiastical hierarchy. Reformed popes could reach throughout the western Church, extending past the other bishops to the lowest cleric and layperson. Just

as monks rejected supervision by local nobles, so did the popes. Not kings or emperors, but popes should ultimately be in charge. These attitudes initiated what is called the **Hildebrandine** or **Gregorian Reform** (1050–1150), named after the monk Hildebrand, who became **Pope Gregory VII** (r. 1073–1085).

One immediate tragic consequence of the restored papal authority was a ***schism***, or "tearing" or "splitting," of the orthodox catholic Christian Church into two parts: the Latin-speaking hierarchy in the West, which took the term *Catholic*, and the Greek-speaking hierarchy in the East, which has come to be called *Orthodox*. Since the fall of the western half of the Roman Empire, the Church had slowly been separating on organizational, theological, and liturgical grounds. The eastern patriarchs and bishops had kept a close relationship with Byzantine emperors. Although they had lost some dioceses to the Muslim advance in the Middle East and Africa, they had found new missionary success among the peoples of the Balkans and eastern Europe. The distant Roman bishop, however, wanted not only independence from the eastern Roman emperor but a recognition of Roman primacy in authority over all the other patriarchs and bishops. Arguments over relatively minor issues such as the supervision of churches, the addition to the Nicene Creed of the word *filioque* ("and the Son" when mentioning who sent the Holy Spirit), and the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist brought on a crisis. In 1054, members of a papal commission to Constantinople aggravated the situation by excommunicating the patriarch there, who, of course, excommunicated them right back. Unity between Christians in East and West has never been able to recover. Christianity has remained fundamentally divided between Eastern ***Orthodox Christianity*** and Western Catholic Christianity ever since in what is sometimes called the "Great Schism."

For the reforming clerics in the West, though, expanding papal supremacy justified the split. They strengthened the role of **cardinals**, who originally had been created as assistants to run the diocese of Rome. In 1059, a unique election law reformed the election process for the pope. Previously, the pope had been chosen in the same manner as other bishops had been. Officially, the accepted canon law said that any bishop was supposed to be chosen by both the clergy and laypeople of the diocese. Practically, though, powerful men, like a king, actually did most of the choosing in most dioceses. The new papal election law excluded laypersons entirely from the pope's selection as well as most of the clergy. Only cardinals appointed by popes could elect the next pope. This law aimed to remove the pope from being the plaything of the Roman nobility, but it also cut out the German king and emperor of the Romans. It took some centuries for this system to function as intended—the emperor and nobles did not like being shut out—but it remains the basic way popes are elected today.

The reformers in Rome also hoped to encourage a higher quality of cleric by targeting what they considered to be the two worst problems in the Church: **simony** and the sexual activity of clerics. Simony, named after the figure Simon Magus in the New Testament, originally meant the sin of trying to purchase salvation. It had come to mean the crime of paying money, or even using political influence, to acquire a Church office or benefice. The attack on clerical sexual activity was partially related to the opposition to simony. Reformers thought that when clergy had children, the tendency to pass on to their heirs a priestly office (not to

mention parish property) compromised the holiness of the priesthood (and the Church's possessions).

Additionally, some reformers were squeamish about women and sex. Already in ancient times the Church had begun to exclude women from leadership. Church authorities then began to restrict married men from offices or sacraments, insisting on celibacy. They adopted misogynist attitudes from pagan philosophers and culture about female inferiority and corrupt sexuality, cringing at the thought that a priest might handle the holy body and blood of Christ in the mass after having touched the impure flesh of a woman. So reformers began a campaign against the many priests who were married and others who kept concubines or ''house companions.'' Of all the reform efforts, people in the local parishes surely noticed this one the most, whether their priests obeyed or not.

To change clerical attitudes, the papacy began to intervene in local Church affairs as never before. The cardinals increased in number and authority. They, with the pope as highest judge, established a court of last resort to solve any disputes within the Church over rights, properties, and privileges. Legal scholars collected and commented on old and new canon law in support of the tighter Church organization. Popes added lawyers and bureaucrats to this papal court called, in Latin, the Curia. The popes often sent cardinals throughout Christendom as legates, the pope's official representatives who had his full authority. The papal scribes issued bulls (named after the lead seal of authenticity hanging from them) in which the popes, on their own authority, codified law and moral issues. To provide a broader base of advice, communication, and acceptance, the popes also began to gather together clergy from all over the West, not just their own diocese or province, in councils claiming to represent the universal Church. Ironically, as a result the pope became less a spiritual leader than the head of a vast bureaucratic machine. While many of the popes over the next centuries were great lawyers and politicians, few had any inclination toward sanctity or sainthood.

One unique right that the popes began to exercise at this time was the calling of **crusades** (1095–1492), the Christian version of holy war. Before the eleventh century, war was sometimes recognized as a necessity but had always been considered sinful. Jesus' clear, explicit commands about nonviolence had even led many Christians in the Roman Empire to be pacifists. Augustine had helped to establish what we call the just war theory, allowing wars if they were defensive, did not involve too much destruction or brutality, and aimed at establishing a more just peace. Although this theory could allow Christians to go to war under many circumstances, every act of killing was a sin that required confession, penance, and reconciliation.

But the concept of crusade turned the sin of war into a virtue. Instead of regretting the killing of another human being, the crusader could glory in it. Killing the enemies of God became a holy act, a good deed. No sin was committed—indeed, one got as much closer to heaven as if one were on a pilgrimage. The crusaders, then, were armed pilgrims. Instead of hiking to Santiago de Compostela to pray, they marched to Jerusalem to slay.

Many regions became the target of crusading activity. The popes first gave their blessing on the crusade to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula, called the *Reconquesta*.

Crusaders struck southward from the northern remnants of early medieval Christian kingdoms against the Islamic Moors of Andalusia. By 1130, crusaders had founded the Christian country of Portugal along the Atlantic coast. They expanded the kingdoms of Leon, Castile, and Aragon southward. These kingdoms would wrangle with one another and the Moors until the end of the Middle Ages, when a united Spain stomped out the last Muslim foothold in western Europe. An even more important result came from the conquest of the city of Toledo, which sparked an intellectual fire in the West (see below).

The most famous crusades, those to liberate the Holy Land, *Outremer* (French for "across the sea"), or Palestine, were based on a misunderstanding. A Turkish victory at the Battle of Manzikert (1071) threatened the Byzantine Empire. Despite the schism, the Byzantine emperor called on the pope to find mercenaries to help him liberate Asia Minor. Instead, Pope Urban II, promoting myths of Muslim atrocities, exhorted knights and infantry to drive the Muslims from the lands of Christians, particularly from Jerusalem.

Surprisingly, or maybe miraculously, the First Crusade (1095–1099) actually succeeded. At first, a ragtag horde of inspired outsiders and peasants shouting, "God wills it!" marched toward Jerusalem. Along the way, the rabble slaughtered some European Jews who refused to convert to Christianity. This mob ended up slaughtered or enslaved by the Turks in Asia Minor before ever reaching Jerusalem. In 1199, a better-organized feudal army under various dukes and counts barely survived a difficult journey through Europe and Asia Minor, suffering battle, thirst, and hunger (the last sometimes solved by cannibalism). Miraculously, these crusaders conquered the Levantine coast, including Jerusalem itself, allegedly helped by the Holy Lance that had pierced Christ's side as well as by fasting and processions. As they sacked the "holy city," the Christian crusaders waded up to their ankles in the blood of slaughtered Muslim men, women, and children in one mosque where they had taken refuge. The crusaders also burned Jews alive in their homes and synagogues. Then the rival crusading leaders set up several small principalities.

To survive for the next two centuries, these crusading princedoms needed more than miracles. The new Western princes and knights in *Outremer* hardly cooperated with either each other or the Byzantine Empire. They did make some efforts at cooperating with the Muslims who were their subjects and neighbors. They needed and received continued reinforcements from Christendom. These zealous and temporary conquerors disliked the civilizations of Byzantium and Islam as something strange, despite their shared Græco-Roman legacy. Their crusading mentality often prevented the Christians who permanently lived in Palestine from working with the pragmatic Muslims and allowing peoples of different heritages to live together in peace.

Also complicating relations was a new form of regular clergy inspired by crusading, namely, military monasticism. The odd figures of **monk-knights** lived Christian lives of chastity, obedience, and prayer like monks, but also fought as warriors on the battlefield against the infidels. These militarized religious orders, like the Hospitallers or the Templars, provided much-needed resources of money, social service, and trained warriors.

The Middle East became a complicated jumble of diverse and competing charac-

teristics. Although the Muslims called all western Christians ''Franks,'' the crusaders were deeply divided (not forgetting the constant attempts of the Byzantines to assert authority). The Franks rarely forgot that they came from England, Scotland, France, various provinces of the Holy Roman Empire, or Norman Sicily, all of whose governments quarreled with one another. Political loyalties, ethnic pride, and religious bickering often weakened their efforts. City-states of northern Italy also built up their own commercial networks in the Levant, either selling to or selling out their fellow Franks, as business required.

In turn, the Franks labeled all their opponents under the blanket term *Saracens*, which ignored the deep religious differences about the choice of a new caliph, such as the divisions of Sunni, Shi'ite, and even Assassin (an unusual Muslim secret sect of alleged hashish smokers that murdered its enemies, giving us the term ***assassination***). The Assassin murders of important Muslim leaders helped keep factions divided, terrorized, and at war with one another. Likewise, ethnic differences among Arabs, Egyptians, Persians, Kurds, and Turks long delayed a united Islamic front. For decades, the divisions among Muslims allowed the crusaders to survive a bit longer by playing one group off against the other. The Kurdish Saladin (Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayb), who had taken control of the Egyptian caliphate, almost succeeded in defeating the crusaders in the 1180s. But Richard ''the Lion-Hearted's'' so-called Third Crusade reestablished a strong Christian foothold, even if Jerusalem remained under Muslim control. Finally, in 1295, unified and zealous Muslims drove the crusaders back to the sea and reclaimed Palestine and the Levant.

The Holy Land had been lost, but other crusades continued. The third-most-important region for crusading, after Palestine and the Iberian Peninsula, was in northeastern Europe, along the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. The **Teutonic Knights**, named after their common German ethnicity, were the most successful crusaders there. They had started as an order of crusading monk-knights in Palestine. Later, the Teutonic Knights gained a papal license to help the Holy Roman Empire conquer the pagan peoples of eastern Europe, a movement called the *Drang-nach-Osten* (''drive to the east''). They conquered the still-pagan Prussians and then founded their own state, called **Prussia**. These Teutonic monk-knights henceforth ruled over the Prussian peasants, who were slowly converted to Christianity and assimilated into German culture. Heretics within Christendom were the fourth major target of crusaders (see the next section), after the Iberian Peninsula, Palestine, and the Baltic region.

The Crusades flowed from the conviction that Christians held the only answer to the meaning of life, combined with the military power to impose Christian beliefs beyond the heartland of Christendom. The Crusades promoted little cultural exchange or even rivalry. The Muslims who interacted with the Franks considered them uncivilized, even barbaric. With few exceptions, political or intellectual leaders of East and West barely communicated with each other. Many westerners did develop a taste, though, for luxury goods, spices, rugs, porcelain, and silk that came from Muslim merchants. And even though the Crusades failed in Palestine, their success in the Iberian Peninsula, northeastern Europe, and against heretics strengthened the supremacy of the Church.

Thus, the medieval Church had created numerous versions of regular clergy,

religious men and women who lived under special rules. The monk-knights fought actual wars against Saracens or ruled countries such as Prussia. Cistercians and their like bowed to the harshest discipline of monastic life. Canons regular served in parishes and cathedrals. Cluniac and unreformed Benedictine houses of men and women continued to dot the medieval religious landscape. Tying them all together was an increasingly influential papacy, eager to spread reform beyond the clergy.

Review: *How did reforms of monks lead to a reform of the wider Church and the creation of the medieval papacy?*

Response:

PLENTY OF PAPAL POWER

The Gregorian Reform created a papacy that, in its administrative effectiveness, became a model for royal governments. Subsequently, however, the popes became rivals to kings. One consequence was the weakening of the Holy Roman Empire. Ever since the Frankish-Papal Alliance under the Carolingians, the popes bound themselves to the revived Roman imperial office in the West, first with Charlemagne in 800 and then with Otto the Great in 962. Otto the Great had also used the bishops of Germany to help him establish a powerful basis of authority and military might. The German empire collected together a variety of peoples, yet regional tendencies resisted the domination of one king over all. Still, Otto's successors generally continued the slow gradual expansion of royal authority, reaching a high point under Henry III, who had cleaned up the disgraced papacy in 1046 by forcing elections of worthy men.

The empire faced a turning point ten years later when Henry III died, leaving as heir his six-year-old son, **Henry IV** (r. 1056–1106). Many magnates used the long regency until Henry IV came of age to seize what they could from his royal rights and prerogatives. The papacy also, as mentioned above, asserted its independence via its new election law. Further, when a pope tried to crush the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily, the Normans there turned defeat into an alliance with their former enemy. Thus, the popes no longer needed the German emperor's protection. When Henry IV became a ruler in his own right, he wanted to restore the power that his father Henry III had wielded.

Henry IV's attempts revealed a clash between church and state that changed the West. The extreme papal claim for a ''plenitude of power'' threatened the role of kings across Europe. The radicals in the papal reform movement had expanded the definition of simony to include any lay involvement in the election of bishops, even when no money changed hands. Papal claims to be the highest figure in Christendom took away royal rights not only about choosing clerics and bishops to serve the royal regimes but about having final authority in any political decision. Disagreements between King Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII over who would be bishops in northern Italy sparked the first open fight over papal versus royal power. The **Investiture Struggle**, Contest, or Controversy (1075–1122) takes its name from the religious ceremony of investiture, which formally installs bishops in their office. This conflict fueled a civil war in the Holy Roman Empire.

As German King Henry IV's episcopal candidates clashed with reform nominees, Pope Gregory VII threatened Henry with excommunication. Gregory had already formulated a grander concept of papal prerogatives than all his forebears had. In his proposed schema, the *Dictatus papæ*, he claimed that only the pope could properly use the Roman imperial insignia, that all princes should kiss the pope's feet, and even that the pope could depose emperors. Pope Gregory declared that Henry IV was no longer king, also excommunicating him, after Henry convinced his bishops to withdraw their allegiance to Gregory.

Although the pope's legal claim to depose Henry was doubtful, Henry's enemies in Germany seized the opportunity to rise up against him. Even many of his bishops abandoned him. In a brilliant move, however, Henry rushed to Italy over frozen Alpine passes. The pope fled to the castle of Canossa, fearing an attack. Yet Henry arrived with only a small retinue. Instead of raging in armor and ferocity, the king stood in sackcloth and repentance before the castle gates for three wintry days. Since the pope was in the job of forgiveness, he lifted Henry's excommunication. Although Henry remained, technically, deposed from his kingship, the confusion about his status gave him the opportunity to regroup his military forces and defeat most of his opposition.

Nonetheless, the war in the empire dragged on as each side stuck to its interpretation of the role of bishops and their election. Gregory excommunicated Henry a futile second time. In turn, Henry's armies drove Gregory from Rome into exile with the Normans in southern Italy, where he died. Finally, Henry's own son rebelled against him to become Henry V (r. 1105–1125).

On the one side, supporters of Gregory VII saw him and his successors as heroes for their reformed papacy at the summit of Christendom. In this view, Henry IV and his heirs were corrupt tyrants. On the other side, followers of the German kings and emperors saw Henry IV as the legitimate ruler trying to hold the state together. In such a perspective, Gregory VII divided the empire through his unjustly claimed royal authority. The basic struggle between royal and Church power continued and spread to France and England (for example, in the quarrel of Henry II versus Becket).

Henry V ended two generations of open warfare between church and state when he came to terms with the papacy in the **Concordat of Worms** in 1122. A concordat is an agreement between a state and the Church, while Worms was a city

on the upper Rhine River, ruled by a bishop, where the treaty was signed. The treaty compromised on papal and imperial authority. The principle that all bishops were to be elected by the clergy and laypeople of their dioceses was reasserted (except for Rome's bishop, of course). Still, the king could be present at each election in Germany (and thus exert an influence and even decide deadlocked elections). The German king gave up the right of investiture regarding a bishop's ecclesiastical office, but he could grant feudal possessions before a bishop's full consecration (at least within the German, if not in the Burgundian or Italian, parts of the empire). Similar compromises were eventually worked out in France and England.

While the Investiture Struggle was officially over, neither advocates of papal authority nor proponents of royal power remained satisfied with this compromise. The Holy Roman Empire especially suffered from ongoing differences between emperors and popes. Emperor Henry V was unfortunate enough to die without an heir in 1125. As usual when a dynasty died out, a civil war erupted. Two major families took the lead in the competition for support from the magnates: the Welfs and the Staufens. Successive popes, using their influence and their recognized right to crown the German king as Holy Roman Emperor, regularly played one side against the other over the next several generations. Potential German kings/Holy Roman Emperors wanted the riches of Italy and the prestige that influence over the Church granted them. Meanwhile, generations of popes were trying to gain independence in Italy and the Papal States while increasing their own standing in the Church. Kings and their allies used war and propaganda against the popes and their supporters. In turn, the popes applied excommunication, crusade, and interdict (the forbidding of clerics to perform sacraments in a territory until its leader had asked forgiveness).

By 1256, the Staufen dynasty had been extinguished, while the Welfs had shrunk to mere territorial significance. Even worse for German power, the dynastic principle had been broken. Instead, three powerful archbishops, the king of Bohemia, two dukes, and a margrave asserted themselves as the seven "electoral princes" of the German king. As a result, the office of emperor/king with the Holy Roman Empire declined in power, if not prestige, while the actual rule of the local territorial magnates was magnified. Unfortunately for the popes, their obsession with weakening the Holy Roman Emperor led them to ignore two new threats—the kings of England and France.

Review: *How did the popes fight with kings and other religious movements?*

Response:

THE AGE OF FAITH AND REASON

The debates and writings provoked by the protracted conflict over papal authority helped to create a new literature of political theory, where people could speculate about the nature and purposes of government. Many of these new ideas came from an unexpected source, the Muslim-dominated Iberian Peninsula, called Andalusia. When Christian crusaders liberated the city of Toledo in 1085, they found libraries full of books written in Arabic. Rather than burning them in fanatic zeal, they hired Jews who had long lived peacefully among the Arabs in Toledo to translate the books into Latin. In that city and soon in several more, the writings from ancient Greeks and Romans as well as more recent Muslims, such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroës), became available to medieval scholars. Most important, the westerners found the writings of Aristotle, whom the Arabs had long appreciated, studied, and interpreted. Aristotle's dialectic logic lit an intellectual fire in the westerners and carried his method to the monastic and cathedral schools that had survived the collapse of the Carolingian Empire. Given their more stable and prosperous civilization, Western Christians leapt at the opportunity to learn.

Some of these schools began to flourish with academic activity, soon blossoming into **universities**. Basic education continued to be the curriculum of the seven liberal arts. The new universities then provided advanced, higher education, where students became "masters" and "doctors" (teachers) by studying canon law, secular law, medicine, theology, or philosophy. A now-familiar kind of person, the scholar, appeared in the West for the first time since the fall of Rome. The whole point of scholars in universities was to profess new knowledge. They brought the light of education to what had been the darkness of ignorance. Secular rulers likewise recognized the necessity for these institutions of higher education and encouraged their foundation in places as diverse as Bologna, Salerno, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, and Heidelberg.

Although kings often chartered these universities, the Church remained in charge of the educational process. Those who studied in this system were members of the clergy. Therefore, students fell under special laws of the Church or university and not under those of the secular courts. The metaphor of the ivory tower reflects the legal distinctions that separated institutions of higher education from the urban communities in which they were located. Conflicts between townspeople and students were considered (and sometimes still are) "town" versus "gown." Then, as now, youthful enthusiasm for extracurricular activities would sometimes annoy the neighbors. Then, as now, learning was difficult. Then, as now, some students preferred to study varieties of beer and wine rather than versions of Plato and Aristotle.

In the thirteenth century, donors and Church officials organized **colleges** as residential and educational spaces to help the young "bachelors" become more disciplined. The collegians might move on to the higher degrees of master or doctor, but many were satisfied with a "bachelor's degree," as they are today. The word *bachelor* also indicates that only men could study at these new, advanced schools. Women might receive some education in monastic schools, either as nuns or students of the nuns. Formal higher education, though, remained closed to women

for centuries. In any case, the Church was the cradle for this growing systematic structure for creating knowledge in the West.

The Church almost strangled that baby in the cradle. Some Christians feared that ideas drawn from pagans were dangerous or irrelevant. These sources of knowledge from anything other than divine revelation frightened them. The use of human reason might lead to error, even heresy. The scholar **Peter Abelard** (b. 1180–d. 1142) seemed the perfect example. Through sheer intellectual *chutzpah*, he had become one of the leading academicians of his day. Then his scandalous affair with his pupil Heloïse almost ruined his career. He had arranged for himself to be employed as her private tutor (since the Church forbade women to attend schools and universities). After she had his illegitimate child, though, instead of properly marrying her, he seemed to want to put her away in a nunnery. Her angry guardian hired some thugs, who castrated Abelard. He recovered to resume his teaching at the university, where his ideas got him into worse trouble. His enduring attitude about wisdom was that we must first doubt authority and then ask questions; questioning will then lead us to the truth. Abelard's questions, though, led him into trouble, just as Socrates' had in ancient Athens. Their experiences suggest another basic principle:

Questioning authority is dangerous.

Abelard's opponents organized to silence him. Those defenders of tradition seized upon his too-subtle explanation of the Trinity to get his ideas condemned at a Church council. They compelled him to stop teaching and even to throw his own books into the flames.

A century later, though, Aristotle's dialectic method emerged victorious. Other clerics, notably **Thomas Aquinas** (b. 1225–d. 1274), used the tools of Aristotelian logic but were careful to make sure their answers were complete and orthodox. Aquinas thought that human reason, properly used, never conflicted with divine revelation. This ***Scholasticism***, or philosophy ''of the schools,'' is clearly expressed in Aquinas' book, the *Sum of Theology*. Therein he used dialectic arguments to answer everything a Christian could want to know about the universe. Aquinas allayed the fears about Aristotle by harnessing his logic for the Church. Eventually Aquinas' logical explications seemed so solid and orthodox that the Roman Catholic Church declared him its leading philosopher.

Despite Aquinas' success, the intellectual debate did not stop. Philosophers continued to argue about realism. Some drew on Plato's idealism that universal ideas shaped reality; others advocated ***nominalism***, which proposed that only particular things in the observable world existed. Another debate among scholars focused on politics. They developed political theories that were coherent proposals about how best to rule human society. Aquinas argued that the pope was the supreme human authority, but many others fought this idea with words and weapons. Kings sought out scholars and founded universities to argue for the supremacy

of kingship and the royal connection to the divine, as had been done since the dawn of ancient civilizations.

Within these debates, the institution of the university further strengthened liberty for everyone by promoting new knowledge. Universities were not intended to convey merely the established dogmas and doctrines of the past or of powerful princes and popes. Instead, professors were, and are, supposed to expand upon inherited wisdom. Once the idea of learning new ideas became acceptable, it inevitably led to change. Nevertheless, popes continued to claim the allegiance of all humanity. Kings still tried to bind their clergy to them as servants to enforce the royal will. Neither of these attempts dominated in the West. By the end of the Middle Ages, no single power, whether the pope, king, one's own connection to God, or the independent human mind itself, would rule both the hearts and minds of mortals. Creative tensions between the demands of faith and the requirements of statehood enriched the choices available to peoples of the West.

During time off from intellectual pursuits, some scholars produced literature, which at the time was not studied at universities. Much of the literature of the Middle Ages was written in the language of scholarship, government, and faith, namely, Latin. Student poets called Goliards were famous for their drinking songs, while other clergy produced histories, epic fantasies, mystical tracts, and religious hymns.

Modern universities today usually neglect to teach about this medieval Latin literature. They instead favor studying the literature from vernacular languages, those that people spoke at home and that later evolved into the European languages of today: Romance languages (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Romanian), Germanic languages (German, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, and English), Celtic languages (which still survive as Irish Gaelic, Scots, Welsh, and Breton), and even Slavic languages (Polish, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Russian, etc.). Most of these languages began their development from literary works written down primarily after the twelfth century.

Romance became one of the most popular genres of vernacular literature. These works of prose or poetry often told of heroic adventures complicated by men and women facing challenges in their love. The most famous work of medieval literature is Dante's so-called *Divine Comedy*, written in Italian. The author had fallen for the ideal girl, Beatrice, but she had died young. In a vision, Dante journeys to hell (*Inferno*), where the Roman poet Vergil guides him through circles of punishment. Then Beatrice helps him through purgatory and finally to paradise to behold the ultimate love of God. Along the way, Dante sees and converses with many people whose stories and fates illustrate his view of good and evil, right choices and wrong choices, made in the Middle Ages.

In religious belief and practice, medieval people did have some choice, however carefully limited. Except for a few Jews and fewer Muslims, everyone who lived in Christendom had to believe in the dogmas of the Western Latin Church and worship in its dioceses and parishes. The structures built for worship, the cathedrals and parish churches, along with abbeys and monastery churches, remain as testimonies to the importance of faith in the Middle Ages. Believers replaced the wooden and few stone churches of the Early Middle Ages with such zeal that almost none survive

today. Huge amounts of wealth, effort, and design went into constructing the new stone cathedrals, minsters, chapels, and parish churches of the High Middle Ages.

Church floor plans were usually based on the Latin cross or the ancient Roman basilica, which had a long central aisle (or nave, after the Latin word for ''ship'') with an altar for the Eucharist at the far end. The people would gather in the nave, while clergy carried out the sacrificial ceremonies around the altar. Music increasingly added decorative sound around the spoken word. We still have records of medieval music because monks invented a system of musical notation (no records of Greek or Roman music have survived). Western music began with a simple plainsong, one simple line of notes called Gregorian chant, and evolved into complex polyphony, many notes sung alongside and around each other in harmony.

Two styles of churches can be recognized as medieval. The first style of stone churches we now call Romanesque, because they inherited many of their design elements from ancient Roman buildings, especially the rounded arch (see figures 8.3 and 8.4). These churches, built between 1000 and 1300, tend to have a blocky appearance, with thick walls necessary to hold up the roof. Still, they could be built quite large, often airy, and full of light. The walls were often decorated with frescoes, and the capitals of columns were carved with sculptures illustrating key ideas of the faith. The second style of churches we now call Gothic (that insulting term mentioned at the beginning of chapter 7), but medieval builders called it the ''modern'' or the ''French'' style (see figures 8.5 and 8.6). Gothic cathedrals were built from about 1150 to 1500. The invention of the Gothic or pointed arch allowed architects to build even taller naves and open up the walls to more windows. They

Figure 8.3. The blocky Romanesque Abbey of Maria Laach sits squarely on the earth, while its towers point to heaven.

Figure 8.4. The bright nave of the Romanesque Abbey of St. Godehard in Hildesheim illuminates the decorated paneled ceiling.

Figure 8.5. The outside of the Gothic choir of Cologne Cathedral highlights the flying buttresses reaching toward heaven.

filled the windows with stained glass, designed in patterns and pictures of faith, pierced by light from heaven.

All these structures required highly skilled builders and a great deal of wealth. Townspeople competed with their neighbors in other communities to have the best possible church. Sometimes, their efforts to surpass one another led to disaster, when improperly designed churches collapsed. Other times, sponsors ran out of resources, and building remained idle for decades, centuries, or forever. Medieval skylines were sometimes defined by castles, but always by churches, whose steeples one could see and bells one could hear for miles throughout the surrounding countryside.

For the people of Christendom of the High Middle Ages, it made sense to devote much time and energy to the religion of Christianity. The worldview that a moral life in this world prepared one for another life after death gave meaning to the troubles people faced as individuals and as a society. Kings might fight with popes, but that did not cast doubt on the meaning of the Gospels. Cluniac monks might live differently from Cistercians, who in turn did not act like Templars, but all observed rules set to conform their lives to the commands of the Church.

***Review**: How did medieval culture reflect both religion and rationalism?*

Response:

Figure 8.6. The high Gothic nave of Canterbury Cathedral opens a sacred space.

A NEW ESTATE

While kings and popes quarreled over the leadership of the West, a new urban power was growing that would overshadow them both. Townspeople did not fit into the usual medieval classifications, typically divided into three estates: priests to pray for all, knights to fight for all, and peasants to work for all. No sooner had this trinitarian social division established itself in the popular imagination than the shock of economic development shattered its reality. The growing success and stability of medieval society had brought back civilization by the twelfth century. And by definition, towns and cities were civilization.

The growth of these cities sprang directly from improvements in the economy and in political rule. Wealth from three-field farming and from monastic communities now financed those who did not themselves live on and work the land. The peace and order from the kings' supremacy in the feudal hierarchy cleared space for cities to organize. Some cities regrew from Roman cities, especially where cathedrals and their clerics maintained cores of religious communities. Since the time of the ancient Roman Empire, bishops had been obliged to live in their cathedral cities. Although bishops had been tempted to move away while cities were in decline during the Early Middle Ages, boom times in the High Middle Ages made urban life attractive again. New cities also sprang up at the feet of castles, where feudal and manorial lords controlled a ready source of wealth. Some clever ecclesiastical and secular lords who saw the increasing importance of trade even planted new cities at crossroads and river crossings. Thus, cities such as Cambridge or Innsbruck arose, named after the bridges over their rivers.

Cities grew first and fastest in two regions, the Lowlands (modern Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg) and Lombardy in northern Italy (with nearby coastal cities such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa). Both regions had dense populations and easy access to seaborne trading routes. By the twelfth century, merchants from those areas gathered at **fairs** in the Champagne province of France (long before the invention of the sparkling wine that has taken the province's name). These fairs greatly expanded upon a typical village market day, since merchants from many communities competed with one another about price and quality with products from distant lands. As farmers entered contests for their animals and produce, competition encouraged better and bigger specimens. The festive atmosphere entertained consumers with varieties of new goods to purchase. Today's county fairs across the United States or trade fairs in Europe are descendants of these medieval fairs. Then and now, fairs were engines of economic growth. The triad of the Lowlands, Champagne, and Lombardy became the core of new commerce of the High Middle Ages.

Traders from medieval Europe began to venture even farther abroad. The First Crusade to the Holy Land had founded new Western principalities in the Levant. Traders were right behind the warriors. The Lombard cities of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice exploited the Mediterranean Sea routes, avoiding and soon outselling the Byzantine Empire. As the crusading states failed, the city-state of Venice in particular succeeded in becoming a maritime political power. Venetians continued to oppose

Muslim expansion while exploiting every trade opportunity. They were also behind the brief Western conquest of the Byzantine Empire during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

Some European merchants even ventured beyond the Mediterranean watershed. Some traveled along the ancient Silk Road through Central Asia, which had long connected the Middle East with China. The most famous merchant was the Venetian Marco Polo (b. ca. 1254–d. 1324), who with relatives and servants lived in the Chinese Empire and East Asia in the second half of the thirteenth century. He wrote a book about his adventures while a prisoner of war held by Genoa. Many people scoffed at his tales (and some are scoff-worthy), but he did accurately describe much of the wealth and glory of China, which far excelled that of Europe at the time.

Still, the Europeans kept gaining ground. Building on wealth produced from commerce, Europeans were starting to use machines to make products, a process called **industrialization**. Historians disagree about which ideas or technology (such as iron plows, horse collars, drills, gears, and pumps) merchants brought back from the comparatively advanced Chinese, Indian, or Muslim civilizations. Years ago, history textbooks credited European inventors with technological innovation. Clearly, though, Asians and North Africans used similar machines decades, if not centuries, before the westerners. The Europeans did invent spectacles or eyeglasses, for which many people who could only with difficulty read this book are assuredly grateful. Whatever the origins of specific technology, after the twelfth century, industrialization further increased the availability of goods to Europeans. The word *manufacture*, which originally meant making something by hand, now described people working with machines.

A boom in textile manufacturing arose from a **cottage industry**, where merchants who traveled from home to home, door to door, were "putting out" goods to be manufactured and then picking up the finished products. Family members in one home might spin the raw wool into thread; down the lane they might weave the thread into cloth; and on the other side of the village they might sew the cloth into a tunic. Peasant wives and children had more time to devote to this new work because of labor saved in the farm fields through iron plows, horse collars, and three-field planting. Peasants thus earned extra income that allowed them to purchase still more new goods. An increasing spiral of growth followed. As some people's work became more specialized, they quit being peasants and became artisans and craftspeople who lived in towns, earning their living from the skills of their minds and hands, not from labor on the land.

These commercial people of towns and cities, however, did not easily fit into the medieval trifold conception of clergy, nobles, and commoners. With no other option, the townspeople became part of that third estate of commoners, yet their social status shared little in common with that of the medieval serf. They gained a new status as burghers, burgesses, or **bourgeoisie** (drawn from the Latin word for castle). Burghers were free men (bourgeois women, of course, remained less free than their fathers, husbands, and sons). Unlike the subservient serfs, burgesses were not bound to the land but could travel freely. Indeed, the bourgeoisie held the freedom of ownership, buying and selling of property, and possessing it in

peace. They were not responsible to the manorial courts. Instead, the townspeople exercised the freedom of self-government, creating laws and representative political institutions such as **mayors** and **town councils**. Many burghers even gained the right to bear arms. Towns could be thought of as huge castles, although with a multitude of families living behind high stone walls instead of only one. Townspeople raised their own troops and defended their fortifications. Many town patricians even gained entrance to the nobility and aristocracy, imitating the lords who dominated society. None imagined that the bourgeois way of life would one day dominate Western civilization.

These freedoms did not come easily. The communal self-government of mayors and town councils slowly revived democratic government in the West. Once again, though, democracy was difficult. The townspeople often had to fight to have their liberties and rights respected by the well-born lords of society. They began to organize **communes**, meaning they sought to have the laws recognize them as a collective group of people who could organize their own affairs separately from the rest of nobility-dominated Europe. The kings, dukes, bishops, and magnates often resisted and attacked the communes at first, seeing them as a threat to their authority. Eventually, however, the lords largely accepted the townspeople, recognizing the economic advantages of a flourishing urban life that created new wealth. The lords granted charters of liberty to the burghers, defining and affirming their self-government and civil rights.

Having successfully fought the lords, townspeople next fought one another over a share of the authority and wealth. The politics of medieval cities were filled with violence. The rich and powerful wanted to exclude the poor and the powerless. The elite patricians fought against the middle-class artisans. Both tried to keep down the more numerous commoners. If frustrated by loss in an election or by exclusion from any political participation at all, groups of townspeople might assassinate their rivals or riot to overthrow them.

Institutions called **guilds** often provided a peaceful framework for political, social, and economic action. These organizations allowed owners (the masters) and workers in a craft or trade (baking, shoemaking, cloth dyeing) to supervise the quality and quantity of production. Even universities (whose product was knowledge) structured themselves as guilds. Masters trained the next generations of apprentices and journeymen (day laborers) in the proper skills. Guilds also became the vehicles for social and political cohesion, as they provided social welfare for their members, organized celebrations, and set up candidates for urban elections. Despite some instability that always goes with democracy and economic change, cities and their civilization were a success in the West again. Towns soon began to grow in size and numbers comparable with the contemporary civilized societies of Islam, India, and China.

To minister to these new townspeople, new kinds of monks called **mendicants** began to appear in the thirteenth century. Their name comes from the Latin word for begging, and that is how they were supposed to receive their livelihood. The earlier Benedictine or Cistercian monks drew income from the production of the land. Mendicants were to live from the excess production of town commerce. The

townspeople had become wealthy enough to have extra money that they could devote to charity. The mendicants were to preach and teach, living only from alms.

Ironically, the mendicants preached against the popular values of city life. The new urban elites gloried in wealth and ostentation, imitating the nobility. This attitude was ***materialism***, valuing goods and pleasures provided by wealth in this world. The most famous medieval Christian opponent of this materialism was the founder of the Franciscans, **Francis of Assisi** (b. 1181–d. 1226). Francis helped to promote the idea of ***apostolic poverty***: that the original apostles were poor, and so modern clergy should be also. He set an example of rejecting the wealth of the patricians and reaching out to the new urban poor.

As we have seen with previous monastic reforming groups, the success of mendicant monks led later generations of them to diverge from the original ideals. They acquired endowments, properties, and possessions. The Franciscans were soon split between those who sought apostolic poverty and those who observed obedience to the wealthy and politically powerful papacy. Another main group of mendicants, the Dominicans, focused on education and fighting new heresies that were already appearing in the twelfth century. Serious heresies had not been a problem since the German barbarians who were Arian Christians had converted to orthodox catholic Christianity at the beginning of the Early Middle Ages. Since then, everyone in the West had to be Christian.

Everyone, that is, with the exception of the Jews. Christian authorities allowed Jews to retain their faith, honoring them as the original "chosen people" of their God. The Christian authorities nevertheless carefully and legally discriminated against the Jews, confining them to living in towns (and usually particular neighborhoods), prohibiting them from owning farmland, and allowing them only certain professions, such as money lending. Christians periodically stole their wealth, forced Jews to convert, falsely accused them of crimes, and attacked them when things went wrong, such as during a plague. At any time, a king might expel the Jews from the kingdom, as happened in England in 1290 and France in 1306. Even if it had been allowed, no Christian would have chosen to convert to Judaism.

The new heresies of the High Middle Ages were different from Judaism, since they offered real alternatives to catholic Christianity. They probably arose because of the increasing success of the European economy. More trade with the East (eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia) opened up merchants and markets to new ideas from those distant places. For too long, much of the hierarchical Church remained mired in ministry to the knights and peasants, with too little thought to growing urban needs. As some merchants became wealthy, enjoying their own materialism, many decided that the Church should not share in their rising economic comforts. Instead, they listened to advocates of apostolic poverty.

One of the first heretics was Pierre Valdès (or Peter Waldo), who lived in the late twelfth century. He might have turned out like Francis of Assisi a generation later, had he been treated differently. Like Francis, Waldo called for poverty and simplicity within the Church. Bishops uncomfortable with his call to poverty tried to silence him. He refused and escaped into the Alps, where he set up small groups, the **Waldensians**, some of which survive to this day. These communities were too isolated, small, and unthreatening for Christendom to expend the effort to wipe them out.

The other major heretical movement was that of the **Cathars** (which probably comes from a word meaning "the pure") or **Albigensians** (named after the southern French town of Albi). These heretics were more dangerous to Christianity because they offered a popular alternative belief system, ***Catharism***. The Cathars' ***dualism*** alleged that God ruled the spirit while the devil claimed material things. Since in this view even the flesh was evil, entirely resisting the pleasures of this world was necessary to gain heaven. Cathars rejected the Western ecclesiastical hierarchy and set up their own counterchurch. As they attracted members from the nobles, townspeople, and peasants, the Cathars broke the monopoly of the official Western Church, especially in southern France.

The Catholic Christians struck back. They tried the preachings of the mendicants first, but words were not enough. So they turned to the justice system and revived the ancient Roman legal procedure known as the **inquisition**, which comes from the Latin word for inquire or ask. Normally, someone has to complain for a crime to be investigated. To maintain public order, however, the Romans occasionally used the inquisition as an alternative. In this procedure, the government would commission a tribunal to uncover crimes committed in a certain region, even if no complaints had been officially registered. Traveling judges were empowered to investigate crimes, arrest people, prosecute alleged criminals, and punish them. Thus the modern legal powers that are today divided among police, district attorneys, judges, and juries were combined into one very effective instrument.

The Church authorities in the thirteenth century thought the situation serious enough to bring this method back. When the majority of people in a region had converted to heresy, no complaints of the crime would come to authorities. So popes and bishops commissioned investigators, often Dominicans, to ferret out heretics. They could enter a province only with the explicit permission of the local political ruler. After finding heretics guilty, the clerical inquisition then handed them over to the secular arm, namely the local political powers, to be executed by burning alive at the stake. The use of torture during the investigations has disgraced the Inquisition in the history of jurisprudence. At times, some historians and critics of religion have exaggerated the Inquisition's excesses of brutality and injustice. Nevertheless, that the "Holy Inquisition" happened at all, with the blessing of Christian leaders, is enough to condemn it thoroughly and stain its legacy.

Surprisingly, even the inquisition could not stamp out heresy. The Church finally resorted to its highest level of violence: a crusade. In 1225, Pope Innocent III sanctioned a Catholic invasion of southern France to destroy the Cathars. The so-called Albigenisan Crusade succeeded. One story goes that in a town in the south of France, everyone was massacred. Those who worried that some Catholic Christians might have been caught in the general slaughter were told that "God will know his own," bringing the righteous into heaven and sending the heretics to hell. The success of the Albigensian Crusade strengthened the French king by giving over confiscated lands to his direct control. The crusade and subsequent royal rule destroyed a flourishing, distinctly southern French culture.

In the next centuries, Church leaders elsewhere in Christendom likewise called other crusades against several rebellious enemies, since by definition defying the Church's authority in any fashion was heretical. Other forces were forming that

would challenge the Church and the rest of medieval society. The wealth produced by the successful towns and cities promoted changes that would shift the West out of the High Middle Ages and into the Later Middle Ages.

Review: *How did the revival of trade and towns change the West?*

Response:

NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

The spread of heresy might have threatened people's souls, but the spread of disease surely plagued their bodies. Tragically, trade connections with Asia brought not just spices and silks, but also the disaster called the **Black Death**. In 1347, contagions that had swarmed along trade routes entered the crowded and dirty cities of Europe. For the next several years and regularly thereafter, plague sprawled through both urban and rural Christendom. The exact nature of this epidemic, or epidemics, is unknown. The contemporary descriptions that drew on ancient accounts of plagues or listed various contradictory symptoms have led historians to suggest that more than one disease was at work. Regardless of its origins, the Black Death swept through the population of western Europe to a degree unknown for centuries, killing probably one out of three people. The impact varied, though, since some regions saw almost no sign of disease, while other towns were nearly wiped out. Well into the eighteenth century, less-virulent waves of plague returned to strike down tens of thousands of Europeans, over and over.

Aiding the spread of disease was a general cooling of the climate. What historians call a mini ice age began about 1300 and lasted until about 1700. The climate in Europe became a few degrees cooler. Winters lasted longer, and summers were shorter. This change shortened growing seasons and increased rainfall where it was not needed. The effects sharply reduced food production, and a hungry European population became even more susceptible to illness.

Historians usually see this period between 1300 and 1350 as the transition from the High Middle Ages to the Later Middle Ages. The climatic change and increase in epidemics created what scholars call a demographic catastrophe that sent the gradually rising European population into a sharp decline. The high mortality rates and fear of death led at times to a breakdown of the fragile social order that had been

created during the High Middle Ages (ca. 1000–1350). As the Later Middle Ages (ca. 1300–1500) followed, everyone had to cope with rougher natural circumstances, the continued political and social dominance of the clergy and knightly nobility, the increasing competition with townspeople, and dissatisfaction among the peasants. The Later Middle Ages is still very much medieval, but it was a time of increasing unrest and uncertainty.

The reduction in population caused labor shortages that forced economic changes. Peasant farming shifted from lord-serf to landlord-tenant. Now peasants' uncertain livelihood depended on paying rent instead of long-standing customary obligations such as labor services and portions of crops. Post-plague, if a peasant failed to come up with the rent, he and his family could more easily be thrown off the land, left with nothing. Also, landlords tried to focus more on cash crops for export instead of a balanced diet for local consumption. The latter had traditionally been encouraged on the self-sufficient manor, when farmers grew what they needed to eat. While serfdom had limited social and political freedom, being tied to the land allowed serfs a certain economic freedom—they could at least feed their families.

Peasants began to rebel against both the restrictions of serfdom and, ironically, the insecurity caused by its decline. Some even thought of a religious justification, as shown in the rhyme, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"[1] **Peasant revolts** started to happen with some regularity. The most famous are the Jacquerie, a rebellion in France in 1358, and the Wat Tyler Revolt in England in 1381. In the first stage of rebellions, peasants killed a few landlords, burned some buildings and records, and grabbed property for themselves. Sadly for the peasants, virtually all revolts ended in defeat. Within weeks, royal or noble armies reorganized and slaughtered hundreds, if not thousands, of peasants. The traditional landholding clergy and nobility, joined by the bourgeoisie, were too well organized and too powerful. That these rebellions increasingly took place at all, though, showed that something was wrong with the order of society.

In some areas of Europe, the leadership of the clergy likewise eventually found itself challenged anew by kings, although not in Germany. During the High Middle Ages, popes had struggled with the Holy Roman Emperors over leadership in Christendom. The popes seemed to have won. The constant switching of royal dynasty because of elections made the Holy Roman Emperor seem more of a ridiculed annoyance than a respected monarch. In 1356, Emperor Charles IV tried to strengthen royal power by adjusting the succession process with his **Golden Bull** (named after its seal, similar to those for papal documents). It limited those who could choose the king of the Romans to seven electors: The prince-archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier; the king of Bohemia; the Duke of Saxony; the Count of Palatine by the Rhine; and the Margrave of Brandenburg. The king then expected to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the pope in Rome. In the long run, the Golden Bull merely regulated the electoral process, not the empire itself. Territorial

1. Or, reworded for modern sense: "When the first human beings worked, Adam dug in the ground and Eve spun thread like peasants; no class distinctions existed as they did when nobles ruled and profited from peasant labor."

princes, dukes, counts, and bishops concerned themselves with their own rule rather than the empire's position as a whole. The German kings of the Holy Roman Empire remained weak compared with either popes or the German princes in territorial duchies and counties.

In contrast, the kings of France and England became strong monarchs with centralized authority over their realms. The kings of both those countries drew on the power of dynasty, military might, and taxes on towns. They also relied on the advice and support of people through elected representative bodies, the Estates-General in France and the Parliament in England. Both kingdoms were expanding. England almost succeeded in conquering Scotland, held off only by the lucky heroics of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce in the early 1300s. The English did, however, increasingly dominate Ireland and Wales. The French, meanwhile, nibbled away at the Western borders of the Holy Roman Empire. Even more important, France and England offered renewed resistance to papal claims of authority.

The new power shift appeared during the reign of Pope **Boniface VIII** (r. 1294–1303). Boniface's papal election had been controversial because he had convinced his saintly predecessor, Celestine V, to resign. As pope himself, Boniface resisted the aims of the kings of England and France, who wanted to tax the clergy to finance a war they were preparing to fight against each other. In his bull of 1296, *Clericos Laicos* (named after the first sentence, which claimed that laypeople have always been hostile to clergy), he forbade kings to tax the clergy without papal permission.

Boniface further insisted on the ancient privilege called benefit of clergy, which allowed clergy accused of crimes to be tried in Church courts rather than those of the king. In 1302, when Boniface issued *Unam Sanctam* (titled after the first words: "One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church"), he declared, said, defined, and proclaimed that every human creature needed to be wholly subject to the Roman pontiff in order to obtain salvation.

The pope's declarations notwithstanding, the kings of England and France had other ideas. The kings retaliated by shutting down their borders and forbidding all export of precious metals and revenues to Rome. They convened their representative assemblies (Parliament and the Estates-General) in order to improve their jurisdiction over all their subjects. These bodies even included the clergy, many of whom sided with their nations against the pope. The most extreme reaction was from King Philip IV "the Fair" of France. He sent agents to Italy who tried to kidnap the pope while he was enjoying the summer in Anagni, away from the heat of Rome. Although freed by Anagni's townspeople, the shocked pope died a month later. If a German emperor had tried to do this fifty years earlier, the Church would have proclaimed a crusade against him. In this case, the king of France escaped with impunity.

Indeed, Philip IV tried to grab hold of the papacy for himself and his dynasty. He helped to elect a Frenchman as pope, Clement V (r. 1305–1314), a man who not only favored the French king but also packed up and moved the Curia out of Rome to the city of **Avignon** on the southeastern border of France. There the papacy resided for the so-called **Babylonian Captivity** (1309–1377), named after the real Hebrew exile 1,800 years earlier. Actually, the popes expanded their administration of the Church. They paid for their palace and power by collecting tithes

and annates (the first year's income of important ecclesiastical offices such as bishop and abbot). Popes even took over provisions or reservations (the right to name men to Church offices), although these appointments were often done in consultation with, and at the request of, the local princes.

Many Christians were properly aghast at this situation. The pope was, of course, the bishop of Rome, and by canon law a bishop was to reside in his cathedral city. It often seemed, as the number and influence of French-born cardinals increased, that the papacy had become a tool of the French king. Many called for the pope to return to Rome, including the famous inspirational religious figures Catherine of Siena and Bridget of Sweden.

Finally, Pope Gregory XI did return to Rome in 1377, only to die the next year. The cardinals, under pressure from the Roman mob, quickly elected an Italian, Urban VI (r. 1378–1389). To their dismay, the cardinals found him not only difficult to work with, but apparently even insane. Rather than deal with the situation forthrightly, one night the cardinals snuck out under cover of darkness. They then deposed Urban in absentia, elected a new pope of French descent, Clement VII (r. 1378–1394), and blithely returned with him to Avignon. Urban, however, refused to recognize his deposition and continued to reign in Rome. Thus the Church was faced with a unique schism: two popes who had been elected by the same cardinals. Different princes chose allegiance to one pope or the other, often depending on whether they liked the French (and their Avignon puppet) or not.

The division grew worse. Indeed, history books often label it the "Great Schism," even though this conflict did not turn out as divisive as the other "Great Schism" that separated Catholic and Orthodox Christianity back in 1054. At first, this Great Western Schism likewise threatened to go on forever, since both popes created cardinals, and each group elected a papal successor after its pope had died. At one point, the majority of cardinals from both parties decided to end the schism by meeting at Pisa in 1410. In the shadow of the leaning tower, they deposed both the Avignon and Roman pontiffs and elected a new pope. Since the first two refused to recognize their depositions, Christendom now had three popes!

This Great Western Schism was healed by the old practice of ***conciliarism***. After first being liberated under Constantine, Christians had originally used Church councils to try to resolve their differences. Important ecumenical councils of all Christians had been held for centuries until the original Great Schism in 1054 between the Catholics and Orthodox ended the possibility of Christian cooperation. As popes revived "universal" councils for the West in the eleventh century, such limited councils became a tool of the monarchical papacy to control the western Church. Now, ironically, Church reformers called for a council to check the papal monarchy. Supported by the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund of Bohemia, all parties attended the **Council of Constance** (1414–1417). The council first gained the resignation or deposition of the three popes based in Pisa, Avignon, and Rome, and then successfully elected a new, universally recognized pope, Martin V. The council also tried to guarantee itself a constitutional role within Church governance by requiring new councils to be called at set intervals.

The papal monarchy, although saved from civil war by conciliarism, proceeded

to stamp out the idea. The popes delayed and restricted the brief insignificant councils of the following years. Finally, the Council of Basel (1431–1449) successfully, if briefly, defied the pope and reasserted conciliar authority. Yet the council fell into disorder and confusion as the pope exploited an opportunity to end the other schism with the Eastern Orthodox Church. When the Muslim Turks attacked the Byzantine Empire from all sides, some Eastern Orthodox Christians thought unity with the West might provide a lifeline. In the end, however, the Byzantine emperor and Orthodox patriarchs, bishops, abbots, and theologians rejected papal supremacy. The Byzantine Empire fell, while the Christian Church remained divided, Catholic in the West, and Orthodox in the East. The papacy in Rome settled onto its seemingly secure foundations.

Although feudal and Church lords could both claim victory, the changing structures of civilization were ending the Middle Ages and beginning the Early Modern Period. The Middle Ages had fashioned Western civilization in medieval Christendom (see map 8.2). Society was at first divided into three groups: those who prayed (the clergy) and those who both fought (the knights) and ruled over those who worked (the serfs). The successes and struggles within this order transformed the West. Kings struggled to dominate their knights, while nobles strove to keep their independence. Popes strained to rule both their own clergy and the kings, while alternate forms of religious life began to flourish and most kings grew

Map 8.2. Europe, 1450

stronger in their kingdoms. These struggles strengthened institutions of state and Church overall. Meanwhile, food production by peasants helped revive towns and reestablish civilized life. Faith and wealth fostered cultural creativity and economic growth. The townspeople with their economic power asserted their respectable status among the established medieval nobles and clergy. Before long, old ideas and new practices would further fracture Christendom, transforming it into our modern West.

Review: *How do the Later Middle Ages expose the problems of medieval institutions?*

Response:

CHAPTER 9

Making the Modern World

The Renaissance and Reformation, 1400 to 1648

Already in the fifteenth century, some intellectuals had begun to claim that centuries of backwardness had given way to a ''modern'' age. Ironically, the key to this transition was a new appreciation for antiquity, the culture of classical Greece and Rome. Historians have named that perception the **Renaissance**, meaning a rebirth of attitudes drawn from Græco-Roman culture. Classical antiquity had, of course, been appreciated to one degree or another since its collapse in the West a thousand years before. Beginning around 1400, however, a renewed interest in antiquity intertwined with economic, political, and religious developments. Digging into the deepest recesses of their souls and reaching out to the four corners of the world, the Europeans transitioned out of the Later Middle Ages (ca. 1300–1500) and burst into the Early Modern Period of history (ca. 1400–1815) (see timeline 9.1).

THE PURSE OF PRINCES

As the Europeans recovered from the onslaught of the Black Death, the resurging economics of the towns propelled them into undreamed-of wealth, and success.

Amid plague and peasant rebellion, a dynamic idea later called ***capitalism*** began to catch on. Capitalism was a new form of economic practice that went beyond the markets of farmers or fairs. The capital of capitalism refers to a substantial amount of wealth that is available, and necessary, for investment. Many businesses require capital to begin operation or maintain themselves. One form of capital is profit, wealth left over after all expenses have been paid. When profits could be obtained, the practice of capitalism dictated what to do with them: reinvest.

In its simplest form, then, capitalism is reinvesting profits gained from investing capital. The usual human inclination is to spend excess wealth on showiness: fine homes, gourmet foods, parties, designer fashions, and grand edifices. One can, of course, give money away or bury it in the ground. Investing profit in one's own operations or in providing start-up and operating funds for another business, however, promoted long-term growth. Successful investments in turn created more profits, which then might be invested still further. Thus, capitalism became an engine for economic progress. Wealth bred more wealth. Likewise, capitalism encouraged innovation. Clever investors looked for a new enterprise, a novel endeavor, which, if successful, would bring an even greater profit.

Only much later did historians and theorists use the exact term *capitalism*. Some historians also argue that other civilizations, either Muslim, Indian, or Chinese, practiced capitalism first, and that westerners learned its techniques from them. Wherever it came from, a bigger problem is that people today often misunderstand the term *capitalism*. Many people often confuse capitalism with free markets. While capitalism requires markets (a space for people to exchange goods and services), they do not have to be entirely free (without restrictions imposed by authorities). This leads to another basic principle:

There is no such thing as an entirely free market; all markets have rules and costs.

One of the key arguments among market participants, then and now, is how many regulations or fees there should be. One of the most important rules determines how much honesty is required between buyer and seller. If the market is an actual place, there are expenses for rent, cleaning, and upkeep. Many fees are taken by middlemen. The number of rules and expenses markets have make them more or less free or fair.

One of the biggest problems about capitalist financial markets occurred when people lost their capital. If a business venture failed, not only was there no profit, but the capital could also disappear as well. Risk has always existed with capitalism—wealth can simply vanish into thin air. On the one hand, luck, creativity, and business acumen can create huge funds from a small incentive. On the other hand, misfortune, stupidity, and economic ignorance can just as easily destroy riches. Poor investors have lost vast assets. For example, a sudden mania for tulips in the Netherlands during the 1630s drove up prices to where one bulb in a flower box

cost the equivalent of a major mansion. When the bubble burst, tulip bulbs once again became mere potential flowers. Since early capitalists succeeded more often than they failed, however, the European economy grew better over the long term. Indeed, capitalism helped make Western civilization the most powerful culture the world has ever known, during what historians have called the **Commercial Revolution** (1350–1600).

The encouragement of innovation and the increase in wealth after the Black Death made medieval economic methods obsolete. The guild's hierarchical, regulated structure stifled progress, as measured by the creation of new forms of business. By definition, the guild promoted one kind of industry and opposed others. The masters who ran guilds increasingly seemed to want only to hold on to their power rather than seek improvements. While guilds had served to help medieval towns thrive, they were too inflexible to adapt to capitalism's drive for change.

The Commercial Revolution put in place more modern economic methods. Replacing the guild as the important structure for business was the partnership or firm. Usually this involved a family or several families pooling their resources to provide capital. As a business evolved, different members or alliances would come and go, which also encouraged creativity.

In the fourteenth century, families began to establish **banks**, the premiere capitalist institution. Banks evolved from benches of money changers into organizations that housed money and earned profits through finance. While bankers paid interest to attract depositors, the collection and safeguarding of deposits was merely a means to accumulate capital. Bankers invested assets as loans. A system of banks also allowed money to move more easily from one part of Europe to another without actually lugging around boxes of gold bars and bags of silver coins. Instead, banks issued bills of exchange, the forerunner of the modern check (the idea probably borrowed from Muslim trading partners). Spreading out from Italy, bank branches sprang up in cities all over Europe.

This rise of finance as a major economic activity required some religious reform. The Church had long taught that charging interest was a sin called usury. Thus Jews, as non-Christians, had been the main moneylenders to medieval Christians. By the close of the Middle Ages, however, Church leaders had redefined the sin to allow more lending so that they, too, could borrow to finance palace and church building.

To keep track of all this wealth, money counters invented double-entry bookkeeping. Since ancient times, businesses had simply entered a running tally of incomes and expenses in paragraph form, if they kept records at all. This new method, much like any modern checkbook or bank statement, arranged the moneys into two columns, which could be easily added or subtracted; a third column tracked the running sum of overall credit or debt. Thus a business leader could easily account for how much he had on reserve or owed.

As in most economic revolutions, benefits and costs distributed themselves unevenly among varied social groups. People still earned wealth through agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing, but finance began its rise to predominance. As happens so often, the rich became richer while the poor became poorer. Women were encouraged to work, although in lower-status jobs at lower wages than men

were paid for the same work. Women workers' low cost and the ease with which they could be fired helped businesses maintain their profit levels. A growing class of menial laborers piled up at the bottom of the social scale since well-paid family artisans lost out to cheap labor. The wealthiest merchants began to merge with the nobility, becoming indistinguishable from them in their manner of living except for titles and family trees of noble ancestors. As a whole, though, the overall affluence and standard of living in Western society rose.

Princes who took advantage of this economic boom became the monarchs of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern times. The practice of **public debt**, allowed by the new banking system, financed their expansion of power (see figure 9.1). Before capitalism, a prince's debts were considered his own—he would have to finance them from his dynastic revenues. Although a prince's incomes were often quite substantial, they were limited by agricultural production and a few taxes on trade. The new idea of public debt meant that bankers could finance loans to the princes, and then all of the prince's subjects had to pay the loans off through taxes and duties. Bankers usually supported this growing debt since they made a profit off the loans. Sometimes, a prince reneged on his debts and capital would disappear, followed by business failures and unemployment. More often, however, governments settled up their loans with interest, the bankers got their profits, and the princes became more powerful, while the common people paid.

Figure 9.1. This woodcut from a legal handbook (ca. 1500) shows the various punishments monarchs inflicted on criminals. Top row: cutting off an ear, preparation for dunking, disembowelment, burning alive at the stake, hanging. Bottom row: flaying, beheading, breaking with the wheel, cutting off a hand.

Princes borrowed money especially for warfare. Wars involved different kinds of risk from capitalism but were always expensive. The **Hundred Years War** (1338–1453) between France and England illustrated the transition from medieval to modern. King Philip IV "the Fair" of France died in 1314, leaving three young sons. Within a few years, they had also died without leaving any male heirs in the Capetian dynasty—a situation France had not faced for more than three hundred years. The French aristocracy, without too much fighting, decided on Philip's grandnephew, who succeeded as King Philip VI, the first king of the Valois dynasty (1328–1589). Meanwhile, King Edward III of England's Plantagenet dynasty decided to claim the throne of France through his own descent as a grandson of Philip "the Fair" (although through Philip's daughter). Edward also wanted to protect some independence for Flanders and preserve what few English territories remained in the southwest of France. These lands, called Guyenne, were the last holdings of Henry II's empire (most of which his son John had lost in the thirteenth century).

As the name implies, the Hundred Years War took generations to grind its way toward a conclusion. Along the way, war and politics changed decisively. When the war began, methods of warfare were still medieval. For centuries, the knight had reigned supreme on the battlefield. Weapon makers constantly tried to devise better ways of killing knights and storming castles, and armor makers and castle architects kept building better ways to defend them. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, knights wore chain mail (heavy coats of linked iron rings). By the middle of the Hundred Years War, jointed plate armor enveloped knights from head to toe. Castles in the eleventh century had been simple wooden forts on hills. By the fourteenth century, they had become elaborate stone fortresses with massive towers and high walls built in concentric circles and surrounded by deep ditches.

England perfected the use of two medieval weapons in its wars with its immediate neighbors. By the fifteenth century, the English had conquered the Welsh but continued to fight off and on in the north against the Scots. The English experience from these border wars encouraged change in military technology and tactics. The English adopted a unique weapon, the **longbow**. Originally used by the Welsh, the longbow was as tall as a man and required long training and practice to pull. It could pierce armor at four hundred paces and be reloaded more quickly than its only competitor, the crossbow. English skills with the longbow were so important that in 1349 the king banned all sports other than archery. English knights also had learned from fighting the Scottish William Wallace and Robert the Bruce to dismount from vulnerable horses and defend themselves and their archers with **pikes**, long spears of two or three times a man's height. Thus, foot soldiers once more returned as a powerful force on the battlefield, as had been the phalanx and the legion.

During the Hundred Years War, the English raided France, devastating the countryside. French knights who tried to stop the raids took a while to realize that they no longer dominated combat. The English archers and dismounted knights wreaked havoc on French armored cavalry in three mighty battles: Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415). Each battle turned the tide for the English and nearly led to the destruction of the French monarchy and kingdom. In the Treaty of Troyes (1420), King Henry V of England forced the French king to skip

over the legitimate royal heir, the Dauphin, and instead grant the succession to the future child of Henry V and his French princess-bride.

Henry's sudden death, however, saved the French. He left an infant heir, Henry VI (r. 1422–1461)—always a precarious situation. The English advantage might still have prevailed over the divided and demoralized French. Then the unique **Joan of Arc** (b. 1412–d. 1431) arrived to save the French kingdom. This lowborn teenager believed that the voices of saints and angels told her to help the uncrowned French prince, the Dauphin. In 1429, he put her in shining armor at the head of a French army, which she miraculously led to victories over the English. The Dauphin gained his crown as King Charles VII (r. 1429–1461), but Joan was captured in battle. The French did nothing to rescue Joan, while the English put her on trial as a heretic. The crime of wearing men's clothing doomed her. They burned her alive at the stake and scattered her ashes.

Meanwhile, Charles VII cleverly used the ongoing English occupation of northern France to extort power from the French nobles and townspeople. In 1438, they supported him at the Council of Bourges, in which the king claimed broad authority over the Church in France. The Estates-General also gave him the right to regularly collect taxes such as those on salt or hearths. Everyone paid the salt tax, while the rich paid progressively more of the hearth tax, since their larger homes had more fireplaces. These revenues enabled Charles VII to raise a national, professional army paid by the government rather than one composed of the typical loyal retainers, feudal vassals, or hired mercenaries. Such a force had not fought in Europe since the time of the Roman legions. He also invested in the new technology of **gunpowder**, buying guns and cannons. With these cannons, Charles VII's armies pounded English-occupied castles to rubble and finally drove the English out of France.

The English did not cope well with this defeat. They did become more English, as the elites stopped speaking French, their language of choice since the Norman Invasion. Their government, though, briefly spun out of control. When Henry VI turned out to be mentally unbalanced, factions formed to control him. These opposing groups eventually came to blows in civil wars called the **Wars of the Roses** (1455–1487). During these, one aristocratic alliance (Lancaster) lost to another (York), which in turn lost to a third (Tudor) in 1485. King Henry VII (r. 1485–1509) of the new **Tudor dynasty** (1485–1603) provided England with a strong monarchy, exploiting the desire of the English to return to political stability. He restricted the rights of aristocrats to maintain private armies, set special judges against lawbreakers, and negotiated peace abroad. English commerce revived and flourished. Henry VII accomplished all this in alliance with the English Parliament. In Parliament's House of Commons, Henry bonded the English monarchy with the English middle class. The Tudor kings working with Parliament gave England a strong and flexible government, able to adapt to changing times.

While English and French kings reaffirmed their ascendance, the Holy Roman Emperors slipped even further into impotence. Since the end of the Staufen dynasty in 1256, powerful dynasties had fought over who would be Roman king and emperor, a problem the Golden Bull of 1356 had not solved. The election of King Frederick III in 1438 offered some stability, although no one knew it at the time. His **Habsburg dynasty** (1438–1918) began a monopoly on the royal and imperial

title that would last, with the briefest of interruptions, until the empire's end in 1806 and beyond.

Realistically, the Habsburgs' power and interests lay with their own dynastic lands: **Austria** and its neighbors. Effective rule of the empire remained beyond their grasp. Frederick III was the last Holy Roman Emperor to be crowned by the pope in Rome. His son and successor Maximilian (r. 1486–1519) found too little success in wars to expand imperial domination. Instead, marriages arranged for and by him added numerous territories to the Habsburg dynasty's collection. His own first marriage gained him parts of Burgundy and the Lowlands, after his father-in-law Duke Charles "the Rash" of Burgundy died in battle with the Swiss. Marriages of his children and grandchildren added Bohemia, Hungary, and even Spain. It was said of his dynasty, "Let others wage war for a throne—you, happy Austria, marry."

Looming on Maximilian's Hungarian border, the new threat of the Ottoman dynasty appeared to unsettle the self-satisfied princes of Christendom. The Ottomans took their dynasty's name from their founder, Othman (and gave their name to our plush, round footstools). In the late thirteenth century, Othman and his *ghazi* (religious warriors) defeated their cousins, the Seljuk Turks, who had earlier seized Asia Minor from the Byzantine Empire in the eleventh century (see chapter 6) but had been weakened by attacks from the Mongols and others. Othman's successors became sultans, a title given to powerful rulers only second in rank to the caliphs. They soon aspired to be caliphs themselves.

With this goal, the Ottoman Turks began an imperialist expansion in all directions. In 1354, Turkish armies crossed the Dardanelles and entered southeastern Europe. Neither the Byzantine Empire nor the small Balkan kingdoms could halt the Muslim advance. Once the Turks had taken the province of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the Bogomils had built up a heretical kingdom united by the dualistic religion of Catharism, many of the Slavs there converted to Islam. Next the Turks crushed the Serbian kingdom at the Battle of Kosovo Polje (28 June 1389), a site also called the Field of the Blackbirds after the winged scavengers who fed on the innumerable corpses of Christian warriors. In 1396 the Turks repeated their success by defeating a Christian crusading army at Nicopolis on the lower Danube. The Ottoman armies soon relied on young Christian boys taken from the conquered lands and trained to be expert warriors called janissaries. Christendom gained a respite when the Ottomans were attacked by the great conqueror Tamerlane or Timur the Lame of Samarkand (b. 1336–d. 1405), whose reputation for slaughter surpassed that of the Huns or the Mongols. Timur's defeat of the Ottoman armies in 1402 almost ended the dynasty.

Three years later, however, Timur was dead, and his empire crumbled apart. The Ottoman Empire reconsolidated and expanded. Jews, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Greeks, Turks, Slavs, Arabs, and Armenians were organized into efficient groups that provided troops and taxes. The Ottomans organized interconnected bureaucracies to manage the diverse peoples and widespread territories. The Ottoman sultans took the ancient title of caliph, the religious and political leader of all (Sunni) Muslims. In 1444, the Ottomans routed another Christian crusading army at Varna on the mouth of the Danube. In 1453, Mohammed or Mehmet II "the Conqueror" besieged Constantinople, the last remnant of the once-mighty Roman

Empire. His massive cannons shelled the city for weeks. Defeat was only a matter of time as the walls became rubble. A Byzantine soldier who forgot to close a door through the walls, though, opened the way to a speedy end. The last Byzantine emperor died among his troops, defending the once-impregnable walls. Thus fell the Byzantine or Roman Empire, once and for all.

Mehmet II made Constantinople his new imperial capital, renaming it Istanbul ("the City"). He rebuilt and repopulated it (although no one told the Turks of the many underground cisterns that had been used to supply the city with water since Roman times). The Ottomans expanded their rule over diverse peoples in the Middle East and North Africa. In 1526, the Turks then seized much of Hungary from the Habsburgs. The Ottomans were then ready to advance into the Holy Roman Empire itself and, perhaps, from there conquer all of Christendom.

By 1600, the Ottomans were equal in power, wealth, and creativity to any of the Europeans (see figure 9.2). Their empire proved its success by conquering huge swatches of territory in the Middle East and North Africa. On the one hand, they allowed people to keep their ethnic identities while welcoming conversions to Islam or becoming Turkish. On the other hand, they sometimes exploited the ethnic conflicts to maintain their rule, encouraging minorities to dislike one another rather than the masters. Either way, the Ottoman Empire provided a powerful rival to the West.

These victories of the Ottomans ended any medieval romantic notion of a united Christendom. Meager attempts by the West to undertake a countercrusade and help the Byzantine Empire and other Balkan Christians had failed miserably. Western popes and princes worked against one another rather than against the common enemy. The various monarchs were looking out for their own narrow dynastic interests first. Western civilization clustered around the various principalities, kingdoms, and empires of Europe.

Figure 9.2. The Blue Mosque dominating the skyline of Istanbul reflects the glory of the Ottoman Empire around 1600.

Once Christendom was gone, so was a key component of what had made the Middle Ages. No one precise moment, event, or battle marks the transition from when medieval became modern history. Today, some historians even argue that medieval times lingered into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Transformations in thought and belief, though, would further turn the West away from the medieval construct of priests, knights, and peasants. Indeed, Western civilization would become the most powerful society in world history.

Review: *How did late medieval monarchs concentrate still more power?*

Response:

MAN AS THE MEASURE

Italy led the way in ending the Middle Ages. As the heartland of urban development in the West, Italy's rich cities had been prizes for foreign powers since German kings and emperors such as Pippin ''the Short'' and Otto ''the Great.'' Cities such as Genoa, Pisa, and Venice had expanded amid the ruins of Roman greatness with the medieval economic revival of the High Middle Ages. They became fat and rich from trade and finance and hard and powerful from politics and warfare. They won independence from both German emperors and Roman popes and even took away commerce from the Byzantine emperors, bargaining with Turks, Arabs, and even Mongols.

Self-government was difficult, however. Strained by economic change, citizens easily fought among themselves over control of elections and laws. Class warfare between the wealthy merchants, prosperous artisans, and the poor tormented the peace of the towns. In desperation for some order, tyrants known as despots seized power in many Italian towns during the Late Middle Ages. These despots started as local nobles, merchants, or even mercenaries, called *condottieri* in Italy. Since these dictators removed one more source of strife—namely, the struggle for leadership—the citizens often tolerated them, just as had happened in ancient Greece and Rome. Some maneuvered themselves into establishing dynasties. Thus, these new Italian princes often cut short the towns' initial experiments in democratic, republican government.

A successful despot might provoke more war across the Italian Peninsula,

seeking for his city-state to dominate others. Ambitious princes began to conquer their neighboring towns, urged on by merchants wanting to eliminate competitors. Since the urban revival of the twelfth century, city-states and small principalities had tried to crush one another in wars that gave ready employment to *condottieri* and their mercenary troops. The Peace of Lodi in 1454 granted Italy four decades of relief from warfare. That treaty established five great powers within the Italian Peninsula who substantially upheld a fragile peace among themselves. In the south, the Kingdom of Naples was the largest in area, but it was weakened by the struggles over the throne by the foreign houses of Anjou (from France) and Aragon (from the Iberian Peninsula). In the center of the peninsula, the Papal States were bound loosely under the authority of the pope. Just north of Rome, in Tuscany, **Florence** dominated all its immediate neighbors (see figure 9.3). In the northwest, Milan ruled the plains of Lombardy. Finally, in the northeast, the maritime power of Venice had put down a strong foothold on the mainland, adding to its other possessions stretching along the eastern coast of the Adriatic and into the Aegean Sea. Venice's unique government was an oligarchy of the most powerful merchants who dominated their elected ruler, called the doge.

This balance of power in the Italian Peninsula ended in 1494, when the French king Charles VIII as heir of Anjou invaded to claim the Kingdom of Naples. Charles' invasion sparked decades of war throughout the peninsula (and spread a new, nasty form of the sexually transmitted disease syphilis, which may have come from the Americas). Wars proliferated while French kings, German emperors, Spanish monarchs, and Italian despots fought for supremacy. In the midst of these wars, over several generations, European culture left the Middle Ages and entered the Modern Period of history.

A cultural shift called the Renaissance (ca. 1400–1600) helped push Europe into modernity. The Renaissance started in Florence. While figuring out how best

Figure 9.3. The Renaissance dome of Florence's medieval cathedral dominates the skyline.

to succeed in their political challenges, the Florentines sought inspiration from the Greeks and Romans of ages past. Their banks generated enough wealth to revive humanism from classical antiquity. At first, humanism had merely meant an interest in ''humane letters'' or the reading of classical writers. Inspired by the poet Petrarch (b. 1304–d. 1374), intellectuals had begun to scour old monastic libraries for ancient manuscripts. Then they edited what they found, creating the intellectual tool of ***textual criticism***—comparing different versions of an author's writings in order to find the best, most accurate text.

Emphasis on the Latin literature of Rome soon led these humanists to appreciate the importance of the Greek language to classical civilization. During the Middle Ages, the knowledge of Greek had been virtually lost. The phrase ''It's all Greek to me'' came about because medieval readers could not decipher passages of Greek quoted by ancient Roman writers. Drawing on help from scholars fleeing the collapsing Byzantine Empire, the Western curriculum expanded to include the literature of ancient Greece. While today literature in the vernacular (that spoken by the common people), like the Italian poetry of Petrarch, is more highly valued, the ancient classics in ''dead'' Greek and Latin were the focus of Renaissance intellectuals.

Florence's **Medici** family played a key role in supporting this intellectual revival after they took over that city's leadership. They had risen to power in local government financed through their family banking business. Over time, the Medicis survived urban rebellions, assassination plots, invasions, and banishment to found their own aristocratic dynasty. Along the way, they aspired to be patrons of the arts, those who fostered creative interaction with Greece and Rome.

On an intellectual level, Renaissance Neoplatonic philosophers reinterpreted the ideas of Plato. On a visual level, artists drew inspiration from styles of classical art and created the new painting, architecture, and sculpture of Renaissance art. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael pioneered a new naturalism in painting and sculpture that emphasized a realistic view of the world and the human body (see figure 9.4). On a literary level, intellectuals eagerly sought and read authors from classical antiquity.

One such intellectual was Niccolò **Machiavelli**. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli had himself been tortured and exiled from Florence for supporting the wrong political faction. In those times, suspicion of disloyalty to rulers meant having one's arms jerked out of the sockets on a torture device called the *strappado*, modified from a pulley. During his exile from the city, Machiavelli consoled himself every night by communing with ancient writers of Greece and Rome. Inspired by them (and to win the favor of the Medici), he wrote ***The Prince*** (1513). This book combined examples of classical antiquity and contemporary politics. It offered advice on how a prince should hold on to power in an occupied territory, suggesting that a ruler's primary goal should not be virtue, as political writers had been propounding through the Middle Ages. Instead, a prince was to wield power, using force and fear, lying or largesse, as long as he did not become hated. Many readers claimed to be shocked by this ''Machiavellian'' advice for amoral political behavior, freed from the constraints of Christianity. In secret, though, most princes and politicians have admired how Machiavelli accurately

IMAGE INTENTIONALLY REMOVED

Figure 9.4. In this selection from his fresco the *School of Athens* in the Vatican, Raphael portrays Leonardo da Vinci as Plato in the center left and Michelangelo as the architect leaning on the block in the foreground. The majestic setting and the many other great thinkers from classical antiquity reflect the Renaissance fascination with Greece and Rome.

described brutal power politics. He aimed to end the diversity of Italian principalities by uniting them under one powerful prince. All his practical suggestions were grounded in his humanist scholarship of antiquity.

A major boost to the humanist scholarly enterprise was the invention of the **printing press** in Germany around 1450. Using a few hundred letters of movable type, any imaginable written page could be reproduced much more cheaply, easily, and quickly than with the laboriously handwritten leaf of every single book of Western history up to that moment. The multiplication of books further encouraged the expansion of literacy, since more publications became readily available to read.

This flood of printed matter also helped spur a change in education, giving rise to new kinds of schools. The sons of nobles and wealthy townspeople would, after an education in a primary or "grammar" school, then attend secondary schools. These advanced institutions went beyond the primary education of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but not so far as the serious scholarly study offered by the "higher education" of colleges and universities. In these secondary schools (the forerunners of American high schools), students further refined their knowledge of the classical curriculum of the liberal arts. Through reading ancient Latin and Greek authors, a student was supposed to learn how to be worthy of liberty. The well-rounded gentleman, an individual fit in mind and body, became the Renaissance ideal.

Compared to that of men, the place of women, genteel or not, remained much more restricted. Ladies were to be respected, but few opportunities opened for their advancement. Lack of access to schools and the inability to control property remained the norm. A rare individual like **Christine de Pisan** (b. 1363–d. ca. 1430) could make her living from writing. Widowed and with children to support, she managed to market her books on history, manners, and poetry to rich male patrons in France and England. She remained an isolated example of the successful woman, unfairly forgotten soon after her death. Society still measured success by a man's achieving his material best, crafting for himself a place of honor in this world.

Perhaps the greatest writer of the Renaissance, if not of all time, was the English actor, poet, and playwright **William Shakespeare** (b. 1564–d. 1616). His plays ranged over histories (such as *Henry IV* and *Henry V*), comedies (such as *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and tragedies (such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*). His writing captures in poetry and action a sense of universal human drama and character, drawing heavily on the classics. The Globe Theater in London, along with other new theaters in European cities, revived plays from ancient writers adapted to new audiences.

With all this focus on success in the world, the humble path of Christ seemed somehow less attractive. Yet, as Renaissance ideas spread from Italy to northern Europe, many scholars in England, the Lowlands, and Germany did bend humanism to a more Christian view. This **Christian humanism** still emphasized the classics, using one's critical mind, and taking action in the world, but it added an interest in the writings of the Christian faith. Thus, along with Latin and Greek, Christian humanists learned Hebrew in order to read both the Old Testament in its original language and the writings of rabbi commentators.

The most famous Christian humanist was **Erasmus** (b. 1466–d. 1536). He sought to promote the best, most pure form of Christianity as he understood it from his reading in the New Testament and the writings of the early Church Fathers. His humanist outlook gave him a mockingly critical attitude to authority. In his *Praise of Folly* (1509), Erasmus satirized all the problems of his contemporaries, especially the hypocrisies and failures of the Church. Questioning authority became an important intellectual tradition, although authorities have never taken kindly to it.

Although Renaissance humanists encouraged a more critical look at the world, Erasmus and many of his contemporaries carelessly accepted dangerous changes in beliefs about witches and witchcraft. Historians have yet to fully understand how

and why the fear of witchcraft began during the Renaissance. Prior to 1400, the usual position of the Church had been that witches did not exist. The Church taught that anyone claiming to be a witch was rather a dupe of the devil, and any supposed magic spells were meaningless deceptions. After 1400, many Church authorities changed their opinions to say that a real conspiracy of witches existed, organized by the devil as a vital threat to Christian society. Actually, no reliable evidence remains that any such organized plot existed or that any magic has ever succeeded against anyone.

Regardless, many ecclesiastical and secular leaders began the **witch hunts** (1400–1800), actively seeking out suspected witches, torturing them into confessing impossible crimes, and then executing them. Like the ancient Roman persecution of Christians, the hunts were sporadic, intermittent, and geographically scattered: worst in the Holy Roman Empire, moderate in France, Scotland, and England, and rare in the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, tens of thousands died, with more untold numbers submitting to false accusations, having loved ones persecuted, or suffering from pervasive fear. Authorities most often accused older women living on the margins of society, yet also younger women, men, and even children fell victim to suspicions.

These witch hunts ended once leaders no longer believed in the reality of diabolic magic. Fewer bouts of bad weather, the rising power of the state, improving economies, and more rational attitudes promoted by the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment (see below and chapter 11) all contributed. By the eighteenth century, most leaders, both religious and political, had once more come to the sensible view that witches and witchcraft were imaginary and no threat.

While scholars studied the classics and certain magistrates hunted witches, religious leaders rethought the givens of medieval faith. European elites had become more modern, embracing the study of ancient Greeks and Romans. The new, more worldly emphasis of humanism, however, contrasted with the basics of medieval Christianity. Humanism prioritized this world; Christianity, the next. Most people in Christendom found meaning and purpose in their faith. The ongoing need of many people for religious certainty would break the unified religious system of the Middle Ages. Just as westerners accepted and fought for separate political states, they would soon embrace and die for divided religious sects.

Review: *How did the Renaissance promote the West's transition into modernity?*

Response:

HEAVEN KNOWS

A religious revolution called the **Reformation** (1517–1648) fractured the medieval unity of the Christian Church in the West beyond recovery. The Reformation first addressed the Church's role in the plan of salvation. Yet the Reformation also reflected the ongoing political, economic, and social changes created by Europe's growing wealth and power. The calls for reform in the western Latin Church had been long and loud since the Great Western Schism had divided the papacy between 1378 and 1415. With the concept of conciliarism crushed, calls for reform went unheeded. The Church leadership's long avoidance of reform made the Reformation more divisive than it might have been.

Some believers did find comfort and hope in many of the rituals and practices of the medieval Church: sacraments from baptism through the mass to final unction, pilgrimages and shrines, saints' days, the Daily Office, hospices, and hospitals. An increasingly popular mysticism (the idea that people could attain their own direct experience of God) led some to question the value of a Church hierarchy. Religious women such as the recluse Julian of Norwich (d. 1416) or the wandering housewife Margery Kempe (d. 1438) continued the practice of Hildegard of Bingen by sharing vivid and novel visions of their interactions with God. The Church's worldly interventions also alienated many. Popes had not lived down the scandals of the Avignon exile and the Great Western Schism.

Even worse, the Renaissance wars over Italy led many to consider the pope to be a typical petty prince rather than a potent moral force and spiritual leader. Christendom watched as the popes deepened their political rule over the Papal States in central Italy. The faithful were scandalized by seeing papal armies commanded first by Cesare Borgia for his father, Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), and later by a pope himself, Julius II (r. 1503–1513). Popes played power politics and lived in pomp as princes. Thus, many Christians gradually grew disillusioned with papal monarchy. Rome seemed to represent the obstacle to reform.

A successful call for reform rose in an obscure and unexpected place: the small town of Wittenberg in the Holy Roman Empire. There, the simple son of prosperous Saxon peasants, **Martin Luther** (b. 1483–d. 1546), had risen to be a professor at the nearby university of Erfurt. Additionally, he dedicated himself to monastic discipline in a house of Augustinian canons regular (sometimes called Austin Friars). Finally, Luther served as the pastor of a parish.

As a pastor, Luther became increasingly disturbed when his poor parishioners bought **indulgences** from traveling salesmen. Indulgences had originally developed out of the Church's sacramental system of penance. When one committed sin, the Church taught, one had to do penance, such as some good deed, prayers, or a pilgrimage. Toward the Later Middle Ages, some clever clerics suggested that, instead of having a penitent take the time and trouble for a complicated and expensive pilgrimage to Rome, why not just have that person pay the comparable amount of cash instead? Consequently, the Church gained money, which it could use for anything it wished. Granted, the Church did officially insist that indulgences did not forgive sin unless the purchaser was truly contrite. Nevertheless, the sales pitch

by indulgence sellers often overlooked that quibble. Encouraged to buy these fill-in-the-blanks forms, people believed that their sins (or those of their dead friends or relatives) would be instantly pardoned in return for some coins.

In Luther's home province of Saxony, the local prince-archbishop of Magdeburg had authorized a vigorous sale of indulgences. The archbishop's share of the profits paid off his debts to the pope, who had suspended canon law so that the archbishop could take possession of more than one prince-bishopric. The pope needed these funds to help build the new Renaissance-style St. Peter's Basilica on the Vatican hill. This new edifice, the largest church building the world had yet seen, designed by the great artist Michelangelo, replaced the crumbling twelve-hundred-year-old structure built under Constantine.

Ignorant of these back-door financial deals, Martin Luther developed his own objections to indulgences. In his own studies of the faith, he began to question the entire concept of indulgences within the plan of salvation. For Luther, sin seemed so pervasive and powerful that he felt any normal means of penance could not erase its stain on the soul. No matter how many good works he undertook or how much he attended church, Luther worried that sin made him unworthy to enter the perfection of heaven. In comparison, he felt like a lump of manure. Luther broke through his dilemma with a revelation upon reading Romans 1:17: "The just shall live by faith." He proposed that a person is assuredly saved, or justified, simply by the belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For Luther, worship was to be a moment of faith, not a process of rituals and ceremonies. And if faith alone justified sinners, then the sacraments provided by the ordained priestly hierarchy of the Church were unnecessary. Hence, Luther's declaration of "justification by faith alone" undermined the dominant position of the chief priest, the pope, as an arbiter of salvation.

Luther offered his **95 Theses**, or arguments, about his developing theological point of view. According to tradition, he posted them on the door of the Wittenberg church on 31 October 1517. Publishers printed these theses and spread them with amazing rapidity across Christendom. Luther became the hero and voice for those who wanted to reform the Church.

Not surprisingly, the Church hierarchy reacted slowly. Even once theologians realized how popular Luther's criticisms had become, their debates with this obscure monk only drove him to harden his point of view and write more pamphlets spreading his ideas. When the pope finally excommunicated Luther in June 1520, the defiant reformer publicly burned the bull along with the books of the canon law, thus dismissing the entire structure of the western Latin Church.

To deal with this upstart monk, the pope sought an ally in the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V** Habsburg (r. 1519–1556). Charles convened a diet (the German version of Parliament) in 1521 in the city of Worms to consider the situation. At the **Diet of Worms**, Luther refused to recant, putting his faith in his own understanding of scripture, reason, and his own conscience. He held his position with the legendary words, "Here I stand; I can do no other." The emperor allowed Luther to leave the diet alive, whereupon his supporters spirited him away into hiding. Charles concluded the diet by declaring Luther an outlaw and pledging to kill him in order to stamp out his heretical ideas.

Since Emperor Charles V ruled over the most wide-ranging empire in history up to that time, such a threat carried weight. As the head of the Habsburg dynasty, Charles V had inherited the lands of Austria and most of the lands of Burgundy (including much of Flanders) from his grandfather, Emperor Maximilian. From his mother he received Naples and Spain, which by this time also included much of the New World (see below), and soon, possessions in Asia. The sun never set on Charles V's empire.

Yet, ironically, this powerful emperor never concentrated enough power to crush Luther and his allies. The office of Holy Roman Emperor had been wasting away during centuries of conflict with the popes and the German princes. Moreover, the Austrian lands were weakened by wars over claims to both Bohemia and Hungary (since Bohemians and Hungarians opposed Habsburg rule). Even Spain, although rich from its new colonial possessions, rebelled against Charles' authority. The wealthy Burgundian lands yearned for more independence while France grabbed what it could. Indeed, the king of France could not tolerate being hemmed in by the Habsburg dominions and also wanted its share of Italy. France thus helped the Lutherans by starting the Habsburg-Valois dynastic conflict. Even though he enjoyed the title ''Most Christian,'' King Francis I of France even encouraged the Muslim sultan of the Ottoman Empire to conquer Charles' ally Hungary in 1526 and besiege the Austrian capital of Vienna in 1530.

As Charles nonetheless gathered resources to crush Luther, the former monk set up a new Christian denomination called ***Lutheranism***. In his hiding place, Luther translated the Bible into simple German. In doing so, he both set the style of modern German and promoted literacy. He simplified the worship ceremonials, emphasizing more preaching, prayer, and music. Then he reined in many reformers who had started to destroy all images and fancy decorations in churches. The bourgeoisie had long wanted more asceticism from the clergy (although the burghers themselves often spent their wealth on conspicuous consumption).

Luther further encouraged simplification by closing monasteries and ending monasticism. That attitude complicated his personal life, however. A nun, Katherine von Bora, and several other nuns were both inspired by Luther's writings and disappointed with religious life. They had escaped from their nunnery in fish barrels. Then Katherine had complained to Luther that since the single, celibate life of a monastic was no longer an option, nuns needed to be married and have children. So he obliged her. He married Katherine and started a family.

Luther's reforming efforts won much popular support. Many German peasants seized on Luther's rhetoric on the defiance of authority and applied it to their social and political obligations. They rebelled against their noble lords in 1525. As was typical of peasant revolts during the Later Middle Ages, the peasants killed a few hundred landlords; the nobles then regrouped and avenged the deaths by hanging many thousands of rebels. Luther disassociated himself from the peasants, calling them ''thievish, murderous hordes.''

Ultimately, Luther relied on the power of princes. Starting with Luther's own Duke of Saxony, many northern German princes and kings in Scandinavia welcomed the Lutheran Church. The new structures allowed them to act as popes in their own provinces. The rulers administered much of the former Church property

and lands for themselves and had a strong hand in appointing the bishops and priests. The Church could devote itself to spiritual matters (which did not involve land reform for peasants).

Consequently, many German princes protected Luther and his fledgling Lutheranism. When the Habsburg Charles V tried to ban Lutheranism at a diet in 1529, Lutheran princes protested. From that event onward, Christians who are neither Eastern Orthodox nor Roman Catholics have usually been called **Protestants**. Once debate failed, the Protestants resorted to weapons, and civil war fitfully raged through the empire. Charles never achieved the military victory needed to crush Luther's princely supporters. With the **Treaty of Augsburg** in 1555, Charles V capitulated to the rights of princes to maintain their Lutheran churches. Despondent, he resigned his throne the next year and died shortly thereafter.

Luther's successful defiance of ecclesiastical and political authority raised a question for Christianity: who had the authority to interpret and define faith? The original, traditional answer had been the Church councils. That was still the position of the Orthodox Churches in eastern Europe, although they had not held a council since long before the Great Schism with the western Latin Church in 1054. The western Catholic Church had rejected conciliarism and instead granted the papacy a monarchical authority to determine the faith.

In contrast, Luther relied solely on his own conscience, as guided by Holy Scripture. Yet how was his conscience necessarily better than anyone else's? Could not anyone claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit and use individual judgment to assert doctrine? Such is what happened. Religious leaders formed new sects and denominations. Success in drawing followers validated divergent religious truths. ***Protestantism*** became a container for multiple Christian groups, each avowing to have the one true interpretation of Christianity.

A variety of sectarians who enjoyed some success in the sixteenth century were collectively known as Anabaptists. ***Anabaptism*** was not one movement but consisted of many different groups lumped together by enemies who disagreed with their common refusal to accept infant baptism. For Anabaptists, only mature adults should be baptized. These groups often drew their followers from the lower classes, who rejected religious hierarchy and ecclesiastical wealth.

Both Lutherans and Catholics joined in exterminating most of these Anabaptists through such traditional methods as torture and war. The most famous example was the siege and destruction of Münster in 1535. There the allied Lutherans and Catholics killed thousands of Anabaptists as they retook the city. The victors tortured the survivors, executed them, and then hung their remains on a church tower in cages that remain there today. Only a few groups of Anabaptists survived, often by fleeing to the New World, especially Pennsylvania, which was founded in the late seventeenth century on a principle of tolerance. Their successors exist today in such denominations as the Mennonites, Moravians, Hutterites, and the Amish or Pennsylvania Dutch.

Various reform ideas soon spread to France, one of the most powerful nations in Europe. The kings of the Valois dynasty had little need or interest in supporting any changes. The monarchy had already arranged the Concordat of 1516, which created a convenient royal co-dominion with the Church in France. The agreement

authorized the French king to appoint most of the bishops, abbots, and abbesses, while the pope got a large cut of the revenues.

One Frenchman, however, found himself more sympathetic to Luther's reforms than the structures of kings and bishops. **Jean Calvin** (b. 1509–d. 1564) learned of Luther's ideas in school. Inspired by them, he created his own new religious framework, called ***Calvinism***, which he solidified after being called to be the leading preacher in Geneva, Switzerland. Geneva became the center of a theocracy, a government based on divine commands. While elected leaders still ran the town council, they passed laws that tried to make the townspeople conform to Calvin's beliefs. From Geneva, Calvin then sent missionaries throughout Europe.

Calvin differed from Luther in two main ways. First, Calvinism focused on **predestination** or ***determinism***: the belief that God determined in advance, for all of time, who was saved and who was damned. Nothing any person did could influence God's preordained omniscient decision. This idea went back to Augustine and had a certain logic to it: if God knows everything, then he surely knows who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. While some complained that this belief removed free will, Calvinism called believers to choose to live the exemplary life of saints, participating in baptism and the Lord's Supper. In doing so, they hoped to re-create heaven on earth.

A second difference in Calvinism was its democratic tendency; members of a church were supposed to be involved in running it. The congregation itself approved ministers or appointed the preacher instead of a distant pope or prince from above. Calvinism expanded through much of the West under the title of Reformed churches in the northern Lowlands or the Netherlands and much of the Rhineland. In France, Calvinists were called Huguenots. In Scotland they formed Presbyterian churches, and in Wales, Congregationalist churches. In England and its colonies, the Calvinists were labeled Puritans.

When Luther first called for reform, no one thought that the authority of the pope could be overthrown by religious ideas. Yet Lutherans, Calvinists, small groups of Anabaptists, and other sects successfully defied papal control. Papal supremacy would suffer yet another loss before it reorganized and redefined itself. Amid all this religious diversity, killing for reasons of faith would continue.

***Review**: How did Early Modern reforms among Christians culminate in wars over religion?*

Response:

FATAL BELIEFS

Although Calvinism gained popularity in England, the **English Reformation** (1534–1559) originated, uniquely, due to matters of state. The reigning king, **Henry VIII** (r. 1509–1547), had strongly supported the views of the pope against Luther. The pope had even awarded King Henry the title of ''Defender of the Faith,'' still sported by English monarchs today. A higher priority for Henry, however, was the security of the Tudor dynasty, for which, he thought, he needed a male heir. After twenty years of marriage to Catherine of Aragon and six births, only one child, a daughter Mary, had survived. Although a daughter could legally inherit the throne in England, Henry believed, like most monarchs of his time, that he needed a son. So he asked the pope to end his marriage, as many kings before and since have done. Contrary to the common version of history, Henry did not want a divorce (the breakup of a genuine marriage). He actually sought an annulment (the declaration that a marriage never had existed). Catherine steadfastly resisted. Her nephew and Luther's overlord, Emperor Charles V, backed her up. Charles just happened to have an army outside of Rome (although it briefly went out of control and brutally sacked the city in 1527). Fearing the nearby Holy Roman Emperor more than the distant English king, the pope refused to support Henry's annulment.

Still determined to father a legitimate heir, Henry decided to break with the pope. His Parliament declared him head of the **Church of England**, and his bishops willingly annulled his first marriage and blessed his second with his courtier, Anne Boleyn. Although the pope excommunicated Henry and declared his new marriage void, that little bothered the monarch or the great majority of the English people. Both the king and many of his subjects had long disliked what they saw as Roman interference in English affairs. Moreover, many of the members of Parliament profited nicely from the subsequent dissolution of the monasteries, whose properties they bought up at bargain rates. Despite the schism, Henry remained religiously conservative, so Calvinist and Lutheran ideas gained very little influence.

Unfortunately for Henry, he did not achieve his sought-after heir with his second wife, Anne Boleyn; she managed to give birth only to a healthy daughter, Elizabeth. To make way for a new wife, Henry had Anne executed on trumped-up charges of adultery. The third wife, Jane Seymour, gave birth to his heir, Edward VI (r. 1547–1553), but died soon after. Three more marriages followed. Henry had the fourth marriage annulled and the fifth wife legitimately executed for adultery. His sixth wife managed to outlive him. Despite this rather unseemly string of marriages, most of the English people did not oppose their king. Henry had to chop off the heads of relatively few who resisted his religious transformation.

A genuinely distinctive Church of England, or ***Anglicanism***, grew after Henry's death. His son, King Edward VI, came to the throne as a child, and his advisors began to push the Church of England further away from the Church of Rome. They began to significantly alter the interpretations of the sacraments and methods of worship to be more in line with simplifications introduced by Calvinist, Lutheran, and other Protestant reformers from the Continent.

These policies abruptly reversed after the young Edward died after a reign of only six years. A brief effort to put his cousin, the Protestant Lady Jane Grey, on the

throne failed. Henry's daughter by his first marriage, Mary I (r. 1553–1558), won the day. Her religious policy forced the English church back under Rome. In doing so, she persecuted clergy and laypeople, many of whom, surprisingly, were willing to die rather than go back to obedience to the pope. She burned several hundred "heretics." For these efforts the English have dubbed her "**Bloody Mary**." Her disastrous marriage to her cousin King Philip II of Spain did not help, either. Many English hated him as a Spaniard and a Roman Catholic, and he avoided both the country and his wife. When she died without an heir, Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn, Queen **Elizabeth I** (r. 1558–1603), inherited the crown.

Elizabeth, who had managed to survive the changes of political and religious policy, now faced a choice herself: should she maintain obedience to Rome or revive the Church of England? In 1559, with the Act of Supremacy enacted in Parliament, she chose the latter course. The English monarch occupied a ceremonial role as head of the Church of England. Henceforward, Anglicanism defined itself as Protestant while still Catholic, trying to maintain the best of both. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) laid out how worship was to be carried out, but it said little of belief. One's conscience was up to oneself—a fairly tolerant attitude. Fortunately for Elizabeth, most English embraced her religious compromise.

In fact, Elizabeth became one of England's greatest monarchs. The late sixteenth century saw a number of powerful and effective women on or behind the thrones of Europe. The Calvinist preacher John Knox in Scotland railed against such a "Monstrous Regiment of Women," as he titled a pamphlet against them. Although the others ruled fairly competently, Elizabeth outshone them all. England flourished during her reign, culturally, economically, and politically. Renaissance culture reached its high point with Shakespeare's plays. Meanwhile, the English navy began to help its countrymen explore and start to dominate the rest of the world, taking the first steps toward becoming the British Empire. It is ironic that Henry VIII thought he needed a son, when Elizabeth was "man" enough to surpass her father's accomplishments.

The one force that seriously threatened Elizabeth was ***Roman Catholicism***. By the beginning of her reign, Rome had begun what historians call either the "Counter-Reformation" or the "Catholic Reformation." Devoted and energetic popes, recovering from the opulent distractions of the Renaissance, now sought to recover lands lost by the Roman version of Christianity. Having accepted the inevitability of reform, the papacy called the **Council of Trent** (1545–1563). Leaders chose the obscure cathedral city at the southern edge of the Alps for a general council because it satisfied Charles V (it was in the empire), the king of France (it was not German), and the pope (its residents spoke Italian).

Some clergy at the Council of Trent wanted to compromise or adopt some ideas of the Protestants, but the council rejected that path. Instead, the Church of the popes insisted on the value of justification by faith supported by good works, combined with the mediating role of the priesthood and the sacraments. The Tridentine Reform (named after the Latin word for Trent) limited some abuses and corruptions and established seminary schools for a better-educated priesthood. The council affirmed that the Church, through the papacy, had the final authority to define belief and interpret scripture—not Luther's conscience, or Anabaptist interpretations, or Calvin's scholarship, or anyone's literal reading of the Bible. The popes

increased their interest in organizing and clarifying the smallest details of belief and practice. The Roman Catholic Church did recognize, however, the importance of tradition. Practice and understanding could change over time.

New monastic orders and reformations of older ones aided the popes in reform. The Ursulines dedicated themselves to the education of girls and women. Most importantly, the Society of Jesus, or the **Jesuits**, gained sway in European affairs. Ignatius Loyola founded the Jesuits after suffering wounds as a warrior in Charles V's Spanish army. During the painful recovery from a shattered leg, he envisioned a new kind of monastic order, one not confined to the cloister. Active in the world, Jesuits dedicated themselves to religious vocation (formed through the Spiritual Exercises), education (becoming teachers and guides), and missionary work (both in Europe and the world). Loyola saw his order as a spiritual army for the Roman Catholic Church, with a so-called fourth vow (after poverty, chastity, and obedience) of absolute dedication to the pope.

The Tridentine Reform set a militant tone for Roman Catholicism during the next two hundred years. Roman Catholicism aimed to recapture the allegiance of lost followers and gain more new ones. A new Roman Inquisition revived in 1542, partly inspired by the Spanish Inquisition of Ferdinand and Isabella. The Spanish Inquisition policed converted Jews and Muslims; this new version hunted Protestants as heretics. An ***Index of Forbidden Books*** declared the reading of certain authors to be sinful. First issued in 1559 by the Holy Office in Rome and regularly reissued thereafter for four hundred years, the list restricted the circulation of banned works in Roman Catholic countries and forbade Roman Catholics from reading these prohibited books. This censorship even included all the works of Erasmus, so fearful had Rome become of any criticism.

The Roman Catholic vigor also expressed itself in a series of Wars of Religion that lasted until 1648. Traditionally, territorial, dynastic, and economic reasons shaped decisions for fighting wars. In this period, ideological differences between adherents of branches of Christianity became significant motives. For a few decades, people were ready to die, and kill, for Lutheranism, Anabaptism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, or Roman Catholicism. Monarchs thought that their subjects and their neighbors needed to conform to their own dogmas as a matter of both public order and divine virtue. People volunteered for armies in the belief that their neighbors should worship the same way they themselves did. Some also enlisted simply as a way to earn a living—soldiering was a growth industry.

In the vanguard of militant Roman Catholicism was Elizabeth's former brother-in-law, King **Philip II** of Spain (r. 1556–1598). Philip had inherited most of his Habsburg father Charles V's possessions except the Austrian ones, which, along with the elected title of Holy Roman Emperor, went to his brother Ferdinand. Yet Philip got the better share: Spain had one of the world's best armies; Flanders was the textile manufacturing center of Europe; and the Americas poured silver into his treasuries. Philip also briefly united Spain with Portugal, making Spain the sole global power. He built a new, modern capital for himself in Madrid. Although Madrid was not conveniently connected to the waterways that bound Philip's empire together, it was easily accessible from his palace of el Escorial, a massive, gray religious retreat (see figure 9.5). Philip was hard working, but perhaps too focused on small details. He saw himself as a divinely appointed monarch obliged

Figure 9.5. King Philip II of Spain often retreated to the gray abbey of El Escorial, which served also as a second palace away from Madrid.

to attend to every corner of his empire. At the apex of a vast bureaucracy, he regulated the lace on court costumes, ordered murders of political enemies, corrected the spelling of secretaries, and held autos-da-fé (public burnings of heretics at which he served as master of ceremonies).

Above all, the king of Spain sent armies to fight for his vision of the Roman Catholic faith. His navy's victory over the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Lepanto (1571) cheered the Christian West, showing that the Ottomans were not invincible. At the time, the Muslim sultan claimed the defeat meant nothing—he would just build another fleet, which he did. Despite this boast, historians have seen the defeat at Lepanto as an obvious turning point toward the long, slow decline of Ottoman dominion. Ironically, Philip's power also began to diminish. His empire, too big for the available means of communication, could not be managed from Madrid. He could not afford his government either, declaring bankruptcy three times and thereby damaging the bankers and merchants he needed so badly.

In particular, some of those capitalists, namely the prosperous Calvinist Dutch in the northern part of the Lowlands, resented paying for Philip's imperialistic and Roman Catholic dreams of grandeur. In 1581, they declared independence from his rule to form the **Dutch Netherlands** (often called Holland after the main province). They even began to construct their own democratic government (see the next chapter). The Dutch would fight off and on for eighty years before they gained full independence for themselves. To stop this rebellion, Philip first sent in the Duke of Parma, whose army earned infamy for its brutality against the civilian population. In turn, Dutch and Huguenot merchants harassed Spanish shipping.

Philip turned his attention to England, which had been supporting the upstart Dutch after the death of his wife Queen Mary I. Hostilities simmered for several years as English sea dogs or privateers (informal pirates with permission from a govern-

ment to raid shipping) preyed on Spanish possessions. Riches looted by the Spanish from the American natives wound up being plundered by the English instead.

Philip retaliated by instigating plots against Elizabeth's life and throne. The pope declared her an illegitimate, excommunicated heretic and encouraged the faithful to overthrow her rule. Philip and the pope supported Elizabeth's cousin, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (not to be confused with Elizabeth's half-sister ''Bloody Mary'' Tudor, the late queen of England) as the true English monarch. The unfortunate Mary Stuart had lost her Scottish Highlands kingdom through her own folly, falling under a reasonable suspicion of blowing up her first husband. She fled from her own people to England. Elizabeth kept her in comfortable confinement until Mary got herself implicated in a treasonous Roman Catholic plot. Elizabeth finally ordered Mary's beheading, although it took the headsman three whacks of his axe to succeed.

Seizing upon Elizabeth's execution of Mary in 1587 as an excuse, Philip assembled the **Spanish Armada**. This fleet of 130 ships aimed to sail from Spain to the Lowlands and then ferry Parma's troops across the North Sea to invade England. It all went terribly wrong. The most famous English sea dog, Sir Francis Drake, destroyed most of the fleet in its harbor. A rebuilt fleet launched in 1588, but adverse weather slowed its progress. That the commanding admiral had never been to sea was not helpful, either. Easily repulsing the English in the Channel, the admiral did finally anchor his fleet off the coast of the Lowlands, only to be told, quite reasonably, that if troops there were diverted to England, the Netherlands might succeed in their rebellion. Then the English broke up the Armada by pushing fire ships, empty burning hulls, among the fleet. The panicked Spanish broke formation and came under English guns. Storms sank most of the rest.

Philip at first wrote off this defeat much as the Ottoman sultan had his own at Lepanto. Notwithstanding Spain's appearance of strength over the next decades, it sank to a second-rank power. England, however, continued its ascendancy, becoming stronger than ever as its national patriotism became bound with its religion and its burgeoning imperialist ventures.

Meanwhile, France had not been able to help Philip II of Spain fight its traditional enemy England, since France itself almost broke apart in religious warfare. The Huguenots (the name for French Calvinists) had grown to about 10 percent of the population. Their numbers were particularly strong in the productive artisan and business classes. The Valois dynasty might have moved against them once its long conflict with the Habsburgs ended in 1559. But that same year the Valois dynasty plummeted into crisis with the unexpected death of King Henry II, killed during a joust by a piece of splintered lance thrust through his eye into his brain. His three young sons and their mother, Queen Catherine de Medici (b. 1519–d. 1589), were trapped between two powerful aristocratic families: the Huguenot Bourbons and the Roman Catholic de Guises. Fighting over the throne using betrayal, assassination, and war, these powerful families nearly destroyed the monarchy and the country.

The Roman Catholic party almost succeeded with the **St. Bartholomew's Day massacre** (14 August 1572), where they viciously murdered thousands of Protestants, great and small, men, women, and children, in the streets of Paris. Henry of Bourbon survived that slaughter and was soon able to gain military domination

over most of the country. After the death of the last Valois in 1589, he became officially recognized as the French King **Henry IV "of Navarre"** (r. 1589–1610), founding the Bourbon dynasty. Hostility to his Protestantism still stood in the way of his acceptance by some Roman Catholics. So, in 1593, he converted to Roman Catholicism, allegedly saying, "Paris is worth a mass." He continued to protect the Protestants, though, with the proclamation of the **Edict of Nantes** (1598). This act mandated a certain level of religious tolerance. It allowed Protestants to worship and to fortify fifty-one cities for their own self-defense. Diversity brought some peace and security.

The last of the religious wars, the **Thirty Years War** (1618–1648), engulfed the Holy Roman Empire and drew in the entire continent. The conflict began in Bohemia, as the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs labored to convert that province back to Roman Catholicism. Leaders in Prague "defenestrated" the emperor's representatives—meaning they tossed them out the window. Habsburg armies quickly crushed the rebellious Bohemians, but other German princes who feared a resurgent imperial power soon took up arms against Austria. As the emperor gained victories through talented generals such as Wallenstein, foreign Lutheran monarchs invaded the empire—first the king of Denmark, then the king of Sweden. Regardless, the Austrian Habsburgs continued to win, fortified by the resources of their Spanish cousins.

Eventually, what began as a religious war ended as a purely political conflict. Roman Catholic France had long feared being surrounded by the Habsburg territories of Spain in the south and the empire in the east. So Roman Catholic France opposed Roman Catholic Austria. Dynastic and national politics overruled religious fraternity. Thus, religion faded as a motive to go to war in the West.

Indeed, the **Peace of Westphalia**, which was signed in 1648, forced Europe into new, modern, international political relationships (see map 9.1). With religious diversity now irreversible, the medieval icon of a unified Christendom was completely broken. Instead, the numerous independent states of Europe lived in an uncertain rivalry. Each became a sovereign state, free from the influence of higher authorities, although able to agree on international principles if necessary. The most important principle maintained a ***balance of power***, where the countries would league together against any state that tried again to dominate Europe. This principle kept the great powers in check and left the middle-ranked and small buffer states free to prosper.

The rest of the treaty redrew some political borders to establish this rough balance of power. Spain held onto the southern "Spanish" Netherlands (soon to be known as Belgium) but lost the northern Dutch Netherlands, which everyone recognized as an independent, sovereign state. The Swiss had their independence affirmed. The Holy Roman Empire became a mere geographical expression as a synonym for Germany. The petty principalities of the empire were more sovereign than the empire itself. The Holy Roman Emperor became even less relevant, a still weaker figurehead. While the Austrian Habsburgs kept control of the imperial office, their varied collection of territories on the empire's southeastern borders mattered far more than the office of emperor. France chewed away a few bits of the empire, bringing its border to the upper Rhine River. Of course, the end of these religious wars did not stop war altogether. Despite this reasonable settlement, great powers continued to try to expand at the expense of their neighbors.

Map 9.1. Europe, 1648

The lack of total victory for any one side assured that religious diversity remained part of Western civilization. While nations might continue to fight, hoping for power, pride, or prosperity, religion as a reason for war declined. States became the key binding agent for Europeans. The Reformation weakened the bonds between religion and the state. Many governments continued to impose religious uniformity on their own people. Indeed, many people remained satisfied with whatever tradition they were brought up in. Yet people only had to look across borders to know that others differed on Christianity and that some individuals might even be able to choose their faith, or even no belief at all.

Review*: How did Early Modern reforms among Christians culminate in wars over religion?*

Response:

GOD, GREED, AND GLORY

Another change from the medieval to the modern in European history was **Western colonial imperialism**, when various kingdoms built empires based on overseas colonies. Historians today argue about what exactly made the Europeans strong enough to take the lead in a new global history after 1500. Answers used to imply, if not outright argue, ***Western exceptionalism***, the idea that Europeans were somehow different (and better) than peoples in other civilizations. More recent historians object to that characterization, especially considering the brutality with which Europeans would "civilize" the world. Comparative historians measure the relative accumulation of wealth, strength of government, level of cultural sophistication, status of technological development, and impulse toward creativity of various civilizations around the world over the centuries and note that Europe would not have ranked near the top.

The Europeans benefited from excellent timing as they began their modern history with their "voyages of discovery." These expeditions allowed them to take advantage of existing trade networks that incorporated much of Asia and Africa. The European national governments began to drive toward global supremacy over other empires and peoples across the seas (see map 9.2). Europeans had three desires that fed this drive to go abroad.

The first came from Christianity's own evangelistic and crusading impulses, which had already driven Western culture beyond the borders of Europe. Even before Latin Christianity began to split apart, westerners wanted to spread the gospel of Christ to "heathens," as seen in the Crusades. The Reformation only encouraged the divided Christians to convert the world, to prove their own version of Christianity as the most successful and, therefore, most divinely sanctioned. Some Europeans ventured on a path of world domination in the name of eternal salvation. Would Jesus, the Prince of Peace, have approved that his message come at the

Map 9.2. The West in the World, 1648

point of a sword and with the price of plundering? His followers thought so, and they had the power to do it.

God provided a spiritual motivation, while money afforded a material one. The capitalism that sprouted from the Commercial Revolution had transformed Europe from a poor offshoot on the fringes of a world trade system centered in Asia to a pillar of economic dynamism. Financial investments from capitalists further pushed these ''voyages of discovery'' forward. Instead of being barriers, the deep seas and oceans soon became highways much as rivers and coastal waters had long been. These explorers, of course, only ''discovered'' what other humans and cultures had long known was there. The difference was that Europeans were now able to exploit these ''new'' lands and foreign peoples as never before in their history.

A second motive for colonialism, then, was the opportunity for profit. Europeans wanted to travel to ''the Indies,'' regions in distant Asia known to possess fantastic wealth. The Europeans knew little about these half-mythical realms except that they were the source of a variety of spices, such as pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. What today sits on our shelves in small jars costing pennies was worth its weight in gold in 1500. The increasingly wealthy Europeans could now afford these exotic spices to make their food more palatable in an age before preservatives.

The main trade routes to the Indies had traditionally run through the Middle East. Only a rare merchant from Europe, such as Marco Polo in the thirteenth century, might travel along the Silk Road through Central Asia all the way to the Chinese Empire. During much of the Middle Ages, most western European merchants bought from the merchants of the Byzantine Empire. After the Byzantine Empire's demise in 1453, the Muslim Ottoman Turks took over supply routes. The idea that the Muslims shut down the trade routes is a myth; rather, the western Christians resented paying these ''infidel'' middlemen. Europeans looked for alternative access to the East.

Pride offered a third motive for imperialism, on both the personal and national levels. At the forefront, monarchs were drawn to the glorification that conquest always brought. New lands meant wider empires and revenues. At the lower social levels, adventuring in foreign lands raised a Renaissance gentleman's reputation and status. Any poor man might acquire treasure or farmland of his own, taken from natives who could not defend it. Thus an obscure man could rise to prominence, whether lording it over foreigners or bringing immense wealth back home to Europe. All these contradictory motives, winning fame, fortune, and souls for Jesus, tempted Europeans out into the world.

Surprisingly, the new imperialism began with the little country of **Portugal**, founded in the twelfth century as part of a crusade during the *Reconquesta* of the Iberian Peninsula (see chapter 8). Over the years, Portugal had fought against the Muslims, but its armies were soon cut off from confronting the enemy by neighboring Castille's successful expansion. Unable to combat the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula, little Portugal sought another outlet for its crusading zealotry. It channeled its expansionism toward Africa, hoping both to convert the Africans and profit from trade on that continent. Prince Henry the Navigator (d. 1460), one of the main proponents of African expeditions, also wished to find enough gold to maintain his court in proper style. His sponsored voyages discovered and colonized the islands

of the Azores and the Madieras in the Atlantic. Colonists found the latter islands so heavily forested that they set a fire that burned for seven years, leaving the land covered in ash. From this new, fertile soil they grew a new wine, Madiera. Heavily populated Africa was a different matter. Instead of converting and conquering, the Portuguese could only wrest away small chunks of African coastline, where they built forts to defend trading outposts and harbors.

Explorers soon thought that it might be possible to sail around the continent of Africa to reach the Indies. Yet sailors faced some serious challenges. First, the dangers of ocean travel in the Atlantic surpassed those of the Mediterranean and coastal waters to which the western Europeans had confined themselves since the fall of Rome. The Portuguese adapted sailing technology from Africa and the Middle East to build sturdy ships called caravels, which could handle the high seas. Second, the North Star, so necessary for navigation, disappeared beyond the horizon south of the equator. Improved maps and charts of the heavens for navigation helped with that problem.

Hugging the Atlantic coast, the Portuguese were best located to launch such voyages. The Portuguese explorer Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope, the southernmost point of Africa, in 1468. It took another thirty years before **Vasco da Gama** traveled beyond that cape. In 1498, he sailed up the east coast of Africa and then ventured across the Arabian Sea to reach India. He did not have much of value to trade with the Indians then, but the spices he brought back profited his expedition thirty times the amount of its cost. On da Gama's next voyage, Portuguese military technology of guns overpowered the natives. Da Gama plundered foreign merchant cargoes, blew the Arab ships out of the water, shelled cities, exploited rivalries between states, and intimidated princes. Other Portuguese followed. Soon they dominated all seagoing trade and commerce in the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and China Sea.

The Portuguese started an empire that ended only in the late twentieth century, with the loss of its last possessions in Africa and Asia. Portugal was too small to grab and keep large territories. For five hundred years, though, the Portuguese held on to fortified enclaves: Angola, Guinea, Mozambique in Africa; Goa in India; Timor in the Indies; and Macao in China. Only in Brazil, in the Americas, did they establish a large colony with European immigrants. Despite its imperial success, Portugal itself remained on the periphery of European affairs, only rarely participating in the approaching wars between Western states over Europe and the world.

Even before Vasco da Gama had begun exploiting and killing Indians, Portugal's neighbor **Spain** had hoped to beat its rival to the Indies. Spain was a young country then, founded only in 1479 as King Ferdinand came to the throne of Aragon, while his wife of five years, Isabella, ruled the neighboring kingdom of Castille. They united their two kingdoms to create Spain, centralizing power in both their hands while weakening the nobles and other estates. Spain's hold on southern Italy was secured through Ferdinand's wars on that peninsula.

Ferdinand and Isabella rounded out their immediate realm on the Iberian Peninsula by finishing the *Reconquesta* begun in the eleventh century, taking back European territory from the Muslims. In 1492 they defeated Granada, the last Muslim principality in western Europe. Then, to impose uniformity and conformity on

their tidy kingdom, they kicked out of the country all Muslims and Jews who refused to convert to Christianity. Spanish authorities worried about the sincerity of conversions by those Muslims and Jews who stayed behind, called respectively Moriscos (after the old term *Moors*) and Marranos (a word for ''pig''). The monarchs set up the infamous **Spanish Inquisition** (1478–1834) to deal with their concerns. The Spanish Inquisition investigated and punished cases about people who secretly practiced Islam or Judaism, as well as sodomy or even, allegedly, witchcraft. Over the centuries, the inquisitors ferreted out, tortured, and burned many people to death. Early in the 1600s, Spain simply gave up worrying about the Moriscos and expelled tens of thousands of them to North Africa. Spain's authorities enforced cultural uniformity as they built their new nation.

While Queen Isabella presided over the defeat of Muslim Granada, she gambled on an unusual plan to reach the lavish Indies. An eccentric Italian ship captain, **Christopher Columbus**, proposed sailing across the Atlantic Ocean westward, rather than to the south around Africa (which would not be successful for six more years). Isabella's advisors were correct to warn her that Columbus' voyage should fail. Contrary to a popular, yet incorrect myth, their advice was not based on a mistaken belief that the world was flat—since the time of the ancient Greeks, every educated person knew that the world was round or, more properly, a globe. Instead, Isabella's advisors were correct to point out that Columbus had underestimated the distance from his last supply point in the Canary Islands to Japan. While Columbus thought that he would need to travel a mere 2,400 miles, Isabella's advisors knew, in fact, the distance to be more than 8,000 miles. Columbus would have died at sea had he not stumbled upon the ''New World.'' For too long Columbus believed that what he had claimed for Spain was part of the true Indies of the East, just as he read in Marco Polo's book. Instead, other explorers, like Amerigo Vespucci, quickly recognized that the islands of the Caribbean were the ''West'' Indies and that new continents lay just beyond. Therefore, mapmakers labeled the continents **North** and **South America**, not Columbia or Christopheria.

Columbus discovered the Americas at exactly the right moment for Europeans to exploit their advantages. There had been, of course, earlier contacts between the Old World of Eurasia and Africa with the New World of the Americas. Information about them can be gleaned from records, most interestingly from the Vikings. In all these earlier interactions, however, the travelers lacked the interest or ability to dominate the ''native'' Americans who had been living there for tens of thousands of years. In 1492, however, Spain was ready to commit resources for conquest and lucky enough to have them succeed beyond expectation.

Columbus' domination of the natives (mistakenly, of course, called Indians after the East Indies) further tarnishes his legacy. He kidnapped natives and killed to seize land at will. In his desire to acquire gold, Columbus cut off the hands of natives who failed to turn in set quotas of gold. Those who fled he had hunted down with huge dogs. Following Columbus, Spanish conquerors, called **conquistadors**, conquered much of the Americas, supported by a firm conviction in God's blessing for their cause, rich financial backing, and a well-drilled military equipped with horses and guns.

Historians call the European takeover of the Americas and its consequences the

Columbian Exchange. This mutual transfer, however, mostly added up to be in the West's favor. European settlers rushed into the Americas, grabbing control of vast expanses of land and virtually enslaving native peoples. Wealth in precious metals and food products flowed into Europe, having been produced by the native peoples. Europeans ate better with foods from the New World, including peanuts, maize, potatoes, and tomatoes (although tomatoes were originally suspected of being poisonous because of their bright red color). Tobacco smoking provided a new social pastime. In turn, both native and immigrant Americans fed on sugarcane, coffee, rice, bananas, and even the honey of honeybees from the Old World. The American natives gained new oppressive rulers, farm animals, and the faith of Christianity.

The European conquest came surprisingly easily, within a few decades after Columbus' discovery. At first, the Indians of the Americas easily outnumbered the Europeans. But the natives were not united; they were even more diverse than Europeans, with hundreds of different cultures and more than a thousand different languages. Alliances and cooperation against the determined European invaders rarely lasted long.

Natives on the Caribbean Islands could not organize a strong military resistance since they were still at the socioeconomic level of hunter-gatherers or simple agriculturalists. In contrast, millions of American Indians on the mainland were quite civilized and organized. Two recently formed empires maintained societies based in cities as sophisticated as any in the Old World. One of the peoples who ruled the so-called Aztec Empire, the Mexica, gave their name to modern-day Mexico. Their political power reached southward toward Central America. The Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan (today, Mexico City) arguably possessed more comforts, and certainly more people, than any one city in Spain. The Incan Empire based in Peru controlled much of the west coast of South America. Each empire coordinated agriculture, war, and peace for millions of people with armies well trained in conquest. These civilized societies were, ironically, even more vulnerable to conquest. They shared three serious disadvantages for competition with the Spanish: deification, ethnic conflicts, and vulnerable immune systems.

First, deification hurt the natives because they expected too much from their own human rulers, who were considered to be gods. The Aztec practice of sacrificing humans for religious reasons, carving out beating hearts with obsidian knives, also upset many subject peoples who did not believe in the Aztec gods. Even worse, the natives too often incorrectly believed the Europeans were gods themselves. The newcomers' pale skins, shiny armor, and unfamiliar horses contributed to this falsehood, which the lying conquistadors exploited to the utmost. This sham allowed Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru to get close to, capture, and then execute the native emperors. Therefore, the embodiment of both church and state collapsed with one blow. Murdered emperors left the natives disorganized and doubting.

Second, the diversity of the Native Americans likewise helped the Spanish defeat the native political states. The Incan and Aztec empires, like many empires, centered on specific ethnic groups that dominated others. Enemies of these empires, tribes that remained unconquered or had been recently subjugated, cooperated

with the Spanish against the native imperial supremacy. The Spanish played various tribal groups against one another. Then, conquistadors replaced every native civilized political structure that ruled over good farmland. Only on the fringes of the Spanish empire did Indians retain some self-rule. They usually survived as hunter-gatherer societies, protected by mountains, deserts, or jungles.

The third, and worst, problem for the natives was the vulnerability of their bodies to diseases carried from Europe. We understand now how many diseases are caused by germs (see chapter 11). In the sixteenth century, though, many people felt that disease was a punishment from God. Such had been the case with the Black Death, which killed a third of the European population within a few years. Little knowledge existed on how to cure most illnesses. The Spanish, naturally and unintentionally, brought with them various germs from Europe, from diseases as harmless as the common cold to the more lethal measles and chicken pox and the very lethal smallpox. The Europeans bore substantial immunities to these diseases; but the native Americans had never been exposed to them. In contrast, perhaps the only illness that the Europeans brought back from the Americas might have been the sexually transmitted disease of syphilis. It first appeared in Europe at about this time and for the next few centuries would disproportionately afflict sexually promiscuous people, especially prostitutes, soldiers, and aristocrats. The number of sufferers overall, however, was limited.

In comparison, the natives of the Americas were not so fortunate. Millions became sick and died. Spreading rapidly along imperial roads, pandemics (epidemics that range over whole continents and beyond) killed large portions of the population. Large regions were completely depopulated, and native sociopolitical networks broke down.

Through exploitation of political rivalries, military tactics, and disease, Spain quickly came to dominate the Americas, wiping out much of the indigenous cultures and civilization and replacing them with its version of Western civilization. At the time, the Spanish did not realize the complete extent of the devastation or fully comprehend their own role in the plagues. But they knew how to take advantage of the situation. Empty land was theirs for the taking. Those natives who survived disease and slaughter were conquered. Only the low number of colonial settlers prevented the Spanish from expanding farther north than they did.

The Spanish masters exploited the defeated. Natives dug in the silver mines (of which there were plenty, but disappointingly few sources of gold). Or they labored in the fields for long hours under the southern sun. Many died from overwork and lack of care, exploited worse than animals. Only a few voices protested, notably Bartolomé de Las Casas, the first priest ordained in the Americas. He spoke out to claim human and Christian dignity for the Indians. He and others won the argument that Indians had souls and were human, capable of entry into heaven after death. But many continued to die. Within a few decades the native population of the Americas fell from what was probably eleven million to only two and one-half million.

While the depopulation guaranteed European domination, it also threatened the Western exploitation. Who would produce the silver and food that the Europeans desired and needed? How could they replace all the dead miners and peasants?

The Portuguese offered a solution with the **Atlantic-African slave trade**. In the year 1400, slavery hardly existed in Europe. Soon after, the Portuguese had gained an interest in slavery, which they had seen operating among the Africans. They began to buy and sell black Africans, beginning in 1444 with the official excuse of the need to convert Muslim prisoners to Christianity. In reality, they wanted cheap, expendable labor. The new plantations for sugarcane, which everyone's sweet tooth craved, promoted harsh labor practices. The crop required hard, nasty, and dangerous harvesting in dank thickets, where workers hacked away at rough, sharp stalks with machetes. So over the next few centuries, Europeans of various nationalities captured and shipped millions of diverse Africans to work as slaves in the Americas. The first boatload arrived by 1510, not even two decades after Columbus' discovery.

Thus, the new Spanish rulers forcibly converted the native American "Indians" and the imported Africans to the ways of Western civilization, which largely supported and benefited the European masters. Of course, through most of history, in most civilizations, the masses, both free and slave, have supported the few at the top. The institutionalized racism of the Americas, though, has left an especially challenging legacy. "Black" skins were identified as inferior, while "white" skins claimed superiority. The periodic revolts by both the Indian and African slaves always ended with the Western masters victorious.

An improved method of investing capital, the bourse or **stock exchange**, soon financed this slave trade and other colonial investments. First appearing in Antwerp in 1485, the stock exchange provided an alternative to banks as a place for capital to be gathered and invested. Where banks promised some protection of deposits, the bourse offered no such protection. If a business failed, the stock became worthless. But the greater the risk, the greater were the possible profits. At first, members pooled their resources for new investment capital. But collective membership risked all of one's own possessions to pay debts if too many of the collective's investments failed. By 1600, joint stock companies provided a better way to protect investments by restricting losses to only the number of shares any individual owned. This limited liability meant that no one could be ruined who prudently invested only a portion of his wealth through stock in any one venture.

Remember, risk was always part of capitalism. Although the New World looked like a profitable investment, it had a mixed impact on the European economy. American mines added tons of silver bullion to the treasuries of Spain, which then filtered out to the other nations of Europe and even to China through world trade. But so much silver also led to a quick and devastating inflation. A "price revolution" of swiftly rising costs of goods and services hurt the middle and poorer classes of Spain, eventually weakening the Spanish Empire. The history of capitalism is rife with both growth in wealth and suffering caused by crises in investments.

The simple idea of capitalism, reinvesting profits, offered no real guidelines on how to best keep those profits flowing to everyone's benefit. Some intellectuals attempted to figure out how to prevent economic disaster and promote economic growth. As part of the Commercial Revolution, they began to propose one of the first **economic theories**, sets of ideas that offered comprehensive explanations for how people carried out economic activity. Since then, many theories have tried to

suggest plans for action on how best to harness capitalism. Unlike scientific theories (see chapter 10), though, no economic theory has as yet sufficiently explained human economic activity.

The early ***economic theory of mercantilism*** linked the growing Early Modern nation-states to their new colonial empires. Theorists emphasized that the accumulation of wealth in precious metals within a country's own borders was the best measure of economic success. Mercantilist theory favored government intervention in the economy, since it was in governments' interest that their economies succeed. The theory argued that a regime should cultivate a favorable balance of trade as a sign of economic success. Since most international exchange took place in bullion, actual gold and silver, monarchs tried to make sure that other countries bought more from their country than they bought from other monarchs' countries. Thus, the bullion in a country's treasury would continue to increase. Monarchs then obsessed about discovering mines of gold and silver, a practically cost-free method of acquiring bullion.

Because of this tangible wealth, governments frequently intervened by trying to promote enterprises to strengthen the economy. State-sponsored monopolies had clear advantages for a monarch. A state-licensed enterprise, such as importing tea leaves from China or sable furs from Siberia, could easily be supervised and taxed. Diligent inspections and regulation ensured that monopolies' goods and services were of a high quality. The government could then push and protect that business both overseas and domestically.

Fueled by this burgeoning capital and developing theory, more explorers sailed off to make their fortune by exploiting the riches of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Unfortunately for imperialists, the world was fairly crowded already with other powerful peoples. Various kingdoms and states in East Asia (the Chinese Empire, Japan), the Indian Subcontinent (the Mughal Empire), and Africa (Abyssinia) had long histories, rich economies, sophisticated cultures, and intimidating armies. In comparison, from antiquity through the Middle Ages, Europe had remained a minor market on the fringe of the Eurasian-African economy.

Even so, Spain and Portugal boldly divided up the world between them, even before Vasco da Gama had reached the Indies, with the **Treaty of Tordesillas** (1494). The pope blessed the proceedings. The treaty demonstrated a certain hubris in those two states. They claimed global domination, notwithstanding their inability to severely damage the rich, powerful, well-established, and disease-resistant kingdoms and empires of Africa and Asia. The European powers ruled the oceans but could only nibble at the fringes of Asia and Africa.

People of other Western nations did not let the Spanish and Portuguese enjoy their fat empires in peace for long. Outside the law, pirates in the Caribbean along the Spanish Main (the Central and South American coastline) and in the Indies plundered whatever they could. Within the law, a few captains preyed on the Spanish and Portuguese, each other, and the foreign peoples almost like pirates, licensed by governments with "letters of marque." For example, raids by the English Sir Francis Drake and his sea dogs helped provoke the Spanish Armada.

By 1600, the Dutch, the English, and the French had launched their own overseas ventures, with navies and armies grabbing and defending provinces across the

oceans. They all began to drive out natives in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. They also turned on one another. In Asia and Africa, the Dutch grabbed Portuguese bases in South Africa and the East Indies. The English, in turn, seized Dutch possessions in Africa, Malaysia, and North America (turning New Holland into New York and New Jersey). The English planted their own colonists along the Atlantic seacoast of North America. The French settled farther inland in Quebec. Likewise, in the Caribbean, India, and the Pacific, the French and English faced each other in disputes about islands and principalities, while the native peoples were caught in the middle.

The slowness and fragility of transportation and communication did mean that the governments in the homelands could not closely supervise the colonies. Westerners both in Europe and abroad comforted themselves that their success justified their dominion, even though it lacked any legal basis except an invented right to seize allegedly empty or neglected land. The new elites of European heritage immigrated to these distant lands and began to forge their own unique cultures, drawing on Western civilization but also able to adapt to local circumstances. The "illegal immigrants" only rarely learned from the native peoples, except, if at all, how to properly farm in new climates and soilscapes, both in the tropics and in temperate zones.

Everywhere they went, the colonizers ravaged the native cultures, often with cruelty (scalping was invented by Europeans) and carelessness (smashing sculptures and pulverizing written works). Priceless cultural riches vanished forever. Land grabbing displaced the local farmers, while slavery (whether in body or wages) and displacement of native peoples by Europeans dismantled social structures. Where social bonds did not snap apart, European immigrants ignored and discriminated, trying to weaken the hold of native religions, languages, and even clothing styles. Robbed of their homes and livelihoods, most non-European subjects found resistance to be futile against the weight of European economic and political decisions.

As a result of the westerners' expansion around the world, "Europe" replaced "Christendom" in their own popular imagination. Nevertheless, these diverse Europeans continued to hurl insults and launch wars against one another, which they promoted through grotesque ethnic stereotypes. While the people of one's own nation were invariably perceived as kind, generous, sober, straight, loyal, honest, and intelligent, they might allege that the Spanish were cruel, the Scots stingy, the Dutch drunk, the French perverted, the Italians deceptive, the English boastful, or the Germans boorish. So Europeans remained pluralistic in their perceptions of one another.

At the same time, the elites recognized their common bonds in how they practiced their gentlemanly manners in ruling over the lower classes, expanded their many governments, grew their increasingly national economies, and revered the Christian religion (no matter how fractured). Some Europeans adopted a notion of the morally pure "noble savage" as a critique on their own culture. Missionaries preached the alleged love and hope of Christianity, while global natives found themselves confronted by new crimes brought in by the westerners, such as prostitution and vagrancy. The West's confidence in its civilization made westerners feel

that they deserved superiority over all other peoples. These diverse Europeans insisted that they themselves were ''civilized'' and that their dominated enemies were ''savages.'' They began to think more in racist categories, ''white'' Europeans and ''colored'' others, whether ''red'' American Indians, ''brown'' Asian Indians, ''yellow'' Chinese, or ''black'' sub-Saharan Africans. All these other ''races'' by definition were believed to be less intelligent, industrious, and intrepid. Through increasing contacts with other peoples, the rest of the world seemed truly ''foreign.''

This Eurocentric attitude is reflected in the early maps of the globe. Medieval maps had usually given pride of place in the center to Jerusalem. By the sixteenth century, geographers had a more accurate picture of the globe and could distinguish other continents as connected to one another by at most a narrow isthmus (Panama for the Americas, Sinai between Eurasia and Africa). Nonetheless, they ''split'' the continent of Eurasia into ''Asia'' and ''Europe,'' arbitrarily deciding on the Ural Mountains as a dividing point (although these hills hardly created a barrier—as the Huns and Mongols had demonstrated). Westerners saw vast stretches of eastern Europe as hardly civilized at all, a tempting target for building empires. From living in one small corner of the map, Europeans in all their varieties had moved to the center. Certainly, the explorers who led the voyages of discovery showed audacity and heroism, added to the scientific knowledge of Europeans, and allowed some mutually beneficial cultural exchange. But they were also expansionist and imperialist. Wielding a newfound global power, Western civilization was unleashed on the world.

Review: *How did the ''voyages of discovery'' begin colonial imperialism by Europeans?*

Response:

Glossary

The terms below cover many of the important ideas that Western civilization has either developed on its own, borrowed from others, or interacted with. The terms often end in *-ism* or *-ation*. Some of these ideas have been discredited by dominant attitudes of political institutions, social pressures, intellectual fashions, or religious organizations. Still, all of these diverse ideas, many of which contradict one another, are options to be adopted and practiced.

absolutism: The idea and practice that one person should dominate in authority and decision making within a state. Historians and political theorists most often apply the term to European monarchs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries A.D., although the concept does apply to all ages.

agnosticism: The belief that the existence of God or of any supernatural beings is impossible to prove.

American exceptionalism: A point of view that sees Americans as different from their fellow westerners or other peoples, usually as being more virtuous or free. The source of this alleged virtue ranges from a special relationship with God to a unique genius of the Founding Fathers. *See* **Western exceptionalism.**

Anabaptism: A religious belief that rejects infant baptism, an idea that united diverse groups of Christians during the Reformation. *See* **Christianity**; **Protestantism**.

anarchism: A political idea that calls for the destruction of industrialized and bureaucratized societies so that a utopian agricultural society can appear. *See* **terrorism**.

Anglicanism: A branch of Christians formed during the Reformation, first organized as the Church of England, which defines itself as a middle path between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. British imperialism planted numerous Anglican churches around the world, now loosely connected to one another as the Anglican Communion.

animism: The religious belief that nature is alive with spirits and ghosts that affect our natural world. Animism was probably the first religion, and many remaining hunter-gatherers practice some form of it.

anthropomorphism: The idea that gods and deities look and act like human beings. Much of ancient Greek and Roman art was based on this concept.

anti-intellectualism: The criticism of the thoughts and opinions of educated elites as less useful than those of the ''common'' uneducated masses.

anti-Semitism: A euphemism for the hatred of Jews. *See* **Judaism**; **racism**.

apostolic poverty: The belief that it is virtuous for Christians to live like the poor, since Jesus and his followers did so. The height of its influence was in the Middle Ages with the Waldensians and Francis of Assisi's monasticism of the mendicants.

apostolic succession: The belief in some parts of Christianity that the true Church requires its leaders (bishops and priests) to be ordained in a direct line from Jesus and his apostles.

arabization: The process of making people conform to Arabic culture, especially Islam and its associated traditions.

Arianism: A religious belief in the third century A.D. that distinguished the human nature of Jesus from the divine. Most parts of Christianity officially defined Arianism as a heresy.

aristocracy: The idea and practice that some people are born to a higher status than others and therefore should rule society.

assassination: The political practice of murdering leaders in order to force change.

atheism: The belief that denies the existence of the supernatural. *See* **supernaturalism**.

atomic theory: The scientific idea that the smallest indivisible part of a unique substance is an atom (Greek for ''not able to cut''). Ancient Greek philosophers first suggested the idea, which was scientifically verified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

authoritarianism: The modern political practice of a dictatorship, where a ruler and his party significantly control mass communication and bureaucracy while maintaining order through secret police, paramilitary, and military groups. *See* **totalitarianism**.

balance of power: An idea most popular between 1648 and 1945 that the nations of Europe should league together against any state that tried to dominate the Continent.

balkanization: The practice of carving up larger empires into smaller states, as done after World War I in eastern Europe. Often it is used in a negative sense.

baptism: The religious idea in Christianity that a ritual with water binds one to that belief system.

barbarian: (1) A term used by civilized urban peoples to describe other peoples who are not civilized (living in pastoral or hunter-gatherer economies); (2) a term used by one people to insult another as unjustifiably cruel, regardless of either's level of socioeconomic development.

Bolshevism: The name for the communist movement in early twentieth-century Russia led by Lenin. *See* **communism**; **Leninism**.

bureaucracy: The practice of governing by means of written records and offices that issue, administer, and store them.

caesaro-papism: The practice of the medieval Eastern Roman or Byzantine emper-

ors of helping to organize and supervise the hierarchy and belief system of the Christian Church in their empire. *See* **Orthdox Christianity**.

Calvinism: The belief system held by churches formed during the Reformation that followed the theology of Jean Calvin. Predestination, the belief that God has already chosen who is saved or damned, is its most distinctive doctrine. *See* **Protestantism**.

capitalism: In its simplest form, the practice of reinvesting profits. As part of our modern ideological conflicts, the term often refers to private ownership of the means of production using free markets, as opposed to communism, where the government carries out central planning of the economy. *See* **Marxism**.

catastrophism, theory of: A scientific idea that explains geology or the history and structures of the earth according to rare and unusual events of enormous power, resembling divine intervention. *See* **uniformitarianism, theory of**.

Catharism: The medieval religion that mixed Christianity and dualism and was therefore identified by the Christian Church as a heresy.

Christian socialism: A socialist idea adopted by Christians, especially Roman Catholics, using religious ideology as a basis to improve conditions for workers while still respecting the private property rights of capitalists.

Christianity: The monotheistic religion that asserts that God became incarnate as his son, Jesus of Nazareth. The Romans executed Jesus, but as the Messiah, or Christ, he returned from the dead to offer salvation, or entrance into heaven for his followers. Since the first century, Christians have divided into many groups: a few who did not define Jesus as fully God and human, as well as the vast majority who have. *See* **Anglicanism**; **Calvinism**; **Christianity**; **Lutheranism**; **Orthodox Pietism**; **Roman Catholicism**; **schism**.

civilization: The practice of people living in cities, which supported rich political, social, and cultural lifestyles that could spread over vast territories and many peoples. Distinct governments, social structures, art and literature, and belief systems indicate differences among civilizations.

classical liberal economics, theory of: Also called *laissez-faire*, the idea that the least interference by government provides the best opportunities for economic growth. It was developed in the eighteenth century in opposition to mercantilism.

collectivization: The practice of Stalin during the 1930s, where the state confiscated land from peasants and consolidated the large tracts into communal farms. Communists in other states, such as China and Cambodia/Kampuchea, later undertook similar policies. *See* **Marxism**; **Stalinism**.

colonialism: The action of one state sending out some of its people to settle in another place. A colony may or may not retain close connections with the homeland.

communism: The idea proposed by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century of a perfect society where the means of production would be shared by all. *See* **Leninism**; **Stalinism**.

conciliarism: The idea and practice that Church councils should be the ultimate authority in resolving conflicts among Christians.

conservatism: A political direction, developed into parties during the nineteenth

century, that stands for resisting change in order to preserve political, social, and cultural advantages of the elites. Today conservatism often calls for reducing the role of government in the economy.

constitutionalism: The political idea that law limits a government's powers, whether formally written in an explicit document or by the precedent of tradition.

constitutional monarchy: The practice of having a democratically structured government while keeping a royal dynasty as a stabilizing force. *See* **parliamentarianism**; **republicanism**.

cynicism: A philosophy originating among the ancient Greeks advocating the rejection of common social rules and human comforts. Today it often describes a pessimism about people's intentions.

deification: The belief that a human being, usually a powerful leader, can become a god.

deism: The religious belief that God is the creator of the universe, although it deemphasizes the Christian dogma of Jesus' incarnation.

democracy: The political idea and practice that the best form of government involves the largest possible number of citizens making decisions. A democrat is not necessarily to be confused with a member of the modern American political party. *See* **parliamentarianism**; **republicanism**.

democratic socialism: Also called social democracy, the effort of revisionists of Marxism to work through the political process instead of through a proletarian revolution. The various modern labor and social democratic political parties were the result.

denazification: The policy after World War II to purge members of the Nazi Party from leadership positions in occupied Germany.

determinism: A philosophy that asserts humans have very little free will in deciding their fate. *See* **Calvinism**.

dialectical materialism: The theoretical model of history suggested by Karl Marx, where a dominant class conflicts with an exploited class. *See* **Marxism**.

diversity: The term used in this text to describe the creative impulse as a force in history. New ideas and groupings of people create change.

divine right: The political idea that God has placed kings in power as part of his divine order.

dualism: A religious philosophy that sees the universe as divided between two powerful beings, one a good force inspired by spirit and ideas, the other an evil influence based on matter and flesh. *See* **Catharism**; **Gnosticism**; **Zoroastrianism**.

ecumenism: The effort by religions, usually those of Christianity, to tolerate one another, work together, and perhaps unify. It was most influential in the mid-twentieth century.

egalitarianism: The idea that the best society tries to equalize the wealth, influence, and opportunities of all its citizens. It is exemplified by ancient Sparta and much Marxist ideology.

empiricism: The idea that observations by our senses are both accurate and rea-

sonable. It is the starting point of scientific knowledge. *See* **rationalism**; **science**.

enlightened despotism: The political idea and practice that asserted that one person, usually a dynastic monarch, should rule, since unity encouraged simplicity and efficiency.

environmentalism: The idea and practice since the 1960s of reducing human interference with and damage upon the natural world.

Epicureanism: A philosophy that suggests that the best way of life is to avoid pain. The good life lay in withdrawal into a pleasant garden to discuss the meaning of life with friends. Epicureanism originated among the Hellenistic Greeks and was popularized by the Romans.

evolution: The observed scientific phenomenon about the increasing diversity and complexity of life on earth from millions of years ago to the present. Darwin's theory of natural selection is the framework under which most scientists today understand the process of evolution.

excommunication: The practice of various Christian churches of disciplining members by shunning them from society and cutting them off from sacraments.

factionalism: The practice of refusing to cooperate with opposing political and social groups.

fascism: A political ideology, most popular in the 1920s and 1930s, where an extreme nationalist dictatorship seemed the best form of government. Fascist authoritarian and totalitarian regimes offered alternatives to socialism, communism, and parliamentary democracy. Many capitalists were able to accept fascist regimes, since fascism's concept of the corporate state still allowed some private property and profit.

federalism: the political practice in republics of separating governmental power within a country, where a strong central administration competes and shares power with provincial or state and local governments. It contrasts with a confederate system, where the central administration is weaker than the local governments.

feminism: The idea that women are not inferior to men, but rather should have equal access to education, political participation, and economic independence. Today it is often mischaracterized as hostility or sexism against men. *See* **Women's Liberation**.

feudal politics: The system where knights bound one another together by oaths and rituals to rule society after A.D. 1000; use instead of *feudalism*, a term to be avoided because of its many confusing meanings.

fundamentalism: A belief that values traditional, often preindustrial customs and attitudes, especially regarding religion. Fundamentalists reject modern ways of knowing based on the skepticism of literary criticism and the scientific and historical methods. In Christianity, it includes those who support an allegedly literal interpretation of the Bible, rather than an interpretation through higher criticism.

germanization: The policy of making people conform to German culture. Used by some princes in the Holy Roman Empire, bureaucrats in the Second German Empire, and the Nazis of the Third Reich.

germ theory of disease: The scientific theory, argued by Pasteur in the nineteenth century, that microscopic organisms, such as bacteria and viruses, cause many illnesses. While very successful as a means to understand illness, it does not, however, explain all disease.

globalization: The recent practice of the world's economies being tied more closely together, often bypassing the interests of nations, regions, and localities.

Gnosticism: The ancient philosophy or religion that drew on dualism and argued that its followers held secret knowledge about the meaning of life. Gnostics tried to influence early Christianity.

heathenism: A religion of polytheism. It was once a term of insult in late Rome applied to poor peasants who were ignorant of Christianity; since the Early Middle Ages it has meant any non-Christian in or outside Christendom.

Hedonism: A philosophy originating among the ancient Greeks that suggested success came to those who pursued pleasure as the highest good.

hellenization: The policy of making people under Greek authority conform to Greek institutions and culture. Practiced especially by the Greek rulers of the Hellenistic Age, after the death of Alexander "the Great."

heresy: Literally, a "choice" or a "sect," the term with which winners in a cultural debate label the ideas of the losers. *See* **orthodoxy**.

higher criticism: The practice of applying modern scholarly techniques to examining the Bible. *See* **textual criticism**.

history: The idea that the past is a product of human activity that needs to be interpreted. Since the eighteenth century, the historical method practiced by academics has been the most reliable way to produce objective and accurate versions of the past.

humanism: The philosophy begun by the ancient Greeks that the world is to be understood by and for humans.

humanitarianism: The idea that humans ought to treat one another well. It is often incorporated in Christianity and was pushed by intellectuals of the Enlightenment.

idealism: Also known as the doctrine of ideas, a philosophical explanation of reality that proposed that particular things in the observable world are reflections of universal truths. It is famously formulated by Plato in his "Allegory of the Cave."

imperialism: The practice of taking over different peoples in other countries and communities in order to build an empire. Empires surpass kingdoms or nations in the diversity of their subject peoples.

individualism: The idea that political and social policies should favor opportunities for single human beings over those in collectives or groups. *See* **collectivization**.

intellectualism: The idea that educated elites should be privileged.

Islam: The religion begun by Mohammed in Arabia. Muslims believe that the one, true God has established a special relationship to those who submit to his will, as explained in the Qu'ran.

islamicization: The policy of making people conform to Islam and live as Muslims.

Judaism: The religion begun by the ancient Hebrews. Jews believe that the one,

true God has established a special relationship with them, as revealed in their sacred scriptures (called by Christians the Old Testament). *See* **anti-Semitism**.

Keynsian economic theory: The economic theory that massive government spending can rescue a nation's economy from a depression. It is named after its creator, twentieth-century British economist John Maynard Keynes.

Leninism: The ideological and political program put in place by Lenin through the Russian Revolution. He established a dictatorship enforced by secret police, had the state take over substantial portions of the economy (a policy called war communism), and carried out land reform.

lesbianism: The practice of women being sexually attracted to and involved with other women. The term comes from the island where Sappho, the ancient Greek poet, had her school (although she herself was not strictly lesbian). *See* **sapphism**.

liberalism: A political direction that developed into parties during the nineteenth century. It generally stands for changing laws in order to broaden political, social, and cultural opportunities for the middle classes. Today liberalism often calls for accepting a role of government in the economy.

liberation theology: A religious idea in Latin America of the twentieth century that called for Christianity to look after the poor in this world and not merely preach about salvation for the next.

Lutheranism: The version of Christianity that originated with Martin Luther during the Reformation.

manorial economics: The economic system in which serfs worked the lands of their seigneurial lords in exchange for the use of farmland for themselves; use instead of *manorialism*, a term to be avoided.

Marxism: The socialist ideology developed by Karl Marx in the mid-nineteenth century that advocated a proletarian revolution to overthrow bourgeois capitalist society. Marx called it "scientific socialism" because of its alleged empirical support. Since then Marxism has been used as a synonym for communism. *See* **Bolshevism**; **Leninism**; **socialism**; **Stalinism**.

materialism: The idea that the physical goods and pleasures in this observable world should take priority over any possible spiritual virtues or destinies.

McCarthyism: A belief usually characterized as a paranoid and unfair attempt to persecute innocent people for their allegedly dangerous political views. It is named after a U.S. senator who during the 1950s wanted to purge alleged communists from the government, politics, and the media.

mercantilism, economic theory of: The idea that government intervention provides the best opportunities for economic growth, especially in establishing monopolies and a favorable balance of trade. It was developed in the sixteenth century in order to manage early capitalism.

militarism: The idea and practice that virtues such as discipline, obedience, courage, and willingness to kill for the state are the highest values a civilized society can hold. It is exemplified by the ancient Assyrians, the Spartans, and the Prussians.

modernism: A belief that accepts changes wrought by the Enlightenment and the Commercial and Industrial Revolutions toward a more secular and materialistic

society. In Christianity, it includes those who support interpretation of scripture through higher criticism.

monasticism: A religious way of life in which people live in a cloistered setting under strict rules, usually involving renunciation of property, physical pleasure, and freedom of choice.

monotheism: The religious belief that only one God exists and should be worshipped.

multiculturalism: The idea that knowledge of and appreciation for diverse ways of life is beneficial for society.

nationalism: The political idea that asserts that states should be organized exclusively around ethnic unities.

naturalism: (1) The movement in classical sculpture and art since the Renaissance to portray objects exactly as they appear in nature, rather than with an abstract interpretation; (2) the movement in literature since the late nineteenth century to focus on suffering caused by modern society. *See* **realism**.

natural selection, theory of: Also called ''survival of the fittest,'' Darwin's explanation for how evolution took place. The theory proposes that the struggle of creatures for food and reproduction encouraged change as living things adapted to their environment, competed with other living things, and then passed on useful characteristics to offspring.

Naziism or **national socialism**: The uniquely German version of fascism. Formulated by Adolf Hitler and brought into action during the Third Reich (1933–1945), it fulfilled many Germans' need for nationalistic pride. Its extreme germanization, however, aimed for the Nazi domination of Eurasia and the enslavement or extermination of non-German peoples, especially Jews.

neo-imperialism: The political practice of Western industrialized states that built up overseas colonial empires between 1830 and 1914.

neo-mercantilism, theory of: The economic idea in Western industrialized states between 1830 and 1914 that combined neo-imperialism abroad with laissez-faire practices at home. *See* **mercantilism, economic theory of**.

nominalism: The medieval philosophy that proposed that only particular material things in the observable world exist, while collective ideas and categories are mere ''names'' created by the human mind. *See* **idealism**.

objectivity: The attempt to remain neutral or interpret disagreements from an unbiased point of view.

oligarchy: The political idea that states are best run by the economic and social elites.

Orthodox Christianity: The version of Christianity originally centered in the Byzantine Empire. It became unique after the schism with Catholic Christianity in 1054.

orthodoxy: Literally, the ''right teaching,'' it is the label adopted by groups whose ideas win a cultural debate. *See* **heresy**.

ostracism: The political practice in ancient Athens of exiling politicians who were considered too dangerous. Today it often means a social practice of shunning. *See* **excommunication**.

pacifism: The political idea that wars are not a proper activity of states. Some Christians and Christian groups promoted the idea in Western civilization.

paganism: A religion of polytheism. It was once a term of insult in late Rome levelled at poor peasants who were ignorant of Christianity; since the Early Middle Ages it has meant any non-Christian in or outside Christendom.

pangermanism: The ideology that all German peoples should be ruled together. As a policy of Adolf Hitler and his Third Reich, it had some success in the 1930s, until Hitler showed his determination to rule non-Germans also.

panhellenism: The idea that all Greeks should be united, at least culturally.

pan-slavism: The political idea that called for all Slavs to live together in one nation-state. The Russians, as the dominant Slavic group, were most behind this movement. *See* **yugo-slavism**.

pan-turkism: A version of Turkish nationalism that sought to promote unity among diverse Turkish peoples. It often became an attitude that encouraged all peoples in the Ottoman Empire to become more like Turks.

parliamentarianism: The political idea and practice that elected representatives with limited terms are the best means of governing a state. Structurally, the person who leads the majority in the parliament, usually called a prime minister or a chancellor, is the most powerful political official in the government. *See* **constitutionalism**; **democracy**; **republicanism**.

particularism: The political and social idea that local variations in institutions and beliefs are the best way to organize the state and society. *See* **diversity**; **universalism**.

philosophy: Literally, ''love of wisdom,'' any intellectual system that proposes explanations for the nature of the universe and the purpose of human beings. While a philosophy may or may not have a supernatural dimension, it should rely on rationalism.

Pietism: A form of Christianity that arose during the eighteenth century, especially among Lutherans, in which believers dedicated themselves to prayer and charity.

polytheism: The belief in many gods and goddesses. Divine beings usually reflected the values and needs of farming communities. *See* **heathenism**; **paganism**.

progress: The idea that people should work to improve political, social, and living conditions in this world. It has been an important Western idea since the Enlightenment.

Protestantism: Any version of Christianity that appeared after Luther's Reformation and its break from Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity; the name originates with those who protested the imperial attacks upon Luther. *See* **Anglicanism**; **Calvinism**.

racism: The social and political belief that some ''races'' are superior to others. Racism developed as a political ideology in the nineteenth century.

rationalism: The concept that the human mind can comprehend the natural world.

realism: (1) The movement in art since the Renaissance to make paintings and sculptures portray objects as human eyes see them; (2) the movement in litera-

ture since the late nineteenth century to focus on social problems. *See* **naturalism**.

Realpolitik: The political practice of both pragmatically making compromise and using force to achieve desired ends, usually the strengthening of the state. It was most promoted by conservative nationalists in the nineteenth century.

regionalism: The political idea that people are best organized within smaller geographic areas rather than the typical large nation-state or centralized empire.

religion: From the word ''to bind,'' a belief system that proposes a supernatural explanation for the nature of the universe and the purpose of human beings.

republicanism: The political idea and practice that elected representatives with limited terms are the best means of governing a state. Republicanism paired with constitutionalism are the foundation of most modern democratic states. In its strict form, a republic elects all significant political figures, thus excluding constitutional monarchy. A republican is not necessarily to be confused with a member of the modern American political party. *See* **democracy**; **parliamentarianism**.

Roman Catholicism: The version of Christianity that originally centered in the western portion of the ancient Roman Empire. It is characterized by being under the authority of the bishop of Rome, eventually called the pope. It defined itself as uniquely Roman after the schism from Orthodox Christianity in 1054 and with the rise of Protestantism in the sixteenth century.

romanization: The process carried out by ancient Romans of conforming their subject peoples, institutions, and attitudes to those of the Roman Empire.

Romantic Movement: The intellectual movement begun in the nineteenth century that appreciated nature, admired the Middle Ages, and emphasized emotion as a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment.

sapphism: The practice of women being sexually attracted to and involved with other women. The term comes from Sappho, the ancient Greek poet (although she herself was not strictly lesbian). *See* **lesbianism**.

schism: Literally, a ''rip,'' usually used to describe one religious group splitting away from another.

Scholasticism: The medieval philosophy ''of the schools,'' which applied Aristotle's dialectic logic to better explain Christianity. *See* **syllogism**.

science: The idea that knowledge of nature can best be gained through rigorous experimentation and observation according to the scientific method. Scientific theories provide coherent explanations for the facts of natural phenomena. Science's many successes have made it the dominant modern methodology. *See* **empiricism**.

sexism: The belief that one sex (usually the male) is better than the other (usually the female).

skepticism: The intellectual idea of doubting everything and trusting only what can be tested through reason.

Social Darwinism: The idea of understanding human society through perspectives influenced by the debate over evolution. Social Darwinists usually rationalized the supremacy of rich European elites over the impoverished masses in the West or the rest of the world. *See* **natural selection, theory of**.

socialism: Several ideas and practices that have developed since the Industrial Revolution to address the political, social, and economic inequalities between capitalists and workers. In principle, socialism stands for helping the workers. Over time, socialist theories and systems have developed in many directions. *See* **Christian socialism**; **communism**; **democratic socialism**; **Marxism**; **state socialism**; **utopian socialism**; **war socialism**.

sovietization: The practice of the Soviet Union during the Cold War of transforming states under their influence to conform to Stalinism.

Stalinism: The developments in the early Soviet Union that both modernized state and society and created a totalitarian dictatorship based on Stalin's cult of personality. *See* **Leninism**; **Marxism**.

state socialism: The practice of conservative governments legislating practices to improve the condition of workers.

stoicism: A philosophy that calls for people to do their duty in difficult circumstances. It originated among the Hellenistic Greeks and was popularized by the Romans.

subjectivity: The inclination to take sides or interpret disagreements from a biased point of view.

subsidiarity: The political idea and practice that decisions should be made at the regional and local levels rather than by a distant national, imperial, or global authority.

suburbanization: The process of moving people to live in areas around cities that mixed traditional urban dwellings with rural landscapes. It became common in the late twentieth century with the increasing use of automobiles.

supernaturalism: The belief that another realm exists apart from the reality that can be empirically observed and sensed. Forces or beings in the supernatural realm are often believed to have influence or power within the natural world.

supremacy: A term used in this text to indicate historical change through the enforced domination of ideas or those with power.

syllogism: An element of dialectic logic as developed by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, where two pieces of known information are compared in order to reach new knowledge. *See* **Scholasticism**.

syncretism: The process in which elements of an idea, philosophy, or religion are blended with those of another.

terrorism: The political idea and practice of using small-scale violence, usually against civilians, to achieve specific political ends. Large-scale violence becomes guerrilla war, rebellion, or actual war. *See* **anarchism**.

textual criticism: The intellectual tool developed during the Renaissance of comparing different versions of an author's writings in order to find the best, most accurate text. *See* **higher criticism**.

theocracy: The political idea and practice that religious leaders should rule the state.

toleration: The idea that people and society should accept other people who believe in different worldviews, philosophies, or religions.

totalitarianism: The modern political practice of a strong dictatorship, where a ruler and his party substantially control mass communication, bureaucracy, and

the economy and maintain order through secret police and a strong military. *See* **authoritarianism**.

trade unionism: The practice of organizing labor unions (trade unions in Britain, syndicalism in France) to help workers. At first illegal, unions often successfully improved conditions for workers to the point that the much of the working class blended into the middle class during the twentieth century. *See* **socialism**.

tyranny: The practice of one person seizing power in a government. While today the term is used in a negative way, tyrants among the ancient Greeks often opened politics to become more egalitarian and democratic.

uniformitarianism, theory of: A scientific theory to explain the history of the earth. It states that the same (uniform) processes that are shaping the earth today have always acted to mold the planet. *See* **science**.

universalism: The attitude that the same beliefs and practices should be applied or open to everyone. *See* **particularism**; **supremacy**.

urbanization: The process of moving rural people to live in ever-larger cities, carried out after the Industrial Revolution. Today most people live in urban areas.

utopian socialism: The first version of socialism, which called on capitalists to improve conditions for workers.

vandalism: The practice of writing on or damaging property, either out of spite or to make a statement. It is unfairly named after the Vandal sack of Rome in A.D. 455.

war socialism: A common policy during World War I and World War II where governments took control of large sectors of the economy, creating a new military-industrial complex. In doing so, they often had to appease workers to prevent strikes. *See* **socialism**.

Western exceptionalism: A point of view that sees Europeans as better than peoples in Asia, Africa, or the Americas. The source of this alleged virtue ranges from the success of Western imperial colonialism, through superior moral upbringing, to divine favor.

westernization: The process of conforming non-European institutions and attitudes to those of Western civilization.

Women's Liberation: A movement in the 1960s and 1970s that promoted the rights of women to education, political participation, and economic independence. It was largely successful in Western industrialized states. *See* **feminism**.

yugo-slavism: The political idea that called for all southern (*yugo*) Slavs to live together in one nation-state. The Serbs, as the dominant group of southern Slavs, were most behind this movement.

zairianization: A political idea of Congolese nationalism, where the authoritarian ruler Mobuto in the 1960s rejected European culture and tried to readapt his country to more native African ways.

Zionism: The idea of Jewish nationalism that Jews, like any other nationality, should have their own nation-state. Zionism culminated in the modern state of Israel in 1948. Ever since, the term has sometimes been used to describe the alleged racist and imperialist policies of Israel against Arab Palestinians and thus may be a version of anti-Semitism.

Zoroastrianism: A dualistic religion in ancient Persia founded by the legendary Zoroaster or Zarathustra. *See* **dualism**.