The Early Middle Ages
Part I

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Scope:

In this course, we will examine a period of European history that is sometimes designated as the "Dark Ages." Our focus will be on the seven centuries between 300 and 1000, a period most unlike the thousand years that would follow. Our period is dominated by the history of two empires, the Roman and the Carolingian, rather than by the history of independent kingdoms or nation-states. It is a period when the mass movement of ethnic groups, involving hundreds of thousands of individuals sweeping across Europe, was nearly a routine event. It is a period when Europe is buffeted time and time again by external invaders, from the Huns to the Arabs to the Vikings. Many aspects of life at this time will appear strange to you. None of us is a serf, vassal, or lord. None of us is a stylite, living atop tall poles for 20 or 30 years at a time. None of us has undergone trial by ordeal, whereby we prove our case by plunging a hand into a cauldron of boiling water as we try to pick up a pebble resting at the bottom.

Odd as this world may seem at times, it is a world that is recognizably becoming our own, and we should not unquestioningly accept the label of the "Dark Ages." In countless ways, seemingly obscure events and developments from the "Dark Ages" impinge on the lives of people today. This is true in the realm of religion, because our period saw the triumph of Christianity over paganism. This is true in the realm of language, because every word that we speak and write—indeed, the handwriting that we use each and every day—is a product of the historical forces that we will study. This is true in the realm of family life, because many practices that existed in 300, such as *polygyny*, marriage within the kin group, and infanticide, are illegal today and were vanishing or completely gone by the year 1000. This course will attempt to strike a balance between difference and similarity, recognizing what this period bequeathed and failed to bequeath to the present.

The course is divided into two sections. The first half will cover the period from circa 300 to circa 650, which historians sometimes call the *world of Late Antiquity*. Late Antiquity is a period that saw the political collapse of the western half of the Roman Empire and the official acceptance of Christianity by Europe's rulers. Late Antiquity is still, in many ways, part of the ancient world, but the ancient world is changing into the medieval world. The transformation of the ancient into the medieval was highly complex—our goal will be to trace the history of that transformation and to explain why it happened at all. The second half of the course will deal with the period from circa 650 to circa 1000, or the Early Middle Ages proper. With the ancient world gone, Europe developed new political orientations, new military technologies, new cultural forms, and new social categories, among many other things. The second half of the course will highlight not only those developments that separated the Early Middle Ages from the ancient world but also those that would be crucial in determining Europe's future identity and development. This course is at an intermediate academic level. As you will soon perceive, not everything has been said that could have been said about, for example, the birth of Islam. Those with an interest in any of the topics that we consider should regard the lectures as a point from which they can launch their own in-depth explorations. Nonetheless, the lectures are more detailed and more involved than is the case in an introductory survey.

Lecture One

Long Shadows and the Dark Ages

Scope: Compared to the High and the Late Middle Ages (1000–1500), the Early Middle Ages and the world of Late Antiquity that preceded it are relatively little studied fields. That is no accident. Surviving documentation from the period 300–1000 is sparse. Furthermore, the period from 300–1000 has often been characterized as the European "Dark Ages," a period in which economic and intellectual activity waned while violent barbarians destroyed the monuments of classical civilization. The period's dismal reputation has done little to recommend it to scholars. Yet this same period has attracted the attention of some of the greatest and most influential historians ever to have lived, such as Edward Gibbon and Henri Pirenne. It continues to attract attention, in part because the questions of why the Romans fell and why Christianity replaced paganism as the dominant European religion are among the most important and controversial historical questions ever to have been posed.

Outline

I. To the extent that any part of the Middle Ages is still regarded as the "Dark Ages," it is the period from 300 to 1000 A.D. or some sub-period thereof.

- **A.** The period from 300 to 1000 is the least studied portion of the Middle Ages.
- **B.** Not coincidentally, it is also the most poorly documented portion of the Middle Ages, bequeathing to modern historians relatively little source material with which to work.
- **C.** Its darkness is sometimes interpreted as more than mere obscurity, however—many historians have depicted the era as an age of civilizational collapse brought about by the fall of the Roman Empire.
- **D.** Despite its grim reputation, the period from 300 to 1000 merits consideration for a number of reasons.
  1. This period poses us with some of the most challenging questions ever to face historians, such as: Why did the Roman Empire fall and the ancient world give way to the medieval?
  2. Many of the most important figures associated with the Middle Ages, such as Augustine of Hippo, Arthur, and Charlemagne, lived between 300 and 1000.
  3. Subsequent medieval developments were, to some extent, based on the foundations established during this period.

II. Two historians have especially influenced our understanding of the collapse of the Roman Empire and the transition from the ancient to the medieval world. One is the Englishman Edward Gibbon (died 1794).

- **A.** Edward Gibbon was a well-off English Protestant and an important participant in the 18th-century Enlightenment. His explanation of the fall of the Roman Empire very much reflected his own personal circumstances, especially as regards his hostility to revealed religions.
  1. Gibbon's magisterial *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was published in six volumes between 1776 and 1787.
  2. This extraordinarily well-written book claimed that the collapse of the Roman Empire was the result of Christianity, which sapped Romans of their civic virtue. Overly concerned with otherworldly salvation, Romans could no longer muster the will to repel invasions by Germanic barbarians during the 4th and 5th centuries.
- **B.** Gibbon's legacy to subsequent generations of historians was his placement of the fall of the Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th centuries, his contempt for the period after that fall, and his tendency to see moral failings as the main cause of that fall.

III. The other historian whose ideas have decisively shaped the study of the period from 300 to 1000 is the Belgian Henri Pirenne (died 1935).

- **A.** Pirenne injected a new emphasis on social and, especially, economic concerns into the study of late Roman and early medieval history.
  1. In this, he was greatly influenced by the ideas of Karl Lamprecht, who challenged his contemporaries' emphasis on political, military, and biographical history.
  2. Lamprecht called on historians to deemphasize the individual and emphasize the collective.

B. According to Pirenne, the barbarian invasions of the 4th and 5th centuries did not result in the fall of the Roman Empire.
   1. The Roman economy, and the Roman civilization built on that economy, remained strong until the 7th century.
   2. Then, the Arab conquests of North Africa and Spain destroyed the economic unity of the Mediterranean world, isolating Europe and forcing it back on its own resources.
   3. Much of Pirenne's case was built on the disappearance of certain items and practices from Christian Europe, north of the Alps, during the 7th century, including papyrus and the minting of gold coins.

IV. This course will argue that the period from 300 to 1000 can best be understood as consisting of two rather different sub-periods: Late Antiquity, lasting roughly until the middle of the 7th century, and the Early Middle Ages proper, stretching from the middle of the 7th century to the late 10th century.

A. Late Antiquity is a transitional period, during which the ancient world slid slowly into the medieval, and elements of classical culture coexisted with phenomena that augur the coming of the Middle Ages

B. During the Early Middle Ages, Europe's center of gravity moved northward thanks to the emergence of the Carolingian Empire, which spread across much of continental Europe and disseminated many distinctively medieval institutions and practices.

Suggested Readings:

Roger Collins. *Early Medieval Europe, 300–1000*. 2nd ed. St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Edward Gibbon. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: An Abridged Version*. Penguin Books, 1952.

Henri Pirenne. *Mohammed and Charlemagne*. Dover Books, 2001 (first published in 1937).

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the concept of the "Dark Ages" retain any analytical and descriptive value, or is it too loaded with negative connotations to merit any place in the modern study of medieval history?
2. Edward Gibbon and Henri Pirenne approached late Roman and early medieval history somewhat differently. Does this shift in tone and emphasis reflect progress in historical methods and understanding? Is history a field that progresses generation by generation? Does it decline? Does each generation of historians respond to its environment, writing history that is neither better nor worse than what came before, but merely different?

Lecture Two

Diocletian and the Crises of the Third Century

Scope: During the 3rd century, the Roman Empire reeled from a series of military, political, and economic crises. Indeed, it came very close to total collapse. However, an emperor by the name of Diocletian managed to stave off that collapse, at least for a few centuries. In saving the empire, however, Diocletian transformed it greatly, despite his intense conservatism and respect for Roman tradition. Diocletian abandoned the pretense of republicanism maintained by predecessors and ruled in an openly autocratic manner. He also attempted to regiment society to a degree unprecedented in Roman history. These transformations did much to give the Roman Empire its distinctive tone during Late Antiquity.

Outline

I. The Roman Empire had experienced many troubled periods in its history, but the crises of the 3rd century A.D. probably surpassed in severity all the earlier ones.

- **A.** During the 3rd century, the Roman Empire was attacked along most of its widely extended borders.
  - **1.** Persian attacks in Syria and Palestine, and incursions by Germanic barbarians across the Rhine-Danube frontier in central Europe constituted the most serious threats.
  - **2.** In 251 and again in 260, Roman emperors were captured and/or killed in battle, which was symptomatic of the deterioration of Roman defenses.
- **B.** The Roman Empire also entered a period of extreme political instability. Between 235 and 284, every Roman emperor but one died violently, either in battle against Roman enemies or through assassination or lynching. Some twenty-odd emperors ruled during this period, which represents a very high rate of turnover.
- **C.** The Roman economy also entered a period of hyperinflation, which rendered Roman money worthless for decades.

II. Emperor Diocletian, who ruled from 284 to 305, stabilized the Roman Empire and, in the process, substantially reshaped it.

- **A.** A general elevated to the office of emperor by his soldiers, Diocletian devoted the first 14 years of his reign to tireless military activity against Roman usurpers and foreign invaders. He successfully restored Rome's frontiers and subdued open internal opposition to his rule.
- **B.** Diocletian ripped away the facade of republicanism that emperors had maintained since the time of Augustus. He ruled in an openly autocratic manner, preferring the title *dominus et deus* ("lord and god") to *princeps* ("first citizen"). He rarely appeared in public and employed elaborate court rituals to emphasize the vast difference between the emperor and his subjects.

III. One of Diocletian's greatest innovations was the creation of a new political system known as the *tetrarchy*.

- **A.** Tetrarchy means the rule of four. Under the tetrarchic system, Diocletian divided the empire into two halves, eastern and western. Each half had its own emperor (Diocletian chose to be emperor in the east), and each emperor had an assistant known as a caesar.
- **B.** The tetrarchy was designed to solve two major problems: the great size of the Roman Empire and the lack of a clear principle of succession to the office of emperor.
  - **1.** By Diocletian's time, the empire's size made it difficult for any single individual to respond to crises along the Roman frontiers. With four rulers (two emperors and two caesars), crises could be dealt with much more quickly.
  - **2.** Since the days of Augustus, it was unclear how a new emperor should be determined when the previous emperor had died. The tetrarchic system was intended to provide a simple system of succession—when the two emperors retired, the two caesars should become emperors. Then, the new emperors would choose two new caesars, who would eventually become emperors in turn.
  - **3.** The tetrarchic system worked poorly as a means of succession; however, the division of the empire stuck. During the 4th century, there were periods when a single emperor ruled over both the east and the west, but as of 395, the division between eastern and western halves of the empire was permanent.

IV. Diocletian and his successor, Constantine (died 337), also attempted to restructure much of Roman society, militarizing substantial sections of it and creating a professional caste system that forced individuals to follow their fathers' professions and restricted physical movement in the empire.

- **A.** Diocletian and Constantine regarded all civil servants as part of the military and required them to wear military uniforms.
- **B.** Diocletian and Constantine required the sons of soldiers to become soldiers, the sons of bakers to become bakers, the sons of certain government officials to hold the same offices as their fathers, and so on. Although not all professions were declared to be hereditary, many were.
- **C.** Diocletian ordered all peasants to remain bound to the land assigned to them in Roman tax registers.
- **D.** Diocletian and Constantine lacked the means to force children to follow their fathers' professions and to force all peasants to reside on specific plots of land. Nonetheless, some tenant peasants did find themselves bound to the land that they rented, and the ambition of the emperors' plans reveals the lengths to which the later Roman Empire would go to preserve itself.

Suggested Readings:

T. D. Barnes. *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*. Harvard University Press, 1982.

Averil Cameron. *The Later Roman Empire, 284–430*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent is it proper and accurate to depict Diocletian's Roman Empire as a totalitarian state? Compared to modern totalitarian states, how totalitarian was it?
2. Were Diocletian's reforms painful but necessary, or might other changes have preserved the Roman Empire at less cost?

Lecture Three

Constantine the Great—Christian Emperor

Scope: Christianity was an illegal religion in the Roman Empire from the 1st century onward. Christians were subjected to local persecution and, from the middle of the 3rd century onward, imperial persecution as well, especially during the reign of Diocletian. When the would-be emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312, it was a dramatic and unexpected event, because Constantine was so similar to Diocletian (a staunch pagan) in other respects and because Christianity appealed to people who were not of much use to Constantine in his civil war. Constantine's military victories, which allowed him to gain control of the whole of the Roman Empire as of 324, and his active support of Christianity began the process whereby Christianity went from a minority, illegal religion to the majority, official religion of the Roman Empire.

Outline

I. The study of religion poses serious problems to historians, because adherents and non-adherents of any given faith tend to explain the emergence and spread of faiths very differently.

- **A.** Believers tend to maintain that their religion emerged and spread because it is true, while other religions emerged and spread for some other reason.
- **B.** Historians cannot explain the emergence of polytheism, of monotheism in its various guises, or of atheism in terms of truth or falsity. Without affirming or denying the truth of any of these beliefs, historians must seek to explain the emergence and spread of each in terms of prevailing historical conditions that existed at specific places and times.

II. Christianity and Roman paganism differed fundamentally on a number of vital issues, and prior to the conversion of the emperor, Christianity appealed more strongly to certain segments of Roman society than to others.

- **A.** Polytheism privileged ritual over faith. Romans did not require the inhabitants of their empire to believe in the existence of the Roman gods. However, they did require the empire's inhabitants to honor those gods through sacrifices, which would ward off the gods' anger and, instead, bring their assistance.
- **B.** Christianity maintained that the Roman gods were demons striving to deceive people and prevent them from believing in the one true God. Christians refused, or at least were supposed to refuse, to honor the Roman gods.

III. In the first three centuries of Christianity's existence, it appealed more strongly to some groups in Roman society than others.

- **A.** Christianity appealed to groups alienated in various ways from Roman civilization and unable to participate fully in it. A disproportionate number of women, slaves, freedmen and freedwomen, and immigrants could be found among the early Christians. Christianity was far more of an urban than a rural religion.
- **B.** To male members of the Roman aristocracy, Christianity had little appeal prior to Constantine's conversion.
- **C.** Christianity appealed to the disenfranchised and to highly mobile individuals, because it maintained the spiritual equality of all believers and because it offered a tangible sense of community to those who could not find it in the vastness of the empire.

IV. Romans were deeply offended by the Christian refusal to offer sacrifices to Roman gods, and the empire sometimes attempted to stamp out Christianity entirely within its borders. However, persecution of Christians varied according to time and space.

- **A.** Until the middle of the 3rd century, persecution of Christians was sporadic and local; it often came about as a response to a recent local calamity, such as an earthquake or fire, for which Christians were blamed.
    - **1.** Although it was illegal to be a Christian everywhere in the empire, the emperor Trajan established a "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward Christians circa 110.

2. Roman officials were not to ferret out Christians or to entertain anonymous accusations of Christianity; they were only to respond to open accusations of Christianity made by individuals willing to identify themselves.

B. Beginning in the middle of the 3rd century, the Roman government began to sponsor empire-wide persecutions of Christians, probably in response to the crises of the 3rd century discussed in the last lecture. These persecutions, however, were not a constant fact of life.

C. Emperor Diocletian in 302 launched the largest imperial persecution of Christians to date.

V. The unexpected conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity changed the position of Christianity in the Roman Empire overnight.

A. In 312, Constantine (still just a usurper) saw a Christian symbol in the sky as he marched to do battle with his main rival for control of the western half of the Roman Empire. Constantine had his soldiers paint the symbol on their shields, then triumphed at the Battle of Milvian Bridge.

B. Constantine went on to become emperor of the eastern half of the empire in 324, and every emperor after Constantine save one would also be a Christian.

C. It seems unlikely that Constantine's conversion was the result of political calculation. Why would he deliberately antagonize important pagan sectors of Roman society to give support to a powerless minority?

D. Constantine exercised a strong control of the Christian Church, summoning and presiding over the Council of Nicaea in 325 in an attempt to settle disputes over heresy. He also supported the Christian Church legislatively and financially while penalizing and, perhaps, even outlawing paganism. As a result, the 4th century witnessed a flood of conversions from paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Suggested Readings:

T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*. Harvard University Press, 1981.

Robin Lane Fox. *Pagans and Christians*. Harper Collins, 1986.

Questions to Consider:

1. If Constantine had not converted to Christianity, would it have become the religion of the majority of Europe's inhabitants?
2. If you had been an inhabitant of the Roman Empire in 300, would you have been a Christian or a pagan? Why? In 400?

Lecture Four
Pagans and Christians in the Fourth Century

Scope: Christian emperors after Constantine continued his policies of supporting Christianity and penalizing paganism. The accession of Julian the Apostate as emperor in 361 caused a brief period of hope or fear, depending on one's religious beliefs, that a pagan restoration might take place in the empire. However, Julian's short reign and personal unpopularity meant that such a restoration was not to be. Within a few decades of Julian's death, most of his policies had been undone. Whereas paganism was the official religion of the Roman Empire in 300 and Christianity outlawed, the exact opposite was true by 400—Christianity was now the official religion and paganism was outlawed. There were still vast areas of the countryside where pagans, ignorant of Christianity, would survive for centuries to come. There were still diehard senators and scholars who would not abandon the old ways. Nonetheless, the tide had turned within the Roman Empire.

Outline

I. The 4th century represents the decisive turning point in the struggle between Christianity and paganism in the Roman Empire. Christianity, with the support of Christian emperors, launched a successful offensive against paganism.

- **A.** Constantine and his successors made pagan sacrifice illegal and punishable by death. They also closed down pagan temples and diverted the temples' financial resources to Christian churches.
- **B.** In 357, a Christian emperor removed one of the most famous pagan altars, the Altar of Victory, from the Roman senate house. Senators were the most fervent supporters of paganism—their inability to prevent the removal of the altar was a sign of Christianity's growing strength.

II. Only one emperor after Constantine was a pagan: Julian the Apostate, who ruled from 361 to 363. Although his reign was brief, it was highly eventful. He actively supported paganism and attempted to turn back what had become an onrushing Christian tide.

- **A.** Julian the Apostate (he would not have called himself "the Apostate") was a nephew of Constantine and raised a Christian. However, he secretly converted to paganism as a youth.
- **B.** Julian was caesar in the western half of the empire and a successful military leader. In 360, Julian's troops proclaimed him to be emperor, and the next year, he triumphed in a civil war, becoming emperor of both the west and the east.
- **C.** Upon becoming emperor, Julian openly proclaimed his paganism.

III. Julian the Apostate attempted to sponsor a pagan revival and to penalize Christianity.

- **A.** He adopted the appearance of an ancient pagan philosopher and wrote philosophical treatises in defense of polytheism.
- **B.** Julian attempted to create a new pagan church modeled on the Christian Church, thereby co-opting some of the elements of Christianity that had made it appealing. Julian's reign, however, was too brief for him to bring this new church into existence.
  - **1.** Among the practices that made Christianity appealing was that of philanthropy—an obligation for all Christians, regardless of their financial status, aimed at providing relief for the poor and needy.
  - **2.** This policy was especially attractive to Christians because they believed that charitable deeds improved their chances of salvation.
- **C.** Julian withdrew imperial financial support for the Christian Church and transferred it to reopen pagan temples.
- **D.** Julian did not outlaw Christianity. However, he executed some army officers who refused to remove Christian symbols from their equipment. He looked the other way when pagan mobs attacked Christians but punished Christian mobs guilty of attacking pagans.
- **E.** Julian attempted to exclude Christians from teaching in the Roman educational system, thereby ensuring that future generations of students would learn from pagan teachers.

IV. Julian's policies failed utterly to restore paganism to its pre-Constantinian importance and vitality.

A. Julian's unpopularity was great among pagans. Educated pagans found his fondness for animal sacrifice crude and vulgar; less educated pagans found his philosophical pretensions off-putting.

B. In 363, Julian attempted to increase his popularity by launching an attack against the Persian Empire, in the hope that a major military victory would make manifest the superiority of paganism. However, Julian died during the campaign under somewhat mysterious circumstances.

C. The successors of Julian the Apostate were all Christians. They rolled back his various pro-pagan, anti-Christian policies.

1. Emperor Gratian (375–383) removed the Altar of Victory from the Roman senate house once again.

2. Emperor Theodosius (378–395), the last emperor to rule over both halves of the empire simultaneously, made pagan sacrifice illegal and ordered the closing of pagan temples throughout the empire.

Suggested Readings:

Glen W. Bowersock. *Julian the Apostate*. Harvard University Press, 1991 (first published in 1978).

Judith Herrin. *The Formation of Christendom*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

Rowland B. E. Smith. *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate*. Routledge, 1995.

Questions to Consider:

1. If Julian the Apostate had lived longer and been victorious against the Persian Empire, might he have achieved the pagan restoration for which he longed?

2. Was Christianity's treatment of paganism harsher than paganism's treatment of Christianity?

Lecture Five
Athletes of God

Scope: The conversion of Constantine and the end of imperial persecution necessitated a change in Christian heroism. With martyrdom no longer readily available, dedicated Christians eager to excel in their faith began to imitate the example of Antony, a 3rd- and 4th-century Egyptian hermit, abandoning the world and living lives of great austerity and self-deprivation based on the avoidance of food and drink, sleep, and intercourse. During the 4th century, individuals in search of the ascetic ideal came to form communities of monks, living together under the supervision of an abbot and guided by a common written rule. At the same time, church fathers, such as Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, among others, developed arguments concerning the superiority of celibacy to marriage, arguments that would resonate well past the end of the Middle Ages.

Outline

I. Before the conversion of Constantine, martyrs and confessors (those who professed their Christian faith to Roman officials in the expectation of martyrdom) were Christianity's heroes and spiritual elite.

- **A.** Martyrdom and openly professing one's faith before Roman officials were supremely meritorious actions.
  - **1.** They were the equivalent of a second baptism, fully atoning for a person's past sins and guaranteeing salvation.
  - **2.** They allowed Christians to mimic as closely as possible the death and sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth.
- **B.** Martyrdom required great courage and persistence, not merely because of the instinctual fear of death, but also because harried local Roman officials sought ways to avoid putting Christians to death.

II. The conversion of Constantine virtually eliminated opportunities for martyrdom within the Roman Empire. Thus, it posed a conundrum to those Christians who wished to excel spiritually and to face a tough religious challenge. As a result, ascetics, hermits, and monks, known as the "athletes of God," grew in popularity during the post-Constantine era.

- **A.** Many athletes of God modeled themselves after the remarkably long-lived Antony (c. 255–c. 355), a hermit who lived a life of great asceticism in the deserts of Egypt. Antony's contemporaries in Egypt referred to him and his followers as *monachos*, or "lonely one." This is the origin of the word *monk*.
- **B.** Another Egyptian, named Pachomius (died 346), brought desert hermits together in a communal life lived under the supervision of an abbot. He thereby created the foundations of Christian monasticism.
- **C.** In addition to hermits and monks, various other kinds of religious virtuosos flourished in the eastern half of the Roman Empire in the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries. These included the Stylites (who lived atop tall poles) and holy fools, who behaved as if they were insane and rejected normal social conventions.

III. Monasticism spread from the eastern half to the western half of the Roman Empire in the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries.

- **A.** Around 355, Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria wrote an account of Antony's life. This book was the first work of Christian hagiography (i.e., a biography emphasizing a saint's spiritual attributes and miraculous powers). This work enjoyed wide popularity throughout the empire and spread the ascetic ideal.
- **B.** During the 5th and 6th centuries, various monastic rules were composed in the West, including the Rule of Saint Benedict, which would come to dominate Western monasticism during the 8th and 9th centuries.
- **C.** A sign of monasticism's growing strength was the election of Pope Gregory I, also known as Gregory the Great, in 590. He was the first monk to be elected as pope.
- **D.** Western monasticism, however, lacked some of the austerity found in the Egyptian deserts.
  - **1.** Because it was not uncommon for older, often well-off individuals to join monasteries, they functioned rather like retirement communities.
  - **2.** Sometimes young children were given to monasteries by parents who could not support them.
  - **3.** Laypeople supported monasteries with donations.

IV. The ascetic ideal is one that many people find difficult to understand today. However, it makes sense in a Christian context.

A. Asceticism was believed to bring humans closer to God by making human beings more like angels, who were incorporeal beings. By refusing and subduing the body's demands for sleep, food, and reproduction, humans could make themselves incorporeal.

B. Asceticism could bring human beings as close as possible to the original state of perfection enjoyed by Adam and Eve in paradise.

C. The Christian belief in asceticism and celibacy was not wholly without classical precedent, but Christian emphasis on these states far exceeded anything in classical antiquity.

D. Early Christian thinkers debated whether asceticism was, in fact, desirable, and whether the celibate were spiritually superior to others. Church fathers, such as Ambrose, Jerome, and especially Augustine, articulated powerful arguments on behalf of the ascetic ideal, thereby ensuring its important place in medieval Christianity.

Suggested Readings:

Peter Brown. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. Columbia University Press, 1988.

Judith Herrin. *The Formation of Christendom*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

Questions to Consider:

1. What place should asceticism and monasticism have in the modern world?
2. How does Christian monasticism differ from monasticism as practiced in other religions, such as Buddhism?

Lecture Six
Augustine, Part One

Scope: Augustine was, perhaps, the most influential thinker to emerge during the later Roman Empire, and his own life and career nicely encapsulate some of the broader changes that were taking place. Born a pagan, partner to a concubine with whom he had a son, and a professor of rhetoric, Augustine ultimately experienced a dramatic conversion experience and became a Christian, a celibate, and a bishop. Having been a Manichaean and a Neoplatonist, Augustine ultimately found neither of those schools of thought satisfactory in explaining the problem of evil, because the former made God too weak and the latter made evil too insubstantial. As Augustine grew older and shouldered the heavy burdens of a late Roman bishop, his thought about humanity and its prospects grew bleaker.

Outline

I. Augustine merits extended consideration because of the tremendous intellectual influence his writings had throughout the Middle Ages and well beyond. Furthermore, we know an unusual amount about Augustine's life and thought.

- **A.** Augustine wrote the first autobiography in Western literature: the *Confessions*.
- **B.** Almost every work that Augustine wrote has survived to the present, and his works can be dated quite securely, allowing us to trace the trajectory of his intellectual development.

II. Augustine's early life was fairly typical of a talented provincial in the Roman Empire, and it was marked by a certain intellectual restlessness.

- **A.** Augustine was a North African born in 354. His father was a pagan and a man of modest local importance; his mother, Monica, was a Christian. Through his childhood, Augustine was a pagan.
- **B.** Augustine received a substantial education in North Africa, and he specialized in the field of rhetoric (the art of reading and writing persuasively). Romans considered rhetoric to be the supreme academic pursuit, and Augustine hoped to use his skills in rhetoric to secure a teaching position.
- **C.** While in North Africa, Augustine took a concubine and fathered one child, a son who died at the age of 16.
- **D.** To the horror of his mother and many contemporaries, Augustine became a Manichaean. Manichaeism was a dualist religion—it maintained that good and evil were equally powerful in the universe and that one could never triumph over the other.
  - **1.** Augustine decided not to become a Christian because he found the style of the Christian Bible to be very lowbrow.
  - **2.** He favored Manichaeism because it offered an explanation for the problem of evil: Evil exists because God, no stronger than Satan, can do nothing about it.

III. In 383, Augustine left North Africa and traveled to Italy, where his life, career, and thought underwent dramatic changes.

- **A.** An important pagan official named Symmachus, sympathetic to Augustine's plight as a Manichaean, appointed Augustine as professor of rhetoric in Milan, a prestigious position because the imperial government was operating out of Milan at this time. This professor's job was to deliver speeches to the imperial court and on its behalf.
- **B.** In Milan, Augustine made the acquaintance of Bishop Ambrose, a formidable Christian thinker and an important rhetorician in his own right.
  - **1.** Ambrose had the courage to confront the Emperor Theodosius I, excommunicating him and insisting that he do penance for massacring the inhabitants of Thessalonica, before Ambrose would allow him back into the Church.
  - **2.** The excommunication of secular rulers by spiritual authorities was exceptional at that time.
- **C.** Influenced by Ambrose's sermons, Augustine abandoned his Manichaeism and became a Neoplatonist.

1. Neoplatonism was based on the ideas of a Greek-speaking Egyptian pagan named Plotinus (died 270). For Neoplatonists, evil did not have any absolute existence—what we perceive as evil is merely an absence of goodness.
2. The Neoplatonic Augustine became very philosophically optimistic.

D. Augustine came to see human beings as free moral agents, in control of their own destinies, not playthings of the two equally powerful principles of good and evil.

E. Augustine's mother followed him to Milan, where she convinced Augustine to abandon his concubine and began to arrange a marriage between Augustine and a wealthy Catholic heiress.

F. In July 386, Augustine underwent a spiritual crisis. He abandoned Neoplatonism and his job as professor of rhetoric. In rejecting Neoplatonism, Augustine abandoned the notion that human beings had free wills. People often deliberately chose to do the wrong thing. Sometimes they did things compulsively, against their own good intentions.

G. Instead, he converted to Christianity and returned to North Africa, living with his friends in a religious community devoted to prayer and scholarship.

H. During a visit to Hippo Regius in North Africa, the local inhabitants forced Augustine to become a priest.

IV. In 395, Augustine was elected bishop of Hippo, and he held that position until his death. His Christianity and his personal experiences as bishop of Hippo would push his thinking in new directions. The results of his search for answers to the question of evil would be enormously influential and would contradict some of his earlier writings.

A. His position as bishop exposed Augustine to jealous rivals and required him to preside over an episcopal court, where he listened to endless lawsuits. These experiences gave him an increasingly lower opinion of humanity.

B. Augustine also found himself drawn into controversies over heresies, such as the Donatist controversy.

1. Donatism, which was largely a North African movement, maintained that clerics who had cooperated with Roman persecutors were illegitimate, as were any clerics whom they consecrated in turn.
2. Faced with Donatist resistance, Augustine supported imperial repression of the Donatists and wrote a series of influential works justifying the use of secular coercion against heretics. Forcing Donatists into orthodox Catholicism could be a means of achieving their ultimate salvation.

Suggested Readings:

Augustine. *Confessions*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Peter Brown. *Augustine of Hippo*. University of California Press, 2000 (first published in 1967).

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent should Augustine be regarded as a part of the Roman classical world, and to what extent should he be understood as a medieval figure?
2. Why do modern readers and listeners enjoy a biographical approach to history so much? What are the advantages and limitations of historical biography as a genre?

Lecture Seven

Augustine, Part Two

Scope: Augustine, as bishop of Hippo, faced theological challenges from such groups as the Donatists and, especially, the Pelagians. Confronted with a theology that argued for the ability of humans to obey God's commands without the assistance of divine grace, Augustine developed, in turn, a theology that emphasized more and more strongly human helplessness and the inability of human beings to achieve happiness in this world. His critique of the Roman Empire and of classical culture was not simply an outright dismissal of the two—he had, at a certain level, a genuine appreciation for them. But Augustine subjected both to a searing and devastating scrutiny in his monumental *City of God*, one of the masterpieces of Christian thought.

Outline

I. In addition to his involvement in the Donatist controversy, Bishop Augustine of Hippo became embroiled in the Pelagian controversy, which catapulted Augustine onto the international stage.

- **A.** Pelagius, a British monk and Augustine's contemporary, maintained that human beings could achieve salvation simply through their own moral efforts, without the assistance of divine grace. Pelagius also maintained that humanity could, through its own efforts, achieve a state on earth similar to that enjoyed by Adam and Eve in paradise.
- **B.** Pelagius rejected the doctrine of original sin and the necessity of infant baptism.
- **C.** Augustine's confrontation with Pelagianism pushed his thinking in increasingly pessimistic directions, as he came to emphasize more and more strongly the debilitating consequences of original sin for humanity and the vast gap between heavenly happiness and earthly misery.
- **D.** Augustine rallied Christians against Pelagius by embracing the necessity and usefulness of infant baptism.
  - **1.** For Augustine, Pelagians overestimated the concept of free will, and they underestimated the devastating consequences of original sin and the extent of suffering in the world.
  - **2.** He claimed that human norms of right and wrong could not be applied to God.
  - **3.** He also found absurd the Pelagian idea that humans had the power to achieve a near-heaven on earth.
- **E.** After Pelagius was accused of heresy by Pope Zosimus and denounced by Emperor Honorius, he disappeared, although some influential clerics continued to defend him.
- **F.** Augustine's confrontation with a theology that gave so much power to humans led him to a bleak view of the human condition.

II. Perhaps the most influential book written by Augustine was the monumental *City of God*, which appeared in various stages between 413 and 426.

- **A.** Augustine wrote *City of God* in response to the sack of Rome in 410 by barbarian Goths. Pagans blamed the sack of Rome on Christianity and the abandonment of the old pagan gods, who had permitted the sack to take place as an act of vengeance. Augustine wrote *City of God* to refute these accusations but also used the book to critique classical civilization and show the inferiority of paganism to Christianity.
- **B.** In *City of God*, Augustine did not reject classical civilization entirely. He expressed admiration for certain philosophers, such as Plato, and for early Roman leaders, whose virtues had led to the expansion of Rome.
- **C.** Augustine recognized that there are pleasant aspects to human existence, such as natural beauty in the world and the utility of the human body. These were consolations, provided by God to humanity.

III. Although he admired some ancient pagans and saw some positive aspects to the Roman Empire and to human existence, Augustine's *City of God* developed a pointed critique of the Roman Empire, of classical philosophy, of pagan religion, and of the notion that human beings could achieve happiness in this world.

- **A.** As regards the Roman Empire, Augustine characterized it, and all other empires, as a large-scale gang of thieves. Individuals doing to their neighbors what the Roman Empire had done to its neighbors would be jailed. The one benefit that the empire brought to the world was justice, but human justice was always deeply flawed.

B. For Augustine, classical philosophy was fundamentally misguided because it focused on the search for human happiness in this world. The achievement of happiness in this life was an impossibility, though, because of the manifold miseries suffered by human beings and the possibility that such miseries might befall them in the future.

C. Augustine denied that Christianity was responsible for the sack of Rome, pointing out that Rome had suffered catastrophes well before the emergence of Christianity.

D. Augustine argued that Roman paganism was riddled with contradictions and foolish beliefs. He pointed out that the Romans worshipped the gods of peoples whom the Romans had conquered, then entrusted the defense of the empire to those same gods who had been unable to defend their original believers from the Romans. He ridiculed the sheer number of Roman gods and their sometimes limited functions.

E. Augustine attacked paganism for offering no moral guidelines to human beings and no possibility of punishment or reward for good and bad behavior.

F. Happiness, an impossibility in this life, would be possible only in the next life.
   1. But Augustine's account of Christian salvation was stern—so stern, in fact, that his views did not become the accepted doctrine of the medieval Church.
   2. In his mature thought, he taught a version of double predestination, whereby God chose to save some and to damn others. Nothing any human being could do would change God's eternal decree.

Suggested Readings:

Augustine. *City of God*. Modern Library, 1994.

Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you agree or disagree with Augustine's critique of the Roman Empire and classical culture? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment of the human condition?
2. To what extent did later theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, echo or dispute Augustinian theology as developed in *City of God*?

Lecture Eight
Barbarians at the Gate

Scope: The western half of the Roman Empire, as a political unit, formally came to an end in 476 A.D. with the deposing of the last Roman emperor in the west. The deposing of the last western emperor was the result of a chain of events set in motion by the Gothic migration of 376 A.D. The Goths, and the other Germanic barbarians who followed in their wake, had no intention of destroying the Roman Empire. Indeed, despite differences in cuisine and clothing, they liked the Roman way of life and wished to share in Roman standards of living. Their desire to partake of those good things and to avoid the onrushing Huns drove the barbarians into the Roman Empire, where they became an indispensable part of the Roman military and came into conflict with the Roman population itself. During the second half of the 5th century, various barbarian leaders and peoples succeeded in carving out their own independent kingdoms.

Outline

I. During the 4th and 5th centuries, the Roman Empire experienced repeated migrations and invasions by Germanic barbarians crossing the Rhine-Danube frontier.

- **A.** In 376, a Germanic group known as the Goths, fleeing from central Asian nomads known as the Huns, asked for permission to cross the Danube River and enter the Roman Empire.
- **B.** The Goths were not an entirely alien group to the Romans. The two groups had commercial contacts, and Goths had served in the Roman military. There were even some Christians living among the Goths.
- **C.** Despite these contacts, Romans still regarded the Goths, and all Germanic barbarians, distastefully. Romans disliked Germanic clothing, cooking, hygienic practices, and languages.
- **D.** Nonetheless, the emperor Valens gave the Goths permission to cross in 376. Settling them on the Roman side of the Danube River, Valens demanded that the Goths convert to Christianity and perform military service for the empire.

II. Although the Gothic crossing of the Danube in 376 was peaceful, it set in motion a chain of events that would result in the political collapse of the western half of the empire and the deposing of the last western Roman emperor in 476.

- **A.** Corrupt local Roman officials did not fulfill the emperor's promises to the Goths, who then attacked the Romans, killing the emperor Valens at the Battle of Adrianople in 378.
- **B.** Other developments further undermined Roman-Gothic relations. The Gothic leader Alaric persistently demanded special treatment and money from the empire and backed his demands with violent attacks on Roman towns. Anti-barbarian sentiment in the empire led to massacres of Germans at Constantinople in 400 and at Rome in 408.
- **C.** Among those killed at Rome in 408 was Stilicho, a barbarian in command of the Roman army who had agreed to meet some of Alaric's demands. When the Roman government refused to abide by Stilicho's promises to Alaric, Alaric and the Goths sacked the city of Rome in 410.
- **D.** Rome had not been sacked by foreign enemies for almost 800 years. The Gothic sack of Rome shocked contemporaries.

III. As other barbarian groups joined the Goths in the western half of the empire, that region shrank considerably, and barbarians became such an indispensable part of the Roman military that barbarian leaders could carve up the western half of the empire for themselves.

- **A.** In the winter of 406 and 407, other Germanic barbarians, such as the Vandals, entered the Roman Empire. Still more Germanic groups, such as the Franks, followed thereafter. The Huns, too, entered the empire during the first half of the 5th century.
- **B.** Confronted by these various groups, the empire tried to play them off against one another, relying on the Goths to protect them from the Huns, the Huns from the Goths, and so on.
- **C.** The Roman army withdrew from Britain around 409, never to return. The army abandoned Spain in 411 and never returned again in any significant force, and it abandoned North Africa in 432.

D. The Huns, led by Attila, nearly sacked Rome in 452. The Vandals did sack Rome, attacking from North Africa, in 455.

E. As the inability of Roman emperors to thwart the barbarians became apparent, the Goths established their own independent kingdom in southwestern Gaul and in Spain during the 460s and 470s. A barbarian general named Odoacer deposed the last Roman emperor in the west in 476, and the western half of the empire fragmented into a series of independent kingdoms with barbarian rulers.

Suggested Readings:

Walter Goffart. *Barbarians and Romans, AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation*. Princeton University Press, 1987.

Peter Heather. *The Goths*. Blackwell, 1998.

Malcolm Todd. *The Early Germans*. Blackwell, 1992.

Herwig Wolfram. *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*. University of California Press, 1998.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should historians refuse to employ the word *barbarian* when discussing the Germanic peoples, because the term has so many negative connotations and reflects the Roman point of view too strongly?
2. In what ways did the Germanic peoples depart from our conventional stereotypes of the "barbarian"? In what ways did they conform to that stereotype?

Lecture Nine

Franks and Goths

Scope: A consideration of the Gothic kingdoms and the kingdom of the Franks considerably complicates our understanding of the fall of the Roman Empire. From a political point of view, the deposing of the last Roman emperor in the west might have been significant. From an administrative, cultural, social, and economic point of view, it was insignificant. Roman culture and administration survived in Visigothic Spain and Ostrogothic Italy, where Goths adopted Roman governmental practices and tried to preserve the Roman lifestyle. Continuity with the classical world was also strong, but not quite as strong, in Frankish Gaul well into the 6th century, as Clovis and other members of the Merovingian dynasty increased Frankish power at the expense of their barbarian neighbors.

Outline

I. The Visigoths, or West Goths, were those Goths who crossed the Danube River in 376. They established their own independent kingdom in southern France and Spain.

- **A.** In 409, various barbarian groups, including the Vandals, entered Spain. A few years after that, the Romans left Spain. They asked the Visigoths (who had sacked Rome a few years earlier) to recapture Spain for them. The Visigoths almost succeeded in doing that, but the Romans then began to fear that the Visigoths would seize Spain for themselves.
- **B.** After bringing pressure to bear on the Visigoths, the Romans settled them in southwestern Gaul in 418. However, by 475, the Visigoths had seized nearly all of the Iberian peninsula for themselves, as well.
- **C.** Defeated by the Franks at the Battle of Vouillé in 507, the Visigoths lost their possessions in Gaul. Henceforth, the Visigothic kingdom was confined entirely to Spain, where it remained in existence until the early 8th century.

II. Visigothic Spain experienced a great deal of cultural continuity with the Roman past. Well into the 7th century and perhaps right up to the collapse of the Visigothic kingdom between 711 and 716, the Visigoths preserved much that was distinctively Roman.

- **A.** The Visigoths adopted written law, modeled after Roman written law, early in the 5th century, and revisions of the written Visigothic code continued into the 7th century.
- **B.** Well into the 7th century, Visigothic kings celebrated their victories in parades and victory ceremonies that consciously imitated those of Roman emperors.
- **C.** Visigothic attempts to remain socially and culturally aloof from the local population failed as the Visigoths adopted local language and local clothing. Visigothic attempts to impose their own Arian Christianity, based on the belief that Jesus, or God the Son, was inferior to God the Father, also failed. Instead, the Visigoths abandoned Arianism and converted to Catholicism.

III. Continuity with the Roman past was just as strong in Ostrogothic Italy as it was in Visigothic Spain. If anything, continuity was even stronger in Italy.

- **A.** The Ostrogoths were those Goths who were denied entrance to the empire in 376. They were conquered by the Huns, then entered the empire in 453, following in the Huns' wake.
- **B.** Under the leadership of Theodoric, the Ostrogoths conquered Italy between 488 and 493. Ostensibly, they were acting at the behest of the eastern Roman emperor. In fact, they established an independent kingdom in Italy.
- **C.** Theodoric had been exposed to Roman culture at a young age and felt a deep appreciation for it. Indeed, he tried to preserve Roman civilization in Italy, with some success.
  1. He and his successors left the Roman government and tax system untouched.
  2. He took for himself the traditional titles (ironically, even calling himself "ruler and conqueror of the barbarians,") and responsibilities of a Roman ruler, building aqueducts and sponsoring circuses.
  3. The Ostrogoths, like most barbarians, were Arians. Theodoric took no measures against the Italian Catholic population, however, and attempted to be on good terms with the pope.

IV. While Spain and Italy came under Gothic control, Gaul came under Frankish control, and the Franks had a very long and important future ahead of them.

A. Clovis (ruled c. 481–c. 511) was the most important early Frankish leader.

1. He subjected various groups of Franks (Salian Franks, Ripuarian Franks) to his control and established the Merovingian dynasty, which ruled over the Franks until 751.

2. He extended Frankish power into southern Gaul at the expense of the Goths. (It was Clovis who defeated the Visigoths at the Battle of Vouillé in 507.)

B. By 536, the Merovingians had succeeded in uniting almost the whole of modern-day France under their rule.

C. Clovis was one of the first barbarian kings to convert to Catholic Christianity. This was greatly beneficial to Catholicism and a blow to Arianism, which was especially widespread among barbarians. As Frankish power and prestige grew, other barbarian rulers followed Clovis's lead and abandoned Arianism for Catholicism.

V. Although continuity with the Roman past was not quite as strong in Merovingian Francia as in Gothic Spain and Italy, it was still strong in southern Gaul and fairly strong even farther north.

A. On the one hand, the name of the region settled by the Franks changed, as *Gaul* became known as *Francia*. Merovingian kings, unlike Visigothic and Ostrogothic kings and Roman emperors before them, regarded their kingdom as a family patrimony rather than as an abstract state.

B. On the other hand, nearly everywhere in Gaul, the Franks adopted the Latin language, embraced Roman urban lifestyles, and maintained the Roman government, at least into the 7th century.

Suggested Readings:

T. S. Burns. *A History of the Ostrogoths*. University of Indiana Press, 1984.

Edward James. *The Franks*. Blackwell, 1988.

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill. *The Long-Haired Kings*. University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Herwig Wolfram. *History of the Goths*. University of California Press, 1988.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should we be surprised that the Goths and the Franks strove to emulate and preserve so much that was Roman within their kingdoms? What does this preservation and emulation tell us about the "barbarians"?

2. Given the tenor of life in these barbarian kingdoms, to what extent would their 6th-century inhabitants have felt that the Roman Empire had "fallen" in 476?

Lecture Ten

Arthur's England

Scope: The history of Roman Britain during the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries differs from what we have seen elsewhere. Well before 476, the Roman presence in the British Isles had waned greatly. As a result, the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England would substantially transform not just the name of the area settled, but the language spoken and the god (or gods) worshipped there. Because of this loss of Roman influence, the history of the British Isles during the lifetime of Arthur—if he ever existed—is especially obscure. Yet, ironically enough, by the 7th and 8th centuries, Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks had become the leading educators and intellectuals of the day. Forced to lavish energy on the study of Latin, a language entirely foreign to them, Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks brought their scholarship with them to the European continent, as monasteries replaced Roman schools as the main intellectual centers of Europe.

Outline

I. Compared to the rest of the western half of the Roman Empire, Britain was under Roman rule for a relatively brief period of time. As a result, Roman culture disappeared much more swiftly and completely from Britain than was the case on the continent, and the impact of the Anglo-Saxons who settled in Britain would be that much greater.

- **A.** As the Roman army withdrew from Britain, Germanic groups, such as the Angles and Saxons from Germany and the Jutes from southern Denmark, began to raid and to settle in Britain during the first half of the 5th century.
- **B.** By 600, Anglo-Saxons had gained control of southern and eastern Britain, although present-day Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, eluded their control. They established a number of different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, such as Wessex, Sussex, and Northumbria.
- **C.** Although there had been contact between the Anglo-Saxons and Britain before these migrations (Angles and Saxons had occasionally been hired to serve in the Roman army in Britain), the Britons (the indigenous Celtic population of Britain) and remaining Romans resisted the Germans, with limited success. Some Celts left Britain and settled in northwest France, now known as Brittany.
- **D.** If Arthur really existed—and that is by no means certain, because our evidence for his activities dates from several centuries after his supposed lifetime—then he was a British general who won a victory against the Germanic invaders at Mount Badon (no one knows where that would be) around 500.
- **E.** As the Anglo-Saxons settled Roman Britain, Scotti from Ireland migrated to the west coast of Britain and established the kingdom of Dalriada, which would go on to conquer what is today Scotland.

II. Anglo-Saxon England during the 5th and 6th centuries experienced an almost total extinction of Roman civilization.

- **A.** The British economy reverted back to its pre-Roman state: highly localized and with exchanges based on barter rather than on money.
- **B.** Roman towns and villas were abandoned.
- **C.** The Roman name *Britain* was replaced by *England* ("Angle-land"). Furthermore, Britain never developed a Romance language derived from Latin, such as French, Spanish, or Italian. Instead, the Germanic language of the Anglo-Saxons became the vernacular in England, while Celtic languages were spoken in the lands beyond England.
- **D.** One change truly set Anglo-Saxon England apart from other parts of the western Roman Empire: the disappearance of Christianity. As best as historians can tell, Christianity vanished in England as local inhabitants adopted the paganism of the Anglo-Saxons. Only in Celtic borderlands did Christianity (and, with it, literacy) continue to exist, however tenuously.

III. Missionaries reintroduced Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England in the 7th century, and the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England would have consequences throughout Europe.

- **A.** In 597, Pope Gregory the Great dispatched a monk named Augustine to England as a missionary. His success was somewhat limited.
- **B.** In addition to papal missionaries, Irish missionaries worked among the pagan Anglo-Saxons.
  - **1.** Ireland had been mostly Christianized by about 500, thanks to St. Patrick.
  - **2.** In the mid-6th century, the Irish missionary Columba converted many of the Picts of Scotland to Christianity and founded the monastery of Iona on an island off the Scottish coast.
  - **3.** By the 660s, Christianity was formally accepted by Anglo-Saxon kings and their subjects.
- **C.** The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons yielded various results.
  - **1.** Literacy was revived in England—the first written Anglo-Saxon laws date to the 7th century.
  - **2.** Christianization stimulated some small-scale urbanization, as bishops and their retinues began to be established.
  - **3.** The minting and use of money also returned then.

IV. Following the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks fanned out across the European continent, bringing religious reform and establishing monasteries as the main centers of intellectual activity in Europe.

- **A.** Anglo-Saxon and Irish monks were especially active intellectually because they were linguistically disadvantaged.
  - **1.** As speakers of Germanic and Celtic languages, respectively, Latin was entirely foreign to them, and they had to work very hard at mastering it.
  - **2.** As a result, Anglo-Saxon and Irish monasteries had an intellectual vitality lacking in continental monasteries prior to the 7th century.
- **B.** During the 7th century, Anglo-Saxon and Irish monks, such as Columbanus (died 615), traveled to the European continent, bringing their own brand of monastic observance with them and establishing such monasteries as Luxeuil and Bobbio, which became important educational centers.
  - **1.** Columbanus spent most of his time in Gaul.
  - **2.** He and his followers were determined to impose harsher penance and punishments.
  - **3.** Columbanus's message resonated powerfully with the Frankish aristocracy, which lavished money, land, and children on the monasteries established by Columbanus and his followers.

Suggested Readings:

Leslie Alcock. *Arthur's Britain*. Penguin Books, 1973.

N. J. Higham. *King Arthur: Myth-making and History*. Routledge, 2002.

Edward James. *Britain in the First Millennium*. Edward Arnold, 2000.

Questions to Consider:

1. Because of the paucity of written sources, archaeology plays an especially important role in the modern reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon England. What are the advantages and disadvantages of archaeological sources as compared to written sources?
2. The title of a recent book on our period speaks of how the "Irish saved civilization." To what extent does the historical record support such an assertion, and to what extent does such an assertion overstate or misstate the role of Irish monks at the end of Late Antiquity and the beginning of the Early Middle Ages?

Lecture Eleven

Justinian and the Byzantine Empire

Scope: The eastern half of the Roman Empire, known to historians as the Byzantine Empire, survived the barbarian migrations of the 4^{th} and 5^{th} centuries by roughly a millennium. Although it became officially Greek speaking, rather than Latin speaking, the Byzantine Empire preserved classical culture and classical urban life better than the West preserved them. The 6^{th}-century Byzantine emperor Justinian had a number of notable accomplishments during his long reign, such as the recodification of Roman law and the construction of the church known as the Hagia Sophia. His reconquests of North Africa and Italy, however, badly strained the resources of the Byzantine Empire, which soon lost much of what he had conquered. During the reign of Emperor Heraclius in the first half of the 7^{th} century, the Byzantine Empire came close to collapsing before the onslaughts of the Persian Empire and the Slavs.

Outline

I. Historians refer to the eastern half of the Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire.

- **A.** Only the western half of the Roman Empire ceased to exist after the deposing of the last western emperor in 476. The eastern half remained in existence until the 15^{th} century, outlasting the western half by almost 1,000 years.
- **B.** The inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire never used that term or called themselves Byzantines; 16^{th}- and 17^{th}-century scholars coined those terms. Those whom we call Byzantines called themselves Romans, and they called their empire the Roman Empire.
- **C.** Nonetheless, there is some justification for speaking of the Byzantine Empire rather than the Roman Empire, at least from the 6^{th} century onward. By 600, the eastern half of the Roman Empire had become officially Greek speaking, with emperors issuing their laws in Greek and replacing their old Latin titles with Greek ones.

II. During the 6^{th} century, one controversial Roman emperor named Justinian (ruled 527–565) attempted to reconquer parts of the western half of the empire.

- **A.** When the barbarian Odoacer deposed the last western Roman emperor, he and his successors carefully preserved the fiction that they were subservient to the Byzantine emperor.
- **B.** Despite their deference, however, the Byzantine emperor Justinian attempted to retake Italy.
- **C.** It is unclear whether Justinian dreamed of retaking the whole of the west. It is also unclear whether his attempts to retake parts of the west were part of a long-held plan to restore the empire to its former glory or an improvised attempt to shore up his weakening popularity in the empire.
- **D.** In 532, Justinian was nearly overthrown in a riot known as the Nika Revolt. It is possible that a desire to win back his popularity in the wake of the Nika Revolt led Justinian to his subsequent attempts at major territorial expansion.
- **E.** Justinian secured a peace treaty with the Persian Empire in 532.
    - **1.** His general Belisarius then quickly conquered Vandal North Africa in 533 and 534.
    - **2.** His success was helped by a ruse: Justinian persuaded the Vandal governor of Sicily to revolt; this drew the Vandal army away from North Africa, leaving it defenseless.

III. Although the conquest of Vandal North Africa went quickly and easily enough, the conquest of Italy was a long and bloody struggle that taxed the resources of the Byzantine Empire.

- **A.** Byzantine forces, posing as the avengers of a murdered, pro-Byzantine Ostrogothic queen named Amalasuntha, invaded Italy in 535 and, by 540, had driven the Ostrogoths north into the Po River Valley.
- **B.** The Byzantine reconquest of Italy, however, bogged down for reasons both predictable and unpredictable.
    - **1.** The Persians, fearing the growth of Byzantine power, broke their peace treaty after only eight years and attacked the Byzantine Empire.

2. Bubonic plague erupted in the Byzantine Empire in 542 and 543. Known as the Justinianic Plague, this was probably the first appearance of bubonic plague in the empire and in Europe. Massive mortality paralyzed the Byzantine government and hindered the war effort.

C. Justinian ultimately annihilated the Ostrogoths, but not until 554 did he achieve complete victory. The war caused great destruction in Italy—the Roman Senate finally ceased to function during Justinian's wars there.

D. Despite the strains placed on the empire, Justinian conquered the southern tip of Visigothic Spain in 552.

E. Justinian was a controversial figure, capable of inspiring almost insane hatred among some of his subjects.

1. Although his professed intention was to restore the glory of the Roman Empire, Justinian was no Diocletian—he was a committed Christian and treated pagans severely.
2. He forbade the teaching of philosophy in Athens, which led to the closure of the Academy, founded by Plato almost 1,000 years before.
3. Something of the animosity felt toward Justinian can be gleaned from Procopius's *The Secret History*, a brutal attack on Justinian written by a contemporary.

F. Yet Justinian accomplished much, including:

1. The reconstruction of the Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople.
2. A major recodification of Roman law, resulting in the composition of such texts as the Justinianic Code, the Digest, and the Institutes. Such texts would become the basis of all subsequent Roman law not only in the Byzantine Empire but also across the medieval West.
3. The smuggling of silkworms and the secret of silk production out of China.

IV. Justinian's conquests of North Africa, Italy, and a sliver of Spain may have done the Byzantine Empire more harm than good. The empire was unable to hold onto its conquests for very long and soon began to lose territory that it had held at the outset of Justinian's reign.

A. In 568, the Lombards swept into northern Italy and captured territory that the Byzantines had just taken from the Ostrogoths. By the 630s, the Byzantines had lost their Spanish territory to the Visigoths, and by the 690s, they had lost North Africa to the Arabs.

B. Furthermore, the Slavs migrated into the Balkans during the second half of the 6th century and seized Byzantine territory there.

C. Early in the 7th century, the Persian Empire nearly conquered the Byzantine Empire entirely. Only a desperate attack on the Persian Empire by Emperor Heraclius (ruled 610–641) managed to stave off total Byzantine collapse.

Suggested Readings:

Alexander Kahzdan and Giles Constable. *People and Power in Byzantium*. Dumbarton Oaks, 1982.

Cyril Mango, ed. *The Oxford History of Byzantium*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

John Moorhead. *Justinian*. Macmillan, 1994.

Questions to Consider:

1. Was Justinian wise or foolish to undertake his campaigns in the west? Should he be regarded as one of the great figures in late antique history or as a bloody butcher who increased human misery?
2. Why is Byzantine history so little studied and known in North America?

Lecture Twelve

The House of Islam

Scope: Islam emerged in Arabia, on the frontiers of the Byzantine and Persian Empires, in the early 7th century. Following the death of Muhammad, Arabs conquered the Persian Empire, large sections of the Byzantine Empire, and even parts of continental Europe, most notably the greater part of the Iberian peninsula in less than a decade. At the Battle of Poitiers in 732, an Arab raiding party that had reached deep into Merovingian Francia was defeated by Charles Martel, a member of the Carolingian family. For the House of Islam, this was a wholly insignificant event. For Francia and for Europe as a whole, it was very significant, because the Carolingian victory at Poitiers marked an important moment in the ascent of the Carolingian family, which would come to dominate the political life of continental Europe during the Early Middle Ages.

Outline

I. Muhammad, the founder of Islam, lived in Arabia during the late 6th and early 7th centuries.

- **A.** During Muhammad's lifetime, Arabia was populated, for the most part, by desert nomads separated into hundreds of warring tribes.
- **B.** Some permanent settlements existed near oases. These settlements included the caravan towns of Medina and Mecca.
- **C.** Although the Arabs were predominantly pagan, worshipping many gods (including one known as Allah), some Christians and Jews lived in Arabia.

II. During his lifetime, Muhammad brought monotheism to a predominantly pagan region and, thereby, united various Arab tribes in a single community of monotheistic faith.

- **A.** Muhammad was born between 570 and 580. He was a merchant from Mecca and lived comfortably, in part because of his marriage to his favorite wife, a wealthy widow.
- **B.** Circa 610, Muhammad began to experience visions. After agonizing soul searching, he decided that these visions were religious revelations given to him by God. After Muhammad's death, his followers recorded the revelations in a written book, the Koran.
- **C.** Muhammad shared his revelations with the inhabitants of Mecca, where the town's wealthier citizens grew hostile to him.
- **D.** In 622, Muhammad left Mecca to take up residence in Medina, where he became the town's leader. This is the year from which the Muslim calendar is reckoned.
- **E.** In 630, he and his followers captured Mecca itself. Muhammad died only two years later, in 632.
- **F.** At his death, Muhammad left behind an Arabia substantially united by its newfound belief in Islam, a monotheist religion maintaining that Allah was the only true God.
- **G.** Muhammad taught that Islam (meaning "submission"—submission to God) was the ultimate fulfillment of Judaism and Christianity.
  1. Through Abraham and Jesus of Nazareth, God had revealed himself to mankind, but those earlier revelations had been partial and incomplete.
  2. Muhammad also taught that Abraham had been the first Muslim and that Jesus of Nazareth was a great prophet but not a divine being—rather, Jesus was wholly human.
  3. Muhammad claimed to be the last and greatest of God's prophets.

III. Upon the death of Muhammad, Arabs attacked their neighbors and created a vast empire, the House of Islam, reaching from Spain to India. Their speed was astonishing.

- **A.** By 651, the Arabs had conquered the Persian Empire and, by the 690s, much of the Byzantine Empire. They failed, however, to capture Constantinople itself.
- **B.** Arab success was a result of the exhaustion of their rivals, the Arabs' ability to operate in the desert, and the tremendous confidence and enthusiasm that Muhammad had given to the Arabs, whom Allah had chosen to be the recipients of his final revelation.

C. During the 8th and 9th centuries, Arab scholars developed the concept of *jihad* to explain and justify the Arab conquests that had taken place following Muhammad's death.

  1. According to the 8th- and 9th-century definitions of *jihad*, it was necessary for the House of Islam to bring Islamic law throughout the entire world, imposing it upon the dar-al-Harb, or House of War (i.e., non-Islamic lands). Muslims must strive to bring the entire world into a single Islamic state, whose unity would mirror the perfect unity of the monotheist God.

  2. *Jihad*, therefore, aimed at a political and legal unification, but not at religious unification. Other monotheists could practice Judaism and Christianity (with certain restrictions) within the House of Islam. Christians and Jews (unlike pagans) should not be converted forcibly.

  3. Ironically, the theory of *jihad* developed as actual Arab expansion subsided.

  4. Islam's early acceptance and Christianity's late acceptance of holy war can best be explained in terms of the historical context in which those two religions emerged.

IV. The expansion of the House of Islam had important consequences for Europe itself.

A. Between 711 and 716, Arabs and North Africans conquered most of Visigothic Spain, leaving only a few small Christian kingdoms in the mountainous and relatively poor north.

B. For a brief period in the early 8th century, Arabs conquered parts of southern Francia. However, Franks, under the leadership of Charles Martel, a member of the Carolingian family, defeated an Arab army at the Battle of Poitiers in 732, checking Arab expansion north of the Pyrenees.

C. Arabs conquered Sicily and much of southern Italy in the 9th century. They were finally driven from southern Italy in 915 by an army of Byzantine, papal, and Italian forces.

Suggested Readings:

Roger Collins. *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797*. Blackwell, 1995.

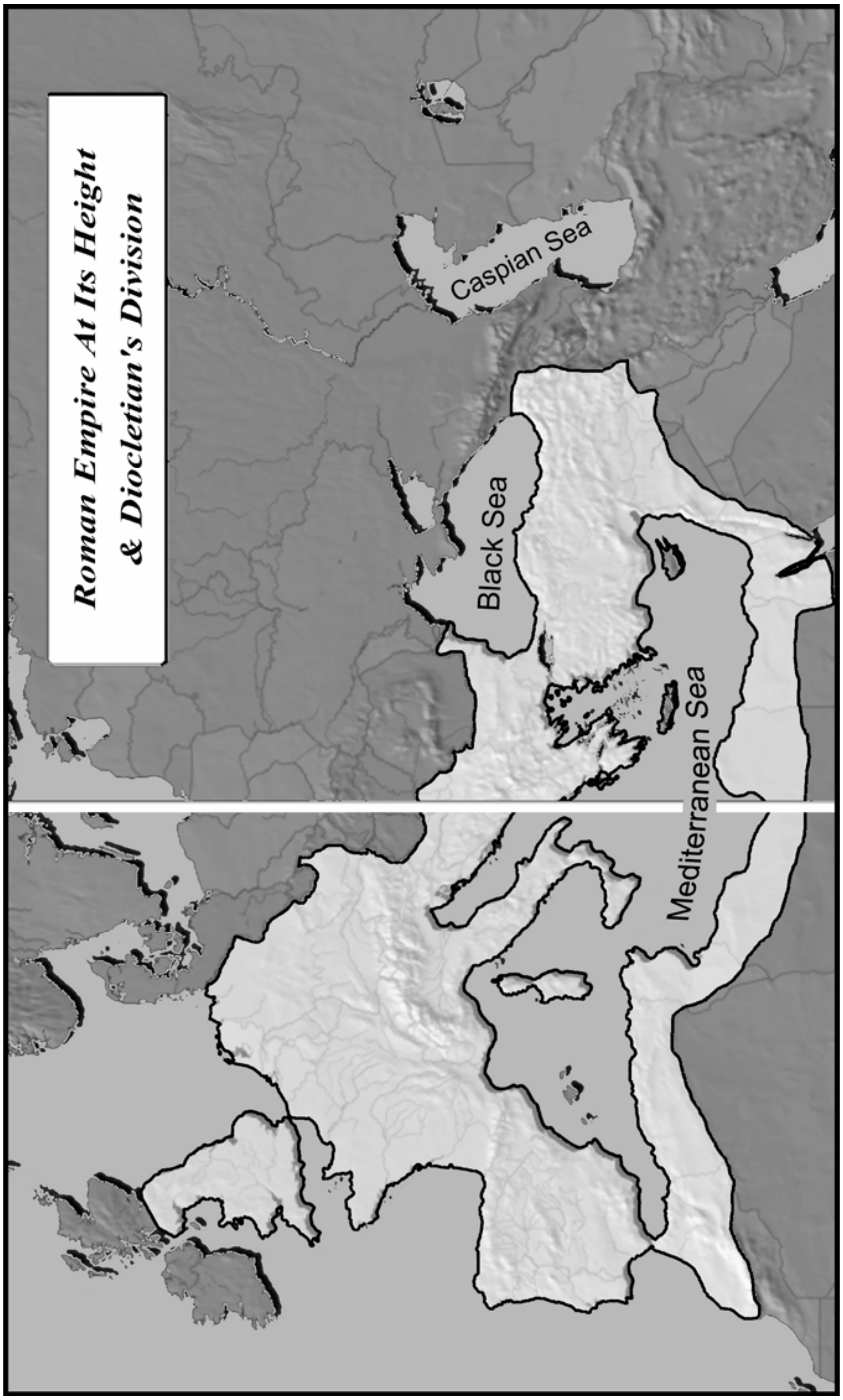
Michael Cook. *Muhammad*. Oxford University Press, 1983.

Robert Hoyland. *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. Longman, 1986.

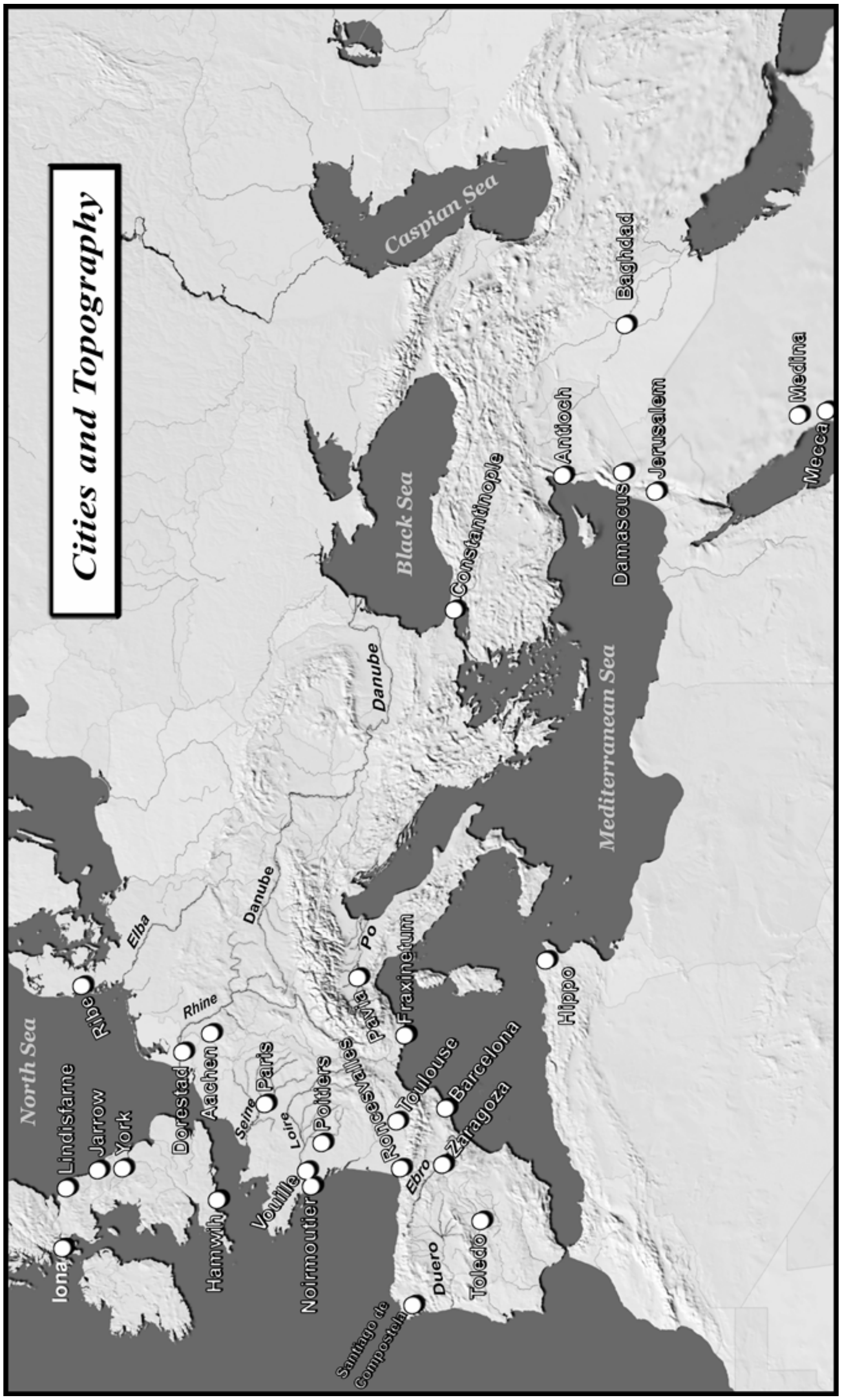
Questions to Consider:

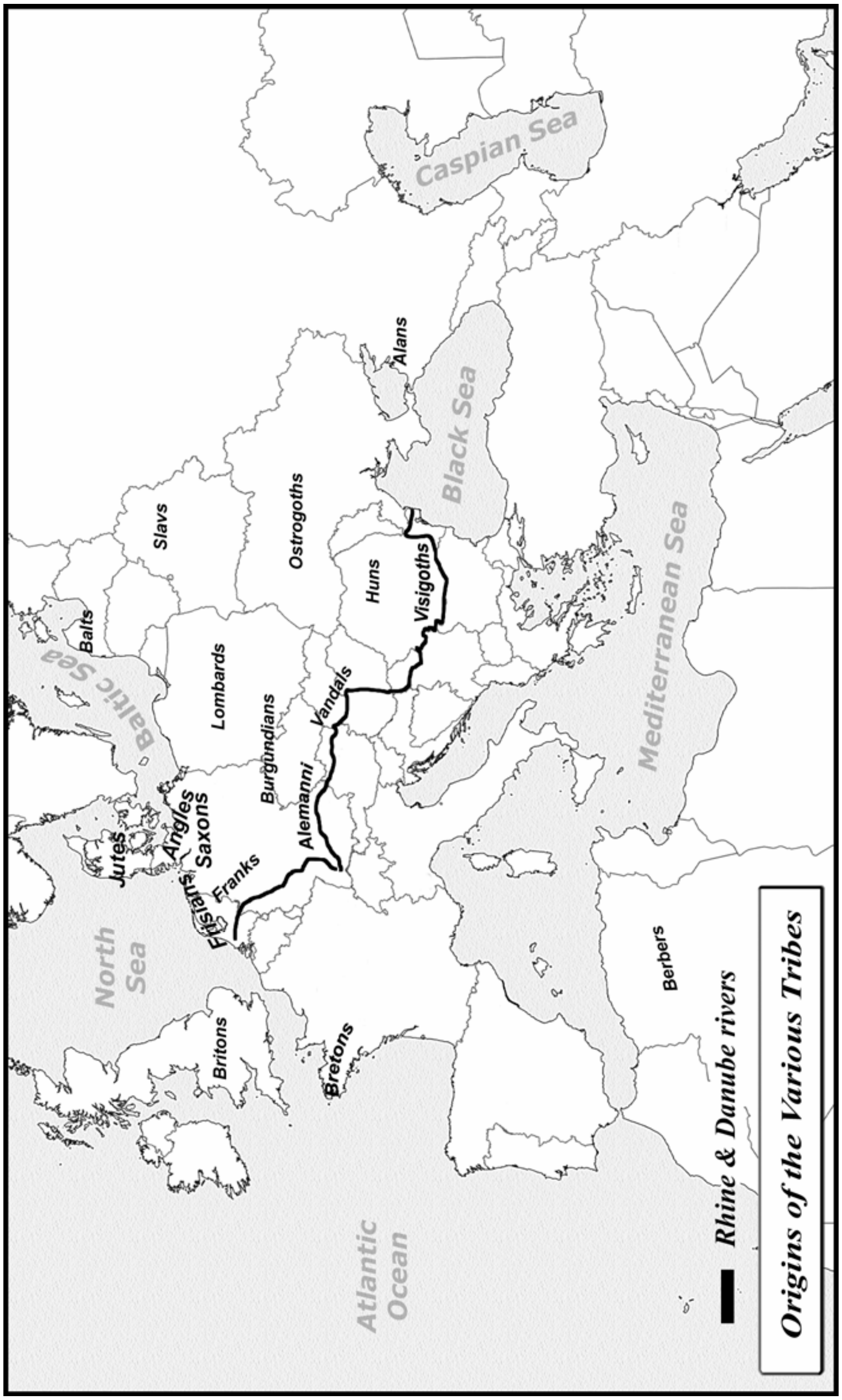
1. In 21st-century America, what are the most common misconceptions about Islam and its early history?

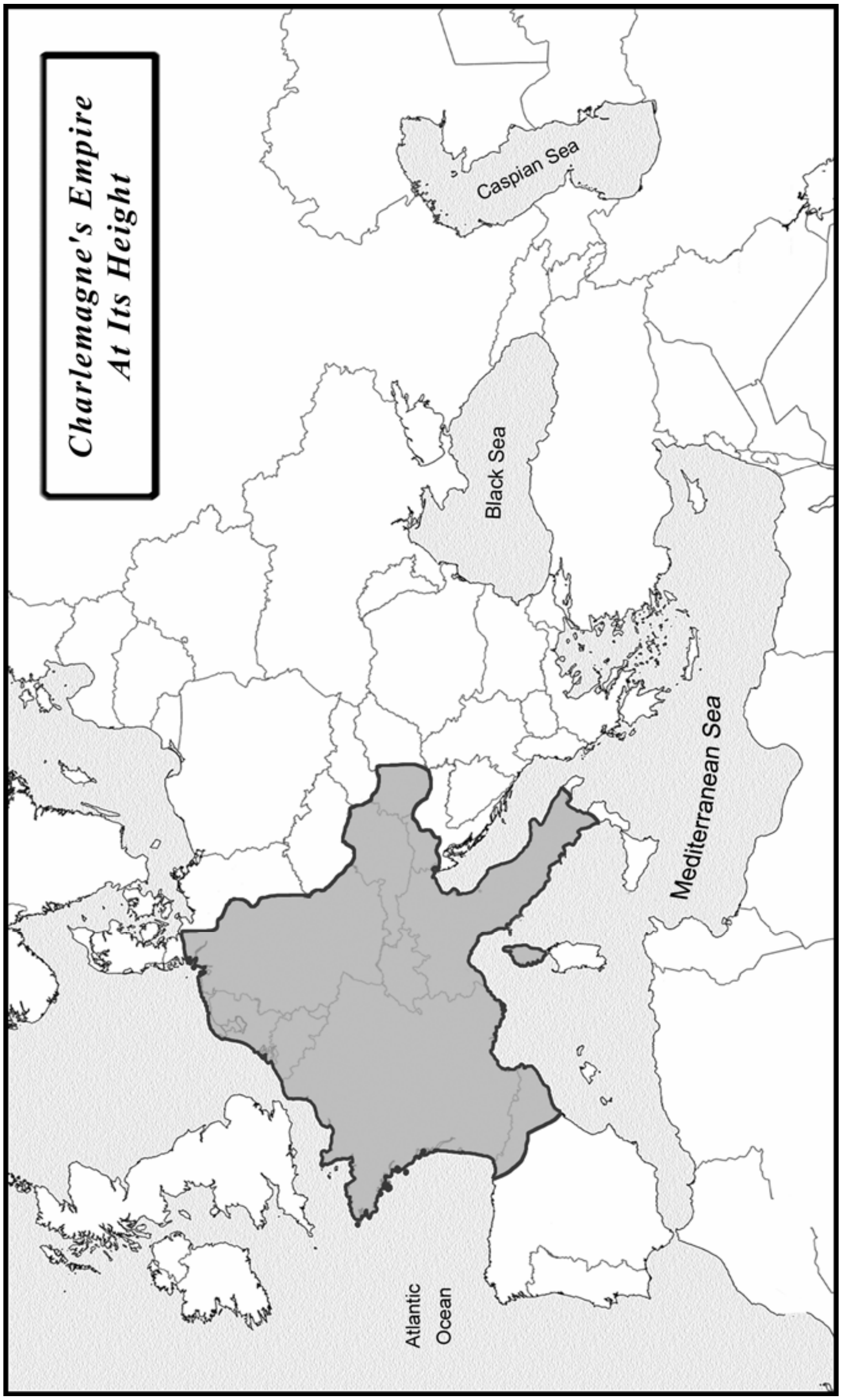
2. In terms of its structure and early history, does Islam have more in common with Christianity or with Judaism?

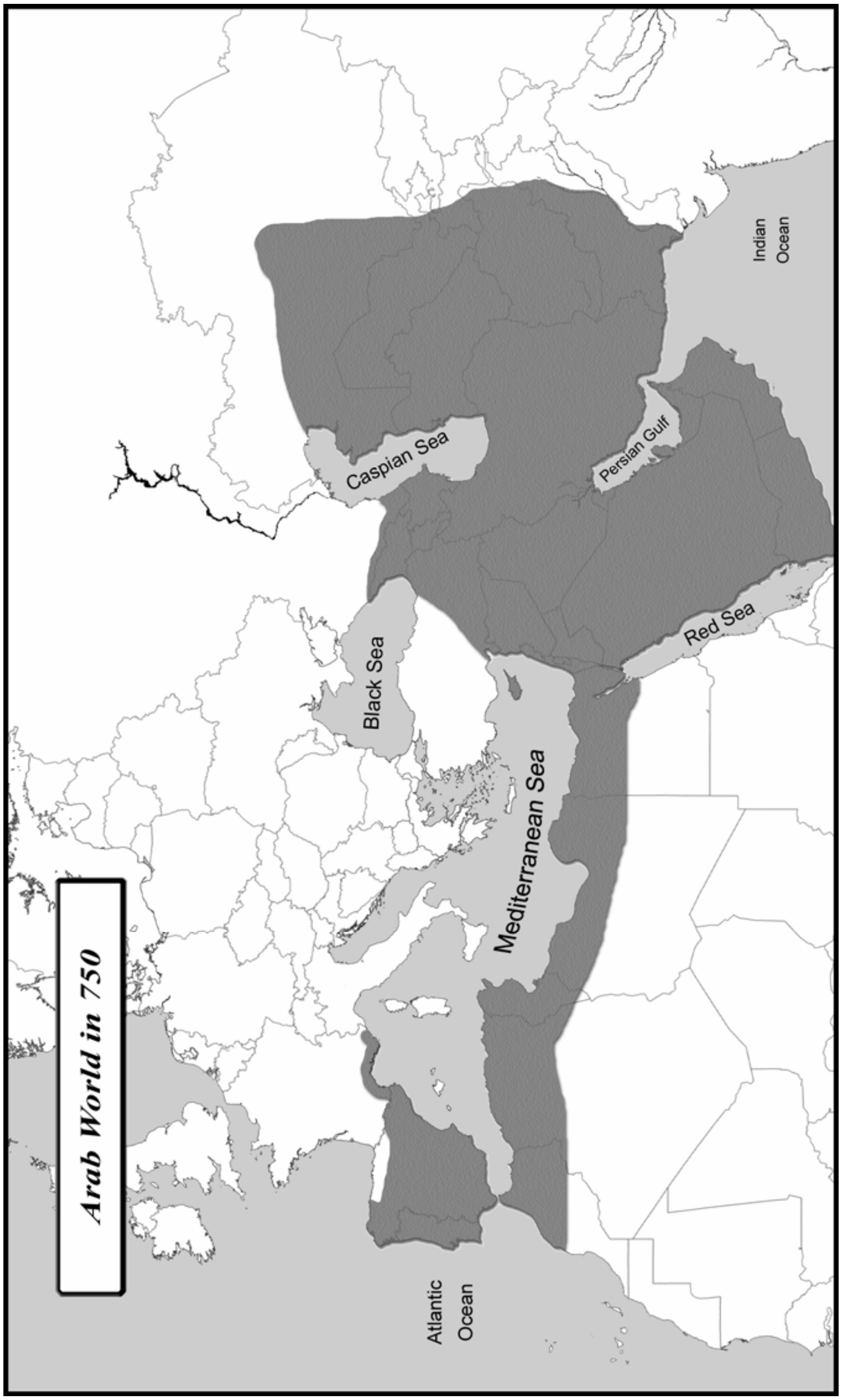


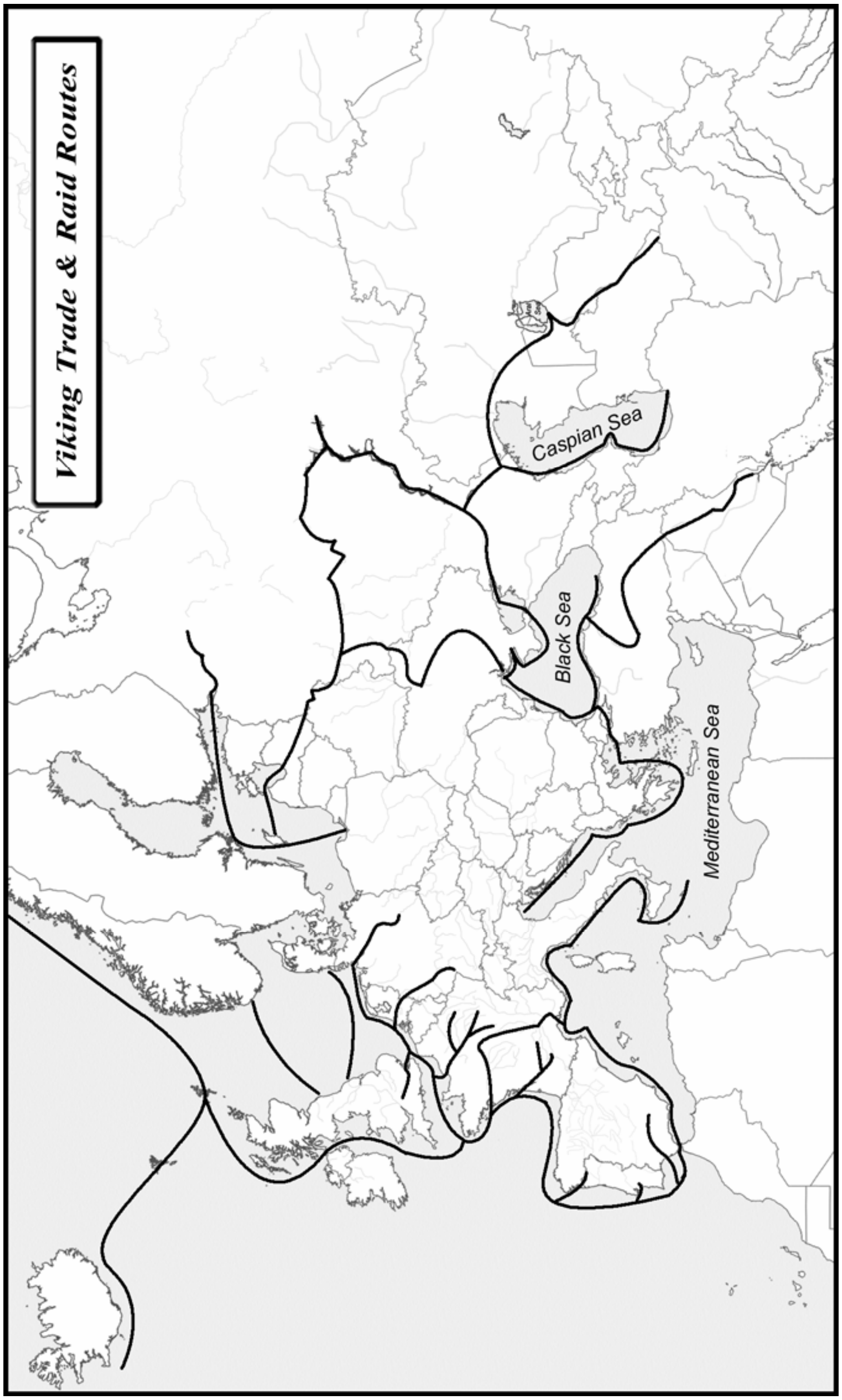
Roman Empire At Its Height & Diocletian's Division


Cities and Topography
North Sea
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Iona
Lindisfarne
Jarrow
York
Hamwih
Dorestad
Aachen
Ribe
Elba
Rhine
Danube
Seine
Paris
Loire
Poitiers
Vouillé
Noirmoutier
Roncesvalles
Toulouse
Pavia
Po
Fraxinetum
Barcelona
Zaragoza
Ebro
Duero
Toledo
Santiago de Compostela
Hippo
Constantinople
Antioch
Damascus
Jerusalem
Baghdad
Medina
Mecca


Origins of the Various Tribes
Rhine & Danube rivers
Caspian Sea
Alans
Black Sea
Slavs
Ostrogoths
Huns
Visigoths
Balts
Baltic Sea
Lombards
Burgundians
Vandals
Alemanni
Angles
Saxons
Jutes
Frisians
Franks
North Sea
Britons
Bretons
Atlantic Ocean
Mediterranean Sea
Berbers


Charlemagne's Empire
At Its Height
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Atlantic
Ocean


Arab World in 750
Indian Ocean
Caspian Sea
Persian Gulf
Red Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Atlantic Ocean


Viking Trade & Raid Routes
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea

Timeline

284–305	Reign of Emperor Diocletian.
312	Constantine is victorious at the Battle of Milvian Bridge; becomes emperor in the western half of the Roman Empire.
324	Constantine becomes emperor in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, as well.
325	Constantine presides over the Council of Nicaea.
337	Death of Emperor Constantine.
354	Birth of Augustine.
c. 355	Death of Antony, Egyptian ascetic.
361–363	Reign of Julian the Apostate, last pagan Roman emperor.
376	Goths migrate into the Roman Empire.
378	Goths defeat Romans at the Battle of Adrianople and kill Emperor Valens.
395	Death of Emperor Theodosius I, the last emperor to rule over the western and eastern halves of the empire simultaneously.
406–407	Vandals and other Germanic groups migrate into Roman Empire.
410	Goths sack Rome.
413–426	Augustine publishes *City of God*.
430	Death of Augustine.
452	Huns threaten Rome.
455	Vandals sack Rome.
476	Odoacer, a barbarian, deposes the last Roman emperor in the west.
c. 481–c. 511	Clovis reigns as king of the Franks, establishes Merovingian dynasty.
c. 500	Possible victory by Arthur and the Britons against the Anglo-Saxons.
527–565	Justinian reigns as Byzantine emperor, conquers Ostrogothic Italy.
542–543	Justinianic Plague—probably the first eruption of bubonic plague in Europe.
568	Lombard conquest of northern Italy.
570s–580s	Slavic migration into the Balkans.
597	Christian missionaries dispatched to Anglo-Saxon England.
610–641	Reign of Byzantine Emperor Heraclius; Byzantine Empire nearly conquered by Persians and Slavs, then suffers substantial territorial losses to Arabs.
615	Death of Columbanus, Irish monk active on the continent.
632	Death of Muhammad; Arabs erupt from Arabian peninsula.
638	Arab conquest of Jerusalem.
651	Arab conquest of Persian Empire.
711–716	Arab invasion of Spain, collapse of the Visigothic kingdom.
c. 729	Iconoclasm Controversy breaks out; papacy establishes its independence from the Byzantine Empire.
732	Frankish victory over Arabs at the Battle of Poitiers.

751 .... Pepin the Short, with papal approval, deposes the last Merovingian king of the Franks; Carolingians become the new Frankish dynasty.

754 .... Pope anoints Pepin the Short as king of the Franks; first papal visit north of the Alps.

754 .... Death of Boniface (Wynfrith), Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Germans.

756 .... Abd al-Rahman I establishes Umayyad rule in Islamic Spain.

768 .... Charlemagne begins his reign as Frankish king.

771 .... Death of Charlemagne's brother Carloman; Charlemagne becomes sole Frankish ruler.

774 .... Frankish conquest of Lombard Italy.

789 .... Vikings attack the monastery at Lindisfarne, off the British coast.

799 .... First Viking attack on the Carolingian Empire (monastery at Noirmoutier).

800 .... Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne as emperor.

801 .... Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, captures Barcelona from the Arabs.

801 .... Alcuin presents Charlemagne with a revised and corrected version of the Bible.

814 .... Death of Charlemagne.

824 .... Louis the Pious issues the *Constitutio Romana*, formalizing Carolingian control of papal elections.

840–843 .... Civil war among the sons of Louis the Pious.

843 .... Treaty of Verdun divides the Carolingian Empire.

845 .... Carolingian rulers begin to pay *Danegeld* (protection money) to the Vikings.

871–899 .... Reign of Alfred the Great as king of Wessex.

888 .... Count Odo of Paris, a member of the Robertian/Capetian family, elected as king of West Francia.

911 .... End of Carolingian rule in East Francia.

911 .... Viking settlement in Normandy.

912–961 .... Reign of Abd al-Rahman III in Islamic Spain; zenith of the caliphate of Córdoba.

919 .... Accession of the Ottonian dynasty in East Francia.

955 .... Ottonians defeat Magyars at the Battle of Lech.

962 .... Otto I, king of Germany, crowned as emperor; birth of the Holy Roman Empire.

980s .... Viking attacks on Anglo-Saxon England resume.

987 .... End of Carolingian rule in West Francia, accession of the Capetian dynasty.

1013 .... Vikings capture London; Anglo-Saxon rulers forced into exile in Normandy.

1031 .... Collapse of the caliphate of Córdoba and end of Umayyad rule; fragmentation of Islamic Spain.

1042 .... Return of Anglo-Saxon kings to England.

1066 .... Fighting among Norwegians, Normans, and Anglo-Saxons results in the Norman Conquest of England.

Glossary

Arianism: Doctrine associated with Arius, a North African priest who died in 336. Arianism denied that Jesus of Nazareth was a divine being and that Jesus, as Son of God, could have coexisted for all eternity with God the Father. The Council of Nicaea (325), summoned and supervised by Emperor Constantine, condemned Arianism as heretical. Nonetheless, Arianism was widespread among Christian barbarians in the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries.

bipartite estate: Also called the *medieval manor*, the bipartite estate refers to a form of agricultural organization that differed structurally from the Roman *latifundium*. Like a Roman estate, the bipartite estate consisted of tenancies (land rented out to tenants by the estate's lord and owner) and the demesne (land directly cultivated by those who worked on the lord's behalf). On a bipartite estate, serfs (see definition below) residing on tenancies provided much of the labor for the demesne. On the Roman estate, slaves and wage laborers had provided most of that labor.

danegeld: Money paid by European rulers, especially the Carolingians, to Viking raiders. Carolingian rulers made at least 11 substantial payments of tribute to the Vikings between 845 and 926. *Danegeld* harmed the Carolingian Empire in several ways. The peace it bought was often limited in duration and geographical scope, because Vikings were paid to spare one part of the empire, but then they attacked another. It placed an enormous drain on the empire's silver resources, and it undermined the legitimacy of the Carolingian dynasty, which rested to a large extent on Carolingian military prowess.

Donatism: A North African religious movement, especially active in the 4th and 5th centuries and named for the 4th-century bishop Donatus. Donatists maintained that members of the clergy who had collaborated with Roman persecutors by, for example, handing over copies of the Bible, were unworthy of being clerics. All those consecrated by such collaborators were false clerics, as well. More generally, the Donatists maintained that sacraments administered by morally unworthy priests were invalid. Augustine and other Catholics struggled against the Donatists in the 5th century, and Augustine developed important arguments in support of the imperial coercion of Donatists and other heretics.

feudalism: An honorable relationship of dependence established most often between two members of the aristocracy. In a feudal relationship, the superior party, or lord, owed the inferior party, or vassal, maintenance and protection, while the vassal owed the lord aid and counsel. Maintenance generally took the form of a fief (*feudum* in Latin), a grant of land from which the vassal collected revenue. Aid meant military service, performed with the equipment acquired with revenue from the fief. Lords took vassals through a ceremony known as commendation, which itself consisted of two parts: the act of homage and the swearing of an oath of fealty. Feudalism arose during the Carolingian period, as Carolingian rulers linked the act of commendation with the granting of fiefs and made military service the most common service demanded of those who received fiefs.

iconoclasm: The destruction of religious images. Between the 5th and 8th centuries, the veneration of painted images (icons) of saints, Jesus, and other holy figures became increasingly common, especially in the Byzantine world. Circa 725, however, the Byzantine emperor ordered the destruction of icons throughout the empire, most likely in imitation of Islamic practice. At first, the papacy refused to follow the policy, and the result was the Iconoclastic Controversy, which lasted off and on through the 8th and 9th centuries. Bitterness over the issue of iconoclasm drove the Byzantine east and the papacy apart, setting the stage for the emergence of the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches.

jihad: An Arabic word meaning struggle, including (but not necessarily limited to) violent struggle against unbelievers. The doctrine of *jihad* is rooted in certain Koranic pronouncements (especially those found in *sura* nine) that speak favorably of military struggle against non-Muslims. However, the doctrine itself was not worked out in any detail until the period from 750 onward, at which point, ironically, Arab conquests were winding down. According to 8th- and 9th-century scholars, Muslims were obliged to establish a single Islamic world state (House of Islam) that observed Islamic law. *Jihad* aimed at political and legal unity, rather than religious unity, because Christians and Jews (but not pagans) were to retain their religions within the House of Islam. By the year 1000, the doctrine of *jihad* had become a dead letter in the areas bordering Europe and the Byzantine Empire. Despite its dormancy, though, the doctrine could be revived during periods when the Arab world felt itself to be besieged, such as during the Crusades.

Manichaeism: A religious doctrine based on the teachings of Mani (died 276), an inhabitant of the Persian Empire who spent some time in India and was much influenced by the thought of Saint Paul. Manichaeism taught that good and evil were equally powerful in the universe; neither could ultimately triumph over the other. The spiritual world was purely good. The material world, created by Satan, was wholly corrupt but contained trapped particles of the spiritual realm, which the faithful Manichaean must liberate through asceticism. Manichaean dualism would be an important component of many medieval heresies.

Neoplatonism: A philosophical movement based on the teachings of Plotinus (died 270), an Egyptian. Crucial to Neoplatonism was the doctrine of emanation. At the center of all reality was the One. Outside the One were various levels that had emanated from the One but were inferior to it to the extent that they were removed from the One and lacked its attributes. The purpose of philosophy was to lead individuals back through the various levels until they had reunited themselves with the One that was the source of all being. For Neoplatonists, evil as such did not exist; there was merely an absence of good as an individual fell away from the One. Christian thinkers tried to square Neoplatonism with Christianity, although the Neoplatonic universe lacked Satan and the concept of emanation was rather different from the Jewish and Christian account of God's conscious creation of the world.

Pelagianism: Religious doctrine associated with a British monk named Pelagius, who lived in the late 4th and early 5th centuries (it is not clear when and how he died). Pelagianism maintained that human beings did not need grace to fulfill God's moral commands and, thus, could achieve salvation through their own efforts. It minimized or denied entirely the debilitating effects of original sin on the human will. Church councils of the early 5th century proclaimed Pelagianism to be a heresy.

serf: An unfree peasant. Although the precise burdens of serfdom varied from manor to manor and even from individual to individual, serfs were generally forbidden to leave the land on which they resided and obliged to perform unpaid labor services for their lord. Although unfree, serfs did have certain legal rights, more than a slave enjoyed. Serfs had a legal right to a family, and their unpaid labor services were for a limited amount of time.

tetrarchy: A term used to describe the political system devised by Emperor Diocletian (retired 305). Under the tetrarchy, the Roman Empire was divided into two halves, an eastern and a western half, and each half had its own emperor. Each emperor had an assistant, or Caesar, who would succeed the emperor at his retirement. Although the tetrarchy failed as a system of succession, the division of the empire into two halves was permanent as of 395.

Biographical Notes

Abd al-Rahman III: Umayyad caliph of Córdoba from 912 to 961, he brought the caliphate to the height of its power in Spain and actively supported scholars, helping to make al-Andalus one of the most important centers of learning on the Europe continent in the 10th century.

Alfred: King of Wessex from 871 to 899. Alfred successfully checked the Viking conquest of England, united Anglo-Saxon England under the leadership of Wessex, and began the process of recapturing Viking-controlled territory. Alfred was also literate and an author, which was rare among 9th-century Christian rulers in Europe—he even translated Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* from Latin into Old English.

Ambrose of Milan: Bishop of Milan from about 374 to 397. Ambrose was a formidable figure, articulating important arguments concerning the spiritual superiority of celibacy to marriage and strengthening emperors in their resolve to remove the Altar of Victory from the Roman Senate. Ambrose showed a rare willingness to defy imperial authority, excommunicating Emperor Theodosius in 390 for a massacre at Thessalonica. Ambrose also had an important influence on Augustine.

Arthur: There is no unambiguous contemporary evidence that Arthur actually existed. However, sources written several hundred years after his supposed lifetime claim that Arthur was a British military leader who defeated the Anglo-Saxons at Mount Badon (modern location unknown) around 500. These sources might possibly echo an authentic oral tradition about Arthur.

Augustine: A North African who served as bishop of Hippo from 395 until his death in 430. A brilliant Latin stylist, Augustine converted to Christianity from paganism and, during the course of controversies with such heretical groups as the Pelagians, became one of the dominant thinkers of his day. He wrote the *Confessions*, the first autobiography in Western literature, and the monumental *City of God*, which contains a spirited defense of Christianity and a scathing critique of classical culture, religion, and philosophy.

Bede the Venerable: An Anglo-Saxon monk and abbot of the monastery at Jarrow, Bede died in 735. Bede was probably the leading intellectual of his day, despite residing in what had once been the far northern reaches of the Roman Empire. His intellectual accomplishments are emblematic of the importance of Anglo-Saxon, British, and Irish monasteries and monks for European intellectual life during the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries.

Charlemagne: King of the Franks from 768 until his death in 814 and crowned emperor in 800. Charlemagne waged war tirelessly along the Frankish frontiers, expanding the Frankish empire to its farthest territorial extent. He also supported ecclesiastical reform and played a decisive role in gathering together the scholars of the Carolingian Renaissance. Already during the 9th century, as the Frankish Empire began to collapse, Charlemagne became a legendary figure.

Clovis: King of the Franks circa 481 to 511. Clovis began the process whereby all of Gaul came under Frankish control; he also established the Merovingian dynasty, which would last until 751. Clovis's conversion to Catholicism was a great boon for that religion and a blow to Arianism, which had been widespread among the barbarians. Clovis's Franks followed him into Catholicism, as did other barbarian groups, often in imitation of their increasingly powerful Frankish neighbors.

Constantine: Proclaimed as emperor by the Roman army, he secured control of the western half of the empire in 312 and the eastern half in 324, ruling over both until his death in 337. As openly autocratic as his predecessor Diocletian, Constantine nonetheless broke with Roman tradition and converted to Christianity. Thanks to the support that he and his successors gave to Christianity, it supplanted paganism as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Diocletian: Roman emperor from 284 to 305. Elevated to the position of emperor by the army, Diocletian restored the Roman frontiers following their collapse during the 3rd century. He divided the empire into an eastern and western half and created the political system known as the *tetrarchy* ("rule of four"). Diocletian also transformed the empire into an unabashedly autocratic state. Deeply conservative, he supported paganism and persecuted Christians.

Julian the Apostate: The last pagan emperor; ruled over both halves of the empire from 361 to 363. Julian attempted to sponsor a pagan revival throughout the Roman Empire and to undo the gains made by Christianity since the time of Constantine. However, his brief reign and personal unpopularity undermined his efforts. Julian died in battle while in his early 30s.

Justinian: Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565. A controversial figure vilified by some of his contemporaries, Justinian barely survived the Nika rebellion of 532, launched by Byzantine sports hooligans. He subsequently embarked on a series of conquests, including North Africa, Italy, and part of Spain. However, his conquests overtaxed the resources of the Byzantine Empire. Justinian also sponsored a major recodification of Roman law and began construction of the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople, which was, for a time, the largest church in the world.

Muhammad: Born between 570 and 580; died in 632. An inhabitant of Mecca and most likely a merchant, Muhammad established the religion of Islam in Arabia during the early 7th century. After moving from Mecca to Medina in 622, Muhammad became ruler of that city and led his followers to victory over Mecca in 630. Upon his death in 632, the Arabs erupted from the Arabian peninsula and, in less than a century, created an empire stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Himalaya Mountains in the east.

Theodoric: King of the Ostrogoths in Italy from 493 to 526. Having lived at Constantinople as a youth and having served in the Roman army, Theodoric appreciated and tried to preserve Roman culture and urban life in Italy, with some success.

Bibliography

Note: To qualify as essential reading, a book had to have been in print when this list was complied. In choosing supplementary readings, I have tried, whenever possible, to privilege books in print over those not in print. However, some out-of-print books are included in the supplementary reading section—they can be found at many libraries and purchased from sellers of used books via the Internet.

Essential Reading:

Brown, Peter. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. ISBN: 0231061005. Superbly written and judicious examination of Christian and pagan debates over the ideal of sexual renunciation.

———. *The World of Late Antiquity*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989. ISBN: 0393958035. Beautifully illustrated book, written with the author's usual flair.

Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: An Abridged Version*. New York: Penguin Books, 1952. ISBN: 0140431896. Abridged version of Gibbon's 18th-century masterpiece.

Hodges, Richard, and David Whitehouse. *Mohammed, Charlemagne, and the Origins of Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983. ISBN: 0801492629. Brief but very influential examination of how archaeology has fueled reevaluations of the Pirenne thesis.

Kahzdan, Alexander, and Giles Constable. *People and Power in Byzantium*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982. ISBN: 0884021033. Brilliantly evocative essays on the nature of the Byzantine Empire and the study of Byzantine history; a masterpiece.

McCormick, Michael. *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986. ISBN: 0521261805. Trailblazing examination of late antique and early medieval political culture and ceremony.

———. *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, 300–900*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0521661021. A work of prodigious scholarship; provides a thorough reexamination of the Pirenne thesis.

Pirenne, Henri. *Mohammed and Charlemagne*. Mineola, NY: Dover Books, 2001. ISBN: 0486420116. A recent edition of Pirenne's highly influential book, which was first published in 1937.

Supplementary Reading:

Abels, Richard. *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship, and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England.* New York: Longman, 1998. Situates Alfred well within his specific historical context.

Alcock, Leslie. *Arthur's Britain*. New York: Penguin Books, 1973. Superb combination of written and archaeological evidence underpins this book, which is especially good at explaining the field of early medieval archaeology to non-specialists.

Augustine. *City of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 1984. A mammoth masterpiece of early Christian thought. Only the hardiest will read it from cover to cover.

———. *Confessions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Augustine's self-evaluation of his journey toward Christianity.

Arnold, Benjamin. *Medieval Germany, 500–1300: A Political Interpretation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. A solid survey of the subject.

Bachrach, Bernard S. *Early Carolingian Warfare*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. Provocative attempt to explain why the Carolingians were so successful militarily.

Barnes, T. D. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981. An excellent place to start for those interested in Constantine.

———. *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982. Invaluable study of the transformation of the later Roman Empire.

Bartlett, Robert. *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. A sound and sensible account of this seemingly odd practice.

Bitel, Lisa. *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996. Cutting-edge scholarship on a region that does not receive as much attention from medieval historians as it should.

Bonnassie, Pierre. *From Slavery to Serfdom in South-Western Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Written by one of the greatest French medievalists of his generation.

Bowersock, Glen W. *Julian the Apostate*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991. Provides a thorough yet concise account of the emperor's short but tumultuous reign.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000. A classic work of biography, first published in 1967.

Brundage, James. *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Enormous work of legal history; filled with fascinating information but notably unsympathetic to Christian strictures. Compare Brundage to Herlihy (below).

Bullough, Donald. *The Age of Charlemagne*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1966. A pithy and thoughtful consideration of the subject, with numerous wonderful illustrations. If this book were in print, I would include it as essential reading.

———. *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002. An outstanding scholar of Carolingian Europe examines a figure at the center of the Carolingian Renaissance.

Burns, T. S. *A History of the Ostrogoths*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984. Detailed examination of a barbarian group that is too often overlooked.

Bury, J. B. *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I. to the Death of Justinian (AD 396–AD 565)*. Two volumes. Mineola, NY: Dover Books, 1978. First published in 1923, this book provides an elegantly written narrative of events. Comparing it to the more modern works in this bibliography will reveal what the writing of history has gained and lost since Bury's time.

Cameron, Averil. *The Later Roman Empire, 284–430*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. A reliable survey.

———. *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, 395–600*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Another reliable survey.

Campbell, James, ed. *The Anglo-Saxons*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991. Wonderful illustrations and incisive essays.

Collins, Roger. *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1989. Examines a crucial period in the history of the Iberian peninsula.

———. *Charlemagne*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. One of the most recent biographies of the legendary emperor.

———. *Early Medieval Europe, 300–1000*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999. Provides the essential facts and historical narrative—a good reference book.

———. *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1995. A sound introduction to the subject.

Cook, Michael. *Muhammad*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. A short but remarkably well-balanced account of Muhammad's life and the historical sources for that life.

Drake, H. A. *Constantine and the Bishops*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Focuses on Constantine's political problems and the issue of persecution.

Fichtenau, Heinrich. *Living in the Tenth Century: Studies in Mentalities and Social Orders*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Takes a very interesting approach to a century that is little studied.

Fletcher, Richard. *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. A lively and thorough examination of the spread of Christianity during the first millennium AD.

Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Knopf, 1987. One of the greatest studies of paganism and Christianity to the time of Constantine. Regrettably out of print (would otherwise be listed under essential reading).

Ganshof, F. L. *Feudalism*. New York: Harper and Row, 1964. A classic.

Geary, Patrick. *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Basic introduction to early medieval history.

Glick, Thomas F. *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979. Important examination of cultural interchange in the Iberian peninsula, but not for beginners.

Goffart, Walter. *Barbarians and Romans, AD 418–584*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. An influential study of barbarian-Roman relations.

Goody, Jack. *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Controversial explanation of Christian teachings regarding marriage.

Heather, Peter. *The Goths*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1998. Solid and informative account of this important barbarian group.

Heinzelmann, Martin. *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. A perceptive study of the main historian of Merovingian Francia.

Herlihy, David. *Medieval Households*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985. Wide-ranging study of medieval families, written by an author sympathetic to medieval Christianity.

Herrin, Judith. *The Formation of Christendom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Provides a panoramic account of Christianity from the 4th to the 9th century, with lots of attention to Byzantium.

Higham, N. J. *King Arthur: Myth-making and History*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. Offers a sane discussion of the historical Arthur and an intriguing explanation of how and why he became a legendary figure.

Hodges, Richard. *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2000. An archaeologist considers how excavations have changed our understanding of early medieval history.

Hoyland, Robert. *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. New York: Longman, 1986. A good place to start for studying the environment that produced Muhammad and Islam.

James, Edward. *Britain in the First Millennium*. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 2001. A panoramic overview of the subject.

———. *The Franks*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1988. Excellent combination of archaeological and written evidence.

Jones, A. H. M. *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602*. Two volumes. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. An enormous account of late Roman institutional history; contains important insights into the fall of the Roman Empire.

Jones, Gwyn. *A History of the Vikings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984. A detailed political history of early medieval Scandinavia.

Kenney, Hugh. *Muslim Spain and Portugal*. New York: Longman, 1997. Basic political overview; a good place to start for those interested in medieval Iberia.

Krautheimer, Richard, and Marvin Trachtenberg. *Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. An excellent study of the city's artistic and architectural history.

Kretzmann, Norman, and Eleonore Stump, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. A collection of essays designed to make Augustine's thought accessible to non-specialists.

Leyser, Karl. *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1979. Important essays on Ottonian Germany.

Mango, Cyril, ed. *The Oxford History of Byzantium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. A well-illustrated collection of essays—not for the beginner.

McKitterick, Rosamond. *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987*. New York: Longman, 1989. A learned survey; especially strong on cultural and intellectual history.

Moorhead, John. *Justinian*. New York: Longman, 1994. A good place to start for those interested in this fascinating emperor.

Nelson, Janet L. *Charles the Bald*. New York: Longman, 1992. A very readable work of early medieval political biography.

Noble, Thomas. *The Republic of Saint Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981. A useful and accessible introduction to an important subject.

Riché, Pierre. *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978. A courageous and intriguing attempt to study what it was like to live in the 8th and 9th centuries.

Safran, Janina. *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in Al-Andalus*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. A very thoughtful examination of Umayyad rule in Islamic Spain.

Sawyer, Peter, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Nicely illustrated; covers Viking activities in various parts of the world, such as Ireland and Russia.

Smith, Rowland B. E. *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995. Interesting examination of the last pagan emperor's thought, as revealed in his writings.

Stafford, Pauline. *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages (Women, Power, and Politics)*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983. Tackles the issue of female rulership and power; fundamental for its subject.

Stenton, Frank. *Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Published in several editions since 1971, this book provides a detailed account of Anglo-Saxon political history.

Straw, Carole. *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991. An original examination of Pope Gregory the Great (died 604), a figure of considerable importance in the history of religion.

Sullivan, Richard. "The Carolingian Age: Reflections on Its Place in the History of the Middle Ages." *Speculum* 64 (1989): 267–306. A good summation of how historians' understanding of Carolingian history has changed over time.

Todd, Malcolm. *The Early Germans*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1992. Takes on the difficult problem of early Germanic history.

Verhulst, Adriaan. *The Carolingian Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002. An expert in the field contemplates the work of his peers. Very useful for assessing trends in research and especially good on agrarian history.

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. *The Frankish Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. First published 1983, this book provides a thorough account of Frankish religious institutions.

———. *The Long-Haired Kings*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. A collection of important and well-written essays on the Merovingian Franks.

Wemple, Suzanne. *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981. Important and pioneering work on the history of women.

Wickham, Chris. *Early Medieval Italy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989. The best work in English on its subject.

Wolfram, Herwig. *History of the Goths*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988. A detailed examination of Gothic history; especially useful on the question of Gothic ethnicity.

———. *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. General consideration of Romans, barbarians, and the question of whether barbarians were responsible for the fall of the empire.

Wood, Ian. *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751*. New York: Longman, 1994. Solid political history of Francia.

Internet Resources

www.fordham.edu/halsall. Home of the medieval internet sourcebook, which contains a large number of primary sources translated into English.

www.georgetown.edu.labyrinth/labyrinth-home.html. A major collection of materials on all aspects of medieval studies.

www.netserf.org. The best site for locating more specialized sites on various aspects of medieval history.

www.the-orb.net. This site contains both translated primary materials and essays by modern historians. The "encyclopedia" section is especially useful.

The Early Middle Ages
Part II

Professor Philip Daileader

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

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Philip Daileader is Associate Professor of History at The College of William and Mary in Virginia. He received his B.A. in history from The Johns Hopkins University in 1990, where he was graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Harvard University in 1991 and 1996, respectively. While a graduate student, he was a four-time winner of the Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching. Prior to taking his position at William and Mary, he taught at the University of Alabama and the State University of New York at New Paltz. He is the recipient of William and Mary's 2004 Alumni Fellowship Award for excellence in teaching. His research focuses on the social, cultural, and religious history of Mediterranean Europe. Among his current research projects are a biography of Saint Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419) and a study of customary law in medieval Catalonia. Dr. Daileader's first book, *True Citizens: Violence, Memory, and Identity in the Medieval Community of Perpignan, 1162–1397,* was published by E. J. Brill Academic Publishers in 2000. A French translation of the book appeared in 2004. His published articles include "The Vanishing Consulates of Catalonia," *Speculum* 74 (1999): 65–94, and "One Will, One Voice, and Equal Love: Papal Elections and the *Liber Pontificalis* in the Early Middle Ages," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 31 (1993): 11–31. As a member of the history faculty at The College of William and Mary, Dr. Daileader won the 2004 Alumni Fellowship Award given "to recognize younger members of the faculty who are particularly outstanding as teachers." This is Dr. Daileader's second course with the Teaching Company; his first, *The High Middle Ages*, was released in 2001.

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The Early Middle Ages
Part II

The Early Middle Ages

Scope:

In this course, we will examine a period of European history that is sometimes designated as the "Dark Ages." Our focus will be on the seven centuries between 300 and 1000, a period most unlike the thousand years that would follow. Our period is dominated by the history of two empires, the Roman and the Carolingian, rather than by the history of independent kingdoms or nation-states. It is a period when the mass movement of ethnic groups, involving hundreds of thousands of individuals sweeping across Europe, was nearly a routine event. It is a period when Europe is buffeted time and time again by external invaders, from the Huns to the Arabs to the Vikings. Many aspects of life at this time will appear strange to you. None of us is a serf, vassal, or lord. None of us is a stylite, living atop tall poles for 20 or 30 years at a time. None of us has undergone trial by ordeal, whereby we prove our case by plunging a hand into a cauldron of boiling water as we try to pick up a pebble resting at the bottom.

Odd as this world may seem at times, it is a world that is recognizably becoming our own, and we should not unquestioningly accept the label of the "Dark Ages." In countless ways, seemingly obscure events and developments from the "Dark Ages" impinge on the lives of people today. This is true in the realm of religion, because our period saw the triumph of Christianity over paganism. This is true in the realm of language, because every word that we speak and write—indeed, the handwriting that we use each and every day—is a product of the historical forces that we will study. This is true in the realm of family life, because many practices that existed in 300, such as *polygyny*, marriage within the kin group, and infanticide, are illegal today and were vanishing or completely gone by the year 1000. This course will attempt to strike a balance between difference and similarity, recognizing what this period bequeathed and failed to bequeath to the present.

The course is divided into two sections. The first half will cover the period from circa 300 to circa 650, which historians sometimes call the *world of Late Antiquity*. Late Antiquity is a period that saw the political collapse of the western half of the Roman Empire and the official acceptance of Christianity by Europe's rulers. Late Antiquity is still, in many ways, part of the ancient world, but the ancient world is changing into the medieval world. The transformation of the ancient into the medieval was highly complex—our goal will be to trace the history of that transformation and to explain why it happened at all. The second half of the course will deal with the period from circa 650 to circa 1000, or the Early Middle Ages proper. With the ancient world gone, Europe developed new political orientations, new military technologies, new cultural forms, and new social categories, among many other things. The second half of the course will highlight not only those developments that separated the Early Middle Ages from the ancient world but also those that would be crucial in determining Europe's future identity and development. This course is at an intermediate academic level. As you will soon perceive, not everything has been said that could have been said about, for example, the birth of Islam. Those with an interest in any of the topics that we consider should regard the lectures as a point from which they can launch their own in-depth explorations. Nonetheless, the lectures are more detailed and more involved than is the case in an introductory survey.

Lecture Thirteen

Rise of the Carolingians

Scope: During the late 7th century and the first half of the 8th century, the Merovingian dynasty found itself pushed aside by the Carolingians, a process that culminated in the deposing of the last Merovingian king by Pepin the Short in 751. The Carolingians could make themselves kings of the Franks by virtue of the prestige they gained via military victory against the Arabs and by virtue of the alliance they struck with the papacy, which needed a new protector after it broke with the Byzantine Empire during the Iconoclasm Controversy. Early Carolingian rulers, such as Charles Martel and Pepin the Short, brought all of Francia under their control and even began to intervene militarily in Italy, reversing the relationship between Italy and northern continental Europe that had existed in the days of the Roman Empire.

Outline

I. Members of the Carolingian family, who overthrew the Merovingian dynasty and became kings of the Franks in their own name, first rose to power as officials in the Merovingian government.

- **A.** Merovingian kings routinely divided up Frankish territory among their sons.
  - **1.** As a result, Merovingian Francia often consisted of a number of different Frankish kingdoms, such as Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy.
  - **2.** These kingdoms often warred against one another, which weakened the Merovingian dynasty.
  - **3.** The warfare made it necessary for Merovingian kings to compete for the support of members of the aristocracy by lavishing land and money on aristocrats, thus reducing their own resources.
- **B.** Between the 630s and the 660s, the Merovingians lost power to officials known as the mayors of the palace.
  - **1.** They ran the government and, most important, controlled appointments to office.
  - **2.** The Carolingians were mayors of the palace in Austrasia.
- **C.** In 687, Austrasia defeated Neustria, allowing the Carolingians to become mayors of the palace there, as well.
- **D.** Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer), a Carolingian but an illegitimate son of the previous Carolingian mayor of the palace, triumphed in a Frankish civil war that lasted from 714 to 719.
  - **1.** Ultimately, he became mayor of the palace of Austrasia and set up a puppet mayor in Neustria.
  - **2.** He then launched a long period of military expansion. He defeated the Arabs at the Battle of Poitiers in 732, and during the 730s, he began the process of bringing southern Francia back under Frankish control.
  - **3.** By 739, nearly the whole of the south and west of modern-day France was under Carolingian control.

II. The Carolingians were able to overthrow the Merovingians, in part, because of the Iconoclasm Controversy, which ruptured relations between the papacy and the Byzantine Empire, forcing the papacy to enter into a political alliance with the up-and-coming Carolingians.

- **A.** Until the early 8th century, Byzantine emperors controlled papal elections by requiring newly elected popes to seek imperial approval before undergoing consecration. The papacy had a strongly eastern orientation.
  - **1.** From 678 to 752, for example, 11 of 13 popes were either Greeks or Syrians.
  - **2.** In 663, the Byzantine emperor visited Rome and was received by the city's inhabitants as its lawful ruler.
  - **3.** In 710, the pope traveled to Constantinople.
  - **4.** However, 710 was the last time that a pope ever went to Constantinople, and no Byzantine emperor would travel to Rome again until the 15th century.
- **B.** In the early 8th century, the papacy refused to pay its taxes to the Byzantine Empire, then defied the Byzantine emperor's policy of iconoclasm (the destruction of religious images). The Byzantine ban on icons was probably a result of the influence on Byzantium of Islam, which was—and is—deeply opposed to religious images.

C. As a result of this falling out over the policy of iconoclasm, the papacy freed itself from Byzantine control and stopped seeking Byzantine approval for the consecration of newly elected popes.

D. The papal revolt against the Byzantine Empire, however, left the papacy vulnerable to the Lombards of northern Italy. The need for protection from the Lombards led the papacy into an alliance with the Carolingian family.

III. Pepin the Short (died 768) was the son of Charles Martel, who died in 741. Pepin was the first Carolingian to take the Frankish royal title, and he did so with papal assistance.

A. In 750, Pepin the Short sent ambassadors to the pope, seeking his approval for the deposition of the last Merovingian ruler. The pope gave his blessing to the deposition—Pepin had the last Merovingian ruler sent to a monastery— and the pope's successor even traveled north of the Alps to anoint Pepin the Short as king in 754. This was the first time that a pope had traveled north of the Alps.

B. In return for this papal assistance, Pepin the Short attacked the Lombards in 755 and 756, marking the first Frankish military intervention south of the Alps. Relations between the Lombards and the Carolingians would be a problem for decades to come.

Suggested Readings:

Bernard S. Bachrach. *Early Carolingian Warfare*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Patrick Geary. *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*. Oxford University Press, 1988.

Thomas Noble. *The Republic of Saint Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

Ian Wood. *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751*. Longman, 1994.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the broader historical consequences and implications of the relationship that arose between the Carolingians and the papacy?
2. Most of our knowledge of the rise of the Carolingians comes from authors who benefited from Carolingian patronage. How might our understanding of the Carolingians change if, for example, we had sources that were more sympathetic to rival aristocratic families or to the Merovingians themselves?

Lecture Fourteen

Charlemagne

Scope: The Carolingian Empire reached its territorial and military high watermark during the very long reign of Charlemagne. His conquests of northeastern Spain, northern Italy, and Germany between the Rhine and Elbe Rivers made the Carolingian Empire the most powerful Christian state on the European continent. Indeed, Charlemagne himself, with the cooperation of Pope Leo III, revived the title of emperor in 800, thereby resurrecting the possibility that Europe, or most of it, would henceforth always have a single overlord. The title of emperor conferred great prestige upon Charlemagne, but it also conferred great problems on the Carolingian dynasty more generally. Indeed, within 30 years of Charlemagne's death, the Carolingian Empire broke apart.

Outline

I. Charlemagne is the most famous member of the Carolingian dynasty. He ruled as king of the Franks from 768 to 814, and he even revived the title of emperor in Europe, undergoing an imperial coronation on Christmas Day in 800.

- **A.** There are many reasons for Charlemagne's fame.
  - **1.** He enjoyed a remarkably long reign from 768 until his death in 814.
  - **2.** No Carolingian did more to expand the Frankish kingdom than Charlemagne.
  - **3.** Crowned emperor by the pope on Christmas Day in 800, Charlemagne was the first emperor in Western Europe in more than 300 years.
- **B.** We know an unusual amount about Charlemagne thanks to a biography of him written by a close confidante named Einhard.
  - **1.** Although Einhard always portrays Charlemagne in the best possible light, he also provides us with a great deal of information about Charlemagne's personality.
  - **2.** Among Einhard's more dubious claims is that Charlemagne knew Greek.
- **C.** At the death of Pepin the Short in 768, the Frankish kingdom was divided between Pepin's two sons, Carloman and Charlemagne. Carloman died in 771, allowing Charlemagne to become sole ruler of the Franks.

II. Charlemagne expanded the Frankish Empire to its greatest territorial extent, waging war tirelessly during the first few decades of his reign.

- **A.** Charlemagne's longest and bloodiest wars were waged against the pagan Saxons, a Germanic group living to the east of the Rhine River.
  - **1.** Although it took decades for Charlemagne to subdue the Saxons and impose Christianity upon them, he succeeded in extending the eastern frontier of the Frankish Empire to the Elbe River, thus conquering a part of Europe that the Romans had never been able to capture.
  - **2.** Although the Saxons succumbed to Charlemagne, they would later become the terror of pagans living to the east of them, much as the Franks had been to the Saxons' ancestors.
- **B.** Just two years after he started his wars against the Saxons, Charlemagne conquered Lombard Italy and took the Lombard royal title in a swift campaign during 773 and 774.
  - **1.** This complicated relations with the Byzantines who claimed that the former Lombard territory was legally theirs.
  - **2.** Charlemagne refused to hand it over; henceforth, northern Italy was ruled by the Carolingians, while central Italy belonged to the popes, and southern Italy was, theoretically, still Byzantine.
- **C.** Charlemagne's invasion of Spain in 778 resulted in a significant defeat at the Battle of Roncesvalles.
  - **1.** This battle formed the basis of the *Song of Roland*, one of the most famous works of medieval literature.
  - **2.** Despite the defeat, Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious, later captured part of northeastern Spain, taking Barcelona in 801.

III. On the one hand, Charlemagne's coronation as emperor in 800 was a momentous event, because it revived the imperial concept in Europe. However, it would appear that the coronation itself was an improvised response to a relatively local problem in Rome.

A. The pope who crowned Charlemagne was Leo III. The relatives of the previous pope were jealous of Leo III, accusing him of fornication and perjury and even going so far as to attack him physically. Their attempt to blind him and cut out his tongue, however, failed.

B. Leo III fled to Charlemagne and asked him to investigate the charges that had been leveled at the pope.

C. Charlemagne traveled to Rome, had the charges investigated, then allowed the pope to clear his name with an oath attesting to his innocence.

D. Charlemagne supported the pope because Carolingian authority was dependent on that of the papacy.

1. The only justification for the Carolingian deposition of the Merovingian dynasty was the fact that the pope had given his blessing to the deed.

2. A discredited pope could mean the discrediting of the Carolingians themselves.

E. Leo III crowned Charlemagne just two days after Charlemagne allowed Leo III to clear himself with a simple oath. Although Einhard claims that Charlemagne had no idea that Leo III was going to crown him as emperor when he went to Christmas mass on December 25, that is highly doubtful. The coronation was probably intended to reward Charlemagne and might have been intended to give more legal force to Charlemagne's judgment concerning Leo III.

IV. By the time of Charlemagne's coronation, however, he was beginning to slow down physically, and the imperial coronation, while conferring great prestige on Charlemagne, also saddled him with serious problems that would burden the Carolingian Empire until its collapse.

A. The revival of the empire caused a problem for Frankish rulers, who would have to balance the unitary concept of empire with the Frankish practice of dividing up their kingdoms among their male sons.

B. The papacy's right to crown emperors gave it leverage that could be used against those who wished to become emperor.

C. When Charlemagne declared in 813 that he wanted his son Louis the Pious to be emperor, he crowned Louis himself, which could suggest that he was trying to free himself and his successors from dependence on the papacy.

D. After Charlemagne's death, however, Western emperors could be crowned only by popes, and Louis was re-crowned in 816.

E. As Charlemagne grew older, he spent more and more time at his imperial palace, located in Aachen.

F. Frankish expansion stopped, and the Carolingians became involved in a war with the Byzantine Empire, which resented the fact that a barbarian Frank had dared to claim the imperial title.

G. In an even more ominous development, people from outside the Carolingian Empire, especially the Vikings, began to raid the empire.

Suggested Readings:

Donald Bullough. *The Age of Charlemagne*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966.

Roger Collins. *Charlemagne*. University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Richard Sullivan. "The Carolingian Age: Reflections on Its Place in the History of the Middle Ages." *Speculum* 64 (1989): 267–306.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does the Charlemagne of legend differ from the historical Charlemagne?
2. Why did subsequent generations come to idealize Charlemagne and to see his reign as a golden age? Were they right to do so?

Lecture Fifteen

Carolingian Christianity

Scope: Carolingian rulers were deeply involved in the affairs of the Christian Church, both because Christian clerics were responsible for interceding with God on behalf of the laity and because rulers had to rely on clerics to staff the royal and imperial bureaucracy. Kings and emperors presided over church councils and dictated theological policy to bishops and even popes. The Carolingians also sponsored Anglo-Saxon missionaries who worked among the German pagans living to the east of the Rhine River, although lasting conversions would have to await Charlemagne's military conquest of this part of Europe. Carolingians also supported ecclesiastical reform in a variety of ways. They sponsored the creation of the parish system and imposed a means of financing those parishes. They reformed monastic life by making Benedictine monasticism normative and predominant in Europe.

Outline

I. Carolingian control over the Christian Church was strong. In the Carolingian world, as in the late Roman world, secular authorities dominated religious authorities, not vice versa.

- **A.** Carolingians regarded their control of the Church as vital, because of the spiritual power wielded by clerics and because they relied on clerics to staff the governmental bureaucracy, which was small and primitive by Roman standards.
  - **1.** Their dependence on literate clerics resulted from the marked decline in lay literacy in Europe by the 8^{th} century.
  - **2.** Furthermore, control of the Church gave the Carolingians a way to foster loyalty and reward followers, by appointing them as bishops and abbots.
- **B.** The Carolingian dynasty controlled the Church in a number of different ways.
  - **1.** The Carolingians exerted control over papal elections; Louis the Pious formalized this control in the *Constitutio Romana* of 824, which gave Carolingian rulers the same power over papal consecrations that Byzantine emperors had once enjoyed.
  - **2.** Carolingian rulers summoned and presided over church councils, sometimes forcing popes to reverse themselves on theological issues. When the papacy and the Byzantine emperor reached an agreement over the policy of iconoclasm, Charlemagne convoked the Council of Frankfurt in 794, condemned the agreement, and forced the pope to denounce it, as well.

II. The Carolingians supported Christian missionaries working among the Germanic pagans living to the east of the Carolingian Empire, regarding the Christianization of the pagans as a necessary component of the pagans' acceptance of Carolingian overlordship.

- **A.** The most famous missionaries to work with Carolingian support were Anglo-Saxons, such as Willibrord (died 739) and Wynfrith/Boniface (died 754), who wished to convert those who had remained in their German homeland rather than migrating to Britain.
- **B.** Although such missionaries established monasteries and bishoprics in pagan territory, the real work of converting the pagan Saxons had to await their military conquest by Charlemagne.
- **C.** The Carolingians preferred to convert Saxons first and to instruct them in the tenets of Christianity later. *The Heliand*, a remarkable Saxon version of the gospel written in the first half of the 9^{th} century, suggests that Christian missionaries presented Christianity to Saxons in a somewhat altered form that was more in keeping with the Saxons' own cultural expectations.

III. In addition to sponsoring missionary activity among pagans, the Carolingians also embarked on a program of ecclesiastical reform within the empire itself.

- **A.** The quality of the Carolingian clergy was lower than the Carolingians would have liked. Ordinary priests were often poorly educated and had a weak grasp of Latin. Bishops often were indistinguishable in their behavior from wealthy lay aristocrats. Monastic observance, too, was sometimes lax.

B. The Carolingians regularized and extended the parish system throughout Europe, trying to guarantee that all Christians in the empire has access to priests and religious services.

C. The Carolingians also strove to create a sound financial basis for local churches by extending the mandatory tithe, an annual payment of (theoretically) 1/10 of each Christian's personal revenue, throughout the empire. The obligation to pay the tithe was not appreciated at the time and would be a sticking point between Christians and the Church for many centuries to come.

D. Louis the Pious and Benedict of Aniane, a monk, strongly supported monastic reform, imposing the Rule of Saint Benedict on monasteries.

E. Although the results of the Carolingian ecclesiastical reforms fell far short of expectations, the reforms nonetheless had concrete consequences and resulted in an increase in the number of parishes and in widespread observance of the Rule of Saint Benedict.

Suggested Readings:

Richard Fletcher. *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity*. University of California Press, 1997.

Judith Herrin. *The Formation of Christendom*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill. *The Frankish Church*. Oxford University Press, 2001 (first published in 1983).

Questions to Consider:

1. Was strict Carolingian control over ecclesiastical matters good or bad for the health of Christianity?
2. Was Carolingian ecclesiastical reform motivated by piety or by self-interest, or is a distinction between the two alien to the manner in which the Carolingians thought?

Lecture Sixteen

The Carolingian Renaissance

Scope: The fear that educational deficiencies were jeopardizing the salvation of souls and interfering with the ability of people to call on God for help drove the Carolingian Renaissance, which flourished in the second half of the 8th century and, especially, in the first half of the 9th century. The scholars of the Carolingian Renaissance attempted to rid the Latin language of the changes that had occurred since the heyday of the Roman Empire and to establish accurate and standardized copies of crucial texts, such as the Bible. This desire to create clean copies of texts led to certain innovations, including various conventions in writing that made (and make) texts easier to read, as well as a new type of handwriting that we use even today.

Outline

I. Charlemagne, although a man of limited educational accomplishments, had a genuine interest in learning and brought together the scholars who launched the Carolingian Renaissance.

- **A.** Charlemagne's interests in scholarship were practical in nature, and they were closely related to his interest in ecclesiastical reform. Indeed, Charlemagne wanted to put scholarship in the service of ecclesiastical reform.
- **B.** Low educational standards meant that priests and other clergy mangled their prayers and the mass, making it (according to Charlemagne) impossible for God to understand what clerics were saying. Bad Latin robbed clerics of their ability to pray for divine favors and mercy.
- **C.** Furthermore, written copies of religious texts, such as the Bible, had become filled with scribal errors and interpolations, which obscured the original meaning of God's word. Certain passages of the Bible might say very different things, depending on where the Bible had been copied.
- **D.** Spoken Latin was evolving into the modern Romance languages.
- **E.** The corruption of the texts and the variance that had developed between the spoken and written word had led to a major problem.

II. The agenda of the Carolingian Renaissance was twofold: to establish correct, legible, and uniform copies of crucial religious texts and to raise the general level of education within the Frankish Empire, especially the educational level of the clergy.

- **A.** Charlemagne recruited scholars from throughout Europe to his court at Aachen. To the extent that the Carolingian Renaissance had a single leader, it was Alcuin of York (died 804), an Anglo-Saxon whom Charlemagne met in Italy.
- **B.** The scholars who participated in the Carolingian Renaissance were all clerics. In this sense, the Carolingian Renaissance was unlike the Italian Renaissance.
- **C.** Although Aachen and the Carolingian court constituted the center of the Carolingian Renaissance, Charlemagne rewarded scholars with ecclesiastical positions throughout his empire, especially in the newly created monasteries and bishoprics of Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe Rivers. As a result, important secondary centers of Carolingian scholarship emerged in recently conquered regions of Germany.
- **D.** Alcuin and other scholars performed the laborious task of preparing new editions of texts, such as the Bible and the Rule of Saint Benedict.
  1. This required them to scour archives for old copies of these texts, collate the various copies they found, identify and eliminate scribal errors and interpolations, then disseminate new, corrected versions of the texts throughout the empire.
  2. The number of books produced during the Carolingian Renaissance dwarfed the number produced in previous centuries.
  3. The Bible prepared by Alcuin did not replace all other versions of the Bible, but it did, at least, establish a norm against which other versions were measured during the Carolingian period.
  4. Copies of the oldest version of the Rule of Saint Benedict were distributed to monasteries to replace the versions that were currently being used.

5. Carolingian scholars also tried to impose a single Christian liturgy throughout the empire—the Gregorian Sacramentary, used by the popes in Rome.

E. The restoration of texts to their original purity fostered, as a side effect, an increased attention to works of classical pagan literature, which survive today only if copied by medieval scholars.

1. This increased attention to classical literature justifies the concept of a Carolingian "Renaissance," but only to a certain extent, because Carolingian scholars were far more wary of pagan literature than Italian humanists would be in the 14th and 15th centuries.
2. For Carolingian scholars, the purpose of studying such pagan authors as Cicero and Virgil was to improve one's grasp of Latin to better understand crucial Christian Latin texts.

F. Charlemagne also attempted to increase the number of schools throughout the empire, making education more available to the laity and clergy alike.

1. However, very few schools were established.
2. The education in the schools for the laity was not appropriate, being almost identical to that of the schools for oblates.
3. Although the educational standards of Christian bishops did rise noticeably, Charlemagne's educational plans had little if any consequence for the laity and the lower ranks of the clergy.

III. Although the Carolingian Renaissance was relatively brief, it had long-term consequences that we live with each and every day.

A. Many of the errors contained in written texts were the result of how people wrote.

1. Handwriting styles varied from country to country; there were no spaces between words, no system of punctuation, and no distinction between upper- and lowercase.
2. Carolingian scholars developed a new, clear form of handwriting called *Carolingian miniscule*, which is essentially the same handwriting we use today.
3. They also developed a rudimentary form of written punctuation, made logical breaks in words at the end of a line, began to distinguish between upper- and lowercase letters, and began to put spaces between words. allofthesechangesmadeitmucheasierto readtheyeliminatedthesourcesofmanyscribalerrors

B. The Carolingian Renaissance, in trying to restore Latin to its original purity, finished it off as a spoken vernacular language. In the centuries before the Carolingian Renaissance, Latin had been evolving into the modern Romance languages of French, Spanish, and Italian. By improving spoken and written Latin, the Carolingian Renaissance drove a wedge between Latin and the vernacular tongues, which by the 9th century, were finally recognized as independent languages.

Suggested Readings:

Donald Bullough. *The Age of Charlemagne*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966.

———. *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*. Brill Academic Publishers, 2002.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the Carolingian Renaissance's single most important contribution to medieval culture and to European culture more generally?
2. What would the scholars of the Carolingian Renaissance have thought about Italian humanists and the Italian Renaissance? Would they have regarded the Italian Renaissance with approval or disapproval?

Lecture Seventeen
Fury of the Northmen

Scope: Beginning in the 8th century, Scandinavians (Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes) fanned out from their homeland in a diaspora stretching from Newfoundland to Russia that involved settlement, the forging of new trading networks, and violent attacks, in varying combinations according to time and place. Viking attacks on the British Isles were serious almost from the moment they started in 789, while Viking attacks on the Continent developed slightly more slowly, reaching a critical stage in the 830s and 840s. The causes of this Viking diaspora are still unclear, because few written sources survive from pagan Scandinavia. However, it is clear that Viking attacks became lengthier and more destructive as the 9th century progressed, terrifying the inhabitants of the Carolingian Empire. Arab attacks from the south and the Magyar invasion from the east compounded the growing insecurity in the Empire.

Outline

I. Viking attacks and settlement during the late 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries, had a profound impact on Europe from Ireland to Russia. The history of Scandinavia during this period, however, is obscure, and the reasons for Viking expansion remain unclear.

- **A.** The term *Viking* was used during the 9th and 10th centuries, but it was relatively rare and its etymology is disputed. More often, the Vikings were simply called the *northmen* on account of their Scandinavian homeland.
- **B.** We have very little written evidence concerning Scandinavia before its Christianization in the 11th century. Viking sagas date only to the 12th and 13th centuries. Although they contain some accurate information about events that happened hundreds of years earlier (such as Leif Eriksson's voyage to Newfoundland circa 1000), it is often difficult to distinguish fact from legend and anachronism in them.
- **C.** The lack of written information makes it difficult to explain why Vikings became so aggressive toward their neighbors in the late 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries.
- **D.** We do know, however, that the Viking diaspora covered a lot of territory, as Vikings settled from Newfoundland and Greenland to Russia, attacking not only the Carolingian Empire but also Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. Vikings even raided Islamic Spain in the 840s, raided into the Mediterranean in the 850s, and attacked Constantinople in 860.

II. Contemporaries regarded the Viking attacks with horror, and those attacks intensified as the 9th century progressed.

- **A.** Starting in 789, Vikings began to attack Anglo-Saxon monasteries, then Carolingian monasteries.
- **B.** The raids quickly intensified in Anglo-Saxon England, which was geographically more vulnerable to the Vikings than was the Continent. During the 830s, Viking raids in Carolingian Europe grew equally frequent and intense.
- **C.** During the 840s, Viking raiders began to penetrate farther and farther inland, and their raids grew more extended as they began to winter in the areas that they intended to pillage during the spring.
- **D.** Carolingian rulers, unable to stop Viking attacks, resorted to paying protection money, or *danegeld*, to the Vikings, which was a great embarrassment to the Carolingian dynasty.
- **E.** The Vikings were successful in attacking the Carolingian Empire largely because of their superior nautical skills and their use of the Viking longboat, which was easily navigated on the ocean and up rivers. Vikings thwarted Carolingian attempts to fortify rivers by carrying their longboats overland and around fortified points.

III. Although the Vikings were the biggest military problem facing Europe in the 9th and 10th centuries, other groups, too, began to attack a Carolingian Empire whose feebleness was growing more apparent.

- **A.** Arab raiders resumed their attacks on Italy and southern France in the 9th century, even attacking Rome in 846. Arab raiders were able to operate for decades from the same location in southern France.

B. A nomadic group known as the Magyars attacked the Carolingian Empire from the east circa 900. By the 930s, Magyar raids were even reaching the western half of the Carolingian Empire.

IV. During the first half of the 10^{th} century, Viking attacks on the Carolingian Europe slowed down and finally stopped entirely.

A. It is not entirely clear why the Viking attacks stopped. Numismatic evidence, which is to say, evidence from coin hoards, suggests that Viking commercial contacts with other parts of the world were disrupted around the 820s but then came back strong in the late 9^{th} and 10^{th} centuries. The Vikings may have abandoned raiding as trading became a more lucrative option once again.

B. The Viking attacks may also have slowed because Europe had been so severely damaged that pillaging it was no longer very lucrative.

C. The Carolingians also employed Vikings to protect Europe from other Vikings, arranging in 911 for the settlement of the Viking Rollo and his followers in Normandy (a region whose name would derive from the northmen who settled there).

D. Another possible reason for the cessation of Viking attacks in Carolingian Europe could be that more and more Vikings were going to Anglo-Saxon England and settling there.

E. Some historians argue that the Viking attacks were beneficial to the European economy. Those who lived through the attacks, however, thought otherwise.

Suggested Readings:

Gwyn Jones. *A History of the Vikings*. Oxford University Press, 1984 (first published in 1968).

Peter Sawyer, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why is there such popular fascination with the Vikings today?

2. How do the nature and consequences of the Viking attacks compare to the nature and consequences of the Germanic migrations during the 4^{th} and 5^{th} centuries?

Lecture Eighteen

Collapse of the Carolingian Empire

Scope: The Carolingian Empire disintegrated during the course of the 9th century. Discredited by its inability to deal with the Viking attacks, the Carolingian dynasty fell prey to civil wars fought among the sons of Louis the Pious, who failed to achieve an acceptable division of his empire among his heirs. As a result, the empire split into various independent kingdoms, most notably West Francia and East Francia. The title of emperor was rendered empty—although still prestigious because of its connections to Roman greatness and Charlemagne, it no longer conferred overlordship of those who bore the inferior title of king. The reign of Charles the Fat, who reunited the empire in the 880s, raised hopes of a Carolingian comeback, but the reign ended pitifully, paving the way for the abandonment of the Carolingians by their subjects.

Outline

I. The Carolingian Empire collapsed during the 9th century as the sources of its 8th-century success disappeared or proved ineffective in new circumstances.

- **A.** Carolingian success was rooted in military conquests, which allowed Carolingian rulers to reward important Frankish aristocrats and maintain their loyalty.
  - **1.** The Frankish military benefited from the appearance of the knight and knightly fighting techniques during the Carolingian period, probably as early as the 8th century.
  - **2.** The key feature of the knightly fighting technique was the use of the lance, tucked under the arm, to impale the enemy or knock him off his horse.
  - **3.** This accomplishment was the result of two innovations: the stirrup and the high-backed saddle.
- **B.** The Carolingians also benefited from dynastic luck. The Carolingians, like the Merovingians, divided up their kingdom among various sons upon the death of the last ruler. However, during the 8th and early 9th centuries, Carolingian succession was fairly simple, with only one or two sons inheriting. Such simple successions allowed the Carolingians to avoid the dynastic civil wars that had plagued the Merovingians.
- **C.** During the 9th century, however, Carolingian military success turned to defeat at the hands of the Vikings, while the Carolingians' dynastic luck ran out as competing Carolingians with claims to the throne warred against one another.

II. During the 830s, relations broke down among Louis the Pious and his sons. When Louis the Pious died in 840, civil war broke out among his three surviving sons.

- **A.** By his first wife, Ermengard, Louis the Pious had three sons: Lothar, Pippin, and Louis the German. Louis made plans in 817 for the eventual division of his lands among his three sons and had the oldest, Lothar, crowned as co-emperor in 823.
- **B.** After Ermengard's death, Louis the Pious married Judith and had a son by her, Charles the Bald.
- **C.** A fierce rivalry broke out among Louis's sons.
  - **1.** The three sons of Ermengard resented Charles the Bald, while Judith demanded that Louis arrange for Charles to inherit part of Louis's lands after his death.
  - **2.** Pippin and Louis the German resented Lothar, too, because he had a share in the imperial title, which implied that he was the overlord of both Pippin and Louis the German, who would be mere kings.
- **D.** During the 830s, Louis the Pious's three sons twice imprisoned him and tried to seize control of the empire, but each time, Pippin and Louis the German abandoned their older brother and freed their father. Upon the death of Pippin in 838, Louis the Pious allotted Pippin's share to Charles the Bald, but Lothar, at least, refused to accept this.
- **E.** When Louis the Pious died, a bloody civil war broke out, with Lothar fighting against Louis the German and Charles the Bald, trying to seize their shares of the inheritance.

III. The civil war among Louis the Pious's sons ended in 843 with the Treaty of Verdun, which formalized the partition of the empire.

A. The treaty divided the empire into three roughly equal parts: West Francia, ruled by Charles the Bald; the middle kingdom, or Lotharingia, ruled by Lothar; and East Francia, ruled by Louis the German.

B. Although Lothar retained the imperial title, Louis the German and Charles the Bald were, in reality, independent. Never again would the imperial title confer actual authority over the various kings of Europe.

C. After the Treaty of Verdun, the boundaries of these three kingdoms shifted often. Lotharingia disappeared in the 850s, and the Carolingian rulers of West Francia and East Francia went to war with each other in 858.

IV. For a brief period in the 880s, a single Carolingian reunited the various kingdoms under his rule. Some contemporaries hoped for a restoration of the Carolingian dynasty to its former greatness and more effective military action against the Vikings.

A. In 884, Emperor Charles the Fat became ruler of all the Carolingian territories.

B. However, when Vikings besieged Paris in 885, Charles the Fat merely paid them the *danegeld*, despite the brave resistance led by Count Odo of Paris.

C. A group of Frankish aristocrats deposed Charles the Fat in 887 after his physical and mental collapse.

Suggested Readings:

Janet L. Nelson. *Charles the Bald*. Longman, 1992.

Rosamond McKitterick. *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987*. Longman, 1989.

Questions to Consider:

1. Which is more surprising: the speed with which the fortunes of the Carolingians changed during the 9th century or the ability of the Carolingians to continue as the empire's ruling dynasty into the 10th century?
2. Medieval politics were dynastic, closely linked to the human life cycle. Births, marriages, and deaths always constituted major events in a ruler's life. During the medieval and early modern periods, which other European rulers found themselves, like Louis the Pious, undone by dynastic accidents and events?

Lecture Nineteen

The Birth of France and Germany

Scope: The collapse of the Carolingian Empire resulted in the emergence of the Capetians and the Ottonians as the new ruling dynasties in West Francia and East Francia, respectively. Royal authority in France was badly diminished in the 10^{th} and 11^{th} centuries, with actual power residing in the hands of local castellans or, occasionally, counts. In East Francia, on the other hand, the Ottonian dynasty managed to avoid the devolution of power. They even became, for a time, the strongest Christian dynasty on the European continent, and their kingdom became the cornerstone of the Holy Roman Empire when the Ottonians took the imperial title for themselves. As West Francia and East Francia separated and adopted their own ruling dynasties, they also began to adopt new identities as the Kingdom of France and the Kingdom of Germany.

Outline

I. As the Carolingian Empire collapsed during the 9^{th} century, Frankish and local aristocrats seized power in the empire's various regions. This process is known as the *devolution* of power.

- **A.** Under Charlemagne and even under the Louis the Pious, Carolingian rulers maintained a certain amount of control over the aristocracy; many members of the aristocracy served the Carolingians as local officials known as dukes and counts.
- **B.** After the death of Louis the Pious, however, counts broke free of Carolingian control and made themselves autonomous within their counties.
    1. Carolingian rulers began to give multiple counties to individual counts.
    2. The office of count became hereditary as Carolingian rulers lost the ability to replace disloyal counts.
    3. Counts took for themselves powers that had previously been reserved for Carolingian kings.
    4. They made lands in their counties their own personal property.
    5. They stopped passing along to the Carolingian kings the fines they collected in public law courts.
    6. They took over the right to make important ecclesiastical appointments.
    7. Kings stopped visiting large parts of territories that theoretically still belonged to them.
- **C.** The fragmentation of Carolingian kingdoms into independent counties and duchies was more severe in West Francia than in East Francia.
- **D.** During the 10^{th} century, the trajectories of West Francia and East Francia further diverged, as West Francia continued to fragment while the situation in East Francia stabilized. There are a number of reasons why West Francia fragmented so completely while East Francia did not.
    1. The Viking raids had been worse in West Francia than in East Francia.
    2. East Francia's eastern frontier with Slavs gave aristocrats an outlet for their bellicosity.

II. Across much of West Francia, castellans (individuals who possessed one or more castles) broke free of the counts' control in the late 10^{th} and early 11^{th} centuries.

- **A.** Carolingian rulers and counts regarded castles as public buildings to be held by public officials, who could be appointed and removed at royal or comital (pertaining to a count) discretion.
- **B.** Toward the year 1000, castellans turned their castles into their own private property and built, without official sanction, other castles that were made of stone rather than wood.
- **C.** The building of stone castles became much more frequent in West Francia, because castellans wished to dominate the countryside from their castles and to profit from the labor of the peasants who lived nearby.
- **D.** The castellans seized financial powers, collecting taxes that had previously gone to the courts, and judicial powers, setting up their own private law courts.
- **E.** The growth in the number of castles also resulted in a growing number of knights, whom castellans used as muscle to impose and enforce their rights of lordship over the peasantry.
- **F.** In 987, the Capetian family supplanted the Carolingians as West Francia's ruling dynasty. By that time, royal authority in France was gravely reduced, and it continued to shrink during the 11^{th} century, extending (to the extent that it extended anywhere) only to the area around Paris itself.

III. The history of East Francia in the 10^{th} century differed from the history of West Francia. Instead of more fragmentation, East Francia experienced a resurgence of royal authority under the Ottonian dynasty, which created the Holy Roman Empire.

A. Carolingian rule in East Francia ended in 911, and the first Ottonian king, Henry I (died 936), came to the throne in 919. The relatively early accession of the Ottonians benefited them—royal authority had not yet collapsed too badly.

B. Otto I won a crushing military victory over the Magyars at the Battle of Lech in 955. The Ottonian victory over those who were menacing East Francia gave the dynasty much prestige.

C. Although the title of emperor had died out in the early 10^{th} century, Otto I had himself crowned as emperor in 962 by the pope. This coronation marks the birth of the Holy Roman Empire, which included not just East Francia, but also northern Italy and (as of 1032) the Kingdom of Burgundy.

D. Otto I and subsequent Ottonian rulers exercised strict control over the Church and papacy, much as the Carolingians had at their empire's height. Ottonian rulers controlled papal elections.

E. After the severing of East Francia from West Francia and the accession of the Ottonian dynasty, East Francia developed its own identity distinct from that of the Franks. By about 1000, contemporaries were abandoning the phrase *regnum orientale Francorum* ("Eastern Kingdom of the Franks") and instead speaking of the *regnum teutonicum* ("German Kingdom" or "Kingdom of Germany").

Suggested Readings:

Benjamin Arnold. *Medieval Germany, 500–1300: A Political Interpretation*. University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Heinrich Fichtenau. *Living in the Tenth Century: Studies in Mentalities and Social Orders*. University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Karl Leyser. *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society*. Blackwell, 1979.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it fortunate or unfortunate that Europe, for the second millennium of its existence, would consist of independent kingdoms and territories rather than a unified empire?
2. To what extent did Ottonian rulers continue Carolingian traditions and to what extent did they forge their own uniquely Ottonian approach to rulership?

Lecture Twenty

England in the Age of Alfred

Scope: The Viking attacks on Britain differed from those on the Continent in that Vikings conquered a number of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, made themselves the new rulers in those kingdoms, and settled a large section of eastern and northern England known as the *Danelaw*. King Alfred of Wessex stopped the Viking advance in the late 9th century and even succeeded in retaking the Danelaw, thus achieving a degree of political unification that had not existed before the Viking attacks. England, unlike the Continent, then experienced a second wave of highly successful Viking attacks beginning in the 980s. However, the Vikings themselves did not become the new masters of England. Rather, as a result of the Norman Conquest of 1066, a group of Christianized, French-speaking Viking descendants became the new ruling class in England.

Outline

I. Viking raids had an even more dramatic impact on the British Isles than they had on the Carolingian Empire, because the British Isles experienced Viking conquest and settlement on a much greater scale.

- **A.** Before the Viking attacks, various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms existed in England.
  - **1.** Northumbria became the cultural center of England, producing some of the period's most famous thinkers and artistic works.
  - **2.** Mercia attained a degree of political supremacy over other kingdoms, especially during the reign of Offa (died 796).
  - **3.** One of Offa's most remarkable legacies was Offa's Dyke, a giant earthen barrier built between England and Wales, evidence of Offa's power to mobilize resources.
- **B.** Because no part of the British Isles is remote from the sea, Viking attacks became a very serious threat instantly. By the middle of the 9th century, no year went by without a Viking raid.
- **C.** In 865, a large Danish army arrived in eastern England. Within a few years, the Danes had conquered three Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (Northumbria, East Anglia, and Mercia) and appeared well on their way to conquering the whole of Anglo-Saxon England. By 900, the only surviving Anglo-Saxon kingdom was Wessex.
- **D.** Under the leadership of King Alfred the Great (ruled 871–899), however, Wessex survived and started to regain some of the land conquered and settled by the Danes, known as the *Danelaw*.
- **E.** Alfred was unusually well educated for a 9th-century ruler. Not only was he literate, but he had translated Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, an important 6th-century philosophical treatise, from Latin into Old English. Like Charlemagne, he attempted to carry out a program of educational reform through a circle of court intellectuals.
- **F.** By 959, the kings of Wessex had succeeded in conquering the Danelaw. Whereas the Viking raids acted as a catalyst for political fragmentation in the Carolingian Empire, they resulted in the unification of Anglo-Saxon England under the leadership of Wessex.

II. By the middle of the 10th century, Viking raids had subsided on the Continent and in England. However, Anglo-Saxon England, unlike the Continent, experienced a resurgence of Viking attacks in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, which vastly complicated the political history of England.

- **A.** Viking attacks on England resumed in the 980s and quickly became a grave threat. If anything, these attacks were even more serious than the first wave of Viking attacks, because Denmark and Norway had been united under the rulership of Harald Bluetooth.
- **B.** King Aethelred of England (died 1016) met the emerging threat in several ways.
  - **1.** He resumed payment of the *danegeld* to the Vikings.
  - **2.** He sought the assistance of Normandy, forging an alliance with the duke of Normandy by marrying his daughter.
  - **3.** Mistrusting the Danes, who had settled in England, and their descendants, Aethelred, in 1002, ordered a massacre of all Danes in his kingdom. Some, but not all, Danes in England were killed. This action, however, backfired, because it enraged the Scandinavians.

C. In 1013, King Swein of Denmark captured London and forced the Anglo-Saxon kings of England into exile in Normandy, where they remained until 1042, when they returned peacefully to England.

III. For a brief period in the 11^{th} century, England formed part of a Scandinavian Empire. However, in another one of the unexpected twists that characterize early medieval English history, the ultimate consequence of the second wave of Viking attacks was the conquest of Anglo-Saxon England by Normandy.

- **A.** Of the barbarian groups who entered the Roman Empire in the 4^{th} and 5^{th} centuries and established kingdoms, the Anglo-Saxons had a remarkably long run. Their kingdom outlasted the Ostrogoths' and the Visigoths' by several centuries.
- **B.** However, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom came to an end in the 11^{th} century, specifically in 1066.
  - **1.** In 1066, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England died without a direct male heir. The king of Norway, Harald Hardrada, and the duke of Normandy, William the Bastard, both claimed the throne for themselves on account of their blood ties to the Anglo-Saxon royal house.
  - **2.** The Anglo-Saxons, however, proclaimed one of their own, named Harold, as king.
  - **3.** Anglo-Saxon Harold defeated Norwegian Harald in 1066 at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. However, the victory was so costly to the Anglo-Saxons that they were, in turn, defeated by William the Bastard at the Battle of Hastings later that same year.
- **C.** The Norman Conquest of England was to have enormous consequences.
  - **1.** Although descendants of the Scandinavian Vikings, the Normans had been living in France for so long that their mother tongue was now French.
  - **2.** Up to this time, English culture was very much shaped by the North Sea/Scandinavian region.
  - **3.** After the Norman conquest, England moved into a continental orbit and would be ruled for centuries by a French-speaking aristocracy with the most highly developed government in Christian Western Europe.

Suggested Readings:

Richard Abels. *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship, and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*. Longman, 1998.

James Campbell, ed. *The Anglo-Saxons*. Penguin Books, 1991 (first published in 1982).

Frank Stenton. *Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford University Press, 2001 (first published in 1971).

Questions to Consider:

1. Should Alfred be considered a ruler equal in importance and significance to Charlemagne?
2. If Harald Hardrada had triumphed over both of his adversaries and the Norman Conquest of 1066 became the Norwegian Conquest of 1066, how would the histories of England and Europe have been different?

Lecture Twenty-One

Al-Andalus—Islamic Spain

Scope: Islamic Spain was, during the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries, one of the most dynamic and developed areas of the European continent. Very well connected to the rest of the world commercially, al-Andalus had large cities, an unusual level of religious and ethnic diversity, a commercial economy, and a sophisticated high culture. One does not wish to romanticize the history of Spain during this period: High politics in al-Andalus were brutal, while Jews and Christians were subjected to legal disabilities and religious restrictions. Nonetheless, the nature of al-Andalus would make it an important site of cultural exchange, especially as Christian Europe's economy took off during the High Middle Ages.

Outline

I. Islamic Spain, or al-Andalus, was remarkable in the Early Middle Ages for its highly developed intellectual and economic life, as well as its ethnic and religious diversity. These accomplishments were a result of the Arab conquest of most of Visigothic Spain between 711 and 716.

- **A.** In 750, the Abbasid dynasty overthrew the Umayyad caliphs and moved the caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad. A member of the Umayyad dynasty, Abd al-Rahman I, fled to Spain and established himself as ruler (*emir*) there in 756, proclaiming the political independence of al-Andalus. The Umayyad dynasty ruled in Spain until 1031.
- **B.** The Umayyad dynasty reached its zenith during the reign of Abd al-Rahman III (ruled 912–961). He was ruthless and creative in suppressing opponents and even took the title of caliph (*khalifa*) for himself in 929, thus establishing his religious independence from the Abbasid caliphs.
- **C.** During the late 10th century, Umayyad caliphs came under the control of an official known as al-Mansur (died 1002).
  - **1.** Al-Mansur garnered popular support for himself by winning notable military victories against the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain.
  - **2.** Among his most memorable triumphs was the sack of the town of Santiago de Compostela, where the most famous Christian shrine in Spain was located.
  - **3.** Al-Mansur's military campaigns diverted attention away from the fact that he had reduced the caliphs in Spain to figureheads.
- **D.** After al-Mansur's death in 1002, his son Sanjul tried to make himself caliph, causing resentment among other members of the Umayyad family and the Arab aristocracy in general.
  - **1.** The built-up resentment of Arab aristocrats against al-Mansur and Sanjul ultimately led to a civil war in al-Andalus that ended with the abolition of the Spanish caliphate in 1031.
  - **2.** Al-Andalus fragmented into some two dozen small kingdoms that were weaker than the Christian kingdoms of the north, such as Castile and Aragon.

II. As a result of the Arab conquest of Spain, al-Andalus became an important point of contact between Islam and Christendom. During the Early Middle Ages, however, Christendom had much to borrow from the Arab world but not much to offer in return.

- **A.** Al-Andalus was far more urbanized than any area of Christian Europe, including Italy. The largest Islamic city in Spain had a population that was perhaps 10 times as large as the largest Christian city in Europe.
- **B.** Spain was actively involved in the commercial life of the Islamic world and, thereby, found itself in indirect contact with China and India.
  - **1.** Western Europe was not yet plugged into this trading network.
  - **2.** Spain was especially valuable as a source of raw materials, including metals, wood, and foodstuffs.
  - **3.** But Western Europe did not benefit much from the trade of these raw materials, because it was relatively poor.
- **C.** The Arabs introduced new technologies and agricultural practices to Spain, where the arid environment was fairly similar to the environment found in the Arabs' homeland.
  - **1.** The Arabs introduced new irrigation techniques.

2. They introduced new plants and crops, such as rice, sugar cane, and cotton.
3. The introduction of new technologies and crops began almost immediately after the arrival of the Arabs in Spain.

D. The 10th century, generally regarded as an intellectual low point in a Europe still experiencing the consequences of Viking attacks, witnessed a remarkable upsurge in the cultural and intellectual life of al-Andalus.

1. Umayyad rulers collected large numbers of Greek and Arabic manuscripts, especially works concerning mathematics and astronomy.
2. So great was Islamic Spain's intellectual prestige in the 10th century that the leading mathematician of 10th-century Europe, Gerbert of Aurillac, traveled to Islamic Spain in order to gain a mastery of his subject.

III. Before the year 1000, al-Andalus was the only part of Europe where large numbers of Muslims, Jews, and Christians (known here as *Mozarabs*) lived side by side for centuries.

A. Spanish Muslims treated Jews and Mozarabs in accordance with general Islamic policy. Both groups were permitted to practice their religion. However, they had to pay a special tax (*jizya*) as a sign of their submission to Islamic rulers, and they were forbidden to seek converts among Muslims.

B. Over time, the number of Muslims rose and the number of Mozarabs shrank as Christians converted to Islam. It appears that between 900 and 1000, Islam became the religion of a majority of those living in al-Andalus. However, the collapse of the caliphate in 1031 would eventually make possible the Christian reconquest of Spain, one of the major events of the High Middle Ages.

Suggested Readings:

Roger Collins. *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000*. Palgrave MacMillan, 1995.

Thomas F. Glick. *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*. Princeton University Press, 1979.

Hugh Kennedy. *Muslim Spain and Portugal*. Longman, 1997.

Janina Safran. *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in Al-Andalus*. Harvard University Press, 2001.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the history of Muslim-Christian interaction in early medieval Europe have any bearing on present-day relations between Islam and Christianity?
2. How would later Iberian history be shaped by the experience of Islamic rule across most of the peninsula for hundreds of years?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Carolingian Europe—Gateway to the Middle Ages

Scope: Locating the dividing line between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages is difficult and, to some extent, a matter of personal judgment. However, one can make the case that, during the Carolingian period, Europe stepped decisively out of its classical past and into its medieval present. Many institutions that we regard as quintessentially medieval emerged under the Carolingians and spread throughout Europe, together with the Carolingians and Franks themselves. We have already witnessed the birth of knights and knightly fighting techniques in the Carolingian world. In this lecture, we will examine other institutions that likewise brought Europe into the Middle Ages: the manor and serfdom, which introduced new elements into the agrarian life of Europe; feudalism, which restructured relationships within the aristocracy; and trial by ordeal, which introduced new elements into the European legal system.

Outline

I. The Early Middle Ages witnessed a switch from Roman *latifundia* to the medieval manor (also known as the bipartite estate). Not coincidentally, the Early Middle Ages also saw a decline in large-scale agricultural slavery and the rise of a new type of peasant servitude, namely, serfdom.

- **A.** Roman estates, or *latifundia*, consisted of two parts: tenancies and the demesne.
  - **1.** Tenancies consisted of land rented out by the estate owner to others, who paid rent.
  - **2.** The demesne consisted of land that the estate's owner farmed directly, using wage labor and slave labor.
  - **3.** The demesne tended to be considerably larger than the tenancies on a Roman estate.
- **B.** The medieval manor, like the Roman estate, consisted of tenancies and the demesne. However, the demesne was smaller and the tenancies were larger on a manor. Furthermore, the tenancies and the demesne were closely linked on a medieval manor, and the demesne was farmed not by slave gangs but by serfs.
- **C.** Serfdom and slavery share several characteristics in common.
  - **1.** The serf, like the slave, is a legally unfree person, owned by someone or something.
  - **2.** Serfdom, like slavery, is a hereditary status. The children of two serfs are themselves serfs.
  - **3.** In the Early Middle Ages, contemporaries used the same Latin word, *servus*, for both, and one does not wish to establish too schematic a distinction between serfdom and slavery.
- **D.** However, serfdom was less onerous than slavery in several important respects.
  - **1.** Agricultural slaves lived in barracks. Serfs lived with their families in individual houses on tenancies.
  - **2.** Slaves, theoretically, owed unlimited unpaid labor services to their owners, chiefly on the demesne. Serfs owed unpaid labor services on the demesne, too, but these services were for fixed amounts of time (by 1000, three days per week was relatively common). When serfs were not working on the demesne, they worked on their tenancies, supporting themselves and keeping a part of what they produced.
  - **3.** Slaves had no legal right to a family, but serfs did. Serfs could be bought and sold, but only as family units, and they had to be bought or sold together with the land on which they worked.
- **E.** The transition from the Roman estate to the medieval manor, and from slavery to serfdom, is poorly documented in the historical record. However, it would appear that the manor and serfdom arose in Merovingian Francia, specifically in the area around Paris, in the 7th century and spread with the Frankish Empire in the 8th and 9th centuries.

II. In addition to spreading the manor and serfdom, Carolingians were also responsible for spreading feudalism across much of Europe.

- **A.** In this course, we will define feudalism as a hierarchical relationship of honorable dependence existing between two people, most often aristocrats. The superior party in a feudal relationship was the lord; the inferior party was the vassal.

B. The lord provided the vassal with a source of revenue, often in the form of land, known as a *feudum* (hence, the term *feudalism*).

C. The lord owed the vassal maintenance (which usually took the form of a fief) and protection.

D. The vassal owed the lord aid and counsel. Aid meant military service, performed with equipment secured with the help of the fief and the revenue it provided.

E. Vassals and lords entered into feudal relationships through a ceremony known as commendation.

F. Fiefs and commendation had both existed in the later Roman Empire; however, they existed independently of one another. Eighth-century Carolingians combined the practice of giving fiefs with the ceremony of commendation, and they made military service the normal form of service demanded of those who received fiefs. In this sense, the Carolingians invented feudalism and brought it with them to conquered territories.

III. The Carolingians were also responsible for a rise in the popularity of trial by ordeal, a practice that fascinates, puzzles, and repulses many in the modern world.

A. Trial by ordeal was unknown among the Romans, and most of the barbarian groups who entered the Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th centuries seem not to have used it either.

B. The early Franks, however, did use trial by ordeal, specifically the ordeal of boiling water, which spread to neighboring barbarian kingdoms in the 7th and 8th centuries.

C. The Carolingians spread the use of trial by ordeal to conquered territories and devised new types of ordeal, such as the ordeal of cold water and the ordeal of hot iron.

D. Trial by ordeal was not the legal procedure of first resort. It was employed in cases where ordinary witness testimony and compurgation (allowing defendants to clear themselves by swearing, along with a certain number of oath-helpers, to their innocence) were not applicable.

E. Ninth-century thinkers debated the legitimacy of trial by ordeal. Bishop Agobard of Lyon and others developed a sophisticated critique of the practice. However, trial by ordeal continued to flourish in Europe until the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) condemned it.

Suggested Readings:

Robert Bartlett. *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal*. Oxford University Press, 1986.

Pierre Bonnassie. *From Slavery to Serfdom in Southwestern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

F. L. Ganshof. *Feudalism*. Harper and Row, 1964.

Adrian Verhulst. *The Carolingian Economy*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Questions to Consider:

1. Modern society does not know personal ties of dependence, such as those that structured society in the Middle Ages. Is the absence of these ties of personal dependence a good or a bad thing?

2. Is trial by ordeal evidence of the Middle Ages' fundamentally irrational nature? Should its abandonment be seen as the triumph of rationality over irrationality as humans began to rely more and more on their ability to reason? Or is trial by ordeal, at some level, rational?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Family Life—How Then Became Now

Scope: The family underwent a number of structural changes during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, and these changes illustrate how Roman and Germanic culture fused to produce the medieval world. Germanic naming patterns triumphed over Roman ones. The Germanic practices of brideprice and morning-gift, which required the conveyance of property from the groom and groom's family to the bride and bride's family, supplanted the Roman dowry, which required the bride's family to provide the property to be conveyed. Roman insistence that a legal marriage required the free consent of both spouses survived Germanic indifference to the question of free consent. The main force reshaping family life, however, was the Christian Church, which was hostile to endogamy (marriage within the kin group), polygyny, divorce, remarriage, infanticide, concubinage, and possibly, adoption. Why the Christian Church opposed all these practices is still debated, but the legacy of the changes wrought on the family by Christianity is still with us today.

Outline

I. During Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, as Roman and Germanic culture fused, family practices changed.

- **A.** Roman and Germanic families shared several important traits.
  - **1.** Roman and Germanic social structures were based on households rather than on the family per se. Households included not only individuals related by blood but others, such as servants, clients, property, and so on.
  - **2.** Heads of the household had extensive powers over the members, including the acceptance or rejection of newborns.
  - **3.** Both Romans and Germans practiced marriage but accepted other long-term relationships between men and women, such as concubinage, as respectable alternatives to marriage. Roman and Germanic law expected parents to play an important role in arranging marriages for their children.
- **B.** Yet there were important differences in Roman and Germanic familial practices.
  - **1.** Romans and Germans used different naming patterns to signify biological relationships.
  - **2.** In Roman marriage, property was transferred from the bride and bride's family to the groom; in Germanic marriage, the property transfer at marriage went from the groom and groom's family to the bride and bride's family.
  - **3.** Roman marriage required the freely given consent of the two spouses, but Germanic marriage did not.
  - **4.** Barbarians practiced polygyny (males could be married to several wives simultaneously), but Romans did not.
- **C.** By the year 1000, Germanic naming patterns and marital property transfers had outlasted Roman ones.

II. Many of the most important changes in family life, however, were not simply the result of Roman-Germanic cultural fusion. Rather, they were the result of Christianity's triumph over paganism. Christianity was deeply hostile to a number of Roman and Germanic familial practices, which Christian officials attempted to eradicate.

- **A.** Christianity's acceptance of Roman marital theory ensured that the free consent of spouses would be the defining element in medieval marriage, and Christian rejection of polygyny would result in its gradual disappearance from Europe.
- **B.** Although not every Christian theologian shared precisely the same opinion about familial practices, Christian clergy condemned behavior that Romans and barbarians found acceptable and even desirable, using spiritual and civil sanctions to enforce these condemnations.
  - **1.** Romans and barbarians favored endogamy, or marriage within the kin group, while Christianity promoted exogamy, or marriage outside the kin group.
  - **2.** Christianity condemned infanticide and, perhaps, also opposed adoption, preferring godparenthood.
  - **3.** Christianity strongly opposed divorce, as well as the remarriage of widows and widowers.
  - **4.** Christianity condemned concubinage.

C. By the year 1000, polygyny had been eliminated. Infanticide and endogamy had lost their social acceptability and were, in all likelihood, rarer—the Church had created an extensive incest taboo, increasing the prohibited degrees of kinship to include sixth cousins. Adoption was much rarer. Divorce and remarriage were also more difficult in theory and seemingly less common in reality. Concubinage, however, remained widespread among the laity and even among clerics.

III. Modern historians have advanced different theories that attempt to explain why Christianity sought to reshape the family so dramatically.

A. One influential theory has been put forward by Jack Goody. According to Goody, the Church attacked these practices because they were strategies of heirship, designed to maximize the possibility of producing heirs who could inherit one's patrimony. Christianity attacked the cohesiveness of the family and reduced the likelihood of the family's producing heirs, thereby increasing the odds that it would then receive property in the form of pious bequests.

B. David Herlihy has critiqued Goody's thesis and offered an alternative explanation, arguing that Christianity condemned the practices it did for reasons of morality, theology, and even social utility.

C. Both Goody and Herlihy have some evidence to support their contentions, yet both theories also leave important questions unanswered. Given the paucity of evidence, it is doubtful that a wholly satisfactory explanation will ever be advanced.

Suggested Readings:

James Brundage. *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Jack Goody. *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

David Herlihy. *Medieval Households*. Harvard University Press, 1985.

Suzanne Wemple. *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900*. University of Philadelphia Press, 1981.

Questions to Consider:

1. As regards changes in the early medieval family, do Goody's explanations or Herlihy's explanations seem more convincing to you?
2. How might the changes wrought on the family by Christianity have affected the lives and status of women? Were these changes harmful or beneficial to those responsible for rearing children?

Lecture Twenty-Four
Long Shadows and the Dark Ages Revisited

Scope: During the 20th century, historical research has modified considerably the ideas of Edward Gibbon and Henri Pirenne concerning the transition from the ancient to the medieval world. Historians today are less willing than Gibbon was to identify Christianity as the cause and barbarians as the instrument of the Roman Empire's fall. Historians now pay more attention to regional variations in the empire's collapse and take the implications of regional variations into greater account. A good number of present-day historians see demographic and, like Pirenne, economic changes at the root of the empire's problems. However, Pirenne overstated the strength of the later Roman economy, which was in decline well before the Arab expansion of the 7th century. The Carolingian economy, rather than sinking to a low point, now appears to have been recovering, at least during the late 8th and early 9th centuries. However, the fields of late antique and early medieval history continue to see further discoveries and refinements of interpretation.

Outline

I. Gibbon was aware of the fact that only the western half of the Roman Empire disintegrated in the 5th century. However, modern historians now recognize the implications of the east's survival for Gibbon's own theory, and they explain western collapse and eastern survival by pointing to the differences between the empire's two halves.

- **A.** Gibbon's argument that Christianity sapped the will of the Romans to resist is echoed in certain modern historians.
  - **1.** According to these historians, Christianity placed a severe financial burden on the empire, because Christian clerics were economically unproductive but had to be supported.
  - **2.** Some contemporary evidence does state that inhabitants of the empire were unwilling to resist the barbarians, but not because the inhabitants were wholly focused on the next world. Rather, some inhabitants resented the Roman tax burden and welcomed the barbarians as liberators.
- **B.** Christianity was stronger in the eastern half of the empire than the western half, yet it was the western half that collapsed. Therefore, it is difficult to see Christianity as the determining factor in the empire's disintegration.
- **C.** Historians now emphasize those factors that differentiated east and west and permitted the former but not the latter to maintain its political cohesion in the face of barbarian migration.
  - **1.** Geography favored the east over the west. Much of the eastern half of the empire was inaccessible to Germanic tribes, but no part of the empire's western half was similarly inaccessible.
  - **2.** The eastern half of the empire had greater economic and demographic resources.

II. Differentiating between west and east is crucial to understanding the fall of the Roman Empire, but it fails to explain why the west disintegrated at all. There is no single explanation on which all historians agree. However, there is evidence to suggest that the Roman world experienced severe depopulation between the 2nd and the 7th centuries and that depopulation undermined the Roman economy and the Roman military.

- **A.** The evidence for depopulation comes both from the archaeological record and from written sources.
  - **1.** Archaeology has revealed a gradual decay in Roman towns and cities from perhaps as early as 200 A.D. Century after century, the inhabited area in most Roman towns and cities grew smaller and smaller.
  - **2.** Although some of the urban population was simply drifting out into the countryside, the number and size of inhabited areas contracted there, as well.
  - **3.** Imperial laws concerning *agri deserti*, or deserted lands, became increasingly common and desperate from the 2nd century onward.
- **B.** The origins of depopulation are still somewhat mysterious. Climatic changes and the barbarian invasions probably played a role. However, the most important factor would appear to be epidemiological, given that new diseases entered the Roman disease pool from the 2nd century onward. Bubonic plague, the worst of them all, first struck Byzantium and Europe in the 6th century.

C. Depopulation undercut the economic and cultural bases of Roman civilization.

   1. Economically, depopulation led to the impoverishment of east and west as economic ties among different parts of the empire weakened.

   2. Culturally, the decline of Roman urban life and of the Roman educational system made it prohibitively difficult for barbarian rulers to maintain Roman civilization in its various manifestations.

III. Gibbon and Pirenne both held the Carolingian period in low esteem, Gibbon, because it was part of the cultural ruin following the fall of Rome, and Pirenne, because it was the period when Europe was most isolated from the rest of the world. Both would have agreed that the Carolingian period was the darkest of the Dark Ages.

A. Most historians steer clear of the concept of a cultural Dark Ages. There is nothing inherently inferior about Carolingian art and architecture, nor are French, Spanish, and Italian inherently inferior to Latin.

B. At first glance, there would appear to be great disagreement among historians as to the nature of the Carolingian economy.

   1. Historians who compare the Carolingian economy to the high medieval economy tend to emphasize Carolingian underdevelopment.

   2. Historians who compare the Carolingian economy to the preceding period (the 6^{th} and 7^{th} centuries) tend to emphasize Carolingian growth.

C. Both camps have a point. However, recent research is demonstrating that the Carolingian period does not represent medieval Europe's economic nadir. Rather, during the late 8^{th} and 9^{th} centuries, the Carolingian Empire came into greater commercial contact with the Islamic East.

   1. During the late 8^{th} and 9^{th} centuries, Viking traders connected the Carolingian Empire to the Islamic East via trade routes running through Russia.

   2. The Mediterranean was not as closed to European traffic as Pirenne imagined. Between 700 and 900, the number of major routes connecting Europe to the East increased sixfold.

   3. Indeed, Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* has recently argued that the origins of the takeoff of the European economy should be dated to the 8^{th} century, not to the High Middle Ages.

Suggested Readings:

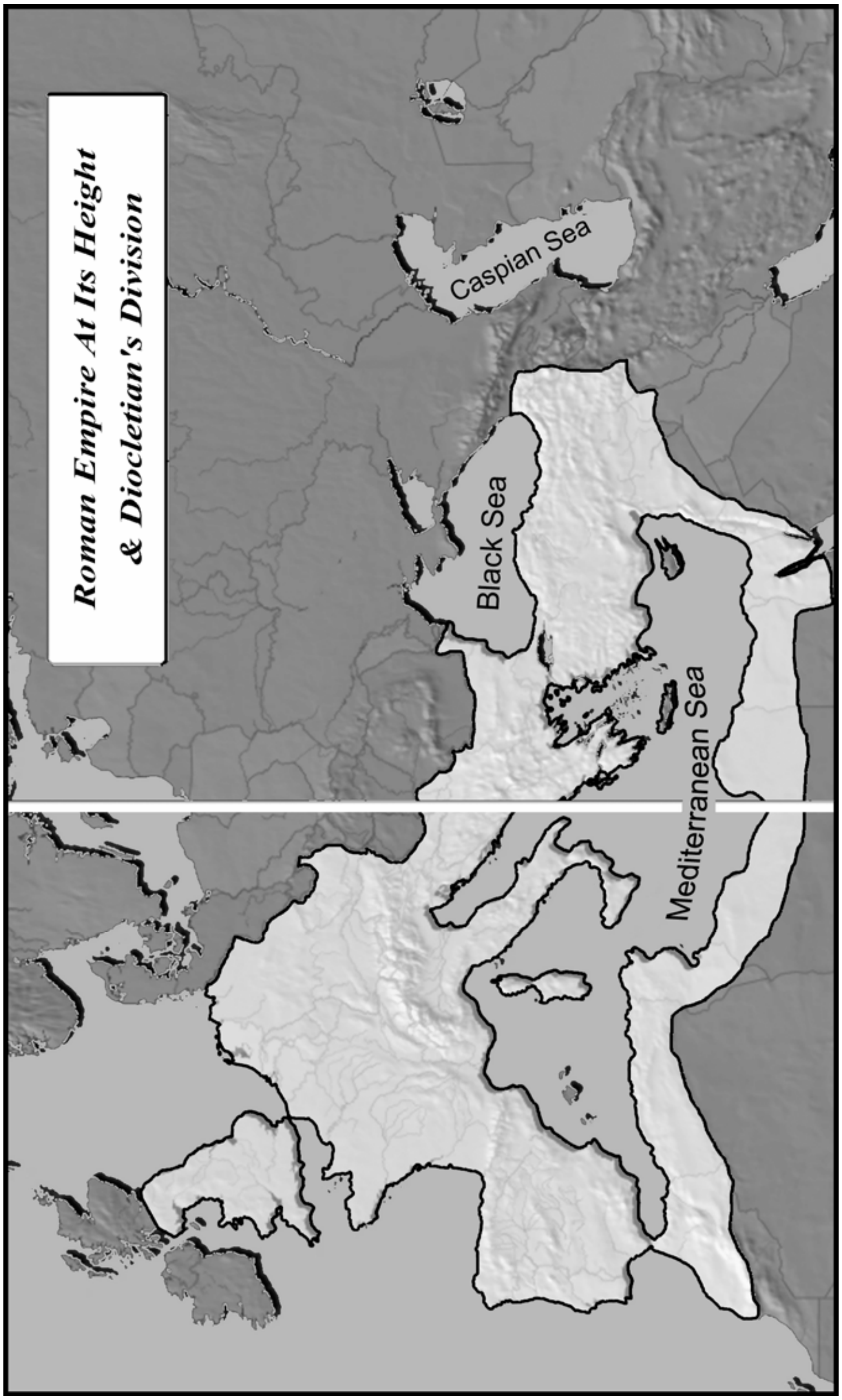
A. H. M. Jones. *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602*. Two volumes. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

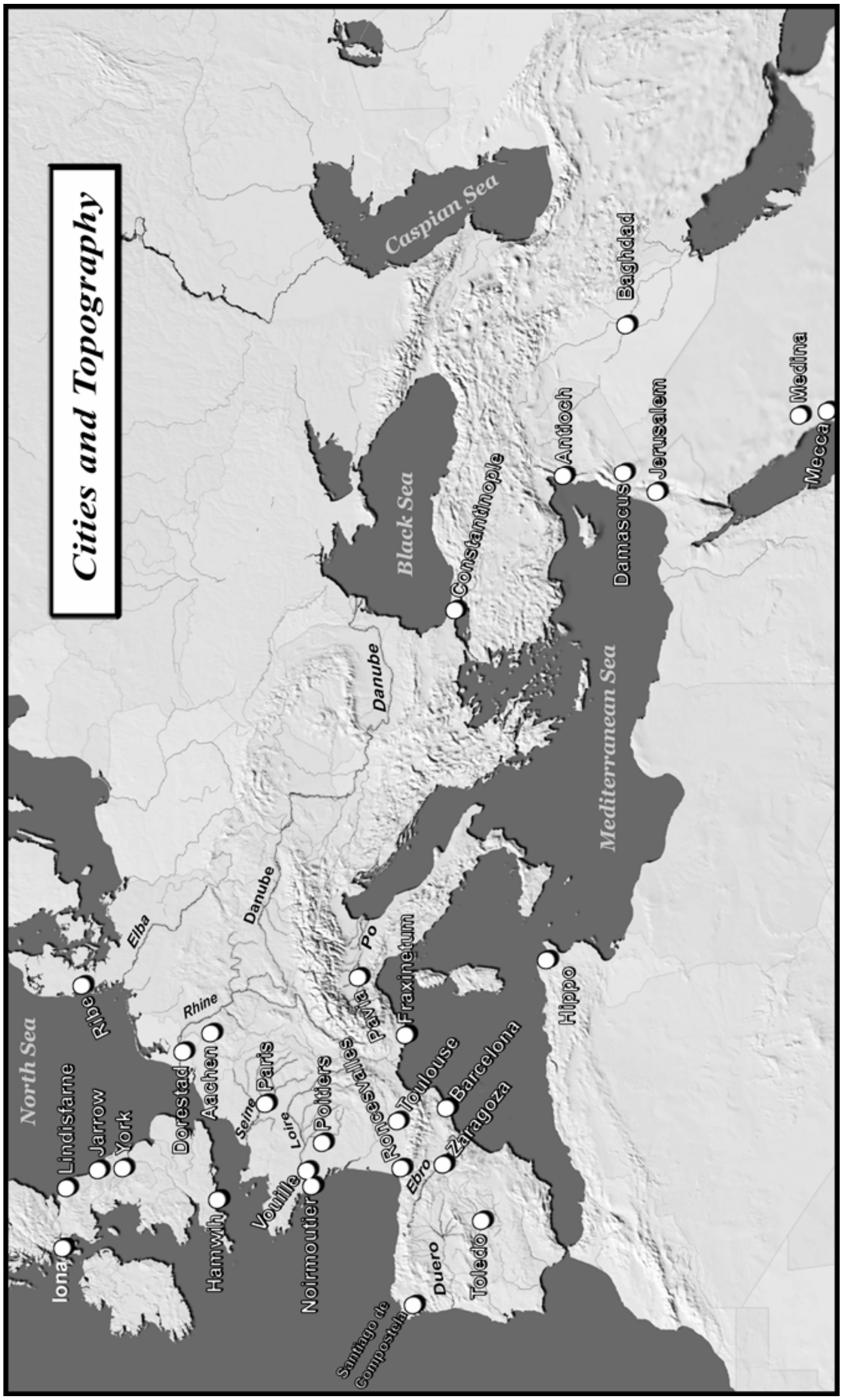
Michael McCormick. *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, 300–900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Questions to Consider:

1. Given the modifications made to Pirenne's and Gibbon's theses, why would one want to read their works today?

2. Contemporary events and intellectual movements shaped Gibbon's and Pirenne's work. Have contemporary events and intellectual trends shaped the course material presented in these lectures, perhaps even without the lecturer's knowledge? If so, how?


Roman Empire At Its Height
& Diocletian's Division
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea


Cities and Topography
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Medina
Mecca
Antioch
Jerusalem
Damascus
Constantinople
Hippo
Fraxinetum
Pavia
Barcelona
Zaragoza
Toulouse
Roncesvalles
Poitiers
Paris
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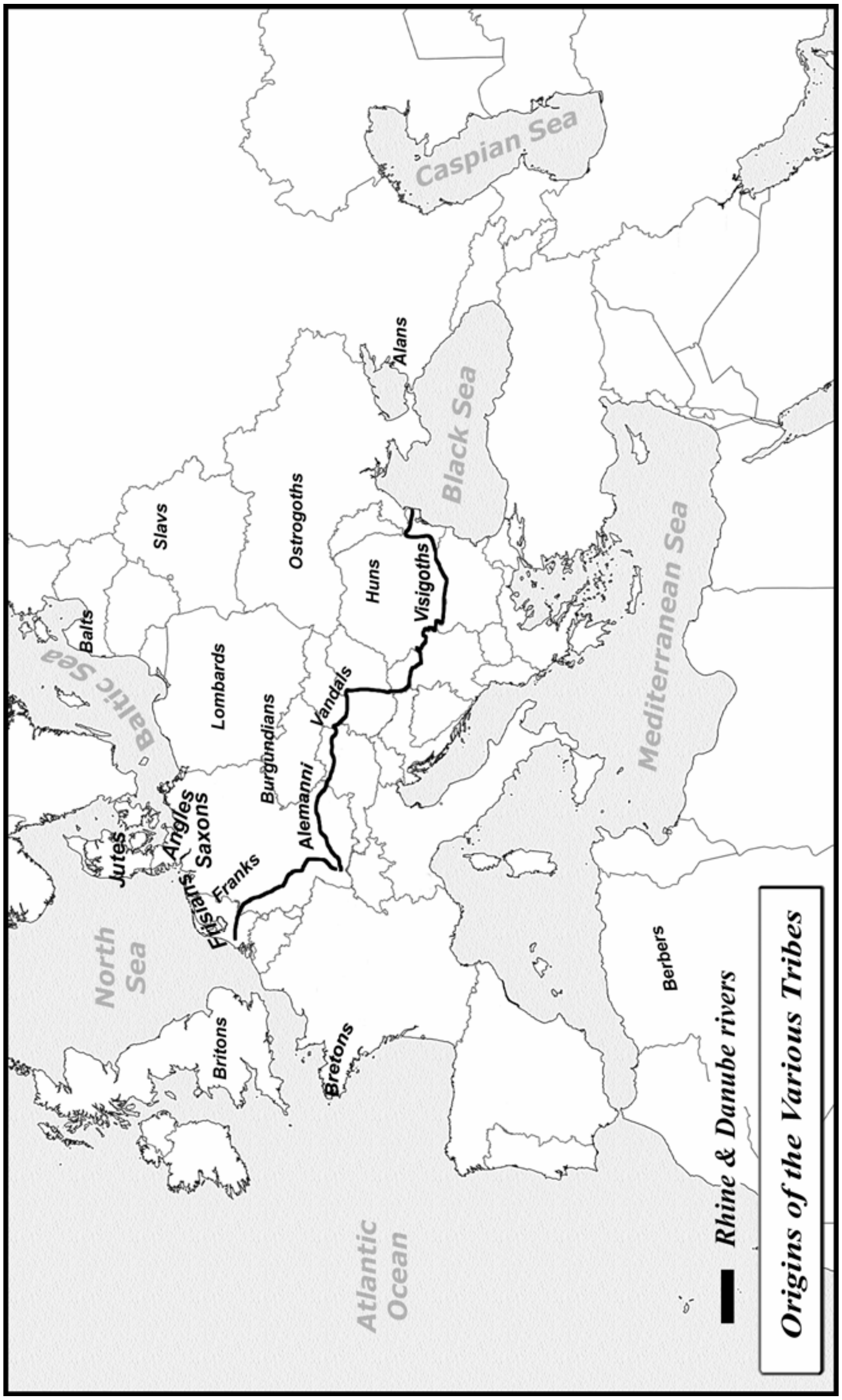
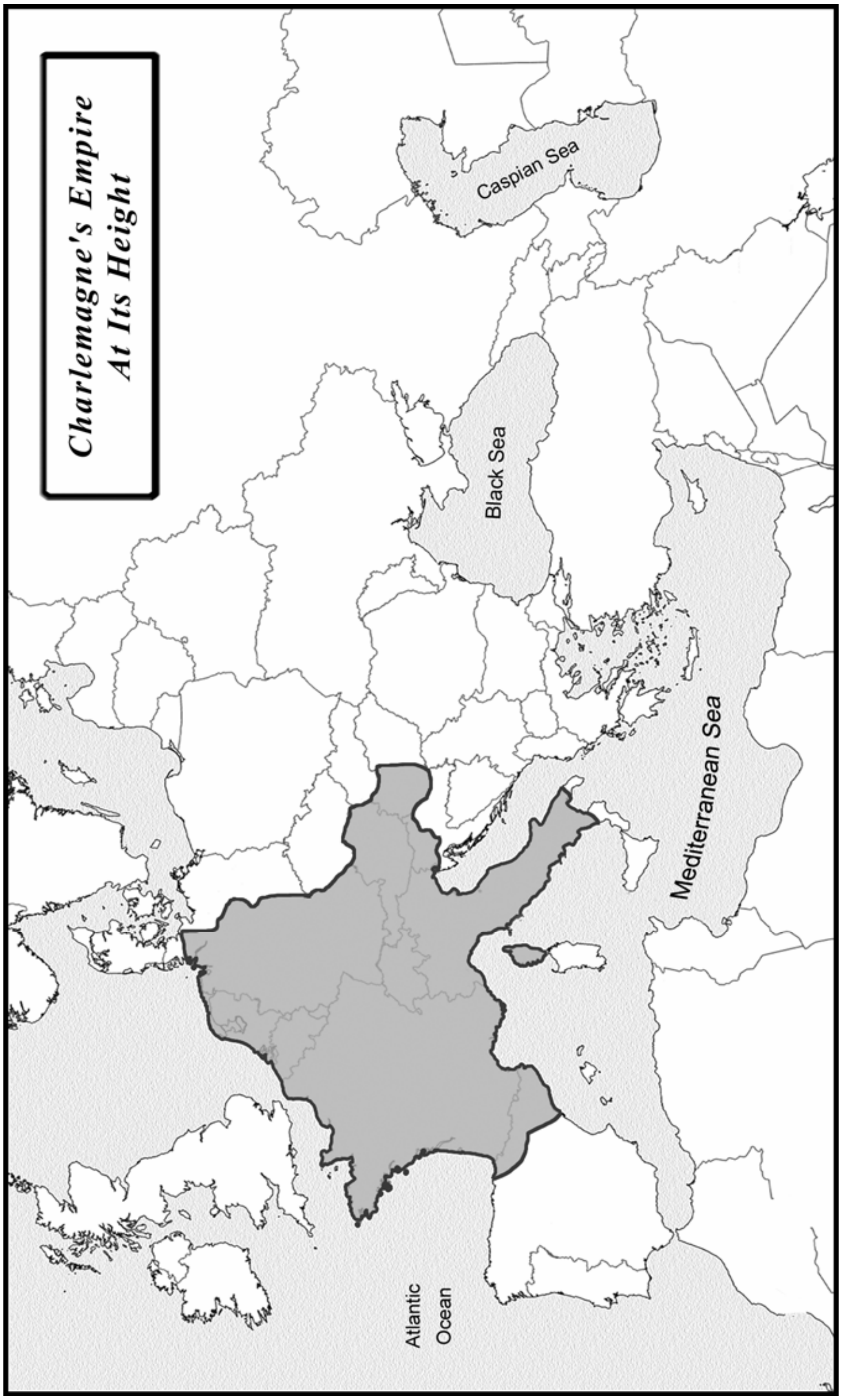
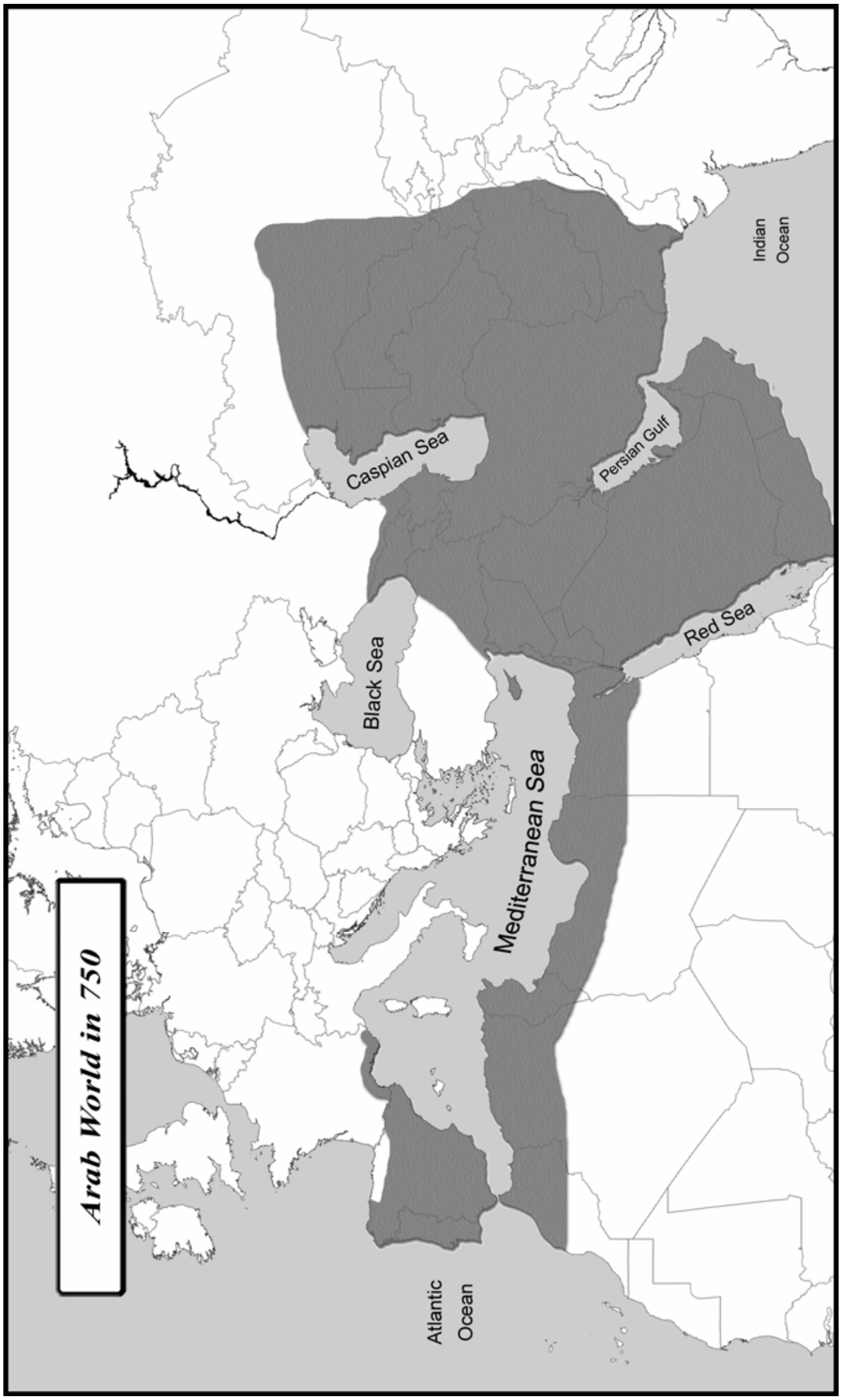
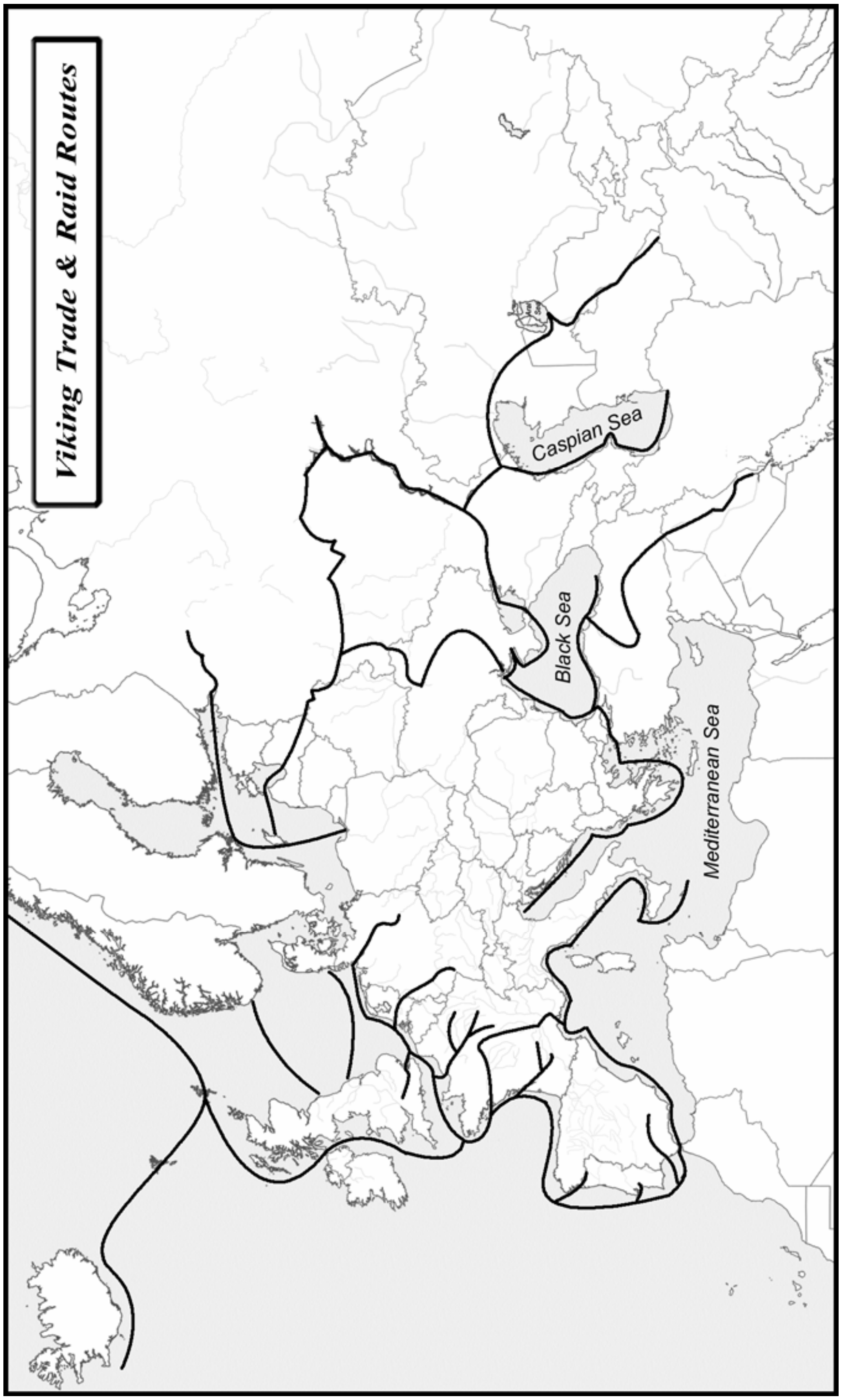


Origins of the Various Tribes


Charlemagne's Empire
At Its Height
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Atlantic
Ocean


Arab World in 750
Caspian Sea
Persian Gulf
Indian Ocean
Black Sea
Red Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Atlantic Ocean


Viking Trade & Raid Routes
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea

Timeline

284–305 .... Reign of Emperor Diocletian.

312 .... Constantine is victorious at the Battle of Milvian Bridge; becomes emperor in the western half of the Roman Empire.

324 .... Constantine becomes emperor in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, as well.

325 .... Constantine presides over the Council of Nicaea.

337 .... Death of Emperor Constantine.

354 .... Birth of Augustine.

c. 355 .... Death of Antony, Egyptian ascetic.

361–363 .... Reign of Julian the Apostate, last pagan Roman emperor.

376 .... Goths migrate into the Roman Empire.

378 .... Goths defeat Romans at the Battle of Adrianople and kill Emperor Valens.

395 .... Death of Emperor Theodosius I, the last emperor to rule over the western and eastern halves of the empire simultaneously.

406–407 .... Vandals and other Germanic groups migrate into Roman Empire.

410 .... Goths sack Rome.

413–426 .... Augustine publishes *City of God*.

430 .... Death of Augustine.

452 .... Huns threaten Rome.

455 .... Vandals sack Rome.

476 .... Odoacer, a barbarian, deposes the last Roman emperor in the west.

c. 481–c. 511 .... Clovis reigns as king of the Franks, establishes Merovingian dynasty.

c. 500 .... Possible victory by Arthur and the Britons against the Anglo-Saxons.

527–565 .... Justinian reigns as Byzantine emperor, conquers Ostrogothic Italy.

542–543 .... Justinianic Plague—probably the first eruption of bubonic plague in Europe.

568 .... Lombard conquest of northern Italy.

570s–580s .... Slavic migration into the Balkans.

597 .... Christian missionaries dispatched to Anglo-Saxon England.

610–641 .... Reign of Byzantine Emperor Heraclius; Byzantine Empire nearly conquered by Persians and Slavs, then suffers substantial territorial losses to Arabs.

615 .... Death of Columbanus, Irish monk active on the continent.

632 .... Death of Muhammad; Arabs erupt from Arabian peninsula.

638 .... Arab conquest of Jerusalem.

651 .... Arab conquest of Persian Empire.

711–716 .... Arab invasion of Spain, collapse of the Visigothic kingdom.

c. 729 .... Iconoclasm Controversy breaks out; papacy establishes its independence from the Byzantine Empire.

732	Frankish victory over Arabs at the Battle of Poitiers.
751	Pepin the Short, with papal approval, deposes the last Merovingian king of the Franks; Carolingians become the new Frankish dynasty.
754	Pope anoints Pepin the Short as king of the Franks; first papal visit north of the Alps.
754	Death of Boniface (Wynfrith), Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Germans.
756	Abd al-Rahman I establishes Umayyad rule in Islamic Spain.
768	Charlemagne begins his reign as Frankish king.
771	Death of Charlemagne's brother Carloman; Charlemagne becomes sole Frankish ruler.
774	Frankish conquest of Lombard Italy.
789	Vikings attack the monastery at Lindisfarne, off the British coast.
799	First Viking attack on the Carolingian Empire (monastery at Noirmoutier).
800	Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne as emperor.
801	Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, captures Barcelona from the Arabs.
801	Alcuin presents Charlemagne with a revised and corrected version of the Bible.
814	Death of Charlemagne.
824	Louis the Pious issues the *Constitutio Romana*, formalizing Carolingian control of papal elections.
840–843	Civil war among the sons of Louis the Pious.
843	Treaty of Verdun divides the Carolingian Empire.
845	Carolingian rulers begin to pay *Danegeld* (protection money) to the Vikings.
871–899	Reign of Alfred the Great as king of Wessex.
888	Count Odo of Paris, a member of the Robertian/Capetian family, elected as king of West Francia.
911	End of Carolingian rule in East Francia.
911	Viking settlement in Normandy.
912–961	Reign of Abd al-Rahman III in Islamic Spain; zenith of the caliphate of Córdoba.
919	Accession of the Ottonian dynasty in East Francia.
955	Ottonians defeat Magyars at the Battle of Lech.
962	Otto I, king of Germany, crowned as emperor; birth of the Holy Roman Empire.
980s	Viking attacks on Anglo-Saxon England resume.
987	End of Carolingian rule in West Francia, accession of the Capetian dynasty.
1013	Vikings capture London; Anglo-Saxon rulers forced into exile in Normandy.
1031	Collapse of the caliphate of Córdoba and end of Umayyad rule; fragmentation of Islamic Spain.
1042	Return of Anglo-Saxon kings to England.
1066	Fighting among Norwegians, Normans, and Anglo-Saxons results in the Norman Conquest of England.

Glossary

Arianism: Doctrine associated with Arius, a North African priest who died in 336. Arianism denied that Jesus of Nazareth was a divine being and that Jesus, as Son of God, could have coexisted for all eternity with God the Father. The Council of Nicaea (325), summoned and supervised by Emperor Constantine, condemned Arianism as heretical. Nonetheless, Arianism was widespread among Christian barbarians in the 4^{th}, 5^{th}, and 6^{th} centuries.

bipartite estate: Also called the *medieval manor*, the bipartite estate refers to a form of agricultural organization that differed structurally from the Roman *latifundium*. Like a Roman estate, the bipartite estate consisted of tenancies (land rented out to tenants by the estate's lord and owner) and the demesne (land directly cultivated by those who worked on the lord's behalf). On a bipartite estate, serfs (see definition below) residing on tenancies provided much of the labor for the demesne. On the Roman estate, slaves and wage laborers had provided most of that labor.

danegeld: Money paid by European rulers, especially the Carolingians, to Viking raiders. Carolingian rulers made at least 11 substantial payments of tribute to the Vikings between 845 and 926. *Danegeld* harmed the Carolingian Empire in several ways. The peace it bought was often limited in duration and geographical scope, because Vikings were paid to spare one part of the empire, but then they attacked another. It placed an enormous drain on the empire's silver resources, and it undermined the legitimacy of the Carolingian dynasty, which rested to a large extent on Carolingian military prowess.

Donatism: A North African religious movement, especially active in the 4^{th} and 5^{th} centuries and named for the 4^{th}-century bishop Donatus. Donatists maintained that members of the clergy who had collaborated with Roman persecutors by, for example, handing over copies of the Bible, were unworthy of being clerics. All those consecrated by such collaborators were false clerics, as well. More generally, the Donatists maintained that sacraments administered by morally unworthy priests were invalid. Augustine and other Catholics struggled against the Donatists in the 5^{th} century, and Augustine developed important arguments in support of the imperial coercion of Donatists and other heretics.

feudalism: An honorable relationship of dependence established most often between two members of the aristocracy. In a feudal relationship, the superior party, or lord, owed the inferior party, or vassal, maintenance and protection, while the vassal owed the lord aid and counsel. Maintenance generally took the form of a fief (*feudum* in Latin), a grant of land from which the vassal collected revenue. Aid meant military service, performed with the equipment acquired with revenue from the fief. Lords took vassals through a ceremony known as commendation, which itself consisted of two parts: the act of homage and the swearing of an oath of fealty. Feudalism arose during the Carolingian period, as Carolingian rulers linked the act of commendation with the granting of fiefs and made military service the most common service demanded of those who received fiefs.

iconoclasm: The destruction of religious images. Between the 5^{th} and 8^{th} centuries, the veneration of painted images (icons) of saints, Jesus, and other holy figures became increasingly common, especially in the Byzantine world. Circa 725, however, the Byzantine emperor ordered the destruction of icons throughout the empire, most likely in imitation of Islamic practice. At first, the papacy refused to follow the policy, and the result was the Iconoclastic Controversy, which lasted off and on through the 8^{th} and 9^{th} centuries. Bitterness over the issue of iconoclasm drove the Byzantine east and the papacy apart, setting the stage for the emergence of the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches.

jihad: An Arabic word meaning struggle, including (but not necessarily limited to) violent struggle against unbelievers. The doctrine of *jihad* is rooted in certain Koranic pronouncements (especially those found in *sura* nine) that speak favorably of military struggle against non-Muslims. However, the doctrine itself was not worked out in any detail until the period from 750 onward, at which point, ironically, Arab conquests were winding down. According to 8^{th}- and 9^{th}-century scholars, Muslims were obliged to establish a single Islamic world state (House of Islam) that observed Islamic law. *Jihad* aimed at political and legal unity, rather than religious unity, because Christians and Jews (but not pagans) were to retain their religions within the House of Islam. By the year 1000, the doctrine of *jihad* had become a dead letter in the areas bordering Europe and the Byzantine Empire. Despite its dormancy, though, the doctrine could be revived during periods when the Arab world felt itself to be besieged, such as during the Crusades.

Manichaeism: A religious doctrine based on the teachings of Mani (died 276), an inhabitant of the Persian Empire who spent some time in India and was much influenced by the thought of Saint Paul. Manichaeism taught that good and evil were equally powerful in the universe; neither could ultimately triumph over the other. The spiritual world was purely good. The material world, created by Satan, was wholly corrupt but contained trapped particles of the spiritual realm, which the faithful Manichaean must liberate through asceticism. Manichaean dualism would be an important component of many medieval heresies.

Neoplatonism: A philosophical movement based on the teachings of Plotinus (died 270), an Egyptian. Crucial to Neoplatonism was the doctrine of emanation. At the center of all reality was the One. Outside the One were various levels that had emanated from the One but were inferior to it to the extent that they were removed from the One and lacked its attributes. The purpose of philosophy was to lead individuals back through the various levels until they had reunited themselves with the One that was the source of all being. For Neoplatonists, evil as such did not exist; there was merely an absence of good as an individual fell away from the One. Christian thinkers tried to square Neoplatonism with Christianity, although the Neoplatonic universe lacked Satan and the concept of emanation was rather different from the Jewish and Christian account of God's conscious creation of the world.

Pelagianism: Religious doctrine associated with a British monk named Pelagius, who lived in the late 4th and early 5th centuries (it is not clear when and how he died). Pelagianism maintained that human beings did not need grace to fulfill God's moral commands and, thus, could achieve salvation through their own efforts. It minimized or denied entirely the debilitating effects of original sin on the human will. Church councils of the early 5th century proclaimed Pelagianism to be a heresy.

serf: An unfree peasant. Although the precise burdens of serfdom varied from manor to manor and even from individual to individual, serfs were generally forbidden to leave the land on which they resided and obliged to perform unpaid labor services for their lord. Although unfree, serfs did have certain legal rights, more than a slave enjoyed. Serfs had a legal right to a family, and their unpaid labor services were for a limited amount of time.

tetrarchy: A term used to describe the political system devised by Emperor Diocletian (retired 305). Under the tetrarchy, the Roman Empire was divided into two halves, an eastern and a western half, and each half had its own emperor. Each emperor had an assistant, or Caesar, who would succeed the emperor at his retirement. Although the tetrarchy failed as a system of succession, the division of the empire into two halves was permanent as of 395.

Biographical Notes

Abd al-Rahman III: Umayyad caliph of Córdoba from 912 to 961, he brought the caliphate to the height of its power in Spain and actively supported scholars, helping to make al-Andalus one of the most important centers of learning on the Europe continent in the 10th century.

Alfred: King of Wessex from 871 to 899. Alfred successfully checked the Viking conquest of England, united Anglo-Saxon England under the leadership of Wessex, and began the process of recapturing Viking-controlled territory. Alfred was also literate and an author, which was rare among 9th-century Christian rulers in Europe—he even translated Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* from Latin into Old English.

Ambrose of Milan: Bishop of Milan from about 374 to 397. Ambrose was a formidable figure, articulating important arguments concerning the spiritual superiority of celibacy to marriage and strengthening emperors in their resolve to remove the Altar of Victory from the Roman Senate. Ambrose showed a rare willingness to defy imperial authority, excommunicating Emperor Theodosius in 390 for a massacre at Thessalonica. Ambrose also had an important influence on Augustine.

Arthur: There is no unambiguous contemporary evidence that Arthur actually existed. However, sources written several hundred years after his supposed lifetime claim that Arthur was a British military leader who defeated the Anglo-Saxons at Mount Badon (modern location unknown) around 500. These sources might possibly echo an authentic oral tradition about Arthur.

Augustine: A North African who served as bishop of Hippo from 395 until his death in 430. A brilliant Latin stylist, Augustine converted to Christianity from paganism and, during the course of controversies with such heretical groups as the Pelagians, became one of the dominant thinkers of his day. He wrote the *Confessions*, the first autobiography in Western literature, and the monumental *City of God*, which contains a spirited defense of Christianity and a scathing critique of classical culture, religion, and philosophy.

Bede the Venerable: An Anglo-Saxon monk and abbot of the monastery at Jarrow, Bede died in 735. Bede was probably the leading intellectual of his day, despite residing in what had once been the far northern reaches of the Roman Empire. His intellectual accomplishments are emblematic of the importance of Anglo-Saxon, British, and Irish monasteries and monks for European intellectual life during the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries.

Charlemagne: King of the Franks from 768 until his death in 814 and crowned emperor in 800. Charlemagne waged war tirelessly along the Frankish frontiers, expanding the Frankish empire to its farthest territorial extent. He also supported ecclesiastical reform and played a decisive role in gathering together the scholars of the Carolingian Renaissance. Already during the 9th century, as the Frankish Empire began to collapse, Charlemagne became a legendary figure.

Clovis: King of the Franks circa 481 to 511. Clovis began the process whereby all of Gaul came under Frankish control; he also established the Merovingian dynasty, which would last until 751. Clovis's conversion to Catholicism was a great boon for that religion and a blow to Arianism, which had been widespread among the barbarians. Clovis's Franks followed him into Catholicism, as did other barbarian groups, often in imitation of their increasingly powerful Frankish neighbors.

Constantine: Proclaimed as emperor by the Roman army, he secured control of the western half of the empire in 312 and the eastern half in 324, ruling over both until his death in 337. As openly autocratic as his predecessor Diocletian, Constantine nonetheless broke with Roman tradition and converted to Christianity. Thanks to the support that he and his successors gave to Christianity, it supplanted paganism as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Diocletian: Roman emperor from 284 to 305. Elevated to the position of emperor by the army, Diocletian restored the Roman frontiers following their collapse during the 3rd century. He divided the empire into an eastern and western half and created the political system known as the *tetrarchy* ("rule of four"). Diocletian also transformed the empire into an unabashedly autocratic state. Deeply conservative, he supported paganism and persecuted Christians.

Julian the Apostate: The last pagan emperor; ruled over both halves of the empire from 361 to 363. Julian attempted to sponsor a pagan revival throughout the Roman Empire and to undo the gains made by Christianity since the time of Constantine. However, his brief reign and personal unpopularity undermined his efforts. Julian died in battle while in his early 30s.

Justinian: Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565. A controversial figure vilified by some of his contemporaries, Justinian barely survived the Nika rebellion of 532, launched by Byzantine sports hooligans. He subsequently embarked on a series of conquests, including North Africa, Italy, and part of Spain. However, his conquests overtaxed the resources of the Byzantine Empire. Justinian also sponsored a major recodification of Roman law and began construction of the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople, which was, for a time, the largest church in the world.

Muhammad: Born between 570 and 580; died in 632. An inhabitant of Mecca and most likely a merchant, Muhammad established the religion of Islam in Arabia during the early 7th century. After moving from Mecca to Medina in 622, Muhammad became ruler of that city and led his followers to victory over Mecca in 630. Upon his death in 632, the Arabs erupted from the Arabian peninsula and, in less than a century, created an empire stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Himalaya Mountains in the east.

Theodoric: King of the Ostrogoths in Italy from 493 to 526. Having lived at Constantinople as a youth and having served in the Roman army, Theodoric appreciated and tried to preserve Roman culture and urban life in Italy, with some success.

Bibliography

Note: To qualify as essential reading, a book had to have been in print when this list was complied. In choosing supplementary readings, I have tried, whenever possible, to privilege books in print over those not in print. However, some out-of-print books are included in the supplementary reading section—they can be found at many libraries and purchased from sellers of used books via the Internet.

Essential Reading:

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