

# Western Civilization I





# Western Civilization I

*JULIANNA WILSON*



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PART I  
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# I. Syllabus

## HIS101 / Western Civilization I

Christine de Pizan

**Credit Hours:** 3

**CRN/Term:** ABC

### Instructor Information

**Instructor Name:** ABC

**Instructor Phone:** ABC

**Instructor Email:** ABC

**Office Location/Hours:** ABC

**Department Chair or Dean Phone:** Kimlisa Salazar Duchicela.  
520.206.7153

**Other Contact Resources:** (optional) ABC

### Course Information

**Course Description:** Pre-history to the Wars of Religion, a period extending from 10,000 BCE to 1648 CE. Includes transition from pre-historic to the historic period, Greco-Roman world, Early, Central, and Late Middle Ages, and Renaissance and Reformation.

**Expectation of coursework hours:** ABC

**Course Meeting Days/Time:** Online

**Course Delivery/Modality:** Online

**Required Textbook:** Textbook linked in course (no cost)

# Student Learning Outcomes

## Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the transition from the pre-historic era to the historic era.
2. Examine the features of the Greco-Roman world.
3. Describe the Early Middle Ages.
4. Analyze aspects of the Central Middle Ages.
5. Describe the events of the Late Middle Ages.
6. State developments of the Renaissance and Reformation.

## Grade and Instructor Policies

Welcome to online HIS 101 – the objective of this course is to cover Pre-history to the Wars of Religion, a period extending from 10,000 BCE to 1648 CE. This includes the transition from pre-historic to the historic period, the Greco-Roman world, the Early, Central, and Late Middle Ages, and the Renaissance and Reformation. I will do everything that I can to ensure that your time in this class will be a positive learning experience for all of us. If you ever have questions or need coaching, please feel free to email me. Together, I think that we will have an exciting, stimulating and rewarding class adventure. Students: Please print a copy of this syllabus for handy reference. Whenever there is a question about the class requirements, remember this Syllabus is considered to be the guiding document.

Your instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester, but the changes will be posted

on Brightspace by D2L under the title SYLLABUS REVISED with the date of revisions.

## Grade Determination: List of Assignments and Points

You will read 14 of the chapters in the textbook and take a timed quiz for each chapter to test your comprehension of the reading and mastery of the material. At the conclusion of the semester you will take a comprehensive final exam over the 14 chapters of the text. You will additionally read one primary source on the class theme of 'voyage' for each of the seven modules of the course, and complete a two page synopsis of your reading. Lastly, each student will also participate in a group project which will be broken into 3 steps. You are responsible for completing each step in your group. I will randomly place students in their respective groups. The 3 required steps are:

- Research the theme of 'voyage' for the group topic you have been assigned and develop a bibliography of at least 6 academic resources.
- Locate a primary source, not already discussed in our class assignments, of a 'voyage', real or imagined, within the parameters of our class time and location.
- Write, with your group members, a 2 to 3 page analysis and exploration of the concept of 'voyage' in western culture and the qualities specific to the selection of your group.
- Develop, as a group, a presentation based on your collective work and post it to the class website.

## Total Points for the Class

- 10 pts. Introduction = 10 points
- 300 pts. Chapter quizzes (12 X 20 points each)
- 140 pts. Primary Source synopsis (7 X 20 points each)
- 50 pts. Group research and bibliography
- 100 pts. Group written analysis
- 100 pts. Group presentation
- 100 pts. Final Exam
- **Total Points 800\***

\*Available points are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor

## Grades

You can check your grade through Brightspace by D2L at any point during the semester. If you have any questions, please contact me immediately. The final grades are a percentage of total available points. Your points and grade will increase as you complete work. You can expect to have graded assignments within 3 to 5 days of the due date of the assignment. Your grade will be a reflection of how well you have mastered the material, not how hard you have worked.

### **Grading Formula**

- A= pts. 90 -100% of total available points
- B= pts. 80 – 89% of total available points
- C= pts. 70– 79% of total available points
- D= pts. 60 – 69% of total available points
- F= pts. 00 – 59% and below of total available points

## Class Policies & Procedures

**Course Activities:** We will be using a course management system called Brightspace by D2L to disperse information, communicate with each other, turn in assignments, and do assessments. Briefly these are the categories commonly used by instructors at PCC. The Content menu will contain all the content information for the course, including weekly outlines, lectures, projects, etc. You should be able to print or copy any of the material you find here, and this area is where you will spend most of your class time.

Click on Grades to check points for individual assignments and for total points.

The Classlist menu gives you the ability to contact all your classmates and your instructor through email. This function is not to be used for non-class-related communication, or communication that you would not share in front of your instructor were this a face to face class. Make sure to cc yourself a copy of everything you send to me. NOTE: All Brightspace by D2L Assignment tool submissions must be in either Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format. If you submit in any other format, your assignment will not be graded.

## Grading Procedures and Policy

**Student Withdrawal “W” Grades** Students may withdraw from class without instructor permission as long as they do so by the deadlines set up under Key Academic dates on the PCC website. This can be done online or by submitting a “Registration Form” at any PCC Campus. Students who withdraw receive a “W” as a grade. For further information on how withdrawing will affect your academic record or financial aid, please see an advisor or counselor. If you are enrolled in a course—whether or not you participate—your instructor is required to submit a final grade for you, which will

then become a part of your permanent college record at Pima. If you foresee you will be unable to complete the course as planned, it is your responsibility (and to your advantage) to officially withdraw and join us again when your schedule is more accommodating. In the event extenuating circumstances made it impossible for you to finish the course, you may request a grade of “W” from your instructor. “W” grade requests must be made in writing and approved by your instructor prior to official submission of your final grade to Pima Community College. A “W” grade may affect your financial aid eligibility and academic standing. I suggest you speak to an advisor prior to requesting a W.

**Incomplete (I):** The instructor does not give Incompletes.

**“AU” Audit Grades:** Auditing a PCC class means that you enroll, attend and do work for the class but do not expect to receive credit or a grade. To audit the class, you need the instructor’s permission and signature on an audit request form from any campus admissions office. This form and appropriate payment must be returned to the admissions office for admission. An audit registration cannot be completed until the first day of class. You must complete your audit registration by the end of the add period for the class you wish to audit.

Class Audits are only allowed with the instructor’s permission.

**Final Grades:** Final grades will be available under grades on Brightspace by D2L and students who wish to check grades may use the grade report which they can access through MyPima. Additional Information: If you have never once logged in to the course by the end of the semester, it is within my right to drop you from the course with a W.

**Late Assignments:** All assignments and due dates are available at the beginning of the semester so it is reasonable to expect quality work from students submitted well before the due date and time. If you do not procrastinate there should be no reason you cannot submit assignments properly. Waiting until the arrival of a deadline to submit your coursework or complete testing leaves no room for error and may result in failure to meet your deadlines and possibly



even failure of your class. Remember, sometimes there are problems that can delay you. Please keep this in mind if you choose to submit assignments minutes before the posted deadline and experience a power failure or technology issues. All individual assignments will gladly be accepted early.

## Academic Integrity

All work done for this class must be your own. We do not accept duplicated (identical) assignments. Duplicated work will receive a grade of “F” and may result in further action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Copying from any source without proper reference is considered plagiarism and will result in an F. Remember your textbook is a source and must be cited. Students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct and the Code of Academic Ethics, also available at PCC campus libraries.

Pima Community College considers violations of academic ethics, including plagiarism, as serious offenses, which may result in failure of an assignment, the course or possible expulsion. Academic Dishonesty is considered a disciplinary offense under the Pima Community College Student Code of Conduct. Academic Dishonesty is defined as the submission of false academic records, cheating, plagiarism, altering, forging, or misusing a college academic record; acquiring or using test materials without faculty permission; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonest grades, honors, or awards. Any acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action and could result in sanctions as described in the Pima Community College Student Code of Conduct.

Academic dishonesty in an online learning environment could involve:

- Having a tutor or friend complete a portion of your

assignments

- Having a reviewer make extensive revisions to an assignment
- Copying work submitted by another student
- Using information from online information services without proper citation (Proper documentation consists of quotation marks around three or more of someone else's words followed by a proper citation. No quotation marks are necessary if you put someone else's ideas in your own words; however, you must follow the paraphrase with a proper citation.)
- Using a paper you have/had written for another class to fulfill an assignment in this class unless you have permission of both instructors
- Sharing or receiving answers on tests before the test has been completed

A first instance of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment and an academic progress report will be filed. The second instance will result in an F for the course and in addition, the matter will be turned over to the Vice President of Student Affairs. If you have any questions about appropriate academic citations, consult your instructor.

## Online Environment “Netiquette”

When engaged in online interaction, it is important that we all follow netiquette. This means our feedback must be clear, concise, not in all capital letters (which indicates yelling), and focus on both the positive and negatives of the work we are reading, giving the author specific examples to support our criticism and specific suggestions on how to fix what we are criticizing. We should start and end each critique with a positive but specific comment about what we are reading.

**Students are reminded to follow basic rules of civil communications:**

There will be no inappropriate language, threats, or negative personal comments tolerated. All such correspondence will be forwarded to the Student Conduct Officer for appropriate action and you will be blocked from the course until you discuss the matter with the instructor. I will not tolerate bullying or abuse. Additionally, students are urged to report to the instructor immediately any harassment by a classmate, whether by email or on the Discussion Board and to forward the offending messages.

**Recommended Websites**

- MLA Guidelines
- PCC Library
- Turnitin (Plagiarism and Authentication Tool)

## Statement of Diversity

The entire class will benefit from the wealth of diversity brought by each individual, so students are asked to extend every courtesy and respect that they, in turn, would expect from the class. This college is committed to creating a positive, supportive environment that welcomes diversity of opinions and ideas for students. There will be no tolerance of race discrimination/harassment, sexual discrimination/harassment, or discrimination/harassment based on age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or membership in a local commission.

## PCC Definition of a Credit

Students are expected to spend a minimum of 45 hours per credit on work related to the class. This includes time spent in the classroom as well as out of class work such as reading assignments, homework, projects, etc. Allow 12 to 28 hours per week to complete the required work in this course. That is quite a time commitment. You should make sure you can meet that time commitment before you start this course.

## Mandatory Statements

### Attendance Requirements/Active Participation

A failure to participate as required may result in loss of financial aid and failure in the class. For every credit hour of your classes you should plan to spend approximately two to three hours outside of class studying each week. Attendance requirements(<https://www.pima.edu/programs-courses/credit-programs-degrees/attendance.html>)

### Student Resources:

- Key Dates: For class add, drop, and withdrawal dates, go to the “My Schedule” section of MyPima, found on the Students > Academics MyPima page. Additional semester Key Dates and Deadlines (<https://www.pima.edu/calendars/key-dates-and-deadlines/index.html>) are on the Calendar link at the top of PCC webpages.

- Tutoring, libraries, computer commons, advising, code of conduct, complaint process. Student resources (<https://www.pima.edu/current-students/index.html>)
- Plagiarism, use of copyright materials, financial aid benefits, ADA information, FERPA, and mandatory reporting laws at: Syllabus Resources/Policies(<https://www.pima.edu/syllabusresources>)

## 2. Schedule of Work

### Schedule of Work

Christine de Pizan

#### Week 1: Due Saturday X/X

**Read all the introductory information for the class. These will include:**

1. Read Me First
2. Syllabus
3. Schedule of Work
4. Why History
5. Semester Paper Assignment

#### **Introduction Discussion**

Points: 20

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

#### Week 2: Due Saturday X/X

**Reading:** Ch. 1

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

## **Week 3: Due Saturday X/X**

**Read:** Ch.2

**Quiz:** Ch. 2

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 1**

**Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 4: Due Saturday X/X**

**Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Group Project Assignments**

D2L will randomly assign membership

## **Week 5: Due Saturday X/X**

**Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 2**

**Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 6: Due Saturday X/X**

**Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

## **Week 7: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0.3**

### **Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 8: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Group research and bibliography** Points: 60

## **Week 9: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 4**

### **Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 10: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20



## **Week 11: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 5**

### **Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 12: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Group Analysis Paper**

Points: 100

## **Week 13: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 6**

### **Reading Synopsis**

Points: 20

## **Week 14: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

## **Week 15: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

**Primary Source Reading – N0. 7** Points: 20

## **Week 16: Due Saturday X/X**

### **Group Presentation Upload**

Points: 100

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the News on the course Homepage.

PART II

WEEK I: PRE-HISTORY,  
NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION,  
AGRICULTURE, WRITING



# 3. Introduction

## Week 1

### Introduction

Pompeii couple

**Prehistory** is the period of human activity between the use of the first stone tools, roughly 3.3 million years ago and the invention of writing systems, the earliest of which appeared 5,300 years ago.

Sumer in Mesopotamia, the Indus valley civilization and ancient Egypt were the first civilizations to develop their own scripts, and to keep historical records; this took place already during the early Bronze Age. Neighboring civilizations were the first to follow. Most other civilizations reached the end of prehistory during the Iron Age. The three-age system of division of prehistory into the Stone Age, followed by the Bronze Age and Iron Age, remains in use for much of Eurasia and North Africa, but is not generally used in those parts of the world where the working of hard metals arrived abruptly with contact with Eurasian cultures, such as the Americas, Oceania, Australasia and much of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Neolithic Age, Era, or Period, or New Stone Age, was a period in the development of human technology, beginning about 15,200 BC, according to the ASPRO chronology, in some parts of the Middle East, and later in other parts of the world and ending between 4500 and 2000 BC.

Traditionally considered the last part of the Stone Age AKA The New Stone Age, the Neolithic followed the terminal Holocene Epipaleolithic period and commenced with the beginning of farming, which produced the “Neolithic Revolution”. It ended when

metal tools became widespread (in the Copper Age or Bronze Age; or, in some geographical regions, in the Iron Age). The Neolithic is a progression of behavioral and cultural characteristics and changes, including the use of wild and domestic crops and of domesticated animals.

map

## 4. Reading: The Study of History

### Splitting History

Periodization—the process of categorizing the past into discrete, quantified, named blocks of time in order to facilitate the study and analysis of history—is always arbitrary and rooted in particular regional perspectives, but serves to organize and systematize historical knowledge.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze the complications inherent to splitting history for the purpose of academic study

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- The question of what kind of inquiries historians pose, what knowledge they seek, and how they

interpret the evidence that they find remains controversial. Historians draw conclusions from the past approaches to history but in the end, they always write in the context of their own time, current dominant ideas of how to interpret the past, and even subjective viewpoints.

- All events that are remembered and preserved in some original form constitute the historical record. The task of historians is to identify the sources that can most usefully contribute to the production of accurate accounts of the past. These sources, known as primary sources or evidence, were produced at the time under study and constitute the foundation of historical inquiry.
- Periodization is the process of categorizing the past into discrete, quantified named blocks of time in order to facilitate the study and analysis of history. This results in descriptive abstractions that provide convenient terms for periods of time with relatively stable characteristics. All systems of periodization are arbitrary.
- The common general split between prehistory, ancient history, Middle Ages, modern history, and contemporary history is a Western division of the largest blocks of time agreed upon by Western historians. However, even within this largely accepted division the perspective of specific national developments and experiences often divides Western historians, as some periodizing labels will be applicable only to particular regions.
- The study of world history emerged as a distinct



academic field in order to examine history from a global perspective rather than a solely national perspective of investigation. However, the field still struggles with an inherently Western periodization.

- World historians use a thematic approach to look for common patterns that emerge across all cultures. World history's periodization, as imperfect and biased as it is, serves as a way to organize and systematize knowledge.

### *Key Terms*

- **periodization:** The process or study of categorizing the past into discrete, quantified named blocks of time in order to facilitate the study and analysis of history. This results in descriptive abstractions that provide convenient terms for periods of time with relatively stable characteristics. However, determining the precise beginning and ending to any period is usually arbitrary.
- **world history:** (Also global history or transnational history): emerged as a distinct academic field in the 1980s. It examines history from a global perspective. World history should not be confused with comparative history, which, like world history, deals with the history of multiple cultures and nations, but does not do so on a global scale. World history identifies common patterns that emerge across all cultures.
- **primary sources:** Original sources of information

about a topic. In the study of history as an academic discipline, primary sources include artifact, document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, recording, or other source of information that was created at the time under study.

## How Do We Write History?

The word *history* comes ultimately from Ancient Greek *historía*, meaning “inquiry,” “knowledge from inquiry,” or “judge.” However, the question of what kind of inquiries historians pose, what knowledge they seek, and how they interpret the evidence that they find remains controversial.

Historians draw conclusions from past approaches to history, but in the end, they always write in the context of their own time, current dominant ideas of how to interpret the past, and even subjective viewpoints. Furthermore, current events and developments often trigger which past events, historical periods, or geographical regions are seen as critical and thus should be investigated. Finally, historical studies are designed to provide specific lessons for societies today. In the words of Benedetto Croce, Italian philosopher and historian, “All history is contemporary history.”

All events that are remembered and preserved in some original form constitute the historical record. The task of historians is to identify the sources that can most usefully contribute to the production of accurate accounts of the past. These sources, known as primary sources or evidence, were produced at the time under study and constitute the foundation of historical inquiry. Ideally, a historian will use as many available primary sources as can be

accessed, but in practice, sources may have been destroyed or may not be available for research. In some cases, the only eyewitness reports of an event may be memoirs, autobiographies, or oral interviews taken years later. Sometimes, the only evidence relating to an event or person in the distant past was written or copied decades or centuries later. Historians remain cautious when working with evidence recorded years, or even decades or centuries, after an event; this kind of evidence poses the question of to what extent witnesses remember events accurately. However, historians also point out that hardly any historical evidence can be seen as objective, as it is always a product of particular individuals, times, and dominant ideas. This is also why researchers try to find as many records of an event under investigation as possible, and it is not unusual that they find evidence that may present contradictory accounts of the same events. In general, the sources of historical knowledge can be separated into three categories: what is written, what is said, and what is physically preserved. Historians often consult all three.

## Periodization

Periodization is the process of categorizing the past into discrete, quantified, named blocks of time in order to facilitate the study and analysis of history. This results in descriptive abstractions that provide convenient terms for periods of time with relatively stable characteristics.

To the extent that history is continuous and cannot be generalized, all systems of periodization are arbitrary. Moreover, determining the precise beginning and ending to any period is also a matter of arbitrary decisions. Eventually, periodizing labels are a reflection of very particular cultural and geographical perspectives, as well as specific subfields or themes of history (e.g., military history, social history, political history, intellectual history, cultural history, etc.).

Consequently, not only do periodizing blocks inevitably overlap, but they also often seemingly conflict with or contradict one another. Some have a cultural usage (the Gilded Age), others refer to prominent historical events (the inter-war years: 1918–1939), yet others are defined by decimal numbering systems (the 1960s, the 17th century). Other periods are named after influential individuals whose impact may or may not have reached beyond certain geographic regions (the Victorian Era, the Edwardian Era, the Napoleonic Era).

## Western Historical Periods

The common general split between prehistory (before written history), ancient history, Middle Ages, modern history, and contemporary history (history within the living memory) is a Western division of the largest blocks of time agreed upon by Western historians and representing the Western point of view. For example, the history of Asia or Africa cannot be neatly categorized following these periods.

However, even within this largely accepted division, the perspective of specific national developments and experiences often divides Western historians, as some periodizing labels will be applicable only to particular regions. This is especially true of labels derived from individuals or ruling dynasties, such as the Jacksonian Era in the United States, or the Merovingian Period in France. Cultural terms may also have a limited, even if larger, reach. For example, the concept of the Romantic period is largely meaningless outside of Europe and European-influenced cultures; even within those areas, different European regions may mark the beginning and the ending points of Romanticism differently. Likewise, the 1960s, although technically applicable to anywhere in the world according to Common Era numbering, has a certain set of specific cultural connotations in certain countries, including sexual

revolution, counterculture, or youth rebellion. However, those never emerged in certain regions (e.g., in Spain under Francisco Franco's authoritarian regime). Some historians have also noted that the 1960s, as a descriptive historical period, actually began in the late 1950s and ended in the early 1970s, because the cultural and economic conditions that define the meaning of the period dominated longer than the actual decade of the 1960s.



## Petrarch by Andrea del Castagno.

Petrarch, Italian poet and thinker, conceived of the idea of a European “Dark Age,” which later evolved into the tripartite periodization of Western history into Ancient, Middle Ages and Modern.

While world history (also referred to as global history or transnational history) emerged as a distinct academic field of historical study in the 1980s in order to examine history from a global perspective rather than a solely national perspective of investigation, it still struggles with an inherently Western periodization. The common splits used when designing comprehensive college-level world history courses (and thus also used in history textbooks that are usually divided into volumes covering pre-modern and modern eras) are still a result of certain historical developments presented from the perspective of the Western world and particular national experiences. However, even the split between pre-modern and modern eras is problematic because it is complicated by the question of how history educators, textbook authors, and publishers decide to categorize what is known as the early modern era, which is traditionally a period between Renaissance and the end of the Age of Enlightenment. In the end, whether the early modern era is included in the first or the second part of a world history course frequently offered in U.S. colleges is a subjective decision of history educators. As a result, the same questions and choices apply to history textbooks written and published for the U.S. audience.

World historians use a thematic approach to identify common patterns that emerge across all cultures, with two major focal points: integration (how processes of world history have drawn people of the world together) and difference (how patterns of world history reveal the diversity of the human experiences). The periodization of world history, as imperfect and biased as it is, serves as a way to organize and systematize knowledge.

Without it, history would be nothing more than scattered events without a framework designed to help us understand the past.

## Dates and Calendars

While various calendars were developed and used across millennia, cultures, and geographical regions, Western historical scholarship has unified the standards of determining dates based on the dominant Gregorian calendar.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Compare and contrast different calendars and how they affect our understanding of history

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The first recorded calendars date to the Bronze Age, including the Egyptian and Sumerian calendars. A larger number of calendar systems of the Ancient Near East became accessible in the Iron Age and were based on the Babylonian calendar. A great number of



Hellenic calendars also developed in Classical Greece and influenced calendars outside of the immediate sphere of Greek influence, giving rise to the various Hindu calendars, as well as to the ancient Roman calendar.

- Despite various calendars used across millennia, cultures, and geographical regions, Western historical scholarship has unified the standards of determining dates based on the dominant Gregorian calendar.
- Julius Caesar effected drastic changes in the existing timekeeping system. The New Year in 709 AUC began on January first and ran over 365 days until December 31. Further adjustments were made under Augustus, who introduced the concept of the leap year in 737 AUC (4 CE). The resultant Julian calendar remained in almost universal use in Europe until 1582.
- The Gregorian calendar, also called the Western calendar and the Christian calendar, is internationally the most widely used civil calendar today. It is named after Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced it in October, 1582. The calendar was a refinement to the Julian calendar, amounting to a 0.002% correction in the length of the year.
- While the European Gregorian calendar eventually dominated the world and historiography, a number of other calendars have shaped timekeeping systems that are still influential in some regions of the world. These include the Islamic calendar, various Hindu calendars, and the Mayan calendar.
- A calendar era that is often used as an alternative

naming of the long-accepted *anno Domini* /before Christ system is Common Era or Current Era, abbreviated CE. While both systems are an accepted standard, the Common Era system is more neutral and inclusive of a non-Christian perspective.

### *Key Terms*

- **Islamic calendar:** (Also Muslim calendar or Hijri calendar): A lunar calendar consisting of 12 months in a year of 354 or 355 days. It is used to date events in many Muslim countries (concurrently with the Gregorian calendar), and is used by Muslims everywhere to determine the proper days on which to observe the annual fasting, to attend Hajj, and to celebrate other Islamic holidays and festivals. The first year equals 622 CE, during which time the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, known as the Hijra, occurred.
- **anno Domini:** The Medieval Latin term, which means in the year of the Lord but is often translated as in the year of our Lord. Dionysius Exiguus, of Scythia Minor, introduced the system based on this concept in 525, counting the years since the birth of Christ.
- **Mayan calendar:** A system of calendars used in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, and in many modern communities in the Guatemalan highlands, Veracruz, Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico. The essentials of it are based upon a system that was in common use

throughout the region, dating back to at least the fifth century BCE. It shares many aspects with calendars employed by other earlier Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Zapotec and Olmec, and with contemporary or later calendars, such as the Mixtec and Aztec calendars.

- **Julian calendar:** A calendar introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE (708 AUC), which was a reform of the Roman calendar. It took effect in 45 BCE (AUC 709), shortly after the Roman conquest of Egypt. It was the predominant calendar in the Roman world, most of Europe, and in European settlements in the Americas and elsewhere, until it was refined and gradually replaced by the Gregorian calendar, promulgated in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII.
- **Gregorian calendar:** (Also the Western calendar and the Christian calendar): A calendar that is internationally the most widely used civil calendar today. It is named after Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced it in October 1582. The calendar was a refinement to the Julian calendar, amounting to a 0.002% correction in the length of the year.

## Calendars and Writing History

Methods of timekeeping can be reconstructed for the prehistoric period from at least the Neolithic period. The natural units for timekeeping used by most historical societies are the day, the solar year, and the lunation. The first recorded calendars date to the Bronze Age, and include the Egyptian and Sumerian calendars. A

larger number of calendar systems of the Ancient Near East became accessible in the Iron Age and were based on the Babylonian calendar. One of these was calendar of the Persian Empire, which in turn gave rise to the Zoroastrian calendar, as well as the Hebrew calendar.

A great number of Hellenic calendars were developed in Classical Greece and influenced calendars outside of the immediate sphere of Greek influence. These gave rise to the various Hindu calendars, as well as to the ancient Roman calendar, which contained very ancient remnants of a pre-Etruscan ten-month solar year. The Roman calendar was reformed by Julius Caesar in 45 BCE. The Julian calendar was no longer dependent on the observation of the new moon, but simply followed an algorithm of introducing a leap day every four years. This created a dissociation of the calendar month from the lunation. The Gregorian calendar was introduced as a refinement of the Julian calendar in 1582 and is today in worldwide use as the *de facto* calendar for secular purposes.

Despite various calendars used across millennia, cultures, and geographical regions, Western historical scholarship has unified the standards of determining dates based on the dominant Gregorian calendar. Regardless of what historical period or geographical areas Western historians investigate and write about, they adjust dates from the original timekeeping system to the Gregorian calendar. Occasionally, some historians decide to use both dates: the dates recorded under the original calendar used, and the date adjusted to the Gregorian calendar, easily recognizable to the Western student of history.

## Julian Calendar

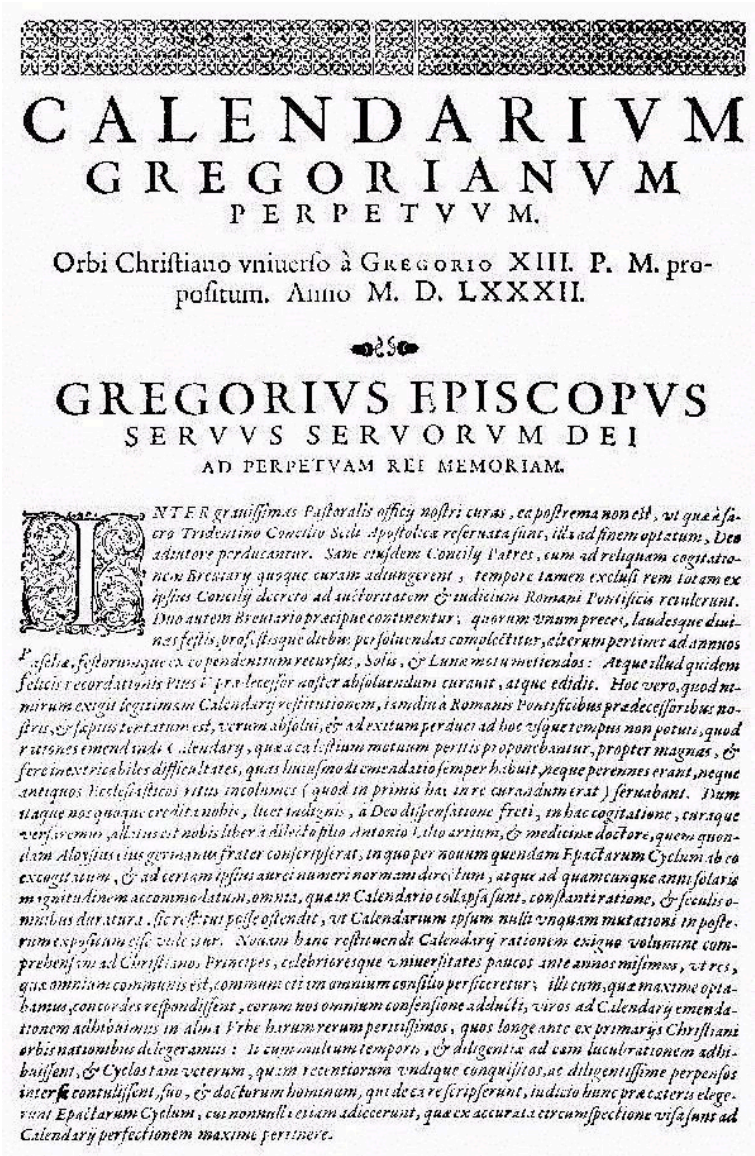
The old Roman year had 304 days divided into ten months, beginning with March. However, the ancient historian, Livy, gave credit to the second ancient Roman king, Numa Pompilius, for

devising a calendar of twelve months. The extra months *Ianuarius* and *Februarius* had been invented, supposedly by Numa Pompilius, as stop-gaps. Julius Caesar realized that the system had become inoperable, so he effected drastic changes in the year of his third consulship. The New Year in 709 AUC (*ab urbe condita*— year from the founding of the City of Rome ) began on January first and ran over 365 days until December 31. Further adjustments were made under Augustus, who introduced the concept of the leap year in 737 AUC (4 CE). The resultant Julian calendar remained in almost universal use in Europe until 1582. Marcus Terentius Varro introduced the *Ab urbe condita* epoch, assuming a foundation of Rome in 753 BCE. The system remained in use during the early medieval period until the widespread adoption of the Dionysian era in the Carolingian period. The seven-day week has a tradition reaching back to the Ancient Near East, but the introduction of the planetary week, which remains in modern use, dates to the Roman Empire period.

## Gregorian Calendar

The Gregorian calendar, also called the Western calendar and the Christian calendar, is internationally the most widely used civil calendar today. It is named after Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced it in October, 1582. The calendar was a refinement to the Julian calendar, amounting to a 0.002% correction in the length of the year. The motivation for the reform was to stop the drift of the calendar with respect to the equinoxes and solstices—particularly the vernal equinox, which set the date for Easter celebrations. Transition to the Gregorian calendar would restore the holiday to the time of the year in which it was celebrated when introduced by the early Church. The reform was adopted initially by the Catholic countries of Europe. Protestants and Eastern Orthodox countries continued to use the traditional Julian calendar, and eventually

adopted the Gregorian reform for the sake of convenience in international trade. The last European country to adopt the reform was Greece in 1923.



The first page of the papal bull “Inter Gravissimas” by which Pope Gregory XIII introduced his calendar.

During the period between 1582, when the first countries adopted the Gregorian calendar, and 1923, when the last European country adopted it, it was often necessary to indicate the date of some event in both the Julian calendar and in the Gregorian calendar. Even before 1582, the year sometimes had to be double dated because of the different beginnings of the year in various countries.

## Calendars Outside of Europe

While the European Gregorian calendar eventually dominated the world and historiography, a number of other calendars have shaped timekeeping systems that are still influential in some regions of the world.

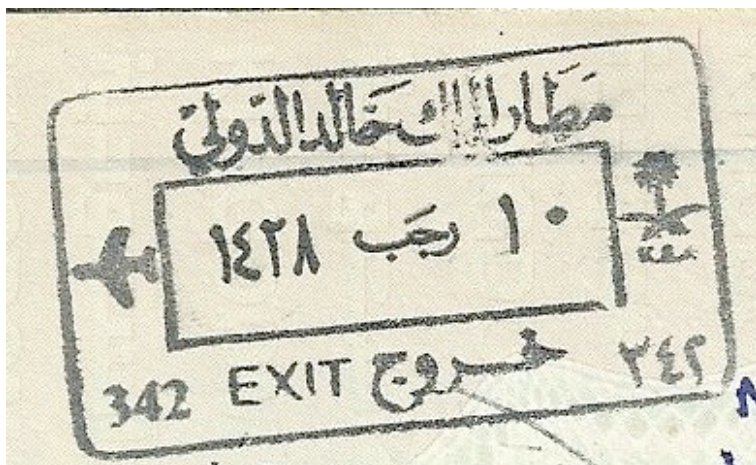
The Islamic calendar determines the first year in 622 CE, during which the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, known as the Hijra, occurred. It is used to date events in many Muslim countries (concurrently with the Gregorian calendar), and is used by Muslims everywhere to determine the proper days on which to observe and celebrate Islamic religious practices (e.g., fasting), holidays, and festivals.

Various Hindu calendars developed in the medieval period with Gupta era astronomy as their common basis. Some of the more prominent regional Hindu calendars include the Nepali calendar, Assamese calendar, Bengali calendar, Malayalam calendar, Tamil calendar, the Vikrama Samvat (used in Northern India), and Shalivahana calendar. The common feature of all regional Hindu calendars is that the names of the twelve months are the same (because the names are based in Sanskrit) although the spelling and

pronunciation have come to vary slightly from region to region over thousands of years. The month that starts the year also varies from region to region. The Buddhist calendar and the traditional lunisolar calendars of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are also based on an older version of the Hindu calendar.

Of all the ancient calendar systems, the Mayan and other Mesoamerican systems are the most complex. The Mayan calendar had two years, the 260-day Sacred Round, or *tzolkin*, and the 365-day Vague Year, or *haab*.

The essentials of the Mayan calendar are based upon a system that was in common use throughout the region, dating back to at least the fifth century BCE. It shares many aspects with calendars employed by other earlier Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Zapotec and Olmec, and contemporary or later ones, such as the Mixtec and Aztec calendars. The Mayan calendar is still used in many modern communities in the Guatemalan highlands, Veracruz, Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico.



Islamic Calendar stamp issued at King Khaled airport (10 Rajab 1428 / 24 July 2007)



The first year was the Islamic year beginning in AD 622, during which the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, known as the Hijra, occurred. Each numbered year is designated either “H” for Hijra or “AH” for the Latin *Anno Hegirae* (“in the year of the Hijra”). Hence, Muslims typically call their calendar the Hijri calendar.

## Anno Domini v. Common Era

The terms *anno Domini* (AD) and before Christ (BC) are used to label or number years in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. The term *anno Domini* is Medieval Latin, which means *in the year of the Lord*, but is often translated as *in the year of our Lord*. It is occasionally set out more fully as *anno Domini nostri Iesu* (or *Iesu Christi*) (“in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ”). Dionysius Exiguus of Scythia Minor introduced the AD system in AD 525, counting the years since the birth of Christ. This calendar era is based on the traditionally recognized year of the conception or birth of Jesus of Nazareth, with AD counting years after the start of this epoch and BC denoting years before the start of the era. There is no year zero in this scheme, so the year AD 1 immediately follows the year 1 BC. This dating system was devised in 525, but was not widely used until after 800.

A calendar era that is often used as an alternative naming of the *anno Domini*

is Common Era or Current Era, abbreviated CE. The system uses BCE as an abbreviation for “before the Common (or Current) Era.” The CE/BCE designation uses the same numeric values as the AD/BC system so the two notations (CE/BCE and AD/BC) are numerically equivalent. The expression “Common Era” can be found as early as 1708 in English and traced back to Latin usage among European Christians to 1615, as *vulgaris aerae*, and to 1635 in English as *Vulgar Era*.

Since the later 20th century, the use of CE and BCE have been popularized in academic and scientific publications, and more generally by authors and publishers wishing to emphasize secularism or sensitivity to non-Christians, because the system does not explicitly make use of religious titles for Jesus, such as “Christ” and *Dominus* (“Lord”), which are used in the BC/AD notation, nor does it give implicit expression to the Christian creed that Jesus is the Christ. While both systems are thus an accepted standard, the CE/BCE system is more neutral and inclusive of a non-Christian perspective.

## The Imperfect Historical Record

While some primary sources are considered more reliable or trustworthy than others, hardly any historical evidence can be seen as fully objective since it is always a product of particular individuals, times, and dominant ideas.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the consequences of the imperfect historical record

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- In the study of history as an academic discipline, a primary source is an artifact, document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, recording, or other source of information that was created at the time under study.
- History as an academic discipline is based on primary sources, as evaluated by the community of scholars for whom primary sources are absolutely fundamental to reconstructing the past. Ideally, a historian will use as many primary sources that were created during the time under study as can be accessed. In practice however, some sources have been destroyed, while others are not available for research.
- While some sources are considered more reliable or trustworthy than others, historians point out that hardly any historical evidence can be seen as fully objective since it is always a product of particular individuals, times, and dominant ideas.
- Historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence (including the evidence of archaeology) to research and write historical accounts of the past.
- Primary sources may remain in private hands or are located in archives, libraries, museums, historical

societies, and special collections. Traditionally, historians attempt to answer historical questions through the study of written documents and oral accounts. They also use such sources as monuments, inscriptions, and pictures. In general, the sources of historical knowledge can be separated into three categories: what is written, what is said, and what is physically preserved. Historians often consult all three.

- Historians use various strategies to reconstruct the past when facing a lack of sources, including collaborating with experts from other academic disciplines, most notably archaeology.

### *Key Terms*

- **secondary source:** A document or recording that relates or discusses information originally found in a primary source. It contrasts with a primary source, which is an original source of the information being discussed; a primary source can be a person with direct knowledge of a situation, or a document created by such a person. A secondary source involves generalization, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, or evaluation of the original information.
- **primary source:** In the study of history as an academic discipline, an artifact, document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, recording, or other source of information that was created at the time

under study. It serves as an original source of information about the topic.

- **historical method:** A scholarly method that comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence (including the evidence of archaeology) to research and write historical accounts of the past.

## Primary Sources

In the study of history as an academic discipline, a primary source (also called original source or evidence) is an artifact, document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, recording, or other source of information that was created at the time under study. It serves as an original source of information about the topic. Primary sources are distinguished from secondary sources, which cite, comment on, or build upon primary sources. In some cases, a secondary source may also be a primary source, depending on how it is used. For example, a memoir would be considered a primary source in research concerning its author or about his or her friends characterized within it, but the same memoir would be a secondary source if it were used to examine the culture in which its author lived. “Primary” and “secondary” should be understood as relative terms, with sources categorized according to specific historical contexts and what is being studied.

## Using Primary Sources: Historical Method

History as an academic discipline is based on primary sources, as evaluated by the community of scholars for whom primary sources are absolutely fundamental to reconstructing the past. Ideally, a historian will use as many primary sources that were created by the people involved at the time under study as can be accessed. In practice however, some sources have been destroyed, while others are not available for research. In some cases, the only eyewitness reports of an event may be memoirs, autobiographies, or oral interviews taken years later. Sometimes, the only evidence relating to an event or person in the distant past was written or copied decades or centuries later. Manuscripts that are sources for classical texts can be copies or fragments of documents. This is a common problem in classical studies, where sometimes only a summary of a book or letter, but not the actual book or letter, has survived. While some sources are considered more reliable or trustworthy than others (e.g., an original government document containing information about an event vs. a recording of a witness recalling the same event years later), historians point out that hardly any historical evidence can be seen as fully objective as it is always a product of particular individuals, times, and dominant ideas. This is also why researchers try to find as many records of an event under investigation as possible, and attempt to resolve evidence that may present contradictory accounts of the same events.



*This wall painting (known as The portrait of Paquius Proculus and currently preserved at the Naples National Archaeological Museum) was found in the Roman city of Pompeii and serves as a complex example of a primary source.*

The fresco would not tell much to historians without corresponding textual and archaeological evidence that helps to establish who the portrayed couple might have been. The man wears a toga, the mark of a Roman citizen, and holds a rotulus, suggesting he is involved in public and/or cultural affairs. The woman holds a stylus and wax tablet, emphasizing that she is educated and literate. It is suspected, based on the physical features of the couple, that they are Samnites,

which may explain the desire to show off the status they have reached in Roman society.

Historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence (including the evidence of archaeology) to research and write historical accounts of the past. Historians continue to debate what aspects and practices of investigating primary sources should be considered, and what constitutes a primary source when developing the most effective historical method. The question of the nature, and even the possibility, of a sound historical method is so central that it has been continuously raised in the philosophy of history as a question of epistemology.

## Finding Primary Sources

Primary sources may remain in private hands or are located in archives, libraries, museums, historical societies, and special collections. These can be public or private. Some are affiliated with universities and colleges, while others are government entities. Materials relating to one area might be spread over a large number of different institutions. These can be distant from the original source of the document. For example, the Huntington Library in California houses a large number of documents from the United Kingdom. While the development of technology has resulted in an increasing number of digitized sources, most primary source materials are not digitized and may only be represented online with a record or finding aid.

Traditionally, historians attempt to answer historical questions through the study of written documents and oral accounts. They also use such sources as monuments, inscriptions, and pictures. In general, the sources of historical knowledge can be separated into three categories: what is written, what is said, and what is physically



preserved. Historians often consult all three. However, writing is the marker that separates history from what comes before

Archaeology is one discipline that is especially helpful to historians. By dealing with buried sites and objects, it contributes to the reconstruction of the past. However, archaeology is constituted by a range of methodologies and approaches that are independent from history. In other words, archaeology does not “fill the gaps” within textual sources but often contrasts its conclusions against those of contemporary textual sources.

Archaeology also provides an illustrative example of how historians can be helped when written records are missing. Unearthing artifacts and working with archaeologists to interpret them based on the expertise of a particular historical era and cultural or geographical area is one effective way to reconstruct the past. If written records are missing, historians often attempt to collect oral accounts of particular events, preferably by eyewitnesses, but sometimes, because of the passage of time, they are forced to work with the following generations. Thus, the question of the reliability of oral history has been widely debated.

When dealing with many government records, historians usually have to wait for a specific period of time before documents are declassified and available to researchers. For political reasons, many sensitive records may be destroyed, withdrawn from collections, or hidden, which may also encourage researchers to rely on oral histories. Missing records of events, or processes that historians believe took place based on very fragmentary evidence, forces historians to seek information in records that may not be a likely sources of information. As archival

research is always time-consuming and labor-intensive, this approach poses the risk of never producing desired results, despite the time and effort invested in finding informative and reliable resources. In some cases, historians are forced to speculate (this should be explicitly noted) or simply admit that we do not have sufficient information to reconstruct particular past events or processes.

# Historical Bias

Biases have been part of historical investigation since the ancient beginnings of the discipline. While more recent scholarly practices attempt to remove earlier biases from history, no piece of historical scholarship can be fully free of biases.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify some examples of historical bias

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Regardless of whether they are conscious or learned implicitly within cultural contexts, biases have been part of historical investigation since the ancient beginnings of the discipline. As such, history provides an excellent example of how biases change, evolve, and even disappear.
- Early attempts to make history an empirical, objective discipline (most notably by Voltaire) did not find many followers. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, European historians only strengthened

their biases. As Europe gradually dominated the world through the self-imposed mission to colonize nearly all the other continents, Eurocentrism prevailed in history.

- Even within the Eurocentric perspective, not all Europeans were equal; Western historians largely ignored aspects of history, such as class, gender, or ethnicity. Until the rapid development of social history in the 1960s and 1970s, mainstream Western historical narratives focused on political and military history, while cultural or social history was written mostly from the perspective of the elites.
- The biased approach to history-writing transferred also to history-teaching. From the origins of national mass schooling systems in the 19th century, the teaching of history to promote national sentiment has been a high priority. History textbooks in most countries have been tools to foster nationalism and patriotism and to promote the most favorable version of national history.
- Germany attempts to be an example of how to remove nationalistic narratives from history education. The history curriculum in Germany is characterized by a transnational perspective that emphasizes the all-European heritage, minimizes the idea of national pride, and fosters the notion of civil society centered on democracy, human rights, and peace.
- Despite progress and increased focus on groups that have been traditionally excluded from mainstream historical narratives (people of color, women, the working class, the poor, the disabled,

LGBTQI-identified people, etc.), bias remains a component of historical investigation.

### *Key Terms*

- **Eurocentrism:** The practice of viewing the world from a European or generally Western perspective with an implied belief in the pre-eminence of Western culture. It may also be used to describe a view centered on the history or eminence of white people. The term was coined in the 1980s, referring to the notion of European exceptionalism and other Western equivalents, such as American exceptionalism.

## Bias in Historical Writing

Bias is an inclination or outlook to present or hold a partial perspective, often accompanied by a refusal to consider the possible merits of alternative points of view. Regardless of whether conscious or learned implicitly within cultural contexts, biases have been part of historical investigation since the ancient beginnings of the discipline. As such, history provides an excellent example of how biases change, evolve, and even disappear.

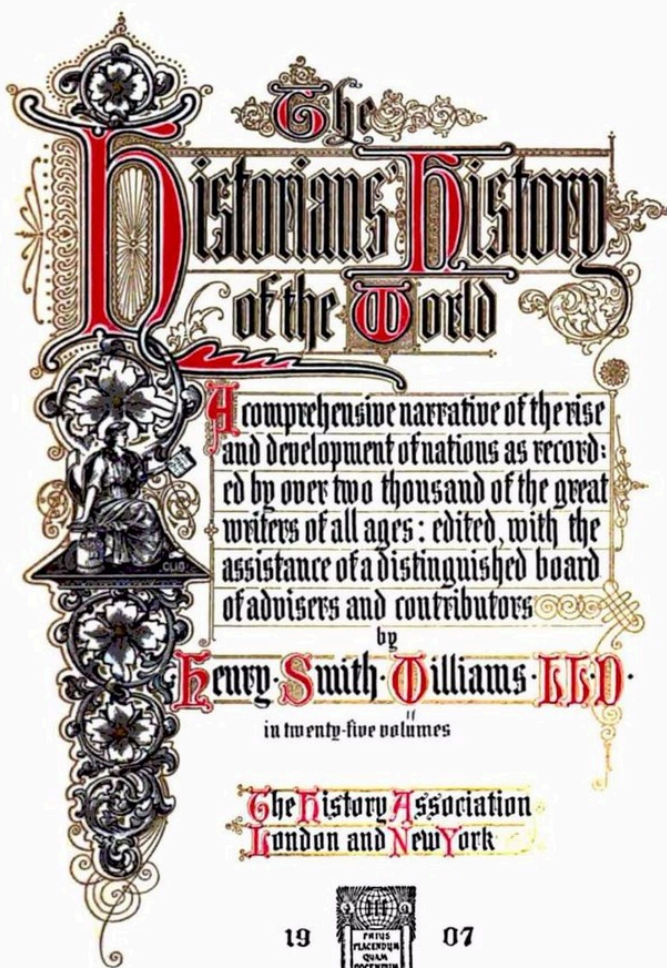
History as a modern academic discipline based on empirical methods (in this case, studying primary sources in order to reconstruct the past based on available evidence), rose to prominence during the Age of Enlightenment. Voltaire, a French

author and thinker, is credited to have developed a fresh outlook on history that broke from the tradition of narrating diplomatic and military events and emphasized customs, social history (the history of ordinary people) and achievements in the arts and sciences. His *Essay on Customs* traced the progress of world civilization in a universal context, thereby rejecting both nationalism and the traditional Christian frame of reference. Voltaire was also the first scholar to make a serious attempt to write the history of the world, eliminating theological frameworks and emphasizing economics, culture, and political history. He was the first to emphasize the debt of medieval culture to Middle Eastern civilization. Although he repeatedly warned against political bias on the part of the historian, he did not miss many opportunities to expose the intolerance and frauds of the Catholic Church over the ages— a topic that was Voltaire's life-long intellectual interest.

Voltaire's early attempts to make history an empirical, objective discipline did not find many followers. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, European historians only strengthened their biases. As Europe gradually benefited from the ongoing scientific progress and dominated the world in the self-imposed mission to colonize nearly all other continents, Eurocentrism prevailed in history. The practice of viewing and presenting the world from a European or generally Western perspective, with an implied belief in the pre-eminence of Western culture, dominated among European historians who contrasted the progressively mechanized character of European culture with traditional hunting, farming and herding societies in many of the areas of the world being newly conquered and colonized. These included the Americas, Asia, Africa and, later, the Pacific and Australasia. Many European writers of this time construed the history of Europe as paradigmatic for the rest of the world. Other cultures were identified as having reached a stage that Europe itself had already passed: primitive hunter-gatherer, farming, early civilization, feudalism and modern liberal-capitalism. Only Europe was considered to have achieved the last stage. With this assumption, Europeans were also presented as racially superior,

and European history as a discipline became essentially the history of the dominance of white peoples.

However, even within the Eurocentric perspective, not all Europeans were equal; Western historians largely ignored aspects of history, such as class, gender, or ethnicity. Until relatively recently (particularly the rapid development of social history in the 1960s and 1970s), mainstream Western historical narratives focused on political and military history, while cultural or social history was written mostly from the perspective of the elites. Consequently, what was in fact an experience of a selected few (usually white males of upper classes, with some occasional mentions of their female counterparts), was typically presented as the illustrative experience of the entire society. In the United States, some of the first to break this approach were African American scholars who at the turn of the 20th century wrote histories of black Americans and called for their inclusion in the mainstream historical narrative.



TITLE-PAGE DESIGNED AND ENGRAVED  
BY TIFFANY & CO., NEW YORK

**The title page to *The Historians' History of the World*: A Comprehensive Narrative of the Rise and Development of Nations as Recorded by over two thousand of the Great Writers of all Ages, 1907.**

*The Historians' History of the World* is a 25-volume encyclopedia of world history originally published in English near the beginning of the 20th century. It is quite extensive but its perspective is entirely Western Eurocentric. For example, while four volumes focus on the history of England (with Scotland and Ireland included in one of them), "Poland, the Balkans, Turkey, minor Eastern states, China, Japan" are all described in one volume. It was compiled by Henry Smith Williams, a medical doctor and author, as well as other authorities on history, and published in New York in 1902 by Encyclopædia Britannica and the Outlook Company.

## Bias in the Teaching of History

The biased approach to historical writing is present in the teaching of history as well. From the origins of national mass schooling systems in the 19th century, the teaching of history to promote national sentiment has been a high priority. Until today, in most countries history textbook are tools to foster nationalism and patriotism and promote the most favorable version of national history. In the United States, one of the most striking examples of this approach is the continuous narrative of the United States as a state established on the principles of personal liberty and democracy. Although aspects of U.S. history, such as slavery, genocide of American Indians, or disfranchisement of the large segments of the society for decades after the onset of the American statehood, are now taught in most (yet not all) American schools, they are presented as marginal in the larger narrative of liberty and democracy.

In many countries, history textbooks are sponsored by the national government and are written to put the national heritage in the most favorable light, although academic historians have often fought against the politicization of the textbooks, sometimes with success. Interestingly, the 21st-century Germany attempts to be



an example of how to remove nationalistic narratives from history education. As the 20th-century history of Germany is filled with events and processes that are rarely a cause of national pride, the history curriculum in Germany (controlled by the 16 German states) is characterized by a transnational perspective that emphasizes the all-European heritage, minimizes the idea of national pride, and fosters the notion of civil society centered on democracy, human rights, and peace. Yet, even in the rather unusual German case, Eurocentrism continues to dominate.

The challenge to replace national, or even nationalist, perspectives with a more inclusive transnational or global view of human history is also still very present in college-level history curricula. In the United States after World War I, a strong movement emerged at the university level to teach courses in Western Civilization with the aim to give students a common heritage with Europe. After 1980, attention increasingly moved toward teaching world history or requiring students to take courses in non-western cultures. Yet, world history courses still struggle to move beyond the Eurocentric perspective, focusing heavily on the history of Europe and its links to the United States.

Despite all the progress and much more focus on the groups that have been traditionally excluded from mainstream historical narratives (people of color, women, the working class, the poor, the disabled, LGBTQI-identified people, etc.), bias remains a component of historical investigation, whether it is a product of nationalism, author's political views, or an agenda-driven interpretation of sources. It is only appropriate to state that the present world history book, while written in accordance with the most recent scholarly and educational practices, has been written and edited by authors trained in American universities and published in the United States. As such, it is also not free from both national (U.S.) and individual (authors') biases.

# 5. Reading: Precursor to Civilization

## The Evolution of Humans

Human evolution is an ongoing and complex process that began seven million years ago.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

To understand the process and timeline of human evolution

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Humans began to evolve about seven million years ago, and progressed through four stages of evolution. Research shows that the first modern humans appeared 200,000 years ago.
- Neanderthals were a separate species from

humans. Although they had larger brain capacity and interbred with humans, they eventually died out.

- A number of theories examine the relationship between environmental conditions and human evolution.
- The main human adaptations have included bipedalism, larger brain size, and reduced sexual dimorphism.

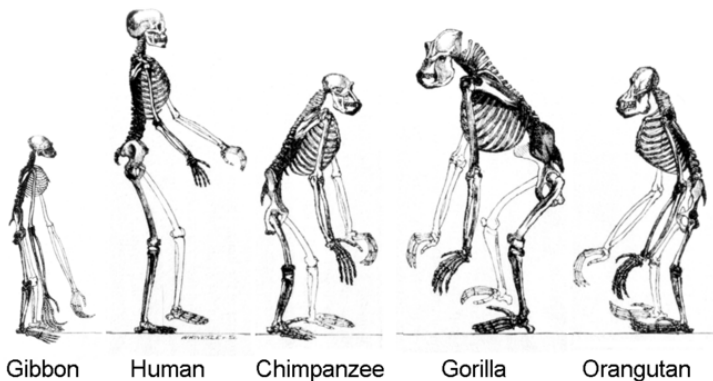
### *Key Terms*

- **sexual dimorphism:** Differences in size or appearance between the sexes of an animal species.
- **encephalization:** An evolutionary increase in the complexity and/or size of the brain.
- **Red Queen hypothesis:** The theory that species must constantly evolve in order to compete with co-evolving animals around them.
- **turnover pulse hypothesis:** The theory that extinctions due to environmental conditions hurt specialist species more than generalist ones, leading to greater evolution among specialists.
- **savannah hypothesis:** The theory that hominins were forced out of the trees they lived in and onto the expanding savannah; as they did so, they began walking upright on two feet.
- **Toba catastrophe theory:** The theory that there was a near-extinction event for early humans about 70,000 years ago.
- **social brain hypothesis:** The theory that improving

cognitive capabilities would allow hominins to influence local groups and control resources.

- **aridity hypothesis:** The theory that the savannah was expanding due to increasingly arid conditions, which then drove hominin adaptation.
- **hominids:** A primate of the family Hominidae that includes humans and their fossil ancestors.
- **bipedal:** Describing an animal that uses only two legs for walking.

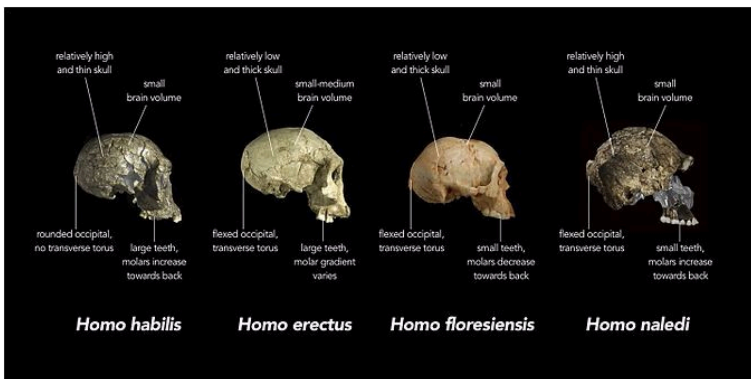
Human evolution began with primates. Primate development diverged from other mammals about 85 million years ago. Various divergences among apes, gibbons, orangutans occurred during this period, with *Homini* (including early humans and chimpanzees) separating from *Gorillini* (gorillas) about 8 millions years ago. Humans and chimps then separated about 7.5 million years ago.



**Skeletal structure of humans and other primates.:** A comparison of the skeletal structures of gibbons, humans, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans.

Generally, it is believed that hominids first evolved in Africa and then migrated to other areas. There were four main stages of human evolution. The first, between four and seven million years ago, consisted of the proto hominins *Sahelanthropus*, *Orrorin* and *Ardipithecus*. These humans may have been bipedal, meaning they walked upright on two legs. The second stage, around four million years ago, was marked by the appearance of *Australopithecus*, and the third, around 2.7 million years ago, featured *Paranthropus*.

The fourth stage features the genus *Homo*, which existed between 1.8 and 2.5 million years ago. *Homo habilis*, which used stone tools and had a brain about the size of a chimpanzee, was an early hominin in this period. Coordinating fine hand movements needed for tool use may have led to increasing brain capacity. This was followed by *Homo erectus* and *Homo ergaster*, who had double the brain size and may have been the first to control fire and use more complex tools. *Homo heidelbergensis* appeared about 800,000 years ago, and modern humans, *Homo sapiens*, about 200,000 years ago. Humans acquired symbolic culture and language about 50,000 years ago.



**Comparison of skull features among early humans.:** A comparison of *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus*, *Homo floresiensis* and *Homo naledi* skull features.

## Neanderthals

A separate species, *Homo neanderthalensis*, had a common ancestor with humans about 660,000 years ago, and engaged in interbreeding with *Homo sapiens* about 45,000 to 80,000 years ago. Although their brains were larger, Neanderthals had fewer social and technological innovations than humans, and they eventually died out.

## Theories of Early Human Evolution

The savannah hypothesis states that hominins were forced out of the trees they lived in and onto the expanding savannah; as they did so, they began walking upright on two feet. This idea was expanded in the aridity hypothesis, which posited that the savannah was expanding due to increasingly arid conditions resulting in hominin adaptation. Thus, during periods of intense aridification, hominins also were pushed to evolve and adapt.

The turnover pulse hypothesis states that extinctions due to environmental conditions hurt specialist species more than generalist ones. While generalist species spread out when environmental conditions change, specialist species become more specialized and have a greater rate of evolution. The Red Queen hypothesis states that species must constantly evolve in order to compete with co-evolving animals around them. The social brain hypothesis states that improving cognitive capabilities would allow hominins to influence local groups and control resources. The Toba catastrophe theory states that there was a near-extinction event for early humans about 70,000 years ago.

# Human Adaptations

Bipedalism, or walking upright, is one of the main human evolutionary adaptations. Advantages to be found in bipedalism include the freedom of the hands for labor and less physically taxing movement. Walking upright better allows for long distance travel and hunting, for a wider field of vision, a reduction of the amount of skin exposed to the sun, and overall thrives in a savannah environment. Bipedalism resulted in skeletal changes to the legs, knee and ankle joints, spinal vertebrae, toes, and arms. Most significantly, the pelvis became shorter and rounded, with a smaller birth canal, making birth more difficult for humans than other primates. In turn, this resulted in shorter gestation (as babies need to be born before their heads become too large), and more helpless infants who are not fully developed before birth.

Larger brain size, also called encephalization, began in early humans with *Homo habilis* and continued through the Neanderthal line (capacity of 1,200 – 1,900 cm<sup>3</sup>). The ability of the human brain to continue to grow after birth meant that social learning and language were possible. It is possible that a focus on eating meat, and cooking, allowed for brain growth. Modern humans have a brain volume of 1250 cm<sup>3</sup>.

Humans have reduced sexual dimorphism, or differences between males and females, and hidden estrus, which means the female is fertile year-round and shows no special sign of fertility. Human sexes still have some differences between them, with males being slightly larger and having more body hair and less body fat. These changes may be related to pair bonding for long-term raising of offspring.

Other adaptations include lessening of body hair, a chin, a descended larynx, and an emphasis on vision instead of smell.

**Human Evolution:** A video showing evolution from early animals to modern humans.

# The Neolithic Revolution

The Neolithic Revolution and invention of agriculture allowed humans to settle in groups, specialize, and develop civilizations.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the significance of the Neolithic Revolution

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- During the Paleolithic Era, humans grouped together in small societies and subsisted by gathering plants, and fishing, hunting or scavenging wild animals.
- The Neolithic Revolution references a change from a largely nomadic hunter-gatherer way of life to a more settled, agrarian-based one, with the inception of the domestication of various plant and animal species—depending on species locally available and likely also influenced by local culture.
- There are several competing (but not mutually exclusive) theories as to the factors that drove



populations to take up agriculture, including the Hilly Flanks hypothesis, the Feasting model, the Demographic theories, the evolutionary/intentionality theory, and the largely discredited Oasis Theory.

- The shift to agricultural food production supported a denser population, which in turn supported larger sedentary communities, the accumulation of goods and tools, and specialization in diverse forms of new labor.
- The nutritional standards of Neolithic populations were generally inferior to that of hunter-gatherers, and they worked longer hours and had shorter life expectancies.
- Life today, including our governments, specialized labor, and trade, is directly related to the advances made in the Neolithic Revolution.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hilly Flanks hypothesis:** The theory that agriculture began in the hilly flanks of the Taurus and Zagros mountains, where the climate was not drier, and fertile land supported a variety of plants and animals amenable to domestication.
- **Evolutionary/Intentionality theory:** The theory that domestication was part of an evolutionary process between humans and plants.
- **Neolithic Revolution:** The world's first historically verifiable advancement in agriculture. It took place

around 12,000 years ago.

- **Hunter-gatherer:** A nomadic lifestyle in which food is obtained from wild plants and animals; in contrast to an agricultural lifestyle, which relies mainly on domesticated species.
- **Paleolithic Era:** A period of history that spans from 2.5 million to 20,000 years ago, during which time humans evolved, used stone tools, and lived as hunter-gatherers.
- **Oasis Theory:** The theory that humans were forced into close association with animals due to changes in climate.
- **Feasting model:** The theory that displays of power through feasting drove agricultural technology.
- **specialization:** A process where laborers focused on one specialty area rather than creating all needed items.
- **Demographic theories:** Theories about how sedentary populations may have driven agricultural changes.

## Before the Rise of Civilization: The Paleolithic Era

The first humans evolved in Africa during the Paleolithic Era, or Stone Age, which spans the period of history from 2.5 million to about 10,000 BCE. During this time, humans lived in small groups as hunter-gatherers, with clear gender divisions for labor. The men hunted animals while the women gathered food, such as fruit, nuts and berries, from the local area. Simple tools made of stone, wood,

and bone (such as hand axes, flints and spearheads) were used throughout the period. Fire was controlled, which created heat and light, and allowed for cooking.

Humankind gradually evolved from early members of the genus *Homo*—

such as *Homo habilis*,

who used simple stone tools— into fully behaviorally and anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) during the Paleolithic era. During the end of the Paleolithic, specifically the Middle and or Upper Paleolithic, humans began to produce the earliest works of art and engage in religious and spiritual behavior, such as burial and ritual. Paleolithic humans were nomads, who often moved their settlements as food became scarce. This eventually resulted in humans spreading out from Africa (beginning roughly 60,000 years ago) and into Eurasia, Southeast Asia, and Australia. By about 40,000 years ago, they had entered Europe, and by about 15,000 years ago, they had reached North America followed by South America.



**Stone ball from a set of Paleolithic bolas:** Paleoliths (artifacts from the Paleolithic), such as this stone ball, demonstrate some of the stone technologies that the early humans used as tools and weapons.

During about 10,000 BCE, a major change occurred in the way humans lived; this would have a cascading effect on every part of human society and culture. That change was the Neolithic Revolution.

# The Neolithic Revolution: From Hunter-Gatherer to Agriculturalist

The beginning of the Neolithic Revolution in different regions has been dated from perhaps 8,000 BCE in the Kuk Early Agricultural Site of Melanesia to 2,500 BCE in Subsaharan Africa, with some considering the developments of 9,000-7,000 BCE in the Fertile Crescent to be the most important. This transition everywhere is associated with the change from a largely nomadic hunter-gatherer way of life to a more settled, agrarian-based one, due to the inception of the domestication of various plant and animal species—depending on the species locally available, and probably also influenced by local culture.

It is not known why humans decided to begin cultivating plants and domesticating animals. While more labor-intensive, the people must have seen the relationship between cultivation of grains and an increase in population. The domestication of animals provided a new source of protein, through meat and milk, along with hides and wool, which allowed for the production of clothing and other objects.

There are several competing (but not mutually exclusive) theories about the factors that drove populations to take up agriculture. The most prominent of these are:

- The Oasis Theory, originally proposed by Raphael Pumpelly in 1908, and popularized by V. Gordon Childe in 1928, suggests that the climate got drier due to the Atlantic depressions shifting northward, communities contracted to oases where they were forced into close association with animals. These animals were then domesticated together with planting of seeds. However, this theory has little support amongst archaeologists today because subsequent climate data suggests that the region was getting wetter rather than drier.
- The Hilly Flanks hypothesis, proposed by Robert Braidwood in

1948, suggests that agriculture began in the hilly flanks of the Taurus and Zagros mountains, where the climate was not drier, as Childe had believed, and that fertile land supported a variety of plants and animals amenable to domestication.

- The Feasting model by Brian Hayden suggests that agriculture was driven by ostentatious displays of power, such as giving feasts, to exert dominance. This system required assembling large quantities of food, a demand which drove agricultural technology.
- The Demographic theories proposed by Carl Sauer and adapted by Lewis Binford and Kent Flannery posit that an increasingly sedentary population outgrew the resources in the local environment and required more food than could be gathered. Various social and economic factors helped drive the need for food.
- The Evolutionary/Intentionality theory, developed by David Rindos and others, views agriculture as an evolutionary adaptation of plants and humans. Starting with domestication by protection of wild plants, it led to specialization of location and then full-fledged domestication.

## Effects of the Neolithic Revolution on Society

The traditional view is that the shift to agricultural food production supported a denser population, which in turn supported larger sedentary communities, the accumulation of goods and tools, and specialization in diverse forms of new labor. Overall a population could increase its size more rapidly when resources were more available. The resulting larger societies led to the development of different means of decision making and governmental organization. Food surpluses made possible the development of a social elite freed from labor, who dominated their communities and monopolized decision-making. There were deep social divisions and

inequality between the sexes, with women's status declining as men took on greater roles as leaders and warriors. Social class was determined by occupation, with farmers and craftsmen at the lower end, and priests and warriors at the higher.

## Effects of the Neolithic Revolution on Health

Neolithic populations generally had poorer nutrition, shorter life expectancies, and a more labor-intensive lifestyle than hunter-gatherers. Diseases jumped from animals to humans, and agriculturalists suffered from more anaemia, vitamin deficiencies, spinal deformations, and dental pathologies.

## Overall Impact of the Neolithic Revolution on Modern Life

The way we live today is directly related to the advances made in the Neolithic Revolution. From the governments we live under, to the specialized work laborers do, to the trade of goods and food, humans were irrevocably changed by the switch to sedentary agriculture and domestication of animals. Human population swelled from five million to seven billion today.

## 6. Reading: The first Urban Civilizations



## The Sumerians

The Sumerian people lived in Mesopotamia from the 27th-20th century BCE. They were inventive and industrious, creating large city-states, trading goods, mass-producing pottery, and perfecting many forms of technology.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

To understand the history and accomplishments of the Sumerian people

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Sumerians were a people living in Mesopotamia from the 27th-20th century BCE.
- The major periods in Sumerian history were the Ubaid period (6500-4100 BCE), the Uruk period (4100-2900 BCE), the Early Dynastic period (2900-2334 BCE), the Akkadian Empire period (2334 – 2218 BCE), the Gutian period (2218-2047 BCE), Sumerian Renaissance /Third Dynasty of Ur (2047-1940 BCE), and then decline.

- Many Sumerian clay tablets have been found with writing. Initially, pictograms were used, followed by cuneiform and then ideograms.
- Sumerians believed in anthropomorphic polytheism, or of many gods in human form that were specific to each city-state.
- Sumerians invented or perfected many forms of technology, including the wheel, mathematics, and cuneiform script.

### *Key Terms*

- **Epic of Gilgamesh:** An epic poem from the Third Dynasty of Ur (circa 2100 BCE), which is seen as the earliest surviving great work of literature.
- **pictograms:** A pictorial symbol for a word or phrase. They are the earliest known forms of writing.
- **pantheon:** The collective gods of a people or religion.
- **ideograms:** Written characters symbolizing an idea or entity without indicating the sounds used to say it.
- **cuneiform script:** Wedge-shaped characters used in the ancient writing systems of Mesopotamia, surviving mainly on clay tablets.
- **City-states:** A city that with its surrounding territory forms an independent state.
- **anthropomorphic:** Having human characteristics.

“Sumerian” is the name given by the Semitic-speaking Akkadians to non-Semitic speaking people living in Mesopotamia. City-states in

the region, which were organized by canals and boundary stones and dedicated to a patron god or goddess, first rose to power during the prehistoric Ubaid and Uruk periods. Sumerian written history began in the 27th century BCE, but the first intelligible writing began in the 23rd century BCE. Classical Sumer ends with the rise of the Akkadian Empire in the 23rd century BCE, and only enjoys a brief renaissance in the 21st century BCE. The Sumerians were eventually absorbed into the Akkadian/Babylonian population.

## Periods in Sumerian History

The Ubaid period (6500-4100 BCE) saw the first settlement in southern Mesopotamia by farmers who brought irrigation agriculture. Distinctive, finely painted pottery was evident during this time.

The Uruk period (4100-2900 BCE) saw several transitions. First, pottery began to be mass-produced. Second, trade goods began to flow down waterways in southern Mesopotamia, and large, temple-centered cities (most likely theocratic and run by priests-kings) rose up to facilitate this trade. Slave labor was also utilized.

The Early Dynastic period (2900-2334 BCE) saw writing, in contrast to pictograms, become commonplace and decipherable. The Epic of Gilgamesh mentions several leaders, including Gilgamesh himself, who were likely historical kings. The first dynastic king was Etana, the 13th king of the first dynasty of Kish. War was on the increase, and cities erected walls for self-preservation. Sumerian culture began to spread from southern Mesopotamia into surrounding areas.



**Sumerian Necklaces and Headgear:** Sumerian necklaces and headgear discovered in the royal (and individual) graves, showing the way they may have been worn.

During the Akkadian Empire period (2334-2218 BCE), many in the region became bilingual in both Sumerian and Akkadian. Toward the end of the empire, though, Sumerian became increasingly a literary language.

The Gutian period (2218-2047 BCE) was marked by a period of chaos and decline, as Gutu barbarians defeated the Akkadian military but were unable to support the civilizations in place.

The Sumerian Renaissance/Third Dynasty of Ur (2047-1940 BCE) saw the rulers Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, whose power extended into southern Assyria. However, the region was becoming more Semitic, and the Sumerian language became a religious language.

The Sumerian Renaissance ended with invasion by the Amorites, whose dynasty of Isin continued until 1700 BCE, at which point Mesopotamia came under Babylonian rule.

## Language and Writing

Many Sumerian clay tablets written in cuneiform script have been discovered. They are not the oldest example of writing, but nevertheless represent a great advance in the human ability to write down history and create literature. Initially, pictograms were used, followed by cuneiform, and then ideograms. Letters, receipts, hymns, prayers, and stories have all been found on clay tablets.



**Bill of Sale on a Clay Tablet:** This clay tablet shows a bill of sale for a male slave and building, circa 2600 BCE.

## Religion

Sumerians believed in anthropomorphic polytheism, or of many gods in human form, which were specific to each city-state. The core pantheon consisted of An (heaven), Enki (a healer and friend to humans), Enlil (gave spells spirits must obey), Inanna (love and war), Utu (sun-god), and Sin (moon-god).

## Technology

Sumerians invented or improved a wide range of technology, including the wheel, cuneiform script, arithmetic, geometry, irrigation, saws and other tools, sandals, chariots, harpoons, and beer.

## The Assyrians

The Assyrians were a major Semitic empire of the Ancient Near East, who existed as an independent state for approximately nineteen centuries between c. 2500-605 BCE, enjoying widespread military success in its heyday.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe key characteristics and notable events of the Assyrian Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Centered on the Upper Tigris river in northern Mesopotamia, the Assyrians came to rule powerful empires at several times, the last of which grew to be the largest and most powerful empire the world had yet seen.
- At its peak, the Assyrian empire stretched from Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea to Persia, and from the Caucasus Mountains (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) to the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. It was at the height of technological, scientific, and cultural achievements for its time.
- In the Old Assyrian period, Assyria established colonies in Asia Minor and the Levant, and asserted itself over southern Mesopotamia under king Ilushuma.
- Assyria experienced fluctuating fortunes in the Middle Assyrian period, with some of its kings finding themselves under the influence of foreign rulers while others eclipsed neighboring empires.
- Assyria became a great military power during the Neo-Assyrian period, and saw the conquests of large empires, such as Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Hittites, and the Persians, among others.
- After its fall in the late 600s BCE, Assyria remained a province and geo-political entity under various empires until the mid-7th century CE.



### *Key Terms*

- **Aššur:** The original capital of the Assyrian Empire, which dates back to 2600 BCE.
- **Assyrian Empire:** A major Semitic kingdom of the Ancient Near East, which existed as an independent state for a period of approximately nineteen centuries from c. 2500–605 BCE.

The Assyrian Empire was a major Semitic kingdom, and often empire, of the Ancient Near East. It existed as an independent state for a period of approximately 19 centuries from c. 2500 BCE to 605 BCE, which spans the Early Bronze Age through to the late Iron Age. For a further 13 centuries, from the end of the 7th century BCE to the mid-7th century CE, it survived as a geo-political entity ruled, for the most part, by foreign powers (although a number of small Neo-Assyrian states arose at different times throughout this period).



**Map of the Ancient Near East during the 14th century BCE, showing the great powers of the day:** This map shows the extent of the empires of Egypt (orange), Hatti (blue), the Kassite kingdom of Babylon (black), Assyria (yellow), and Mitanni (brown). The extent of the Achaean/Mycenaean civilization is shown in purple.

Centered on the Upper Tigris river, in northern Mesopotamia (northern Iraq, northeast Syria, and southeastern Turkey), the Assyrians came to rule powerful empires at several times, the last of which grew to be the largest and most powerful empire the world had yet seen.

As a substantial part of the greater Mesopotamian “Cradle of Civilization,” Assyria was at the height of technological, scientific, and cultural achievements for its time. At its peak, the Assyrian empire stretched from Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea to Persia (Iran), and from the Caucasus Mountains (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) to the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. Assyria is named for its original capital, the ancient city of Ašur (a.k.a., Ashur) which dates to c. 2600 BCE and was located in what is now the Saladin Province of northern Iraq. Ashur was originally one of a number of Akkadian city states in Mesopotamia. In the late 24th century BCE, Assyrian kings were regional leaders under Sargon of Akkad, who united all the Akkadian Semites and Sumerian -speaking peoples

of Mesopotamia under the Akkadian Empire (c. 2334 BC-2154 BCE). Following the fall of the Akkadian Empire, c. 2154 BCE, and the short-lived succeeding Sumerian Third Dynasty of Ur, which ruled southern Assyria, Assyria regained full independence.

The history of Assyria proper is roughly divided into three periods, known as Old Assyrian (late 21st-18th century BCE), Middle Assyrian (1365-1056 BCE), and Neo-Assyrian (911- 612BCE). These periods roughly correspond to the Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, and Early Iron Age, respectively. In the Old Assyrian period, Assyria established colonies in Asia Minor and the Levant. Under king Ilushuma, it asserted itself over southern Mesopotamia. From the late 19th century BCE, Assyria came into conflict with the newly created state of Babylonia, which eventually eclipsed the older Sumero-Akkadian states in the south, such as Ur, Isin, Larsa and Kish. Assyria experienced fluctuating fortunes in the Middle Assyrian period. Assyria had a period of empire under Shamshi-Adad I and Ishme-Dagan in the 19th and 18th centuries BCE. Following the reigns of these two kings, it found itself under Babylonian and Mitanni-Hurrian domination for short periods in the 18th and 15th centuries BCE, respectively.

However, a shift in the Assyrian's dominance occurred with the rise of the Middle Assyrian Empire (1365 BCE-1056 BCE). This period saw the reigns of great kings, such as Ashur-uballit I, Arik-den-ili, Tukulti-Ninurta I, and Tiglath-Pileser I. Additionally, during this period, Assyria overthrew Mitanni and eclipsed both the Hittite Empire and Egyptian Empire in the Near East. Long wars helped build Assyria into a warrior society, supported by landed nobility, which supplied horses to the military. All free male citizens were required to serve in the military, and women had very low status.

Beginning with the campaigns of Adad-nirari II from 911 BCE, Assyria again showed itself to be a great power over the next three centuries during the Neo-Assyrian period. It overthrew the Twenty-Fifth dynasty of Egypt, and conquered a number of other notable civilizations, including Babylonia, Elam, Media, Persia, Phoenicia/Canaan, Aramea (Syria), Arabia, Israel, and the Neo-Hittites. They

drove the Ethiopians and Nubians from Egypt, defeated the Cimmerians and Scythians, and exacted tribute from Phrygia, Magan, and Punt, among others.

After its fall (between 612-605 BCE), Assyria remained a province and geo-political entity under the Babylonian, Median, Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, Roman, and Sassanid Empires, until the Arab Islamic invasion and conquest of Mesopotamia in the mid-7th century CE when it was finally dissolved.

Assyria is mainly remembered for its military victories, technological advancements (such as using iron for weapons and building roads), use of torture to inspire fear, and a written history of conquests. Its military had not only general troops, but charioteers, cavalry, bowmen, and lancers.

# 7. Assignments

## Week 1

### Assignment

Thoroughly read the read me first section to become familiar with the course expectations.

#### **Introduction Discussion**

Points: 20

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.



PART III

WEEK 2: ANCIENT  
NEAR-EAST,  
MESOPOTAMIA, SYRIA,  
PALESTINE, AND EGYPT





# 8. Introduction

## Week 2

### Introduction

Antarados sarkophagus face

The ancient Near East was the home of early civilizations within a region roughly corresponding to the modern Middle East: Mesopotamia (modern Iraq, southeast Turkey, southwest Iran, northeastern Syria and Kuwait), ancient Egypt, ancient Iran (Elam, Media, Parthia and Persia), Anatolia/Asia Minor and Armenian Highlands (Turkey's Eastern Anatolia Region, Armenia, northwestern Iran, southern Georgia, and western Azerbaijan), the Levant (modern Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, and Jordan), Cyprus and the Arabian Peninsula. The ancient Near East is studied in the fields of Near Eastern archaeology and ancient history.

The history of the ancient Near East begins with the rise of Sumer in the 4th millennium BC, though the date it ends varies. The term covers the Bronze Age and the Iron Age in the region, until either the conquest by the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th century BC, that by Macedonian Empire in the 4th century BC, or the Muslim conquests in the 7th century AD.

The ancient Near East is considered one of the cradles of civilization. It was here that intensive year-round agriculture was first practiced, leading to the rise of the first dense urban settlements and the development of many familiar institutions of civilization, such as social stratification, centralized government and empires, organized religion and organized warfare. It also saw the creation of the first writing system and law codes, early

advances that laid the foundations of astronomy and mathematics,  
and the invention of the wheel.

map

# 9. Reading: Akkadian Empire

## River Valley Civilizations

The first civilizations formed in river valleys, and were characterized by a caste system and a strong government that controlled water access and resources.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why early civilizations arose on the banks of rivers

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Rivers were attractive locations for the first civilizations because they provided a steady supply of drinking water and game, made the land fertile for growing crops, and allowed for easy transportation.
- Early river civilizations were all hydraulic empires that maintained power and control through exclusive

control over access to water. This system of government arose through the need for flood control and irrigation, which requires central coordination and a specialized bureaucracy.

- Hydraulic hierarchies gave rise to the established permanent institution of impersonal government, since changes in ruling were usually in personnel, but not in the structure of government.

### *Key Terms*

- **Water shortage:** Water is less available due to climate change, pollution, or overuse.
- **Water crisis:** There is not enough fresh, clean water to meet local demand.
- **caste:** A form of social stratification characterized by endogamy (hereditary transmission of a lifestyle). This lifestyle often includes an occupation, ritual status in a hierarchy, and customary social interaction and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and pollution.
- **hydraulic empire:** A social or governmental structure that maintains power through exclusive control of water access.
- **Fertile Crescent:** A crescent-shaped region containing the comparatively moist and fertile land of otherwise arid and semi-arid Western Asia, and the Nile Valley and Nile Delta of northeast Africa. Often called the cradle of civilization.
- **Neolithic Revolution:** Also called the Agricultural

Revolution, this was the wide-scale transition of human cultures from being hunter-gatherers to being settled agriculturalists.

- **Water stress:** Difficulty in finding fresh water, or the depletion of available water sources.

## The First Civilizations

The first civilizations formed on the banks of rivers. The most notable examples are the Ancient Egyptians, who were based on the Nile, the Mesopotamians in the Fertile Crescent on the Tigris/Euphrates rivers, the Ancient Chinese on the Yellow River, and the Ancient India on the Indus. These early civilizations began to form around the time of the Neolithic Revolution (12000 BCE).

Rivers were attractive locations for the first civilizations because they provided a steady supply of drinking water and made the land fertile for growing crops. Moreover, goods and people could be transported easily, and the people in these civilizations could fish and hunt the animals that came to drink water. Additionally, those lost in the wilderness could return to civilization by traveling downstream, where the major centers of human population tend to concentrate.



**The Nile River and Delta:** Most of the Ancient Egyptian settlements occurred along the northern part of the Nile, pictured in this satellite image taken from orbit by NASA.

## Hydraulic Empires

Though each civilization was uniquely different, we can see common patterns amongst these first civilizations since they were all based around rivers. Most notably, these early civilizations were all hydraulic empires. A hydraulic empire (also known as hydraulic despotism, or water monopoly empire) is a social or governmental structure which maintains power through exclusive control over water access. This system of government arises through the need for flood control and irrigation, which requires central coordination and a specialized bureaucracy. This political structure is commonly characterized by a system of hierarchy and control based around class or caste. Power, both over resources (food, water, energy)

and a means of enforcement, such as the military, are vital for the maintenance of control. Most hydraulic empires exist in desert regions, but imperial China also had some such characteristics, due to the exacting needs of rice cultivation. The only hydraulic empire to exist in Africa was under the Ajuran State near the Jubba and Shebelle Rivers in the 15th century CE.

Karl August Wittfogel, the German scholar who first developed the notion of the hydraulic empire, argued in his book, *Oriental Despotism* (1957), that strong government control characterized these civilizations because a particular resource (in this case, river water) was both a central part of economic processes and environmentally limited. This fact made controlling supply and demand easier and allowed the establishment of a more complete monopoly, and also prevented the use of alternative resources to compensate. However, it is also important to note that complex irrigation projects predated states in Madagascar, Mexico, China and Mesopotamia, and thus it cannot be said that a key, limited economic resource necessarily mandates a strong centralized bureaucracy.

According to Wittfogel, the typical hydraulic empire government has no trace of an independent aristocracy—in contrast to the decentralized feudalism of medieval Europe. Though tribal societies had structures that were usually personal in nature, exercised by a patriarch over a tribal group related by various degrees of kinship, hydraulic hierarchies gave rise to the established permanent institution of impersonal government. Popular revolution in such a state was very difficult; a dynasty might die out or be overthrown by force, but the new regime would differ very little from the old one. Hydraulic empires were usually destroyed by foreign conquerors.

## Water Scarcity Today

Access to water is still crucial to modern civilizations; water scarcity affects more than 2.8 billion people globally. Water stress is the term used to describe difficulty in finding fresh water or the depletion of available water sources. Water shortage is the term used when water is less available due to climate change, pollution, or overuse. Water crisis is the term used when there is not enough fresh, clean water to meet local demand. Water scarcity may be physical, meaning there are inadequate water resources available in a region, or economic, meaning governments are not managing available resources properly. The United Nations Development Programme has found that water scarcity generally results from the latter issue.

## The Akkadian Empire

The Akkadian Empire flourished in the 24th and 22nd centuries BCE, ruled by Sargon and Naram-Sin. It eventually collapsed in 2154 BCE, due to the invasion of barbarian peoples and large-scale climatic changes.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the key political characteristics of the Akkadian Empire



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Akkadian Empire was an ancient Semitic empire centered in the city of Akkad and its surrounding region in ancient Mesopotamia, which united all the indigenous Akkadian speaking Semites and the Sumerian speakers under one rule within a multilingual empire.
- King Sargon, the founder of the empire, conquered several regions in Mesopotamia and consolidated his power by instating Akkadian officials in new territories. He extended trade across Mesopotamia and strengthened the economy through rain-fed agriculture in northern Mesopotamia.
- The Akkadian Empire experienced a period of successful conquest under Naram-Sin due to benign climatic conditions, huge agricultural surpluses, and the confiscation of wealth.
- The empire collapsed after the invasion of the Gutians. Changing climatic conditions also contributed to internal rivalries and fragmentation, and the empire eventually split into the Assyrian Empire in the north and the Babylonian empire in the south.

## *Key Terms*

- **Akkadian Empire:** An ancient Semitic empire centered in the city of Akkad and its surrounding region in ancient Mesopotamia.
- **Sargon:** The first king of the Akkadians. He conquered many of the surrounding regions to establish the massive multilingual empire.
- **Gutians:** A group of barbarians from the Zagros Mountains who invaded the Akkadian Empire and contributed to its collapse.
- **Cuneiform:** One of the earliest known systems of writing, distinguished by its wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets, and made by means of a blunt reed for a stylus.
- **Semites:** Today, the word “Semite” may be used to refer to any member of any of a number of peoples of ancient Southwest Asian descent, including the Akkadians, Phoenicians, Hebrews (Jews), Arabs, and their descendants.
- **Naram-Sin:** An Akkadian king who conquered Ebla, Aram, and Magan, and built a royal residence at Tell Brak.

The Akkadian Empire was an ancient Semitic empire centered in the city of Akkad, which united all the indigenous Akkadian speaking Semites and Sumerian speakers under one rule. The Empire controlled Mesopotamia, the Levant, and parts of Iran.



**Map of the Akkadian Empire:** The Akkadian Empire is pictured in brown. The directions of the military campaigns are shown as yellow arrows.

Its founder was Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279 BCE). Under Sargon and his successors, the Akkadian Empire reached its political peak between the 24th and 22nd centuries BCE. Akkad is sometimes regarded as the first empire in history.

## Sargon and His Dynasty

Sargon claimed to be the son of La'ibum or Itti-Bel, a humble gardener, and possibly a *hierodule*, or priestess to Ishtar or Inanna. Some later claimed that his mother was an “entu” priestess (high priestess). Originally a cupbearer to king Ur-Zababa of Kish, Sargon became a gardener, which gave him access to a disciplined corps of workers who also may have served as his first soldiers. Displacing

Ur-Zababa, Sargon was crowned king and began a career of foreign conquest. He invaded Syria and Canaan on four different campaigns, and spent three years subduing the countries of “the west” to unite them with Mesopotamia “into a single empire.”

Sargon's empire reached westward as far as the Mediterranean Sea and perhaps Cyprus (Kaptara); northward as far as the mountains; eastward over Elam; and as far south as Magan (Oman)—a region over which he purportedly reigned for 56 years, though only four “year-names” survive. He replaced rulers with noble citizens of Akkad. Trade extended from the silver mines of Anatolia to the lapis lazuli mines in Afghanistan, and from the cedars of Lebanon to the copper of Magan. The empire's breadbasket was the rain-fed agricultural system of northern Mesopotamia (Assyria), and a chain of fortresses was built to control the imperial wheat production.

Sargon, throughout his long life, showed special deference to the Sumerian deities, particularly Inanna (Ishtar), his patroness, and Zababa, the warrior god of Kish. He called himself “the anointed priest of Anu” and “the great ensi of Enlil.”

Sargon managed to crush his opposition even in old age. Difficulties also broke out in the reign of his sons, Rimush (2278–2270 BCE), who was assassinated by his own courtiers, and Manishtushu (2269–2255 BCE), who reigned for 15 years. He, too, was likely assassinated in a palace conspiracy.



**Bronze head of a king:** Bronze head of a king, most likely Sargon of Akkad but possibly Naram-Sin. Unearthed in Nineveh (now in Iraq).

# Naram-Sin

Manishtushu's son and successor, Naram-Sin (called, Beloved of Sin) (2254–2218 BCE), assumed the imperial title “King Naram-Sin, King of the Four Quarters.” He was also, for the first time in Sumerian culture, addressed as “the god of Agade (Akkad).” This represents a marked shift away from the previous religious belief that kings were only representatives of the people toward the gods.

Naram-Sin conquered Ebla and Armum, and built a royal residence at Tell Brak, a crossroads at the heart of the Khabur River basin of the Jezirah. Naram-Sin also conquered Magan and created garrisons to protect the main roads. This productive period of Akkadian conquest may have been based upon benign climatic conditions, huge agricultural surpluses, and the confiscation of the wealth of other peoples.



*Stele of Naram-Sin: This stele commemorates Naram-Sin's victory against the Lullubi from Zagros in 2260 BCE. Naram-Sin is depicted to be wearing a horned helmet, a symbol of divinity, and is also portrayed in a larger scale in comparison to others to emphasize his superiority.*

## Living in the Akkadian Empire

Future Mesopotamian states compared themselves to the Akkadian Empire, which they saw as a classical standard in governance. The economy was dependent on irrigated farmlands of southern Iraq, and rain-fed agriculture of Northern Iraq. There was often a surplus of agriculture but shortages of other goods, like metal ore, timber,

and building stone. Art of the period often focused on kings, and depicted somber and grim conflict and subjugation to divinities. Sumerians and Akkadians were bilingual in each other's languages, but Akkadian gradually replaced Sumerian. The empire had a postal service, and a library featuring astronomical observations.

## Collapse of the Akkadian Empire

The Empire of Akkad collapsed in 2154 BCE, within 180 years of its founding. The collapse ushered in a Dark Age period of regional decline that lasted until the rise of the Third Dynasty of Ur in 2112 BCE. By the end of the reign of Naram-Sin's son, Shar-kali-sharri (2217-2193 BCE), the empire had weakened significantly. There was a period of anarchy between 2192 BC and 2168 BCE. Some centralized authority may have been restored under Shu-Durul (2168-2154 BCE), but he was unable to prevent the empire collapsing outright from the invasion of barbarian peoples, known as the Gutians, from the Zagros Mountains.

Little is known about the Gutian period or for how long it lasted. Cuneiform sources suggest that the Gutians' administration showed little concern for maintaining agriculture, written records, or public safety; they reputedly released all farm animals to roam about Mesopotamia freely, and soon brought about famine and rocketing grain prices. The Sumerian king Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BCE) later cleared the Gutians from Mesopotamia during his reign.

The collapse of rain-fed agriculture in the Upper Country due to drought meant the loss of the agrarian subsidies which had kept the Akkadian Empire solvent in southern Mesopotamia. Rivalries between pastoralists and farmers increased. Attempts to control access to water led to increased political instability; meanwhile, severe depopulation occurred.

After the fall of the Akkadian Empire, the Akkadian people

coalesced into two major Akkadian speaking nations: Assyria in the north, and, a few centuries later, Babylonia in the south.

## Ur

The city-state of Ur in Mesopotamia was important and wealthy, and featured highly centralized bureaucracy. It is famous for the Ziggurat of Ur, a temple whose ruins were discovered in modern day.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

To understand the significance of the city-state of Ur

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Ur was a major Sumerian city-state located in Mesopotamia, founded circa 3800 BCE.
- Cuneiform tablets show that Ur was a highly centralized, wealthy, bureaucratic state during the third millennium BCE.
- The Ziggurat of Ur was built in the 21st century



BCE, during the reign of Ur-Nammu, and was reconstructed in the 6th century BCE by Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon.

- Control of Ur passed among various peoples until the Third Dynasty of Ur, which featured the strong kings Ur-Nammu and Shulgi.
- Ur was uninhabited by 500 BCE.

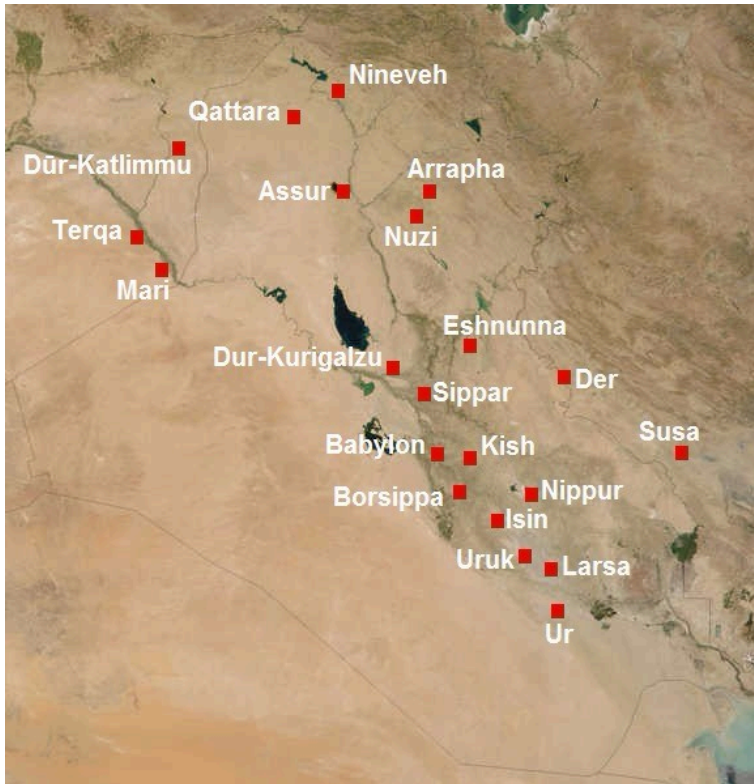
### *Key Terms*

- **Sumerian:** A group of non-Semitic people living in ancient Mesopotamia.
- **Cuneiform:** Wedge-shaped characters imprinted onto clay tablets, used in ancient writing systems of Mesopotamia.
- **Sargon the Great:** A Semitic emperor of the Akkadian Empire, known for conquering Sumerian city-states in the 24th and 23rd centuries BCE.
- **Ziggurat:** A rectangular stepped tower, sometimes surmounted by a temple.

## A Major Mesopotamian City

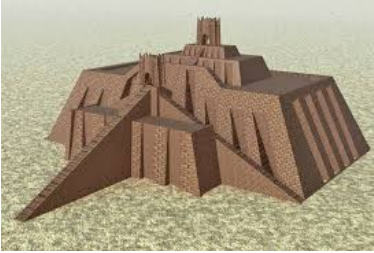
Ur was a major Sumerian city-state located in Mesopotamia, marked today by Tell el-Muqayyar in southern Iraq. It was founded circa 3800 BCE, and was recorded in written history from the 26th century BCE. Its patron god was Nanna, the moon god, and the city's name literally means "the abode of Nanna."

Cuneiform tablets show that Ur was, during the third millennium BCE, a highly centralized, wealthy, bureaucratic state. The discovery of the Royal Tombs, dating from about the 25th century BCE, showed that the area had luxury items made out of precious metals and semi-precious stones, which would have required importation. Some estimate that Ur was the largest city in the world from 2030-1980 BCE, with approximately 65,000 people.



**The City of Ur:** This map shows Mesopotamia in the third millennium BCE, with Ur in the south.

## The Ziggurat of Ur



**The Ziggurat of Ur:** This is a reconstruction of Ur-Nammu's ziggurat.

This temple was built in the 21st century BCE, during the reign of Ur-Nammu, and was reconstructed in the 6th century BCE by Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. The ruins, which cover an area of 3,900 feet by 2,600 feet, were

uncovered in the 1930s. It was part of a temple complex that served as an administrative center for the city of Ur, and was dedicated to Nanna, the moon god.

## Control of Ur

Between the 24th and 22nd century BCE, Ur was controlled by Sargon the Great, of the Akkadian Empire. After the fall of this empire, Ur was ruled by the barbarian Gutians, until King Ur-Nammu came to power, circa 2047 – 2030 BCE (the Third Dynasty of Ur). Advances during this time included the building of temples, like the Ziggurat, better agricultural irrigation, and a code of laws, called the Code of Ur-Nammu, which preceded the Code of Hammurabi by 300 years.

Shulgi succeeded Ur-Nammu, and was able to increase Ur's power by creating a highly centralized bureaucratic state. Shulgi, who eventually declared himself a god, ruled from 2029-1982 BCE, and was well-known for at least two thousand years after.

Three more kings, Amar-Sin, Shu0Sin and Ibbi-Sin, ruled Ur before it fell to the Elamites in 1940 BCE. Although Ur lost its political power, it remained economically important. It was ruled by the first dynasty of Babylonia, then part of the Sealand Dynasty,

then by the Kassites before falling to the Assyrian Empire from the 10th-7th century BE. After the 7th century BCE, it was ruled by the Chaldean Dynasty of Babylon. It began its final decline around 550 BCE, and was uninhabited by 500 BE. The final decline was likely due to drought, changing river patterns and the silting of the Persian Gulf.

# 10. Reading: Babylonia

## Babylon

Following the collapse of the Akkadians, the Babylonian Empire flourished under Hammurabi, who conquered many surrounding peoples and empires, in addition to developing an extensive code of law and establishing Babylon as a “holy city” of southern Mesopotamia.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe key characteristics of the Babylonian Empire under Hammurabi

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- A series of conflicts between the Amorites and the Assyrians followed the collapse of the Akkadian Empire, out of which Babylon arose as a powerful city-state c. 1894 BCE.

- Babylon remained a minor territory for a century after it was founded, until the reign of its sixth Amorite ruler, Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE), an extremely efficient ruler who established a bureaucracy with taxation and centralized government.
- Hammurabi also enjoyed various military successes over the whole of southern Mesopotamia, modern-day Iran and Syria, and the old Assyrian Empire in Asian Minor.
- After the death of Hammurabi, the First Babylonian Dynasty eventually fell due to attacks from outside its borders.

### *Key Terms*

- **Marduk:** The south Mesopotamian god that rose to supremacy in the pantheon over the previous god, Enlil.
- **Hammurabi:** The sixth king of Babylon, who, under his rule, saw Babylonian advancements, both militarily and bureaucratically.
- **Code of Hammurabi:** A code of law that echoed and improved upon earlier written laws of Sumer, Akkad, and Assyria.
- **Amorites:** An ancient Semitic-speaking people from ancient Syria who also occupied large parts of Mesopotamia in the 21st Century BCE.

# The Rise of the First Babylonian Dynasty

Following the disintegration of the Akkadian Empire, the Sumerians rose up with the Third Dynasty of Ur in the late 22nd century BCE, and ejected the barbarian Gutians from southern Mesopotamia. The Sumerian “Ur-III” dynasty eventually collapsed at the hands of the Elamites, another Semitic people, in 2002 BCE. Conflicts between the Amorites (Western Semitic nomads) and the Assyrians continued until Sargon I (1920-1881 BCE) succeeded as king in Assyria and withdrew Assyria from the region, leaving the Amorites in control (the Amorite period).

One of these Amorite dynasties founded the city-state of Babylon circa 1894 BCE, which would ultimately take over the others and form the short-lived first Babylonian empire, also called the Old Babylonian Period.

A chieftain named Sumuabum appropriated the then relatively small city of Babylon from the neighboring Mesopotamian city state of Kazallu, turning it into a state in its own right. Sumuabum appears never to have been given the title of King, however.



**Babylonia under Hammurabi:** The extent of the Babylonian Empire at the start and end of Hammurabi's reign.

## The Babylonians Under Hammurabi

Babylon remained a minor territory for a century after it was founded, until the reign of its sixth Amorite ruler, Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE). He was an efficient ruler, establishing a centralized

bureaucracy with taxation. Hammurabi freed Babylon from Elamite dominance, and then conquered the whole of southern

Mesopotamia, bringing stability and the name of Babylonia to the region.

The armies of Babylonia under Hammurabi were well-disciplined, and he was able to invade modern-day Iran to the east and conquer the pre-Iranic Elamites, Gutians and Kassites. To the west, Hammurabi enjoyed military success against the Semitic states of the Levant (modern Syria), including the powerful kingdom of Mari. Hammurabi also entered into a protracted war with the Old Assyrian Empire for control of Mesopotamia and the Near East. Assyria had extended control over parts of Asia Minor from the 21st century BCE, and from the latter part of the 19th century BCE had asserted itself over northeast Syria and central Mesopotamia as well. After a protracted, unresolved struggle over decades with the Assyrian king Ishme-Dagan, Hammurabi forced his successor, Mut-Ashkur, to pay tribute to Babylon c. 1751 BCE, thus giving Babylonia control over Assyria's centuries-old Hattian and Hurrian colonies in Asia Minor.

One of the most important works of this First Dynasty of Babylon was the compilation in about 1754 BCE of a code of laws, called the Code of Hammurabi, which echoed and improved upon the earlier written laws of Sumer, Akkad, and Assyria. It is one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world. The Code consists of 282 laws, with scaled punishments depending on social status, adjusting "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Nearly one-half of the Code deals with matters of contract. A third of the code addresses issues concerning household and family relationships.

From before 3000 BC until the reign of Hammurabi, the major cultural and religious center of southern Mesopotamia had been the ancient city of Nippur, where the god Enlil reigned supreme. However, with the rise of Hammurabi, this honor was transferred to Babylon, and the god Marduk rose to supremacy (with the god Ashur remaining the dominant deity in Assyria). The city of Babylon became known as a "holy city," where any legitimate ruler of southern Mesopotamia had to be crowned. Hammurabi turned what had previously been a minor administrative town into a major city,



increasing its size and population dramatically, and conducting a number of impressive architectural works.

## The Decline of the First Babylonian Dynasty

Despite Hammurabi's various military successes, southern Mesopotamia had no natural, defensible boundaries, which made it vulnerable to attack. After the death of Hammurabi, his empire began to disintegrate rapidly. Under his successor Samsu-iluna (1749-1712 BCE), the far south of Mesopotamia was lost to a native Akkadian king, called Ilum-ma-ili, and became the Sealand Dynasty; it remained free of Babylon for the next 272 years.

Both the Babylonians and their Amorite rulers were driven from Assyria to the north by an Assyrian-Akkadian governor named Puzur-Sin, c. 1740 BCE. Amorite rule survived in a much-reduced Babylon, Samshu-iluna's successor, Abi-Eshuh, made a vain attempt to recapture the Sealand Dynasty for Babylon, but met defeat at the hands of king Damqi-ilishu II. By the end of his reign, Babylonia had shrunk to the small and relatively weak nation it had been upon its foundation.

## Hammurabi's Code

The Code of Hammurabi was a collection of 282 laws, written in c. 1754 BCE in Babylon, which focused on contracts and family relationships, featuring a presumption of innocence and the presentation of evidence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the significance of Hammurabi's code

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world (written c. 1754 BCE), and features a code of law from ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia.
- The Code consisted of 282 laws, with punishments that varied based on social status (slaves, free men, and property owners).
- Some have seen the Code as an early form of constitutional government, as an early form of the presumption of innocence, and as the ability to present evidence in one's case.
- Major laws covered in the Code include slander, trade, slavery, the duties of workers, theft, liability, and divorce. Nearly half of the code focused on contracts, and a third on household relationships.
- There were three social classes: the amelu (the elite), the mushkenu (free men) and ardu (slave).
- Women had limited rights, and were mostly based

around marriage contracts and divorce rights.

- A stone stele featuring the Code was discovered in 1901, and is currently housed in the Louvre.

### *Key Terms*

- **cuneiform:** Wedge-shaped characters used in the ancient writing systems of Mesopotamia, impressed on clay tablets.
- **ardu:** In Babylon, a slave.
- **mushkenu:** In Babylon, a free man who was probably landless.
- **amelu:** In Babylon, an elite social class of people.
- **stele:** A stone or wooden slab, generally taller than it is wide, erected as a monument.

The Code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world, and features a code of law from ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia. Written in about 1754 BCE by the sixth king of Babylon, Hammurabi, the Code was written on stone stele and clay tablets. It consisted of 282 laws, with punishments that varied based on social status (slaves, free men, and property owners). It is most famous for the “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” (*lex talionis*) form of punishment. Other forms of codes of law had been in existence in the region around this time, including the Code of Ur-Nammu, king of Ur (c. 2050 BCE), the Laws of Eshnunna (c. 1930 BCE) and the codex of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin (c. 1870 BCE).

The laws were arranged in groups, so that citizens could easily read what was required of them. Some have seen the Code as an early form of constitutional government, and as an early form of the

presumption of innocence, and the ability to present evidence in one's case. Intent was often recognized and affected punishment, with neglect severely punished. Some of the provisions may have been codification of Hammurabi's decisions, for the purpose of self-glorification. Nevertheless, the Code was studied, copied, and used as a model for legal reasoning for at least 1500 years after.

The prologue of the Code features Hammurabi stating that he wants "to make justice visible in the land, to destroy the wicked person and the evil-doer, that the strong might not injure the weak." Major laws covered in the Code include slander, trade, slavery, the duties of workers, theft, liability, and divorce. Nearly half of the code focused on contracts, such as wages to be paid, terms of transactions, and liability in case of property damage. A third of the code focused on household and family issues, including inheritance, divorce, paternity and sexual behavior. One section establishes that a judge who incorrectly decides an issue may be removed from his position permanently. A few sections address military service.

One of the most well-known sections of the Code was law #196: "If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye. If one break a man's bone, they shall break his bone. If one destroy the eye of a freeman or break the bone of a freeman he shall pay one gold mina. If one destroy the eye of a man's slave or break a bone of a man's slave he shall pay one-half his price."

## The Social Classes

Under Hammurabi's reign, there were three social classes. The *amelu* was originally an elite person with full civil rights, whose birth, marriage and death were recorded. Although he had certain privileges, he also was liable for harsher punishment and higher fines. The king and his court, high officials, professionals and craftsmen belonged to this group. The *mushkenu* was a free man who may have been landless. He was required to accept monetary

compensation, paid smaller fines and lived in a separate section of the city. The *ardu* was a slave whose master paid for his upkeep, but also took his compensation. *Ardu* could own property and other slaves, and could purchase his own freedom.

## Women's Rights

Women entered into marriage through a contract arranged by her family. She came with a dowry, and the gifts given by the groom to the bride also came with her. Divorce was up to the husband, but after divorce he then had to restore the dowry and provide her with an income, and any children came under the woman's custody. However, if the woman was considered a "bad wife" she might be sent away, or made a slave in the husband's house. If a wife brought action against her husband for cruelty and neglect, she could have a legal separation if the case was proved. Otherwise, she might be drowned as punishment. Adultery was punished with drowning of both parties, unless a husband was willing to pardon his wife.

## Discovery of the Code

Archaeologists, including Egyptologist Gustave Jequier, discovered the code in 1901 at the ancient site of Susa in Khuzestan; a translation was published in 1902 by Jean-Vincent Scheil. A basalt stele containing the code in cuneiform script inscribed in the Akkadian language is currently on display in the Louvre, in Paris, France. Replicas are located at other museums throughout the world.



**The Code of Hammurabi:** This basalt stele has the Code of Hammurabi inscribed in cuneiform script in the Akkadian language.

## Babylonian Culture

Hallmarks of Babylonian culture include mudbrick architecture, extensive astronomical records and logs, diagnostic medical handbooks, and translations of Sumerian literature.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the extent and influence of Babylonian culture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Babylonian temples were massive structures of crude brick, supported by buttresses. Such uses of brick led to the early development of the pilaster and column, and of frescoes and enameled tiles.
- Certain pieces of Babylonian art featured crude three-dimensional statues, and gem-cutting was considered a high-perfection art.
- The Babylonians produced extensive compendiums of astronomical records containing catalogues of stars and constellations, as well as schemes for calculating various astronomical coordinates and phenomena.
- Medicinally, the Babylonians introduced basic medical processes, such as diagnosis and prognosis, and also catalogued a variety of illnesses with their symptoms.
- Both Babylonian men and women learned to read and write, and much of Babylonian literature is translated from ancient Sumerian texts, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh.

### *Key Terms*

- **mudbrick:** A brick mixture of loam, mud, sand, and

water mixed with a binding material, such as rice husks or straw.

- **etiology:** Causation. In medicine, cause or origin of disease or condition.
- **pilaster:** An architectural element in classical architecture used to give the appearance of a supporting column and to articulate an extent of wall, with only an ornamental function.
- **Epic of Gilgamesh:** One of the most famous Babylonian works, a twelve-book saga translated from the original Sumerian.
- **Enūma Anu Enlil:** A series of cuneiform tablets containing centuries of Babylonian observations of celestial phenomena.
- **Diagnostic Handbook:** The most extensive Babylonian medical text, written by Esagil-kin-apli of Borsippa.

## Art and Architecture

In Babylonia, an abundance of clay and lack of stone led to greater use of mudbrick. Babylonian temples were thus massive structures of crude brick, supported by buttresses. The use of brick led to the early development of the pilaster and column, and of frescoes and enameled tiles. The walls were brilliantly colored, and sometimes plated with zinc or gold, as well as with tiles. Painted terracotta cones for torches were also embedded in the plaster. In Babylonia, in place of the bas-relief, there was a preponderance of three-dimensional figures—the earliest examples being the Statues of Gudea—that were realistic, if also somewhat clumsy. The paucity of



stone in Babylonia made every pebble a commodity and led to a high perfection in the art of gem-cutting.

## Astronomy

During the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, Babylonian astronomers developed a new empirical approach to astronomy. They began studying philosophy dealing with the ideal nature of the universe and began employing an internal logic within their predictive planetary systems. This was an important contribution to astronomy and the philosophy of science, and some scholars have thus referred to this new approach as the first scientific revolution. Tablets dating back to the Old Babylonian period document the application of mathematics to variations in the length of daylight over a solar year. Centuries of Babylonian observations of celestial phenomena are recorded in a series of cuneiform tablets known as the "Enūma Anu Enlil." In fact, the oldest significant astronomical text known to mankind is Tablet 63 of the Enūma Anu Enlil, the Venus tablet of Ammi-saduqa, which lists the first and last visible risings of Venus over a period of about 21 years. This record is the earliest evidence that planets were recognized as periodic phenomena. The oldest rectangular astrolabe dates back to Babylonia c. 1100 BCE. The MUL.APIN contains catalogues of stars and constellations as well as schemes for predicting heliacal risings and the settings of the planets, as well as lengths of daylight measured by a water-clock, gnomon, shadows, and intercalations. The Babylonian GU text arranges stars in "strings" that lie along declination circles (thus measuring right-ascensions or time-intervals), and also employs the stars of the zenith, which are also separated by given right-ascensional differences.

# Medicine

The oldest Babylonian texts on medicine date back to the First Babylonian Dynasty in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE. The most extensive Babylonian medical text, however, is the Diagnostic Handbook written by the ummânû, or chief scholar, Esagil-kin-apli of Borsippa.

The Babylonians introduced the concepts of diagnosis, prognosis, physical examination, and prescriptions. The Diagnostic Handbook additionally introduced the methods of therapy and etiology outlining the use of empiricism, logic, and rationality in diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. For example, the text contains a list of medical symptoms and often detailed empirical observations along with logical rules used in combining observed symptoms on the body of a patient with its diagnosis and prognosis. In particular, Esagil-kin-apli discovered a variety of illnesses and diseases and described their symptoms in his Diagnostic Handbook, including those of many varieties of epilepsy and related ailments.

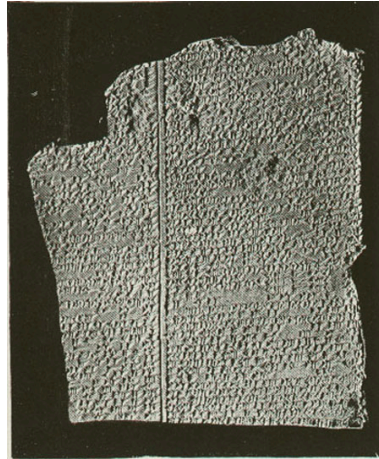
## Literature

Libraries existed in most towns and temples. Women as well as men learned to read and write, and had knowledge of the extinct Sumerian language, along with a complicated and extensive syllabary.

A considerable amount of Babylonian literature was translated from Sumerian originals, and the language of religion and law long continued to be written in the old agglutinative language of Sumer.

Vocabularies, grammars, and interlinear translations were compiled for the use of students, as well as commentaries on the older texts and explanations of obscure words and phrases. The characters of the syllabary were organized and named, and elaborate lists of them were drawn up.

There are many Babylonian literary works whose titles have come down to us. One of the most famous of these was the Epic of Gilgamesh, in twelve books, translated from the original Sumerian by a certain Sin-liqi-unninni, and arranged upon an astronomical principle. Each division contains the story of a single adventure in the career of King Gilgamesh. The whole story is a composite product, and it is probable that some of the stories are artificially attached to the central figure.



**A Tablet from the Epic of Gilgamesh:** *The Deluge tablet of the Gilgamesh epic in Akkadian.*

# Philosophy

The origins of Babylonian philosophy can be traced back to early Mesopotamian wisdom literature, which embodied certain philosophies of life, particularly ethics, in the forms of dialectic, dialogs, epic poetry, folklore, hymns, lyrics, prose, and proverbs. Babylonian reasoning and rationality developed beyond empirical observation. It is possible that Babylonian philosophy had an influence on Greek philosophy, particularly Hellenistic philosophy. The Babylonian text *Dialogue of Pessimism* contains similarities to the agonistic thought of the sophists, the Heraclitean doctrine of contrasts, and the dialogs of Plato, as well as a precursor to the maieutic Socratic method of Socrates.

## Neo-Babylonian Culture

The resurgence of Babylonian culture in the 7th and 6th century BCE resulted in a number of developments. In astronomy, a new approach was developed, based on the philosophy of the ideal nature of the early universe, and an internal logic within their predictive planetary systems. Some scholars have called this the first scientific revolution, and it was later adopted by Greek astronomers. The Babylonian astronomer Seleucus of Seleucia (b. 190 BCE) supported a heliocentric model of planetary motion. In mathematics, the Babylonians devised the base 60 numeral system, determined the square root of two correctly to seven places, and demonstrated knowledge of the Pythagorean theorem before Pythagoras.

# Nebuchadnezzar and the Fall of Babylon

The Kassite Dynasty ruled Babylonia following the fall of Hammurabi and was succeeded by the Second Dynasty of Isin, during which time the Babylonians experienced military success and cultural upheavals under Nebuchadnezzar.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the key characteristics of the Second Dynasty of Isin

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Following the collapse of the First Babylonian Dynasty under Hammurabi, the Babylonian Empire entered a period of relatively weakened rule under the Kassites for 576 years. The Kassite Dynasty eventually fell itself due to the loss of territory and military weakness.
- The Kassites were succeeded by the Elamites, who themselves were conquered by Marduk -kabit-ahheshu, the founder of the Second Dynasty of Isin.

- Nebuchadnezzar I was the most famous ruler of the Second Dynasty of Isin. He enjoyed military successes for the first part of his career, then turned to peaceful building projects in his later years.
- The Babylonian Empire suffered major blows to its power when Nebuchadnezzar's sons lost a series of wars with Assyria, and their successors effectively became vassals of the Assyrian king. Babylonia descended into a period of chaos in 1026 BCE.

### *Key Terms*

- **Elamites:** An ancient civilization centered in the far west and southwest of modern-day Iran.
- **Kassite Dynasty:** An ancient Near Eastern people who controlled Babylonia for nearly 600 years after the fall of the First Babylonian Dynasty.
- **Nebuchadnezzar I:** The most famous ruler of the Second Dynasty of Isin, who sacked the Elamite capital of Susa and devoted himself to peaceful building projects after securing Babylonia's borders.
- **Assyrian Empire:** A major Semitic empire of the Ancient Near East which existed as an independent state for a period of approximately nineteen centuries.
- **Kudurrû:** A type of stone document used as boundary stones and as records of land grants to vassals by the Kassites in ancient Babylonia.
- **Marduk-kabit-ahheshu:** Overthrower of the Elamites and the founder of the Second Dynasty of

## The Fall of the Kassite Dynasty and the Rise of the Second Dynasty of Isin

Following the collapse of the First Babylonian Dynasty under Hammurabi, the Babylonian Empire entered a period of relatively weakened rule under the Kassites for 576 years—the longest dynasty in Babylonian history. The Kassite Dynasty eventually fell due to the loss of territory and military weakness, which resulted in the evident reduction in literacy and culture. In 1157 BCE, Babylon was conquered by Shutruk-Nahhunte of Elam.

The Elamites did not remain in control of Babylonia long, and Marduk-kabit-ahheshu (1155-1139 BCE) established the Second Dynasty of Isin. This dynasty was the very first native Akkadian-speaking south Mesopotamian dynasty to rule Babylon, and was to remain in power for some 125 years. The new king successfully drove out the Elamites and prevented any possible Kassite revival. Later in his reign, he went to war with Assyria and had some initial success before suffering defeat at the hands of the Assyrian king Ashur-Dan I. He was succeeded by his son Itti-Marduk-balatu in 1138 BCE, who was followed a year later by Ninurta-nadin-shumi in 1137 BCE.

## The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I and His Sons

Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1103 BCE) was the most famous ruler of the Second Dynasty of Isin. He not only fought and defeated the

Elamites and drove them from Babylonian territory but invaded Elam itself, sacked the Elamite capital Susa, and recovered the sacred statue of Marduk that had been carried off from Babylon. In the later years of his reign, he devoted himself to peaceful building projects and securing Babylonia's borders. His construction activities are memorialized in building inscriptions of the Ekituš-hegal-tila, the temple of Adad in Babylon, and on bricks from the temple of Enlil in Nippur. A late Babylonian inventory lists his donations of gold vessels in Ur. The earliest of three extant economic texts is dated to Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year; in addition to two kudurrus and a stone memorial tablet, they form the only existing commercial records. These artifacts evidence the dynasty's power as builders, craftsmen, and managers of the business of the empire.



**The Kudurru of Nebuchadnezzar:** This detail depicts Nebuchadnezzar granting Marduk freedom from taxation.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his two sons, firstly Enlil-nadin-apli (1103-1100 BCE), who lost territory to Assyria, and then Marduk-



nadin-ahhe (1098-1081 BCE), who also went to war with Assyria. Some initial success in these conflicts gave way to catastrophic defeat at the hands of Tiglath-pileser I, who annexed huge swathes of Babylonian territory, thereby further expanding the Assyrian Empire. Following this military defeat, a terrible famine gripped Babylon, which invited attacks from Semitic Aramean tribes from the west.

In 1072 BCE, King Marduk-shapik-zeri signed a peace treaty with Ashur-bel-kala of Assyria. His successor, Kadašman-Buriaš, however, did not maintain his predecessor's peaceful intentions, and his actions prompted the Assyrian king to invade Babylonia and place his own man on the throne. Assyrian domination continued until c. 1050 BCE, with the two reigning Babylonian kings regarded as vassals of Assyria. Assyria descended into a period of civil war after 1050 BCE, which allowed Babylonia to once more largely free itself from the Assyrian yoke for a few decades.

However, Babylonia soon began to suffer repeated incursions from Semitic nomadic peoples migrating from the west, and large swathes of Babylonia were appropriated and occupied by these newly arrived Arameans, Chaldeans, and Suteans. Starting in 1026 and lasting till 911 BCE, Babylonia descended into a period of chaos.

## II. Reading: Ancient Societies on the Mediterranean

### The Hittites

The Hittites were an ancient Anatolian people of the Bronze Age, who manufactured advanced iron goods, ruled through government officials with independent authority over various branches of government, and worshipped storm gods.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the key characteristics of the Hittite Empire

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- The Hittite Empire was established at Hattusa in north-central Anatolia around 1600 BCE, and reached its height during the mid-14th century BCE under Suppiluliuma I.

- After c. 1180 BCE, the empire came to an end during the Bronze Age collapse and splintered into several independent “Neo-Hittite” city-states, some of which survived until the 8th century BCE.
- The Hittite language was a member of the Anatolian branch of the Indo-European language family.
- The Hittite military made successful use of chariots and advanced iron working technologies.
- After 1180 BCE, amid general turmoil in the Levant associated with the sudden arrival of the Sea Peoples, the kingdom disintegrated into several independent “Neo-Hittite” city-states.
- The head of the Hittite state was the king, but other officials exercised independent authority over various branches of the government.
- Storm gods featured prominently in the Hittite religion, which was heavily influenced by Hattic, Mesopotamian, and Hurrian religions.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hittite Empire:** An ancient Anatolian people who established an empire at Hattusa in north-central Anatolia around 1600 BCE. It reached its height during the mid-14th century BCE.
- **Indo-European language:** A member of a family of several hundred related languages and dialects that includes most major current languages of Europe, the Iranian plateau, the Indian subcontinent, and ancient

Anatolia.

- **cuneiform:** Wedge-shaped characters used in ancient Mesopotamian writings, typically on clay tablets.
- **Tarhunt:** The Hurrian god of sky and storm who oversaw Hittite conflicts with foreign powers.

The Hittites were an ancient Anatolian people who established an empire at Hattusa in north-central Anatolia around 1600 BCE. The Hittite Empire reached its height during the mid-14th century BCE under Suppiluliuma I, when it encompassed an area that included most of Asia Minor as well as parts of the northern Levant and Upper Mesopotamia. After c. 1180 BCE, the empire came to an end during the Bronze Age collapse, and splintered into several independent “Neo-Hittite” city-states, some of which survived until the 8th century BCE.



**The Hittite Empire at its greatest extent under Suppiluliuma I (c. 1350–1322 BCE) and Mursili II (c. 1321–1295 BCE):** The approximate extent of the maximum area of the Hittite rule (light green) and the Hittite rule c. 1350–1300 BCE (green line).

The Hittite language was a member of the Anatolian branch of the Indo-European language family. They referred to their native land as Hatti. The conventional name “Hittites” is due to their initial identification with the Biblical Hittites, according to 19th century archaeology. The Hebrew Bible refers to “Hittites” in several passages, and links them to an eponymous ancestor Heth, a descendant of Ham through his son Canaan. The Hittites are thereby counted among the Canaanites. The Hittites are usually depicted as a people living among the Israelites—Abraham purchases the Patriarchal burial-plot from “Ephron HaChiti” (Ephron the Hittite), and Hittites serve as high military officers in David’s army. In 2 Kings 7:6, they are depicted as a people with their own kingdoms.

Despite the use of Hatti as the core of their territory, the Hittites should be distinguished from the Hattians, an earlier people who inhabited the same region (until the beginning of the 2nd

millennium BCE), and spoke a different language, possibly in the Northwest Caucasian language group known as Hattic.

The Hittite military made successful use of chariots. Although their civilization thrived during the Bronze Age, the Hittites were the forerunners of the Iron Age and were manufacturing iron artifacts from as early as the 14th century BCE. Correspondence with rulers from other empires reveal a foreign demand for iron goods.

After 1180 BCE, amid general turmoil in the Levant associated with the sudden arrival of the Sea Peoples, the kingdom disintegrated into several independent “Neo-Hittite” city-states. The history of the Hittite civilization is known mostly from cuneiform texts found in the area of their kingdom, and from diplomatic and commercial correspondence found in various archives in Egypt and the Middle East.

## Culture

## Government

The head of the Hittite state was the king, followed by the heir-apparent. However, some officials exercised independent authority over various branches of the government. One of the most important of these posts was that of the Gal Mesedi (Chief of the Royal Bodyguards). It was superseded by the rank of the Gal Gestin (Chief of the Wine Stewards), who, like the Gal Mesedi, was generally a member of the royal family. The kingdom’s bureaucracy was headed by the Gal Dubsar (Chief of the Scribes).

## Religion

Hittite religion and mythology were heavily influenced by their Hattic, Mesopotamian, and Hurrian counterparts. In earlier times, Indo-European elements may still be clearly discerned.

“Storm gods” were prominent in the Hittite pantheon. Tarhunt was referred to as “The Conqueror,” “The King of Kummiya,” “King of Heaven,” and “Lord of the land of Hatti.” As the god of battle and victory, especially against foreign powers, he was chief among the gods and was depicted as a bearded man astride two mountains and bearing a club.

## The Phoenicians

Known for their alphabet, the Phoenicians were an ancient Semitic maritime trading culture in the Mediterranean. They fell under both Persian and Hellenistic rule.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe key aspects of Phoenician culture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

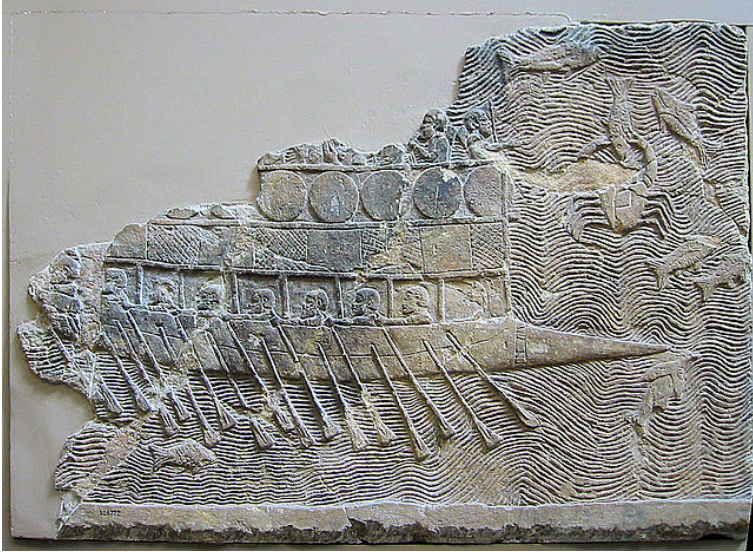
- Phoenicia was an ancient Semitic maritime trading culture situated on the western, coastal part of the Fertile Crescent and centered on the coastline of modern Lebanon and Tartus Governorate in Syria from 1550 to 300 BCE.
- The Phoenicians used the galley, a man-powered sailing vessel, and are credited with the invention of the bireme.
- Each Phoenician city-state was a politically independent unit. City-states often came into conflict with others of its kind, or formed leagues and alliances.
- A league of independent city-state ports, with others on the islands and along other coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, was ideally suited for trade between the Levant area (which was rich in natural resources) and the rest of the ancient world.
- Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Phoenicia in 539 BCE, and divided Phoenicia into four vassal kingdoms: Sidon, Tyre, Arwad, and Byblos.
- Alexander the Great conquered Phoenicia beginning with Tyre in 332 BCE. The rise of Hellenistic Greece gradually ousted the remnants of Phoenicia's former dominance over the Eastern Mediterranean trade routes.



## *Key Terms*

- **city-state:** An independent or autonomous entity, not administered as a part of another local government, whose territory consists of a city and possibly its surrounding territory.
- **Phoenicia:** An ancient Semitic maritime trading culture situated on the western, coastal part of the Fertile Crescent.
- **bireme:** An ancient oared warship (galley) with two decks of oars, probably invented by the Phoenicians.
- **Alexander the Great:** Also known as Alexander III of Macedon. His military was extremely successful, and he created one of the largest empires in history.
- **Cyrus the Great:** Also known as Cyrus II of Persia, Cyrus the Elder. Founder of the Achaemenid Empire.

Phoenicia was an ancient Semitic civilization situated on the western, coastal part of the Fertile Crescent near modern-day Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria. All major Phoenician cities were on the coastline of the Mediterranean. It was an enterprising maritime trading culture that spread across the Mediterranean from 1550 BCE to 300 BCE. The Phoenicians used the galley, a man-powered sailing vessel, and are credited with the invention of the bireme oared ship. They were famed in Classical Greece and Rome as “traders in purple,” which refers to their monopoly on the precious purple dye of the Murex snail, used for royal clothing, among other things.



**Assyrian Warship:** Assyrian warship (probably built by Phoenicians) with two rows of oars, relief from Nineveh, c. 700 BCE.

Phoenician became one of the most widely used writing systems. It was spread by Phoenician merchants across the Mediterranean world, where it evolved and was assimilated by many other cultures. The Aramaic alphabet, a modified form of Phoenician, was the ancestor of modern Arabic script, while Hebrew script is a stylistic variant of the Aramaic script. The Greek alphabet (and by extension its descendants, such as the Latin, the Cyrillic, and the Coptic) was a direct successor of Phoenician, though certain letter values were changed to represent vowels.

Phoenicians are widely thought to have originated from the earlier Canaanite inhabitants of the region. Although Egyptian seafaring expeditions had already been made to Byblos to bring back “cedars of Lebanon” as early as the 3rd millennium BCE, continuous contact only occurred in the Egyptian New Empire period.

It is important to note that Phoenicia is a Classical Greek term used to refer to the region of the major Canaanite port towns, and

does not correspond exactly to a cultural identity that would have been recognized by the Phoenicians themselves. It is uncertain to what extent the Phoenicians viewed themselves as a single ethnicity and nationality. Their civilization was organized in city-states, similar to that of ancient Greece. However, in terms of archaeology, language, life style and religion, there is little to set the Phoenicians apart as markedly different from other Semitic cultures of Canaan. As Canaanites, they were unique in their remarkable seafaring achievements.

Each Phoenician city-state was a politically independent unit. City-states often came into conflict with one another, with the result that one may dominate another. City-states were also inclined to collaborate in leagues and alliances. Though ancient boundaries of city-centered cultures fluctuated, the city of Tyre held the southernmost border of Phoenician territory.



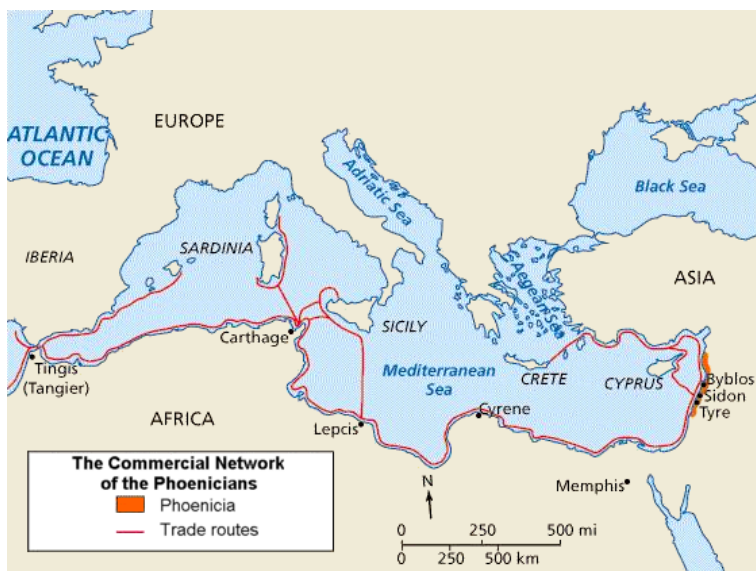
**Phoenician Sarcophagus:** A Phoenician sarcophagus at the burial grounds of Antarados, northern Lebanon, 480-450 BCE. Made from Greek marble.

## Rise and Decline

The high point of Phoenician culture and sea power is usually placed

c. 1200–800 BCE, though many of the most important Phoenician settlements had been established long before this period. Archeology has identified cultural elements of the Phoenician zenith as early as the 3rd millennium BCE. The league of independent city-state ports, with others on the islands and along other coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, was ideally suited for trade between the Levant area (which was rich in natural resources) and the rest of the ancient world. During the early Iron Age, around 1200 BCE, Sea Peoples appeared in the area from the north, which weakened and destroyed the Egyptians and Hittites, respectively. In the resulting power vacuum, a number of Phoenician cities rose as significant maritime powers.

These societies rested on three power-bases: the king; the temple and its priests; and the councils of elders. Byblos first became the predominant center from where the Phoenicians dominated the Mediterranean and Erythraean (Red) Sea routes. It was here that the first inscription in the Phoenician alphabet was found, on the sarcophagus of Ahiiram (c. 1200 BCE). Tyre rose to power several hundred years later. One of its kings, the priest Ithobaal (887–856 BCE), ruled Phoenicia as far north as Beirut and Cyprus. Carthage was founded in 814 BCE, under Pygmalion of Tyre (820–774 BCE). The collection of city-states constituting Phoenicia came to be characterized by outsiders and the Phoenicians as Sidonia or Tyria. Phoenicians and Canaanites alike were called Sidonians or Tyrians, as one Phoenician city came to prominence after another.



**Phoenician Trade Network:** Map of Phoenicia and its trade routes.

## Persian Rule

Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Phoenicia in 539 BCE. The Persians divided Phoenicia into four vassal kingdoms: Sidon, Tyre, Arwad, and Byblos. Though these vassal kingdoms prospered and furnished fleets for the Persian kings, Phoenician influence declined after this period. It is likely that much of the Phoenician population migrated to Carthage and other colonies following the Persian conquest. In 350 or 345 BCE, a rebellion in Sidon was crushed by Artaxerxes III.

## Hellenistic Rule

Alexander the Great took Tyre in 332 BCE after the Siege of Tyre, and kept the existing king in power. He gained control of the other Phoenician cities peacefully, and the rise of Hellenistic Greece gradually ousted the remnants of Phoenicia's former dominance over the Eastern Mediterranean trade routes. Phoenician culture disappeared entirely in the motherland. Carthage continued to flourish in North Africa. It oversaw the mining of iron and precious metals from Iberia, and used its considerable naval power and mercenary armies to protect commercial interests. It was finally destroyed by Rome in 146 BC, at the end of the Punic Wars.

## The Minoans

The Minoans were an Aegean Bronze Age civilization on the island of Crete that flourished between 2800–1450 BCE. They left behind extensive material culture showing the extent of their handicraft and influence upon Mycenaean culture.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Evaluate the impact of Minoan culture on other cultures and empires of the time

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Minoan civilization was an Aegean Bronze Age civilization that arose on the island of Crete, and flourished from approximately the 27th century to the 15th century BCE.
- The term “Minoan” was coined after the mythic “king” Minos, who was associated in Greek myth with the labyrinth identified with the site at Knossos.
- The Bronze Age allowed upper Minoan classes to practice leadership activities and to expand their influence, eventually replacing the original hierarchies of the local elites with monarchist power structures.
- The apex of Minoan civilization occurred during a period of large building projects, as palaces were rebuilt and settlements sprung up throughout Crete.
- Evidence of the influence of Minoan civilization outside Crete can be seen in Minoan handicraft on the Greek mainland, likely the result of a connection between Mycenaean and Minoan trade networks. The Minoans were also connected to Egypt and the Canaanite civilization.
- The Minoan civilization declined due to natural catastrophe, but the Dynasty of Knossos was able to spread its influence over Crete until it was overrun by the Mycenaean Greeks.
- Minoan culture is known best for its pottery and

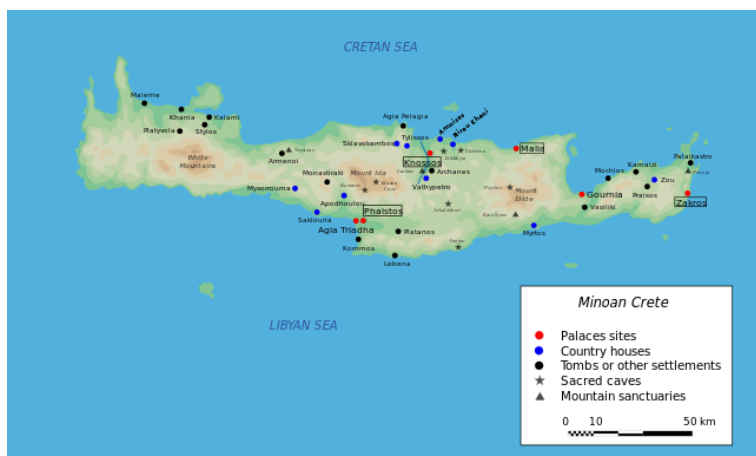


handiwork, and its religion was based primarily on the worship of female goddesses.

### *Key Terms*

- **Linear A:** The primary script used in palace and religious writings of the Minoan civilization, one of two currently undeciphered writing systems used in ancient Crete.
- **Neopalatial period:** The period of the new or second palaces of Minoan Crete, corresponding roughly with 17th and 16th centuries BCE.
- **Knossos:** A syllabic script that was used for writing Mycenaean Greek, the earliest attested form of Greek.
- **Minoan civilization:** An Aegean Bronze Age civilization that arose on the island of Crete and flourished from approximately the 27th century to the 15th century BCE.
- **Linear B:** A syllabic script that was used for writing Mycenaean Greek—the earliest attested form of Greek.

The Minoan civilization was an Aegean Bronze Age civilization that arose on the island of Crete, and flourished from approximately the 27th century to the 15th century BCE.



**Minoan Crete:** A map of Minoan Crete.

The early inhabitants of Crete settled as early as 128,000 BCE, during the Middle Paleolithic Age. It was not until 5000 BCE that the first signs of advanced agriculture appeared, marking the beginning of civilization. The term “Minoan” was coined by Arthur Evans after the mythic “king” Minos. Minos was associated in Greek myth with the labyrinth, which is identified with the site at Knossos.

The Bronze Age began in Crete around 2700 BCE, when several localities on the island developed into centers of commerce and handwork. This development enabled the upper classes to continuously practice leadership activities and to expand their influence. It is likely that the original hierarchies of the local elites were replaced by monarchist power structures— a precondition for the creation of the great palaces.

Around 1700 BCE, there was a large disturbance in Crete, possibly an earthquake or an invasion from Anatolia. The palaces at Knossos, Phaistos, Malia, and Kato Zakros were destroyed. But with the start of the Neopalatial period (the 17th and 16th centuries BCE), population increased again, palaces were rebuilt on a larger scale,

and new settlements sprung up all over the island. This period represents the apex of the Minoan civilization.



**Knossos – North Portico:** Restored North Entrance of the Knossos palace complex, with the charging bull fresco.

The influence of the Minoan civilization outside Crete has been seen in the evidence of valuable Minoan handicraft items on the Greek mainland. It is likely that the ruling house of Mycena was connected to the Minoan trade network. After c. 1700 BCE, the material culture on the Greek mainland achieved a new level due to Minoan influence. Connections between Egypt and Crete are also prominent. Minoan ceramics are found in Egyptian cities, and the Minoans imported several items from Egypt, especially papyrus, as well as architectural and artistic ideas. The Egyptian hieroglyphs served as a model for Minoan pictographic writing, from which the famous Linear A and Linear B writing systems later developed.

There has also been evidence of Minoan influence among Canaanite artifacts.

The Minoan culture began to decline c. 1450 BCE, following an earthquake, the eruption of the Thera volcano, or another possible natural catastrophe. Several important palaces in locations such as Mallia, Tyliссos, Phaistos, Hagia Triade, as well as the living quarters of Knossos were destroyed, but the palace in Knossos seems to have remained largely intact. The preservation of this palace resulted in the Dynasty in Knossos spreading its influence over large parts of Crete until it was overrun by Mycenaean Greeks.

## Society and Culture

### Pottery

The best surviving examples of Minoan art are its pottery and palace architecture with frescos that include landscapes, stone carvings, and intricately carved seal stones. Ceramics from the Early Minoan period are characterized by linear patterns of spirals, triangles, curved lines, crosses, and fishbone motifs. In the Middle Minoan period, naturalistic designs such as fish, squid, birds, and lilies were common. In the Late Minoan period, flowers and animals were still the most characteristic, but the variability had increased. The “palace style” of the region around Knossos is characterized by a strong geometric simplification of naturalistic shapes and monochromatic paintings. The similarities between Late Minoan and Mycenaean art are notable. Frescoes were the main form of art during the period of Late Minoan culture.

## Religion

The Minoans seem to have worshiped primarily goddesses, and can be described as a “matriarchal religion.” Although there is some evidence of male gods, depictions of Minoan goddesses vastly outnumber depictions of anything that could be considered a Minoan god. While some of these depictions of women are speculated to be images of worshippers and priestesses officiating at religious ceremonies, as opposed to the deity, several goddesses appear to be portrayed. These include a mother goddess of fertility, a mistress of the animals, a protectress of cities, the household, the harvest, and the underworld, to name a few. The goddesses are often depicted with serpents, birds, or poppies, and are often shown with a figure of an animal upon her head.

# 12. Assignments

## Week 2

### Assignment

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

PART IV

## WEEK 3: ANCIENT EGYPT





# 13. Introduction

## Week 3

### Introduction

Nefertari

Ancient Egypt was a civilization of ancient Northeastern Africa, concentrated along the lower reaches of the Nile River in the place that is now the country Egypt. It is one of six historic civilizations to arise independently. Egyptian civilization followed prehistoric Egypt and coalesced around 3150 BC (according to conventional Egyptian chronology) with the political unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under Menes (often identified with Narmer). The history of ancient Egypt occurred as a series of stable kingdoms, separated by periods of relative instability known as Intermediate Periods: the Old Kingdom of the Early Bronze Age, the Middle Kingdom of the Middle Bronze Age and the New Kingdom of the Late Bronze Age.

Egypt reached the pinnacle of its power in the New Kingdom, during the Ramesside period, where it rivaled the Hittite Empire, Assyrian Empire and Mitanni Empire, after which it entered a period of slow decline. Egypt was invaded or conquered by a succession of foreign powers, such as the Canaanites/Hyksos, Libyans, the Nubians, the Assyrians, Babylonians, the Achaemenid Persians, and the Macedonians in the Third Intermediate Period and the Late Period of Egypt. In the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death, one of his generals, Ptolemy Soter, established himself as the new ruler of Egypt. This Greek Ptolemaic Kingdom ruled Egypt until 30 BC, when, under Cleopatra, it fell to the Roman Empire and became a Roman province.

The success of ancient Egyptian civilization came partly from its ability to adapt to the conditions of the Nile River valley for agriculture. The predictable flooding and controlled irrigation of the fertile valley produced surplus crops, which supported a more dense population, and social development and culture. With resources to spare, the administration sponsored mineral exploitation of the valley and surrounding desert regions, the early development of an independent writing system, the organization of collective construction and agricultural projects, trade with surrounding regions, and a military intended to defeat foreign enemies and assert Egyptian dominance. Motivating and organizing these activities was a bureaucracy of elite scribes, religious leaders, and administrators under the control of a pharaoh, who ensured the cooperation and unity of the Egyptian people in the context of an elaborate system of religious beliefs.

map

# 14. Reading: Introduction to Ancient Egypt

## The Rise of Egyptian Civilization

In prehistoric times (pre-3200 BCE), many different cultures lived in Egypt along the Nile River, and became progressively more sedentary and reliant on agriculture. By the time of the Early Dynastic Period, these cultures had solidified into a single state.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the rise of civilization along the Nile River

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The prehistory of Egypt spans from early human settlements to the beginning of the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt (c. 3100 BCE), and is equivalent to the Neolithic period.

- The Late Paleolithic in Egypt began around 30,000 BCE, and featured mobile buildings and tool-making industry.
- The Mesolithic saw the rise of various cultures, including Halfan, Qadan, Sebilian, and Harifian.
- The Neolithic saw the rise of cultures, including Merimde, El Omari, Maadi, Tasian, and Badarian.
- Three phases of Naqada culture included: the rise of new types of pottery (including blacktop-ware and white cross-line-ware), the use of mud-bricks, and increasingly sedentary lifestyles.
- During the Protodynastic period (3200–3000 BCE) powerful kings were in place, and unification of the state occurred, which led to the Early Dynastic Period.

### *Key Terms*

- **nomadic pastoralism:** The herding of livestock to find fresh pasture to graze.
- **Neolithic:** The later part of the Stone Age, during which ground or polished stone weapons and implements were used.
- **Fertile Crescent:** Also known as the Cradle of Civilization, the Fertile Crescent is a crescent-shaped region containing the comparatively moist and fertile land of Western Asia, the Nile Valley, and the Nile Delta.
- **serekhs:** An ornamental vignette combining a view of a palace facade and a top view of the royal

courtyard. It was used as a royal crest.

The prehistory of Egypt spans from early human settlements to the beginning of the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt (c. 3100 BCE), which started with the first Pharaoh Narmer (also known as Menes). It is equivalent to the Neolithic period, and is divided into cultural periods, named after locations where Egyptian settlements were found.

## The Late Paleolithic

This period began around 30,000 BCE. Ancient, mobile buildings, capable of being disassembled and reassembled were found along the southern border near Wadi Halfa. Aterian tool-making industry reached Egypt around 40,000 BCE, and Khormusan industry began between 40,000 and 30,000 BCE.

## The Mesolithic

Halfan culture arose along the Nile Valley of Egypt and in Nubia between 18,000 and 15,000 BCE. They appeared to be settled people, descended from the Khormusan people, and spawned the Ibero-Marusian industry. Material remains from these people include stone tools, flakes, and rock paintings.

The Qadan culture practiced wild-grain harvesting along the Nile, and developed sickles and grinding stones to collect and process these plants. These people were likely residents of Libya who were

pushed into the Nile Valley due to desiccation in the Sahara. The Sebilian culture (also known as Esna) gathered wheat and barley.

The Harifian culture migrated out of the Fayyum and the Eastern deserts of Egypt to merge with the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B; this created the Circum-Arabian Nomadic Pastoral Complex, who invented nomadic pastoralism, and may have spread Proto-Semitic language throughout Mesopotamia.

## The Neolithic

Expansion of the Sahara desert forced more people to settle around the Nile in a sedentary, agriculture-based lifestyle. Around 6000 BCE, Neolithic settlements began to appear in great number in this area, likely as migrants from the Fertile Crescent returned to the area. Weaving occurred for the first time in this period, and people buried their dead close to or within their settlements.

The Merimde culture (5000-4200 BCE) was located in Lower Egypt. People lived in small huts, created simple pottery, and had stone tools. They had cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs, and planted wheat, sorghum, and barley. The first Egyptian life-size clay head comes from this culture.

The El Omari culture (4000-3100 BCE) lived near modern-day Cairo. People lived in huts, and had undecorated pottery and stone tools. Metal was unknown.

The Maadi culture (also known as Buto Maadi) is the most important Lower Egyptian prehistoric culture. Copper was used, pottery was simple and undecorated, and people lived in huts. The dead were buried in cemeteries.

The Tasian culture (4500-3100 BCE) produced a kind of red, brown, and black pottery, called blacktop-ware. From this period on, Upper Egypt was strongly influenced by the culture of Lower Egypt.

The Badarian culture (4400-4000 BCE) was similar to the Tasian, except they improved blacktop-ware and used copper in addition to stone.

The Amratian culture (Naqada I) (4000-3500 BCE) continued making blacktop-ware, and added white cross-line-ware, which featured pottery with close, parallel, white, crossed lines. Mud-brick buildings were first seen in this period in small numbers.

The Gerzean culture (Naqada II, 3500-3200 BCE) saw the laying of the foundation for Dynastic Egypt. It developed out of Amratian culture, moving south through Upper Egypt. Its pottery was painted dark red with pictures of animals, people and ships. Life was increasingly sedentary and focused on agriculture, as cities began to grow. Mud bricks were mass-produced, copper was used for tools and weapons, and silver, gold, lapis, and faience were used as decorations. The first Egyptian-style tombs were built.



**Amratian (Naqada I) Terracotta**  
**Figure:** This terracotta female figure, c. 3500-3400 BCE, is housed at the Brooklyn Museum.

## Protodynastic Period (Naqada III) (3200 – 3000

BCE)

During this period, the process of state formation, begun in Naqada II, became clearer. Kings headed up powerful polities, but they were unrelated. Political unification was underway, which culminated in the formation of a single state in the Early Dynastic Period. Hieroglyphs may have first been used in this period, along with irrigation. Additionally, royal cemeteries and serekhs (royal crests) came into use.





**Serekh of King Djet:** This serekh (royal crest) shows the Horus falcon.

# 15. Reading: The Old Kingdom

## The Old Kingdom

The Old Kingdom, spanning the Third to Sixth Dynasties of Egypt (2686-2181 BCE), saw the prolific construction of pyramids, but declined due to civil instability, resource shortages, and a drop in precipitation.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the reasons for the rise and fall of the Old Kingdom

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Old Kingdom is the name commonly given to the period when Egypt gained in complexity and achievement, spanning from the Third Dynasty

through the Sixth Dynasty (2686-2181 BCE).

- The royal capital of Egypt during the Old Kingdom was located at Memphis, where the first notable king of the Old Kingdom, Djoser, established his court.
- In the Third Dynasty, formerly independent ancient Egyptian states became known as Nomes, which were ruled solely by the pharaoh. The former rulers of these states were subsequently forced to assume the role of governors, or otherwise work in tax collection.
- Egyptians during this Dynasty worshipped their pharaoh as a god, and believed that he ensured the stability of the cycles that were responsible for the annual flooding of the Nile. This flooding was necessary for their crops.
- The Fourth Dynasty saw multiple large-scale construction projects under pharaohs Sneferu, Khufu, and Khufu's sons Djedefra and Khafra, including the famous pyramid and Sphinx at Giza.
- The Fifth Dynasty saw changes in religious beliefs, including the rise of the cult of the sun god Ra, and the deity Osiris.
- The Sixth Dynasty saw civil war and the loss of centralized power to nomarchs.

### *Key Terms*

- **necropolis:** A cemetery, especially a large one belonging to an ancient city.
- **Osiris:** The Egyptian god of the underworld, and husband and brother of Isis.

- **Sneferu:** A king of the Fourth Dynasty, who used the greatest mass of stones in building pyramids.
- **Djoser:** An ancient Egyptian pharaoh of the Third Dynasty, and the founder of the Old Kingdom.
- **Old Kingdom:** Encompassing the Third to Eighth Dynasties, the name commonly given to the period in the 3rd millennium BCE, when Egypt attained its first continuous peak of complexity and achievement.
- **nomarchs:** Semi-feudal rulers of Ancient Egyptian provinces.
- **Nomes:** Subnational, administrative division of Ancient Egypt.
- **Ra:** The sun god, or the supreme Egyptian deity, worshipped as the creator of all life, and usually portrayed with a falcon's head bearing a solar disc.

The Old Kingdom is the name commonly given to the period from the Third Dynasty through the Sixth Dynasty (2686-2181 BCE), when Egypt gained in complexity and achievement. The Old Kingdom is the first of three so-called “Kingdom” periods that mark the high points of civilization in the Nile Valley. During this time, a new type of pyramid (the step) was created, as well as many other massive building projects, including the Sphinx. Additionally, trade became more widespread, new religious ideas were born, and the strong centralized government was subtly weakened and finally collapsed.

The king (not yet called Pharaoh) of Egypt during this period resided in the new royal capital, Memphis. He was considered a living god, and was believed to ensure the annual flooding of the Nile. This flooding was necessary for crop growth. The Old Kingdom is perhaps best known for a large number of pyramids, which were constructed as royal burial places. Thus, the period of the Old Kingdom is often called “The Age of the Pyramids.”

Egypt's Old Kingdom was also a dynamic period in the development of Egyptian art. Sculptors created early portraits, the first life-size statues, and perfected the art of carving intricate relief decoration. These had two principal functions: to ensure an ordered existence, and to defeat death by preserving life in the next world.

## The Beginning: Third Dynasty (c. 2650-2613 BCE)

The first notable king of the Old Kingdom was Djoser (reigned from 2691-2625 BCE) of the Third Dynasty, who ordered the construction of the step pyramid in Memphis' necropolis, Saqqara. It was in this era that formerly independent ancient Egyptian states became known as nomes, and were ruled solely by the king. The former rulers of these states were forced to assume the role of governors or tax collectors.

## Golden Age: Fourth Dynasty (2613-2494 BCE)

The Old Kingdom and its royal power reached a zenith under the Fourth Dynasty, which began with Sneferu (2613-2589 BCE). Using a greater mass of stones than any other king, he built three pyramids: Meidum, the Bent Pyramid, and the Red Pyramid. He also sent his military into Sinai, Nubia and Libya, and began to trade with Lebanon for cedar.

Sneferu was succeeded by his (in)famous son, Khufu (2589-2566 BCE), who built the Great Pyramid of Giza. After Khufu's death, one of his sons built the second pyramid, and the Sphinx in Giza. Creating these massive projects required a centralized government with strong powers, sophistication and prosperity. Builders of the pyramids were not slaves but peasants, working in the farming off-season, along with specialists like stone cutters, mathematicians,

and priests. Each household needed to provide a worker for these projects, although the wealthy could have a substitute.



**The Pyramid of Khufu at Giza:** The Great Pyramid of Giza was built c. 2560 BCE, by Khufu during the Fourth Dynasty. It was built as a tomb for Khufu and constructed over a 20-year period. Modern estimates place construction efforts to require an average workforce of 14,567 people and a peak workforce of 40,000.



**Great Sphinx of Giza and the pyramid of Khafre:** *The Sphinx is a limestone statue of a reclining mythical creature with a lion's body and a human head that stands on the Giza Plateau on the west bank of the Nile in Giza, Egypt. The face is generally believed to represent the face of King Khafra.*

The later kings of the Fourth Dynasty were king Menkaura (2532-2504 BCE), who built the smallest pyramid in Giza, Shepseskaf (2504-2498 BCE), and perhaps Djedefptah (2498-2496 BCE). During this period, there were military expeditions into Canaan and Nubia, spreading Egyptian influence along the Nile into modern-day Sudan.

## Religious Changes: Fifth Dynasty (2494-2345 BCE)

The Fifth Dynasty began with Userkaf (2494-2487 BCE), and with several religious changes. The cult of the sun god Ra, and temples built for him, began to grow in importance during the Fifth Dynasty.

This lessened efforts to build pyramids. Funerary prayers on royal tombs (called Pyramid Texts) appeared, and the cult of the deity Osiris ascended in importance.

Egyptians began to build ships to trade across maritime routes. Goods included ebony, incense, gold, and copper. They traded with Lebanon for cedar, and perhaps with modern-day Somalia for other goods. Ships were held together by tightly tied ropes.

## Decline and Collapse: The Sixth Dynasty (2345-2181 BCE)

The power of the king and central government declined during this period, while that of nomarchs (regional governors) increased.

These nomarchs were not part of the royal family. They passed down the title through their lineage, thus creating local dynasties that were not under the control of the king. Internal disorder resulted during and after the long reign of Pepi II (2278-2184 BCE), due to succession struggles, and eventually led to civil war. The final blow was a severe drought between 2200-2150 BCE, which prevented Nile flooding. Famine, conflict, and collapse beset the Old Kingdom for decades.

## The First Intermediate Period

The First Intermediate Period, the Seventh to Eleventh dynasties, spanned approximately one hundred years (2181-2055 BCE), and was characterized by political instability and conflict between the Heracleopolitan and Theban Kings.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the processes by which the First Intermediate Period occurred, and then transitioned into the Middle Kingdom

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The First Intermediate Period was a dynamic time in history, when rule of Egypt was roughly divided between two competing power bases. One of those bases resided at Heracleopolis in Lower Egypt, a city just south of the Faiyum region. The other resided at Thebes in Upper Egypt.
- The Old Kingdom fell due to problems with succession from the Sixth Dynasty, the rising power of provincial monarchs, and a drier climate that resulted in widespread famine.
- Little is known about the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties due to a lack of evidence, but the Seventh Dynasty was most likely an oligarchy, while Eighth Dynasty rulers claimed to be the descendants of the Sixth Dynasty kings. Both ruled from Memphis.
- The Heracleopolitan Kings saw periods of both

violence and peace under their rule, and eventually brought peace and order to the Nile Delta region.

- Siut princes to the south of the Heracleopolitan Kingdom became wealthy from a variety of agricultural and economic activities, and acted as a buffer during times of conflict between the northern and southern parts of Egypt.
- The Theban Kings enjoyed a string of military successes, the last of which was a victory against the Heracleopolitan Kings that unified Egypt under the Twelfth Dynasty.

### *Key Terms*

- **Mentuhotep II:** A pharaoh of the Eleventh Dynasty, who defeated the Heracleopolitan Kings and unified Egypt. Often considered the first pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom.
- **oligarchy:** A form of power structure in which power effectively rests with a small number of people who are distinguished by royalty, wealth, family ties, education, corporate, or military control.
- **nomarchs:** Ancient Egyptian administration officials responsible for governing the provinces.
- **First Intermediate Period:** A period of political conflict and instability lasting approximately 100 years and spanning the Seventh to Eleventh Dynasties.

The First Intermediate Period (c. 2181-2055 BCE), often described as

a “dark period” in ancient Egyptian history after the end of the Old Kingdom, spanned approximately 100 years. It included the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and part of the Eleventh dynasties.

The First Intermediate Period was a dynamic time in history when rule of Egypt was roughly divided between two competing power bases: Heracleopolis in Lower Egypt, and Thebes in Upper Egypt. It is believed that political chaos during this time resulted in temples being pillaged, artwork vandalized, and statues of kings destroyed. These two kingdoms eventually came into military conflict. The Theban kings conquered the north, which resulted in the reunification of Egypt under a single ruler during the second part of the Eleventh dynasty.

## Events Leading to the First Intermediate Period

The Old Kingdom, which preceded this period, fell for numerous reasons. One was the extremely long reign of Pepi II (the last major king of the Sixth Dynasty), and the resulting succession issues. Another major problem was the rise in power of the provincial nomarchs. Toward the end of the Old Kingdom, the positions of the nomarchs had become hereditary, creating family legacies independent from the king. They erected tombs in their own domains and often raised armies, and engaged in local rivalries. A third reason for the dissolution of centralized kingship was the low level of the Nile inundation, which may have resulted in a drier climate, lower crop yields, and famine.

## The Seventh and Eighth Dynasties at Memphis

The Seventh and Eighth dynasties are often overlooked because very little is known about the rulers of these two periods. The

Seventh Dynasty was most likely an oligarchy based in Memphis that attempted to retain control of the country. The Eighth Dynasty rulers, claiming to be the descendants of the Sixth Dynasty kings, also ruled from Memphis.

## The Heracleopolitan Kings

After the obscure reign of the Seventh and Eighth dynasty kings, a group of rulers rose out of Heracleopolis in Lower Egypt, and ruled for approximately 94 years. These kings comprise the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties, each with 19 rulers.

The founder of the Ninth Dynasty, Wahkare Khety I, is often described as an evil and violent ruler who caused much harm to the inhabitants of Egypt. He was seized with madness, and, as legend would have it, was eventually killed by a crocodile. Khety I was succeeded by Khety II, also known as Meryibre, whose reign was essentially peaceful but experienced problems in the Nile Delta. His successor, Khety III, brought some degree of order to the Delta, although the power and influence of these Ninth Dynasty kings were still insignificant compared to that of the Old Kingdom kings.

A distinguished line of nomarchs rose out of Siut (or Asyut), which was a powerful and wealthy province in the south of the Heracleopolitan kingdom. These warrior princes maintained a close relationship with the kings of the Heracleopolitan royal household, as is evidenced by the inscriptions in their tombs. These inscriptions provide a glimpse at the political situation that was present during their reigns, and describe the Siut nomarchs digging canals, reducing taxation, reaping rich harvests, raising cattle herds, and maintaining an army and fleet. The Siut province acted as a buffer state between the northern and southern rulers and bore the brunt of the attacks from the Theban kings.

## The Theban Kings

The Theban kings are believed to have been descendants of Intef or Inyotef, the nomarch of Thebes, often called the “Keeper of the Door of the South.” He is credited with organizing Upper Egypt into an independent ruling body in the south, although he himself did not appear to have tried to claim the title of king. Intef II began the Theban assault on northern Egypt, and his successor, Intef III, completed the attack and moved into Middle Egypt against the Heracleopolitan kings. The first three kings of the Eleventh Dynasty (all named Intef) were, therefore, also the last three kings of the First Intermediate Period. They were succeeded by a line of kings who were all called Mentuhotep. Mentuhotep II, also known as Nebhepetra, would eventually defeat the Heracleopolitan kings around 2033 BCE, and unify the country to continue the Eleventh Dynasty and bring Egypt into the Middle Kingdom.



**Mentuhotep II:** Painted sandstone seated statue of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

# 16. Reading: The Middle Kingdom

## The Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom was a period of Egyptian history spanning the Eleventh through Twelfth Dynasty (2000-1700 BCE), when centralized power consolidated a unified Egypt.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the various characteristics of Sensuret III's rule during the height of the Middle Kingdom

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Middle Kingdom had two phases: the end of the Eleventh Dynasty, which ruled from Thebes, and the Twelfth Dynasty onwards, which was centred around el-Lisht.

- During the First Intermediate Period, the governors of the nomes of Egypt— called nomarchs — gained considerable power. Amenemhet I also instituted a system of co-regency, which ensured a smooth transition from monarch to monarch and contributed to the stability of the Twelfth Dynasty.
- The height of the Middle Kingdom came under the rules of Sensuret III and Amenemhat III, the former of whom established clear boundaries for Egypt, and the latter of whom efficiently exploited Egyptian resources to bring about a period of economic prosperity.
- The Middle Kingdom declined into the Second Intermediate Period during the Thirteenth Dynasty, after a gradual loss of dynastic power and the disintegration of Egypt.

### *Key Terms*

- **nomes:** Subnational administrative divisions within ancient Egypt.
- **Amenemhat III:** Egyptian king who saw a great period of economic prosperity through efficient exploitation of natural resources.
- **Middle Kingdom:** Period of unification in Ancient Egyptian history, stretching from the end of the Eleventh Dynasty to the Thirteenth Dynasty, roughly between 2030–1640 BCE.
- **Senusret III:** Warrior-king during the Twelfth Dynasty, who centralized power within Egypt



through various military successes.

- **Sobekneferu**,: The first known female ruler of Egypt.
- **genut**:
- **waret**: Administrative divisions in Egypt.

The Middle Kingdom, also known as the Period of Reunification, is a period in the history of Ancient Egypt stretching from the end of the Eleventh Dynasty to the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, roughly between 2000-1700 BCE. There were two phases: the end of the Eleventh Dynasty, which ruled from Thebes, and the Twelfth Dynasty onwards, which was centred around el-Lisht.

## The End of the Eleventh Dynasty and the Rise of the Twelfth Dynasty

Toward the end of the First Intermediate Period, Mentuhotep II and his successors unified Egypt under a single rule, and commanded such faraway locations as Nubia and the Sinai. He reigned for 51 years and restored the cult of the ruler, considering himself a god and wearing the headdresses of Amun and Min. His descendants ruled Egypt, until a vizier, Amenemhet I, came to power and initiated the Twelfth Dynasty.

From the Twelfth dynasty onward, pharaohs often kept well-trained standing armies, which formed the basis of larger forces raised for defense against invasion, or for expeditions up the Nile or across the Sinai. However, the Middle Kingdom remained defensive in its military strategy, with fortifications built at the First Cataract of the Nile, in the Delta and across the Sinai Isthmus.

Amenemhet I never held the absolute power commanded, in

theory, by the Old Kingdom pharaohs. During the First Intermediate Period, the governors of the nomes of Egypt— nomarchs—gained considerable power. To strengthen his position, Amenemhet required registration of land, modified nome borders, and appointed nomarchs directly when offices became vacant. Generally, however, he acquiesced to the nomarch system, creating a strongly feudal organization.

In his 20th regnal year, Amenemhat established his son, Senusret I, as his co-regent. This instituted a practice that would be used throughout the Middle and New Kingdoms. The reign of Amenemhat II, successor to Senusret I, has been characterized as largely peaceful. It appears Amenemhet allowed nomarchs to become hereditary again. In his 33rd regnal year, he appointed his son, Senusret II, co-regent.

There is no evidence of military activity during the reign of Senusret II. Senusret instead appears to have focused on domestic issues, particularly the irrigation of the Faiyum. He reigned only fifteen years, and was succeeded by his son, Senusret III.

## Height of the Middle Kingdom

Senusret III was a warrior-king, and launched a series of brutal campaigns in Nubia. After his victories, Senusret built a series of massive forts throughout the country as boundary markers; the locals were closely watched.



**Statue head of Sensuret III:** Statue head of Sensuret III, one of the kings in the Twelfth Dynasty.

Domestically, Senusret has been given credit for an administrative reform that put more power in the hands of appointees of the

central government. Egypt was divided into three waret, or administrative divisions: North, South, and Head of the South (perhaps Lower Egypt, most of Upper Egypt, and the nomes of the original Theban kingdom during the war with Herakleopolis, respectively). The power of the nomarchs seems to drop off permanently during Sensuret's reign, which has been taken to indicate that the central government had finally suppressed them, though there is no record that Senusret took direct action against them.

The reign of Amenemhat III was the height of Middle Kingdom economic prosperity, and is remarkable for the degree to which Egypt exploited its resources. Mining camps in the Sinai, that had previously been used only by intermittent expeditions, were operated on a semi-permanent basis. After a reign of 45 years, Amenemhet III was succeeded by Amenemhet IV, under whom dynastic power began to weaken. Contemporary records of the Nile flood levels indicate that the end of the reign of Amenemhet III was dry, and crop failures may have helped to destabilize the dynasty. Furthermore, Amenemhet III had an inordinately long reign, which led to succession problems. Amenemhet IV was succeeded by Sobekneferu, the first historically attested female king of Egypt, who ruled for no more than four years. She apparently had no heirs, and when she died the Twelfth Dynasty came to a sudden end.

## Decline into the Second Intermediate Period

After the death of Sobeknefru, Egypt was ruled by a series of ephemeral kings for about 10-15 years. Ancient Egyptian sources regard these as the first kings of the Thirteenth Dynasty.

After the initial dynastic chaos, a series of longer reigning, better attested kings ruled for about 50-80 years. The strongest king of this period, Neferhotep I, ruled for 11 years, maintained effective control of Upper Egypt, Nubia, and the Delta, and was even

recognized as the suzerain of the ruler of Byblos. At some point during the Thirteenth Dynasty, the provinces of Xoïs and Avaris began governing themselves. Thus began the final portion of the Thirteenth Dynasty, when southern kings continued to reign over Upper Egypt; when the unity of Egypt fully disintegrated, however, the Middle Kingdom gave way to the Second Intermediate Period.

## The Second Intermediate Period

The Second Intermediate Period (c. 1650-1550 BCE) spanned the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties, and was a period in which decentralized rule split Egypt between the Theban-based Seventeenth Dynasty in Upper Egypt and the Sixteenth Dynasty under the Hyksos in the north.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the dynamics between the various groups of people vying for power during the Second Intermediate Period.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The brilliant Twelfth Dynasty was succeeded by a weaker Thirteenth Dynasty, which experienced a splintering of power.
- The Hyksos made their first appearance during the reign of Sobekhotep IV, and overran Egypt at the end of the Fourteenth Dynasty. They ruled through the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties.
- The Abydos Dynasty was a short-lived Dynasty that ruled over part of Upper Egypt, and was contemporaneous with the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties.
- The Seventeenth Dynasty established itself in Thebes around the time that the Hyksos took power in Egypt, and co-existed with the Hyksos through trade for a period of time. However, rulers from the Seventeenth Dynasty undertook several wars of liberation that eventually once again unified Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty.

### *Key Terms*

- **Baal:** The native storm god of the Hyksos.
- **Second Intermediate Period:** Spanning the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties, a period of

Egyptian history where power was split between the Hyksos and a Theban-based dynasty in Upper Egypt.

- **Hyksos:** An Asiatic people from West Asia who took over the eastern Nile Delta, ending the Thirteenth dynasty of Egypt and initiating the Second Intermediate Period.
- **Abydos Dynasty:** A short-lived local dynasty ruling over parts of Upper Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period in Ancient Egypt.

The Second Intermediate Period (c. 1782-1550 BCE) marks a time when Ancient Egypt once again fell into disarray between the end of the Middle Kingdom, and the start of the New Kingdom. It is best known as the period when the Hyksos, who reigned during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties, made their appearance in Egypt.

## The Thirteenth Dynasty (1803 – 1649 BCE)

The brilliant Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty— and the Golden Age of the Middle Kingdom— came to an end around 1800 BCE with the death of Queen Sobekneferu (1806-1802 BCE), and was succeeded by the much weaker Thirteenth Dynasty (1803-1649 BCE). Pharaohs ruled from Memphis until the Hyksos conquered the capital in 1650 BCE.

## The Fourteenth Dynasty (c. 1725-1650 BCE)

The Thirteenth Dynasty proved unable to hold onto the long land of Egypt, and the provincial ruling family in Xoïs, located in the

marshes of the western Delta, broke away from the central authority to form the Fourteenth Dynasty. The capital of this dynasty was likely Avaris. It existed concurrently with the Thirteenth Dynasty, and its rulers seemed to be of Canaanite or West Semitic descent.



**Fourteenth Dynasty Territory:** The area in orange is the territory possibly under control of the Fourteenth Dynasty.

## The Fifteenth Dynasty (c. 1650-1550 BCE)

The Hyksos made their first appearance in 1650 BCE and took control of the town of Avaris. They would also conquer the Sixteenth Dynasty in Thebes and a local dynasty in Abydos (see below). The Hyksos were of mixed Asiatic origin with mainly Semitic components, and their native storm god, Baal, became associated with the Egyptian storm god Seth. They brought technological innovation to Egypt, including bronze and pottery techniques, new



breeds of animals and new crops, the horse and chariot, composite bow, battle-axes, and fortification techniques for warfare. These advances helped Egypt later rise to prominence.



**Luxor Temple:** Thebes was the capital of many of the Sixteenth Dynasty pharaohs

## The Sixteenth Dynasty

This dynasty ruled the Theban region in Upper Egypt for 70 years, while the armies of the Fifteenth Dynasty advanced against southern enemies and encroached on Sixteenth territory. Famine was an issue during this period, most notably during the reign of Neferhotep III.

## The Abydos Dynasty

The Abydos Dynasty was a short-lived local dynasty that ruled over part of Upper Egypt and was contemporaneous with the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties c. 1650-1600 BCE. The royal necropolis of the Abydos Dynasty was found in the southern part of Abydos, in an

area called Anubis Mountain in ancient times, adjacent to the tombs of the Middle Kingdom rulers.



**The Abydos Dynasty:** This map shows the possible extent of power of the Abydos Dynasty (in red).

## The Seventeenth Dynasty (c. 1580-1550 BCE)

Around the time Memphis and Itj-tawy fell to the Hyksos, the native Egyptian ruling house in Thebes declared its independence from Itj-tawy and became the Seventeenth Dynasty. This dynasty would eventually lead the war of liberation that drove the Hyksos back into

Asia. The Theban-based Seventeenth Dynasty restored numerous temples throughout Upper Egypt while maintaining peaceful trading relations with the Hyksos kingdom in the north. Indeed, Senakhtenre Ahmose, the first king in the line of Ahmoside kings, even imported white limestone from the Hyksos-controlled region of Tura to make a granary door at the Temple of Karnak. However, his successors—the final two kings of this dynasty—,Seqenenre Tao and Kamose, defeated the Hyksos through several wars of liberation. With the creation of the Eighteenth Dynasty around 1550 BCE, the New Kingdom period of Egyptian history began with Ahmose I, its first pharaoh, who completed the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt and placed the country, once again, under centralized administrative control.

# 17. Reading: The New Kingdom

## The New Kingdom

The New Kingdom of Egypt spanned the Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties (c. 1550-1077 BCE), and was Egypt's most prosperous time. It was ruled by pharaohs Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun and Ramesses II.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the reasons for the collapse of the New Kingdom

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The New Kingdom saw Egypt attempt to create a buffer against the Levant and by attaining its greatest territorial by extending into Nubia and the Near East. This was possibly a result of the foreign rule of the

Hyksos during the Second Intermediate Period,

- The Eighteenth Dynasty contained some of Egypt's most famous pharaohs, including Hatshepsut, Akhenaten, Thutmose III, and Tutankhamun. Hatshepsut concentrated on expanding Egyptian trade, while Thutmose III consolidated power.
- Akhenaten's devotion to Aten defined his reign with religious fervor, while art flourished under his rule and attained an unprecedented level of realism.
- Due to Akhenaten's lack of interest in international affairs, the Hittites gradually extended their influence into Phoenicia and Canaan.
- Ramesses II attempted war against the Hittites, but eventually agreed to a peace treaty after an indecisive result.
- The heavy cost of military efforts in addition to climatic changes resulted in a loss of centralized power at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, leading to the Third Intermediate Period.

### *Key Terms*

- **New Kingdom:** The period in ancient Egyptian history between the 16th century BCE and the 11th century BCE that covers the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties of Egypt. Considered to be the peak of Egyptian power.
- **Thutmose III:** The sixth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who greatly consolidated political power through a series of military conquests.

- **Hatshepsut:** The fifth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who expanded Egyptian trade.
- **Akhenaten:** Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty known for his religious fervor to the god Aten.
- **Tutankhamun:** An Egyptian pharaoh of the 18th dynasty (ruled c. 1332 BC-1323 BC in the conventional chronology), during the period of Egyptian history known as the New Kingdom. He is popularly referred to as King Tut.
- **Aten:** The disk of the sun in ancient Egyptian mythology, and originally an aspect of Ra.
- **Ramesses II:** The third pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt, who made peace with the Hittites. Often regarded as the greatest, most celebrated, and most powerful pharaoh of the Egyptian Empire.

The New Kingdom of Egypt, also referred to as the Egyptian Empire, is the period in ancient Egyptian history between 1550-1070 BCE, covering the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Dynasties of Egypt. The New Kingdom followed the Second Intermediate Period, and was succeeded by the Third Intermediate Period. It was Egypt's most prosperous time and marked the peak of its power.

The Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties (1292-1069 BCE) are also known as the Ramesside period, after the eleven pharaohs that took the name of Ramesses. The New Kingdom saw Egypt attempt to create a buffer against the Levant and attain its greatest territorial extent. This was possibly a result of the foreign rule of the Hyksos during the Second Intermediate Period

## The Eighteenth Dynasty (c. 1543-1292 BCE)

The Eighteenth Dynasty, also known as the Thutmosid Dynasty, contained some of Egypt's most famous pharaohs, including Ahmose I, Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, Akhenaten (c. 1353-1336 BCE) and his queen Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun. Queen Hatshepsut (c. 1479 – 1458 BCE) concentrated on expanding Egypt's external trade by sending a commercial expedition to the land of Punt, and was the longest-reigning woman pharaoh of an indigenous dynasty. Thutmose III, who would become known as the greatest military pharaoh, expanded Egypt's army and wielded it with great success to consolidate the empire created by his predecessors. These victories maximized Egyptian power and wealth during the reign of Amenhotep III. It was also during the reign of Thutmose III that the term "pharaoh," originally referring to the king's palace, became a form of address for the king.

One of the best-known Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs is Amenhotep IV (c. 1353-1336 BCE), who changed his name to Akhenaten in honor of Aten and whose exclusive worship of the deity is often interpreted as the first instance of monotheism. Under his reign Egyptian art flourished and attained an unprecedented level of realism. Toward the end of this dynasty, the Hittites had expanded their influence into Phoenicia and Canaan, the outcome of which would be inherited by the rulers of the Nineteenth Dynasty.



**Bust of Akhenaten:** Akhenaten, born Amenhotep IV, was the son of Queen Tiye. He rejected the old Egyptian religion and promoted the Aten as a supreme deity.



## The Nineteenth Dynasty (c. 1292-1187 BCE)

New Kingdom Egypt would reach the height of its power under Seti I and Ramesses II, who fought against the Libyans and Hittites. The city of Kadesh was a flashpoint, captured first by Seti I and then used as a peace bargain with the Hatti, and later attacked again by Ramesses II. Eventually, the Egyptians and Hittites signed a lasting peace treaty.



**Egyptian and Hittite Empires:** This map shows the Egyptian (green) and Hittite (red) Empires around 1274 BCE.

Ramesses II had a large number of children, and he built a massive funerary complex for his sons in the Valley of the Kings. The Nineteenth Dynasty ended in a revolt led by Setnakhte, the founder of the Twentieth Dynasty.



**Temple of Ramesses II:** Detail of the Temple of Ramesses II.

## The Twentieth Dynasty (c. 1187-1064 BCE)

The last “great” pharaoh from the New Kingdom is widely regarded to be Ramesses III. In the eighth year of his reign, the Sea Peoples invaded Egypt by land and sea, but were defeated by Ramesses III.

The heavy cost of warfare slowly drained Egypt’s treasury and contributed to the gradual decline of the Egyptian Empire in Asia. The severity of the difficulties is indicated by the fact that the first known labor strike in recorded history occurred during the 29th year of Ramesses III’s reign, over food rations. Despite a palace conspiracy which may have killed Ramesses III, three of his sons ascended the throne successively as Ramesses IV, Ramesses VI and Ramesses VIII. Egypt was increasingly beset by droughts, below-normal flooding of the Nile, famine, civil unrest, and official corruption. The power of the last pharaoh of the dynasty, Ramesses XI, grew so weak that, in the south, the High Priests of Amun at Thebes became the de facto rulers of Upper Egypt. The Smendes controlled Lower Egypt even before Ramesses XI’s death. Menes eventually founded the Twenty-first Dynasty at Tanis.

## Hatshepsut

Hatshepsut ruled Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty (1478-1458 BCE), and brought wealth and a focus on large building projects. She was one of just a handful of female rulers.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the achievements of Hatshepsut in Ancient Egypt.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Hatshepsut reigned Egypt from 1478-1458 BCE, during the Eighteenth Dynasty. She ruled longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty.
- Hatshepsut established trade networks that helped build the wealth of the Eighteenth Dynasty.
- Hundreds of construction projects and statuary were commissioned by Hatshepsut, including obelisks and monuments at the Temple of Karnak.
- While not the first female ruler of Egypt, Hatshepsut's reign was longer and more prosperous; she oversaw a peaceful, wealthy era.
- The average woman in Egypt was quite liberated for the time, and had a variety of property and other rights.
- Hatshepsut died in 1458 BCE in middle age, possibly of diabetes and bone cancer. Her mummy was discovered in 1903 and identified in 2007.

### *Key Terms*

- **kohl:** A black powder used as eye makeup.
- **obelisks:** Stone pillars, typically having a square or rectangular cross section and a pyramidal tip, used as a monument.
- **co-regent:** The situation wherein a monarchical position, normally held by one person, is held by two.

Hatshepsut reigned in Egypt from 1478-1458 BCE, during the Eighteenth Dynasty, longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty. According to Egyptologist James Henry Breasted, she was “the first great woman in history of whom we are informed.” She was the daughter of Thutmose I and his wife Ahmes. Hatshepsut’s husband, Thutmose II, was also a child of Thutmose I, but was conceived with a different wife. Hatshepsut had a daughter named Neferure with her husband, Thutmose II. Thutmose II also fathered Thutmose III with Iset, a secondary wife. Hatshepsut ascended to the throne as co-regent with Thutmose III, who came to the throne as a two-year old child.



**Statue of Hatshepsut:** This statue of Hatshepsut is housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

## Trade Networks

Hatshepsut established trade networks that helped build the wealth of the Eighteenth Dynasty. This included a successful mission to the Land of Punt in the ninth year of her reign, which brought live myrrh trees and frankincense (which Hatshepsut used as kohl eyeliner) to Egypt. She also sent raiding expeditions to Byblos and Sinai, and may have led military campaigns against Nubia and Canaan.

## Building Projects

Hatshepsut was a prolific builder, commissioning hundreds of construction projects and statuary. She had monuments constructed at the Temple of Karnak, and restored the original Precinct of Mut at Karnak, which had been ravaged during the Hyksos occupation of Egypt. She installed twin obelisks (the tallest in the world at that time) at the entrance to this temple, one of which still stands. Karnak's Red Chapel was intended as a shrine to her life, and may have stood with these obelisks.

The Temple of Pakhet was a monument to Bast and Sekhmet, lioness war goddesses. Later in the Nineteenth Dynasty, King Seti I attempted to take credit for this monument. However, Hatshepsut's masterpiece was a mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri; the focal point was the Djoser-Djeseru ("the Sublime of Sublimes"), a colonnaded structure built 1,000 years before the Greek Parthenon. The Hatshepsut needle, a granite obelisk, is considered another great accomplishment.



**Hatshepsut Temple:** The colonnaded design is evident in this temple.

## Female Rule

Hatshepsut was not the first female ruler of Egypt. She had been preceded by Merneith of the First Dynasty, Nimaathap of the Third Dynasty, Nitocris of the Sixth Dynasty, Sobekneferu of the Twelfth Dynasty, Ahhotep I of the Seventeenth Dynasty, Ahmose-Nefertari, and others. However, Hatshepsut's reign was longer and more prosperous; she oversaw a peaceful, wealthy era. She was also proficient at self-promotion, which was enabled by her wealth.





**Hieroglyphs of Thutmose III and Hatshepsut:** Hatshepsut, on the right, is shown having the trappings of a greater role.

The word “king” was considered gender-neutral, and women could take the title. During her father’s reign, she held the powerful office of God’s Wife, and as wife to her husband, Thutmose II, she took an active role in administration of the kingdom. As pharaoh, she faced few challenges, even from her co-regent, who headed up the powerful Egyptian army and could have unseated her, had he chosen to do so.

## Women’s Status in Egypt

The average woman in Egypt was quite liberated for the time period.

While her foremost role was as mother and wife, an average woman might have worked in weaving, perfume making, or entertainment. Women could own their own businesses, own and sell property, serve as witnesses in court cases, be in the company of men, divorce and remarry, and have access to one-third of their husband's property.

## Hatshepsut's Death

Hatshepsut died in 1458 BCE in middle age; no cause of death is known, although she may have had diabetes and bone cancer, likely from a carcinogenic skin lotion. Her mummy was discovered in the Valley of the Kings by Howard Carter in 1903, although at the time, the mummy's identity was not known. In 2007, the mummy was found to be a match to a missing tooth known to have belonged to Hatshepsut.



**Osirian Statues of Hatshepsut:** These statues of Hatshepsut at her tomb show her holding the crook and flail associated with Osiris.

After her death, mostly during Thutmose III's reign, haphazard attempts were made to remove Hatshepsut from certain historical and pharaonic records. Amenhotep II, the son of Thutmose III, may have been responsible. The Tyldesley hypothesis states that

Thutmose III may have decided to attempt to scale back Hatshepsut's role to that of regent rather than king.

## The Third Intermediate Period

The Third Intermediate Period (c. 1069-664 BCE) spanned the Twenty-first to Twenty-sixth Dynasties, and was marked by internal divisions within Egypt, as well as conquest and rule by foreigners.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the general landscape of the political chaos during Third Intermediate Period

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The period of the Twenty-first Dynasty was characterized by the country's fracturing kingship, as power became split more and more between the pharaoh and the High Priests of Amun at Thebes.
- Egypt was temporarily reunified during the Twenty-second Dynasty, and experienced a period of

stability, but shattered into two states after the reign of Osorkon II.

- Civil war raged in Thebes and was eventually quelled by Osorkon B, who founded the Upper Egyptian Libyan Dynasty. This dynasty collapsed, however, with the rise of local city-states.
- The Twenty-fourth Dynasty saw the conquest of the Nubians over native Egyptian rulers, and the Nubians ruled through the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, when they expanded Egyptian power to the extent of the New Kingdom and restored many temples. Due to lacking military power, however, the Egyptians were conquered by the Assyrians toward the end of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.
- The end of the Third Intermediate Period and the Twenty-sixth Dynasty saw Assyrian rule over Egypt. Although some measure of independence was regained, Egypt faced pressure and eventual defeat at the hands of the Persians.

### *Key Terms*

- **Nubia:** A region along the Nile river, located in northern Sudan and southern Egypt.
- **Assyrians:** A major Mesopotamian East Semitic-speaking people.
- **High Priests of Amun:** The highest-ranking priest in the priesthood of the Ancient Egyptian god, Amun. Assumed significant power along with the pharaoh in the Twenty-First Dynasty.

- **Third Intermediate Period:** Spanning the Twenty-first to Twenty-sixth Dynasties. A period of Egyptian decline and political instability

The Third Intermediate Period of Ancient Egypt began with the death of the last pharaoh of the New Kingdom, Ramesses XI in 1070 BCE, and ended with the start of the Postdynastic Period. The Third Intermediate Period was one of decline and political instability. It was marked by a division of the state for much of the period, as well as conquest and rule by foreigners. However, many aspects of life for ordinary Egyptians changed relatively little.

## The Twenty-First Dynasty (c. 1077-943 BCE)

The period of the Twenty-first Dynasty was characterized by the country's fracturing kingship. Even in Ramesses XI's day, the Twentieth Dynasty of Egypt was losing its grip on power in the city of Thebes, where priests were becoming increasingly powerful. The Amun priests of Thebes owned 2/3 of all the temple lands in Egypt, 90% of ships, and many other resources. Consequently, the Amun priests were as powerful as the Pharaoh, if not more so. After the death of Ramesses XI, his successor, Smendes I, ruled from the city of Tanis, but was mainly active only in Lower Egypt. Meanwhile, the High Priests of Amun at Thebes effectively ruled Middle and Upper Egypt in all but name. During this time, however, this division was relatively insignificant, due to the fact that both priests and pharaohs came from the same family.

## The Twenty-Second (c. 943-716 BCE) and Twenty-Third (c. 880-720 BCE) Dynasties

The country was firmly reunited by the Twenty-second Dynasty, founded by Shoshenq I in approximately 943 BCE. Shoshenq I descended from Meshwesh immigrants originally from Ancient Libya. This unification brought stability to the country for well over a century, but after the reign of Osorkon II, the country had shattered in two states. Shoshenq III of the Twenty-Second Dynasty controlled Lower Egypt by 818 BCE, while Takelot II and his son Osorkon (the future Osorkon III) ruled Middle and Upper Egypt. In Thebes, a civil war engulfed the city between the forces of Pedubast I, a self-proclaimed pharaoh. Eventually Osorkon B defeated his enemies, and proceeded to found the Upper Egyptian Libyan Dynasty of Osorkon III, Takelot III, and Rudamun. This kingdom quickly fragmented after Rudamun's death with the rise of local city-states.

## The Twenty-Fourth Dynasty (c. 732-720 BCE)

The Nubian kingdom to the south took full advantage of the division of the country. Nubia had already extended its influence into the Egyptian city of Thebes around 752 BCE, when the Nubian ruler Kashta coerced Shepenupet into adopting his own daughter Amenirdis as her successor. Twenty years later, around 732 BCE, these machinations bore fruit for Nubia when Kashta's successor Piye marched north in his Year 20 campaign into Egypt, and defeated the combined might of the native Egyptian rulers.

## The Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (c. 760-656 BCE)

Following his military conquests, Piye established the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and appointed the defeated rulers as his provincial governors. Rulers under this dynasty originated in the Nubian Kingdom of Kush. Their reunification of Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Kish created the largest Egyptian empire since the New Kingdom. They assimilated into Egyptian culture but also brought some aspects of Kushite culture. During this dynasty, the first widespread building of pyramids since the Middle Kingdom resumed. The Nubians were driven out of Egypt in 670 BCE by the Assyrians, who installed an initial puppet dynasty loyal to the Assyrians.



**Nubian Pharaohs:** Statues of the Nubian Pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

## End of the Third Intermediate Period

Upper Egypt remained under the rule of Tantamani for a time, while Lower Egypt was ruled by the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, starting in



664 BCE. Although originally established as clients of the Assyrians, the Twenty-sixth Dynasty managed to take advantage of the time of troubles facing the Assyrian empire to successfully bring about Egypt's political independence. In 656 BCE, Psamtik I (last of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty kings) occupied Thebes and became pharaoh, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. He proceeded to reign over a united Egypt for 54 years from his capital at Sais. Four successive Saite kings continued guiding Egypt through a period of peace and prosperity from 610-525 BCE. Unfortunately for this dynasty, however, a new power was growing in the Near East: Persia. Pharaoh Psamtik III succeeded his father, Ahmose II, only six months before he had to face the Persian Empire at Pelusium. The new king was no match for the Persians, who had already taken Babylon. Psamtik III was defeated and briefly escaped to Memphis. He was ultimately imprisoned, and later executed at Susa, the capital of the Persian king Cambyses. With the Saite kings exterminated, Cambyses assumed the formal title of Pharaoh.

## The Decline of Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt went through a series of occupations and suffered a slow decline over a long period of time. First occupied by the Assyrians, then the Persians, and later the Macedonians and Romans, Egyptians would never again reach the glorious heights of self-rule they achieved during previous periods.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why Ancient Egypt declined as an economic and political force

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After a renaissance in the 25th Dynasty, ancient Egypt was occupied by Assyrians, initiating the Late Period.
- In 525 BCE, Egypt was conquered by Persia, and incorporated into the Achaemenid Persian Empire.
- In 332 BCE, Egypt was given to Macedonia and Alexander the Great. During this period, the new capital of Alexandria flourished.
- Egypt became a Roman province after the defeat of Marc Antony and Queen Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE. During this period, religious and other traditions slowly declined.

### *Key Terms*

- **hieroglyphics:** A formal writing system used by ancient Egyptians, consisting of pictograms.
- **pagan:** A person holding religious beliefs other than those of the main world religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.
- **Hellenistic:** Relating to Greek history, language, and culture, during the time between the death of Alexander the Great and the defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE.

Ancient Egypt went through a series of occupations and suffered a slow decline over a long period of time. First occupied by the Assyrians, then the Persians, and later the Macedonians and Romans, Egyptians would never again reach the glorious heights of self-rule they achieved during previous periods.

## Third Intermediate Period (1069-653 BCE)

After a renaissance in the Twenty-fifth dynasty, when religion, arts, and architecture (including pyramids) were restored, struggles against the Assyrians led to eventual conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon in 671 BCE. Native Egyptian rulers were installed but could not retain control of the area, and former Pharaoh Taharqa seized control of southern Egypt for a time, until he was defeated again by the Assyrians. Taharqa's successor, Tanutamun, also made a failed attempt to regain Egypt, but was defeated.

## Late Period (672-332 BCE)

Having been victorious in Egypt, the Assyrians installed a series of vassals known as the Saite kings of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. In 653 BCE, one of these kings, Psamtik I, was able to achieve a peaceful separation from the Assyrians with the help of Lydian and Greek mercenaries. In 609 BCE, the Egyptians attempted to save the Assyrians, who were losing their war with the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Medians, and Scythians. However, they were unsuccessful.

In 525 BCE, the Persians, led by Cambyses II, invaded Egypt, capturing the Pharaoh Psamtik III. Egypt was joined with Cyprus and Phoenicia in the sixth satrapy of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, also called the Twenty-seventh Dynasty. This ended in 402 BCE, and

the last native royal house of dynastic Egypt, known as the Thirtieth Dynasty, was ruled by Nectanebo II. Persian rule was restored briefly in 343 BCE, known as the Thirty-first Dynasty, but in 332 BCE, Egypt was handed over peacefully to the Macedonian ruler, Alexander the Great.

## Macedonian and Ptolemaic Period (332-30 BCE)

Alexander the Great was welcomed into Egypt as a deliverer, and the new capital city of Alexandria was a showcase of Hellenistic rule, capped by the famous Library of Alexandria. Native Egyptian traditions were honored, but eventually local revolts, plus interest in Egyptian goods by the Romans, caused the Romans to wrest Egypt from the Macedonians.

## Roman Period (30 BCE-641CE)

Egypt became a Roman province after the defeat of Marc Antony and Queen Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE. Some Egyptian traditions, including mummification and worship of local gods, continued, but local administration was handled exclusively by Romans. The spread of Christianity proved to be too powerful, and pagan rites were banned and temples closed. Egyptians continued to speak their language, but the ability to read hieroglyphics disappeared as temple priests diminished.

# 18. Reading: Ancient Egyptian Society

## Ancient Egyptian Religion

Ancient Egyptian religion lasted for more than 3,000 years, and consisted of a complex polytheism. The pharaoh's role was to sustain the gods in order to maintain order in the universe.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the religious beliefs and practices of Ancient Egypt

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The religion of Ancient Egypt lasted for more than 3,000 years, and was polytheistic, meaning there were a multitude of deities, who were believed to reside within and control the forces of nature.

- Formal religious practice centered on the pharaoh, or ruler, of Egypt, who was believed to be divine, and acted as intermediary between the people and the gods. His role was to sustain the gods so that they could maintain order in the universe.
- The Egyptian universe centered on Ma'at, which has several meanings in English, including truth, justice and order. It was fixed and eternal; without it the world would fall apart.
- The most important myth was of Osiris and Isis. The divine ruler Osiris was murdered by Set (god of chaos), then resurrected by his sister and wife Isis to conceive an heir, Horus. Osiris then became the ruler of the dead, while Horus eventually avenged his father and became king.
- Egyptians were very concerned about the fate of their souls after death. They believed ka (life-force) left the body upon death and needed to be fed. Ba, or personal spirituality, remained in the body. The goal was to unite ka and ba to create akh.
- Artistic depictions of gods were not literal representations, as their true nature was considered mysterious. However, symbolic imagery was used to indicate this nature.
- Temples were the state's method of sustaining the gods, since their physical images were housed and cared for; temples were not a place for the average person to worship.
- Certain animals were worshipped and mummified as representatives of gods.
- Oracles were used by all classes.

## *Key Terms*

- **polytheistic:** A religion with more than one worshipped god.
- **Duat:** The realm of the dead; residence of Osiris.
- **ka:** The spiritual part of an individual human being or god that survived after death.
- **pantheon:** The core actors of a religion.
- **heka:** The ability to use natural forces to create “magic.”
- **Ma'at:** The Egyptian universe.
- **ba:** The spiritual characteristics of an individual person that remained in the body after death. Ba could unite with the ka.
- **akh:** The combination of the ka and ba living in the afterlife.

The religion of Ancient Egypt lasted for more than 3,000 years, and was polytheistic, meaning there were a multitude of deities, who were believed to reside within and control the forces of nature. Religious practices were deeply embedded in the lives of Egyptians, as they attempted to provide for their gods and win their favor. The complexity of the religion was evident as some deities existed in different manifestations and had multiple mythological roles. The pantheon included gods with major roles in the universe, minor deities (or “demons”), foreign gods, and sometimes humans, including deceased Pharaohs.

Formal religious practice centered on the pharaoh, or ruler, of Egypt, who was believed to be divine, and acted as intermediary between the people and the gods. His role was to sustain the gods so

that they could maintain order in the universe, and the state spent its resources generously to build temples and provide for rituals. The pharaoh was associated with Horus (and later Amun) and seen as the son of Ra. Upon death, the pharaoh was fully deified, directly identified with Ra and associated with Osiris, the god of death and rebirth. However, individuals could appeal directly to the gods for personal purposes through prayer or requests for magic; as the pharaoh's power declined, this personal form of practice became stronger. Popular religious practice also involved ceremonies around birth and naming. The people also invoked "magic" (called heka) to make things happen using natural forces.





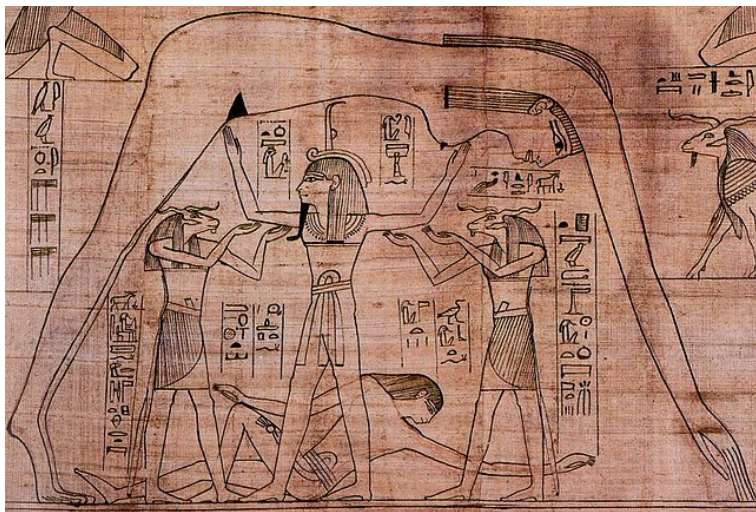
**Gods of the Pantheon:** This wall painting shows, from left to right, the gods Osiris, Anubis and Horus.

## Cosmology

The Egyptian universe centered on Ma'at, which has several meanings in English, including truth, justice and order. It was fixed

and eternal (without it the world would fall apart), and there were constant threats of disorder requiring society to work to maintain it. Inhabitants of the cosmos included the gods, the spirits of deceased humans, and living humans, the most important of which was the pharaoh. Humans should cooperate to achieve this, and gods should function in balance. Ma'at was renewed by periodic events, such as the annual Nile flood, which echoed the original creation. Most important of these was the daily journey of the sun god Ra.

Egyptians saw the earth as flat land (the god Geb), over which arched the sky (goddess Nut); they were separated by Shu, the god of air. Underneath the earth was a parallel underworld and undersky, and beyond the skies lay Nu, the chaos before creation. Duat was a mysterious area associated with death and rebirth, and each day Ra passed through Duat after traveling over the earth during the day.



**Egyptian Cosmology:** In this artwork, the air god Shu is assisted by other gods in holding up Nut, the sky, as Geb, the earth, lies beneath.

# Myths

Egyptian myths are mainly known from hymns, ritual and magical texts, funerary texts, and the writings of Greeks and Romans. The creation myth saw the world as emerging as a dry space in the primordial ocean of chaos, marked by the first rising of Ra. Other forms of the myth saw the primordial god Atum transforming into the elements of the world, and the creative speech of the intellectual god Ptah.

The most important myth was of Osiris and Isis. The divine ruler Osiris was murdered by Set (god of chaos), then resurrected by his sister and wife Isis to conceive an heir, Horus. Osiris then became the ruler of the dead, while Horus eventually avenged his father and became king. This myth set the Pharaohs, and their succession, as orderliness against chaos.

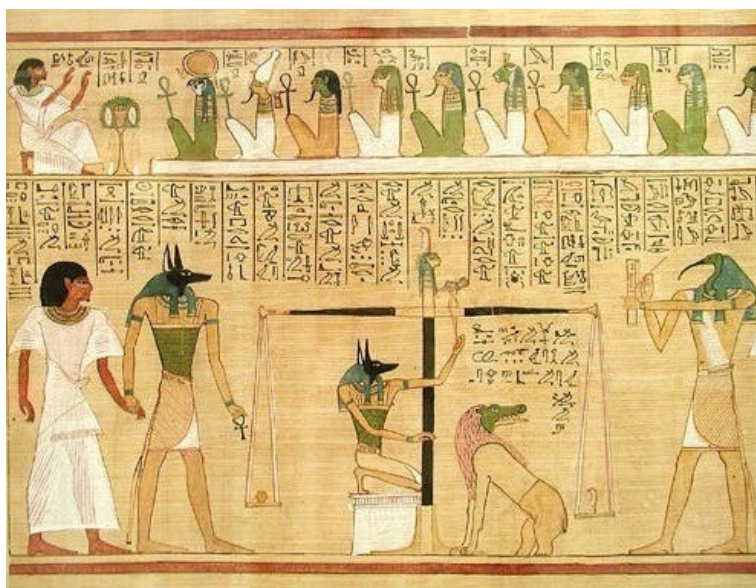
## The Afterlife

Egyptians were very concerned about the fate of their souls after death, and built tombs, created grave goods and gave offerings to preserve the bodies and spirits of the dead. They believed humans possessed ka, or life-force, which left the body at death. To endure after death, the ka must continue to receive offerings of food; it could consume the spiritual essence of it. Humans also possessed a ba, a set of spiritual characteristics unique to each person, which remained in the body after death. Funeral rites were meant to release the ba so it could move, rejoin with the ka, and live on as an akh. However, the ba returned to the body at night, so the body must be preserved.

Mummification involved elaborate embalming practices, and wrapping in cloth, along with various rites, including the Opening of

the Mouth ceremony. Tombs were originally mastabas (rectangular brick structures), and then pyramids.

However, this originally did not apply to the common person: they passed into a dark, bleak realm that was the opposite of life. Nobles did receive tombs and grave gifts from the pharaoh. Eventually, by about 2181 BCE, Egyptians began to believe every person had a ba and could access the afterlife. By the New Kingdom, the soul had to face dangers in the Duat before having a final judgment, called the Weighing of the Heart, where the gods compared the actions of the deceased while alive to Ma'at, to see if they were worthy. If so, the ka and ba were united into an akh, which then either traveled to the lush underworld, or traveled with Ra on his daily journey, or even returned to the world of the living to carry out magic.



**Funerary Text:** In this section from the Book of the Dead for the scribe Hunefer, the Weighing of the Heart is shown.

## Rise and Fall of Gods

Certain gods gained a primary status over time, and then fell as other gods overtook them. These included the sun god Ra, the creator god Amun, and the mother goddess Isis. There was even a period of time where Egypt was monotheistic, under Pharaoh Akhenaten, and his patron god Aten.

## The Relationships of Deities

Just as the forces of nature had complex interrelationships, so did Egyptian deities. Minor deities might be linked, or deities might come together based on the meaning of numbers in Egyptian mythology (i.e., pairs represented duality). Deities might also be linked through syncretism, creating a composite deity.

## Artistic Depictions of Gods

Artistic depictions of gods were not literal representations, since their true nature was considered mysterious. However, symbolic imagery was used to indicate this nature. An example was Anubis, a funerary god, who was shown as a jackal to counter its traditional meaning as a scavenger, and create protection for the mummy.

## Temples

Temples were the state's method of sustaining the gods, as their physical images were housed and cared for; they were not a place for the average person to worship. They were both mortuary

temples to serve deceased pharaohs and temples for patron gods. Starting as simple structures, they grew more elaborate, and were increasingly built from stone, with a common plan. Ritual duties were normally carried out by priests, or government officials serving in the role. In the New Kingdom, professional priesthood became common, and their wealth rivaled that of the pharaoh.

## Rituals and Festivals

Aside from numerous temple rituals, including the morning offering ceremony and re-enactments of myths, there were coronation ceremonies and the sed festival, a renewal of the pharaoh's strength during his reign. The Opet Festival at Karnak involved a procession carrying the god's image to visit other significant sites.

## Animal Worship

At many sites, Egyptians worshipped specific animals that they believed to be manifestations of deities. Examples include the Apis bull (of the god Ptah), and mummified cats and other animals.

## Use of Oracles

Commoners and pharaohs asked questions of oracles, and answers could even be used during the New Kingdom to settle legal disputes. This might involve asking a question while a divine image was being carried, and interpreting movement, or drawing lots.

# Ancient Egyptian Art

Ancient Egyptian art included painting, sculpture, pottery, glass work, and architecture. Many surviving art is related to tombs and monuments. Aside from the brief Amarna period, Egyptian art remained relatively unchanged for thousands of years.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Examine the development of Egyptian Art under the Old Kingdom.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Ancient Egyptian art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, and other forms of art, such as drawings on papyrus, created between 3000 BCE and 100 CE.
- Most of this art was highly stylized and symbolic. Much of the surviving forms come from tombs and monuments, and thus have a focus on life after death and preservation of knowledge.
- Symbolism meant order, shown through the pharaoh's regalia, or through the use of certain

colors.

- In Egyptian art, the size of a figure indicates its relative importance.
- Paintings were often done on stone, and portrayed pleasant scenes of the afterlife in tombs.
- Ancient Egyptians created both monumental and smaller sculptures, using the technique of sunk relief.
- Ka statues, which were meant to provide a resting place for the ka part of the soul, were often made of wood and placed in tombs.
- Faience was sintered-quartz ceramic with surface vitrification, used to create relatively cheap small objects in many colors. Glass was originally a luxury item but became more common, and was used to make small jars, for perfume and other liquids, to be placed in tombs. Carvings of vases, amulets, and images of deities and animals were made of steatite. Pottery was sometimes covered with enamel, particularly in the color blue.
- Papyrus was used for writing and painting, and was used to record every aspect of Egyptian life.
- Architects carefully planned buildings, aligning them with astronomically significant events, such as solstices and equinoxes. They used mainly sun-baked mud brick, limestone, sandstone, and granite.
- The Amarna period (1353-1336 BCE) represents an interruption in ancient Egyptian art style, subjects were represented more realistically, and scenes included portrayals of affection among the royal family.



## *Key Terms*

- **papyrus:** A material prepared in ancient Egypt from the stem of a water plant, used in sheets for writing or painting on.
- **regalia:** The emblems or insignia of royalty.
- **sunk relief:** Sculptural technique in which the outlines of modeled forms are incised in a plane surface beyond which the forms do not project.
- **Ka:** The supposed spiritual part of an individual human being or god that survived after death, and could reside in a statue of the person.
- **ushabti:** Ancient Egyptian funerary figure.
- **Faience:** Glazed ceramic ware.
- **scarabs:** Ancient Egyptian gem cut in the form of a scarab beetle

Ancient Egyptian art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, and other forms of art, such as drawings on papyrus, created between 3000 BCE and 100 AD. Most of this art was highly stylized and symbolic. Many of the surviving forms come from tombs and monuments, and thus have a focus on life after death and preservation of knowledge.

## Symbolism

Symbolism in ancient Egyptian art conveyed a sense of order and the influence of natural elements. The regalia of the pharaoh

symbolized his or her power to rule and maintain the order of the universe. Blue and gold indicated divinity because they were rare and were associated with precious materials, while black expressed the fertility of the Nile River.

## Hierarchical Scale

In Egyptian art, the size of a figure indicates its relative importance. This meant gods or the pharaoh were usually bigger than other figures, followed by figures of high officials or the tomb owner; the smallest figures were servants, entertainers, animals, trees and architectural details.

## Painting

Before painting a stone surface, it was whitewashed and sometimes covered with mud plaster. Pigments were made of mineral and able to stand up to strong sunlight with minimal fade. The binding medium is unknown; the paint was applied to dried plaster in the “fresco a secco” style. A varnish or resin was then applied as a protective coating, which, along with the dry climate of Egypt, protected the painting very well. The purpose of tomb paintings was to create a pleasant afterlife for the dead person, with themes such as journeying through the afterworld, or deities providing protection. The side view of the person or animal was generally shown, and paintings were often done in red, blue, green, gold, black and yellow.



**Wall Painting of Nefertari:** In this wall painting of Nefertari, the side view is apparent.

## Sculpture

Ancient Egyptians created both monumental and smaller sculptures, using the technique of sunk relief. In this technique, the

image is made by cutting the relief sculpture into a flat surface, set within a sunken area shaped around the image. In strong sunlight, this technique is very visible, emphasizing the outlines and forms by shadow. Figures are shown with the torso facing front, the head in side view, and the legs parted, with males sometimes darker than females. Large statues of deities (other than the pharaoh) were not common, although deities were often shown in paintings and reliefs.

Colossal sculpture on the scale of the Great Sphinx of Giza was not repeated, but smaller sphinxes and animals were found in temple complexes. The most sacred cult image of a temple's god was supposedly held in the naos in small boats, carved out of precious metal, but none have survived.

Ka statues, which were meant to provide a resting place for the ka part of the soul, were present in tombs as of Dynasty IV (2680-2565 BCE). These were often made of wood, and were called reserve heads, which were plain, hairless and naturalistic. Early tombs had small models of slaves, animals, buildings, and objects to provide life for the deceased in the afterworld. Later, ushabti figures were present as funerary figures to act as servants for the deceased, should he or she be called upon to do manual labor in the afterlife.



**Ka Statue:** The ka statue was placed in the tomb to provide a physical place for the ka to manifest. This statue is found at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo.

Many small carved objects have been discovered, from toys to utensils, and alabaster was used for the more expensive objects. In creating any statuary, strict conventions, accompanied by a rating system, were followed. This resulted in a rather timeless quality, as few changes were instituted over thousands of years.

## Faience, Pottery, and Glass

Faience was sintered-quartz ceramic with surface vitrification used to create relatively cheap, small objects in many colors, but most commonly blue-green. It was often used for jewelry, scarabs, and figurines. Glass was originally a luxury item, but became more common, and was used to make small jars, of perfume and other liquids, to be placed in tombs. Carvings of vases, amulets, and images of deities and animals were made of steatite. Pottery was sometimes covered with enamel, particularly in the color blue. In tombs, pottery was used to represent organs of the body removed during embalming, or to create cones, about ten inches tall, engraved with legends of the deceased.

## Papyrus

Papyrus is very delicate and was used for writing and painting; it has only survived for long periods when buried in tombs. Every aspect of Egyptian life is found recorded on papyrus, from literary to administrative documents.

## Architecture

Architects carefully planned buildings, aligning them with astronomically significant events, such as solstices and equinoxes, and used mainly sun-baked mud brick, limestone, sandstone, and granite. Stone was reserved for tombs and temples, while other buildings, such as palaces and fortresses, were made of bricks. Houses were made of mud from the Nile River that hardened in the sun. Many of these houses were destroyed in flooding or

dismantled; examples of preserved structures include the village Deir al-Madinah and the fortress at Buhen.

The Giza Necropolis, built in the Fourth Dynasty, includes the Pyramid of Khufu (also known as the Great Pyramid or the Pyramid of Cheops), the Pyramid of Khafre, and the Pyramid of Menkaure, along with smaller “queen” pyramids and the Great Sphinx.



**The Pyramids of Giza:** The Pyramid of Khufu (Great Pyramid) is the largest of the pyramids pictured here.

The Temple of Karnak was first built in the 16th century BCE. About 30 pharaohs contributed to the buildings, creating an extremely large and diverse complex. It includes the Precincts of Amon-Re, Montu and Mut, and the Temple of Amehotep IV (dismantled).



**The Temple of Karnak:** Shown here is the hypostyle hall of the Temple of Karnak.

The Luxor Temple was constructed in the 14th century BCE by Amenhotep III in the ancient city of Thebes, now Luxor, with a major expansion by Ramesses II in the 13th century BCE. It includes the 79-foot high First Pylon, friezes, statues, and columns.



## The Amarna Period (1353-1336 BCE)

During this period, which represents an interruption in ancient Egyptian art style, subjects were represented more realistically, and scenes included portrayals of affection among the royal family. There was a sense of movement in the images, with overlapping figures and large crowds. The style reflects Akhenaten 's move to monotheism, but it disappeared after his death.

## Ancient Egyptian Monuments

Ancient Egyptian monuments included pyramids, sphinxes, and temples. These buildings and statues required careful planning and resources, and showed the influence Egyptian religion had on the state and its people.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the impressive attributes of the monuments erected by Egyptians in the Old Kingdom

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Ancient Egyptian architects carefully planned buildings, aligning them with astronomically significant events, such as solstices and equinoxes, and used mainly sun-baked mud brick, limestone, sandstone, and granite.
- Egyptian pyramids were highly reflective, referenced the sun, and were usually placed on the West side of the Nile River.
- About 135 pyramids have been discovered in Egypt, with the largest (in Egypt and the world) being the Great Pyramid of Giza.
- The Great Sphinx of Giza is a reclining sphinx (a mythical creature with a lion's body and a human head); its face is meant to represent the Pharaoh Khafra. It is the world's oldest and largest monolith.
- Egyptian temples were used for official, formal worship of the gods by the state, and to commemorate pharaohs. The temple was the house of a particular god, and Egyptians would perform rituals, give offerings, re-enact myths, and keep order in the universe (ma'at).
- The Temple of Karnak was first built in the 16th century BCE. About 30 pharaohs contributed to the buildings, creating an extremely large and diverse complex.
- The Luxor Temple was constructed in the 14th

century BCE by Amenhotep III in the ancient city of Thebes, now Luxor. It later received a major expansion by Ramesses II in the 13th century BCE.

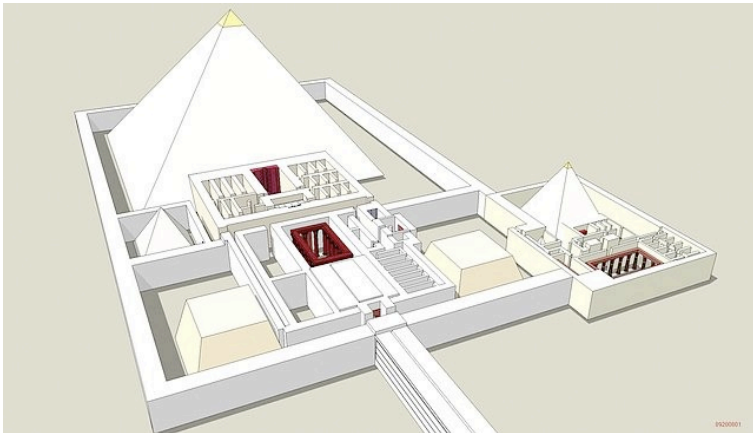
### *Key Terms*

- **solstices:** Either of the two times in the year (summer and winter) when the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in the sky at noon.
- **equinoxes:** Either of the two times in the year when the sun crosses the celestial equator, and day and night are of equal length.
- **Hypostyle halls:** In ancient Egypt, covered rooms with columns.
- **peristyle courts:** In ancient Egypt, courts that open to the sky.
- **pylon:** In ancient Egypt, two tapering towers with a less elevated section between them, forming a gateway.
- **friezes:** Broad, horizontal bands of sculpted or painted decoration.
- **monolith:** A large single upright block of stone, especially one shaped into, or serving as, a pillar or monument.
- **ma'at:** The ancient Egyptian concept of truth, balance, order, harmony, law, morality and justice.
- **obelisks:** Stone pillars, typically having a square or rectangular cross section and pyramidal top, used as monuments or landmarks.

Ancient Egyptian architects carefully planned buildings, aligning them with astronomically significant events, such as solstices and equinoxes. They used mainly sun-baked mud brick, limestone, sandstone, and granite. Stone was reserved for tombs and temples, while other buildings, such as palaces and fortresses, were made of bricks.

## Pyramids

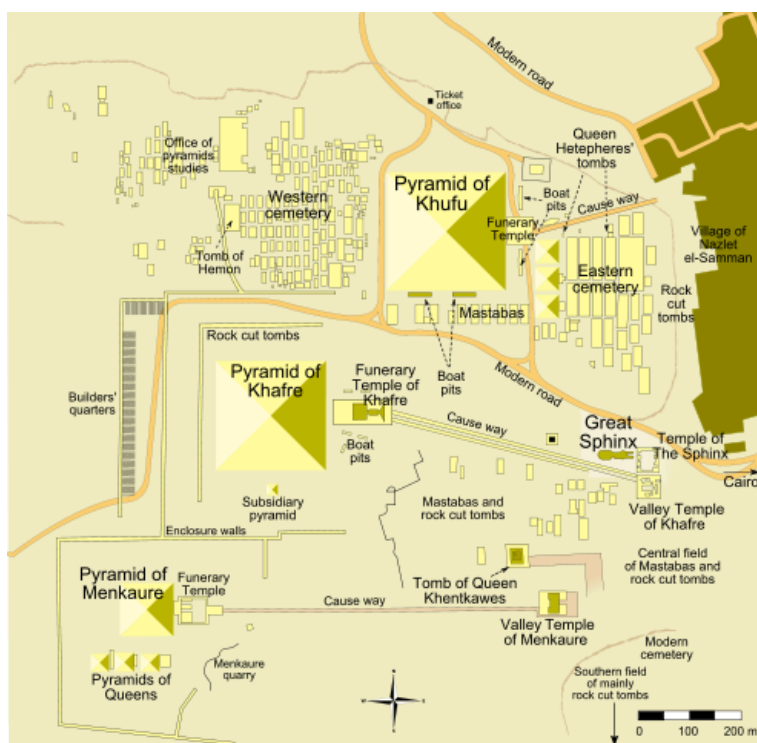
Egyptian pyramids referenced the rays of the sun, and appeared highly polished and reflective, with a capstone that was generally a hard stone like granite, sometimes plated with gold, silver or electrum. Most were placed west of the Nile, to allow the pharaoh's soul to join with the sun during its descent.



**Old Kingdom Pyramid Temple Reconstruction:** In this reconstruction, a causeway leads out to the valley temple.

About 135 pyramids have been discovered in Egypt, with the largest (in Egypt and the world) being the Great Pyramid of Giza. Its base is

over 566,000 square feet in area, and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Giza Necropolis, built in the Fourth Dynasty, includes the Pyramid of Khufu (also known as the Great Pyramid or the Pyramid of Cheops), the Pyramid of Khafre and the Pyramid of Menkaure, along with smaller “queens” pyramids and the Great Sphinx.



**Map of Giza Pyramid Complex:** A map showing the layout of the Giza Pyramid area, including the Pyramids of Khufu, Khafre, Menkaure, and the Great Sphinx.

## The Great Sphinx of Giza

This limestone statue of a reclining sphinx (a mythical creature with

a lion's body and a human head) is located on the Giza Plateau to the west of the Nile. It is believed the face is meant to represent the Pharaoh Khafra. It is the largest and oldest monolith statue in the world, at 241 feet long, 63 feet wide, and 66.34 feet tall. It is believed to have been built during the reign of Pharaoh Khafra (2558-2532 BCE). It was probably a focus of solar worship, as the lion is a symbol associated with the sun.



**The Great Sphinx of Giza:** Here the Great Sphinx is shown against the Pyramid of Khafre.

## Temples

Egyptian temples were used for official, formal worship of the gods by the state, and to commemorate pharaohs. The temple was the house dedicated to a particular god, and Egyptians would perform rituals there, give offerings, re-enact myths and keep order in the universe (ma'at). Pharaohs were in charge of caring for the gods, and

they dedicated massive resources to this task. Priests assisted in this effort. The average citizen was not allowed into the inner sanctum of the temple, but might still go there to pray, give offerings, or ask questions of the gods.

The inner sanctuary had a cult image of the temple's god, as well as a series of surrounding rooms that became large and elaborate over time, evolving into massive stone edifices during the New Kingdom. Temples also often owned surrounding land and employed thousands of people to support its activities, creating a powerful institution. The designs emphasized order, symmetry and monumentality. Hypostyle halls (covered rooms filled with columns) led to peristyle courts (open courts), where the public could meet with priests. At the front of each court was a pylon (broad, flat towers) that held flagpoles. Outside the temple building was the temple enclosure, with a brick wall to symbolically protect from outside disorder; often a sacred lake would be found here. Decoration included reliefs (bas relief and sunken relief) of images and hieroglyphic text and sculpture, including obelisks, figures of gods (sometimes in sphinx form), and votive figures. Egyptian religions faced persecution by Christians, and the last temple was closed in 550 AD.

The Temple of Karnak was first built in the 16th century BCE. About 30 pharaohs contributed to the buildings, creating an extremely large and diverse complex. It includes the Precincts of Amon-Re, Montu and Mut, and the Temple of Amehotep IV (dismantled).



**Temple of Karnak:** This view of the Temple of Karnak shows they hypostyle hall, with massive columns.

The Luxor Temple was constructed in the 14th century BCE by Amenhotep III in the ancient city of Thebes, now Luxor, with a major expansion by Ramesses II in the 13th century BCE. It includes the 79-foot high First Pylon, friezes, statues, and columns.





**Luxor Temple:** Shown here is the entrance pylon of Luxor Temple, one of the major New Kingdom temples.

## Ancient Egyptian Trade

Ancient Egyptians traded with their African and Mediterranean neighbors to obtain goods, such as cedar, lapis lazuli, gold, ivory, and more. They exported goods, such as papyrus, linen, and finished objects using a variety of land and maritime trading routes.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the economic structure of ancient Egypt

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Trade was occurring in the 5th century BCE onwards, especially with Canaan, Lebanon, Nubia and Punt.
- Just before the First Dynasty, Egypt had a colony in southern Canaan that produced Egyptian pottery for export to Egypt.
- In the Second Dynasty, Byblos provided quality timber that could not be found in Egypt.
- By the Fifth Dynasty, trade with Punt gave Egyptians gold, aromatic resins, ebony, ivory, and wild animals.
- A well-traveled land route from the Nile to the Red Sea crossed through the Wadi Hammamat. Another route, the Darb el-Arbain, was used from the time of the Old Kingdom of Egypt.
- Egyptians built ships as early as 3000 BCE by lashing planks of wood together and stuffing the gaps with reeds. They used them to import goods from Lebanon and Punt.

### *Key Terms*

- **myrrh**: A fragrant gum resin obtained from certain trees, often used in perfumery, medicine and incense.

- **malachite:** A bright green mineral consisting of copper hydroxyl carbonate.
- **papyrus:** A material prepared in ancient Egypt from the stem of a water plant, used in sheets for writing, painting, or making rope, sandals, and boats.
- **obsidian:** A hard, dark, glasslike volcanic rock.
- **electrum:** A natural or artificial alloy of gold, with at least 20% silver, used for jewelry.

Early examples of ancient Egyptian trade included contact with Syria in the 5th century BCE, and importation of pottery and construction ideas from Canaan in the 4th century BCE. By this time, shipping was common, and the donkey, camel, and horse were domesticated and used for transportation. Lebanese cedar has been found in the tombs of Nekhen, dated to the Naqada I and II periods. Egyptians during this period also imported obsidian from Ethiopia, gold and incense from Nubia in the south, oil jugs from Palestine, and other goods from the oases of the western desert and the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean. Egyptian artifacts from this era have been found in Canaan and parts of the former Mesopotamia. In the latter half of the 4th century BCE, the gemstone lapis lazuli was being imported from Badakhshan (modern-day Afghanistan).

Just before the First Dynasty, Egypt had a colony in southern Canaan that produced Egyptian pottery for export to Egypt. In the Second Dynasty, Byblos provided quality timber that could not be found in Egypt. By the Fifth Dynasty, trade with Punt gave Egyptians gold, aromatic resins, ebony, ivory, and wild animals. Egypt also traded with Anatolia for tin and copper in order to make bronze. Mediterranean trading partners provided olive oil and other fine goods.

Egypt commonly exported grain, gold, linen, papyrus, and finished goods, such as glass and stone objects.



**Depiction of Queen Hatshepsut's Expedition to Punt:** This painting shows Queen Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt.

## Land Trade Routes

A well-traveled land route from the Nile to the Red Sea crossed through the Wadi Hammamat, and was known from predynastic times. This route allowed travelers to move from Thebes to the Red Sea port of Elim, and led to the rise of ancient cities.

Another route, the Darb el-Arbain, was used from the time of the Old Kingdom of Egypt to trade gold, ivory, spices, wheat, animals, and plants. This route passed through Kharga in the south and Asyut in the north, and was a major route between Nubia and Egypt.

## Maritime Trade Routes

Egyptians built ships as early as 3000 BCE by lashing planks of wood together and stuffing the gaps with reeds.



***Egyptian Sailing Ship:*** This painting depicts an Egyptian ship from c. 1420 BCE.

Pharaoh Sahure, of the Fifth Dynasty, is known to have sent ships to Lebanon to import cedar, and to the Land of Punt for myrrh, malachite, and electrum. Queen Hatshepsut sent ships for myrrh in Punt, and extended Egyptian trade into modern-day Somalia and the Mediterranean.



**Queen Hatshepsut:** *Queen Hatshepsut expanded trade into modern-day Somalia and the Mediterranean.*

An ancient form of the Suez Canal is believed to have been started by Pharaoh Senusret II or III of the Twelfth Dynasty, in order to connect the Nile River with the Red Sea.

## Ancient Egyptian Culture

The Middle Kingdom was a golden age for ancient Egypt, when arts, religion, and literature flourished. Two major innovations of the time were block statues and new forms of literature.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Examine the artistic and social developments of the Middle Kingdom

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Middle Kingdom (2134-1690 BCE) was a time of prosperity and stability, as well as a resurgence of art, literature, and architecture. Block statue was a new type of sculpture invented in the Middle Kingdom, and was often used as a funerary monument.
- Literature had new uses during the Middle Kingdom, and many classics were written during the period.

### *Key Terms*

- **funerary monuments:** Sculpture meant to decorate a tomb within a pyramid.

The Middle Kingdom (2134-1690 BCE) was a time of prosperity and

stability, as well as a resurgence of art, literature, and architecture. Two major innovations of the time were the block statue and new forms of literature.

## The Block Statue

The block statue came into use during this period. This type of sculpture depicts a squatting man with knees drawn close to the chest and arms folded on top of the knees. The body may be adorned with a cloak, which makes the body appear to be a block shape. The feet may be covered by the cloak, or left uncovered. The head was often carved in great detail, and reflected Egyptian beauty ideals, including large ears and small breasts. The block statue became more popular over the years, with its high point in the Late Period, and was often used as funerary monuments of important, non-royal individuals. They may have been intended as guardians, and were often fully inscribed.





**Example of Block Statue:** An example of a block statue from the Late Period, c. 650-633 BCE.

## Literature

In the Middle Kingdom period, due to growth of middle class and scribes, literature began to be written to entertain and provide

intellectual stimulation. Previously, literature served the purposes of maintaining divine cults, preserving souls in the afterlife, and documenting practical activities. However, some Middle Kingdom literature may have been transcriptions of the oral literature and poetry of the Old Kingdom. Future generations of Egyptians often considered Middle Kingdom literature to be “classic,” with the ultimate example being the Story of Sinuhe.

# 19. Assignments

## Week 3

### Assignment

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

## 20. Primary Source Reading 1: Wenamen's Journey

### Primary Source Reading: Wenamen's Journey

This translation is by Egyptologist Miriam Lichtheim from *Ancient Egyptian Literature: The New Kingdom, Volume II*, pp. 224-229.

map of Wenamun's journey

Year 5, fourth month of summer, day 16, the day of departure of Wenamun, the Elder of the Portal of the Temple of Amun, Lord of Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands, to fetch timber for the great noble bark of Amen-Re, King of Gods, which is upon the river and [is called] Amen-user-he.

On the day of my arrival at Tanis, the place where Smendes and Tentamun are, I gave them the dispatches of Amen-Re, King of Gods. They had read them out before them and they said: "I will do, I will do as Amen-Re, King of Gods, our lord has said."

I stayed until the fourth month of summer in Tanis. Then Smendes and Tentamun sent me off with the ship's captain Mengebet, and I went down upon the great sea of Phoenicia in the first month summer, day 1. I arrived at Dor, a Tjeker town; and Beder, its prince, had fifty loaves, one jug of wine, and one ox-haunch brought to me. Then a man of my ship fled after stealing one vessel of gold worth 5 deben, four jars of silver worth 20 deben, and a bag with 11 deben of silver; [total of what he stole]: gold 5 deben, silver 31 deben.

That morning when I had risen, I went to where the prince was and said to him: "I have been robbed in your harbor. Now you are the prince of this land, you are the one who controls it. Search for my money! Indeed, the money belongs to Amen-Re, King of Gods,

the lord of the lands. It belongs to Smendes; it belongs to Herihor, my lord, and [to] the other magnates of Egypt. It belongs to you; it belongs to Weret; it belongs to Mekmer; it belongs to Tjekerbaal, the prince of Byblos!" He said to me: "Are you serious? Are you joking? Indeed, I do not understand the demand you make to me. If it had been a thief belonging to my land who had gone down to your ship and had stolen your money, I would replace it for you from my storehouse, until your thief, whatever his name, had been found. But the thief who robbed you, he is yours, he belongs to your ship. Spend a few days here with me; I will search for him."

I stayed nine days moored in his harbor. Then I went to him and said to him: "Look, you have not found my money. [Let me depart] with the ship captains, with those who go to sea."

*[The next eight lines are broken. Apparently, the prince advises Wenamun to wait some more, but Wenamun departs. He passes Tyre and approaches Byblos. Then he seizes thirty deben of silver from a ship he has encountered which belongs to the Tjeker, an obvious act of >piracy. He tells the owners that he will keep the money until his money has been found. Through this action he incurs the enmity of the Tjeker.]*

They departed and I celebrated [in] a tent on the shore of the sea in the harbor of Byblos. And [I made a hiding place for] Amun-of-the-Road and placed possessions in it. Then the prince of Byblos sent to me saying: "[Leave my] harbor!" I sent to him, saying: "Where shall [I go]? ----. If [you have a ship to carry me], let me be taken back to Egypt." I spent twenty-nine days in his harbor, and he spent time sending to me daily to say: "Leave my harbor!"

Now while he was offering to his gods, the god took hold of a young man [of] his young men and put him in a trance. He said to him: "Bring [the] god up! Bring the envoy who is carrying him! It is Amun who sent him. It is he who made him come!" Now it was while the entranced one was entranced that night that I had found a ship headed for Egypt. I had loaded all my belongings into it and was watching for the darkness, saying: "When it descends I will load the god so that no other eye shall see him."

Then the harbor master came to me, saying: "Wait until morning, says the prince!" I said to him: "Was it not you who daily took time to come to me, saying: 'Leave my harbor'? Do you now say: 'Wait this night,' in order to let the ship that I found depart, and then you will come to to say: 'Go away'?" He went and told it to the prince. Then the prince sent to the captain of the ship, saying: "Wait until morning, says the prince."

When morning came, he sent and brought me up, while the god rested in the tent where he was on the shore of the sea. I found him seated in his upper chamber with his back against a window, and the waves of the great sea of Phoenicia broke behind his head. I said to him: "Blessings of Amun!" He said to me: "How long is it to this day since you came from the place where Amun is?" I said to him: "Five whole months till now." He said to me: "If you are right, where is the dispatch of Amun that was in your hand? Where is the letter of the High Priest of Amun that was in your hand?" I said to him: "I gave them to Smendes and Tentamun." Then he became very angry and said to me: "Now then, dispatches, letters you have none. Where is the ship of pinewood that Smendes gave you? Where is its Phoenician crew? Did he not entrust you to this foreign ship's captain in order to have him kill you and have them throw you into the sea? From whom would one then seek the god? And you, from whom would one seek you?" So he said to me.

I said to him: "Is it not an Egyptian ship? Those who sail under Smendes are Egyptian crews. He has no Phoenician crews." He said to me: "Are there not twenty ships here in my harbor. that do business with Smendes? As for Sidon, that other [place] you passed, are there not another fifty ships there that do business with Werekter and haul to this house?"

I was silent in this great moment. Then he spoke to me, saying: "On what business have you come?" I said to him: "I have come in quest of timber for the great noble bark of Amen-Re, King of Gods. What your father did, what the father of your father did, you too will do it." So I said to him. He said to me: "True, they did it. If you pay me for doing it, I will do it. My relations carried out this business

after Pharaoh had sent six ships laden with the goods of Egypt, and they had been unloaded into their storehouses. You, what have you brought for me?"

He had the daybook of his forefathers brought and had it read before me. They found entered in his book a thousand deben of silver and all sorts of things. He said to me: "If the ruler of Egypt were the lord of what is mine and I were his servant, he would not have sent silver and gold to say: 'Carry out the business of Amun.' It was not a royal gift that they gave to my father! I too, I am not your servant, nor am I the servant of him who sent you! If I shout aloud to the Lebanon, the sky opens and the logs lie here on the shore of the sea! Give me the sails you brought to move your ships, loaded with logs for [Egypt]! Give me the ropes you brought [to lash the pines] that I am to fell in order to make them for you --, ----- that I am to make for you for the sails of your ships; or the yards may be too heavy and break, and you may die [in] the midst of the sea. For Amun makes thunder in the sky ever since he placed Seth beside him! Indeed, Amun has founded all the lands. He founded them after having first founded the land of Egypt from which you have come. Thus craftsmanship came from it in order to reach the place where I am! Thus learning came from it in order to reach the place where I am! What are these foolish travels they made you do?"

I said to him: "Wrong! These are not foolish travels that I am doing. There is no ship on the river that does not belong to Amun. His is the sea and his the Lebanon of which you say, 'It is mine.' It is a growing ground for Amen-user-he, the lord of every ship. Truly, it was Amen-Re, King of Gods, who said to Herihor, my master: 'Send me!' And he made me come with this great god. But look, you have let this great god spend these twenty-nine days moored in your harbor. Did you not know that he was here? Is he not he who he was? You are prepared to haggle over the Lebanon with Amun, its lord? As to your saying, the former kings sent silver and gold: If they had owned life and health, they would not have sent these things. It was in place of life and health that they sent these things to your fathers! But Amen-Re, King of Gods, he is the lord of life and health,

and he was the lord of your fathers! They passed their lifetimes offering to Amun. You too, you are the servant of Amun!

If you will say ‘I will do’ to Amun, and will carry out his business, you will live, you will prosper, you will be healthy; you will be beneficent to your whole land and your people. Do not desire what belongs to Amun-Re, King of Gods! Indeed, a lion loves his possessions! Have your scribe brought to me that I may send him to Smendes and Tentamun, the pillars Amun has set up for the north of his land; and they will send all that is needed. I will send him to them, saying ‘Have it brought until I return to the south; then I shall refund you all your expenses’”. So I said to him.

He placed my letter in the hand of his messenger; and he loaded the keel, the prow-piece, and the stern-piece, together with four other hewn logs, seven in all, and sent them to Egypt. His messenger who had gone to Egypt returned to me in Phoenicia in the first month of winter, Smendes and Tentamun having sent: four jars and one kakmen-vessel of gold; five jars of silver; ten garments of royal linen; ten hrd-garments of fine linen; five hundred smooth linen maats; five hundred ox-hides; five hundred ropes; twenty sacks of lentils; and thirty baskets of fish. And she sent to me: five garments of fine linen; five hrd-garments of fine linen; one sack of lentils; and five baskets of fish.

The prince rejoiced. He assigned three hundred men and three hundred oxen, and he set supervisors over them to have them fell the timbers. They were felled and they lay there during the winter. In the third month of summer they dragged them to the shore of the sea. The prince came out and stood by them, and he sent to me saying: “Come!” Now when I had been brought into his presence, the shadow of his sunshade fell on me. Then Penamun, a butler of his, intervened, saying “The shadow of Pharaoh, your lord, has fallen upon you.” And he was angry with him and said: “Leave him alone.”

As I stood before him, he addressed me, saying: “Look, the business my fathers did in the past, I have done it, although you did not do for me what your fathers did for mine. Look, the last of your timber has arrived and is ready. Do as I wish, and come to load it.



For has it not been given to you? Do not come to look at the terror of the sea. For if you look at the terror of the sea, you will see my own! Indeed, I have not done to you what was done to the envoys of Khaemwese, after they had spent seventeen years in this land. They died on the spot.” And he said to his butler: “Take him to see the tomb where they lie.”

I said to him: “Do not make me see it. As for Khaemwese, the envoys he sent you were men and he himself was a man. You have not here one of his envoys, though you say: ‘Go and see your companions.’ Should you not rejoice and have a Stella [made] for yourself, and say on it: ‘Amen-Re, King of Gods sent me Amun-of-the-Road, his envoy, together with Wenamun, his human envoy, in quest of timber for the great noble bark of Amen-Re, King of Gods. I felled it; I loaded it; I supplied my ships and my crews. I let them reach Egypt so as to beg for me from Amun fifty years of life over and above my allotted fate.’ And if it comes to pass that in another day an envoy comes from the land of Egypt who knows writing and he reads out your name on the Stella, you will receive water of the west like the gods who are there.”

He said to me: “A great speech of admonition is what you have said to me.” I said to him: “As to the many [things] you have said to me: if I reach the place where the High Priest of Amun is and he sees your accomplishment, it is your accomplishment that will draw profit to you.”

I went off to the shore of the sea, to where the logs were lying. And I saw eleven ships that had come in from the sea and belonged to the Tjeker [who were] saying: “Arrest him! Let no ship of his leave for the land of Egypt!” Then I sat down and wept. And the secretary of the prince came out to me and said to me: “What is it?” I said to him: “Do you not see the migrant birds going down to Egypt a second time? Look at them traveling to the cool water! Until when shall I be left here? For do you not see those who have come to arrest me?”

He went and told it to the prince. And the prince began to weep on account of the words said to him, for they were painful. He sent

his secretary out to me, bringing two jugs of wine and a sheep. And he sent me Tentne, an Egyptian songstress who was with him, saying: "Sing for him! Do not let his heart be anxious." And he sent to me, saying: "Eat, drink; do not let your heart be anxious. You shall hear what I will say tomorrow."

When morning came, he had his assembly summoned. He stood in their midst and said to the Tjeker: "What have you come for?" They said to him: "We have come after the blasted ships that you are sending to Egypt with our enemy." He said to them: "I cannot arrest the envoy of Amun in my country. Let me send him off, and you go after him to arrest him."

He had me board and sent off from the harbor of the sea. And the wind drove me to the land of Alasiya. Then the town's people came out against me to kill me. But I forced my way through them to where Hatiba, the princess of the town was. I met her coming from one of her houses to enter another. I saluted her and said to the people who stood around her: "Is there not one among you who understands Egyptian?" And one among them said: "I understand it." I said to him: "Tell my lady that I have heard it said as far away as Thebes, the place where Amun is: 'If wrong is done in every town, in the land of Alasiya right is done.' Now is wrong done here too every day?"

She said: "What is it you have said?" I said to her: "If the sea rages and the wind drives me to the land where you are, will you let me be received so as to kill me, though I am the envoy of Amun? Look, as for me, they would search for me till the end of time. As for this crew of the prince of Byblos, whom they seek to kill, will not their lord find ten crews of yours and kill them also?" She had the people summoned and they were reprimanded. She said to me: "Spend the night....."

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PART V

# WEEK 4: ANCIENT GREECE AND THE INDUS RIVER VALLEY



# 2I. Introduction

## Week 4

### Introduction

The Death of Epaminondas, a painting by Isaac Walraven

Ancient Greece was a civilization belonging to a period of Greek history from the Greek Dark Ages of the 12th–9th centuries BC to the end of antiquity (c. 600 AD). Immediately following this period was the beginning of the Early Middle Ages and the Byzantine era.[1] Roughly three centuries after the Late Bronze Age collapse of Mycenaean Greece, Greek urban polis began to form in the 8th century BC, ushering in the period of Archaic Greece and colonization of the Mediterranean Basin. This was followed by the period of Classical Greece, an era that began with the Greco-Persian Wars, lasting from the 5th to 4th centuries BC. Due to the conquests by Alexander the Great of Macedonia, Hellenistic civilization flourished from Central Asia to the western end of the Mediterranean Sea. The Hellenistic period came to an end with the conquests and annexations of the eastern Mediterranean world by the Roman Republic, which established the Roman province of Macedonia in Roman Greece, and later the province of Achaea during the Roman Empire.

Paleolithic sites have been discovered in Pothohar near Pakistan's capital Islamabad, with the stone tools of the Soan Culture. In ancient Gandhara, near Islamabad, evidence of cave dwellers dated 15,000 years ago has been discovered at Mardan.

map

## 22. Reading: The Indus River Valley Civilizations

### The Indus River Valley Civilization

The Indus River Valley Civilization, located in modern Pakistan, was one of the world's three earliest widespread societies.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify the importance of the discovery of the Indus River Valley Civilization

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- The Indus Valley Civilization (also known as the Harappan Civilization) was a Bronze Age society extending from modern northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India.
- The civilization developed in three phases: Early

Harappan Phase (3300 BCE-2600 BCE), Mature Harappan Phase (2600 BCE-1900 BCE), and Late Harappan Phase (1900 BCE-1300 BCE).

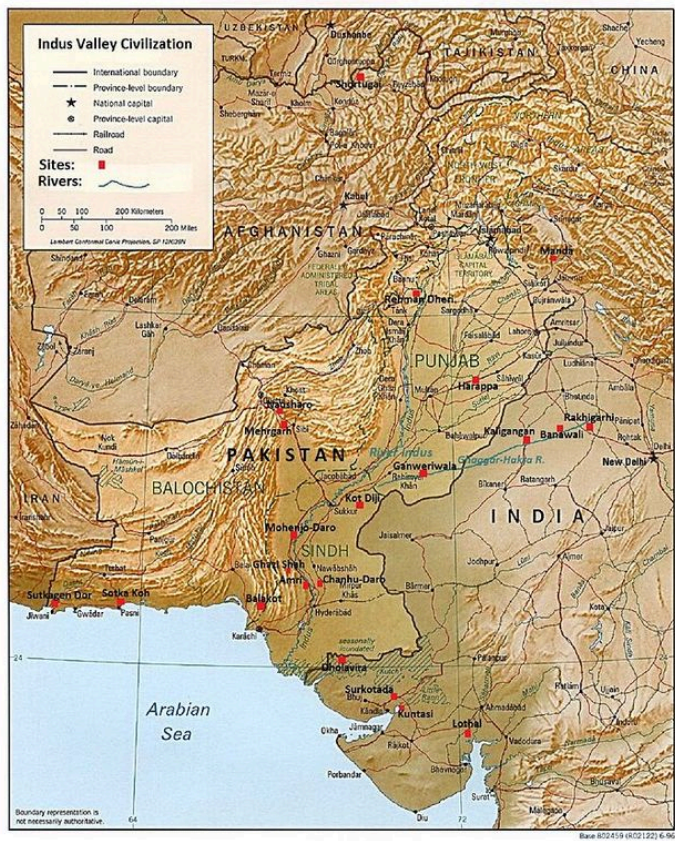
- Inhabitants of the ancient Indus River valley developed new techniques in handicraft, including Carnelian products and seal carving, and metallurgy with copper, bronze, lead, and tin.
- Sir John Hubert Marshall led an excavation campaign in 1921-1922, during which he discovered the ruins of the city of Harappa. By 1931, the Mohenjo-daro site had been mostly excavated by Marshall and Sir Mortimer Wheeler. By 1999, over 1,056 cities and settlements of the Indus Civilization were located.

### *Key Terms*

- **seal:** An emblem used as a means of authentication. Seal can refer to an impression in paper, wax, clay, or other medium. It can also refer to the device used.
- **metallurgy:** The scientific and mechanical technique of working with bronze, copper, and tin.

The Indus Valley Civilization existed through its early years of 3300-1300 BCE, and its mature period of 2600-1900 BCE. The area of this civilization extended along the Indus River from what today is northeast Afghanistan, into Pakistan and northwest India. The Indus Civilization was the most widespread of the three early civilizations of the ancient world, along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were thought to be the two great cities

of the Indus Valley Civilization, emerging around 2600 BCE along the Indus River Valley in the Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Their discovery and excavation in the 19th and 20th centuries provided important archaeological data about ancient cultures.



**Map of the Indus Valley Civilization:** The major sites of the Indus Valley Civilization.



# Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley Civilization was one of the three “Ancient East” societies that are considered to be the cradles of civilization of the old world of man, and are among the most widespread; the other two “Ancient East” societies are Mesopotamia and Pharonic Egypt. The lifespan of the Indus Valley Civilization is often separated into three phases: Early Harappan Phase (3300-2600 BCE), Mature Harappan Phase (2600-1900 BCE) and Late Harappan Phase (1900-1300 BCE).

At its peak, the Indus Valley Civilization may have had a population of over five million people. It is considered a Bronze Age society, and inhabitants of the ancient Indus River Valley developed new techniques in metallurgy—the science of working with copper, bronze, lead, and tin. They also performed intricate handicraft, especially using products made of the semi-precious gemstone Carnelian, as well as seal carving—the cutting of patterns into the bottom face of a seal used for stamping. The Indus cities are noted for their urban planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, and clusters of large, non-residential buildings.

The Indus Valley Civilization is also known as the Harappan Civilization, after Harappa, the first of its sites to be excavated in the 1920s, in what was then the Punjab province of British India and is now in Pakistan. The discoveries of Harappa, and the site of its fellow Indus city Mohenjo-daro, were the culmination of work beginning in 1861 with the founding of the Archaeological Survey of India in the British Raj, the common name for British imperial rule over the Indian subcontinent from 1858 through 1947.

## Harappa and Mohenjo-daro

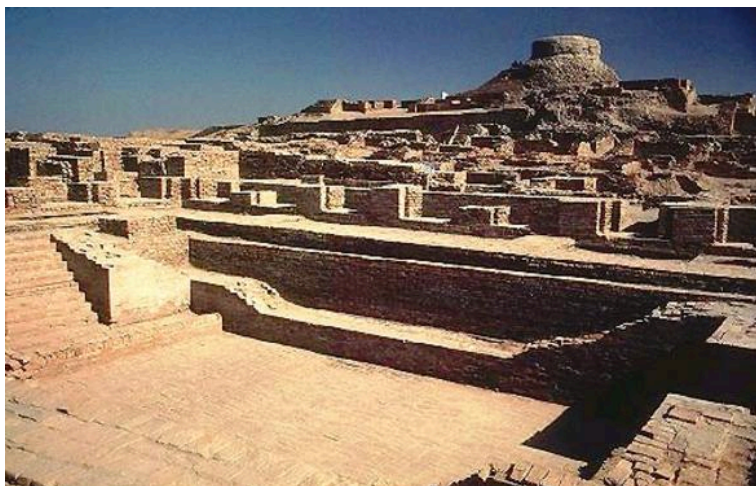
Harappa was a fortified city in modern-day Pakistan that is believed to have been home to as many as 23,500 residents living in sculpted houses with flat roofs made of red sand and clay. The city spread over 150 hectares (370 acres) and had fortified administrative and religious centers of the same type used in Mohenjo-daro. The modern village of Harappa, used as a railway station during the Raj, is six kilometers (3.7 miles) from the ancient city site, which suffered heavy damage during the British period of rule.

Mohenjo-daro is thought to have been built in the 26th century BCE and became not only the largest city of the Indus Valley Civilization but one of the world's earliest, major urban centers. Located west of the Indus River in the Larkana District, Mohenjo-daro was one of the most sophisticated cities of the period, with sophisticated engineering and urban planning. Cock-fighting was thought to have religious and ritual significance, with domesticated chickens bred for religion rather than food (although the city may have been a point of origin for the worldwide domestication of chickens). Mohenjo-daro was abandoned around 1900 BCE when the Indus Civilization went into sudden decline.

The ruins of Harappa were first described in 1842 by Charles Masson in his book, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab, & Kalât*. In 1856, British engineers John and William Brunton were laying the East Indian Railway Company line connecting the cities of Karachi and Lahore, when their crew discovered hard, well-burnt bricks in the area and used them for ballast for the railroad track, unwittingly dismantling the ruins of the ancient city of Brahminabad.

## Excavations

In 1912, John Faithfull Fleet, an English civil servant working with the Indian Civil Services, discovered several Harappan seals. This prompted an excavation campaign from 1921-1922 by Sir John Hubert Marshall, Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, which resulted in the discovery of Harappa. By 1931, much of Mohenjo-Daro had been excavated, while the next director of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, led additional excavations.



**Excavated Ruins of Mohenjo-daro:** The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro, a city in the Indus River Valley Civilization.

The Partition of India, in 1947, divided the country to create the new nation of Pakistan. The bulk of the archaeological finds that followed were inherited by Pakistan. By 1999, over 1,056 cities and settlements had been found, of which 96 have been excavated.

# Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus River Valley Civilization (IVC) contained urban centers with well-conceived and organized infrastructure, architecture, and systems of governance.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the significance of the urban centers in the IVC

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

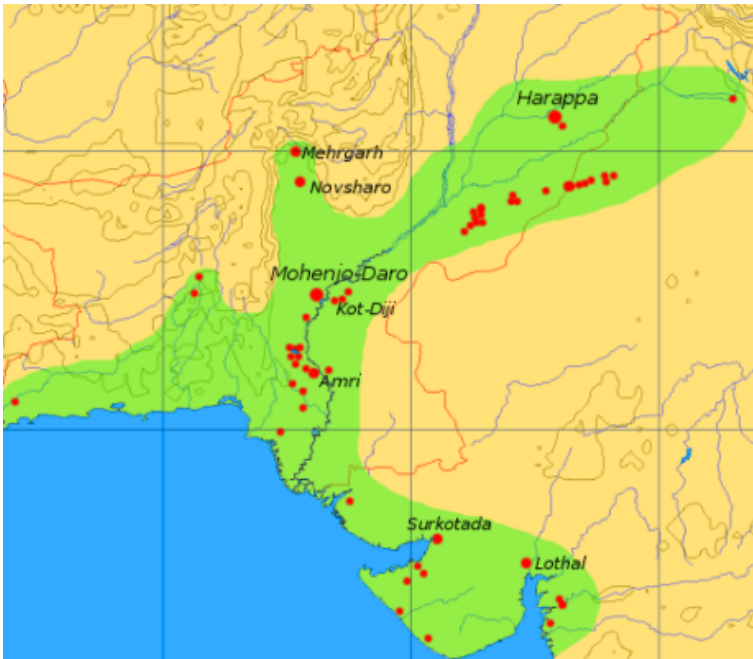
### *Key Points*

- The Indus Valley Civilization contained more than 1,000 cities and settlements.
- These cities contained well-organized wastewater drainage systems, trash collection systems, and possibly even public granaries and baths.
- Although there were large walls and citadels, there is no evidence of monuments, palaces, or temples.
- The uniformity of Harappan artifacts suggests some form of authority and governance to regulate seals, weights, and bricks.

### *Key Terms*

- **granaries:** A storehouse or room in a barn for threshed grain or animal feed.
- **citadels:** A central area in a city that is heavily fortified.
- **Harappa and Mohenjo-daro:** Two of the major cities of the Indus Valley Civilization during the Bronze Age.
- **urban planning:** A technical and political process concerned with the use of land and design of the urban environment that guides and ensures the orderly development of settlements and communities.

By 2600 BCE, the small Early Harappan communities had become large urban centers. These cities include Harappa, Ganeriwala, and Mohenjo-daro in modern-day Pakistan, and Dholavira, Kalibangan, Rakhigarhi, Rupar, and Lothal in modern-day India. In total, more than 1,052 cities and settlements have been found, mainly in the general region of the Indus River and its tributaries. The population of the Indus Valley Civilization may have once been as large as five million.



**Indus Valley Civilization Sites:** This map shows a cluster of Indus Valley Civilization cities and excavation sites along the course of the Indus River in Pakistan.

The remains of the Indus Valley Civilization cities indicate remarkable organization; there were well-ordered wastewater drainage and trash collection systems, and possibly even public granaries and baths. Most city-dwellers were artisans and merchants grouped together in distinct neighborhoods. The quality of urban planning suggests efficient municipal governments that placed a high priority on hygiene or religious ritual.

## Infrastructure

Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, and the recently, partially-excavated Rakhigarhi demonstrate the world's first known urban sanitation systems. The ancient Indus systems of sewerage and drainage developed and used in cities throughout the Indus region were far more advanced than any found in contemporary urban sites in the Middle East, and even more efficient than those in many areas of Pakistan and India today. Individual homes drew water from wells, while waste water was directed to covered drains on the main streets. Houses opened only to inner courtyards and smaller lanes, and even the smallest homes on the city outskirts were believed to have been connected to the system, further supporting the conclusion that cleanliness was a matter of great importance.

## Architecture

Harappans demonstrated advanced architecture with dockyards, granaries, warehouses, brick platforms, and protective walls. These massive walls likely protected the Harappans from floods and may have dissuaded military conflicts. Unlike Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, the inhabitants of the Indus Valley Civilization did not build large, monumental structures. There is no conclusive evidence of palaces or temples (or even of kings, armies, or priests), and the largest structures may be granaries. The city of Mohenjo-daro contains the "Great Bath," which may have been a large, public bathing and social area.



**Sokhta Koh:** Sokhta Koh, a Harappan coastal settlement near Pasni, Pakistan, is depicted in a computer reconstruction. Sokhta Koh means “burnt hill,” and corresponds to the browned-out earth due to extensive firing of pottery in open pit ovens.

## Authority and Governance

Archaeological records provide no immediate answers regarding a center of authority, or depictions of people in power in Harappan society. The extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artifacts is evident in pottery, seals, weights, and bricks with standardized sizes and weights, suggesting some form of authority and governance.

Over time, three major theories have developed concerning Harappan governance or system of rule. The first is that there was a single state encompassing all the communities of the civilization, given the similarity in artifacts, the evidence of planned settlements, the standardized ratio of brick size, and the apparent establishment of settlements near sources of raw material. The



second theory posits that there was no single ruler, but a number of them representing each of the urban centers, including Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and other communities. Finally, experts have theorized that the Indus Valley Civilization had no rulers as we understand them, with everyone enjoying equal status.

## Harappan Culture

The Indus River Valley Civilization, also known as Harappan, included its own advanced technology, economy, and culture.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify how artifacts and ruins provided insight into the IRV's technology, economy, and culture

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Indus River Valley Civilization, also known as Harappan civilization, developed the first accurate system of standardized weights and measures, some as accurate as to 1.6 mm.

- Harappans created sculpture, seals, pottery, and jewelry from materials, such as terracotta, metal, and stone.
- Evidence shows Harappans participated in a vast maritime trade network extending from Central Asia to modern-day Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and Syria.
- The Indus Script remains indecipherable without any comparable symbols, and is thought to have evolved independently of the writing in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.

### *Key Terms*

- **steatite:** Also known as Soapstone, steatite is a talc-schist, which is a type of metamorphic rock. It is very soft and has been a medium for carving for thousands of years.
- **Indus Script:** Symbols produced by the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.
- **chalcolithic period:** A period also known as the Copper Age, which lasted from 4300–3200 BCE.

The Indus Valley Civilization is the earliest known culture of the Indian subcontinent of the kind now called “urban” (or centered on large municipalities), and the largest of the four ancient civilizations, which also included Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China. The society of the Indus River Valley has been dated from the Bronze Age, the time period from approximately 3300–1300 BCE. It was located in

modern-day India and Pakistan, and covered an area as large as Western Europe.

Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were the two great cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, emerging around 2600 BCE along the Indus River Valley in the Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Their discovery and excavation in the 19th and 20th centuries provided important archaeological data regarding the civilization's technology, art, trade, transportation, writing, and religion.

## Technology

The people of the Indus Valley, also known as Harappan (Harappa was the first city in the region found by archaeologists), achieved many notable advances in technology, including great accuracy in their systems and tools for measuring length and mass.

Harappans were among the first to develop a system of uniform weights and measures that conformed to a successive scale. The smallest division, approximately 1.6 mm, was marked on an ivory scale found in Lothal, a prominent Indus Valley city in the modern Indian state of Gujarat. It stands as the smallest division ever recorded on a Bronze Age scale. Another indication of an advanced measurement system is the fact that the bricks used to build Indus cities were uniform in size.

Harappans demonstrated advanced architecture with dockyards, granaries, warehouses, brick platforms, and protective walls. The ancient Indus systems of sewerage and drainage developed and used in cities throughout the region were far more advanced than any found in contemporary urban sites in the Middle East, and even more efficient than those in many areas of Pakistan and India today.

Harappans were thought to have been proficient in seal carving, the cutting of patterns into the bottom face of a seal, and used distinctive seals for the identification of property and to stamp clay on trade goods. Seals have been one of the most commonly

discovered artifacts in Indus Valley cities, decorated with animal figures, such as elephants, tigers, and water buffalos.

Harappans also developed new techniques in metallurgy—the science of working with copper, bronze, lead, and tin—and performed intricate handicraft using products made of the semi-precious gemstone, Carnelian.

## Art

Indus Valley excavation sites have revealed a number of distinct examples of the culture's art, including sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewelry, and anatomically detailed figurines in terracotta, bronze, and steatite—more commonly known as Soapstone.

Among the various gold, terracotta, and stone figurines found, a figure of a “Priest-King” displayed a beard and patterned robe. Another figurine in bronze, known as the “Dancing Girl,” is only 11 cm. high and shows a female figure in a pose that suggests the presence of some choreographed dance form enjoyed by members of the civilization. Terracotta works also included cows, bears, monkeys, and dogs. In addition to figurines, the Indus River Valley people are believed to have created necklaces, bangles, and other ornaments.



**Miniature Votive Images or Toy Models from Harappa, c. 2500 BCE:** *The Indus River Valley Civilization created figurines from terracotta, as well as bronze and steatite. It is still unknown whether these figurines have religious significance.*

## Trade and Transportation

The civilization's economy appears to have depended significantly on trade, which was facilitated by major advances in transport technology. The Harappan Civilization may have been the first to use wheeled transport, in the form of bullock carts that are identical to those seen throughout South Asia today. It also appears they built boats and watercraft—a claim supported by archaeological discoveries of a massive, dredged canal, and what is regarded as a docking facility at the coastal city of Lothal.



**The docks and canal in the ancient city of Lothal, located in modern India:** Archaeological evidence suggests that the Indus River Valley Civilization constructed boats and may have participated in an extensive maritime trade network.

Trade focused on importing raw materials to be used in Harappan city workshops, including minerals from Iran and Afghanistan, lead and copper from other parts of India, jade from China, and cedar wood floated down rivers from the Himalayas and Kashmir. Other trade goods included terracotta pots, gold, silver, metals, beads, flints for making tools, seashells, pearls, and colored gem stones, such as lapis lazuli and turquoise.

There was an extensive maritime trade network operating between the Harappan and Mesopotamian civilizations. Harappan seals and jewelry have been found at archaeological sites in regions of Mesopotamia, which includes most of modern-day Iraq, Kuwait, and parts of Syria. Long-distance sea trade over bodies of water, such as the Arabian Sea, Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, may have become feasible with the development of plank watercraft that was equipped with a single central mast supporting a sail of woven rushes or cloth.

During 4300-3200 BCE of the Chalcolithic period, also known as the Copper Age, the Indus Valley Civilization area shows ceramic similarities with

southern Turkmenistan and northern Iran. During the Early Harappan period (about 3200-2600 BCE), cultural similarities in pottery, seals, figurines, and ornaments document caravan trade with Central Asia and the Iranian plateau.

## Writing

Harappans are believed to have used Indus Script, a language consisting of symbols. A collection of written texts on clay and stone tablets unearthed at Harappa, which have been carbon dated 3300-3200 BCE, contain trident-shaped, plant-like markings. This Indus Script suggests that writing developed independently in the Indus River Valley Civilization from the script employed in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.



**Indus Script:** These ten Indus Script symbols were found on a “sign board” in the ancient city of Dholavira.

As many as 600 distinct Indus symbols have been found on seals, small tablets, ceramic pots, and more than a dozen other materials. Typical Indus inscriptions are no more than four or five characters in length, most of which are very small. The longest on a single

surface, which is less than 1 inch (or 2.54 cm.) square, is 17 signs long. The characters are largely pictorial, but include many abstract signs that do not appear to have changed over time.

The inscriptions are thought to have been primarily written from right to left, but it is unclear whether this script constitutes a complete language. Without a “Rosetta Stone” to use as a comparison with other writing systems, the symbols have remained indecipherable to linguists and archaeologists.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online*

*here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=42>*

**A Rosetta Stone for the Indus script, lecture by Rajesh Rao:** Rajesh Rao is fascinated by “the mother of all crossword puzzles,” how to decipher the 4,000-year-old Indus script. At TED 2011, he explained how he was enlisting modern computational techniques to read the Indus language. View full lesson: <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-rosetta-stone-for-the-indus-script-rajesh-rao>

## Religion

The Harappan religion remains a topic of speculation. It has been widely suggested that the Harappans worshipped a mother goddess who symbolized fertility. In contrast to Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization seems to have lacked any temples or palaces that would give clear evidence of religious rites or specific deities. Some Indus Valley seals show a swastika symbol,



which was included in later Indian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Many Indus Valley seals also include the forms of animals, with some depicting them being carried in processions, while others showing chimeric creations, leading scholars to speculate about the role of animals in Indus Valley religions. One seal from Mohenjo-daro shows a half-human, half-buffalo monster attacking a tiger. This may be a reference to the Sumerian myth of a monster created by Aruru, the Sumerian earth and fertility goddess, to fight Gilgamesh, the hero of an ancient Mesopotamian epic poem. This is a further suggestion of international trade in Harappan culture.



**The “Shiva Pashupati” seal:** This seal was excavated in Mohenjo-daro and depicts a seated and possibly ithyphallic figure, surrounded by animals.

# Disappearance of the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley Civilization declined around 1800 BCE due to climate change and migration.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the causes for the disappearance of the Indus Valley Civilization

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- One theory suggested that a nomadic, Indo-European tribe, called the Aryans, invaded and conquered the Indus Valley Civilization.
- Many scholars now believe the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization was caused by climate change.
- The eastward shift of monsoons may have reduced the water supply, forcing the Harappans of the Indus River Valley to migrate and establish smaller villages and isolated farms.

- These small communities could not produce the agricultural surpluses needed to support cities, which were then abandoned.

### *Key Terms*

- **Indo-Aryan Migration theory:** A theory suggesting the Harappan culture of the Indus River Valley was assimilated during a migration of the Aryan people into northwest India.
- **monsoon:** Seasonal changes in atmospheric circulation and precipitation; usually winds that bring heavy rain once a year.
- **Aryans:** A nomadic, Indo-European tribe called the Aryans suddenly overwhelmed and conquered the Indus Valley Civilization.

The great Indus Valley Civilization, located in modern-day India and Pakistan, began to decline around 1800 BCE. The civilization eventually disappeared along with its two great cities, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Harappa lends its name to the Indus Valley people because it was the civilization's first city to be discovered by modern archaeologists.

Archaeological evidence indicates that trade with Mesopotamia, located largely in modern Iraq, seemed to have ended. The advanced drainage system and baths of the great cities were built over or blocked. Writing began to disappear and the standardized weights and measures used for trade and taxation fell out of use.

Scholars have put forth differing theories to explain the

disappearance of the Harappans, including an Aryan Invasion and climate change marked by overwhelming monsoons.

## The Aryan Invasion Theory (c. 1800-1500 BC)

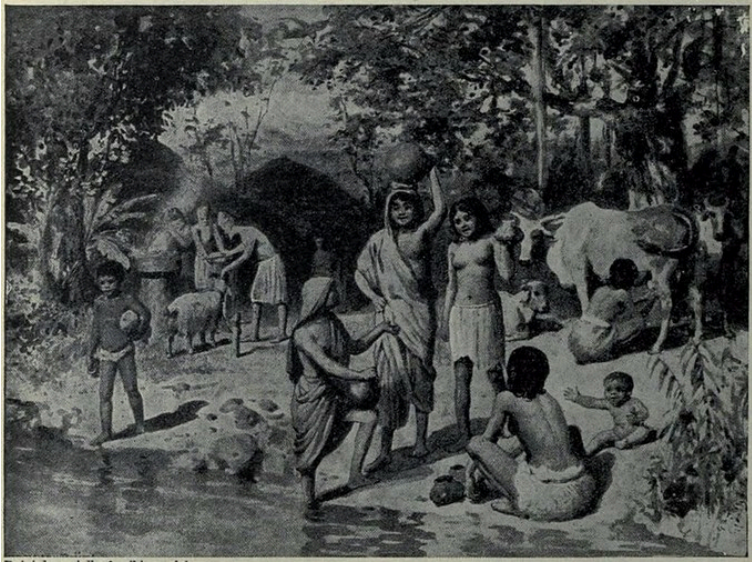
The Indus Valley Civilization may have met its demise due to invasion. According to one theory by British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler, a nomadic, Indo-European tribe, called the Aryans, suddenly overwhelmed and conquered the Indus River Valley.

Wheeler, who was Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1944 to 1948, posited that many unburied corpses found in the top levels of the Mohenjo-daro archaeological site were victims of war. The theory suggested that by using horses and more advanced weapons against the peaceful Harappan people, the Aryans may have easily defeated them.

Yet shortly after Wheeler proposed his theory, other scholars dismissed it by explaining that the skeletons were not victims of invasion massacres, but rather the remains of hasty burials. Wheeler himself eventually admitted that the theory could not be proven and the skeletons indicated only a final phase of human occupation, with the decay of the city structures likely a result of it becoming uninhabited.

Later opponents of the invasion theory went so far as to state that adherents to the idea put forth in the 1940s were subtly justifying the British government's policy of intrusion into, and subsequent colonial rule over, India.

Various elements of the Indus Civilization are found in later cultures, suggesting the civilization did not disappear suddenly due to an invasion. Many scholars came to believe in an Indo-Aryan Migration theory stating that the Harappan culture was assimilated during a migration of the Aryan people into northwest India.



**Aryans in India:** An early 20th-century depiction of Aryan people settling in agricultural villages in India.

## The Climate Change Theory (c. 1800-1500 BC)

Other scholarship suggests the collapse of Harappan society resulted from climate change. Some experts believe the drying of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BCE, was the main cause for climate change, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area.

Any major environmental change, such as deforestation, flooding or droughts due to a river changing course, could have had disastrous effects on Harappan society, such as crop failures, starvation, and disease. Skeletal evidence suggests many people died from malaria, which is most often spread by mosquitoes. This

also would have caused a breakdown in the economy and civic order within the urban areas.

Another disastrous change in the Harappan climate might have been eastward-moving monsoons, or winds that bring heavy rains. Monsoons can be both helpful and detrimental to a climate, depending on whether they support or destroy vegetation and agriculture. The monsoons that came to the Indus River Valley aided the growth of agricultural surpluses, which supported the development of cities, such as Harappa. The population came to rely on seasonal monsoons rather than irrigation, and as the monsoons shifted eastward, the water supply would have dried up.



**Ruins of the city of Lothal:** Archaeological evidence shows that the site, which had been a major city before the downfall of the Indus Valley Civilization, continued to be inhabited by a much smaller population after the collapse. The few people who remained in Lothal did not repair the city, but lived in poorly-built houses and reed huts instead.

By 1800 BCE, the Indus Valley climate grew cooler and drier, and a tectonic event may have diverted the Ghaggar Hakra river system toward the Ganges Plain. The Harappans may have migrated toward

the Ganges basin in the east, where they established villages and isolated farms.

These small communities could not produce the same agricultural surpluses to support large cities. With the reduced production of goods, there was a decline in trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia. By around 1700 BCE, most of the Indus Valley Civilization cities had been abandoned.

# 23. Reading: Early Periods in Greek History

## Greek Dark Ages

The Greek Dark Ages were ushered in by a period of violence, and characterized by the disruption of Greek cultural progress.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the characteristics of the Greek Dark Ages

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Late Bronze Age collapse, also known as the Age of Calamities, was a transition in the Aegean Region, Eastern Mediterranean, and Southwestern Asia. It took place from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Historians believe this period was violent, sudden, and culturally disruptive.



- Many historians attribute the fall of the Mycenaeans, and overall Bronze Age collapse, to climatic or environmental catastrophe combined with an invasion by the Dorians (or Sea Peoples).
- During the Dark Ages, Greece was most likely divided into independent regions according to kinship groups, and the *oikoi*, or households.
- Toward the end of the Greek Dark Ages, communities began to develop that were governed by elite groups of aristocrats, as opposed to singular kings or chieftains of earlier periods. Additionally, trade with other communities in the Mediterranean and the Levant began to strengthen, based upon findings from archaeological sites.

### *Key Terms*

- **oikoi:** The basic unit of society in most Greek city-states. In some usage, it refers to the line of descent from a father to a son throughout generations. Alternatively, it can refer to everybody living in a given house.
- **Linear B:** Syllabic script that was used for writing Mycenaean Greek, the earliest documented form of the Greek language.
- **palace economy:** A system of economic organization in which a substantial share of wealth flows into the control of a centralized administration (i.e., the palace), and then outward to the general population.

## Age of Calamities

The Late Bronze Age collapse, or Age of Calamities, was a transition in the Aegean Region, Eastern Mediterranean, and Southwestern Asia that took place from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Historians believe this period was violent, sudden, and culturally disruptive. The palace economy of the Aegean Region that had characterized the Late Bronze Age, was replaced, after a hiatus, by the isolated village cultures of the Greek Dark Ages— a period that lasted for more than 400 years. Cities like Athens continued to be occupied, but with a more local sphere of influence, limited evidence of trade, and an impoverished culture, which took centuries to recover.

## Fall of the Mycenaeans

Many historians attribute the fall of the Mycenaeans, and overall Bronze Age collapse, to climatic or environmental catastrophe, combined with an invasion by the Dorians or Sea Peoples—a group of people who possibly originated from different parts of the Mediterranean like the Black Sea, though their origins remain obscure. Historians also point to the widespread availability of edged iron weapons as an exasperating factor. Despite this, no single explanation fits all available archaeological evidence in explaining the fall of the Mycenaean culture.

Many large-scale revolts took place in several parts of the eastern Mediterranean during this time, and attempts to overthrow existing kingdoms were made as a result of economic and political instability by peoples already plagued with famine and hardship. Some regions in Greece, such as Attica, Euboea, and central Crete, recovered economically quicker from these events than other regions, but life for the poorest Greeks would have remained relatively unchanged.

Farming, weaving, metalworking, and potting continued at lower levels of output and for local use. Some technical innovations were introduced around 1050 BCE with the start of the Proto-geometric style. However, the overall trend was toward simpler, less intricate pieces with fewer resources being devoted to the creation of art.

None of the Mycenaean palaces of the Late Bronze Age survived, with the possible exception of the Cyclopean fortifications on the Acropolis of Athens. The archaeological record shows that destruction was heaviest at palaces and fortified sites. Up to 90% of small sites in the Peloponnese were abandoned, suggesting major depopulation. The Linear B writing of the Greek language used by Mycenaean bureaucrats ceased, and decorations on Greek pottery after about 1100 BCE lacks the figurative decoration of the Mycenaeans, and was restricted to simpler geometric styles.

## Society During the Greek Dark Ages

Greece was most likely divided into independent regions according to kinship groups and the *oikoi*, or households. Excavations of Dark Age communities, such as Nichoria in the Peloponnese, have shown how a Bronze Age town was abandoned in 1150 BCE, but then reemerged as a small village cluster by 1075 BCE. Archaeological evidence suggests that only 40 families lived in Nichoria and that there was abundant farming and grazing land. Some remains appear to have been the living quarters of a chieftain. High status individuals did exist during the Dark Ages; however, their standards of living were not significantly higher than others in their village.

By the mid- to late 8th century BCE, a new alphabet system was adopted by the Greek, and borrowed from the Phoenician writing system. This writing system introduced characters for vowel sounds, creating the first truly alphabetic (as opposed to abjad) writing system. The new system of writing spread throughout the

Mediterranean, and was used not only to write in Greek, but also Phrygian and other languages.

It was previously believed that all contact had been lost between mainland Hellenes and foreign powers during this period; however, artifacts from excavations at Lefkandi in Euboea show that significant cultural and trade links with the east, especially the Levant coast, developed from approximately 900 BCE onward. Evidence has also emerged of a Hellenic presence in sub-Mycenaean Cyprus, and on the Syrian coast at Al Mina. The archaeological record of many sites demonstrates that the economic recovery of Greece was well advanced by the beginning of the 8th century BCE. Many burial sites contained offerings from the Near East, Egypt, and Italy. The decoration of pottery also became more elaborate, featuring figured scenes that parallel the stories of Homeric tradition. Iron tools and weapons also became better in quality, and communities began to develop that were governed by elite groups of aristocrats, as opposed to singular kings or chieftains of earlier periods.

## Archaic Greece

The Archaic Period saw the increasing urbanization of Greek communities, and the development of the concept of the *polis*.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the changes to Greek society during the Archaic Period

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Archaic period saw significant urbanization, and the development of the concept of the *polis*, as it was used in classical Greece.
- Archaic Greece, from the mid-seventh century onward, has been referred to as an “age of tyrants.”
- The Homeric Question concerns the doubts and consequent debate over the historicity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as the identity of their author, Homer.

### *Key Terms*

- **synoecism:** The amalgamation of several small settlements into a single urban center.
- **polis:** The literal translation of this word from Greek is “city.” It typically refers to the Greek city-states of the Archaic and Classical periods.

## Archaic Greece

The Archaic period of Greek history lasted from the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE to the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE. The

period began with a massive increase in the Greek population and a structural revolution that established the Greek city-states, or *polis*. The Archaic period saw developments in Greek politics, economics, international relations, warfare, and culture. It also laid the groundwork for the classical period, both politically and culturally. During this time, the Greek alphabet developed, and the earliest surviving Greek literature was composed. Monumental sculpture and red-figure pottery also developed in Greece, and in Athens, the earliest institutions of democracy were implemented.

Some written accounts of life exist from this time period in the form of poetry, law codes, inscriptions on votive offerings, and epigrams inscribed on tombs. However, thorough written histories, such as those that exist from the Greek classical period, are lacking. Historians do have access to rich archaeological evidence from this period, however, that informs our understanding of Greek life during the Archaic period.



**View from Philopappos, Acropolis Hill:** The Acropolis of Athens, a noted *polis* of classical Greece.

## Development of the *Polis*

The Archaic period saw significant urbanization and the development of the concept of the *polis* as it was used in classical Greece. However, the *polis* did not become the dominant form of sociopolitical organization throughout Greece during the Archaic period, and in the north and west of the country it did not become dominant until later in the classical period. The process of urbanization known as “synoecism” (or the amalgamation of several small settlements into a single urban center), took place in much of Greece during the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Both Athens and Argos, for example, coalesced into single settlements near the end of that century. In some settlements, physical unification was marked by the construction of defensive city walls. The increase in population, and evolution of the *polis* as a sociopolitical structure, necessitated a new form of political organization.

## Age of Tyranny

Archaic Greece from the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century onward has been referred to as an “age of tyrants.” Various explanations have been provided for the rise of tyranny in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The most popular explanation dates back to Aristotle, who argued that tyrants were set up by the people in response to the nobility becoming less tolerable. Because there is no evidence from this time period demonstrating this to be the case, historians have looked for alternate explanations. Some argue that tyrannies were set up by individuals who controlled private armies, and that early tyrants did not need the support of the people at all. Others suggest that tyrannies were established as a consequence of in-fighting between rival oligarchs, rather than as a result of fighting between oligarchs and the people.

Other historians question the existence of a 7<sup>th</sup> century “age of tyrants” altogether. In the Archaic period, the Greek word *tyrannos* did not have the negative connotations it had later in the classical period. Often the word could be used as synonymous with “king.” As a result, many historians argue that Greek tyrants were not considered illegitimate rulers, and cannot be distinguished from any other rulers during the same period.

## The Homeric Question

The Homeric Question concerns the doubts and consequent debate over the identity of Homer, the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; it also questions the historicity of the two books. Many scholars agree that regardless of who authored Homer’s works, it is highly likely that the poems attributed to him were part of a generations-old oral tradition, with many scholars believing the works to be transcribed some time in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE or earlier. Many estimates place the events of Homer’s Trojan War as preceding the Greek Dark Ages, of approximately 1250 to 750 BCE. The *Iliad*, however, has been placed immediately following the Greek Dark Age period.

## The Rise of Classical Greece

Classical Greece rose after the fall of the Athenian tyrants and the institution of Cleisthenes’ democratic reforms, and lasted throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understand the significance of Cleisthenes' reforms to the rise of Classical Greece

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The classical period followed the Archaic period, and was succeeded by the Hellenistic period.
- Much of modern Western politics, artistic and scientific thought, literature, and philosophy derives from this period of Greek history.
- Through Cleisthenes' reforms, the people endowed their city with isonomic institutions, and established ostracism.
- A corpus of reforms made to Athenian political administration during this time led to the emergence of a wider democracy in the 460s and 450s BCE.

### *Key Terms*

- **trittyes:** Population divisions in ancient Attica,

established by the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BCE.

- **ostracism:** A procedure under Athenian democracy by which any citizen could be expelled from the city-state of Athens for ten years.
- **isonomic:** A word used by ancient Greek writers to refer to various kinds of popular government with the general goal of “equal rights.”
- **Cleisthenes:** A noble Athenian of the Alcmaeonid family, credited with reforming the constitution of ancient Athens, and setting it on a democratic footing in 508/7 BCE.
- **Classical Greece:** A 200 year period in Greek culture, lasting from the 5th through 4th centuries BCE.

Classical Greece was a 200-year period in Greek culture lasting from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. This period saw the annexation of much of modern-day Greece by the Persian Empire, as well as its subsequent independence. Classical Greece also had a powerful influence on the Roman Empire, and greatly influenced the foundations of Western civilization. Much of modern Western politics, artistic and scientific thought, literature, and philosophy derives from this period of Greek history. The classical period was preceded by the Archaic period, and was succeeded by the Hellenistic period.

## Rise of the City-States

The term “city-state,” which is English in origin, does not fully translate the Greek term for these same entities, *polis*. *Poleis* were

different from ancient city-states in that they were ruled by bodies of the citizens who lived there. Many were initially established, as in Sparta, via a network of villages, with a governance center being established in a central urban center. As notions of citizenship rose to prominence among landowners, *polis* came to embody an entire body of citizens and the term could be used to describe the populace of a place, rather than the physical location itself. Basic elements of a *polis* often included the following:

- Self-governance, autonomy, and independence
- A social hub and financial marketplace, called an *agora*
- Urban planning and architecture
- Temples, altars, and other sacred precincts, many of which would be dedicated to the patron deity of the city
- Public spaces, such as gymnasia and theaters
- Defensive walls to protect against invasion
- Coinage minted by the city

*Polis* were established and expanded by synoecism, or the absorption of nearby villages and tribes. Most cities were composed of several tribes that were in turn composed of groups sharing common ancestry, and their extended families. Territory was a less helpful means of thinking about the shape of a *polis* than regions of shared religious and political associations.

Dwellers of a *polis* were typically divided into four separate social classes, with an individual's status usually being determined at birth. Free adult men born of legitimate citizens were considered citizens with full legal and political rights, including the right to vote, be elected into office, and bear arms, with the obligation to serve in the army during wartime. The female relatives and underage children of full citizens were also considered citizens, but they had no formal political rights. They were typically represented within society by their adult male relatives. Citizens of other *poleis* who chose to reside in a different *polis* possessed full rights in their place of origin, but had no political rights in their new place of

residence. Otherwise, such citizens had full personal and property rights subject to taxation. Finally, slaves were considered possessions of their owner and had no rights or privileges other than those granted by their owner.

## Greco-Persian Wars

The Greco- Persian Wars, also referred to as the Persian Wars, were a series of conflicts that began in 499 BCE and lasted until 449 BCE, between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia (modern-day Iran) and Greek city-states. The conflict began when Cyrus the Great conquered the Greek-inhabited region of Ionia in 547 BCE. After struggling to control the cities of Ionia, the Persians appointed tyrants to rule each of them. When the tyrant of Miletus embarked on an unsuccessful expedition to conquer the island of Naxos with Persian support, however, a rebellion was incited throughout Hellenic Asia Minor against the Persians. This rebellion, known as the Ionian Revolt, lasted until 493 BCE, and drew increasingly more regions throughout Asia Minor into the conflict.

Eventually the Ionians suffered a decisive defeat and the rebellion collapsed. Subsequently, Darius the Great, the Persian ruler, sought to secure his empire from further revolts and interference from the mainland Greeks, and embarked upon a scheme to conquer all of Greece. The first Persian invasion of Greece began in 492 BCE, and was successful in conquering Macedon and re-subjugating Thrace. In 490 BCE, a second force was sent to Greece across the Aegean Sea, successfully subjugating the Cyclades. However, the Persians were defeated by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon, putting a halt to Darius's plan until his death in 486 BCE.

In 480 BCE, Darius's son, Xerxes, personally led the second Persian invasion of Greece with one of the largest ancient armies ever assembled. His invasion was successful and Athens was burned. However, the following year, the Allied Greek states went on the

offensive, defeating the Persian army at the Battle of Plataea and ending the invasion of Greece. The Greeks continued to expel Persian forces from Greece and surrounding areas, but the actions of Spartan General Pausanias at the siege of Byzantium alienated many of the Greek states from the Spartans, causing the anti-Persian alliance to be reconstituted around Athenian leadership in what became known as the Delian League. The Delian League continued the campaign against the Persians for the next three decades. Some historical sources suggest the end of hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians was marked by a peace treaty between Athens and Persia, called the Peace of Callias.

## Athenian Democracy

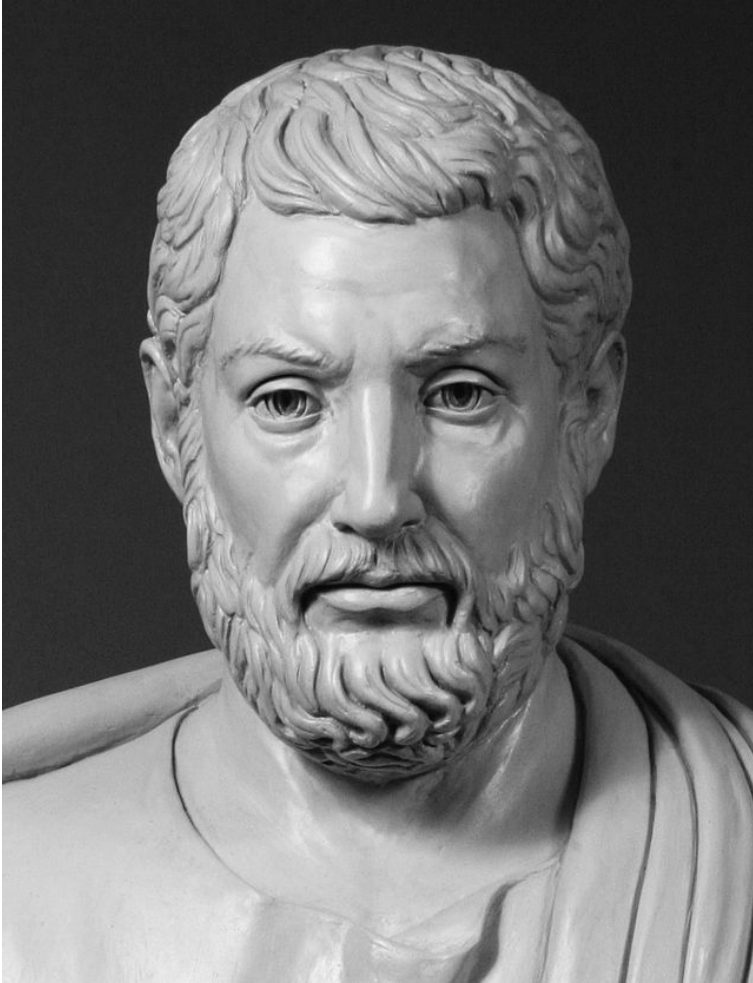
Athenian democracy developed around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, in the Greek city-state of Athens. It is the first known democracy in the world. Other Greek cities set up democracies, most following the Athenian model, but none are as well documented as Athens. Athenian democracy was a system of direct democracy, in which participating citizens voted directly on legislation and executive bills. Participation was open to adult, land-owning men, which historians estimate numbered between 30,000 and 50,000 individuals, out of a total population of approximately 250,000 to 300,000.

Before the first attempt at democratic government, Athens was ruled by a series of *archons*, or chief magistrates, and the Areopagus, which was made up of *ex-archons*. Archons were typically aristocrats who ruled to their own advantage. Additionally, a series of laws codified by Draco in 621 BCE reinforced the power of the aristocracy over all other citizens. A mediator called Solon reshaped the city-state by restructuring the way citizenship was defined in order to absorb the traditional aristocracy within it, and established the right of every Athenian to participate in meetings

of governing assemblies. The Areopagus, however, retained ultimate lawmaking authorities.

## Cleisthenes

In 510 BCE, Spartan troops helped the Athenians overthrow their king, the tyrant Hippias, son of Peisistratos. Cleomenes I, king of Sparta, put in place a pro-Spartan oligarchy headed by Isagoras. But his rival, Cleisthenes, with the support of the middle class and aided by democrats, managed to take over. Cleomenes intervened in 508 and 506 BCE, but could not stop Cleisthenes, who was then supported by the Athenians. Through his reforms, the people endowed their city with institutions furnished with equal rights (i.e., isonomic institutions), and established ostracism, a procedure by which any citizen could be expelled from the city-state of Athens for ten years.



**Bust of Cleisthenes:** Modern bust of Cleisthenes, known as “the father of Athenian democracy,” on view at the Ohio Statehouse, Columbus, Ohio. Cleisthenes, the father of Greek democracy, reformed traditional Athenian government controlled by ruling tribes into the first government “of the people” (a *demos*, or democracy).

The isonomic and isegoric democracy was first organized into about 130 demes— political subdivisions created throughout Attica. Ten

thousand citizens exercised their power via an assembly (the *ekklesia*, in Greek), of which they all were a part, that was headed by a council of 500 citizens chosen at random. The city's administrative geography was reworked, the goal being to have mixed political groups—not federated by local interests linked to the sea, the city, or farming—whose decisions (declaration of war, etc.) would depend on their geographical situations. The territory of the city was subsequently divided into 30 trittyes. It was this corpus of reforms that would allow the emergence of a wider democracy in the 460s and 450s BCE.



# 24. Assignments

## Week 4

### Assignments

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

#### **Group Project Assignments**

Brightspace will randomly assign membership

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.



PART VI

# WEEK 5: PERSIAN WARS



# 25. Introduction

## Week 5

### Introduction

the Hyrcanian Golden cup

The Persian Wars (also often called the Greco-Persian Wars) were a series of conflicts between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and Greek city-states that started in 499 BCi and lasted until 449 BC. The collision between the fractious political world of the Greeks and the enormous empire of the Persians began when Cyrus the Great conquered the Greek-inhabited region of Ionia in 547 BC. Struggling to rule the independent-minded cities of Ionia, the Persians appointed tyrants to rule each of them. This would prove to be the source of much trouble for the Greeks and Persians alike.

In 499 BC, the tyrant of Miletus, Aristagoras, embarked on an expedition to conquer the island of Naxos, with Persian support;<sup>[3]</sup> however, the expedition was a debacle and, pre-empting his dismissal, Aristagoras incited all of Hellenic Asia Minor into rebellion against the Persians. This was the beginning of the Ionian Revolt, which would last until 493 BC, progressively drawing more regions of Asia Minor into the conflict. Aristagoras secured military support from Athens and Eretria, and in 498 BC these forces helped to capture and burn the Persian regional capital of Sardis.

map

# 26. Reading: The Persian Empire

## The Achaemenid Empire

Under Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire became the first global empire.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss the Achaemenid as the first global empire

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Around 550 BCE, Cyrus the Great (Cyrus II) conquered the Median Empire and started the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire, assimilating the neighboring Lydian and Neo-Babylonian empires.
- Cyrus the Great was succeeded by his son

Cambyses II in 530 BCE and then the usurper Gaumata, and finally by Darius the Great in 522 BCE.

- By the time of Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes, the Achaemenid Empire had expanded to include Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, the Southern Caucasus, Macedonia, the western Indus basin, as well as parts of Central Asia, northern Arabia and northern Libya.
- At its height around 475 BCE, the Achaemenid Empire ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest figure for any empire in history.

### *Key Terms*

- **Cyrus the Great:** Cyrus II of Persia, also known as Cyrus the Great, created the largest empire the world had seen.
- **Darius the Great:** The third king of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, who ruled at its peak from c. 522-486 BCE.
- **Median Empire:** One of the four major powers of the ancient Near East (with Babylonia, Lydia, and Egypt), until it was conquered by Cyrus the Great in 550 BCE.
- **Pasargadae:** The capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great.

The Achaemenid Empire, c. 550-330 BCE, or First Persian Empire, was founded in the 6th century BCE by Cyrus the Great, in Western and Central Asia. The dynasty drew its name from Achaemenes,

who, from 705-675 BCE, ruled Persis, which was land bounded on the west by the Tigris River and on the south by the Persian Gulf. It was the first centralized nation-state, and during expansion in approximately 550-500 BCE, it became the first global empire and eventually ruled over significant portions of the ancient world.

## Empire Beginnings

By the 7th century BCE, a group of ancient Iranian people had established the Median Empire, a vassal state under the Assyrian Empire that later tried to gain its independence in the 8th century BCE. After Assyria fell in 605 BCE, Cyaxares, king of the Medes, extended his rule west across Iran.

Around 550 BCE, Cyrus II of Persia, who became known as Cyrus the Great, rose in rebellion against the Median Empire, eventually conquering the Medes to create the first Persian Empire, also known as the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus utilized his tactical genius, as well as his understanding of the socio-political conditions governing his territories, to eventually assimilate the neighboring Lydian and Neo-Babylonian empires into the new Persian Empire.





**Relief of Cyrus the Great:** Cyrus II of Persia, better known as Cyrus the Great, was the founder of the Achaemenid Empire. Under his rule, the empire assimilated all the civilized states of the ancient Near East, and eventually conquered most of Southwest Asia and much of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

## Achaemenid Expansion

The empire was ruled by a series of monarchs who joined its disparate tribes by constructing a complex network of roads. The unified form of the empire came in the form of a central administration around the city of Pasargadae, which was erected by Cyrus c. 550 BCE. After his death in 530 BCE, Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses II, who conquered Egypt, Nubia, and Cyrenaica in 525 BCE; he died in 522 BCE during a revolt.

During the king's long absence during his expansion campaign, a Zoroastrian priest, named Guamata, staged a coup by impersonating Cambyses II's younger brother, Bardiya, and seized the throne. Yet in 522 BCE, Darius I, also known as Darius the Great, overthrew Gaumata and solidified control of the territories of the Achaemenid Empire, beginning what would be a historic consolidation of lands.



**Achaemenid Empire in the time of Darius and Xerxes:** At its height, the Achaemenid Empire ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest figure for any empire in history.

Between c. 500–400 BCE, Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes I, ruled the Persian Plateau and all of the territories formerly held by the Assyrian Empire, including Mesopotamia, the Levant, and

Cyprus. It eventually came to control Egypt, as well. This expansion continued even further afield with Anatolia and the Armenian Plateau, much of the Southern Caucasus, Macedonia, parts of Greece and Thrace, Central Asia as far as the Aral Sea, the Oxus and Jaxartes areas, the Hindu Kush and the western Indus basin, and parts of northern Arabia and northern Libya.

This unprecedented area of control under a single ruler stretched from the Indus Valley in the east to Thrace and Macedon on the northeastern border of Greece. At its height, the Achaemenid Empire ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest such figure for any empire in history.

## Government and Trade in the Achaemenid Empire

Emperors Cyrus II and Darius I created a centralized government and extensive trade network in the Achaemenid Empire.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss how the central government provided cultural and economic reform

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Cyrus the Great maintained control over a vast empire by installing regional governors, called satraps, to rule individual provinces.
- When Darius the Great ascended the throne in 522 BCE, he organized a new uniform monetary system and established Aramaic as the official language of the empire.
- Trade infrastructure facilitated the exchange of commodities in the far reaches of the empire, including the Royal Road, standardized language, and a postal service.
- Tariffs on trade from the territories were one of the empire's main sources of revenue, in addition to agriculture and tribute.

### *Key Terms*

- **Cyrus Cylinder:** An ancient clay artifact that has been called the oldest-known charter of human rights.
- **Behistun Inscription:** An inscription carved in a cliff face of Mount Behistun in Iran; it provided a key to

deciphering cuneiform script.

- **satrapy:** The territory under the rule of a satrap.
- **satrap:** The governor of a province in the ancient Median and Achaemenid (Persian) Empires.

The Achaemenid Empire reached enormous size under the leadership of Cyrus II of Persia (576-530 BCE), commonly known as Cyrus the Great, who created a multi-state empire. Called Cyrus the Elder by the Greeks, he founded an empire initially comprising all the previous civilized states of the ancient Near East and eventually most of Southwest and Central Asia and the Caucus region, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River. Control of this large territory involved a centralized government, territorial monarchs who served as proxy rulers for the emperor, and an extensive system of commerce and trade.

## Government Organization

Cyrus, whose rule lasted between 29 and 31 years, until his death in battle in 530 BCE, controlled the vast Achaemenid Empire through the use of regional monarchs, called *satrap*, who each oversaw a territory called a satrapy. The basic rule of governance was based upon the loyalty and obedience of the *satrapy* to the central power, the king, and compliance with tax laws. Cyrus also connected the various regions of the empire through an innovative postal system that made use of an extensive roadway and relay stations.

Cyrus the Great was recognized for achievements in human rights and politics, having influenced both Eastern and Western Civilization. The ancient Babylonians called him “The Liberator,” while the modern nation of Iran calls Cyrus its “father.”

## Cyrus Cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder is an ancient clay artifact, now broken into several fragments, that has been called the oldest-known charter of universal human rights and a symbol of his humanitarian rule.

The cylinder dates from the 6th century BCE, and was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in Mesopotamia, now Iraq, in 1879. In addition to describing the genealogy of Cyrus, the declaration in Akkadian cuneiform script on the cylinder is considered by many Biblical scholars to be evidence of Cyrus's policy of repatriation of the Jewish people following their captivity in Babylon.

The historical nature of the cylinder has been debated, with some scholars arguing that Cyrus did not make a specific decree, but rather that the cylinder articulated his general policy allowing exiles to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples.

In fact, the policies of Cyrus with respect to treatment of minority religions were well documented in Babylonian texts, as well as in Jewish sources. Cyrus was known to have an overall attitude of religious tolerance throughout the empire, although it has been debated whether this was by his own implementation or a continuation of Babylonian and Assyrian policies.

## Darius Improvements

When Darius I (550-486 BCE), also known as Darius the Great, ascended the throne of the Achaemenid Empire in 522 BCE, he established Aramaic as the official language and devised a codification of laws for Egypt. Darius also sponsored work on construction projects throughout the empire, focusing on improvement of the cities of Susa, Pasargadae, Persepolis, Babylon, and various municipalities in Egypt.

When Darius moved his capital from Pasargadae to Persepolis,

he revolutionized the economy by placing it on a silver and gold coinage and introducing a regulated and sustainable tax system. This structure precisely tailored the taxes of each *satrapy* based on its projected productivity and economic potential. For example, Babylon was assessed for the highest amount of silver taxes, while Egypt owed grain in addition to silver taxes.



**Persian reliefs in the city of Persepolis:** Darius the Great moved the capital of the Achaemenid Empire to Persepolis c. 522 BCE. He initiated several major architectural projects, including the construction of a palace and a treasure house.

## Behistun Inscription

Sometime after his coronation, Darius ordered an inscription to be carved on a limestone cliff of Mount Behistun in modern Iran. The Behistun Inscription, the text of which Darius wrote, came to



have great linguistic significance as a crucial clue in deciphering cuneiform script.

The inscription begins by tracing the ancestry of Darius, followed by a description of a sequence of events following the deaths of the previous two Achaemenid emperors, Cyrus the Great and Cyrus's son, Cambyses II, in which Darius fought 19 battles in one year to put down numerous rebellions throughout the Persian lands.

The inscription, which is approximately 15 meters high and 25 meters wide, includes three versions of the text in three different cuneiform languages: Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, which was a version of Akkadian. Researchers were able to compare the scripts and use it to help decipher ancient languages, in this way making the Behistun Inscription as valuable to cuneiform as the Rosetta Stone is to Egyptian hieroglyphs.



**Behistun Inscription:** A section of the Behistun Inscription on a limestone cliff of Mount Behistun in western Iran, which became a key in deciphering cuneiform script.



## Commerce and Trade

Under the Achaemenids, trade was extensive and there was an efficient infrastructure that facilitated the exchange of commodities in the far reaches of the empire. Tariffs on trade were one of the empire's main sources of revenue, in addition to agriculture and tribute.

The *satrapies* were linked by a 2,500-kilometer highway, the most impressive stretch of which was the Royal Road, from Susa to Sardis. The relays of mounted couriers could reach the most remote areas in 15 days. Despite the relative local independence afforded by the *satrapy* system, royal inspectors regularly toured the empire and reported on local conditions using this route.



**Achaemenid golden bowl with lion imagery:** Trade in the Achaemenid Empire was extensive. Infrastructure, including the Royal Road, standardized language, and a postal service facilitated the exchange of commodities in the far reaches of the empire.

## Military

Cyrus the Great created an organized army to enforce national authority, despite the ethno-cultural diversity among the subject nations, the empire's enormous geographic size, and the constant struggle for power by regional competitors.

This professional army included the Immortals unit, comprising 10,000 highly trained heavy infantry. Under Darius the Great, Persia would become the first empire to inaugurate and deploy an imperial navy, with personnel that included Phoenicians, Egyptians, Cypriots, and Greeks.

## Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion, had a major influence on the culture and religion of all other monotheistic religions in the region.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain Zoroastrianism and its impact on Persian culture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Zoroastrianism is ascribed to the teachings of Zoroaster, an Iranian prophet, who worshiped Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord), as its Supreme Being.
- Leading characteristics, such as messianism, heaven and hell, and free will are said to have influenced other religious systems, including Second Temple Judaism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Zoroastrianism served as the state religion of the pre-Islamic Iranian empires from c. 600 BCE to 650 CE, but saw a steep decline after the Muslim conquest of Persia.
- The religion states that active participation in life through good deeds is necessary to ensure happiness and to keep chaos at bay.

### *Key Terms*

- **Sassanids:** The last Iranian empire before the rise of Islam.
- **Gnosticism:** A modern term categorizing a collection of ancient religions whose adherents shunned the material world—which they viewed as created by the demiurge—and embraced the spiritual world.

- **messianism:** The belief in a messiah, who acts as a savior, redeemer or liberator of a group of people.
- **eschatological:** A part of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity, often referred to as the “end times.”

## Overview and Theology

Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest religions. It ascribed to the teachings of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra), and exalted their deity of wisdom, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord), as its Supreme Being. Leading characteristics, such as messianism, heaven and hell, and free will are said to have influenced other religious systems, including Second Temple Judaism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Islam. With possible roots dating back to the second millennium BCE, Zoroastrianism enters recorded history in the 5th-century BCE. It served as the state religion of the pre-Islamic Iranian empires from around 600 BCE to 650 CE. Zoroastrianism was suppressed from the 7th century onwards, following the Muslim conquest of Persia. Recent estimates place the current number of Zoroastrians at around 2.6 million, with most living in India and Iran.

The most important texts of the religion are those of the Avesta, which includes the writings of Zoroaster, known as the Gathas and the Yasna. The Gathas are enigmatic poems that define the religion's precepts, while the Yasna is the scripture. The full name by which Zoroaster addressed the deity is: Ahura, The Lord Creator, and Mazda, Supremely Wise. He proclaimed that there is only one God, the singularly creative and sustaining force of the Universe. He also stated that human beings are given a right of choice, and because

of cause and effect are also responsible for the consequences of their choices. The contesting force to Ahura Mazda was called Angra Mainyu, or angry spirit. Post-Zoroastrian scripture introduced the concept of Ahriman, the Devil, which was effectively a personification of Angra Mainyu.

In Zoroastrianism, water (*apo*, *aban*) and fire (*atar*, *azar*) are agents of ritual purity, and the associated purification ceremonies are considered the basis of ritual life. In Zoroastrian cosmogony, water and fire are respectively the second and last primordial elements to have been created, and scripture considers fire to have its origin in the waters. Both water and fire are considered life-sustaining, and both water and fire are represented within the precinct of a fire temple. Zoroastrians usually pray in the presence of some form of fire (which can be considered evident in any source of light), and the culminating rite of the principle act of worship constitutes a “strengthening of the waters.” Fire is considered a medium through which spiritual insight and wisdom is gained, and water is considered the source of that wisdom.

The religion states that active participation in life through good deeds is necessary to ensure happiness and to keep chaos at bay. This active participation is a central element in Zoroaster’s concept of free will, and Zoroastrianism rejects all forms of monasticism. Ahura Mazda will ultimately prevail over the evil Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, at which point the universe will undergo a cosmic renovation and time will end. In the final renovation, all of creation—even the souls of the dead that were initially banished to “darkness”—will be reunited in Ahura Mazda, returning to life in the undead form. At the end of time, a savior-figure (*a Saoshyant*) will bring about a final renovation of the world (*frashokereti*), in which the dead will be revived.



**Zoroastrian Priest:** Painted clay and alabaster head of a Zoroastrian priest wearing a distinctive Bactrian-style headdress, Takhti-Sangin, Tajikistan, Greco-Bactrian kingdom, 3rd-2nd century BCE.

# History

The roots of Zoroastrianism are thought to have emerged from a common prehistoric Indo-Iranian religious system dating back to the early 2nd millennium BCE. The prophet Zoroaster himself, though traditionally dated to the 6th century BCE, is thought by many modern historians to have been a reformer of the polytheistic Iranian religion who lived in the 10th century BCE. Zoroastrianism as a religion was not firmly established until several centuries later. Zoroastrianism enters recorded history in the mid-5th century BCE. Herodotus' *The Histories* (completed c. 440 BCE) includes a description of Greater Iranian society with what may be recognizably Zoroastrian features, including exposure of the dead.

*The Histories* is a primary source of information on the early period of the Achaemenid era (648–330 BCE), in particular with respect to the role of the Magi. According to Herodotus i.101, the Magi were the sixth tribe of the Medians (until the unification of the Persian empire under Cyrus the Great, all Iranians were referred to as “Mede” or “Mada” by the peoples of the Ancient World). The Magi appear to have been the priestly caste of the Mesopotamian-influenced branch of Zoroastrianism today known as Zurvanism, and they wielded considerable influence at the courts of the Median emperors.

Darius I, and later Achaemenid emperors, acknowledged their devotion to Ahura Mazda in inscriptions (as attested to several times in the Behistun inscription), and appear to have continued the model of coexistence with other religions. Whether Darius was a follower of Zoroaster has not been conclusively established, since devotion to Ahura Mazda was (at the time) not necessarily an indication of an adherence to Zoroaster's teaching. A number of the Zoroastrian texts that today are part of the greater compendium of the Avesta have been attributed to that period.

The religion would be professed many centuries following the demise of the Achaemenids in mainland Persia and the core regions

of the former Achaemenid Empire—most notably Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Caucasus. In the Cappadocian kingdom (whose territory was formerly an Achaemenid possession), Persian colonists who were cut off from their co-religionists in Iran proper continued to practice the Zoroastrianism of their forefathers. There, Strabo, observing in the first century BCE, records that these “fire kindlers” possessed many “holy places of the Persian Gods,” as well as fire temples. Strabo furthermore relates, that they were “noteworthy enclosures; and in their midst there is an altar, on which there is a large quantity of ashes and where the magi keep the fire ever burning.” Throughout, and after, the Hellenistic periods in the aforementioned regions, the religion would be strongly revived.

As late as the Parthian period, a form of Zoroastrianism was without a doubt the dominant religion in the Armenian lands. The Sassanids aggressively promoted the Zurvanite form of Zoroastrianism, often building fire temples in captured territories to promote the religion. During the period of their centuries long suzerainty over the Caucasus, the Sassanids made attempts to promote Zoroastrianism there with considerable successes. It was also prominent in the pre-Christian Caucasus (especially modern-day Azerbaijan).



## 27. Reading: Sparta

### Sparta

Sparta, known for its militaristic culture and unequaled women's rights, was a dominant military power in classical Greece.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Distinguish key differences between Athens and Sparta

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- Sparta was a prominent city-state in ancient Greece, situated on the banks of the Eurotas River in Laconia in southeastern Peloponnese.
- Given its military preeminence, Sparta was recognized as the overall leader of the combined Greek forces during the Greco-Persian Wars, and defeated Athens during the Peloponnesian War.
- Sparta's defeat by Thebes in the Battle of Leuctra in

371 BCE ended Sparta's prominent role in Greece, but it maintained its political independence until the Roman conquest of Greece in 146 BCE.

- Sparta functioned under an oligarchy of two hereditary kings.
- Unique in ancient Greece for its social system and constitution, Spartan society focused heavily on military training and excellence.
- Spartan women enjoyed status, power, and respect that was unequalled in the rest of the classical world.

### *Key Terms*

- **Sparta:** A prominent city-state in ancient Greece situated on the banks of the Eurotas River in Laconia. The dominant military power in ancient Greece.
- **agoge:** The rigorous education and training regimen mandated for all male Spartan citizens, except for the firstborn sons of the ruling houses Eurypontid and Agiad.

Sparta was a prominent city-state in ancient Greece situated on the banks of the Eurotas River in Laconia in southeastern Peloponnese. It emerged as a political entity around the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when the invading Dorians subjugated the local, non-Dorian population. Around 650 BCE, it rose to become the dominant military power in ancient Greece. Given its military preeminence, Sparta was recognized as the overall leader of the combined Greek forces during the Greco-Persian Wars. Between 431 and 404 BCE, Sparta was the principal enemy of Athens during the Peloponnesian War,

from which it emerged victorious, though at great cost. Sparta's defeat by Thebes in the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE ended Sparta's prominent role in Greece. However, it maintained its political independence until the Roman conquest of Greece in 146 BCE.



**Political geography of ancient Greece:** The map shows the political structure of Greece in the Archaic Age.

## The Rise of Classical Sparta

The Spartans were already considered a land-fighting force to be reckoned with when, in 480 BCE, a small force of Spartans, Thespians, and Thebans made a legendary final stand at the Battle of Thermopylae against the massive Persian army during the Greco-Persian Wars. The Greek forces suffered very high casualties before finally being encircled and defeated. One year later, Sparta led a Greek alliance against the Persians at the Battle of Plataea where

their superior weaponry, strategy, and bronze armor proved a huge asset in achieving a resounding victory. This decisive victory put an end to the

Greco-Persian War, as well as Persian ambitions of spreading into Europe. Despite being fought as part of an alliance, the victory was credited to Sparta, which had been the de facto leader of the entire Greek expedition.

In the later classical period, Sparta fought amongst Athens, Thebes, and Persia for supremacy within the region. As a result of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta developed formidable naval power, enabling it to subdue many key Greek states and even overpower the elite Athenian navy. A period of Spartan Hegemony was inaugurated at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when Sparta defeated the Athenian Empire and invaded Persian provinces in Anatolia.

## Spartan Culture and Government

Sparta functioned under an oligarchy. The state was ruled by two hereditary kings of the Agiad and Eurypontid families, both supposedly descendants of Heracles, and equal in authority so that one could not act against the power and political enactments of his colleague. Unique in ancient Greece for its social system and constitution, Spartan society was completely focused on military training and excellence. Its inhabitants were classified as Spartiates (Spartan citizens who enjoyed full rights), Mothakes (non-Spartan, free men raised as Spartans), Perioikoi (freed men), and Helots (state-owned serfs, part of the enslaved, non-Spartan, local population).

Male Spartans began military training at age seven. The training was designed to encourage discipline and physical toughness, as well as emphasize the importance of the Spartan state. Boys lived in communal messes and, according to Xenophon, whose sons

attended the *agoge*, the boys were fed “just the right amount for them never to become sluggish through being too full, while also giving them a taste of what it is not to have enough.” Besides physical and weapons training, boys studied reading, writing, music, and dancing. Special punishments were imposed if boys failed to answer questions sufficiently laconically (i.e., briefly and wittily).



**Spartan Hoplite:** Marble statue of a helmed hoplite (5th century BCE), Archaeological Museum of Sparta, Greece.

At age 20, the Spartan citizen began his membership in one of

the *syssitia* (dining messes or clubs), which were composed of about 15 members each, and were compulsory. Here each group learned how to bond and rely on one another. The Spartans were not eligible for election to public office until the age of 30. Only native Spartans were considered full citizens, and were obliged to undergo military training as prescribed by law, as well as participate in, and contribute financially to, one of the *syssitia*.

## Spartan Women

Female Spartan citizens enjoyed status, power, and respect that was unequalled in the rest of the classical world. The higher status of females in Spartan society started at birth. Unlike in Athens, Spartan girls were fed the same food as their brothers. Nor were they confined to their father's house or prevented from exercising or getting fresh air. Spartan women even competed in sports. Most important, rather than being married at the age of 12 or 13, Spartan law forbade the marriage of a girl until she was in her late teens or early 20s. The reasons for delaying marriage were to ensure the birth of healthy children, but the effect was to spare Spartan women the hazards and lasting health damage associated with pregnancy among adolescents.

Spartan women, better fed from childhood and fit from exercise, stood a far better chance of reaching old age than their sisters in other Greek cities, where the median life expectancy was 34.6 years, or roughly ten years below that of men. Unlike Athenian women, who wore heavy, concealing clothes and were rarely seen outside the house, Spartan women wore dresses (*peplos*) slit up the side to allow freer movement, and moved freely about the city, either walking or driving chariots.

## Culture in Classical Sparta

Although Spartan society was highly regimented, militarily and socially, enslaved classes and women were afforded greater privileges relative to the populations of other Greek city-states.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the key characteristics of Sparta's society

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Sparta was an oligarchic city-state, ruled by two hereditary kings equal in authority.
- Spartan society was largely structured around the military, and around military training.
- Inhabitants were classified as Spartiates (Spartan citizens, who enjoyed full rights), Mothakes (non-Spartan, free men raised as Spartans), Perioikoi (free, but non-citizen inhabitants), and Helots (state-owned serfs, part of the enslaved non-Spartan, local population).
- Spartiates began military training at the age of



seven.

- At the age of 20, Spartiates were initiated into full citizenship and joined a *syssitia*.
- Helots were granted many privileges, in comparison to enslaved populations in other Greek city-states.
- The Helot population outnumbered the Spartiate population, and grew over time, causing societal tensions.
- Female Spartans enjoyed status, power, and respect that was unequalled in the rest of the classical world.

### *Key Terms*

- **Delphi:** A famous ancient sanctuary that served as the seat of an oracle, who consulted on important decisions throughout the ancient classical world.
- **ephors:** Ephors were ancient Spartan officials who shared power with the hereditary kings. Five individuals were elected annually to swear on behalf of the city, whereas kings served for a lifetime and swore only on their own behalf.
- **gerousia:** The gerousia were a council of Spartan elders comprised of men over the age of 60, who were elected for life, and usually were members of one of the two kings' households.

## The Spartan Political System

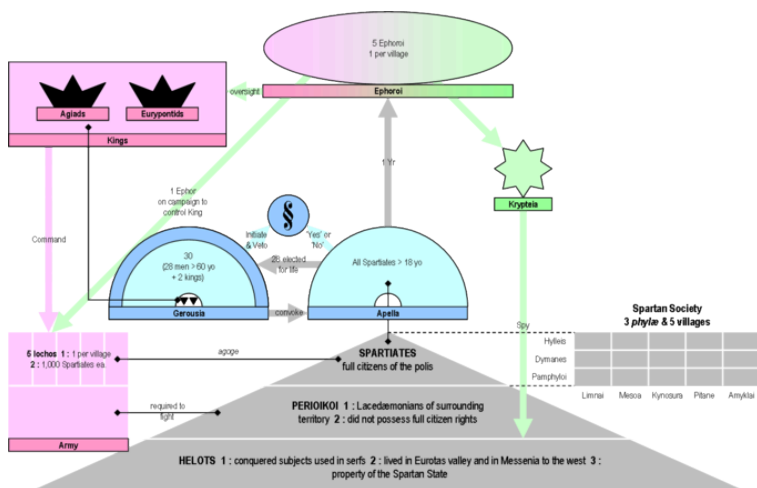
Sparta functioned under an oligarchy. The state was ruled by two hereditary kings of the Agiad and Eurypontid families, both supposedly descendants of Heracles, and equal in authority so that one could not act against the power and political enactments of his colleague. The duties of the kings were religious, judicial, and military in nature. They were the chief priests of the state, and maintained contact with Delphi, the sanctuary that exercised great authority in Spartan politics.

By 450 BCE, the kings' judicial authority was restricted to cases dealing with heiresses, adoptions, and public roads. Over time, royal prerogatives were curtailed further until, aside from their service as military generals, the kings became mere figureheads. For example, from the time of the Greco Persian Wars, the kings lost the right to declare war and were shadowed in the field by two officials, known as *ephors*. The *ephors* also supplanted the kings' leadership in the realm of foreign policy. Civil and criminal cases were also decided by *ephors*, as well as a council of 28 elders over the age of 60, called the *gerousia*. The *gerousia* were elected for life, and usually were members of one of the two kings' households. The *gerousia* discussed high state policy decisions, then proposed action alternatives to the *damos*—a collective body of Spartan citizenry, who would then select one of the options by voting.

## Spartan Citizenship

Unique in ancient Greece for its social system, Spartan society was completely focused on military training and excellence. Its inhabitants were classified as Spartiates (Spartan citizens, who enjoyed full rights), *Mothakes* (non-Spartan, free men raised as Spartans), *Perioikoi* (free, but non-citizen inhabitants), and *Helots*

(state-owned serfs, part of the enslaved, non-Spartan, local population).



**Structure of Spartan society:** Spartan society was highly regimented, with a clearly delineated class system.

Male Spartans began military training at age seven. The training was designed to encourage discipline and physical toughness, as well as emphasize the importance of the Spartan state. Typically only men who were to become Spartiates underwent military training, although two exceptions existed to this rule. *Trophimoi*, or “foster sons,” from other Greek city-states were allowed to attend training as foreign students. For example, the Athenian general Xenophon sent his two sons to Sparta as *trophimoi*. Additionally, sons of a Helot could enroll as a *syntrophos* if a Spartiate formally adopted him and paid his way. If a *syntrophos* did exceptionally well in training, he could be sponsored to become a Spartiate. Likewise, if a Spartan could not afford to pay the expenses associated with military training, they potentially could lose their right to citizenship.

Boys who underwent training lived in communal messes and,

according to Xenophon, whose sons attended the *agoge*, the boys were fed “just the right amount for them never to become sluggish through being too full, while also giving them a taste of what it is not to have enough.” Besides physical and weapons training, boys studied reading, writing, music, and dancing. Special punishments were imposed if boys failed to answer questions sufficiently laconically (i.e., briefly and wittily).

At age 20, the Spartan citizen began his membership in one of the *syssitia* (dining messes or clubs), which were composed of about 15 members each, and were compulsory. Here each group learned how to bond and rely on one another. The Spartans were not eligible for election to public office until the age of 30. Only native Spartans were considered full citizens, and were obliged to undergo military training as prescribed by law, as well as participate in, and contribute financially to, one of the *syssitia*.

## Helots

Spartiates were actually a minority within Sparta, and Helots made up the largest class of inhabitants of the city-state. Helots were originally free Greeks that the Spartans had defeated in battle, and subsequently enslaved. In contrast to populations conquered by other Greek cities, the male Helot population was not exterminated, and women and children were not treated as chattel. Instead, Helots were given a subordinate position within Spartan society more comparable to the serfs of medieval Europe. Although Helots did not have voting rights, they otherwise enjoyed a relatively privileged position, in comparison to slave populations in other Greek city-states.

The Spartan poet, Tyrtaios, gives account that Helots were permitted to marry and retain half the fruits of their labor. They were also allowed religious freedoms and could own a limited

amount of personal property. Up to 6,000 Helots even accumulated enough wealth to buy their own freedom in 227 BCE.

Since Spartiates were full-time soldiers, manual labor fell to the Helot population who worked as unskilled serfs, tilling the Spartan land or accompanying the Spartan army as non-combatants. Helot women were often used as wet nurses.

Relations between Helots and their Spartan masters were often strained, and there is evidence that at least one Helot revolt occurred circa 465-460 BCE. Many historians argue that because the Helots were permitted such privileges as the maintenance of family and kinship groups and ownership of property, they were better able to retain their identity as a conquered people and thus were more effective at organizing rebellions. Over time, the Spartan population continued to decline and the Helot population grew, and the imbalance in power exasperated tensions that already existed.

## Spartan Women

Female Spartans enjoyed status, power, and respect that was unequaled in the rest of the classical world. The higher status of females in Spartan society started at birth. Unlike in Athens, Spartan girls were fed the same food as their brothers. Nor were they confined to their father's house or prevented from exercising or getting fresh air. Spartan women even competed in sports. Most important, rather than being married at the age of 12 or 13, Spartan law forbade the marriage of a girl until she was in her late teens or early 20s. The reasons for delaying marriage were to ensure the birth of healthy children, but the effect was to spare Spartan women the hazards and lasting health damage associated with pregnancy among adolescents.

Spartan women, better fed from childhood and fit from exercise, stood a far better chance of reaching old age than their sisters in

other Greek cities where the median life expectancy was 34.6 years, or roughly ten years below that of men. Unlike Athenian women who wore heavy, concealing clothes and were rarely seen outside the house, Spartan women wore dresses (*peplos*) slit up the side to allow freer movement, and moved freely about the city, either walking or driving chariots.

# 28. Reading: The Persian Wars

## The Persian Wars

The Persian Wars led to the rise of Athens as the head of the Delian League.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the consequences of the Persian Wars.

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Persian Wars began in 499 BCE, when Greeks in the Persian-controlled territory rose in the Ionian Revolt.
- Athens, and other Greek cities, sent aid, but were quickly forced to back down after defeat in 494 BCE.
- Subsequently, the Persians suffered many defeats at

the hands of the Greeks, led by the Athenians.

- Silver mining contributed to the funding of a massive Greek army that was able to rebuke Persian assaults and eventually defeat the Persians entirely.
- The end of the Persian Wars led to the rise of Athens as the leader of the Delian League.

### *Key Terms*

- **Persian Wars:** A series of conflicts, from 499–449 BCE, between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and city-states of the Hellenic world.
- **hoplites:** A citizen-soldier of one of the ancient Greek city-states, armed primarily with spears and a shield.

The Persian Wars (499–449 BCE) were fought between the Achaemenid Empire and the Hellenic world during the Greek classical period. The conflict saw the rise of Athens, and led to its Golden Age.

## Origins of the Conflict

Greeks of the classical period believed, and historians generally agree, that in the aftermath of the fall of Mycenaean civilization, many Greek tribes emigrated and settled in Asia Minor. These settlers were from three tribal groups: the Aeolians, Dorians, and Ionians. The Ionians settled along the coasts of Lydia and Caria, and founded 12 towns that remained politically separate from one



another, although they did recognize a shared cultural heritage. This formed the basis for an exclusive Ionian “cultural league.” The Lydians of western Asia Minor conquered the cities of Ionia, which put the region at conflict with the Median Empire, the precursor to the Achaemenid Empire of the Persian Wars, and a power that the Lydians opposed.

In 553 through 550 BCE, the Persian prince Cyrus led a successful revolt against the last Median king Astyages, and founded the Achaemenid Empire. Seeing an opportunity in the upheaval, the famous Lydian king Croesus asked the oracle at Delphi whether he should attack the Persians in order to extend his realm. According to Herodotus, he received the ambiguous answer that “if Croesus was to cross the Halys [River] he would destroy a great empire.” Croesus chose to attack, and in the process he destroyed his own empire, with Lydia falling to Prince Cyrus. The Ionians sought to maintain autonomy under the Persians as they had under the Lydians, and resisted the Persians militarily for some time. However, due to their unwillingness to rise against the Lydians during previous conflicts, they were not granted special terms. Finding the Ionians difficult to rule, the Persians installed tyrants in every city, as a means of control.



**Achaemenid Empire Map:** *The Achaemenid Empire at its greatest extent.*

## The Ionian Revolt

In 499 BCE, Greeks in the region rose up against Persian rule in the Ionian Revolt. At the heart of the rebellion lay a deep dissatisfaction with the tyrants who were appointed by the Persians to rule the local Greek communities. Specifically, the riot was incited by the Milesian tyrant Aristagoras, who in the wake of a failed expedition to conquer Naxos, utilized Greek unrest against Persian king Darius the Great to his own political purposes.

Athens and other Greek cities sent aid, but were quickly forced to back down after defeat in 494 BCE, at the Battle of Lade. As a result, Asia Minor returned to Persian control. Nonetheless, the Ionian Revolt remains significant as the first major conflict between Greece and the Persian Empire, as well as the first phase of the Persian Wars. Darius vowed to exact revenge against Athens, and developed a plan to conquer all Greeks in an attempt to secure the stability of his empire.

## First Persian Invasion of Greece

In 492 BCE, the Persian general, Mardonius, led a campaign through Thrace and Macedonia. During this campaign, Mardonius re-subjugated Thrace and forced Macedonia to become a fully submissive client of the Persian Empire, whereas before they had maintained a broad degree of autonomy.

While victorious, he was wounded and forced to retreat back into Asia Minor. Additionally, he lost his 1200-ship naval fleet to a storm off the coast of Mount Athos. Darius sent ambassadors to all Greek cities to demand full submission in light of the recent Persian victory, and all cities submitted, with the exceptions of Athens and Sparta, both of which executed their respective ambassadors. These actions signaled Athens' continued defiance and brought Sparta into the conflict.

In 490 BCE, approximately 100,000 Persians landed in Attica intending to conquer Athens, but were defeated at the Battle of Marathon by a Greek army of 9,000 Athenian hoplites and 1,000 Plateans, led by the Athenian general, Miltiades. The Persian fleet continued to sail to Athens but, seeing it garrisoned, decided not to attempt an assault. The Battle of Marathon was a watershed moment in the Persian Wars, in that it demonstrated to the Greeks that the Persians could be defeated. It also demonstrated the superiority of the more heavily armed Greek hoplites.



**Greek-Persian duel:** Depiction of a Greek hoplite and a Persian warrior fighting each other on an ancient kylix.

## Interbellum (490-480 BCE)

After the failure of the first Persian invasion, Darius raised a large army with the intent of invading Greece again. However, in 486 BCE, Darius's Egyptian subjects revolted, postponing any advancement against Greece. During preparations to march on Egypt, Darius died and his son, Xerxes I, inherited the throne. Xerxes quickly crushed the Egyptians and resumed preparations to invade Greece.

## Second Invasion of Greece

In 480 BCE, Xerxes sent a much more powerful force of 300,000 soldiers by land, with 1,207 ships in support, across a double pontoon bridge over the Hellespont. This army took Thrace before descending on Thessaly and Boetia, whilst the Persian navy skirted the coast and resupplied the ground troops. The Greek fleet, meanwhile, dashed to block Cape Artemision. After being delayed by Leonidas I, the Spartan king of the Agiad Dynasty, at the Battle of Thermopylae (a battle made famous due to the sheer imbalance of forces, with 300 Spartans facing the entire Persian Army), Xerxes advanced into Attica, where he captured and burned Athens. But the Athenians had evacuated the city by sea, and under the command of Themistocles, defeated the Persian fleet at the Battle of Salamis.

In 483 BCE, during the period of peace between the two Persian invasions, a vein of silver ore had been discovered in the Laurion (a small mountain range near Athens), and the ore that was mined there paid for the construction of 200 warships to combat Aeginetan piracy. A year later, the Greeks, under the Spartan Pausanias, defeated the Persian army at Plataea. Meanwhile, the allied Greek navy won a decisive victory at the Battle of Mycale, destroying the Persian fleet, crippling Xerxes's sea power, and marking the ascendancy of the Greek fleet. Following the Battle of Plataea and the Battle of Mycale, the Persians began withdrawing from Greece and never attempted an invasion again.

## Greek Counterattack

The Battle of Mycale was in many ways a turning point, after which the Greeks went on the offensive against the Persian fleet. The Athenian fleet turned to chasing the Persians from the Aegean Sea, and in 478 BCE, the fleet then proceeded to capture Byzantium. In

the course of doing so, Athens enrolled all the island states, and some mainland states, into an alliance called the Delian League—so named because its treasury was kept on the sacred island of Delos, whose purpose was to continue fighting the Persian Empire, prepare for future invasions, and organize a means of dividing the spoils of war. The Spartans, although they had taken part in the war, withdrew into isolation afterwards. The Spartans believed that the war's purpose had already been reached through the liberation of mainland Greece and the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Historians also speculate that Sparta was unconvinced of the ability of the Delian League to secure long-term security for Asian Greeks. The Spartan withdrawal from the League allowed Athens to establish unchallenged naval and commercial power within the Hellenic world.

## Effects of the Persian Wars

Despite their victories in the Persian Wars, the Greek city-states emerged from the conflict more divided than united.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the effect the Persian Wars had on the balance of power throughout the classical world

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After the second Persian invasion of Greece was halted, Sparta withdrew from the Delian League and reformed the Peloponnesian League with its original allies.
- Many Greek city-states had been alienated from Sparta following the violent actions of Spartan leader Pausanias during the siege of Byzantium.
- Following Sparta's departure from the Delian League, Athens was able to use the resources of the League to its own ends, which led it into conflict with less powerful members of the League.
- The Persian Empire adopted a divide-and-rule strategy in relation to the Greek city-states in the wake of the Persian Wars, stoking already simmering conflicts, including the rivalry between Athens and Sparta, to protect the Persian Empire against further Greek attacks.

### *Key Terms*

- **Peloponnesian League:** An alliance formed around Sparta in the Peloponnesus, from the 6th to 4th centuries BCE.
- **Delian League:** An association of Greek city-states

under the leadership of Athens, the purpose of which was to continue fighting the Persian Empire after the Greek victories at the end of the Second Persian invasion of Greece.

- **hegemony:** The political, economic, or military predominance or control of one state over others.

## Aftermath of the Persian Wars

As a result of the allied Greek success, a large contingent of the Persian fleet was destroyed and all Persian garrisons were expelled from Europe, marking an end of Persia's advance westward into the continent. The cities of Ionia were also liberated from Persian control. Despite their successes, however, the spoils of war caused greater inner conflict within the Hellenic world. The violent actions of Spartan leader Pausanias at the siege of Byzantium, for instance, alienated many of the Greek states from Sparta, and led to a shift in the military command of the Delian League from Sparta to Athens. This set the stage for Sparta's eventual withdrawal from the Delian League.

## Two Leagues

Following the two Persian invasions of Greece, and during the Greek counterattacks that commenced after the Battles of Plataea and Mycale, Athens enrolled all island and some mainland city-states into an alliance, called the Delian League, the purpose of which was to pursue conflict with the Persian Empire, prepare for future



invasions, and organize a means of dividing the spoils of war. The Spartans, although they had taken part in the war, withdrew from the Delian League early on, believing that the war's initial purpose had been met with the liberation of mainland Greece and the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Historians also speculate that Sparta decided to leave the League for pragmatic reasons, remaining unconvinced that it was possible to secure long-term security for Greeks residing in Asia Minor, and as a result of their unease with Athenian efforts to increase their power. Once Sparta

withdrew from the Delian League after the Persian Wars, it reformed the Peloponnesian League, which had originally been formed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and provided the blueprint for what was now the Delian League. The Spartan withdrawal from the League had the effect, however, of allowing Athens to establish unchallenged naval and commercial power, unrivaled throughout the Hellenic world. In fact, shortly after the League's inception, Athens began to use the League's navy for its own purposes, which frequently led it into conflict with other, less powerful League members.



**Map of the Athenian Empire c. 431 BCE:** The Delian League was the basis for the Athenian Empire, shown here on the brink of the Peloponnesian War (c. 431 BCE).

## Delian League Rebellions

A series of rebellions occurred between Athens and the smaller city-states that were members of the League. For example, Naxos was the first member of the League to attempt to secede, in approximately 471 BCE. It was later defeated and forced to tear down its defensive city walls, surrender its fleet, and lost voting privileges in the League. Thasos, another League member, also defected when, in 465 BCE, Athens founded the colony of Amphipolis on the Strymon River, which threatened Thasos' interests in the mines of Mt Pangaion. Thasos allied with Persia and petitioned Sparta for assistance, but Sparta was unable to help because it was facing the largest helot revolution in its history.

Nonetheless, relations between Athens and Sparta were soured by the situation. After a three-year long siege, Thasos was recaptured and forced back into the Delian League, though it also lost its defensive walls and fleet, its mines were turned over to Athens, and the city-state was forced to pay yearly tribute and fines. According to Thucydides, the siege of Thasos marked the transformation of the League from an alliance into a hegemony.

## Persia

Following their defeats at the hands of the Greeks, and plagued by internal rebellions that hindered their ability to fight foreign enemies, the Persians adopted a policy of divide-and-rule. Beginning in 449 BCE, the Persians attempted to aggravate the growing tensions between Athens and Sparta, and would even bribe politicians to achieve these aims. Their strategy was to keep the Greeks distracted with in-fighting, so as to stop the tide of counterattacks reaching the Persian Empire. Their strategy was largely successful, and there was no open conflict between the Greeks and Persia until 396 BCE, when the Spartan king Agesilaus briefly invaded Asia Minor.

## 29. Reading: Athens

### Athens

Athens attained its Golden Age under Pericles in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and flourished culturally as the hegemonic power of the Hellenic world.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the factors contributing to the rise and fall of Athens

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- Cleisthenes overthrew the dictator Hippias in 511/510 BCE in order to establish democracy at Athens
- Athens entered its Golden Age in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when it abandoned the pretense of parity and relocated the treasury of the Delian League from Delos to Athens. This money funded the building of

the Athenian Acropolis, put half the Athenian population on the public payroll, and allowed Athens to build and maintain the dominant naval power in the Greek world.

- With the empire's funds, military dominance, and its political fortunes as guided by statesman and orator Pericles, Athens produced some of the most influential and enduring cultural artifacts of the Western tradition.
- Tensions within the Delian League brought about the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE), during which Athens was defeated by its rival, Sparta. Athens lost further power when the armies of Philip II defeated an alliance of Greek city-states.

### *Key Terms*

- **Pericles:** A prominent and influential Greek statesman, orator, and general of Athens during its Golden Age, in the time between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars.
- **Delian League:** Founded in 478 BCE, an association of Greek city-states under the leadership of Athens, whose purpose was to fight the Persian Empire during the Greco-Persian Wars.
- **Acropolis:** A settlement, especially a citadel, built upon an area of elevated ground, frequently a hill with precipitous sides, chosen for purposes of defense. Often the nuclei of large cities of classical antiquity.

## The Rise of Athens (508-448 BCE)

In 514 BCE, the dictator Hippias established stability and prosperity with his rule of Athens, but remained very unpopular as a ruler. With the help of an army from Sparta in 511/510 BCE, he was overthrown by Cleisthenes, a radical politician of aristocratic background who established democracy in Athens.

Prior to the rise of Athens, Sparta, a city-state with a militaristic culture, considered itself the leader of the Greeks, and enforced an hegemony. In 499 BCE, Athens sent troops to aid the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor, who were rebelling against the Persian Empire during the Ionian Revolt. This provoked two Persian invasions of Greece, both of which were repelled under the leadership of the soldier-statesmen Miltiades and Themistocles, during the Persian Wars. In the decades that followed, the Athenians, with the help of the Spartans and other allied Greek city-states, managed to rout the Persians. These victories enabled Athens to bring most of the Aegean, and many other parts of Greece, together in the Delian League, creating an Athenian-dominated alliance from which Sparta and its allies withdrew.

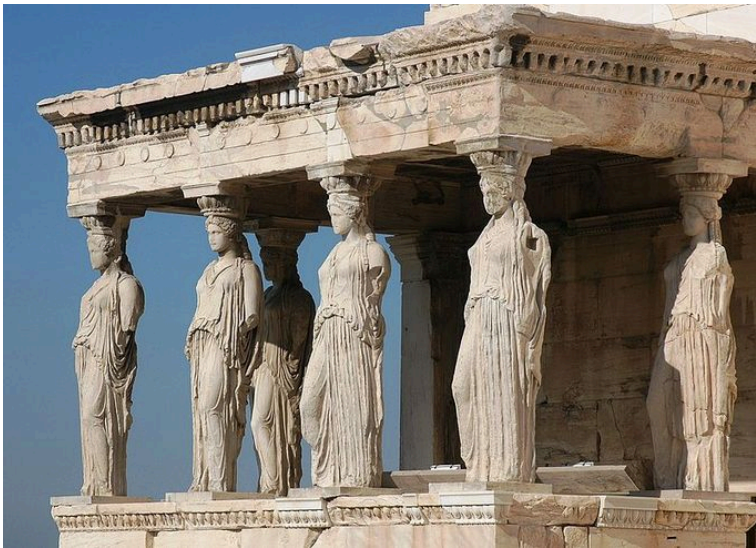


**Greek-Persian Duel**

## Athenian Hegemony and the Age of Pericles

The 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE was a period of Athenian political hegemony, economic growth, and cultural flourishing that is sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of Athens. The latter part of this time period is often called The Age of Pericles. After peace was made with Persia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, what started as an alliance of independent city-states became an Athenian empire. Athens moved to abandon the pretense of parity among its allies, and relocated the Delian League treasury from Delos to Athens, where it funded

the building of the Athenian Acropolis, put half its population on the public payroll, and maintained the dominant naval power in the Greek world. With the empire's funds, military dominance, and its political fortunes as guided by statesman and orator Pericles, Athens produced some of the most influential and enduring cultural artifacts of Western tradition, during what became known as the Golden Age of Athenian democracy, or the Age of Pericles. The playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all lived and worked in Athens during this time, as did historians Herodotus and Thucydides, the physician Hippocrates, and the philosopher Socrates.



Pericles was arguably the most prominent and influential Greek statesman, orator, and general of Athens during its Golden Age. One of his most popular reforms while in power was to allow *thetes* (Athenians without wealth) to occupy public office. Another success of his administration was the creation of the *misthophoria*, a special salary for the citizens that attended the courts as jurors. As Athens' ruler, he helped the city to prosper with a resplendent culture and democratic institutions.



## 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian Political Institutions

The administration of the Athenian state was managed by a group of people referred to as magistrates, who were submitted to rigorous public control and chosen by lot. Only two magistrates were directly elected by the Popular Assembly: *strategos* (or generals), and magistrates of finance. All magistrates served for a year or less, with the exception of Pericles, who was elected year after year to public office. At the end of their service, magistrates were required to give an account of their administration and use of public finances.

The most elite posts in the Athenian political system belonged to archons. In ages past, they served as heads of the Athenian state, but in the Age of Pericles they lost much of their influence and power, though they still presided over tribunals. The Assembly of the People was the first organ of democracy in Athens. In theory, it was composed of all the citizens of Athens. However, it is estimated that the maximum number of participants it witnessed was 6,000. The Assembly met in front of the Acropolis and decided on laws and decrees. Once the Assembly gave its decision in a certain matter, the issue was raised to the Council, or *Boule*, to provide definitive approval.

The Council consisted of 500 members, 50 from each tribe, and functioned as an extension of the Assembly. Council members were chosen by lot in a similar manner to magistrates and supervised the work of the magistrates in addition to other legal projects and administrative details. They also oversaw the city-state's external affairs.

## Athenian Defeat and Conquest By Macedon

Originally intended as an association of Greek city-states to continue the fight against the Persians, the Delian League soon

turned into a vehicle for Athens's own imperial ambitions and empire-building. The resulting tensions brought about the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE), in which Athens was defeated by its rival, Sparta. By the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the northern Greek kingdom of Macedon was becoming dominant in Athenian affairs. In 338 BCE, the armies of Philip II of Macedon defeated an alliance of some of the Greek city-states, including Athens and Thebes, at the Battle of Chaeronea, effectively ending Athenian independence.

## Athenian Society

Classical Athenian society was structured as a democratic patriarchy that strived towards egalitarian ideals.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the structures of Athenian society in the classical period

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The citizens of Athens decided matters of state in

the Assembly of the People, the principle organ of Athen's democracy.

- The Athenian democracy provided a number of governmental resources to its population in order to encourage participation in the democratic process.
- Many governmental posts in classical Athens were chosen by lot, in an attempt to discourage corruption and patronage.
- The Athenian elite lived relatively modestly, and wealth and land were not concentrated in the hands of the few, but rather distributed fairly evenly across the upper classes.
- *Thetes* occupied the lowest rung of Athenian society, but were granted the right to hold public office during the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles.
- Athenian society was a patriarchy; men held all rights and advantages, such as access to education and power.
- Athenian women were dedicated to the care and upkeep of the family home.

### *Key Terms*

- **thetes:** The lowest social class of citizens in ancient Athens.
- **Assembly of the People:** The democratic congregation of classical Athens, which, in theory, brought together all citizens to decide upon proposed laws and decrees.

## Structure of the Athenian Government

In the Assembly of the People, Athenian citizens decided matters of state. In theory, it was composed of all the citizens of Athens; however, it is estimated that the maximum number of participants it included was 6,000. Since many citizens were incapable of exercising political rights, due to their poverty or ignorance, a number of governmental resources existed to encourage inclusivity. For example, the Athenian democracy provided the following to its population:

- Concession of salaries to public functionaries
- Help finding work for the poor
- Land grants for dispossessed villagers
- Public assistance for war widows, invalids, orphans, and indigents

In order to discourage corruption and patronage, most public offices that did not require specialized expertise were appointed by lot rather than by election. Offices were also rotated so that members could serve in all capacities in turn, in order to ensure that political functions were instituted as smoothly as possible regardless of each individual official's capacity.

When the Assembly of the People reached decisions on laws and decrees, the issue was raised to a body called the Council, or *Boule*, to provide definitive approval. The Council consisted of 500 members, 50 from each tribe, and functioned as an extension of the Assembly. Council members, who were chosen by lot, supervised the work of other government officials, legal projects, and other administrative details. They also oversaw the city-state's external affairs.



**The Acropolis:** View of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

## Athenians in the Age of Pericles

The Athenian elite lived modestly and without great luxuries compared to the elites of other ancient societies. Wealth and land ownership was not typically concentrated in the hands of a few people. In fact, 71-73% of the citizen population owned 60-65% of the land. By contrast, *thetes* occupied the lowest social class of citizens in Athens. *Thetes* worked for wages or had less than 200 *medimnoi* as yearly income. Many held crucial roles in the Athenian navy as rowers, due to the preference of many ancient navies to rely on free men to row their galleys. During the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles around 460-450 BCE, *thetes* were granted the right to hold public office.

Boys were educated at home until the age of seven, at which time they began formal schooling. Subjects included reading, writing, mathematics, and music, as well as physical education classes that

were intended to prepare students for future military service. At the age of 18, service in the army was compulsory.

Athenian women were dedicated to the care and upkeep of the family home. Athenian society was a patriarchy; men held all rights and advantages, such as access to education and power. Nonetheless, some women, known as *hetaeras*, did receive an education with the specific purpose of entertaining men, similar to the Japanese geisha tradition. *Hetaeras* were considered higher in status than other women, but lower in status than men. One famous example of a *hetaera* is Pericles' mistress, Aspasia of Miletus, who is said to have debated with prominent writers and thinkers, including Socrates.

# 30. Reading: Culture in Classical Greece

## Classical Greek Philosophy

The three most famous Classical Greek philosophers are Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the main philosophical beliefs of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Socrates is best known for having pursued a probing question-and-answer style of examination on a number of topics, usually attempting to arrive at a defensible and attractive definition of a virtue.
- In 399 BCE, Socrates was charged for his

philosophical inquiries, convicted, and sentenced to death.

- Plato was a student of Socrates, and is the author of numerous dialogues and letters, as well as one of the primary sources available to modern scholars on Socrates' life.
- In his defining work, *The Republic*, Plato reaches the conclusion that a utopian city is likely impossible because philosophers would refuse to rule and the people would refuse to compel them to do so.
- Aristotle was a student of Plato, the tutor of Alexander the Great, and founder of the Lyceum and Peripatetic School of philosophy in Athens. He wrote on a number of subjects, including logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, rhetoric, politics, and botany.

### *Key Terms*

- **allegory of the cave:** A paradoxical analogy wherein Socrates argues that the invisible world is the most intelligible, and the visible world is the least knowable and obscure. Plato has Socrates describe a gathering of people who have lived chained to the wall of a cave all of their lives, facing a blank wall upon which shadows are projected. The shadows are as close as the prisoners get to viewing reality.
- **aporia:** In philosophy, a paradox or state of puzzlement; in rhetoric, a useful expression of doubt.
- **Socrates:** A classical Greek (Athenian) philosopher credited as one of the founders of Western

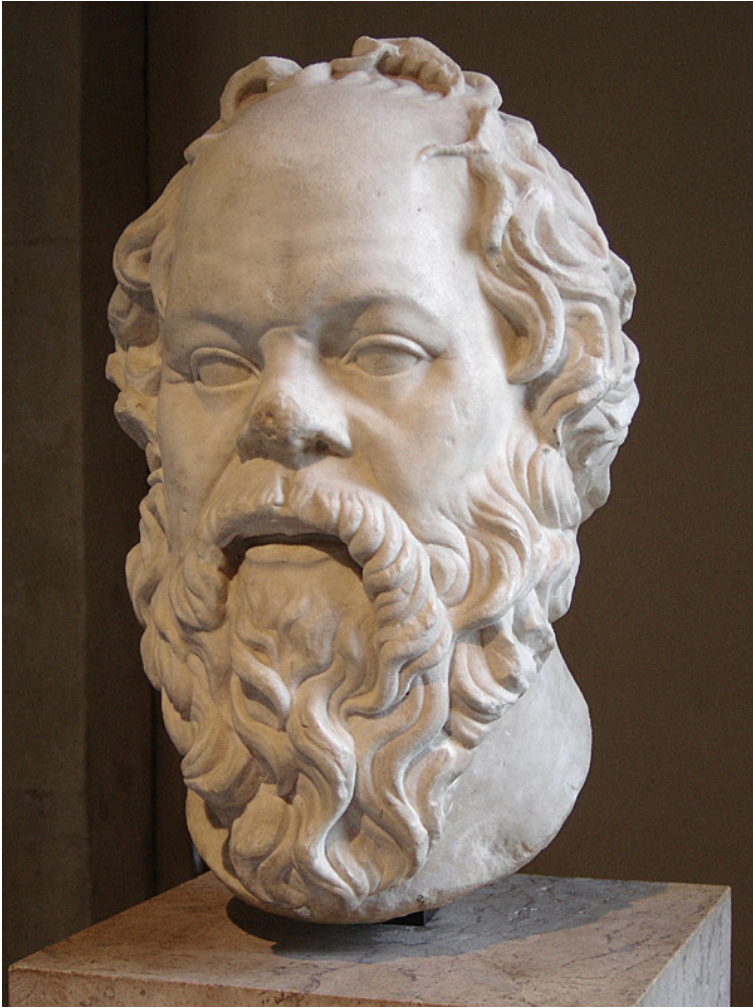


philosophy. Known for a question-answer style of examination.

- **Plato:** The student of Socrates and author of *The Republic*. A philosopher and mathematician in classical Greece.
- **Aristotle:** The student of Plato, tutor to Alexander the Great, and founder of the Lyceum. A Greek philosopher who wrote on a number of topics, including logic, ethics, and metaphysics.

Classical Greece saw a flourishing of philosophers, especially in Athens during its Golden Age. Of these philosophers, the most famous are Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

## Socrates



**Socrates:** Bust of Socrates, currently in the Louvre.

Socrates, born in Athens in the 5th century BCE, marks a watershed

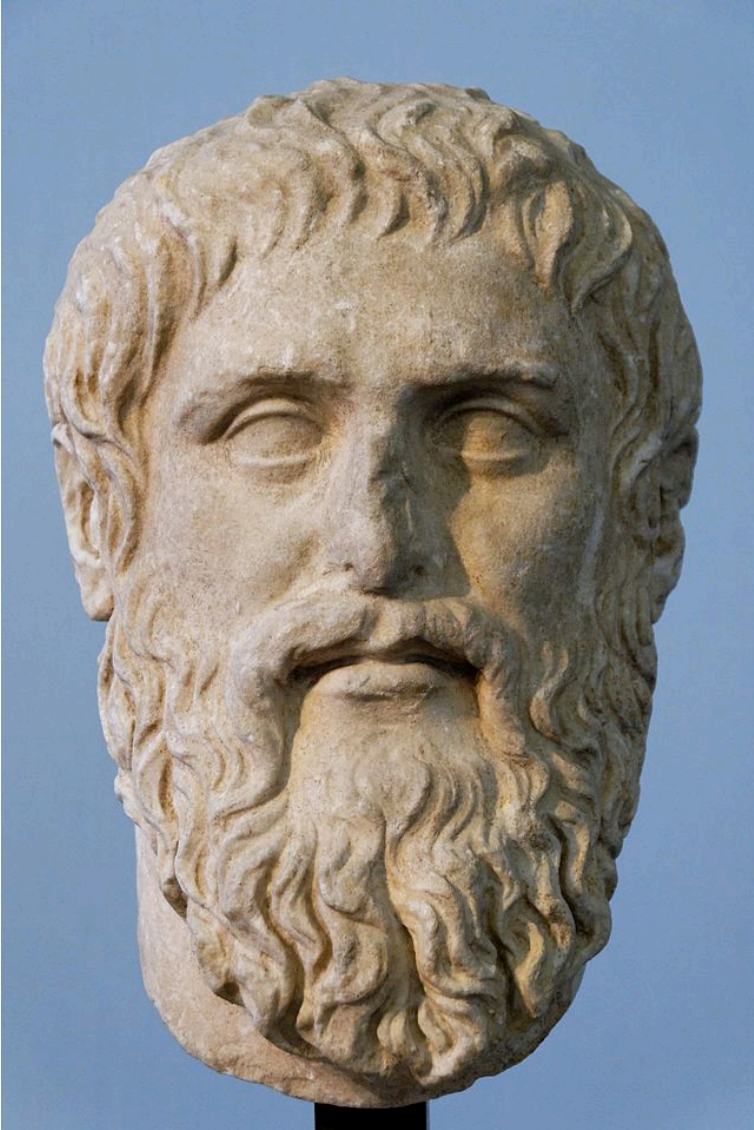
in ancient Greek philosophy. Athens was a center of learning, with sophists and philosophers traveling from across Greece to teach rhetoric, astronomy, cosmology, geometry, and the like. The great statesman Pericles was closely associated with these new teachings, however, and his political opponents struck at him by taking advantage of a conservative reaction against the philosophers. It became a crime to investigate issues above the heavens or below the earth because they were considered impious. While other philosophers, such as Anaxagoras, were forced to flee Athens, Socrates was the only documented individual charged under this law, convicted, and sentenced to death in 399 BCE. In the version of his defense speech presented by Plato, he claims that the envy others experience on account of his being a philosopher is what will lead to his conviction.

Many conversations involving Socrates (as recounted by Plato and Xenophon) end without having reached a firm conclusion, a style known as *aporia*. Socrates is said to have pursued this probing question-and-answer style of examination on a number of topics, usually attempting to arrive at a defensible and attractive definition of a virtue. While Socrates' recorded conversations rarely provide a definitive answer to the question under examination, several maxims or paradoxes for which he has become known recur. Socrates taught that no one desires what is bad, and so if anyone does something that truly is bad, it must be unwillingly or out of ignorance; consequently, all virtue is knowledge. He frequently remarks on his own ignorance (claiming that he does not know what courage is, for example). Plato presents Socrates as distinguishing himself from the common run of mankind by the fact that, while they know nothing noble and good, they do not know that they do not know, whereas Socrates knows and acknowledges that he knows nothing noble and good.

Socrates was morally, intellectually, and politically at odds with many of his fellow Athenians. When he was on trial, he used his method of *elenchos*, a dialectic method of inquiry that resembles the scientific method, to demonstrate to the jurors that their moral

values are wrong-headed. He tells them they are concerned with their families, careers, and political responsibilities when they ought to be worried about the “welfare of their souls.” Socrates’ assertion that the gods had singled him out as a divine emissary seemed to provoke irritation, if not outright ridicule. Socrates also questioned the Sophistic doctrine that *arete* (virtue) can be taught. He liked to observe that successful fathers (such as the prominent military general Pericles) did not produce sons of their own quality. Socrates argued that moral excellence was more a matter of divine bequest than parental nurture.

## Plato



**Plato:** A copy of Plato's portrait bust by Silanion.

Plato was an Athenian of the generation after Socrates. Ancient tradition ascribes 36 dialogues and 13 letters to him, although of these only 24 of the dialogues are now universally recognized as authentic. Most modern scholars believe that at least 28 dialogues, and two of the letters, were in fact written by Plato, although all of the 36 dialogues have some defenders. Plato's dialogues feature Socrates, although not always as the leader of the conversation. Along with Xenophon, Plato is the primary source of information about Socrates' life and beliefs, and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.

Much of what is known about Plato's doctrines is derived from what Aristotle reports about them, and many of Plato's political doctrines are derived from Aristotle's works, *The Republic*, the *Laws*, and the *Statesman*. *The Republic* contains the suggestion that there will not be justice in cities unless they are ruled by philosopher kings; those responsible for enforcing the laws are compelled to hold their women, children, and property in common; and the individual is taught to pursue the common good through noble lies. *The Republic* determines that such a city is likely impossible, however, and generally assumes that philosophers would refuse to rule if the citizenry asked them to, and moreover, the citizenry would refuse to compel philosophers to rule in the first place.

"Platonism" is a term coined by scholars to refer to the intellectual consequences of denying, as Plato's Socrates often does, the reality of the material world. In several dialogues, most notably *The Republic*, Socrates inverts the common man's intuition about what is knowable and what is real. While most people take the objects of their senses to be real if anything is, Socrates is contemptuous of people who think that something has to be graspable in the hands to be real. Socrates's idea that reality is unavailable to those who use their senses is what puts him at odds with the common man and with common sense. Socrates says that he who sees with his eyes is blind, and this idea is most famously captured in his allegory of the cave, a paradoxical analogy wherein Socrates argues that the invisible world is the most intelligible and

that the visible world is the least knowable and most obscure.

In the allegory, Socrates describes a gathering of people who have lived chained to the wall of a cave facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall from the fire burning behind them, and the people begin to name and describe the shadows, which are the closest images they have to reality. Socrates then explains that a philosopher is like a prisoner released from that cave who comes to understand the shadows on the wall are not reality.

## Aristotle



**Aristotle:** Roman copy in marble of a Greek bronze bust of Aristotle by Lysippus, c. 330 BCE. The alabaster mantle is modern.

Aristotle moved to Athens from his native Stageira in 367 BCE, and



began to study philosophy, and perhaps even rhetoric, under Isocrates. He eventually enrolled at Plato's Academy. He left Athens approximately twenty years later to study botany and zoology, became a tutor of Alexander the Great, and ultimately returned to Athens a decade later to establish his own school, the Lyceum. He is the founder of the Peripatetic School of philosophy, which aims to glean facts from experiences and explore the "why" in all things. In other words, he advocates learning by induction.

At least 29 of Aristotle's treatises have survived, known as the *corpus Aristotelicum*, and address a variety of subjects including logic, physics, optics, metaphysics, ethics, rhetoric, politics, poetry, botany, and zoology. Aristotle is often portrayed as disagreeing with his teacher, Plato. He criticizes the regimes described in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and refers to the theory of forms as "empty words and poetic metaphors." He preferred utilizing empirical observation and practical concerns in his works. Aristotle did not consider virtue to be simple knowledge as Plato did, but founded in one's nature, habit, and reason. Virtue was gained by acting in accordance with nature and moderation.

## Classical Greek Poetry and History

Homer, one of the greatest Greek poets, significantly influenced classical Greek historians as their field turned increasingly towards scientific evidence-gathering and analysis of cause and effect.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how epic poetry influenced the development of classical Greek historical texts

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The formative influence of the Homeric epics in shaping Greek culture was widely recognized, and Homer was described as the teacher of Greece.
- The *Iliad*, sometimes referred to as the *Song of Ilium* or *Song of Ilium*, is set during the Trojan War and recounts the battles and events surrounding a quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles.
- Herodotus is referred to as “The Father of History,” and is the first historian known to have broken from Homeric tradition in order to treat historical subjects as a method of investigation arranged into a historiographic narrative.
- Thucydides, who had been trained in rhetoric, provided a model of historical prose-writing based more firmly in factual progression of a narrative, whereas Herodotus, due to frequent digressions and asides, appeared to minimize his authorial control.
- Thucydides is sometimes known as the father of “scientific history,” or an early precursor to 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific positivism, because of his strict adherence to evidence-gathering and analysis of historical cause and effect without reference to divine intervention.
- Despite its heavy political slant, scholars cite strong literary and philosophical influences in Thucydides’ work.

## *Key Terms*

- **Homer:** A Greek poet of the 7th or 8th century BCE; author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
- **dactylic hexameter:** A form of meter in poetry or a rhythmic scheme. Traditionally associated with the quantitative meter of classical epic poetry in both Greek and Latin, and consequently considered to be the grand style of classical poetry.

## Homer

In the Western classical tradition, Homer is the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and is revered as the greatest of ancient Greek epic poets. These epics lie at the beginning of the Western canon of literature, and have had an enormous influence on the history of literature. Whether and when Homer lived is unknown. The ancient Greek author Herodotus estimates that Homer lived 400 years before his own time, which would place him at around 850 BCE, while other ancient sources claim that he lived much nearer to the supposed time of the Trojan War, in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Most modern researchers place Homer in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.



**Homer:** Idealized portrayal of Homer dating to the Hellenistic period; located at the British Museum.

The formative influence of the Homeric epics in shaping Greek culture was widely recognized, and Homer was described as the “Teacher of Greece.” Homer’s works, some 50% of which are speeches, provided models in persuasive speaking and writing that were emulated throughout the ancient and medieval Greek worlds.

Fragments of Homer account for nearly half of all identifiable Greek literary papyrus finds.

## The Iliad

The *Iliad* (sometimes referred to as the *Song of Ilion* or *Song of Ilium*) is an ancient Greek epic poem in dactylic hexameter. Set during the Trojan War (the ten-year siege of the city of Troy (Ilium) by a coalition of Greek states), it tells of the battles and events surrounding a quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles. Although the story covers only a few weeks in the final year of the war, the *Iliad* mentions or alludes to many of the Greek legends about the siege. The epic narrative describes events prophesied for the future, such as Achilles' looming death and the sack of Troy. The events are prefigured and alluded to more and more vividly, so that when the story reaches an end, the poem has told a more or less complete tale of the Trojan War.

Nineteenth century excavations at Hisarlik provided scholars with historical evidence for the events of the Trojan War, as told by Homer in the *Iliad*. Additionally, linguistic studies into oral epic traditions in nearby civilizations, and the deciphering of Linear B in the 1950s, provided further evidence that the Homeric poems could have been derived from oral transmissions of long-form tales about a war that actually took place. The likely historicity of the *Iliad* as a piece of literature, however, must be balanced against the creative license that would have been taken over years of transmission, as well as the alteration of historical fact to conform with tribal preferences and provide entertainment value to its intended audiences.

## Herodotus

Herodotus was a Greek historian who was born in Halicarnassus (modern-day Bodrum, Turkey) and lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. He was a contemporary of Socrates. He is referred to as “The Father of History” and is the first historian known to have broken from Homeric tradition in order to treat historical subjects as a method of investigation arranged into a historiographic narrative. His only known work is a history on the origins of the Greco-Persian Wars, entitled, *The Histories*. Herodotus states that he only reports that which was told to him, and some of his stories are fanciful and/or inaccurate; however, the majority of his information appears to be accurate.

Athenian tragic poets and storytellers appear to have provided heavy inspiration for Herodotus, as did Homer. Herodotus appears to have drawn on an Ionian tradition of storytelling, collecting and interpreting oral histories he happened upon during his travels in much the same way that oral poetry formed the basis for much of Homer’s works. While these oral histories often contained folk-tale motifs and fed into a central moral, they also related verifiable facts relating to geography, anthropology, and history. For this reason, Herodotus drew criticism from his contemporaries, being touted as a mere storyteller and even a falsifier of information. In contrast to this type of approach, Thucydides, who had been trained in rhetoric, provided a model of historical prose-writing based more firmly in factual progression of a narrative, whereas Herodotus, due to frequent digressions and asides, appeared to minimize his authorial control.

## Thucydides

Thucydides was an Athenian historian and general. His *History of*

the *Peloponnesian War* recounts the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE war between Athens and Sparta. Thucydides is sometimes known as the father of “scientific history,” or an early precursor to 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific positivism, because of his strict adherence to evidence-gathering and analysis of historical cause and effect without reference to divine intervention. He is also considered the father of political realism, which is a school of thought within the realm of political science that views the political behavior of individuals and the relations between states to be governed by self-interest and fear. More generally, Thucydides’ texts show concern with understanding why individuals react the way they do during such crises as plague, massacres, and civil war.

Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides did not view his historical accounts as a source of moral lessons, but rather as a factual reporting of contemporary political and military events. Thucydides viewed life in political terms rather than moral terms, and viewed history in political terms. Thucydides also tended to omit, or at least downplay, geographic and ethnographic aspects of events from his work, whereas Herodotus recorded all information as part of the narrative. Thucydides’ accounts are generally held to be more unambiguous and reliable than those of Herodotus. However, unlike his predecessor, Thucydides does not reveal his sources. Curiously, although subsequent Greek historians, such as Plutarch, held up Thucydides’ writings as a model for scholars of their field, many of them continued to view history as a source of moral lessons, as did Herodotus.

Despite its heavy political slant, scholars cite strong literary and philosophical influences in Thucydides’ work. In particular, the *History of the Peloponnesian War* echoes the narrative tradition of Homer, and draws heavily from epic poetry and tragedy to construct what is essentially a positivistic account of world events. Additionally, it brings to the forefront themes of justice and suffering in a similar manner to the philosophical texts of Aristotle and Plato.

# Classical Greek Theater

Classical Greek theater, whether tragic or comic, has had great influence on modern literature and drama.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the common themes found in classical Greek plays

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The city-state of Athens was the center of cultural power during this period, and held a drama festival in honor of the god Dionysus, called the Dionysia.
- Two dramatic genres to emerge from this era of Greek theater were tragedy and comedy, both of which rose to prominence around 500-490 BCE.
- Greek tragedy is an extension of the ancient rites carried out in honor of Dionysus; it heavily influenced the theater of ancient Rome and the Renaissance.
- Tragic plots were often based upon myths from the oral traditions of archaic epics, and took the form of



narratives presented by actors.

- Aeschylus was the first tragedian to codify the basic rules of tragic drama, and is considered by many to be the “father of tragedy.” Athenian comedy is divided into three periods: Old Comedy, Middle Comedy, and New Comedy.

### *Key Terms*

- **chorus:** In the context of Greek theatre, a homogeneous, non-individualized group of performers who comment, with a collective voice, on dramatic action.
- **deus ex machina:** A plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable problem is suddenly and abruptly resolved by the unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability, or object.
- **monody:** In the context of ancient Greek theater and literature, lyric poetry sung by a single performer rather than by a chorus.

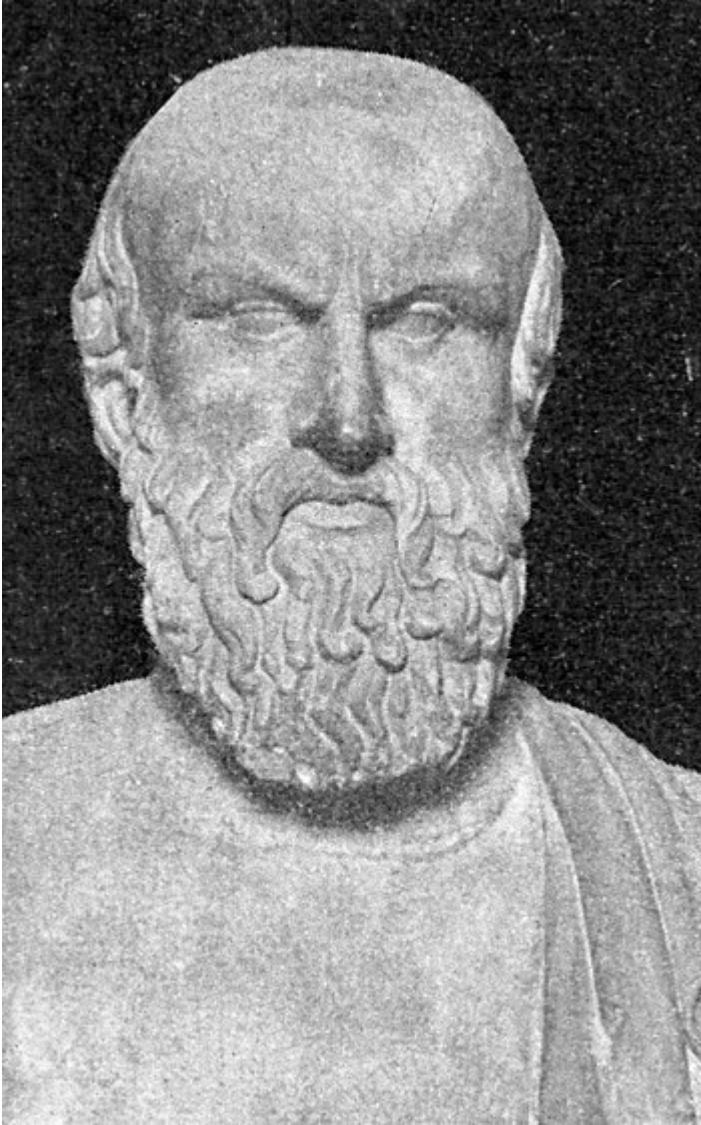
The theatrical culture of ancient Greece flourished from approximately 700 BCE onward. The city-state of Athens was the center of cultural power during this period and held a drama festival in honor of the god Dionysus, called the Dionysia. This festival was exported to many of Athen's numerous colonies to promote a common cultural identity across the empire. Two dramatic genres to emerge from this era of Greek theater were tragedy and comedy, both of which rose to prominence around 500-490 BCE.

## Greek Tragedy

Sometimes referred to as Attic tragedy, Greek tragedy is an extension of the ancient rites carried out in honor of Dionysus, and it heavily influenced the theater of ancient Rome and the Renaissance. Tragic plots were often based upon myths from the oral traditions of archaic epics, and took the form of narratives presented by actors. Tragedies typically began with a prologue, in which one or more characters introduce the plot and explain the background to the ensuing story. The prologue is then followed by *paraodos*, after which the story unfolds through three or more episodes. The episodes are interspersed by *stasima*, or choral interludes that explain or comment on the situation that is developing. The tragedy then ends with an *exodus*, which concludes the story.

## Aeschylus and the Codification of Tragic Drama

Aeschylus was the first tragedian to codify the basic rules of tragic drama. He is often described as the father of tragedy. He is credited with inventing the trilogy, a series of three tragedies that tell one long story. Trilogies were often performed in sequence over the course of a day, from sunrise to sunset. At the end of the last play, a satyr play was staged to revive the spirits of the public after they had witnessed the heavy events of the tragedy that had preceded it.



**Marble bust of Aeschylus**

According to Aristotle, Aeschylus also expanded the number of

actors in theater to allow for the dramatization of conflict on stage. Previously, it was standard for only one character to be present and interact with the homogeneous chorus, which commented in unison on the dramatic action unfolding on stage. Aeschylus's works show an evolution and enrichment in dialogue, contrasts, and theatrical effects over time, due to the rich competition that existed among playwrights of this era. Unfortunately, his plays, and those of Sophocles and Euripides, are the only works of classical Greek literature to have survived mostly intact, so there are not many rival texts to examine his works against.

## The Reforms of Sophocles



**Cast of Sophocles' bust in the Pushkin Museum**

Sophocles was one such rival who triumphed against the famous

and previously unchallenged Aeschylus. Sophocles introduced a third actor to staged tragedies, increased the chorus to 15 members, broke the cycle of trilogies (making possible the production of independent dramas), and introduced the concept of scenery to theater. Compared to the works of Aeschylus, choruses in Sophocles' plays did less explanatory work, shifting the focus to deeper character development and staged conflict. The events that took place were often left unexplained or unjustified, forcing the audience to reflect upon the human condition.

## The Realism of Euripides

Euripides differs from Aeschylus and Sophocles in his search for technical experimentation and increased focus on feelings as a mechanism to elaborate the unfolding of tragic events. In Euripides' tragedies, there are three experimental aspects that reoccur. The first is the transition of the prologue to a monologue performed by an actor informing spectators of a story's background. The second is the introduction of *deus ex machina*, or a plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable problem is suddenly and abruptly resolved by the unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability, or object. Finally, the use of a chorus was minimized in favor of a monody sung by the characters.



## **Statue of Euripides**

Another novelty introduced by Euripidean drama is the realism with which characters' psychological dynamics are portrayed. Unlike in Aeschylus or Sophocles' works, heroes in Euripides' plays were portrayed as insecure characters troubled by internal conflict rather than simply resolute. Female protagonists were also used to portray tormented sensitivity and irrational impulses that collided with the world of reason.

## Greek Comedy

As Aristotle wrote in his *Poetics*, comedy is defined by the representation of laughable people, and involves some kind of blunder or ugliness that does not cause pain or disaster. Athenian comedy is divided into three periods: Old Comedy, Middle Comedy, and New Comedy. The Old Comedy period is largely represented by the 11 surviving plays of Aristophanes, whereas much of the work of the Middle Comedy period has been lost. New Comedy is known primarily by the substantial papyrus fragments of Menander. In general, the divisions between these periods is largely arbitrary, and ancient Greek comedy almost certainly developed constantly over the years.

## Old Comedy and Aristophanes

Aristophanes, the most important Old Comic dramatist, wrote plays that abounded with political satire, as well as sexual and scatological innuendo. He lampooned the most important personalities and



institutions of his day, including Socrates in *The Clouds*. His works are characterized as definitive to the genre of comedy even today.

## Middle Comedy

Although the line between Old and Middle Comedy is not clearly marked chronologically, there are some important thematic differences between the two. For instance, the role of the chorus in Middle Comedy was largely diminished to the point where it had no influence on the plot. Additionally, public characters were no longer impersonated or personified onstage, and objects of ridicule tended to be more general rather than personal, and in many instances, literary rather than political. For some time, mythological burlesque was popular among Middle Comic poets. Stock characters also were employed during this period. In-depth assessment and critique of the styling of Middle Comedy is difficult, given the lack of complete bodies of work. However, given the revival of this style in Sicily and Magna Graecia, it appears that the works of this period did have considerable widespread literary and social impact.

## New Comedy

The style of New Comedy is comparable to what is contemporarily referred to as situation comedy or comedy of manners. The playwrights of Greek New Comedy built upon the devices, characters, and situations their predecessors had developed. Prologues to shape the audience's understanding of events, messengers' speeches to announce offstage action, and *ex machina* endings were all well established tropes that were used in New Comedies. Satire and farce occupied less importance in the works of this time, and mythological themes and subjects were

replaced by everyday concerns. Gods and goddesses were, at best, personified abstractions rather than actual characters, and no miracles or metamorphoses occurred. For the first time, love became a principal element in this type of theater.

Three playwrights are well known from this period: Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus. Menander was the most successful of the New Comedians. Menander's comedies focused on the fears and foibles of the ordinary man, as opposed to satirical accounts of political and public life, which perhaps lent to his comparative success within the genre. His comedies are the first to demonstrate the five-act structure later to become common in modern plays. Philemon's comedies dwell on philosophical issues, whereas Diphilus was noted for his use of farcical violence.

## Classical Greek Architecture

Classical Greek architecture can be divided into three separate styles: the Doric Order, the Ionic Order, and the Corinthian Order.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the distinguishing characteristics of Classical Greek Architecture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Classical Greek architecture is best represented by substantially intact ruins of temples and open-air theaters.
- The architectural style of classical Greece can be divided into three separate orders: the Doric Order, the Ionic Order, and the Corinthian Order. All three styles have had a profound impact on Western architecture of later periods.
- While the three orders of Greek architecture are most easily recognizable by their capitals, the orders also governed the form, proportions, details, and relationships of the columns, entablature, pediment, and stylobate.
- The Parthenon is considered the most important surviving building of classical Greece, and the zenith of Doric Order architecture.

### *Key Terms*

- **stylobate:** In classical Greek architecture, a stylobate is the top step of a stepped platform upon which colonnades of temple columns are placed. In other words, the stylobate comprises the temple flooring.

- **capitals:** In architecture, a capital forms the topmost member of a column.
- **entablature:** An entablature is the superstructure of moldings and bands that lay horizontally above columns and rest on capitals.
- **pediment:** A pediment is an element in classical, neoclassical, and baroque architecture that is placed above the horizontal structure of an entablature, and is typically supported by columns.

Classical Greek architecture is highly formalized in structure and decoration, and is best known for its temples, many of which are found throughout the region as substantially intact ruins. Each classical Greek temple appears to have been conceived as a sculptural entity within the landscape, and is usually raised on higher ground so that its proportions and the effects of light on its surface can be viewed from multiple angles. Open-air theaters are also an important type of building that survives throughout the Hellenic world, with the earliest dating from approximately 525–480 BCE.

Greek architectural style can be divided into three separate orders: the Doric Order, the Ionic Order, and the Corinthian Order. These styles have had a profound impact on Western architecture of later periods. In particular, the architecture of ancient Rome grew out of Greek architecture. Revivals of Classicism have also brought about renewed interest in the architectural styles of ancient Greece. While the three orders of Greek architecture are most easily recognizable by their capitals, the orders also governed the form, proportions, details, and relationships of the columns, entablature, pediment, and stylobate. Orders were applied to the whole range of buildings and monuments.

# The Doric Order

The Doric Order developed on mainland Greece and spread to Italy. It is most easily recognized by its capital, which appears as a circular cushion placed on top of a column onto which a lintel rests. In early examples of the Doric Order, the cushion is splayed and flat, but over time, it became more refined, deeper, and with a greater curve.

Doric columns almost always feature fluting down the length of the column, numbering up to 20 flutes. The flutes meet at sharp edges, called arrises. Doric columns typically have no bases, with the exception of a few examples dating from the Hellenistic period. Columns of an early Doric temple, such as the Temple of Apollo at Syracuse, could have a column height to an entablature ratio of 2:1, and a column height to a base diameter ratio of only 4:1. Later, a column height to a diameter ratio of 6:1 became more usual, and there is a column height to an entablature ratio at the Parthenon oapproximately 3:1.

Doric entablatures consist of three parts: the architrave, the frieze, and the cornice. The architrave is composed of stone lintels that span the space between columns. On top of this rests the frieze, one of the major areas of sculptural decoration. The frieze is divided into triglyps and metopes. The triglyphs have three vertical grooves, similar to columnar fluting, and below them are guttae, small strips that appear to connect the triglyphs to the architrave below. The triglyphs are located above the center of each capital and the center of each lintel.

Pediments in the Doric style were decorated with figures in relief in early examples; however, by the time the sculptures on the Parthenon were created, many pediment decorations were freestanding.

# The Parthenon

The Parthenon is considered the most important surviving building of classical Greece and the zenith of Doric Order architecture. It is a former temple on the Athenian Acropolis dedicated to the patron goddess of Athens, Athena. Construction began on the Parthenon in 447 BCE, when the Athenian Empire was at its peak. Construction was completed in 438 BCE, but decoration of the building continued until 432 BCE. Although most architectural elements of the Parthenon belong to the Doric Order, a continuous sculptured frieze in low relief that sits above the architrave belongs to the Ionic style.



**The Parthenon:** *The Parthenon under restoration in 2008.*

## The Ionic Order

The Ionic Order coexisted with the Doric Order and was favored by Greek cities in Ionia, Asia Minor, and the Aegean Islands. It did not evolve into a clearly defined style until the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Early Ionic temples in Asia Minor were particularly ambitious in scale.

The Ionic Order is most easily identified by its voluted capital. The cushion placed on top of the column is similarly shaped to that of the Doric Order, but is decorated with a stylized ornament and surmounted by a horizontal band that scrolls under to either side.

Ionic Order columns are fluted with narrow, shallow flutes that do not meet at a sharp edge, but have a flat band between them. The usual number of flutes is 24, but there can be as many as 44. The architrave is not always decorated, but more often it rises in three outwardly-stepped bands. The frieze runs in a continuous band and is separated from other members by rows of small projecting blocks.

The Ionic Order is lighter in appearance than the Doric Order, with columns that have a 9:1 ratio, and the diameter and the whole entablature appears much narrower and less heavy than those of the Doric. Decorations were distributed with some variation, and Ionic entablatures often featured formalized bands of motifs. The external frieze often contained a continuous band of figurative sculpture or ornament, though this was not always the case. Caryatids—draped female figures used as supporting members to the entablature—were also a feature of the Ionic Order.



**The Erechtheum on the Acropolis of Athens, Greece**

Corner capital in the Ionic style with a diagonal volute, showing also details of the fluting separated by fillets.

## The Corinthian Order

The Corinthian Order grew directly from the Ionic in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and was initially of a very similar style and proportion, with the only distinguishing factor being its more ornate capitals. The capitals of the Corinthian Order were much deeper than those of the Doric and Ionic Orders. They were shaped like a bell-shaped mixing bowl and ornamented with a double row of acanthus leaves above which rose splayed, voluted tendrils. The ratio of column height to diameter of the Corinthian Order is generally 10:1, with the capital taking up more than a tenth of the



height. The ratio of capital height to diameter is generally about 1:16:1.

Initially the Corinthian Order was used internally in such sites as the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae. By the late 300s, features of the Corinthian Order began to be used externally at sites such as the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates and the Temple of Zeus Olympia, both in Athens. During the Hellenistic period, Corinthian columns were sometimes built without fluting. The Corinthian Order became popular among the Romans, who added a number of refinements and decorative details.

## Scientific Advancements in the Classical Period

The Hellenistic Period witnessed significant scientific advancements, due to the mixing of Greek and Asian culture and royal patronage.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the various scientific advancements made during the Hellenistic period

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Great seats of learning rose during the Hellenistic Period, including those at Alexandria and Antioch.
- Scientific inquiries were often sponsored by royal patrons.
- The discoveries of several Greek mathematicians, including Pythagoras and Euclid, are still used in mathematical teaching today. Important developments include the basic rules of geometry, the idea of a formal mathematical proof, and discoveries in number theory, mathematical analysis, and applied mathematics.
- The Greeks also developed the field of astronomy, which they treated as a branch of mathematics to a highly sophisticated level.
- Hippocrates was a physician of the classical period, and is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine. Most notably, he founded the Hippocratic school of medicine, which revolutionized medicine in ancient Greece by establishing it as a discipline distinct from other fields, and making medicine a profession.

### *Key Terms*

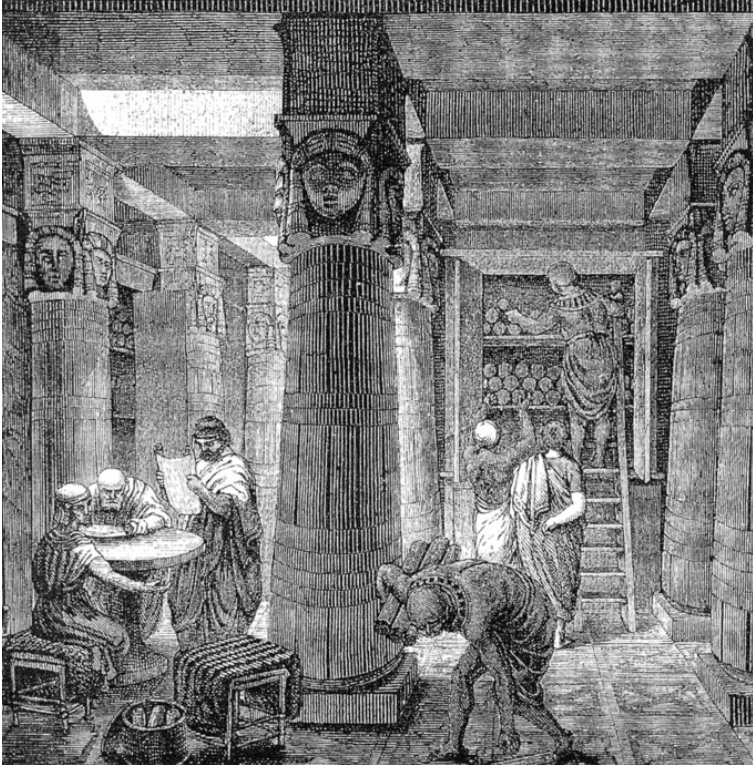
- **Hellenistic period:** The period of ancient Greek and Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE and the emergence of the Roman Empire, as signified by the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE.
- **Alexandria:** An important seat of learning within the Hellenistic civilization and the capital of Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Egypt for almost 1,000 years, until the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 641 CE.

## Hellenistic Culture

Hellenistic culture produced seats of learning in Alexandria, Egypt and Antioch, Syria, along with Greek-speaking populations across several monarchies. Hellenistic science differed from Greek science in at least two ways. First, it benefited from the cross-fertilization of Greek ideas with those that had developed in the larger Hellenistic world. Secondly, to some extent, it was supported by royal patrons in the kingdoms founded by Alexander's successors.

Especially important to Hellenistic science was the city of Alexandria in Egypt, which became a major center of scientific research in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Two institutions established there during the reigns of Ptolemy I Soter (reigned 323-283 BCE) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (reigned 281-246 BCE) were the Library and the Museum. Unlike Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, these

institutions were officially supported by the Ptolemies, although the extent of patronage could be precarious, depending on the policies of the current ruler.



**The Great Library of Alexandria:** The Great Library of Alexandria, O. Von Corven. 19th century.

## Mathematics and Astronomy

The discoveries of several Greek mathematicians, including Pythagoras and Euclid, are still used in mathematical teaching today. Important developments include the basic rules of geometry,

the idea of a formal mathematical proof, and discoveries in number theory, mathematical analysis, and applied mathematics. Ancient Greek mathematicians also came close to establishing integral calculus.

The Greeks also developed the field of astronomy, which they treated as a branch of mathematics, to a highly sophisticated level. The first geometrical, three-dimensional models to explain the apparent motion of the planets was developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, by Eudoxus of Cnidus and Callippus of Cyzicus. Their younger contemporary, Heraclides Ponticus, proposed that the Earth rotates around its axis. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, Aristarchus of Samos was the first to suggest a heliocentric system. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, Hipparchus of Nicea made a number of contributions, including the first measurement of precession and the compilation of the first star catalog, in which he proposed the modern system of apparent magnitudes.

The Antikythera mechanism, a device for calculating the movements of the planets, was the first ancestor of the astronomical computer. It dates from about 80 BCE, and was discovered in an ancient shipwreck off the Greek island of Antikythera. The device became famous for its use of a differential gear, which was previously believed to have been invented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the miniaturization and complexity of its parts, which has been compared to that of clocks produced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## The Medical Field

The ancient Greeks also made important discoveries in the medical field. Hippocrates was a physician of the classical period, and is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine. He is sometimes even referred to as the “father of medicine.” Most notably, he founded the Hippocratic school of

medicine, which revolutionized medicine in ancient Greece by establishing it as a discipline distinct from other fields, and making medicine a profession.

Other notable Hellenistic scientists and their achievements include:

- Herophilos (335-280 BCE), who was the first to base medical conclusions on dissection of the human body and to describe the nervous system
- Archimedes (c. 287-212 BCE), a geometer, physicist, and engineer who laid the foundations of hydrostatics and statics, and explained the principle of the lever
- Eratosthenes (c. 276 BCE-195/194 BCE), who measured the distance between the Sun and the Earth, as well as the size of the Earth

# 31. Reading: The Peloponnesian War

## Introduction to the Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War provided a dramatic end to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, shattering religious and cultural taboos, devastating vast swathes of countryside, and destroying whole cities.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the events of the Peloponnesian War

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) was fought between Athens and its empire, known as the Delian League, and the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta.
- During this conflict, Greek warfare evolved from an originally limited and formalized form of conflict, to

all-out struggles between city-states, with large-scale atrocities.

- During the first phase, known as the Archidamian War, Sparta launched repeated invasions of Attica while Athens took advantage of its naval supremacy to raid the Peloponnese coast.
- Initially Athens' strategy, as guided by Pericles, was to avoid open battle with the more numerous and better trained Spartan hoplites, and to instead rely on Athens' superior naval fleet.
- In the aftermath of a devastating plague, Athenians turned against Pericles's defensive strategy in favor of a more aggressive one that would bring war directly to Sparta and its allies.
- The Peace of Nicias was signed in 421 BCE, and concluded the first phase of the war. The treaty was undermined, however, by continued fighting and calls for revolt throughout the Peloponnese.
- The destruction of Athens' fleet at Aegospotami during the Decelean War effectively ended the Peloponnesian War. Athens surrendered a year later in 404 BCE.

### *Key Terms*

- **helot:** Helots were a subjugated population group that formed the main population of Laconia and Messenia, the territories controlled by Sparta.
- **hoplites:** Hoplites were citizen-soldiers of Ancient Greek city-states who were primarily armed with

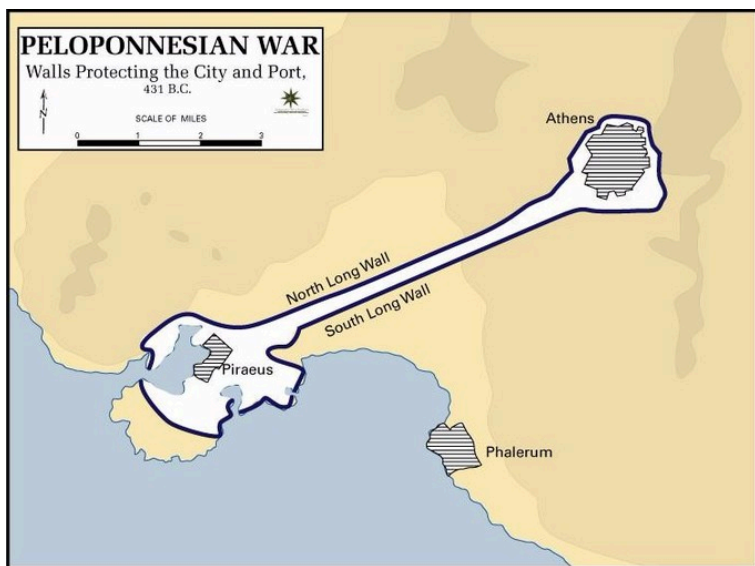


spears and shields.

The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) was fought between Athens and its empire, known as the Delian League, and the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta. During this conflict, Greek warfare evolved from an originally limited and formalized form of conflict, to all-out struggles between city-states, complete with large-scale atrocities. The Peloponnesian War provided a dramatic end to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, shattering religious and cultural taboos, devastating vast swathes of countryside, and destroying whole cities. Historians have traditionally divided the war into several different phases.

## The Archidamian War

During the first phase, known as the Archidamian War, Sparta launched repeated invasions of Attica while Athens took advantage of its naval supremacy to raid the Peloponnese coast. Sparta and its allies, with the exception of Corinth, were almost exclusively land-based powers, whereas the Athens empire, though based on a peninsula, had developed impressive naval power. As a result, the two powers were relatively unable to fight decisive battles. The Spartan strategy during the Archidamian War was to invade the land surrounding Athens, depriving Athenians of the productive land around their city. However, Athens maintained access to the sea and did not suffer much from this strategy, though many citizens of Attica abandoned their farms and moved inside the long walls connecting Athens to port Piraeus.



**The Walls Protecting Athens:** The walls protecting Athens during the Peloponnesian War.

Initially Athens' strategy, as guided by Pericles, was to avoid open battle with the more numerous, and better trained Spartan hoplites, and to instead rely on Athens' superior fleet. As a result, Athens' fleet went on the offensive, winning a victory at Naupactus. Their victory was short-lived, however, because in 430 BCE, an outbreak of plague hit Athens, ravaging the densely packed city and wiping out over 30,000 citizens, sailors, and soldiers, which amounted to roughly one-third to two-thirds of the Athenian population. As a result, Athenian manpower was drastically reduced, and due to widespread fears of plague, foreign mercenaries refused to hire themselves out to Athens. Sparta also abandoned its invasion of Attica during this time, unwilling to risk contact with their diseased enemy.

Pericles and his sons perished as a result of plague, and in the aftermath, Athenians turned against Pericles's defensive strategy in

favor of a more aggressive one that would bring war directly to Sparta and its allies. Initially this strategy met with some success as Athens pursued naval raids throughout the Peloponnese. Their successes allowed them to fortify posts throughout the Peloponnese. One such post was near Pylos, on a tiny island called Sphacteria. It began attracting helot runaways from Sparta, which in turn raised Spartan fears that Athenian activities throughout the Peloponnese would incite a mass helot revolt. As a result, the Spartans were driven into action. During the ensuing conflicts, 300 to 400 Spartans were taken hostage, providing Athens with a bargaining chip.

In return, the Spartans raised an army of allies and helots and marched the length of Greece to the Athenian colony of Amphipolis, which controlled several nearby silver mines. These mines were particularly important because they provided much of the money that financed the Athenian war effort. The capture of this colony provided Sparta a bargaining chip as well, and the two rival city-states agreed to sign a truce, exchanging the Spartan hostages for Amphipolis and its silver mines.

## Peace of Nicias

The Peace of Nicias was signed in 421 BCE, concluding the first phase of the war. Due to the loss of war hawks in both city-states during the previous conflict, the peace endured for approximately six years. The treaty was undermined, however, by continued fighting and calls for revolt throughout the Peloponnese. Although the Spartans refrained from such actions themselves, their allies remained vocal, particularly Argos. The Athenians supported the Argives and encouraged them to form a coalition of democratic states within the Peloponnese and separate from Sparta. Early Spartan attempts to thwart such a coalition ultimately failed, and

the Argives, their allies, and a small Athenian force moved to seize the city of Tegea, near Sparta.

The Battle of Mantinea was the largest land battle fought within Greece during the Peloponnesian War. The Argive allied coalition initially utilized the sheer strength of their combined forces to score early successes, but failed to capitalize on them, providing the elite Spartan forces opportunities to defeat the coalition and save their city from a strategic defeat. The Argive democratic alliance was broken up, and most members were reincorporated into Sparta's Peloponnesian League, reestablishing Spartan hegemony throughout the region.

## The Sicilian Expedition

During the 17<sup>th</sup> year of war, Athens received news that one of their distant allies in Sicily was under attack from Syracuse. The people of Syracuse were ethnically Dorian like the Spartans, and Sicily and their allies, the Athenians, were ethnically Ionian. In 415 BCE, Athens dispatched a massive expeditionary force to attack Syracuse in Sicily. The Athenian force consisted of more than 100 ships, approximately 5,000 infantry, and lightly armored troops. However, their cavalry was limited to about 30 horses, which proved to be no match for the large and highly trained Syracusan cavalry.

Meanwhile, the Syracusans petitioned Sparta for assistance in the matter, and Sparta sent their general, Gylippus, to Sicily with reinforcements. Subsequent Athenian attacks failed and Athens' entire force was destroyed by 413 BCE.

## The Second War

This ushered in the final phase of the war, known as the Decelean

War, or the Ionian War. By this time, Sparta was receiving support from Persia, and Sparta bolstered rebellions in Athens' Aegean Sea and Ionian subject states, in order to undermine Athens empire. This eventually led to the erosion of Athens' naval supremacy. The Lacedaemonians were no longer content with simply sending aid to Sicily as a means of supporting their ally. Instead, their focus shifted to an offensive strategy against Athens. As a result, Decelia, a town near Athens, was fortified in order to prevent the Athenians from making use of their land year-round, and to thwart overland shipments of supplies. Nearby silver mines were also disrupted, with Spartan hoplites freeing as many as 20,000 Athenian slaves in the vicinity. Due to this disruption in finance, Athens was forced to demand increased tribute from its subject allies, further increasing tension and the threat of rebellion throughout the Athenian empire.

Members of the Peloponnesian League continued to send reinforcements to Syracuse in hopes of driving off the Athenians, but instead, Athens sent another 100 ships and 5,000 troops to Sicily. Gylippus's forces, combined with those of the Syracusans, defeated the Athenians on land. The destruction of Athens' fleet at Aegospotami effectively ended the war, and Athens surrendered a year later in 404 BCE. Corinth and Thebes demanded that Athens be destroyed and all its citizens enslaved, but Sparta refused to destroy a city that had done good service at a time of great danger to Greece, and took Athens into their own alliance system.

## Effects of the Peloponnesian War

Following the Peloponnesian War, Athens underwent a period of harsh oligarchic governance and Sparta enjoyed a brief hegemonic period.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understand the effects of the Peloponnesian War on the Greek city-states

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Peloponnesian War ended in victory for Sparta and its allies, but signaled the demise of Athenian naval and political hegemony throughout the Mediterranean.
- Democracy in Athens was briefly overthrown in 411 BCE as a result of its poor handling of the Peloponnesian War. Lysander, the Spartan admiral who commanded the Spartan fleet at Aegospotami in 405 BCE, helped to organize the Thirty Tyrants as Athens' government for the 13 months they maintained power.
- Lysander established many pro-Spartan governments throughout the Aegean, where the ruling classes were more loyal to him than to Sparta as a whole. Eventually Spartan kings, Agis and Pausanias, abolished these Aegean decarchies, curbing Lysander's political influence.

- Agesilaus II was one of two Spartan kings during the period of Spartan hegemony, and is remembered for his multiple campaigns in the eastern Aegean and Persian territories.
- Agesilaus's loss at the Battle of Leuctra effectively ended Spartan hegemony throughout the region.

### *Key Terms*

- **oligarchy:** A form of power structure in which a small group of people hold all power and influence in a state.
- **harmosts:** A Spartan term for a military governor.
- **hegemony:** The political, economic, or military predominance or control of one state over others.

The Peloponnesian War ended in victory for Sparta and its allies, and led directly to the rising naval power of Sparta. However, it marked the demise of Athenian naval and political hegemony throughout the Mediterranean. The destruction from the Peloponnesian War weakened and divided the Greeks for years to come, eventually allowing the Macedonians an opportunity to conquer them in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

## Athens

Democracy in Athens was briefly overthrown in 411 BCE as a result of its poor handling of the Peloponnesian War. Citizens reacted against Athens' defeat, blaming democratic politicians, such as

Cleon and Cleophon. The Spartan army encouraged revolt, installing a pro-Spartan oligarchy within Athens, called the Thirty Tyrants, in 404 BCE. Lysander, the Spartan admiral who commanded the Spartan fleet at Aegospotami in 405 BCE, helped to organize the Thirty Tyrants as a government for the 13 months they maintained power.

During the Thirty Tyrants' rule, five percent of the Athenian population was killed, private property was confiscated, and democratic supporters were exiled. The Thirty appointed a council of 500 to serve the judicial functions that had formerly belonged to all citizens. Despite all this, not all Athenian men had their rights removed. In fact, 3,000 such men were chosen by the Thirty to share in the government of Athens. These men were permitted to carry weapons, entitled to jury trial, and allowed to reside within the city limits. This list of men was constantly being revised, and selection was most likely a reflection of loyalty to the regime, with the majority of Athenians not supporting the Thirty Tyrants' rule.

Nonetheless, the Thirty's regime was not met with much overt opposition for the majority of their rule, as a result of the harsh penalties placed on dissenters. Eventually, the level of violence and brutality carried out by the Thirty in Athens led to increased opposition, stemming primarily from a rebel group of exiles led by Thrasybulus, a former trierarch in the Athenian navy. The increased opposition culminated in a revolution that ultimately overthrew the Thirty's regime. In the aftermath, Athens gave amnesty to the 3,000 men who were given special treatment under the regime, with the exception of those who comprised the governing Thirty and their associated governmental officials. Athens struggled to recover from the upheaval caused by the Thirty Tyrants in the years that followed.

## Sparta

As a result of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta, which had primarily



been a continental culture, became a naval power. At its peak, Sparta overpowered many key Greek states, including the elite Athenian navy. By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Sparta's successes against the Athenian Empire and ability to invade Persian provinces in Anatolia ushered in a period of Spartan hegemony. This hegemonic period was to be short-lived, however.

## Lysander

After the end of the Peloponnesian War, Lysander established many pro-Spartan governments throughout the Aegean. Most of the ruling systems set up by Lysander were ten-man oligarchies, called decarchies, in which harmosts, Spartan military governors, were the heads of the government. Because Lysander appointed from within the ruling classes of these governments, the men were more loyal to Lysander than Sparta, making these Aegean outposts similar to a private empire.

Lysander and Spartan king Agis were in agreement with Corinth and Thebes that Athens should be totally destroyed in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, but they were opposed by a more moderate faction, headed by Pausanias. Eventually, Pausanias' moderate faction gained the upper hand and Athens was spared, though its defensive walls and port fortifications at Piraeus were demolished. Lysander also managed to require Athens to recall its exiles, causing political instability within the city-state, of which Lysander took advantage to establish the oligarchy that came to be known as the Thirty Tyrants. Because Lysander was also directly involved in the selection of the Thirty, these men were loyal to him over Sparta, causing King Agis and King Pausanias to agree to the abolishment of his Aegean decarchies, and eventually the restoration of democracy in Athens, which quickly curbed Lysander's political influence.



*Lysander*: A 16th century engraving of Lysander

## Agesilaus and His Campaigns

Agesilaus II was one of two Spartan kings during the period of Spartan hegemony. Lysander was one of Agesilaus's biggest supporters, and was even a mentor. During his kingship, Agesilaus embarked on a number of military campaigns in the eastern Aegean and Persian territories. During these campaigns, the Spartans under Agesilaus's command met with numerous rebelling Greek poleis, including the Thebans. The Thebans, Argives, Corinthians, and Athenians had rebelled during the Corinthian War from 395-386

BCE, and the Persians aided the Thebans, Corinthians, and Athenians against the Spartans.

During the winter of 379/378 BCE, a group of Theban exiles snuck into Thebes and succeeded in liberating it, despite resistance from a 1,500-strong Spartan garrison. This led to a number of Spartan expeditions against Thebes, known as The Boeotian War. The Greek city-states eventually attempted to broker peace, but Theban diplomat Epaminondas angered Agesilaus by arguing for the freedom of non-Spartan citizens within Laconia. As a result, Agesilaus excluded the Thebans from the treaty, and the Battle of Leuctra broke out in 371 BCE; the Spartans eventually lost. Sparta's international political influence precipitated quickly after their defeat.

# 32. Assignments

## Week 5

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

Since you are going to write 7 of these this semester, I thought some guidelines might help. Remember that this assignment is short and to the point! In a single page, you are going to summarize and briefly compare two multi-page primary source readings. How should you begin?

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – “Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.”
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is

devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.

- It is acceptable to analyze. *“The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.”*
- It is not acceptable to editorialize. *“The author is super biased against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”*
- Don’t worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

# 33. Primary Source Reading 2: Hanno: Carthaginian Explorer

## Primary Source Reading: Hanno: Carthaginian Explorer

Hanno's route map

*Hanno the Navigator was a Carthaginian explorer of the sixth or fifth century BCE best known for his naval exploration of the western coast of Africa. The only source of his voyage is a Greek periplus. According to some modern analyses of his route, Hanno's expedition might have reached as far south as the African nation of Gabon. Below is Hanno's text in full. Modern names are supplied in brackets.*

This is the story of the long voyage of Hanno king of the Carthaginians into Libyan lands beyond the Pillars of Heracles [Straits of Gibraltar], which he dedicated on a tablet in the temple of Kronos [Baal Hammon]:

I The Carthaginians decided that Hanno should sail beyond the Pillars of Heracles and found cities of Libyphoenicians [Carthaginians]. He set sail with sixty penteconters and about thirty thousand men and women, and provisions and other necessities.

II After sailing beyond the Pillars for two days we founded the first city which we called Thymiaterion [Tangier]. Below it was a large plain.

III Sailing thence westward we came to Soloeis, a Libyan promontory covered with trees. There we founded a temple to Poseidon.

IV Journeying eastward for half a day we reached a lake not far

from the sea, covered with a great growth of tall reeds, where elephants and many other wild animals fed.

V A day's journey beyond this lake we founded cities on the coast called Karikon Teichos, Gytte, Akra, Melitta, and Arambys.

VI Passing on from there we came to the large river Lixos [the Draa in Morocco], flowing from Libya, beside which nomads called Lixitae [Berbers] pastured their flocks. We stayed some time with them and became friends.

VII Inland from there dwelt inhospitable Ethiopians in a land ridden with wild beasts and hemmed in by great mountains. They say that Lixos flows down from there and that among these mountains Troglodytes of strange appearance dwell, who according to the Lixitae can run more swiftly than horses.

VIII Taking interpreters from the Lixitae we sailed south along the desert [Sahara] shore for two days and then for one day eastward and found a small island five stades [c. 1 km] in circumference at the farther end of a gulf. We made a settlement there and called it Cerne. We judged from our journey that it was directly opposite Carthage, for the voyage from Carthage to the Pillars and from there to Cerne seemed alike.

IX From here sailing up a big river called Chretes [Senegal] we reached a lake, in which were three islands bigger than Cerne. Completing a day's sail from here we came to the end of the lake, overhung by some very high mountains crowded with savages clad in skins of wild beasts, which stoned us and beat us off and prevented us from disembarking.

X Sailing from there we came to another big wide river, teeming with crocodiles and hippopotamuses. We turned again from there and came back to Cerne.

XI We sailed south for twelve days from there, clinging to the coast, which was all along occupied by Ethiopians who did not stay their ground, but fled from us. Their speech was unintelligible, even to our Lixitae.

XII On the last day we came to anchor by some high mountains clad with trees whose wood was sweet-smelling and mottled.

XIII Sailing round these for two days we reached an immense gulf, on either shore of which was a plain where by night we saw big and little fires flaming up at intervals everywhere [Grass fires?].

XIV Taking on water here, we sailed on for five days along the coast until we came to a great bay which our interpreters called the Horn of the West. In it was a large island and in the island a salt-water lake, within which was another island where we disembarked. By day we could see nothing but a forest, but by night we saw many fires burning and we heard the sound of flutes and of beating of cymbals and drums and a great din of voices. Fear came upon us and the soothsayers bade us leave the island.

XV We sailed thence in haste and skirted a fiery coast replete with burning incense. Great streams of fire and lava poured down into the sea and the land was unapproachable because of the heat.

XVI We left there hurriedly in fear and sailing for four days we saw the land by night full of flames. In the middle was a high flame taller than the rest, reaching, as it seemed, the stars. By day it was seen to be a very high mountain called the Chariot of the Gods [Mt. Cameroon?].

XVII Thence sailing for three days past fiery lava flows we reached a gulf called the Horn of the South.

XVIII At the farther end of this bay was an island, like the first, with a lake, within which was another island full, of savages. By far the greater number were women with shaggy bodies, whom our interpreters called Gorillas [Pygmies?]. Chasing them we were unable to catch any of the men, all of whom, being used to climbing precipices, got away, defending themselves by throwing stones. But we caught three women, who bit and mangled those who carried them off, being unwilling to follow them. We killed them, however, and flayed them and brought their skins back to Carthage. For we did not sail farther as our supplies gave out.



PART VII

WEEK 6: HELLENISTIC  
GREECE AND ALEXANDER  
THE GREAT



# 34. Introduction

## Week 6

### Introduction

Alexander the Great at the Battle of the Granicus against the Persians - a painting by Cornelis Troost

In the context of ancient Greek art, architecture, and culture, Hellenistic Greece corresponds to the period between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the annexation of the classical Greek heartlands by the Roman Republic. This culminated at the Battle of Corinth in 146 BC, a crushing Roman victory in the Peloponnese that led to the destruction of Corinth and ushered in the period of Roman Greece.

The Hellenistic period began with the wars of the Diadochi, armed contests among the former generals of Alexander the Great to carve up his empire in Europe, Asia, and North Africa. The wars lasted until 275 BC, witnessing the fall of both the Argead and Antipatrid dynasties of Macedonia in favor of the Antigonid dynasty. The era was also marked by successive wars between the Kingdom of Macedonia and its allies against the Aetolian League, Achaean League, and the city-state of Sparta.

Alexander III of Macedon (20/21 July 356 BC – 10/11 June 323 BC), commonly known as Alexander the Great, was a king of the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and a member of the Argead dynasty. He was born in Pella in 356 BC and succeeded his father Philip II to the throne at the age of twenty. He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa, and he created one of the largest empires of the ancient

world by the age of thirty, stretching from Greece to northwestern India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered one of history's most successful military commanders.

# 35. Reading: Macedonian Conquest

## The Rise of the Macedon

Philip II's conquests during the Third Sacred War cemented his power, as well as the influence of Macedon, throughout the Hellenic world.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe Philip II's achievements and how he built up Macedon

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The military skills Philip II learned while in Thebes, coupled with his expansionist vision of Macedonian greatness, brought him early successes when he ascended to the throne in 359 BCE.

- Philip earned immense prestige, and secured Macedon's position in the Hellenic world during his involvement in the Third Sacred War, which began in Greece in 356 BCE.
- War with Athens would arise intermittently for the duration of Philip's campaigns, due to conflicts over land, and/or with allies.
- In 337 BCE, Philip created and led the League of Corinth, a federation of Greek states that aimed to invade the Persian Empire.
- In 336 BCE, Philip was assassinated during the earliest stages of the League of Corinth's Persian venture.
- Many Macedonian institutions and demonstrations of power mirrored established Achaemenid conventions.

### *Key Terms*

- **sarissas:** A long spear or pike about 13-20 feet in length, used in ancient Greek and Hellenistic warfare, that was initially introduced by Philip II of Macedon.

Macedon rose from a small kingdom on the periphery of classical Greek affairs, to a dominant player in the Hellenic world and beyond, within the span of 25 years between 359 and 336 BCE. Macedon's rise is largely attributable to the policies during Philip II's rule.

## Background

In the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta rose as a hegemonic power in classical Greece. Sparta's dominance was challenged by many Greek city-states who had traditionally been independent during the Corinthian War of 395–387 BCE. Sparta prevailed in the conflict, but only because Persia intervened on their behalf, demonstrating the fragility with which Sparta held its power over the other Greek city-states. In the next decade, the Thebans revolted against Sparta, successfully liberating their city-state, and later defeating the Spartans at the Battle of Leuctra (371 BCE). Theban general Epaminondas then led an invasion of the Peloponnesus in 370 BCE, invaded Messenia, and liberated the helots, permanently crippling Sparta.

These series of events allowed the Thebans to replace Spartan hegemonic power with their own. For the next nine years, Epaminondas and Theban general Pelopidas further extended Theban power and influence via a series of campaigns throughout Greece, bringing almost every city-state in Greece into the conflict. These years of war ultimately left Greece war-weary and depleted, and during Epaminondas's fourth invasion of the Peloponnesus in 362 BCE, Epaminondas was killed at the Battle of Mantinea. Although Thebes emerged victorious, their losses were heavy, and the Thebans returned to a defensive policy, allowing Athens to reclaim its position at the center of the Greek political system for the first time since the Peloponnesian War. The Athenians' second confederacy would be Macedon's main rivals for control of the lands of the north Aegean.

## Philip II's Accession

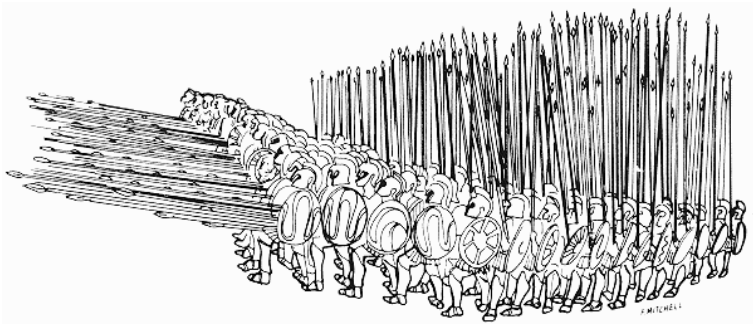


**Philip II of Macedon:** *Bust of Philip II.*

While Philip was young, he was held hostage in Thebes, and received a military and diplomatic education from Epaminondas. By 364 BCE,



Philip returned to Macedon, and the skills he learned while in Thebes, coupled with his expansionist vision of Macedonian greatness, brought him early successes when he ascended to the throne in 359 BCE. When he assumed the throne, the eastern regions of Macedonia had been sacked and invaded by the Paionians, and the Thracians and the Athenians had landed a contingent on the coast at Methoni. Philip pushed the Paionians and Thracians back, promising them tributes, and defeated the 3,000 Athenian hoplites at Methoni. In the interim between conflicts, Philip focused on strengthening his army and his overall position domestically, introducing the phalanx infantry corps and arming them with long spears, called sarissas.



**A Macedonian Phalanx:** *Depiction of a Macedonian phalanx armed with sarissas.*

In 358 BCE, Philip marched against the Illyrians, establishing his authority inland as far as Lake Ohrid. Subsequently, he agreed to lease the gold mines of Mount Pangaion to the Athenians in exchange for the return of the city of Pydna to Macedon. Ultimately, after conquering Amphipolis in 357 BCE, he reneged on his agreement, which led to war with Athens. During that conflict, Philip conquered Potidaea, but ceded it to the Chalkidian League of Olynthus, with which he was allied. A year later, he also conquered

Crenides and changed its name to Philippi, using the gold from the mines there to finance subsequent campaigns.

## Third Sacred War

Philip earned immense prestige and secured Macedon's position in the Hellenic world during his involvement in the Third Sacred War, which began in Greece in 356 BCE. Early in the war, Philip defeated the Thessalians at the Battle of Crocus Field, allowing him to acquire Pherae and Magnesia, which was the location of an important harbor, Pagasae. He did not attempt to advance further into central Greece, however, because the Athenians occupied Thermopylae. Although there were no open hostilities between the Athenians and Macedonians at the time, tensions had arisen as a result of Philip's recent land and resource acquisitions. Instead, Philip focused on subjugating the Balkan hill-country in the west and north, and attacking Greek coastal cities, many of which Philip maintained friendly relations with, until he had conquered their surrounding territories. Nonetheless, war with Athens would arise intermittently for the duration of Philip's campaigns, due to conflicts over land and/or with allies.

## Persian Influences

For many Macedonian rulers, the Achaemenid Empire in Persia was a major sociopolitical influence, and Philip II was no exception. Many institutions and demonstrations of his power mirrored established Achaemenid conventions. For example, Philip established a Royal Secretary and Archive, as well as the institution of Royal Pages, which would mount the king on his horse in a manner very similar to the way in which Persian kings were

mounted. He also aimed to make his power both political and religious in nature, utilizing a special throne stylized after those of the Achaemenid court, to demonstrate his elevated rank. Achaemenid administrative practices were also utilized in Macedonia rule of conquered lands, such as Thrace in 342-334 BCE.

In 337 BCE, Philip created and led the League of Corinth. Members of the league agreed not to engage in conflict with one another unless their aim was to suppress revolution. Another stated aim of the league was to invade the Persian Empire. Ironically, in 336 BCE, Philip was assassinated during the earliest stages of the Persian venture, during the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra to Alexander I of Epirus.

## Alexander the Great

In a little over 30 years, Alexander the Great created one of the largest empires in the ancient world, using his military and tactical genius.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Examine Alexander the Great's successes and failures

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Alexander the Great spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa. By the age of 30, he created an empire that stretched from Greece to Egypt, and into present-day Pakistan.
- Alexander inherited a strong kingdom and experienced army, both of which contributed to his successes.
- Alexander's legacy includes the cultural diffusion his engendered conquests, and the rise of Hellenistic culture as a result of his military campaigns.
- Alexander's impressive record was largely due to his smart use of terrain, phalanx and cavalry tactics, bold and adaptive strategy, and the fierce loyalty of his troops.

### *Key Terms*

- **phalanx:** A rectangular mass military formation, usually composed entirely of heavy infantry armed with spears, pikes, sarissas, or similar weapons.
- **Alexander the Great:** Formally Alexander III of Macedon, a Macedonian king who was undefeated in battle and is considered one of history's most

successful commanders.

- **Philip II:** A king of the Greek kingdom of Macedon from 359 BCE until his assassination in 336 BCE. He was the father of Alexander the Great.

Following the decline of the Greek city-states, the Greek kingdom of Macedon rose to power under Philip II. Alexander III, commonly known as Alexander the Great, was born to Philip II in Pella in 356 BCE, and succeeded his father to the throne at the age of 20. He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa, and by the age of 30, had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, which stretched from Greece to Egypt and into present-day Pakistan. He was undefeated in battle and is considered one of history's most successful commanders.



**Alexander the Great:** Bust of a young Alexander the Great from the Hellenistic era, now at the British Museum.

During his youth, Alexander was tutored by the philosopher Aristotle, until the age of 16. When he succeeded his father to the

throne in 336 BCE, after Philip was assassinated, Alexander inherited a strong kingdom and an experienced army. He had been awarded the generalship of Greece, and used this authority to launch his father's military expansion plans. In 334 BCE, he invaded the Achaemenid Empire, ruled Asia Minor, and began a series of campaigns that lasted ten years. Alexander broke the power of Persia in a series of decisive battles, most notably the battles of Issus and Gaugamela. He overthrew the Persian King Darius III, and conquered the entirety of the Persian Empire. At that point, his empire stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River.

Seeking to reach the "ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea," he invaded India in 326 BCE, but was eventually forced to turn back at the demand of his troops. Alexander died in Babylon in 323 BCE, the city he planned to establish as his capital, without executing a series of planned campaigns that would have begun with an invasion of Arabia. In the years following his death, a series of civil wars tore his empire apart, resulting in several states ruled by the Diadochi, Alexander's surviving generals and heirs. Alexander's legacy includes the cultural diffusion his engendered conquests. He founded some 20 cities that bore his name, the most notable being Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander's settlement of Greek colonists, and the spread of Greek culture in the east, resulted in a new Hellenistic civilization, aspects of which were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-15th century. Alexander became legendary as a classical hero in the mold of Achilles, and he features prominently in the history and myth of Greek and non-Greek cultures. He became the measure against which military leaders compared themselves, and military academies throughout the world still teach his tactics.

## Military Generalship

Alexander earned the honorific epithet "the Great" due to his unparalleled success as a military commander. He never lost a

battle, despite typically being outnumbered. His impressive record was largely due to his smart use of terrain, phalanx and cavalry tactics, bold strategy, and the fierce loyalty of his troops. The Macedonian phalanx, armed with the *sarissa*, a spear up to 20 feet long, had been developed and perfected by Alexander's father, Philip II. Alexander used its speed and maneuverability to great effect against larger, but more disparate, Persian forces. Alexander also recognized the potential for disunity among his diverse army, due to the various languages, cultures, and preferred weapons individual soldiers wielded. He overcame the possibility of unrest among his troops by being personally involved in battles, as was common among Macedonian kings.

In his first battle in Asia, at Granicus, Alexander used only a small part of his forces— perhaps 13,000 infantry, with 5,000 cavalry—against a much larger Persian force of 40,000. Alexander placed the phalanx at the center, and cavalry and archers on the wings, so that his line matched the length of the Persian cavalry line. By contrast, the Persian infantry was stationed behind its cavalry. Alexander's military positioning ensured that his troops would not be outflanked; further, his phalanx, armed with long pikes, had a considerable advantage over the Persians' scimitars and javelins. Macedonian losses were negligible compared to those of the Persians.

At Issus in 333 BCE, his first confrontation with Darius, he used the same deployment, and again the central phalanx pushed through. Alexander personally led the charge in the center and routed the opposing army. At the decisive encounter with Alexander at Gaugamela, Darius equipped his chariots with scythes on the wheels to break up the phalanx and equipped his cavalry with pikes. Alexander in turn arranged a double phalanx, with the center advancing at an angle, which parted when the chariots bore down and reformed once they had passed. The advance proved successful and broke Darius's center, and Darius was forced to retreat once again.

When faced with opponents who used unfamiliar fighting



techniques, such as in Central Asia and India, Alexander adapted his forces to his opponents' style. For example, in Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander successfully used his javelin throwers and archers to prevent outflanking movements, while massing his cavalry at the center. In India, confronted by Porus's elephant corps, the Macedonians opened their ranks to envelop the elephants, and used their sarissas to strike upwards and dislodge the elephants' handlers.

## Alexander's Empire

Alexander the Great's legacy was the dissemination of Greek culture throughout Asia.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the legacy Alexander left within his conquered territories

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Alexander's campaigns greatly increased contacts

and trade between the East and West, and vast areas to the east were significantly exposed to Greek civilization and influence. Successor states remained dominant for the next 300 years during the Hellenistic period.

- Over the course of his conquests, Alexander founded some 20 cities that bore his name, and these cities became centers of culture and diversity. The most famous of these cities is Egypt's Mediterranean port of Alexandria.
- Hellenization refers to the spread of Greek language, culture, and population into the former Persian empire after Alexander's conquest.
- Alexander's death was sudden and his empire disintegrated into a 40-year period of war and chaos in 321 BCE. The Hellenistic world eventually settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon.

### *Key Terms*

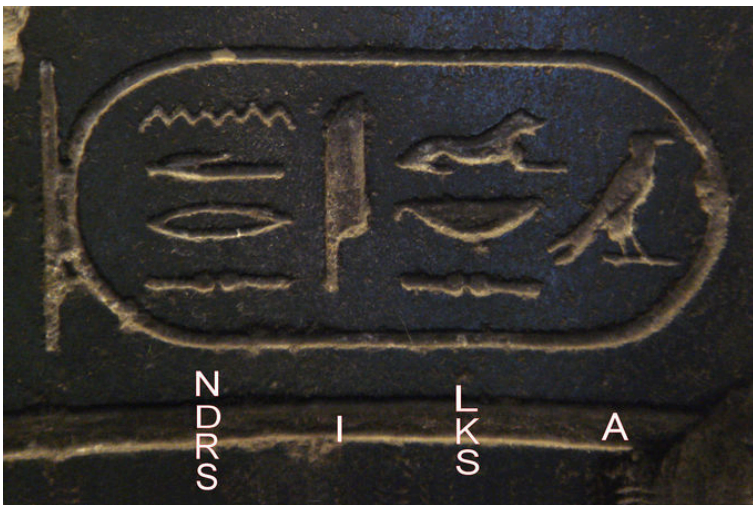
- **Hellenization:** The spread of Greek language, culture, and population into the former Persian empire after Alexander's conquests.

Alexander's legacy extended beyond his military conquests. His campaigns greatly increased contacts and trade between the East and West, and vast areas to the east were exposed to Greek civilization and influence. Some of the cities he founded became

major cultural centers, and many survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His chroniclers recorded valuable information about the areas through which he marched, while the Greeks themselves attained a sense of belonging to a world beyond the Mediterranean.

## Hellenistic Kingdoms

Alexander's most immediate legacy was the introduction of Macedonian rule to huge swathes of Asia. Many of the areas he conquered remained in Macedonian hands or under Greek influence for the next 200 to 300 years. The successor states that emerged were, at least initially, dominant forces, and this 300 year period is often referred to as the Hellenistic period.



**Alexander's name in hieroglyphics:** Name of Alexander the Great in Egyptian hieroglyphs (written from right to left), c. 330 BCE, Egypt; Louvre Museum.

The eastern borders of Alexander's empire began to collapse during

his lifetime. However, the power vacuum he left in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent directly gave rise to one of the most powerful Indian dynasties in history. Taking advantage of this, Chandragupta Maurya (referred to in Greek sources as *Sandrokottos*), of relatively humble origin, took control of the Punjab, and with that power base proceeded to conquer the Nanda Empire.

## Hellenization

The term “Hellenization” was coined to denote the spread of Greek language, culture, and population into the former Persian empire after Alexander’s conquest. Alexander deliberately pursued Hellenization policies in the communities he conquered. While his intentions may have simply been to disseminate Greek culture, it is more likely that his policies were pragmatic in nature and intended to aid in the rule of his enormous empire via cultural homogenization. Alexander’s Hellenization policies can also be viewed as a result of his probable megalomania. Later his successors explicitly rejected these policies. Nevertheless, Hellenization occurred throughout the region, accompanied by a distinct and opposite “Orientalization” of the successor states.

The core of Hellenistic culture was essentially Athenian. The close association of men from across Greece in Alexander’s army directly led to the emergence of the largely Attic-based *koiné* (or “common”) Greek dialect. *Koiné* spread throughout the Hellenistic world, becoming the *lingua franca* of Hellenistic lands, and eventually the ancestor of modern Greek. Furthermore, town planning, education, local government, and art during the Hellenistic periods were all based on classical Greek ideals, evolving into distinct new forms commonly grouped as Hellenistic.

## The Founding of Cities

Over the course of his conquests, Alexander founded some 20 cities that bore his name, most of them east of the Tigris River. The first, and greatest, was Alexandria in Egypt, which would become one of the leading Mediterranean cities. The cities' locations reflected trade routes, as well as defensive positions. At first, the cities must have been inhospitable, and little more than defensive garrisons. Following Alexander's death, many Greeks who had settled there tried to return to Greece. However, a century or so after Alexander's death, many of these cities were thriving with elaborate public buildings and substantial populations that included both Greek and local peoples.

Alexander's cities were most likely intended to be administrative headquarters for his empire, primarily settled by Greeks, many of whom would have served in Alexander's military campaigns. The purpose of these administrative centers was to control the newly conquered subject populations. Alexander attempted to create a unified ruling class in conquered territories like Persia, often using marriage ties to intermingle the conquered with conquerors. He also adopted elements of the Persian court culture, adopting his own version of their royal robes, and imitating some court ceremonies. Many Macedonians resented these policies, believing hybridization of Greek and foreign cultures to be irreverent.

Alexander's attempts at unification also extended to his army. He placed Persian soldiers, some of who had been trained in the Macedonian style, within Macedonian ranks, solving chronic manpower problems.

## Division of the Empire

Alexander's death was so sudden that when reports of his death

reached Greece, they were not immediately believed. Alexander had no obvious or legitimate heir because his son, Alexander IV, was born after Alexander's death. According to Diodorus, an ancient Greek historian, Alexander's companions asked him on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom. His laconic reply was, *tôi kratistôi* ("to the strongest"). Another, more plausible, story claims that Alexander passed his signet ring to Perdiccas, a bodyguard and leader of the companion cavalry, thereby nominating him as his official successor.

Perdiccas initially did not claim power, instead suggesting that Alexander's unborn baby would be king, if male. He also offered himself, Craterus, Leonnatus, and Antipater, as guardians of Alexander's unborn child. However, the infantry rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion. Instead, they supported Alexander's half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, as Alexander's successor. Eventually the two sides reconciled, and after the birth of Alexander IV, Perdiccas and Philip III were appointed joint kings, albeit in name only.

Dissension and rivalry soon afflicted the Macedonians. After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BCE, Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between "The Successors" (*Diadochi*) ensued, before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon. In the process, both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered.

## The Legacy of Alexander the Great

Four stable power blocks emerged following the death of Alexander the Great: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire, the Attalid Dynasty of the Kingdom of Pergamon, and Macedon.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate Alexander the Great's legacy as carried out by his successors

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BCE, Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between “The Successors” ( Diadochi ) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon.
- The Ptolemaic Kingdom was ruled by the Ptolemaic dynasty, starting with Ptolemy I Soter's accession to the throne following the death of Alexander the Great. The dynasty survived until the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE, at which point Egypt was conquered by the Romans.
- Although the Ptolemaic Kingdom observed the Egyptian religion and customs, Greek inhabitants were treated as a privileged minority.
- The Seleucid Empire was a major center of

Hellenistic culture where Greek customs prevailed and the Greek political elite dominated, though mostly in urban areas.

- The Attalid kingdom of Pergamon began as a rump state, but was expanded by subsequent rulers.
- The Attalids were some of the most loyal supporters of Rome in the Hellenistic world and were known for their generous and intelligent rule.
- The Macedonian regime is the only successor state to Alexander the Great's empire that maintained archaic perceptions of kingship, and elided the adoption of Hellenistic monarchical customs.

### *Key Terms*

- **proskynesis:** A traditional Persian act of bowing or prostrating oneself before a person of higher social rank.
- **satrap:** A governor of a province in the Hellenistic empire. The word is also used metaphorically to refer to leaders who are heavily influenced by larger superpowers or hegemonies, and regionally act as a surrogate for those larger players.

## Background

Alexander's death was so sudden that when reports of his death reached Greece, they were not immediately believed. Alexander had



no obvious or legitimate heir because his son, Alexander IV, was born after Alexander's death. According to Diodorus, an ancient Greek historian, Alexander's companions asked him on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom. His laconic reply was *tôi kratistôi* ("to the strongest"). Another, more plausible, story claims that Alexander passed his signet ring to Perdiccas, a bodyguard and leader of the companion cavalry, thereby nominating him as his official successor.

Perdiccas initially did not claim power, instead suggesting that Alexander's unborn baby would be king, if male. He also offered himself, Craterus, Leonnatus, and Antipater, as guardians of Alexander's unborn child. However, the infantry rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion. Instead, they supported Alexander's half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, as Alexander's successor. Eventually the two sides reconciled, and after the birth of Alexander IV, Perdiccas and Philip III were appointed joint kings, albeit in name only.

Dissension and rivalry soon afflicted the Macedonians. After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BCE, Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between "The Successors" (Diadochi) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon. In the process, both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered.

## The Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt

The Ptolemaic Kingdom was a Hellenistic kingdom based in Egypt, and ruled by the Ptolemaic dynasty, starting with Ptolemy I Soter's accession to the throne following the death of Alexander the Great. The Ptolemaic dynasty survived until the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE, at which point Egypt was conquered by the Romans. Ptolemy was appointed as satrap of Egypt in 323 BCE, by Perdiccas

during the succession crisis that erupted following Alexander the Great. From that time, Ptolemy ruled Egypt nominally in the name of joint kings Philip III and Alexander IV. As Alexander the Great's empire disintegrated, however, Ptolemy established himself as a ruler in his own right. In 321 BCE, Ptolemy defended Egypt against an invasion by Perdiccas. During the Wars of the Diadochi (322-301 BCE), Ptolemy further consolidated his position within Egypt and the region by taking the title of King.



**Ptolemy I Soter:** Bust of Ptolemy I Soter, king of Egypt (305-282 BCE) and founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The identification is based upon coin effigies.

Early in the Ptolemaic dyansty, Egyptian religion and customs were observed, and magnificent new temples were built in the style of the old pharaohs. During the reign of Ptolemies II and III, thousands of Macedonian veterans were rewarded with farm land grants, and settled in colonies and garrisons throughout the country. Within a century, Greek influence had spread throughout the country and intermarriage produced a large Greco-Egyptian educated class. Despite this, the Greeks remained a privileged minority in Ptolemaic Egypt. Greek individuals lived under Greek law, received a Greek education, were tried in Greek courts, and were citizens of Greek cities, rather than Egyptian cities.

## The Seleucid Empire



**Seleucid Empire:** Seleucid Empire at its greatest extent, 281 BCE.

The Seleucid Empire was a Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid Dynasty, which existed from 312 BCE-63 BCE. It was founded by

Seleucus I Nicator following the dissolution of Alexander the Great's empire. Following Ptolemy's successes in the Wars of the Diadochi, Seleucus, then a senior officer in the Macedonian Royal Army, received Babylonia. From there, he expanded his dominion to include much of Alexander's near eastern territories. At the height of its power, the Seleucid Empire encompassed central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan. Seleucus himself traveled as far as India in his campaigns. Seleucid expansion into Anatolia and Greece was halted, however, after decisive defeats at the hands of the Roman army.

The Seleucid Empire was a major center of Hellenistic culture, where Greek customs prevailed and the Greek political elite dominated, though mostly in urban areas. Existing Greek populations within the empire were supplemented with Greek immigrants.

## The Kingdom of Pergamon



**Asia Minor, 188 BCE:** The Kingdom of Pergamon (colored olive), shown at its greatest extent in 188 BCE.

The ancient Greek city of Pergamon was taken by Lysimachus, King of Thrace, in 301 BCE, a short-lived possession that ended when the kingdom of Thrace collapsed. It became the capital of a new kingdom of Pergamon, which Philetaerus founded in 281 BCE, thus beginning the rule of the Attalid Dynasty. The Attalid kingdom began as a rump state, but was expanded by subsequent rulers. The Attalids themselves were some of the most loyal supporters of Rome in the Hellenistic world. Under Attalus I (r. 241-197 BCE), the Attalids allied with Rome against Philip V of Macedon, during the first and second Macedonian Wars. They allied with Rome again under Eumenes II (r. 197-158 BCE) against Perseus of Macedon, during the Third Macedonian War. Additionally, in exchange for their support against the Seleucids, the Attalids were given all former Seleucid domains in Asia Minor.

The Attalids were known for their intelligent and generous rule. Many historical documents from the era demonstrate that the Attalids supported the growth of towns by sending in skilled artisans and remitting taxes. They also allowed Greek cities to maintain nominal independence and sent gifts to Greek cultural sites, such as Delphi, Delos, and Athens, and even remodeled the Acropolis of Pergamon after the Acropolis in Athens. When Attalus III (r. 138-133 BCE) died without an heir, he bequeathed his entire kingdom to Rome to prevent civil war.

# Macedon



***The Kingdom of Macedon at the death of Philip II (336 BCE)***

Macedon, or Macedonia, was the dominant state of Hellenistic Greece. In the partition of Alexander's empire among the Diadochi, Macedon fell to the Antipatrid Dynasty, which was headed by Antipater and his son, Cassander. Following Cassander's death in 297 BCE, Macedon slid into a long period of civil strife. Antigonius II (r. 277-239 BCE) successfully restored order and prosperity in the region, and established a stable monarchy under the Antigonid Dynasty, though he lost control of many Greek city-states in the process.

Notably, the Macedonian regime is the only successor state to Alexander the Great's empire that maintained archaic perceptions of kingship, and elided the adoption of Hellenistic monarchical

customs. The Macedonian king was never deified in the same way that kings of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Dynasties had been. Additionally, the custom of proskynesis, a traditional Persian act of bowing or prostrating oneself before a person of higher social rank, was never adopted. Instead, Macedonian subjects addressed their kings in a far more casual manner, and kings still consulted with their aristocracy in the process of making decisions.

During the reigns of Philip V (r. 221-179 BCE) and his son Perseus (r. 179-168 BCE), Macedon clashed with the rising Roman republic. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE, Macedon fought a series of wars against Rome. Two decisive defeats in 197 and 168 BCE resulted in the deposition of the Antigonid Dynasty, and the dismantling of the kingdom of Macedon.



# 36. Assignments

## Week 6

### Assignment

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

Remember your **Group Bibliography** is due in week 8:

In this assignment, you will work collaboratively with your group members. As you meet virtually or in person, be clear about which group member is expected to complete which task(s), and document your respective responsibilities. If there are issues later with unfulfilled assignments, I will need evidence to hold failing group members accountable.

This is the first work your group will take toward the final completed project: a presentation of a dialogue between two historical personalities representing an opinion in one of the major conflicts in Western Civilization:

1. The Reformation [16<sup>th</sup> century]
2. Witchcraft trials [16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century]
3. Secular government [17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century]
4. Evolutionary theory [19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century]
5. Women's Suffrage [19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century]
6. Imperialism [18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century]
7. The motive of Hitler's anti-Semitism [20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century]

Each group will consult the two primary sources assigned for that topic. Then, begin to research in greater depth. What were the

opinions, views, concepts and ideas expressed by Western thinkers on your groups' topic? Who were the major players in the debate, and what were the big ideas expressed in the debate? Keep your research confined to the Western world and the time period associated with your group. Ultimately for your final presentation, you will be selecting two people from your original research who best demonstrate the conflicting beliefs of the time, so it is better to find a few strong and intelligent voices, rather than ten different opinions.

Write a 300 word, double-spaced paper listing your choices. You should have 3 to 5 people that your group has identified. For each person, relate the basic facts; when did they live? Where? What were their major books, articles? What position did they take on your topic? Did this position change over time? How influential were his/her ideas? Your paper will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least 6 secondary academic sources in MLA format. This assignment is worth 60 points.

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

PART VIII

WEEK 7: ETRUSCAN ITALY,  
AND EARLY REPUBLICAN  
ROME



# 37. Introduction

## Week 7

### Introduction

Hannibal's Famous Crossing of the Alps

The Etruscan civilization (/ ɪ ˈtrʌskən/) is the modern name given to a powerful and wealthy civilization of ancient Italy in the area corresponding roughly to Tuscany, western Umbria, and northern Lazio. As distinguished by its unique language, this civilization endured from before the time of the earliest Etruscan inscriptions (c. 700 BC)[2] until its assimilation into the Roman Republic, beginning in the late 4th century BC with the Roman–Etruscan Wars.

Culture that is identifiably Etruscan developed in Italy after about 800 BC, approximately over the range of the preceding Iron Age Villanovan culture. The latter gave way in the 7th century BC to a culture that was influenced by Ancient Greek culture. At its maximum extent, during the foundational period of Rome and the Roman Kingdom, Etruscan civilization flourished in three confederacies of cities: of Etruria, of the Po Valley with the eastern Alps, and of Latium and Campania. The decline was gradual, but by 500 BC the political destiny of Italy had passed out of Etruscan hands. The last Etruscan cities were formally absorbed by Rome around 100 BC.

The Roman Republic (Latin: *Res publica Romana*; Classical Latin: [ˈreːs ˈpuːb.lɪ.ka roːˈmaː.na]) was the era of ancient Roman civilization beginning with the overthrow of the Roman Kingdom, traditionally dated to 509 BC, and ending in 27 BC with the

establishment of the Roman Empire. It was during this period that Rome's control expanded from the city's immediate surroundings to hegemony over the entire Mediterranean world.

map

# 38. Reading: The Etruscans

## The Origins of Etruria

The Etruscans were a Mediterranean civilization during the 6<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, from whom the Romans derived a great deal of cultural influence.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the relationship between the Etruscan and Roman civilizations

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The prevailing view is that Rome was founded by Italics who later merged with Etruscans. Rome was likely a small settlement until the arrival of the Etruscans, who then established Rome's urban infrastructure.
- The Etruscans were indigenous to the

Mediterranean area, probably stemming from the Villanovan culture.

- The mining and commerce of metal, especially copper and iron, led to an enrichment of the Etruscans, and to the expansion of their influence in the Italian Peninsula and the western Mediterranean Sea. Conflicts with the Greeks led the Etruscans to ally themselves with the Carthaginians.
- The Etruscans governed within a state system, with only remnants of the chiefdom or tribal forms. The Etruscan state government was essentially a theocracy.
- Aristocratic families were important within Etruscan society, and women enjoyed, comparatively, many freedoms within society.
- The Etruscan system of belief was an immanent polytheism that incorporated indigenous, Indo-European, and Greek influences.
- It is believed that the Etruscans spoke a non-Indo-European language, probably related to what is called the Tyrsenian language family, which is itself an isolate family, or in other words, unrelated directly to other known language groups.

### *Key Terms*

- **theocracy:** A form of government in which a deity is officially recognized as the civil ruler, and official policy is governed by officials regarded as divinely guided, or is pursuant to the doctrine of a particular



religion or religious group.

- **Etruscan:** The modern name given to a civilization of ancient Italy in the area corresponding roughly to Tuscany, western Umbria, and northern Latium.
- **oligarchic:** A form of power structure in which power effectively rests with a small number of people. These people could be distinguished by royalty, wealth, family ties, education, corporate, or military control. Such states are often controlled by a few prominent families who typically pass their influence from one generation to the next; however, inheritance is not a necessary condition for the application of this term.

Those who subscribe to an Italic (a diverse group of people who inhabited pre-Roman Italy) foundation of Rome, followed by an Etruscan invasion, typically speak of an Etruscan “influence” on Roman culture; that is, cultural objects that were adopted by Rome from neighboring Etruria. The prevailing view is that Rome was founded by Italics who later merged with Etruscans. In that case, Etruscan cultural objects are not a heritage but are, instead, influences. Rome was likely a small settlement until the arrival of the Etruscans, who then established its initial urban infrastructure.

## Origins

The origins of the Etruscans are mostly lost in prehistory. Historians have no literature, and no original texts of religion or philosophy. Therefore, much of what is known about this civilization is derived from grave goods and tomb findings. The main hypotheses state

that the Etruscans were indigenous to the region, probably stemming from the Villanovan culture or from the Near East. Etruscan expansion was focused both to the north, beyond the Apennines, and into Campania. The mining and commerce of metal, especially copper and iron, led to an enrichment of the Etruscans, and to the expansion of their influence in the Italian Peninsula and the western Mediterranean Sea. Here, their interests collided with those of the Greeks, especially in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when Phocaeans of Italy founded colonies along the coast of Sardinia, Spain, and Corsica. This led the Etruscans to ally themselves with the Carthaginians, whose interests also collided with the Greeks.



**Map of the Etruscan Civilization:** Extent of Etruscan civilization and the 12 Etruscan League cities.

Around 540 BCE, the Battle of Alalia led to a new distribution of power in the western Mediterranean Sea. Though the battle had no clear winner, Carthage managed to expand its sphere of influence at the expense of the Greeks, and Etruria saw itself relegated to the northern Tyrrhenian Sea with full ownership of Corsica. From the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the new international political

situation signaled the beginning of Etruscan decline after they had lost their southern provinces. In 480 BCE, Etruria's ally, Carthage, was defeated by a coalition of Magna Graecia cities led by Syracuse. A few years later, in 474 BCE, Syracuse's tyrant, Hiero, defeated the Etruscans at the Battle of Cumae. Etruria's influence over the cities of Latium and Campania weakened, and it was taken over by the Romans and Samnites. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Etruria saw a Gallic invasion end its influence over the Po valley and the Adriatic coast. Meanwhile, Rome had started annexing Etruscan cities. These events led to the loss of the Northern Etruscan provinces. Etruria was conquered by Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.

## Etruscan Government

The Etruscans governed using a state system of society, with only remnants of the chieftdom and tribal forms. In this way, they were different from the surrounding Italics. Rome was, in a sense, the first Italic state, but it began as an Etruscan one. It is believed that the Etruscan government style changed from total monarchy to an oligarchic republic (as the Roman Republic did) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, although it is important to note this did not happen to all city-states.

The Etruscan state government was essentially a theocracy. The government was viewed as being a central authority over all tribal and clan organizations. It retained the power of life and death; in fact, the gorgon, an ancient symbol of that power, appears as a motif in Etruscan decoration. The adherents to this state power were united by a common religion. Political unity in Etruscan society was the city-state, and Etruscan texts name quite a number of magistrates without explanation of their function (the camthi, the parnich, the purth, the tamera, the macstrev, etc.).

## Etruscan Families

According to inscriptional evidence from tombs, aristocratic families were important within Etruscan society. Most likely, aristocratic families rose to prominence over time through the accumulation of wealth via trade, with many of the wealthiest Etruscan cities located near the coast.

The Etruscan name for family was *lautn*, and at the center of the *lautn* was the married couple. Etruscans were monogamous, and the lids of large numbers of sarcophagi were decorated with images of smiling couples in the prime of their life, often reclining next to each other or in an embrace. Many tombs also included funerary inscriptions naming the parents of the deceased, indicating the importance of the mother's side of the family in Etruscan society. Additionally, Etruscan women were allowed considerable freedoms in comparison to Greek and Roman women, and mixed-sex socialization outside the domestic realm occurred.

## Etruscan Religion

The Etruscan system of belief was an immanent polytheism; that is, all visible phenomena were considered to be a manifestation of divine power, and that power was subdivided into deities that acted continually on the world of man and could be dissuaded or persuaded in favor of human affairs. Three layers of deities are evident in the extensive Etruscan art motifs. One appears to be divinities of an indigenous nature: Catha and Usil, the sun; Tivr, the moon; Selvans, a civil god; Turan, the goddess of love; Laran, the god of war; Leinth, the goddess of death; Maris; Thalna; Turms; and the ever-popular Fufluns, whose name is related in an unknown way to the city of Populonia and the *populus Romanus*, the Roman people.

Ruling over this pantheon of lesser deities were higher ones that

seem to reflect the Indo-European system: Tin or Tinia, the sky; Uni, his wife (Juno); and Cel, the earth goddess. In addition the Greek gods were taken into the Etruscan system: Aritimi (Artemis), Menrva (Minerva), and Pacha (Bacchus). The Greek heroes taken from Homer also appear extensively in art motifs.

The Greek polytheistic approach was similar to the Etruscan religious and cultural base. As the Romans emerged from the legacy created by both of these groups, it shared in a belief system of many gods and deities.

## Etruscan Language and Etymology

Knowledge of the Etruscan language is still far from complete. It is believed that the Etruscans spoke a non-Indo-European language, probably related to what is called the Tyrsenian language family, which is itself an isolate family, or in other words, unrelated directly to other known language groups. No etymology exists for *Rasna*, the Etruscans' name for themselves, though Italian historic linguist, Massimo Pittau, has proposed that it meant "shaved" or "beardless." The hypothesized etymology for *Tusci*, a root for "Tuscan" or "Etruscan," suggests a connection to the Latin and Greek words for "tower," illustrating the *Tusci* people as those who built towers. This was possibly based upon the Etruscan preference for building hill towns on high precipices that were enhanced by walls. The word may also be related to the city of Troy, which was also a city of towers, suggesting large numbers of migrants from that region into Etruria.

## Etruscan Artifacts

Historians have no literature, or original Etruscan religious or

philosophical texts, on which to base knowledge of their civilization. So much of what is known is derived from grave goods and tomb findings.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the importance of Etruscan artifacts to our understanding of their history

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Princely tombs did not house individuals, but families who were interred over long periods.
- Although many Etruscan cities were later assimilated by Italic, Celtic, or Roman ethnic groups, the Etruscan names and inscriptions that survive within the ruins provide historic evidence as to the range of settlements that the Etruscans constructed.
- It is unclear whether Etruscan cultural objects are influences upon Roman culture or part of native Roman heritage. The criterion for deciding whether or not an object originated in Rome or descended to the Romans from the Etruscans is the date of the object and the opinion of ancient sources regarding

the provenance of the object's style.

- Although Diodorus of Sicily wrote, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, of the great achievements of the Etruscans, little survives or is known of it.

### *Key Terms*

- **sarcophagi:** A box-like funeral receptacle for a corpse, most commonly carved in stone and displayed above ground.
- **oligarchic:** A form of power structure in which power effectively rests with a small number of people. These people could be distinguished by royalty, wealth, family ties, education, corporate, or military control. Such states are often controlled by a few prominent families who typically pass their influence from one generation to the next, but inheritance is not a necessary condition for the application of this term.

Historians have no literature or original Etruscan religious or philosophical texts on which to base knowledge of their civilization, so much of what is known is derived from grave goods and tomb findings. Princely tombs did not house individuals, but families who were interred over long periods. The decorations and objects included at these sites paint a picture of Etruscan social and political life. For instance, wealth from trade seems to have supported the rise of aristocratic families who, in turn, were likely foundational to the Etruscan oligarchic system of governance. Indeed, at some Etruscan tombs, physical evidence of trade has



been found in the form of grave goods, including fine faience ware cups, which was likely the result of trade with Egypt. Additionally, the depiction of married couples on many sarcophagi provide insight into the respect and freedoms granted to women within Etruscan society, as well as the emphasis placed on romantic love as a basis for marriage pairings.



**Sarcophagus of the Spouses:** Sarcophagus of an Etruscan couple in the Louvre, Room 18.

Although many Etruscan cities were later assimilated by Italic, Celtic, or Roman ethnic groups, the Etruscan names and inscriptions that survive within the ruins provide historic evidence of the range of settlements constructed by the Etruscans. Etruscan cities flourished over most of Italy during the Roman Iron Age. According to ancient sources, some cities were founded by the Etruscans in prehistoric times, and bore entirely Etruscan names. Others were later colonized by the Etruscans from Italic groups.

Nonetheless, relatively little is known about the architecture of the ancient Etruscans. What is known is that they adapted the native Italic styles with influence from the external appearance of Greek architecture. Etruscan architecture is not generally considered part of the body of Greco-Roman classical architecture. Though the houses of the wealthy were evidently very large and comfortable, the burial chambers of tombs, and the grave-goods that filled them, survived in greater numbers. In the southern Etruscan area, tombs contain large, rock-cut chambers under a tumulus in large necropoli.

There is some debate among historians as to whether Rome was founded by Italic cultures and then invaded by the Etruscans, or whether Etruscan cultural objects were adopted subsequently by Roman peoples. In other words, it is unclear whether Etruscan cultural objects are influences upon Roman culture, or part of native Roman heritage. Among archaeologists, the main criteria for deciding whether or not an object originated in Rome, or descended to the Romans from the Etruscans, is the date of the object, which is often determined by process of carbon dating. After this process, the opinion of ancient sources is consulted.

Although Diodorus of Sicily wrote in the 1st century of the great achievements of the Etruscans, little survives or is known of it. Most Etruscan script that does survive are fragments of religious and funeral texts. However, it is evident, from Etruscan visual art, that Greek myths were well known.

## Etruscan Religion

The Etruscan belief system was heavily influenced by other religions in the region, and placed heavy emphasis on the divination of the gods' wills to guide human affairs.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe some of the key characteristics of the Etruscan belief system

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Etruscan system of belief was an immanent polytheism, meaning all visible phenomena were considered to be a manifestation of divine power, and that power was subdivided into deities that acted continually on the world of man.
- The Etruscan scriptures were a corpus of texts termed the *Etrusca Disciplina*, a set of rules for the conduct of all divination.
- Three layers of deities are evident in the extensive Etruscan art motifs: indigenous, Indo-European, and Greek.
- Etruscan beliefs concerning the afterlife were influenced by a number of sources, particularly those of the early Mediterranean region.

## *Key Terms*

- **Etrusca Disciplina:** A corpus of texts that comprised the Etruscan scriptures, which essentially provided a systematic guide to divination.
- **polytheism:** The worship of, or belief in, multiple deities, usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, each with their own specific religions and rituals.

The Etruscan system of belief was an immanent polytheism; that is, all visible phenomena were considered to be a manifestation of divine power and that power was subdivided into deities that acted continually on the world of man, and could be dissuaded or persuaded in favor of human affairs. The Greek polytheistic approach was similar to the Etruscan religious and cultural base. As the Romans emerged from the legacy created by both of these groups, it shared in a belief system of many gods and deities.

## Etrusca Disciplina

The Etruscan scriptures were a corpus of texts, termed the *Etrusca Disciplina*. These texts were not scriptures in the typical sense, and foretold no prophecies. The Etruscans did not appear to have a systematic rubric for ethics or morals. Instead, they concerned themselves with the problem of understanding the will of the gods, which the Etruscans considered inscrutable. The Etruscans did not attempt to rationalize or explain divine actions or intentions, but to

simply divine what the gods' wills were through an elaborate system of divination. Therefore, the *Etrusca Disciplina* is mainly a set of rules for the conduct of all sorts of divination. It does not dictate what laws shall be made or how humans are to behave, but instead elaborates rules for how to ask the gods these questions and receive their answers.

Divinations were conducted by priests, who the Romans called *haruspices* or *sacerdotes*. A special magistrate was designated to look after sacred items, but every man had religious responsibilities. In this way, the Etruscans placed special emphasis upon intimate contact with divinity, consulting with the gods and seeking signs from them before embarking upon a task.

## Spirits and Deities

Three layers of deities are evident in the extensive Etruscan art motifs. One appears to be divinities of an indigenous nature: Catha and Usil, the sun; Tivr, the moon; Selvans, a civil god; Turan, the goddess of love; Laran, the god of war; Leinth, the goddess of death; Maris; Thalna; Turms; and the ever-popular Fufluns, whose name is related in some unknown way to the city of Populonia and the *populus Romanus* (the Roman people). Ruling over this pantheon of lesser deities were higher ones that seem to reflect the Indo European system: Tin or Tinia, the sky; Uni, his wife (Juno); and Cel, the earth goddess. In addition, the Greek gods were taken into the Etruscan system: Aritimi (Artemis), Menrva (Minerva), and Pacha (Bacchus). The Greek heroes taken from Homer also appear extensively in art motifs.



**Mars of Todi:** The Mars of Todi, a life-sized Etruscan bronze sculpture of a soldier making a votive offering, most likely to Laran, the Etruscan god of war; late 5th to early 4th century BCE.

## The Afterlife

Etruscan beliefs concerning the afterlife seem to be influenced by a number of sources. The Etruscans shared in general early Mediterranean beliefs. For instance, much like the Egyptians, the Etruscans believed that survival and prosperity in the afterlife depended on the treatment of the deceased's remains. Souls of ancestors are found depicted around Etruscan tombs, and after the 5th century BCE, the deceased are depicted in iconography as traveling to the underworld. In several instances, spirits of the dead are referred to as *hinthial*, or one who is underneath. The transmigrational world beyond the grave was patterned after the Greek Hades and ruled by Aita. The deceased were guided there by Charun, the equivalent of Death, who was blue and wielded a hammer. The Etruscan version of Hades was populated by Greek mythological figures, some of which were of composite appearance to those in Greek mythology.

Etruscan tombs imitated domestic structures, contained wall paintings and even furniture, and were spacious. The deceased was depicted in the tomb at the prime of their life, and often with a spouse. Not everyone had a sarcophagus, however. Some deceased individuals were laid out on stone benches, and depending on the proportion of inhumation, versus cremation, rites followed, cremated ashes and bones might be put into an urn in the shape of a house, or in a representation of the deceased.



**Reconstruction of an Etruscan Temple:** 19th century reconstruction of an Etruscan temple, in the courtyard of the Villa Giulia Museum in Rome, Italy.



## 39. Reading: Early Rome

### The Founding of Rome

Myths surrounding the founding of Rome describe the city's origins through the lens of later figures and events.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how the founding of Rome is rooted in mythology

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- The national epic poem of mythical Rome, the *Aeneid* by Virgil, tells the story of how the Trojan prince, Aeneas, came to Italy. The *Aeneid* was written under the emperor Augustus, who, through Julius Caesar, claimed ancestry from Aeneas.
- The Alba Longan line, begun by Iulus, Aeneas's son, extends to King Procas, who fathered two sons, Numitor and Amulius. According to the myth of

Romulus and Remus, Amulius captured Numitor, sent him to prison, and forced the daughter of Numitor, Rhea Silvia, to become a virgin priestess among the Vestals.

- Despite Amulius' best efforts, Rhea Silvia had twin boys, Romulus and Remus, by Mars. Romulus and Remus eventually overthrew Amulius, and restored Numitor.
- In the course of a dispute during the founding of the city of Rome, Romulus killed Remus. Thus Rome began with a fratricide, a story that was later taken to represent the city's history of internecine political strife and bloodshed.
- According to the archaeological record of the region, the development of Rome itself is presumed to have coalesced around the migrations of various Italic tribes, who originally inhabited the Alban Hills as they moved into the agriculturally-superior valley near the Tiber River.
- The discovery of a series of fortification walls on the north slope of Palatine Hill, most likely dating to the middle of the 8th century BCE, provide the strongest evidence of the original site and date of the founding of the city of Rome.

### *Key Terms*

- **Romulus:** The founder of Rome, and one of two twin sons of Rhea Silvia and Mars.
- **Aeneas:** A Trojan survivor of the Trojan War who,

according to legend, journeyed to Italy and founded the bloodline that would eventually lead to the Julio-Claudian emperors.

- **Rome:** An Italic civilization that began on the Italian Peninsula as early as the 8th century BCE. Located along the Mediterranean Sea, and centered on one city, it expanded to become one of the largest empires in the ancient world.

The founding of Rome can be investigated through archaeology, but traditional stories, handed down by the ancient Romans themselves, explain the earliest history of their city in terms of legend and myth. The most familiar of these myths, and perhaps the most famous of all Roman myths, is the story of Romulus and Remus, the twins who were suckled by a she-wolf. This story had to be reconciled with a dual tradition, set earlier in time.

## Romulus and the Founding of Rome



**The Capitoline Wolf:** The iconic sculpture of Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf who raised them. Traditional scholarship says the wolf-figure is Etruscan, 5th century BCE, with figures of Romulus and Remus added in the 15th century CE by Antonio Pollaiuolo. Recent studies suggest that the wolf may be a medieval sculpture dating from the 13th century CE.

Romulus and Remus were purported to be sons of Rhea Silvia and Mars, the god of war. Because of a prophecy that they would overthrow their great-uncle Amulius, who had overthrown Silvia's father, Numitor, they were, in the manner of many mythological heroes, abandoned at birth. Both sons were left to die on the Tiber River, but were saved by a number of miraculous interventions. After being carried to safety by the river itself, the twins were nurtured by a she-wolf and fed by a woodpecker, until a shepherd, named Faustulus, found them and took them as his sons.

When Remus and Romulus became adults and learned the truth about their birth and upbringing, they killed Amulius and restored Numitor to the throne. Rather than wait to inherit Alba Longa, the city of their birth, the twins decided to establish their own city.

They quarreled, however, over where to locate the new city, and in the process of their dispute, Romulus killed his brother. Thus Rome began with a fratricide, a story that was later taken to represent the city's history of internecine political strife and bloodshed.

## Aeneas and the Aeneid

The national epic of mythical Rome, the *Aeneid* by Virgil, tells the story of how the Trojan prince, Aeneas, came to Italy. Although the Aeneid was written under the emperor Augustus between 29 and 19 BCE, it tells the story of the founding of Rome centuries before Augustus's time. The hero, Aeneas, was already well known within Greco-Roman legend and myth, having been a character in the *Iliad*. But Virgil took the disconnected tales of Aeneas's wanderings, and his vague association with the foundation of Rome, and fashioned it into a compelling foundation myth or national epic. The story tied Rome to the legends of Troy, explained the Punic Wars, glorified traditional Roman virtues, and legitimized the Julio-Claudian dynasty as descendants of the founders, heroes, and gods of Rome and Troy.

Virgil makes use of symbolism to draw comparisons between the emperor Augustus and Aeneas, painting them both as founders of Rome. The Aeneid also contains prophecies about Rome's future, the deeds of Augustus, his ancestors, and other famous Romans. The shield of Aeneas even depicts Augustus's victory at Actium in 31 BCE. Virgil wrote the Aeneid during a time of major political and social change in Rome, with the fall of the republic and the Final War of the Roman Republic tearing through society and causing many to question Rome's inherent greatness. In this context, Augustus instituted a new era of prosperity and peace through the reintroduction of traditional Roman moral values. The Aeneid was seen as

reflecting this aim by depicting Aeneas as a man devoted and loyal

to his country and its greatness, rather than being concerned with his own personal gains. The *Aeneid* also gives mythic legitimization to the rule of Julius Caesar, and by extension, to his adopted son, Augustus, by immortalizing the tradition that renamed Aeneas's son Iulus, making him an ancestor to the family of Julius Caesar.

According to the *Aeneid*, the survivors from the fallen city of Troy banded together under Aeneas, underwent a series of adventures around the Mediterranean Sea, including a stop at newly founded Carthage under the rule of Queen Dido, and eventually reached the Italian coast. The Trojans were thought to have landed in an area between modern Anzio and Fiumicino, southwest of Rome, probably at Laurentum, or in other versions, at Lavinium, a place named for Lavinia, the daughter of King Latinus, who Aeneas married. Aeneas' arrival started a series of armed conflicts with Turnus over the marriage of Lavinia. Before the arrival of Aeneas, Turnus was engaged to Lavinia, who then married Aeneas, which began the conflict. Aeneas eventually won the war and killed Turnus, which granted the Trojans the right to stay and to assimilate with the local peoples. The young son of Aeneas, Ascanius, also known as Iulus, went on to found Alba Longa and the line of Alban kings who filled the chronological gap between the Trojan saga and the traditional founding of Rome in the 8th century BCE.

Toward the end of this line, King Procas appears as the father of Numitor and Amulius. At Procas' death, Numitor became king of Alba Longa, but Amulius captured him and sent him to prison. He also forced the daughter of Numitor, Rhea Silvia, to become a virgin priestess among the Vestals. For many years, Amulius was the king. The tortuous nature of the chronology is indicated by Rhea Silvia's ordination among the Vestals, whose order was traditionally said to have been founded by the successor of Romulus, Numa Pompilius.

## The Archaeological Record

According to the archaeological record of the region, the Italic tribes who originally inhabited the Alban Hills moved down into the valleys, which provided better land for agriculture. The area around the Tiber River was particularly advantageous and offered many strategic resources. For instance, the river itself provided a natural border on one side of the settlement, and the hills on the other side provided another defensive position for the townspeople. A settlement in this area would have also allowed for control of the river, including commercial and military traffic, as well as a natural observation point at Isola Tiberina. This was especially important, since Rome was at the intersection of the principal roads to the sea from Sabinum and Etruria, and traffic from those roads could not be as easily controlled.

The development of Rome itself is presumed to have coalesced around the migrations of these various tribes into the valley, as evidenced by differences in pottery and burial techniques. The discovery of a series of fortification walls on the north slope of Palatine Hill, most likely dating to the middle of the 8th century BCE, provide the strongest evidence for the original site and date of the founding of the city of Rome.

## The Seven Kings

For its first 200 years, Rome was ruled by seven kings, each of whom is credited either with establishing a key Roman tradition or constructing an important building.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the significance of the Seven Kings of Rome to Roman culture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Romulus was Rome's first king and the city's founder. He is best known for the Rape of the Sabine Women and the establishment of the Senate, as well as various voting practices.
- Numa Pompilius was a just, pious king who established the cult of the Vestal Virgins at Rome, and the position of Pontifex Maximus. His reign was characterized by peace.
- Tullus Hostilius had little regard for the Roman gods, and focused entirely on military expansion. He constructed the home of the Roman Senate, the *Curia Hostilia*.
- Ancus Marcius ruled peacefully and only fought wars when Roman territories needed defending.
- Lucius Tarquinius Priscus increased the size of the Senate and began major construction works, including the Temple to Jupiter Optimus Maximus,



and the Circus Maximus.

- Servius Tullius built the first *pomerium*—walls that fully encircled the Seven Hills of Rome. He also made organizational changes to the Roman army, and implemented a new constitution for the Romans, further developing the citizen classes.
- Lucius Tarquinius Superbus's reign is remembered for his use of violence and intimidation, as well as his disrespect of Roman custom and the Roman Senate. He was eventually overthrown, thus leading to the establishment of the Roman Republic.

### *Key Terms*

- **absolute monarchy:** A monarchical form of government in which the monarch has absolute power among his or her people. This amounts to unrestricted political power over a sovereign state and its people.
- **patrician:** A group of elite families in ancient Rome.

The first 200 years of Roman history occurred under a monarchy. Rome was ruled by seven kings over this period of time, and each of their reigns were characterized by the personality of the ruler in question. Each of these kings is credited either with establishing a key Roman tradition, or constructing an important building. None of the seven kings were known to be dynasts, and no reference is made to the hereditary nature of kingdom until after the fifth king, Tarquinius Priscus.

The king of Rome possessed absolute power over the people, and the Senate provided only a weak, oligarchic counterbalance to his power, primarily exercising only minor administrative powers. For these reasons, the kingdom of Rome is considered an absolute monarchy. Despite this, Roman kings, with the exception of Romulus, were elected by citizens of Rome who occupied the Curiate Assembly. There, members would vote on candidates that had been nominated by a chosen member of the Senate, called an *interrex*. Candidates could be chosen from any source.

## Romulus

Romulus was Rome's legendary first king and the city's founder. In 753 BCE, Romulus began building the city upon the Palatine Hill. After founding and naming Rome, as the story goes, he permitted men of all classes to come to Rome as citizens, including slaves and freemen, without distinction. To provide his citizens with wives, Romulus invited the neighboring tribes to a festival in Rome where he abducted the young women amongst them (this is known as The Rape of the Sabine Women). After the ensuing war with the Sabines, Romulus shared the kingship with the Sabine king, Titus Tatius. Romulus selected 100 of the most noble men to form the Roman Senate as an advisory council to the king. These men were called *patres* (from *pater*: father, head), and their descendants became the patricians. He also established voting, and class structures that would define sociopolitical proceedings throughout the Roman Republic and Empire.

## Numa Pompilius

After the death of Romulus, there was an *interregnum* for one year,

during which ten men chosen from the senate governed Rome as successive *interreges*. Numa Pompilius, a Sabine, was eventually chosen by the senate to succeed Romulus because of his reputation for justice and piety. Numa's reign was marked by peace and religious reform. Numa constructed a new temple to Janus and, after establishing peace with Rome's neighbors, shut the doors of the temple to indicate a state of peace. The doors of the temple remained closed for the balance of his reign. He established the cult of the Vestal Virgins at Rome, as well as the "leaping priests," known as the Salii, and three flamines, or priests, assigned to Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus. He also established the office and duties of Pontifex Maximus, the head priest of the Roman state religion.

## Tullus Hostilius

Tullus Hostilius was much like Romulus in his warlike behavior, and completely unlike Numa in his lack of respect for the gods. Tullus waged war against Alba Longa, Fidenae and Veii, and the Sabines. It was during Tullus' reign that the city of Alba Longa was completely destroyed, after which Tullus integrated its population into Rome. According to the Roman historian Livy, Tullus neglected the worship of the gods until, towards the end of his reign, he fell ill and became superstitious. However, when Tullus called upon Jupiter and begged assistance, Jupiter responded with a bolt of lightning that burned the king and his house to ashes. Tullus is attributed with constructing a new home for the Senate, the *Curia Hostilia*, which survived for 562 years after his death.

## Ancus Marcius

Following the death of Tullus, the Romans elected a peaceful and

religious king in his place—Numa's grandson, Ancus Marcius. Much like his grandfather, Ancus did little to expand the borders of Rome, and only fought war when his territories needed defending.

## Lucius Tarquinius Priscus

Lucius Tarquinius Priscus was the fifth king of Rome and the first of Etruscan birth. After immigrating to Rome, he gained favor with Ancus, who later adopted him as his son. Upon ascending the throne, he waged wars against the Sabines and Etruscans, doubling the size of Rome and bringing great treasures to the city. One of his first reforms was to add 100 new members to the Senate from the conquered Etruscan tribes, bringing the total number of senators to 200. He used the treasures Rome had acquired from conquests to build great monuments for Rome, including the Roman Forum, the temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, and the Circus Maximus. His reign is best remembered for the introduction of Etruscan symbols of military distinction and civilian authority into the Roman tradition, including the scepter of the king, the rings worn by senators, and the use of the tuba for military purposes.



**The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus:** 19th century illustration depicting the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus above the Tiber River during the Roman Republic.

## Servius Tullus

Following Priscus's death, his son-in-law, Servius Tullius, succeeded him to the throne. Like his father-in-law before him, Servius fought successful wars against the Etruscans. He used the treasure from his campaigns to build the first *pomerium*—walls that fully encircled the Seven Hills of Rome. He also made organizational changes to the Roman army, and was renowned for implementing a new constitution for the Romans and further developing the citizen classes. Servius's reforms brought about a major change in Roman life—voting rights were now based on socioeconomic status, transferring much of the power into the hands of the Roman elite. The 44-year reign of Servius came to an abrupt end when he was assassinated in a conspiracy led by his own daughter, Tullia, and her husband, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus.

## Lucius Tarquinius Superbus

While in power, Tarquinius conducted a number of wars against Rome's neighbors, including the Volsci, Gabii, and the Rutuli. Tarquinius also engaged in a series of public works, notably the completion of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill. Tarquin's reign, however, is best remembered for his use of violence and intimidation in his attempts to maintain control over Rome, as well as his disrespect of Roman custom and the Roman Senate. Tensions came to a head when the king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, raped Lucretia, wife and daughter to powerful Roman nobles. Lucretia then told her relatives about the attack and subsequently committed suicide to avoid the dishonor of the episode. Four men, led by Lucius Junius Brutus, incited a revolution, and as a result, Tarquinius and his family were deposed and expelled from Rome in 509 BCE. Because of his actions and the way they were viewed by the people, the word for King, *rex*, held a negative connotation in Roman culture until the fall of the Roman Empire. Brutus and Collatinus became Rome's first consuls, marking the beginning of the Roman Republic. This new government would survive for the next 500 years, until the rise of Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus, and cover a period in which Rome's authority and area of control extended to cover great areas of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.

## Early Roman Society

Multiple, overlapping hierarchies characterized Roman society, which was also highly patriarchal.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe what Roman society was like in its early years

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Roman society was extremely patriarchal and hierarchical. The adult male head of a household had special legal powers and privileges that gave him jurisdiction over all the members of his family.
- The status of freeborn Romans was established by their ancestry, census ranking, and citizenship.
- The most important division within Roman society was between patricians, a small elite who monopolized political power, and plebeians, who comprised the majority of Roman society.
- The Roman census divided citizens into six complex classes based on property holdings.
- Most adult, free-born men within the city limits of Rome held Roman citizenship. Classes of non-citizens existed and held different legal rights.

## *Key Terms*

- **plebeians:** A general body of free Roman citizens who were part of the lower strata of society.
- **patricians:** A group of ruling class families in ancient Rome.
- **tax farming:** A technique of financial management in which future, uncertain revenue streams are fixed into periodic rents via assignment by legal contract to a third party.

Roman society was extremely patriarchal and hierarchical. The adult male head of a household had special legal powers and privileges that gave him jurisdiction over all the members of his family, including his wife, adult sons, adult married daughters, and slaves, but there were multiple, overlapping hierarchies at play within society at large. An individual's relative position in one hierarchy might have been higher or lower than it was in another. The status of freeborn Romans was established by the following:

- Their ancestry
- Their census rank, which in turn was determined by the individual's wealth and political privilege
- Citizenship, of which there were grades with varying rights and privileges



## Ancestry

The most important division within Roman society was between patricians, a small elite who monopolized political power, and plebeians, who comprised the majority of Roman society. These designations were established at birth, with patricians tracing their ancestry back to the first Senate established under Romulus. Adult, male non-citizens fell outside the realms of these divisions, but women and children, who were also not considered formal citizens, took the social status of their father or husband. Originally, all public offices were only open to patricians and the classes could not intermarry, but, over time, the differentiation between patrician and plebeian statuses became less pronounced, particularly after the establishment of the Roman republic.

## Census Rankings

The Roman census divided citizens into six complex classes based on property holdings. The richest class was called the senatorial class, with wealth based on ownership of large agricultural estates, since members of the highest social classes did not traditionally engage in commercial activity. Below the senatorial class was the equestrian order, comprised of members who held the same volume of wealth as the senatorial classes, but who engaged in commerce, making them an influential early business class. Certain political and quasi-political positions were filled by members of the equestrian order, including tax farming and leadership of the Praetorian Guard. Three additional property-owning classes occupied the rungs beneath the equestrian order. Finally, the *proletarii* occupied the bottom rung with the lowest property values in the kingdom.

## Citizenship

Citizenship in ancient Rome afforded political and legal privileges to free individuals with respect to laws, property, and governance. Most adult, free-born men within the city limits of Rome held Roman citizenship. Men who lived in towns outside of Rome might also hold citizenship, but some lacked the right to vote. Free-born, foreign subjects during this period were known as *peregrini*, and special laws existed to govern their conduct and disputes, though they were not considered Roman citizens during the Roman kingdom period. Free-born women in ancient Rome were considered citizens, but they could not vote or hold political office. The status of woman's citizenship affected the citizenship of her offspring. For example, in a type of Roman marriage called *conubium*, both spouses must be citizens in order to marry. Additionally, the phrase *ex duobus civibus Romanis natos*, translated to mean "children born of two Roman citizens," reinforces the importance of both parents' legal status in determining that of their offspring.



**Roman citizenship:** *The toga, shown here on a statue restored with the head of Nerva, was the distinctive garb of Roman citizens*

Classes of non-citizens existed and held different legal rights. Under Roman law, slaves were considered property and held no rights. However, certain laws did regulate the institution of slavery, and extended protections to slaves that were not granted to other forms of property. Slaves who had been manumitted became freedmen and enjoyed largely the same rights and protections as free-born citizens. Many slaves descended from debtors or prisoners of war,

especially women and children who were captured during foreign military campaigns and sieges.

Ironically, many slaves originated from Rome's conquest of Greece, and yet Greek culture was considered, in some respects by the Romans, to be superior to their own. In this way, it seems Romans regarded slavery as a circumstance of birth, misfortune, or war, rather than being limited to, or defined by, ethnicity or race. Because it was defined mainly in terms of a lack of legal rights and status, it was also not considered a permanent or inescapable position. Some who had received educations or learned skills that allowed them to earn their own living were manumitted upon the death of their

owner, or allowed to earn money to buy their freedom during their owner's lifetime. Some slave owners also freed slaves who they believed to be their natural children. Nonetheless, many worked under harsh conditions, and/or suffered inhumanely under their owners during their enslavement.

Most freed slaves joined the lower plebeian classes, and worked as farmers or tradesmen, though as time progressed and their numbers increased, many were also accepted into the equestrian class. Some went on to populate the civil service, whereas others engaged in commerce, amassing vast fortunes that were rivaled only by those in the wealthiest classes.

# 40. Reading: The Roman Republic

## The Establishment of the Roman Republic

After the public outcry that arose as a result of the rape of Lucretia, Romans overthrew the unpopular king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, and established a republican form of government.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why and how Rome transitioned from a monarchy to a republic

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Roman monarchy was overthrown around 509 BCE, during a political revolution that resulted in the expulsion of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome.

- Despite waging a number of successful campaigns against Rome's neighbors, securing Rome's position as head of the Latin cities, and engaging in a series of public works, Tarquinius was a very unpopular king, due to his violence and abuses of power.
- When word spread that Tarquinius's son raped Lucretia, the wife of the governor of Collatia, an uprising occurred in which a number of prominent patricians argued for a change in government.
- A general election was held during a legal assembly, and participants voted in favor of the establishment of a Roman republic.
- Subsequently, all Tarquins were exiled from Rome and an interrex and two consuls were established to lead the new republic.

### *Key Terms*

- **patricians:** A group of ruling class families in ancient Rome.
- **plebeians:** A general body of free Roman citizens who were part of the lower strata of society.
- **interrex:** Literally, this translates to mean a ruler that presides over the period between the rule of two separate kings; or, in other words, a short-term regent.

The Roman monarchy was overthrown around 509 BCE, during a political revolution that resulted in the expulsion of Lucius

Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome. Subsequently, the Roman Republic was established.

## Background

Tarquinius was the son of Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, the fifth king of Rome's Seven Kings period. Tarquinius was married to Tullia Minor, the daughter of Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome's Seven Kings period. Around 535 BCE, Tarquinius and his wife, Tullia Minor, arranged for the murder of his father-in-law. Tarquinius became king following Servius Tullius's death.

Tarquinius waged a number of successful campaigns against Rome's neighbors, including the Volsci, Gabii, and the Rutuli. He also secured Rome's position as head of the Latin cities, and in a series of public works, such as the completion of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. However, Tarquinius remained an unpopular king for a number of reasons. He refused to bury his predecessor and executed a number of leading senators whom he suspected remained loyal to Servius. Following these actions, he refused to replace the senators he executed and refused to consult the Senate in matters of government going forward, thus diminishing the size and influence of the Senate greatly. He also went on to judge capital criminal cases without the advice of his counselors, stoking fear among his political opponents that they would be unfairly targeted.

## The Rape of Lucretia and An Uprising



Titian's *Tarquin and Lucretia* (1571).



## *Tarquin and Lucretia*

During Tarquinius's war with the Rutuli, his son, Sextus Tarquinius, was sent on a military errand to Collatia, where he was received with great hospitality at the governor's mansion. The governor's wife, Lucretia, hosted Sextus while the governor was away at war. During the night, Sextus entered her bedroom and raped her. The next day, Lucretia traveled to her father, Spurius Lucretius, a distinguished prefect in Rome, and, before witnesses, informed him of what had happened. Because her father was a chief magistrate of Rome, her pleas for justice and vengeance could not be ignored. At the end of her pleas, she stabbed herself in the heart with a dagger, ultimately dying in her own father's arms. The scene struck those who had witnessed it with such horror that they collectively vowed to publicly defend their liberty against the outrages of such tyrants.

Lucius Junius Brutus, a leading citizen and the grandson of Rome's fifth king, Tarquinius Priscus, publicly opened a debate on the form of government that Rome should have in place of the existing monarchy. A number of patricians attended the debate, in which Brutus

proposed the banishment of the Tarquins from all territories of Rome, and the appointment of an interrex to nominate new magistrates and to oversee an election of ratification. It was decided that a republican form of government should temporarily replace the monarchy, with two consuls replacing the king and executing the will of a patrician senate. Spurius Lucretius was elected interrex, and he proposed Brutus, and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, a leading citizen who was also related to Tarquinius Priscus, as the first two consuls. His choice was ratified by the *comitia curiata*, an organization of patrician families who primarily ratified decrees of the king.

In order to rally the plebeians to their cause, all were summoned to a legal assembly in the forum, and Lucretia's body was paraded through the streets. Brutus gave a speech and a general election was

held. The results were in favor of a republic. Brutus left Lucretius in command of the city as interrex, and pursued the king in Ardea where he had been positioned with his army on campaign. Tarquinius, however, who had heard of developments in Rome, fled the camp before Brutus arrived, and the army received Brutus favorably, expelling the king's sons from their encampment. Tarquinius was subsequently refused entry into Rome and lived as an exile with his family.

# The Establishment of the Republic



**Brutus and Lucretia:** The statue shows Brutus holding the knife and swearing the oath, with Lucretia.

Although there is no scholarly agreement as to whether or not it actually took place, Plutarch and Appian both claim that Brutus's first act as consul was to initiate an oath for the people, swearing never again to allow a king to rule Rome. What is known for certain is that he replenished the Senate to its original number of 300 senators, recruiting men from among the equestrian class. The new consuls also created a separate office, called the *rex sacrorum*, to carry out and oversee religious duties, a task that had previously fallen to the king.

The two consuls continued to be elected annually by Roman citizens and advised by the senate. Both consuls were elected for one-year terms and could veto each other's actions. Initially, they were endowed with all the powers of kings past, though over time these were broken down further by the addition of magistrates to the governmental system. The first magistrate added was the praetor, an office that assumed judicial authority from the consuls. After the praetor, the censor was established, who assumed the power to conduct the Roman census.

## Structure of the Republic

The Roman Republic was composed of the Senate, a number of legislative assemblies, and elected magistrates.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the political structure of the Roman Republic

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Constitution of the Roman Republic was a set of guidelines and principles passed down, mainly through precedent. The constitution was largely unwritten and uncoded, and evolved over time.
- Roman citizenship was a vital prerequisite to possessing many important legal rights. The Senate passed decrees that were called *senatus consulta*, ostensibly “advice” from the senate to a magistrate. The focus of the Roman Senate was usually foreign policy.
- There were two types of legislative assemblies. The first was the *comitia* (“committees”), which were assemblies of all Roman citizens. The second was the *concilia* (“councils”), which were assemblies of specific groups of citizens.
- The *comitia centuriata* was the assembly of the centuries (soldiers), and they elected magistrates who had imperium powers (consuls and praetors). The *comitia tributa*, or assembly of the tribes (the citizens of Rome), was presided over by a consul and composed of 35 tribes. They elected quaestors, curule aediles, and military tribunes.
- Dictators were sometimes elected during times of military emergency, during which the constitutional government would be disbanded.

### *Key Terms*

- **patricians:** A group of ruling class families in ancient Rome.
- **plebeian:** A general body of free Roman citizens who were part of the lower strata of society.
- **Roman Senate:** A political institution in the ancient Roman Republic. It was not an elected body, but one whose members were appointed by the consuls, and later by the censors.

The Constitution of the Roman Republic was a set of guidelines and principles passed down, mainly through precedent. The constitution was largely unwritten and uncoded, and evolved over time. Rather than creating a government that was primarily a democracy (as was ancient Athens), an aristocracy (as was ancient Sparta), or a monarchy (as was Rome before, and in many respects after, the Republic), the Roman constitution mixed these three elements of governance into their overall political system. The democratic element took the form of legislative assemblies; the aristocratic element took the form of the Senate; and the monarchical element took the form of the many term-limited consuls.



**The Roman SPQR Banner:** “SPQR” (*senatus populusque romanus*) was the Roman motto, which stood for “the Senate and people of Rome”.

## The Roman Senate

The Senate’s ultimate authority derived from the esteem and prestige of the senators, and was based on both precedent and custom. The Senate passed decrees, which were called *senatus consulta*, ostensibly “advice” handed down from the senate to a magistrate. In practice, the magistrates usually followed the *senatus consulta*. The focus of the Roman Senate was usually foreign policy. However, the power of the Senate expanded over time as the power of the legislative assemblies declined, and eventually the Senate took a greater role in civil law-making. Senators were usually appointed by Roman censors, but during times of military emergency, such as the civil wars of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, this practice became less prevalent, and the Roman dictator, triumvir, or the Senate itself would select its members.





**Curia Iulia – The Roman Senate House:** The Curia Iulia in the Roman Forum, the seat of the imperial Senate.

## Legislative Assemblies

Roman citizenship was a vital prerequisite to possessing many important legal rights, such as the rights to trial and appeal, marriage, suffrage, to hold office, to enter binding contracts, and to enjoy special tax exemptions. An adult male citizen with full legal and political rights was called *optimo jure*. The *optimo jure* elected assemblies, and the assemblies elected magistrates, enacted legislation, presided over trials in capital cases, declared war and peace, and forged or dissolved treaties. There were two types of

legislative assemblies. The first was the *comitia* (“committees”), which were assemblies of all *optimo jure*. The second was the *concilia* (“councils”), which were assemblies of specific groups of *optimo jure*.

Citizens on these assemblies were organized further on the basis of *curiae* (familial groupings), centuries (for military purposes), and tribes (for civil purposes), and each would each gather into their own assemblies. The Curiate Assembly served only a symbolic purpose in the late Republic, though the assembly was used to ratify the powers of newly elected magistrates by passing laws known as *leges curiatae*. The *comitia centuriata* was the assembly of the centuries (soldiers). The president of the *comitia centuriata* was usually a consul, and the *comitia centuriata* would elect magistrates who had *imperium* powers (consuls and praetors). It also elected censors. Only the *comitia centuriata* could declare war and ratify the results of a census. It also served as the highest court of appeal in certain judicial cases.

The assembly of the tribes, the *comitia tributa*, was presided over by a consul, and was composed of 35 tribes. The tribes were not ethnic or kinship groups, but rather geographical subdivisions. While it did not pass many laws, the *comitia tributa* did elect quaestors, curule aediles, and military tribunes. The Plebeian Council was identical to the assembly of the tribes, but excluded the patricians. They elected their own officers, plebeian tribunes, and plebeian aediles. Usually a plebeian tribune would preside over the assembly. This assembly passed most laws, and could also act as a court of appeal.

Since the tribunes were considered to be the embodiment of the plebeians, they were *sacrosanct*. Their *sacrosanctness* was enforced by a pledge, taken by the plebeians, to kill any person who harmed or interfered with a tribune during his term of office. As such, it was considered a capital offense to harm a tribune, to disregard his veto, or to interfere with his actions. In times of military emergency, a dictator would be appointed for a term of six months. The

constitutional government would be dissolved, and the dictator would be the absolute master of the state. When the dictator's term ended, constitutional government would be restored.

## Executive Magistrates

Magistrates were the elected officials of the Roman republic. Each magistrate was vested with a degree of power, and the dictator, when there was one, had the highest level of power. Below the dictator was the censor (when they existed), and the consuls, the highest ranking ordinary magistrates. Two were elected every year and wielded supreme power in both civil and military powers. The ranking among both consuls flipped every month, with one outranking the other.

Below the consuls were the praetors, who administered civil law, presided over the courts, and commanded provincial armies. Censors conducted the Roman census, during which time they could appoint people to the Senate. Curule aediles were officers elected to conduct domestic affairs in Rome, who were vested with powers over the markets, public games, and shows. Finally, at the bottom of magistrate rankings were the quaestors, who usually assisted the consuls in Rome and the governors in the provinces with financial tasks. Plebeian tribunes and plebeian aediles were considered representatives of the people, and acted as a popular check over the Senate through use of their veto powers, thus safeguarding the civil liberties of all Roman citizens.

Each magistrate could only veto an action that was taken by an equal or lower ranked magistrate. The most significant constitutional power a magistrate could hold was that of imperium or command, which was held only by consuls and praetors. This gave the magistrate in question the constitutional authority to issue commands, military or otherwise.

Election to a magisterial office resulted in automatic membership

in the Senate for life, unless impeached. Once a magistrate's annual term in office expired, he had to wait at least ten years before serving in that office again. Occasionally, however, a magistrate would have his command powers extended through prorogation, which effectively allowed him to retain the powers of his office as a promagistrate.

## Roman Society Under the Republic

The bulk of Roman politics prior to the 1st century BCE focused on inequalities among the orders.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the relationship between the government and the people in the time of the Roman Republic

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- A number of developments affected the relationship between Rome's republican government and

society, particularly in regard to how that relationship differed among patricians and plebeians.

- In 494 BCE, plebeian soldiers refused to march against a wartime enemy, in order to demand the right to elect their own officials.
- The passage of Lex Trebonia forbade the co-opting of colleagues to fill vacant positions on tribunes in order to sway voting in favor of patrician blocs over plebeians.
- Throughout the 4th century BCE, a series of reforms were passed that required all laws passed by the plebeian council to have the full force of law over the entire population. This gave the plebeian tribunes a positive political impact over the entire population for the first time in Roman history.
- In 445 BCE, the plebeians demanded the right to stand for election as consul. Ultimately, a compromise was reached in which consular command authority was granted to a select number of military tribunes.
- The Licinio-Sextian law was passed in 367 BCE; it addressed the economic plight of the plebeians and prevented the election of further patrician magistrates.
- In the decades following the passage of the Licinio-Sextian law, further legislation was enacted that granted political equality to the plebeians. Nonetheless, it remained difficult for a plebeian from an unknown family to enter the Senate, due to the rise of a new patricio-plebeian aristocracy that was less interested in the plight of the average plebeian.

### *Key Terms*

- **patricians:** A group of ruling class families in ancient Rome.
- **plebeian:** A general body of free Roman citizens who were part of the lower strata of society.

In the first few centuries of the Roman Republic, a number of developments affected the relationship between the government and the Roman people, particularly in regard to how that relationship differed across the separate strata of society.

## The Patrician Era (509-367 BCE)

The last king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, was overthrown in 509 BCE. One of the biggest changes that occurred as a result was the establishment of two chief magistrates, called consuls, who were elected by the citizens of Rome for an annual term. This stood in stark contrast to the previous system, in which a king was elected by senators, for life. Built in to the consul system were checks on authority, since each consul could provide balance to the decisions made by his colleague. Their limited terms of office also opened them up to the possibility of prosecution in the event of abuses of power. However, when consuls exercised their political powers in tandem, the magnitude and influence they wielded was hardly different from that of the old kings.

In 494 BCE, Rome was at war with two neighboring tribes, and plebeian soldiers refused to march against the enemy, instead

seceding to the Aventine Hill. There, the plebeian soldiers took advantage of the situation to demand the right to elect their own officials. The patricians assented to their demands, and the plebeian soldiers returned to battle. The new offices that were created as a result came to be known as “plebeian tribunes,” and they were to be assisted by “plebeian aediles.”

In the early years of the republic, plebeians were not permitted to hold magisterial office. Tribunes and aediles were technically not magistrates, since they were only elected by fellow plebeians, as opposed to the unified population of plebeians and patricians. Although plebeian tribunes regularly attempted to block legislation they considered unfavorable, patricians could still override their veto with the support of one or more other tribunes. Tension over this imbalance of power led to the passage of Lex Trebonia, which forbade the co-opting of colleagues to fill vacant positions on tribunes in order to sway voting in favor of one or another bloc. Throughout the 4th century BCE, a series of reforms were passed that required all laws passed by the plebeian council to have equal force over the entire population, regardless of status as patrician or plebeian. This gave the plebeian tribunes a positive political impact over the entire population for the first time in Roman history.



**Gaius Gracchus:** This 18th century drawing shows Gaius Gracchus, tribune of the people, presiding over the plebeian council.

In 445 BCE, the plebeians demanded the right to stand for election as consul. The Roman Senate initially refused them this right, but ultimately a compromise was reached in which consular command authority was granted to a select number of military tribunes, who, in turn, were elected by the centuriate assembly with veto power being retained by the senate.

Around 400 BCE, during a series of wars that were fought against neighboring tribes, the plebeians demanded concessions for the disenfranchisement they experienced as foot soldiers fighting for spoils of war that they were never to see. As a result, the Licinio-Sextian law was eventually passed in 367 BCE, which addressed the economic plight of the plebeians and prevented the election of further patrician magistrates.



## The Conflict of the Orders Ends (367-287 BCE)

In the decades following the passage of the Licinio-Sextian law, further legislation was enacted that granted political equality to the plebeians. Nonetheless, it remained difficult for a plebeian from an unknown family to enter the Senate. In fact, the very presence of a long-standing nobility, and the Roman population's deep respect for it, made it very difficult for individuals from unknown families to be elected to high office. Additionally, elections could be expensive, neither senators nor magistrates were paid for their services, and the Senate usually did not reimburse magistrates for expenses incurred during their official duties, providing many barriers to the entry of high political office by the non-affluent.

Ultimately, a new patricio-plebeian aristocracy emerged and replaced the old patrician nobility. Whereas the old patrician nobility existed simply on the basis of being able to run for office, the new aristocracy existed on the basis of affluence. Although a small number of plebeians had achieved the same standing as the patrician families of the past, new plebeian aristocrats were less interested in the plight of the average plebeian than were the old patrician aristocrats. For a time, the plebeian plight was mitigated, due higher employment, income, and patriotism that was wrought by a series of wars in which Rome was engaged; these things eliminated the threat of plebeian unrest. But by 287 BCE, the economic conditions of the plebeians deteriorated as a result of widespread indebtedness, and the plebeians sought relief. Roman senators, most of whom were also creditors, refused to give in to the plebeians' demands, resulting in the first plebeian secession to Janiculum Hill.

In order to end the plebeian secession, a dictator, Quintus Hortensius, was appointed. Hortensius, who was himself a plebeian, passed a law known as the "Hortensian Law." This law ended the requirement that an *auctoritas patrum* be passed before a bill could be considered by either the plebeian council or the tribal assembly,

thus removing the final patrician senatorial check on the plebeian council. The requirement was not changed, however, in the centuriate assembly. This provided a loophole through which the patrician senate could still deter plebeian legislative influence.

## Art and Literature in the Roman Republic

Culture flourished during the Roman Republic with the emergence of great authors, such as Cicero and Lucretius, and with the development of Roman relief and portraiture sculpture.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Recognize the wide extent of art and literature created during the Roman Republic

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Roman literature was, from its very inception, influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest works we possess are of historical epics that

tell the early military history of Rome. However, authors diversified their genres as the Republic expanded.

- Cicero is one of the most famous Republican authors, and his letters provide detailed information about an important period in Roman history.
- Romans typically produced historical sculptures in relief, as opposed to Greek free-standing sculpture. Small sculptures were considered luxury items, while moulded relief decoration in pottery vessels and small figurines were produced in great quantities for a wider section of the population.
- The most well-known surviving examples of Roman painting consist of the wall paintings from Pompeii and Herculaneum that were preserved in the aftermath of the fatal eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE.
- Veristic portraiture is a hallmark of Roman art during the Republic, though its use began to diminish during the 1st century BCE as civil wars threatened the empire and individual strong men began amassing more power.

### *Key Terms*

- **Cicero:** A Roman philosopher, politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, consul, and constitutionalist.
- **veristic portraiture:** A hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics; a common style of portraiture in the early to mid-Republic.

## Literature

Roman literature was, from its very inception, heavily influenced by Greek authors. Some of the earliest works we possess are historical epics telling the early military history of Rome, similar to the Greek epic narratives of Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides. Virgil, though generally considered to be an Augustan poet, represents the pinnacle of Roman epic poetry. His *Aeneid* tells the story of the flight of Aeneas from Troy, and his settlement of the city that would become Rome. As the Republic expanded, authors began to produce poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy. Lucretius, in his *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), attempted to explicate science in an epic poem. The genre of satire was also common in Rome, and satires were written by, among others, Juvenal and Persius.

## The Age of Cicero



**Bust of Cicero:** A mid-first century CE bust of Cicero, in the Capitoline Museums, Rome.

Cicero has traditionally been considered the master of Latin prose.

The writing he produced from approximately 80 BCE until his death in 43 BCE, exceeds that of any Latin author whose work survives, in terms of quantity and variety of genre and subject matter. It also possesses unsurpassed stylistic excellence. Cicero's many works can be divided into four groups: letters, rhetorical treatises, philosophical works, and orations. His letters provide detailed information about an important period in Roman history, and offers a vivid picture of public and private life among the Roman governing class. Cicero's works on oratory are our most valuable Latin sources for ancient theories on education and rhetoric. His philosophical works were the basis of moral philosophy during the Middle Ages, and his speeches inspired many European political leaders, as well as the founders of the United States.

## Art

Early Roman art was greatly influenced by the art of Greece and the neighboring Etruscans, who were also greatly influenced by Greek art via trade. As the Roman Republic conquered Greek territory, expanding its imperial domain throughout the Hellenistic world, official and patrician sculpture grew out of the Hellenistic style that many Romans encountered during their campaigns, making it difficult to distinguish truly Roman elements from elements of Greek style. This was especially true since much of what survives of Greek sculpture are actually copies made of Greek originals by Romans. By the 2nd century BCE, most sculptors working within Rome were Greek, many of whom were enslaved following military conquests, and whose names were rarely recorded with the work they created. Vast numbers of Greek statues were also imported to Rome as a result of conquest as well as trade.

Rather than create free-standing works depicting heroic exploits from history or mythology, as the Greeks had, the Romans produced historical works in relief. Small sculptures were considered luxury

items and were frequently the object of client-patron relationships. The silver Warren Cup and glass Lycurgus cup are examples of the high quality works that were produced during this period. For a wider section of the population, moulded relief decoration in pottery vessels and small figurines were produced in great quantities, and were often of great quality.

In the 3rd century BCE, Greek art taken during wars became popular, and many Roman homes were decorated with landscapes by Greek artists.

Of the vast body of Roman painting that once existed, only a few examples survive to the modern-age. The most well-known surviving examples of Roman painting are the wall paintings from Pompeii and Herculaneum, that were preserved in the aftermath of the fatal eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. A large number of paintings also survived in the catacombs of Rome, dating from the 3rd century CE to 400, prior to the Christian age, demonstrating a continuation of the domestic decorative tradition for use in humble burial chambers. Wall painting was not considered high art in either Greece or Rome. Sculpture and panel painting, usually consisting of tempera or encaustic painting on wooden panels, were considered more prestigious art forms.

A large number of Fayum mummy portraits, bust portraits on wood added to the outside of mummies by the Romanized middle class, exist in Roman Egypt. Although these are in some ways distinctively local, they are also broadly representative of the Roman style of painted portraits.

Roman portraiture during the Republic is identified by its considerable realism, known as veristic portraiture. Verism refers to a hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics. The style originated from Hellenistic Greece; however, its use in Republican Rome and survival throughout much of the Republic is due to Roman values, customs, and political life. As with other forms of Roman art, Roman portraiture borrowed certain details from Greek art, but adapted these to their own needs. Veristic images often show their male subject with receding hairlines, deep wrinkles,

and even with warts. While the face of the portrait was often shown with incredible detail and likeness, the body of the subject would be idealized, and did not seem to correspond to the age shown in the face.





**Bust of an Old Man:** Veristic portraiture of an Old Man. Verism refers to a hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics.

Portrait sculpture during the period utilized youthful and classical proportions, evolving later into a mixture of realism and idealism. Advancements were also made in relief sculptures, often depicting Roman victories. The Romans, however, completely lacked a tradition of figurative vase-painting comparable to that of the ancient Greeks, which the Etruscans had also emulated.

## The Late Republic

The use of veristic portraiture began to diminish during the Late Republic in the 1st century BCE. During this time, civil wars threatened the empire and individual men began to gain more power. The portraits of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar, two political rivals who were also the most powerful generals in the Republic, began to change the style of portraits and their use. The portraits of Pompey the Great were neither fully idealized, nor were they created in the same veristic style of Republican senators. Pompey borrowed a specific parting and curl of his hair from Alexander the Great, linking Pompey visually to Alexander's likeness, and triggering his audience to associate him with Alexander's characteristics and qualities.



**Bust of Pompey the Great:** *The portraits of Pompey the Great were neither fully idealized, nor were they created in the same veristic style of Republican senators. This bust clearly shows the specific parting and curl of his hair that would have likened him to Alexander the Great.*

## Republican Wars and Conquest

By the end of the mid-Republic, Rome had achieved military dominance on both the Italian peninsula and within the Mediterranean.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the key results and effects of major Republican wars

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Early Roman Republican wars were wars of both expansion and defense, aimed at protecting Rome from neighboring cities and nations, and establishing its territory within the region.
- The Samnite Wars were fought against the Etruscans and effectively finished off all vestiges of Etruscan power by 282 BCE.
- By the middle of the 3rd century and the end of the Pyrrhic War, Rome had effectively dominated the Italian peninsula and won an international military reputation.
- Over the course of the three Punic Wars, Rome completely defeated Hannibal and razed Carthage to the ground, thereby acquiring all of Carthage's North African and Spanish territories.
- After four Macedonian Wars, Rome had established its first permanent foothold in the Greek world, and

divided the Macedonian Kingdom into four client republics.

### *Key Terms*

- **Punic Wars:** A series of three wars fought between Rome and Carthage, from 264 BCE to 146 BCE, that resulted in the complete destruction of Carthage.
- **Pyrrhus:** Greek general and statesman of the Hellenistic era. Later he became king of Epirus (r. 306-302, 297-272 BCE) and Macedon (r. 288-284, 273-272 BCE). He was one of the strongest opponents of early Rome. Some of his battles, though successful, cost him heavy losses, from which the term “Pyrrhic victory” was coined.



**Roman Conquest of the Italian Peninsula:** This map shows the expansion of Roman territory through the various wars fought during the Republican period.

## Early Republic

### Early Campaigns (458-396 BCE)

The first Roman Republican wars were wars of both expansion and

defense, aimed at protecting Rome from neighboring cities and nations, as well as establishing its territory in the region. Initially, Rome's immediate neighbors were either Latin towns and villages or tribal Sabines from the Apennine hills beyond. One by one, Rome defeated both the persistent Sabines and the nearby Etruscan and Latin cities. By the end of this period, Rome had effectively secured its position against all immediate threats.

## Expansion into Italy and the Samnite Wars (343-282 BCE)

The First Samnite War, of 343 BCE-341 BCE, was a relatively short affair. The Romans beat the Samnites in two battles, but were forced to withdraw from the war before they could pursue the conflict further, due to the revolt of several of their Latin allies in the Latin War. The Second Samnite War, from 327 BCE-304 BCE, was much longer and more serious for both the Romans and Samnites, but by 304 BCE the Romans had effectively annexed the greater part of the Samnite territory and founded several colonies therein. Seven years after their defeat, with Roman dominance of the area seemingly assured, the Samnites rose again and defeated a Roman army in 298 BCE, to open the Third Samnite War. With this success in hand, they managed to bring together a coalition of several of Rome's enemies, but by 282 BCE, Rome finished off the last vestiges of Etruscan power in the region.

## Pyrrhic War (280-275 BCE)

By the beginning of the 3rd century BCE, Rome had established itself as a major power on the Italian Peninsula, but had not yet come into conflict with the dominant military powers in the

Mediterranean Basin at the time: the Carthage and Greek kingdoms. When a diplomatic dispute between Rome and a Greek colony erupted into a naval confrontation, the Greek colony appealed for military aid to Pyrrhus, ruler of the northwestern Greek kingdom of Epirus. Motivated by a personal desire for military accomplishment, Pyrrhus landed a Greek army of approximately 25,000 men on Italian soil in 280 BCE. Despite early victories, Pyrrhus found his position in Italy untenable. Rome steadfastly refused to negotiate with Pyrrhus as long as his army remained in Italy. Facing unacceptably heavy losses with each encounter with the Roman army, Pyrrhus withdrew from the peninsula (thus giving rise to the term “pyrrhic victory”).

In 275 BCE, Pyrrhus again met the Roman army at the Battle of Beneventum. While Beneventum’s outcome was indecisive, it led to Pyrrhus’s

complete withdrawal from Italy, due to the decimation of his army following years of foreign campaigns, and the diminishing likelihood of further material gains. These conflicts with Pyrrhus would have a positive effect on Rome. Rome had shown it was capable of pitting its armies successfully against the dominant military powers of the Mediterranean, and that the Greek kingdoms were incapable of defending their colonies in Italy and abroad. Rome quickly moved into southern Italia, subjugating and dividing the Greek colonies. By the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Rome effectively dominated the Italian peninsula, and had won an international military reputation.

## Mid-Republic

### Punic Wars

The First Punic War began in 264 BCE, when Rome and Carthage became interested in using settlements within Sicily to solve their



own internal conflicts. The war saw land battles in Sicily early on, but focus soon shifted to naval battles around Sicily and Africa. Before the First Punic War, there was essentially no Roman navy. The new war in Sicily against Carthage, a great naval power, forced Rome to quickly build a fleet and train sailors. Though the first few naval battles of the First Punic War were catastrophic disasters for Rome, Rome was eventually able to beat the Carthaginians and leave them without a fleet or sufficient funds to raise another. For a maritime power, the loss of Carthage's access to the Mediterranean stung financially and psychologically, leading the Carthaginians to sue for peace.

Continuing distrust led to the renewal of hostilities in the Second Punic War, when, in 218 BCE, Carthaginian commander Hannibal attacked a Spanish town with diplomatic ties to Rome. Hannibal then crossed the Italian Alps to invade Italy. Hannibal's successes in Italy began immediately, but his brother, Hasdrubal, was defeated after he crossed the Alps on the Metaurus River. Unable to defeat Hannibal on Italian soil, the Romans boldly sent an army to Africa under Scipio Africanus, with the intention of threatening the Carthaginian capital. As a result, Hannibal was recalled to Africa, and defeated at the Battle of Zama.

Carthage never managed to recover after the Second Punic War, and the Third Punic War that followed was, in reality, a simple punitive mission to raze the city of Carthage to the ground. Carthage was almost defenseless, and when besieged offered immediate surrender, conceding to a string of outrageous Roman demands. The Romans refused the surrender and the city was stormed and completely destroyed after a short siege. Ultimately, all of Carthage's North African and Spanish territories were acquired by Rome.



**Hannibal's Famous Crossing of the Alps:** Depiction of Hannibal and his army crossing the Alps during the Second Punic War.

## Macedon and Greece

Rome's preoccupation with its war in Carthage provided an opportunity for Philip V of the kingdom of Macedonia, located in the northern part of the Greek peninsula, to attempt to extend his power westward. Over the next several decades, Rome clashed

with Macedon to protect their Greek allies throughout the First, Second, and Third Macedonian Wars. By 168 BCE, the Macedonians had been thoroughly defeated, and Rome divided the Macedonian Kingdom into four client republics. After a Fourth Macedonian War, and nearly a century of constant crisis management in Greece (which almost always was a result of internal instability when Rome pulled out), Rome decided to divide Macedonia into two new Roman provinces, Achaea and Epirus.

## Crises of the Republic

The 1st century BCE saw tensions between patricians and plebeians erupt into violence, as the Republic became increasingly more divided and unstable.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how crises in the 1st century BCE further destabilized the Roman Republic

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Though the causes and attributes of individual crises varied throughout the decades, an underlying theme of conflict between the aristocracy and ordinary citizens drove the majority of actions.
- The Gracchi brothers, Tiberius and Gaius, introduced a number of populist agrarian and land reforms in the 130s and 120s BCE that were heavily opposed by the patrician Senate. Both brothers were murdered by mob violence after political stalemates.
- Political instability continued, as populist Marius and optimate Sulla engaged in a series of conflicts that culminated in Sulla seizing power and marching to Asia Minor against the decrees of the Senate, and Marius seizing power in a coup back at Rome.
- The Catilinarian Conspiracy discredited the populist party, in turn repairing the image of the Senate, which had come to be seen as weak and not worthy of such violent attack.
- Under the terms of the First Triumvirate, Pompey's arrangements would be ratified and Caesar would be elected consul in 59 BCE; he subsequently served as governor of Gaul for five years. Crassus was promised the consulship later.
- The triumvirate crumbled in the wake of growing political violence and Crassus and Caesar's daughter's

death.

- A resolution was passed by the Senate that declared that if Caesar did not lay down his arms by July 49 BCE, he would be considered an enemy of the Republic. Meanwhile, Pompey was granted dictatorial powers over the Republic.
- On January 10, 49 BCE, Caesar crossed the Rubicon and marched towards Rome. Pompey, the consuls, and the Senate all abandoned Rome for Greece, and Caesar entered the city unopposed.

### *Key Terms*

- **Gracchi Brothers:** Brothers Tiberius and Gaius, Roman plebeian nobles who both served as tribunes in the late 2nd century BCE. They attempted to pass land reform legislation that would redistribute the major patrician landholdings among the plebeians.
- **plebeian:** A general body of free Roman citizens who were part of the lower strata of society.
- **patrician:** A group of ruling class families in ancient Rome.

The Crises of the Roman Republic refers to an extended period of political instability and social unrest that culminated in the demise of the Roman Republic, and the advent of the Roman Empire from about 134 BCE-44 BCE. The exact dates of this period of crisis are unclear or are in dispute from scholar to scholar. Though the causes and attributes of individual crises varied throughout the decades, an

underlying theme of conflict between the aristocracy and ordinary citizens drove the majority of actions.

Optimates were a traditionalist majority of the late Roman Republic. They wished to limit the power of the popular assemblies and the Tribune of the Plebeians, and to extend the power of the Senate, which was viewed as more dedicated to the interests of the aristocrats. In particular, they were concerned with the rise of individual generals, who, backed by the tribunate, the assemblies, and their own soldiers, could shift power from the Senate and aristocracy. Many members of this faction were so-classified because they used the backing of the aristocracy and the Senate to achieve personal

goals, not necessarily because they favored the aristocracy over the lower classes. Similarly, the populists did not necessarily champion the lower classes, but often used their support to achieve personal goals.

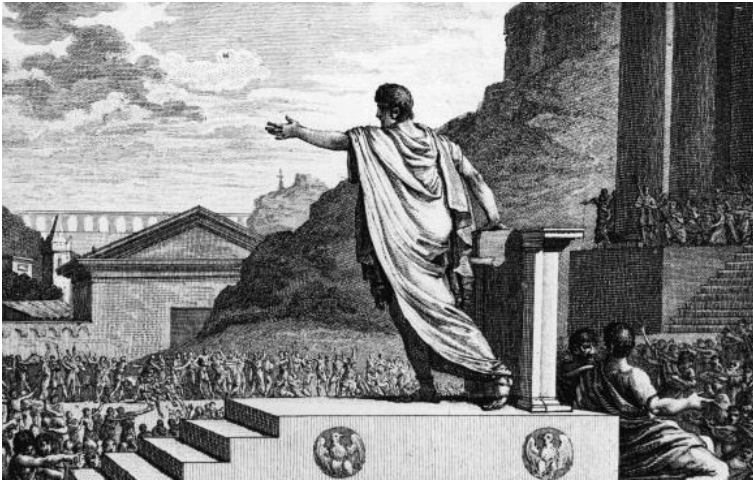
Following a period of great military successes and economic failures of the early Republican period, many plebeian calls for reform among the classes had been quieted. However, many new slaves were being imported from abroad, causing an unemployment crisis among the lower classes. A flood of unemployed citizens entered Rome, giving rise to populist ideas throughout the city.

## The Gracchi Brothers

Tiberius Gracchus took office as a tribune of the plebeians in late 134 BCE. At the time, Roman society was a highly stratified class system with tensions bubbling below the surface. This system consisted of noble families of the senatorial rank (patricians), the knight or equestrian class, citizens (grouped into two or three classes of self-governing allies of Rome: landowners; and plebs, or tenant freemen, depending on the time period), non-citizens who lived outside of southwestern Italy, and at the bottom, slaves. The

government owned large tracts of farm land that it had gained through invasion or escheat. This land was rented out to either large landowners whose slaves tilled the land, or small tenant farmers who occupied the property on the basis of a sub-lease. Beginning in 133 BCE, Tiberius tried to redress the grievances of displaced small tenant farmers. He bypassed the Roman Senate, and passed a law limiting the amount of land belonging to the state that any individual could farm, which resulted in the dissolution of large plantations maintained by rich landowners on public land.

A political back-and-forth ensued in the Senate as the other tribune, Octavius, blocked Tiberius's initiatives, and the Senate denied funds needed for land reform. When Tiberius sought re-election to his one-year term (an unprecedented action), the oligarchic nobles responded by murdering Tiberius, and mass riots broke out in the city in reaction to the assassination. About nine years later, Tiberius Gracchus's younger brother, Gaius, passed more radical reforms in favor of the poorer plebeians. Once again, the situation ended in violence and murder as Gaius fled Rome and was either murdered by oligarchs or committed suicide. The deaths of the Gracchi brothers marked the beginning of a late Republic trend in which tensions and conflicts erupted in violence.



**Gaius Gracchus Addressing the People:** Silvestre David Mirys' rendition of the the tribune, Gaius Gracchus, addressing the people of Rome.

## Marius and Sulla

The next major reformer of the time was Gaius Marius, who like the Gracchi, was a populist who championed the lower classes. He was a general who abolished the property requirement for becoming a soldier, which allowed the poor to enlist in large numbers. Lucius Cornelius Sulla was appointed as Marius's quaestor (supervisor of the financial affairs of the state) in 107 BCE, and later competed with Marius for supreme power. Over the next few decades, he and Marius engaged in a series of conflicts that culminated in Sulla seizing power and marching to Asia Minor against the decrees of the Senate. Marius launched a coup in Sulla's absence, putting to death some of his enemies and instituting a populist regime, but died soon after.





**Bust of Sulla:** The bust of Lucius Cornelius Sulla, an optimate who marched against Rome and installed himself as dictator in 82-81 BCE.

## Pompey, Crassus, and the Catilinarian Conspiracy

In 77 BCE, two of Sulla's former lieutenants, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus ("Pompey the Great") and Marcus Licinius Crassus, had left Rome to put down uprisings and found the populist party, attacking Sulla's constitution upon their return. In an attempt to forge an agreement with the populist party, both lieutenants promised to dismantle components of Sulla's constitution that the populists found disagreeable, in return for being elected consul. The two were elected in 70 BCE and held true to their word. Four years later, in 66 BCE, a movement to use peaceful means to address the plights of the various classes arose; however, after several failures in achieving their goals, the movement, headed by Lucius Sergius Catilina and based in Faesulae, a hotbed of agrarian agitation, decided to march to Rome and instigate an uprising. Marcus Tullius Cicero, the consul at the time, intercepted messages regarding recruitment and plans, leading the Senate to authorize the assassination of many Catilinarian conspirators in Rome, an action that was seen as stemming from dubious authority. This effectively disrupted the conspiracy and discredited the populist party, in turn repairing the image of the Senate, which had come to be seen as weak and not worthy of such violent attack.

### First Triumvirate

In 62 BCE, Pompey returned from campaigning in Asia to find that the Senate, elated by its successes against the Catiline conspirators, was unwilling to ratify any of Pompey's arrangements, leaving Pompey powerless. Julius Caesar returned from his governorship in Spain a year later and, along with Crassus, established a private agreement with Pompey known as the First Triumvirate. Under the terms of this agreement, Pompey's arrangements would be ratified

and Caesar would be elected consul in 59 BCE, subsequently serving as governor of Gaul for five years. Crassus was promised the consulship later.

When Caesar became consul, he saw the passage of Pompey's arrangements through the Senate, at times using violent means to ensure their passage. Caesar also facilitated the election of patrician Publius Clodius Pulcher to the tribunate in 58 BCE, and Clodius sidelined Caesar's senatorial opponents, Cato and Cicero. Clodius eventually formed armed gangs that terrorized Rome and began to attack Pompey's followers, who formed counter-gangs in response, marking the end of the political alliance between Pompey and Caesar. Though the triumvirate was briefly renewed in the face of political opposition for the consulship from Domitius Ahenobarbus, Crassus's death during an expedition against the Kingdom of Parthia, and the death of Pompey's wife, Julia, who was also Caesar's daughter, severed any remaining bonds between Pompey and Caesar.

Beginning in the summer of 54 BCE, a wave of political corruption and violence swept Rome, reaching a climax in January 52 BCE, when Clodius was murdered in a gang war. Caesar presented an ultimatum to the Senate on January 1, 49 BCE, which was ultimately rejected. Subsequently, a resolution was passed that declared that if Caesar did not lay down his arms by July, he would be considered an enemy of the Republic. The senators adopted Pompey as their champion, and on January 7, Pompey was granted dictatorial powers over the Republic by the Senate. Pompey's army, however, was composed mainly of untested conscripts, and on January 10, Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his more experienced forces in defiance of Roman laws, and marched towards Rome. Pompey, the consuls, and the Senate all abandoned Rome for Greece, in the face of Caesar's rapidly advancing forces, and Caesar entered the city unopposed.

# 4I. Assignments

## Week 7

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – “Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.”
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.
- It is acceptable to analyze. “The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.”

- It is not acceptable to editorialize. *“The author is super biased against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”*
- Don’t worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

# 42. Primary Source Reading 3: Xenophon

## Primary Source Reading: Xenophon

Xenophon brings a burnt offering to the goddess Diana

*Xenophon the Athenian was born 431 B.C. He was a pupil of Socrates. He marched with the Spartans, and was exiled from Athens. Sparta gave him land and property in Scillus, where he lived for many years before having to move once more, to settle in Corinth. He died in 354 B.C.*

*The Anabasis is his story of the march to Persia to aid Cyrus, who enlisted Greek help to try and take the throne from Artaxerxes, and the ensuing return of the Greeks, in which Xenophon played a leading role. This occurred between 401 B.C. and March 399 B.C.*

### **Book II**

On arrival at the doors of Tissaphernes's quarters the generals were summoned inside. They were Proxenus the Boeotian, Menon the Thessalian, Agias the Arcadian, Clearchus the Laconian, and Socrates the Achaean; while the captains remained at the doors. Not long after that, at one and the same signal, those within were seized and those without cut down; after which some of the barbarian horsemen galloped over the plain, killing every Hellene they encountered, bond or free. The Hellenes, as they looked from the camp, viewed that strange horsemanship with surprise, and could not explain to themselves what it all meant, until Nicarchus the Arcadian came tearing along for bare life with a wound in the belly, and clutching his protruding entrails in his hands. He told them all that had happened. Instantly the Hellenes ran to their arms, one and all, in utter consternation, and fully expecting that the enemy would

instantly be down upon the camp. They had at their back other Persians also, armed with cuirasses, as many as three hundred. As soon as they were within a short distance, they bade any general or captain of the Hellenes who might be there to approach and hear a message from the king. After this, two Hellene generals went out with all precaution. Cheirisophus was at the time away in a village with a party gathering provisions. As soon as they had halted within earshot, Ariaeus said: "Hellenes, Clearchus being shown to have committed perjury and to have broken the truce, has suffered the penalty, and he is dead; but Proxenus and Menon, in return for having given information of his treachery, are in high esteem and honor. As to yourselves, the king demands your arms. He claims them as his, since they belonged to Cyrus, who was his slave." To this the Hellenes made answer by the mouth of Cleanor of Orchomenus, their spokesman, who said, addressing Ariaeus: "Thou villain, Ariaeus, and you the rest of you, who were Cyrus's friends, have you no shame before God or man, first to swear to us that you have the same friends and the same enemies as we ourselves, and then to turn and betray us, making common cause with Tissaphernes, that most impious and villainous of men? With him you have murdered the very men to whom you gave your solemn word and oath, and to the rest of us turned traitors; and, having so done, you join hand with our enemies to come against us." Ariaeus answered: "There is no doubt but that Clearchus has been known for some time to harbor designs against Tissaphernes and Orontas, and all of us who side with them." Taking up this assertion, Xenophon said: "Well, then, granting that Clearchus broke the truce contrary to our oaths, he has his deserts, for perjurers deserve to perish; but where are Proxenus and Menon, our generals and your good friends and benefactors, as you admit? Send them back to us. Surely, just because they are friends of both parties, they will try to give us the best advice for you and for us."

At this, the Asiatics stood discussing with one another for a long while, and then they went away without vouchsafing a word.

The generals who were thus seized were taken up to the king

and there decapitated. The first of these, Clearchus, was a thorough soldier, and a true lover of fighting. This is the testimony of all who knew him intimately. As long as the war between the Lacedaemonians and Athenians lasted, he could find occupation at home; but after the peace, he persuaded his own city that the Thracians were injuring the Hellenes, and having secured his object, set sail, empowered by the ephorate to make war upon the Thracians north of the Chersonese and Perinthus. But he had no sooner fairly started than, for some reason or other, the ephors changed their minds, and endeavored to bring him back again from the isthmus. Thereupon he refused further obedience, and went off with sails set for the Hellespont. In consequence he was condemned to death by the Spartan authorities for disobedience to orders; and now, finding himself an exile, he came to Cyrus. Working on the feelings of that prince, in language described elsewhere, he received from his entertainer a present of ten thousand darics. Having got this money, he did not sink into a life of ease and indolence, but collected an army with it, carried on war against the Thracians, and conquered them in battle, and from that date onwards harried and plundered them with war incessantly, until Cyrus wanted his army; whereupon he at once went off, in hopes of finding another sphere of warfare in his company.

These, I take it, were the characteristic acts of a man whose affections are set on warfare. When it is open to him to enjoy peace with honor, no shame, no injury attached, still he prefers war; when he may live at home at ease, he insists on toil, if only it may end in fighting; when it is given to him to keep his riches without risk, he would rather lessen his fortune by the pastime of battle. To put it briefly, war was his mistress; just as another man will spend his fortune on a favorite, or to gratify some pleasure, so he chose to squander his substance on soldiering.

But if the life of a soldier was a passion with him, he was none the less a soldier born, as herein appears; danger was a delight to him; he courted it, attacking the enemy by night or by day; and in difficulties he did not lose his head, as all who ever served



in a campaign with him would with one consent allow. A good soldier! The question arises, Was he equally good as a commander? It must be admitted that, as far as was compatible with his quality of temper, he was; none more so. Capable to a singular degree of devising how his army was to get supplies, and of actually getting them, he was also capable of impressing upon those about him that Clearchus must be obeyed; and that he brought about by the very hardness of his nature. With a scowling expression and a harshly-grating voice, he chastised with severity, and at times with such fury, that he was sorry afterwards himself for what he had done. Yet it was not without purpose that he applied the whip; he had a theory that there was no good to be got out of an unchastened army. A saying of his is recorded to the effect that the soldier who is to mount guard and keep his hands off his friends, and be ready to dash without a moment's hesitation against the foe—must fear his commander more than the enemy. Accordingly, in any strait, this was the man whom the soldiers were eager to obey, and they would have no other in his place. The cloud which lay upon his brow, at those times lit up with brightness; his face became radiant, and the old sternness was so charged with vigor and knitted strength to meet the foe, that it savored of salvation, not of cruelty. But when the pinch of danger was past, and it was open to them to go and taste subordination under some other officer, many forsook him. So lacking in grace of manner was he; but was ever harsh and savage, so that the feeling of the soldiers towards him was that of schoolboys to a master. In other words, though it was not his good fortune ever to have followers inspired solely by friendship or goodwill, yet those who found themselves under him, either by State appointment or through want, or other arch necessity, yielded him implicit obedience. From the moment that he led them to victory, the elements which went to make his soldiers efficient were numerous enough. There was the feeling of confidence in facing the foe, which never left them, and there was the dread of punishment at his hands to keep them orderly. In this way and to this extent he knew how to rule; but to play a subordinate part

himself he had no great taste; so, at any rate, it was said. At the time of his death he must have been about fifty years of age.

Agiass the Arcadian and Socrates the Achaean were both among the sufferers who were put to death. To the credit, be it said, of both, no one ever derided either as cowardly in war: no one ever had a fault to find with either on the score of friendship. They were both about thirty-five years of age.

### **Book III**

After the generals had been seized, and the captains and soldiers who formed their escort had been killed, the Hellenes lay in deep perplexity—a prey to painful reflections. Here were they at the king's gates, and on every side environing them were many hostile cities and tribes of men. Who was there now to furnish them with a market? Separated from Hellas by more than a thousand miles, they had not even a guide to point the way. Impassable rivers lay athwart their homeward route, and hemmed them in. Betrayed even by the Asiatics, at whose side they had marched with Cyrus to the attack, they were left in isolation. Without a single mounted trooper to aid them in pursuit: was it not perfectly plain that if they won a battle, their enemies would escape to a man, but if they were beaten themselves, not one soul of them would survive?

Haunted by such thoughts, and with hearts full of despair, but few of them tasted food that evening; but few of them kindled even a fire, and many never came into camp at all that night, but took their rest where each chanced to be. They could not close their eyes for very pain and yearning after their fatherlands or their parents, the wife or child whom they never expected to look upon again. Such was the plight in which each and all tried to seek repose.

Now there was in that host a certain man, an Athenian, Xenophon, who had accompanied Cyrus, neither as a general, nor as an officer, nor yet as a private soldier, but simply on the invitation of an old friend, Proxenus. This old friend had sent to fetch him from home, promising, if he would come, to introduce him to Cyrus, "whom," said Proxenus, "I consider to be worth my fatherland and more to me."

Xenophon having read the letter, consulted Socrates the Athenian, whether he should accept or refuse the invitation. Socrates, who had a suspicion that the State of Athens might in some way look askance at my friendship with Cyrus, whose zealous co-operation with the Lacedaemonians against Athens in the war was not forgotten, advised Xenophon to go to Delphi and there to consult the god as to the desirability of such a journey. Xenophon went and put the question to Apollo, to which of the gods he must pray and do sacrifice, so that he might best accomplish his intended journey and return in safety, with good fortune. Then Apollo answered him: "To such and such gods must thou do sacrifice," and when he had returned home he reported to Socrates the oracle. But he, when he heard, blamed Xenophon that he had not, in the first instance, inquired of the god, whether it were better for him to go or to stay, but had taken on himself to settle that point affirmatively, by inquiring straightway, how he might best perform the journey. "Since, however," continued Socrates, "you did so put the question; you should do what the god enjoined." Thus, and without further ado, Xenophon offered sacrifice to those whom the god had named, and set sail on his voyage. He overtook Proxenus and Cyrus at Sardis, when they were just ready to start on the march up country, and was at once introduced to Cyrus. Proxenus eagerly pressed him to stop—a request which Cyrus with like ardor supported, adding that as soon as the campaign was over he would send him home. The campaign referred to was understood to be against the Pisidians. That is how Xenophon came to join the expedition, deceived indeed, though not by Proxenus, who was equally in the dark with the rest of the Hellenes, not counting Clearchus, as to the intended attack upon the king. Then, though the majority were in apprehension of the journey, which was not at all to their minds, yet, for very shame of one another and Cyrus, they continued to follow him, and with the rest went Xenophon.

And now in this season of perplexity, he too, with the rest, was in sore distress, and could not sleep; but anon, getting a snatch of sleep, he had a dream. It seemed to him in a vision that there was a

storm of thunder and lightning, and a bolt fell on his father's house, and thereupon the house was all in a blaze. He sprung up in terror, and pondering the matter, decided that in part the dream was good: in that he had seen a great light from Zeus, whilst in the midst of toil and danger. But partly too he feared it, for evidently it had come from Zeus the king. And the fire kindled all around—what could that mean but that he was hemmed in by various perplexities, and so could not escape from the country of the king? The full meaning, however, is to be discovered from what happened after the dream.

This is what took place. As soon as he was fully awake, the first clear thought which came into his head was, why am I lying here? The night advances; with the day, it is like enough, the enemy will be upon us. If we are to fall into the hands of the king, what is left us but to face the most horrible of sights, and to suffer the most fearful pains, and then to die, insulted, an ignominious death? To defend ourselves—to ward off that fate—not a hand stirs: no one is preparing, none cares; but here we lie, as though it were time to rest and take our ease. I too! What am I waiting for? A general to undertake the work? And from what city? Am I waiting till I am older myself and of riper age? Older I shall never be, if to-day I betray myself to my enemies.

Thereupon he got up, and called together first Proxenus's officers; and when they were met, he said: "Sleep, sirs, I cannot, nor can you, I fancy, nor lie here longer, when I see in what straits we are. Our enemy, we may be sure, did not open war upon us till he felt he had everything amply ready; yet none of us shows a corresponding anxiety to enter the lists of battle in the bravest style.

"And yet, if we yield ourselves and fall into the king's power, need we ask what our fate will be? This man, who, when his own brother, the son of the same parents, was dead, was not content with that, but severed head and hand from the body, and nailed them to a cross. We, then, who have not even the tie of blood in our favor, but who marched against him, meaning to make a slave of him instead of a king—and to slay him if we could: what is likely to be our fate at his hands? Will he not go all lengths so that, by inflicting on us

the extreme of ignominy and torture, he may rouse in the rest of mankind a terror of ever marching against him anymore? There is no question but that our business is to avoid by all means getting into his clutches.

“For my part, all the while the truce lasted, I never ceased pitying ourselves and congratulating the king and those with him, as, like a helpless spectator, I surveyed the extent and quality of their territory, the plenteousness of their provisions, the multitude of their dependents, their cattle, their gold, and their apparel. And then to turn and ponder the condition of our soldiers, without part or lot in these good things, except we bought it; few, I knew, had any longer the wherewithal to buy, and yet our oath held us down, so that we could not provide ourselves otherwise than by purchase. I say, as I reasoned thus, there were times when I dreaded the truce more than I now dread war.

“Now, however, that they have abruptly ended the truce, there is an end also to their own insolence and to our suspicion. All these good things of theirs are now set as prizes for the combatants. To whichever of us shall prove the better men, will they fall as guerdons; and the gods themselves are the judges of the strife. The gods, who full surely will be on our side, seeing it is our enemies who have taken their names falsely; whilst we, with much to lure us, yet for our oath’s sake, and the gods who were our witnesses, sternly held aloof. So that, it seems to me, we have a right to enter upon this contest with much more heart than our foes; and further, we are possessed of bodies more capable than theirs of bearing cold and heat and labor; souls too we have, by the help of heaven, better and braver; nay, the men themselves are more vulnerable, more mortal, than ourselves, if so be the gods vouchsafe to give us victory once again.

“Howbeit, for I doubt not elsewhere similar reflections are being made, whatsoever betide, let us not, in heaven’s name, wait for others to come and challenge us to noble deeds; let us rather take the lead in stimulating the rest to valor. Show yourselves to be the bravest of officers, and among generals, the worthiest to command.

For myself, if you choose to start forwards on this quest, I will follow; or, if you bid me lead you, my age shall be no excuse to stand between me and your orders. At least I am of full age; I take it, to avert misfortune from my own head."

Such were the speaker's words; and the officers, when they heard, all, with one exception, called upon him to put himself at their head. This was a certain Apollonides there present, who spoke in the Boeotian dialect. This man's opinion was that it was mere nonsense for anyone to pretend they could obtain safety otherwise than by an appeal to the king, if he had skill to enforce it; and at the same time he began to dilate on the difficulties. But Xenophon cut him short. "O most marvelous of men! Though you have eyes to see, you do not perceive; though you have ears to hear, you do not recollect. You were present with the rest of us now here when, after the death of Cyrus, the king, vaunting himself on that occurrence, sent dictatorially to bid us lay down our arms. But when we, instead of giving up our arms, put them on and went and pitched our camp near him, his manner changed. It is hard to say what he did not do, he was so at his wit's end, sending us embassies and begging for a truce, and furnishing provisions the while, until he had got it. Or to take the contrary instance, when just now, acting precisely on your principles, our generals and captains went, trusting to the truce, unarmed to a conference with them, what came of it? What is happening at this instant? Beaten, goaded with pricks, insulted, poor souls, they cannot even die: though death, I ween, would be very sweet. And you, who know all this, how can you say that it is mere nonsense to talk of self-defense? how can you bid us go again and try the arts of persuasion? In my opinion, sirs, we ought not to admit this fellow to the same rank with ourselves; rather ought we to deprive him of his captaincy, and load him with packs and treat him as such. The man is a disgrace to his own fatherland and the whole of Hellas, that, being a Hellene, he is what he is."

Here Agasias the Stymphalian broke in, exclaiming: "Nay, this fellow has no connection either with Boeotia or with Hellas, none whatever. I have noted both his ears bored like a Lydian's." And so

it was. Him then they banished. But the rest visited the ranks, and wherever a general was left, they summoned the general; where he was gone, the lieutenant-general; and where again the captain alone was left, the captain. As soon as they were all met, they seated themselves in front of the place of arms: the assembled generals and officers, numbering about a hundred. It was nearly midnight when this took place.

Thereupon Hieronymous the Eleian, the eldest of Proxenus's captains, commenced speaking as follows: "Generals and captains, it seemed right to us, in view of the present crisis, ourselves to assemble and to summon you, that we might advise upon some practicable course. Would you, Xenophon, repeat what you said to us?"

Thereupon Xenophon spoke as follows: "We all know only too well, that the king and Tissaphernes have seized as many of us as they could, and it is clear they are plotting to destroy the rest of us if they can. Our business is plain: it is to do all we can to avoid getting into the power of the barbarians; rather, if we can, we will get them into our power. Rely upon this then, all you who are here assembled, now is your great opportunity. The soldiers outside have their eyes fixed upon you; if they think that you are faint-hearted, they will turn cowards; but if you show them that you are making your own preparations to attack the enemy, and setting an example to the rest—follow you, be assured, they will: imitate you they will. May be, it is but right and fair that you should somewhat excel them, for you are generals, you are commanders of brigades or regiments; and if, while it was peace, you had the advantage in wealth and position, so now, when it is war, you are expected to rise superior to the common herd—to think for them, to toil for them, whenever there be need.

"At this very moment you would confer a great boon on the army, if you made it your business to appoint generals and officers to fill the places of those that are lost. For without leaders nothing good or noble, to put it concisely, was ever wrought anywhere; and in military matters this is absolutely true; for if discipline is held

to be of saving virtue, the want of it has been the ruin of many ere now. Well, then! When you have appointed all the commanders necessary, it would only be opportune, I take it, if you were to summon the rest of the soldiers and speak some words of encouragement. Even now, I daresay you noticed yourselves the crestfallen air with which they came into camp, the despondency with which they fell to picket duty, so that, unless there is a change for the better, I do not know for what service they will be fit; whether by night, if need were, or even by day. The thing is to get them to turn their thoughts to what they mean to do, instead of to what they are likely to suffer. Do that and their spirits will soon revive wonderfully. You know, I need hardly remind you, it is not numbers or strength that gives victory in war; but, heaven helping them, to one or other of two combatants it is given to dash with stouter hearts to meet the foe, and such onset, in nine cases out of ten, those others refuse to meet. This observation, also, I have laid to heart, that they, who in matters of war seek in all ways to save their lives, are just they who, as a rule, die dishonorably; whereas they who, recognizing that death is the common lot and destiny of all men, strive hard to die nobly: these more frequently, as I observe, do after all attain to old age, or, at any rate, while life lasts, they spend their days more happily. This lesson let all lay to heart this day, for we are just at such a crisis of our fate. Now is the season to be brave ourselves, and to stimulate the rest by our example." With these words he ceased.



PART IX

## WEEK 8: ROME



# 43. Introduction

## Week 8

### Introduction

drawing of the Colosseum attributed to Jan Asselijn

Rome's history spans more than 2,500 years. While Roman mythology dates the founding of Rome at around 753 BC, the site has been inhabited for much longer, making it one of the oldest continuously occupied sites in Europe. The city's early population originated from a mix of Latins, Etruscans and Sabines. Eventually, the city successively became the capital of the Roman Kingdom, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and is regarded as the birthplace of Western civilisation and by some as the first ever metropolis. It was first called The Eternal City (Latin: *Urbs Aeterna*; Italian: *La Città Eterna*) by the Roman poet Tibullus in the 1st century BC, and the expression was also taken up by Ovid, Virgil, and Livy. Rome is also called the "Caput Mundi" (Capital of the World).

# 44. Reading: The Roman Empire

## Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was a late Republic statesman and general who waged civil war against the Roman Senate, defeating many patrician conservatives before he declared himself dictator.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the rise of Julius Caesar and his various successes

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- In 60 BCE, Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) formed a political alliance, known as the First Triumvirate, that was to dominate Roman politics for several years, though their populist tactics were

opposed by the conservative Senate.

- Caesar enjoyed great success as commander in the Gallic Wars. Upon conclusion of the wars, he refused to return to Rome as ordered by the Senate, and instead, crossed the Rubicon in 49 BCE with a legion, entering Roman territory under arms.
- Caesar fought in a civil war against his old colleague, Pompey, who had aligned himself with conservative interests in the Senate. Caesar quickly defeated his rival and many other Senate conservatives who had previously opposed him.
- With most of his enemies gone, Caesar installed himself as dictator in perpetuity. As dictator, he instituted a series of reforms and, most notably, created the Julian calendar.
- Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE by his remaining enemies in the Senate, throwing Rome into another period of chaos and civil war.

### *Key Terms*

- **dictator:** During Caesar's time, in the late Roman Republic, ruler for life. In the early Republic, by contrast, a dictator was a general appointed by the Senate, who served temporarily during a national emergency.
- **Julius Caesar:** A Roman general, statesman, consul, and author, who played a critical role in the events that led to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire.

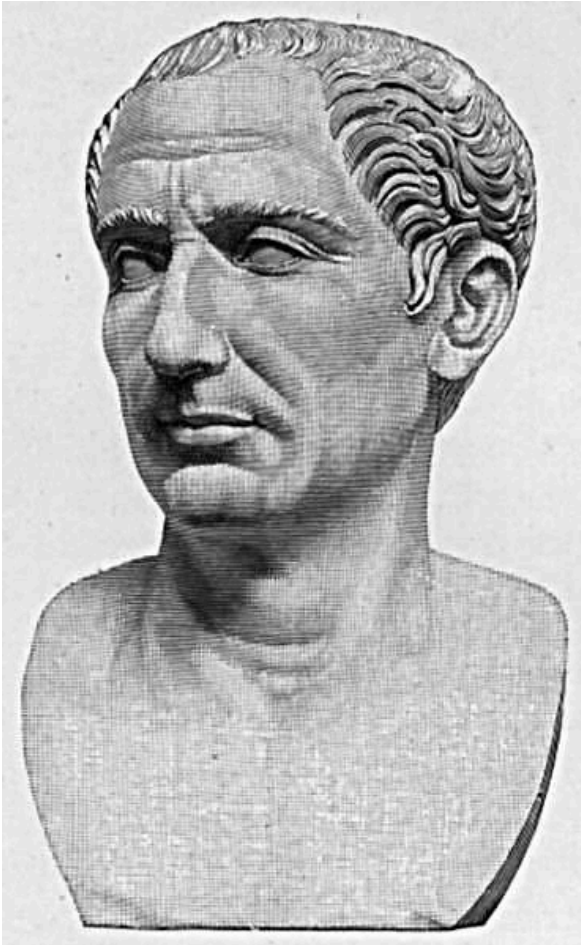
- **Pompey:** A military and political leader of the late Roman Republic, who represented the Roman Senate in a civil war against Julius Caesar.

Gaius Julius Caesar was a Roman general, statesman, consul, and notable author of Latin prose. He played a critical role in the events that led to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. In 60 BCE, Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) formed a political alliance, known as the First Triumvirate, that was to dominate Roman politics for several years. Caesar made the initial overtures that led to the informal alliance. An acclaimed military commander who had also served in a variety of political offices, Caesar sought election as consul in 59 BCE, along with two other candidates. The election was particularly contentious, with corruption occurring on all sides. Caesar won, as well as conservative Marcus Bibulus, but saw that he could further his political influence with Crassus and Pompey. Their attempts to amass power through populist tactics were opposed by the conservative ruling class within the Roman Senate, among them Cato the Younger and Cicero. Meanwhile, Caesar's victories in the Gallic Wars, completed by 51 BCE, extended Rome's territory to the English Channel and the Rhine River. Caesar became the first Roman general to cross both when he built a bridge across the Rhine and conducted the first invasion of Britain.

These achievements granted Caesar unmatched military power and threatened to eclipse the standing of his colleague, Pompey, who had realigned himself with the Senate after the death of Crassus in 53 BCE. With the Gallic Wars concluded, the Senate ordered Caesar to step down from his military command and return to Rome. Caesar refused and marked his defiance in 49 BCE by crossing the Rubicon (shallow river in northern Italy) with a legion. In doing so, he deliberately broke the law on imperium and engaged

in an open act of insurrection and treason. Civil War ensued, with Pompey representing the Roman Senate forces against Caesar, but Caesar quickly defeated Pompey in 48 BCE, and dispatched Pompey's supporters in the following year. During this time, many staunch Senate conservatives, such as Cato the Younger, were either killed or committed suicide, thereby greatly decreasing the number of optimates in Rome.

## Caesar as Dictator



**Bust of Julius Caesar:** Gaius Julius Caesar was a Roman general, statesman, consul, and notable author of Latin prose.

After assuming control of the government upon the defeat of his enemies in 45 BCE, Caesar began a program of social and



governmental reforms that included the creation of the Julian calendar. He centralized the bureaucracy of the Republic and eventually proclaimed himself “dictator in perpetuity.” It is important to note that Caesar did not declare himself *rex* (king), but instead, claimed the title of dictator. Contrary to the negative connotations that the modern use of the word evokes, the Roman dictator was appointed by the Senate during times of emergency as a unilateral decision-maker who could act more quickly than the usual bureaucratic processes that the Republican government would allow. Upon bringing the Roman state out of trouble, the dictator would then resign and restore power back to the Senate. Thus, Caesar’s declaration ostensibly remained within the Republican framework of power, though the huge amounts of power he had gathered for himself in practice set him up similar to a monarch.

Caesar used his powers to fill the Senate with his own partisans. He also increased the number of magistrates who were elected each year, which created a large pool of experienced magistrates and allowed Caesar to reward his supporters. He used his powers to appoint many new senators, which eventually raised the Senate’s membership to 900. All the appointments were of his own partisans, which robbed the senatorial aristocracy of its prestige and made the Senate increasingly subservient to him. To minimize the risk that another general might attempt to challenge him, Caesar passed a law that subjected governors to term limits. All of these changes watered down the power of the Senate, which infuriated those used to aristocratic privilege. Such anger proved to be fuel for Caesar’s eventual assassination.

Despite the defeat of most of his conservative enemies, however, underlying political conflicts had not been resolved. On the Ides of March (March 15) 44 BCE, Caesar was scheduled to appear at a session of the Senate, and a group of senators led by Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus conspired to assassinate him. Though some of his assassins may have had ulterior personal vendettas against Caesar, Brutus is said to have acted out of concern

for the Republic in the face of what he considered to be a monarchical tyrant. Mark Antony, one of Caesar's generals and administrator of Italy during Caesar's campaigns abroad, learned such a plan existed the night before, and attempted to intercept Caesar, but the plotters anticipated this and arranged to meet him outside the site of the session and detain him there. Caesar was stabbed 23 times and lay dead on the ground for some time before officials removed his body.

A new series of civil wars broke out following Caesar's assassination, and the constitutional government of the Republic was never restored. Caesar's adopted heir, Octavian, later known as Augustus, rose to sole power, and the era of the Roman Empire began.

## Founding of the Roman Empire

Augustus rose to power after Julius Caesar's assassination, through a series of political and military maneuvers, eventually establishing himself as the first emperor of Rome.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the key features of Augustus's reign and the reasons for its successes

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Following the assassination of his maternal great-uncle Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, Caesar's will named Octavian as his adopted son and heir when Octavian was only 19 years old.
- By ingratiating himself with his father's legions, Octavian was able to fulfill the military demands of the Roman Senate. He quickly gained both power and prestige and formed the Second Triumvirate with Antony and Lepidus in 43 BCE.
- By 31 BCE, Octavian had emerged as the sole ruler of Rome, upon the political and military defeat of the two other triumvirs.

### *Key Terms*

- **Mark Antony:** Julius Caesar's right hand man, and a member of the Second Triumvirate. He was eventually defeated by Octavian at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE.
- **Augustus:** The founder of the Roman Empire, known as Octavian during his early years and during his rise to power.

Augustus is regarded by many scholars as the founder and first

emperor of the Roman Empire. He ruled from 27 BCE until his death in 14 CE.

## Rise to Power

Augustus was born Gaius Octavius, and in his early years was known as Octavian. He was from an old and wealthy equestrian branch of the plebeian Octavii family. Following the assassination of his maternal great-uncle, Julius Caesar, in 44 BCE, Caesar's will named Octavian as his adopted son and heir when Octavian was only 19 years old. The young Octavian quickly took advantage of the situation and ingratiated himself with both the Roman people and his adoptive father's legions, thereby elevating his status and importance within Rome. Octavian found Mark Antony, Julius Caesar's former colleague and the current consul of Rome, in an uneasy truce with Caesar's assassins, who had been granted general amnesty for their part in the plot. Nonetheless, Antony eventually succeeded in driving most of them out of Rome, using Caesar's eulogy as an opportunity to mount public opinion against the assassins.

Mark Antony began amassing political support, and Octavian set about rivaling it. Eventually, many Caesarian sympathizers began to view Octavian as the lesser evil of the two. Octavian allied himself with optimate factions, despite their opposition to Caesar when he was alive. The optimate orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero, began attacking Antony in a series of speeches, portraying him as a threat to the republican order of Rome. As public opinion against him mounted, Antony fled to Cisalpine Gaul at the end of his consular year.

Octavian further established himself both politically and militarily in the following months. He was declared a senator and granted the power of military command, *imperium*, in 43 BCE, and was further

able to leverage his successes to obtain the vacant consulships left by the two defeated consuls of that year.

Octavian eventually reached an uneasy truce with Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus in October 43 BCE, and together, the three formed the Second Triumvirate to defeat the assassins of Caesar. Following their victory against Brutus at Phillipi, the Triumvirate divided the Roman Republic among themselves and ruled as military dictators. Relations within the Triumvirate were strained as the various members sought greater political power. Civil war between Antony and Octavian was averted in 40 BCE, when Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia Minor. Despite his marriage, Antony continued a love affair with Cleopatra, the former lover of Caesar and queen of Egypt, further straining political ties to Rome. Octavian used Antony's relationship with Cleopatra to his own advantage, portraying Antony as less committed to Rome. With Lepidus expelled in 36 BCE, the Triumvirate finally disintegrated in the year 33. Finally, disagreements between Octavian and Antony erupted into civil war in the year 31 BCE.

The Roman Senate, at Octavian's direction, declared war on Cleopatra's regime in Egypt and proclaimed Antony a traitor. Antony was defeated by Octavian at the naval Battle of Actium the same year. Defeated, Antony fled with Cleopatra to Alexandria where they both committed suicide. With Antony dead, Octavian was left as the undisputed master of the Roman world. Octavian would assume the title Augustus, and reign as the first Roman Emperor.



**Augustus of Prima Porta:** The statue of Augustus of Prima Porta is perhaps one of the best known images of the Emperor Augustus. It portrays the emperor as perpetually youthful, and depicts many of the key propaganda messages that Augustus put forth during his time as emperor.

# The Pax Romana

The Pax Romana, which began under Augustus, was a 200-year period of peace in which Rome experienced minimal expansion by military forces.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the key reasons for and characteristics of the Pax Romana

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Pax Romana was established under Augustus, and for that reason it is sometimes referred to as the Pax Augusta.
- Augustus closed the Gates of Janus three times to signify the onset of peace: in 29 BCE, 25 BCE, and 13 BCE, likely in conjunction with the Ara Pacis ceremony.
- The Romans regarded peace not as an absence of war, but as the rare situation that existed when all opponents had been beaten down and lost the ability

to resist. Thus, Augustus had to persuade Romans that the prosperity they could achieve in the absence of warfare was better for the Empire than the potential wealth and honor acquired when fighting a risky war.

- The Ara Pacis is a prime example of the propaganda Augustus employed to promote the Pax Romana, and depicts images of Roman gods and the city of Rome personified amidst wealth and prosperity.

### *Key Terms*

- **Ara Pacis Augustae:** The Altar of Augustan Peace, a sacrificial altar that displays imagery of the peace and prosperity Augustus achieved during the Pax Romana.
- **Pax Romana:** The long period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military force experienced by the Roman Empire in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. Also sometimes known as the Pax Augusta.

## Augustus's Constitutional Reforms

After the demise of the Second Triumvirate, Augustus restored the outward facade of the free Republic with governmental power vested in the Roman

Senate, the executive magistrates, and the legislative assemblies. In reality, however, he retained his autocratic power over the Republic as a military dictator. By law, Augustus held powers granted to him



for life by the Senate, including supreme military command and those of tribune and censor. It took several years for Augustus to develop the framework within which a formally republican state could be led under his sole rule.

Augustus passed a series of laws between the years 30 and 2 BCE that transformed the constitution of the Roman Republic into the constitution of the Roman Empire. During this time, Augustus reformed the Roman system of taxation, developed networks of roads with an official courier system, established a standing army, established the Praetorian Guard, created official police and fire-fighting services for Rome, and rebuilt much of the city during his reign.

## First Settlement

During the First Settlement, Augustus modified the Roman political system to make it more palatable to the senatorial classes, eschewing the open authoritarianism exhibited by Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony. In 28 BCE, in a calculated move, Augustus eradicated the emergency powers he held as dictator and returned all powers and provinces to the Senate and the Roman people. Members of the Senate were unhappy with this prospect, and in order to appease them, Augustus agreed to a ten-year extension of responsibilities over disorderly provinces. As a result of this, Augustus retained *imperium* over the provinces where the majority of Rome's soldiers were stationed. Augustus also rejected monarchical titles, instead calling himself *princeps civitatis* ("First Citizen"). The resulting constitutional framework became known as the Principate, the first phase of the Roman Empire.

At this time, Augustus was given honorifics that made his full name *Imperator Caesar divi filius Augustus*. *Imperator* stressed military power and victory and emphasized his role as commander-in-chief. *Divi filius* roughly translates to "son of the divine,"

enhancing his legitimacy as ruler without deifying him completely. The use of Caesar provided a link between himself and Julius Caesar, who was still very popular among lower classes. Finally, the name Augustus raised associations to Rome's illustrious and majestic traditions, without creating heavy authoritarian overtones.

By the end of the first settlement, Augustus was in an ideal political position. Although he no longer held dictatorial powers, he had created an identity of such influence that authority followed naturally.

## Second Settlement

In the wake of Augustus's poor health, a second settlement was announced in 23 BCE. During this time, Augustus outwardly appeared to rein

in his constitutional powers, but really continued to extend his dominion throughout the Empire. Augustus renounced his ten-year consulship, but in return, secured the following concessions for himself.

- A seat on the consul's platform at the front of the Curia
- The right to speak first in a Senate meeting, or *ius primae relationis*
- The right to summon a meeting of the Senate, which was a useful tool for policy making
- Care of Rome's grain supply, or *cura annonae*, which gave him sweeping patronage powers over the plebs

Augustus was also granted the role of *tribunicia potestas*, which enabled him to act as the guardian of the citizens of Rome. This position came with a number of benefits, including the right to propose laws to the Senate whenever he wanted, veto power of laws, and the ability to grant amnesty to any citizen accused of

a crime. Though the role of *tribunicia potestas* effectively gave Augustus legislative supremacy, it also had many positive connotations harkening back to the Republic, making Augustus's position less offensive to the aristocracy. Beyond Rome, Augustus was granted *maius imperium*, meaning greater (proconsular) power. This position enabled him to effectively override the orders of any other provincial governor in the Roman Empire, in addition to governing his own provinces and armies.

## Augustus and the Pax Romana

The *Pax Romana* (Latin for “Roman peace”) was a long period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military forces experienced by the Roman Empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries CE. Since this period was initiated during Augustus's reign, it is sometimes called Pax Augusta. Its span was approximately 206 years (27 BCE to 180 CE).

The Pax Romana started after Augustus, then Octavian, met and defeated Mark Antony in the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Augustus created a junta of the greatest military magnates and gave himself the titular honor. By binding together these leading magnates into a single title, he eliminated the prospect of civil war. The Pax Romana was not immediate, despite the end of the civil war, because fighting continued in Hispania and in the Alps.

Despite continuous wars of imperial expansion on the Empire's frontiers and one year-long civil war over the imperial succession, the Roman world was largely free from large-scale conflict for more than two centuries. Augustus dramatically enlarged the Empire, annexing Egypt, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Raetia, expanded possessions in Africa as well as into Germania, and completed the conquest of Hispania. Beyond Rome's frontiers, he secured the Empire with a buffer region of client states, and made peace with the troublesome Parthian Empire through diplomacy.

Augustus closed the Gates of Janus (the set of gates to the Temple of Janus, which was closed in times of peace and opened in times of war) three times. The first time was in 29 BCE and the second in 25 BCE. The third closure is undocumented, but scholars have persuasively dated the event to 13 BCE during the Ara Pacis ceremony, which was held after Augustus and Agrippa jointly returned from pacifying the provinces.

Augustus faced some trouble making peace an acceptable mode of life for the Romans, who had been at war with one power or another continuously for 200 years prior to this period. The Romans regarded peace not as an absence of war, but the rare situation that existed when all opponents had been beaten down and lost the ability to resist. Augustus's challenge was to persuade Romans that the prosperity they could achieve in the absence of war was better for the Empire than the potential wealth and honor acquired from fighting. Augustus succeeded by means of skillful propaganda. Subsequent emperors followed his lead, sometimes producing lavish ceremonies to close the Gates of Janus, issuing coins with Pax on the reverse, and patronizing literature extolling the benefits of the Pax Romana.

## The Ara Pacis Augustae

The Ara Pacis Augustae, or Altar of Augustan Peace, is one of the best examples of Augustan artistic propaganda and the prime symbol of the new Pax Romana. It was commissioned by the Senate in 13 BCE to honor the peace and bounty established by Augustus following his return from Spain and Gaul. The theme of peace is seen most notably in the east and west walls of the Ara Pacis, each of which had two panels, although only small fragments remain for one panel on each side. On the east side sits an unidentified goddess presumed by scholars to be Tellus, Venus, or Peace within an allegorical scene of prosperity and fertility. Twins sit on her lap

along with a cornucopia of fruits. Personifications of the wind and sea surround her, each riding on a bird or a sea monster. Beneath the women rests a bull and lamb, both sacrificial animals, and flowering plants fill the empty space. The nearly incomplete second eastern panel appears to depict a female warrior, possibly Roma, amid the spoils of conquest.



**The Tellus Mater Panel of the Ara Pacis:** *The eastern wall of the Ara Pacis, which depicts the Tellus Mater surrounded by symbols of fertility and prosperity.*

Augustus died in 14 CE at the age of 75. He may have died from natural causes, although unconfirmed rumors swirled that his wife Livia poisoned him. His adopted son (also stepson and former son-in-law), Tiberius, succeeded him to the throne.

# The Julio-Claudian Emperors

The Julio-Claudian emperors expanded the boundaries of the Roman Empire and engaged in ambitious construction projects. However, they were met with mixed public reception due to their unique ruling methods.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the reigns of the emperors who followed Augustus

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Tiberius was the second emperor of the Roman Empire, and was considered one of Rome's greatest generals.
- Tiberius conquered Pannonia, Dalmatia, Raetia, and temporarily, parts of Germania. His conquests laid the foundations for the northern frontier.
- When Tiberius died on March 16, 37 CE, his estate and titles were left to Caligula and Tiberius's grandson, Gemellus. However, Caligula's first act as

Principes was to void Tiberius's will and have Gemellus executed.

- Although Caligula is described as a noble and moderate ruler during the first six months of his reign, sources portray him as a cruel and sadistic tyrant, immediately thereafter.
- In 38 CE, Caligula focused his attention on political and public reform; however, by 39 CE, a financial crisis had emerged as a result of Caligula's use of political payments, which had overextended the state's treasury. Despite financial difficulties, Caligula began a number of construction projects during this time.
- In 41 CE, Caligula was assassinated as part of a conspiracy by officers of the Praetorian Guard, senators, and courtiers.
- Claudius, the fourth emperor of the Roman Empire, was the first Roman Emperor to be born outside of Italy.
- Despite his lack of experience, Claudius was an able and efficient administrator, as well as an ambitious builder. He constructed many roads, aqueducts, and canals across the Empire.
- Claudius's appointment as emperor by the Praetorian Guard damaged his reputation. This was amplified when Claudius became the first emperor to resort to bribery as a means to secure army loyalty. Claudius also rewarded the Praetorian Guard that had named him emperor with 15,000 sesterces.

## *Key Terms*

- **Praetorian Guard:** A force of bodyguards used by the Roman emperors. They also served as secret police, and participated in wars.
- **Julio-Claudian dynasty:** The first five Roman emperors who ruled the Roman Empire, including Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero.

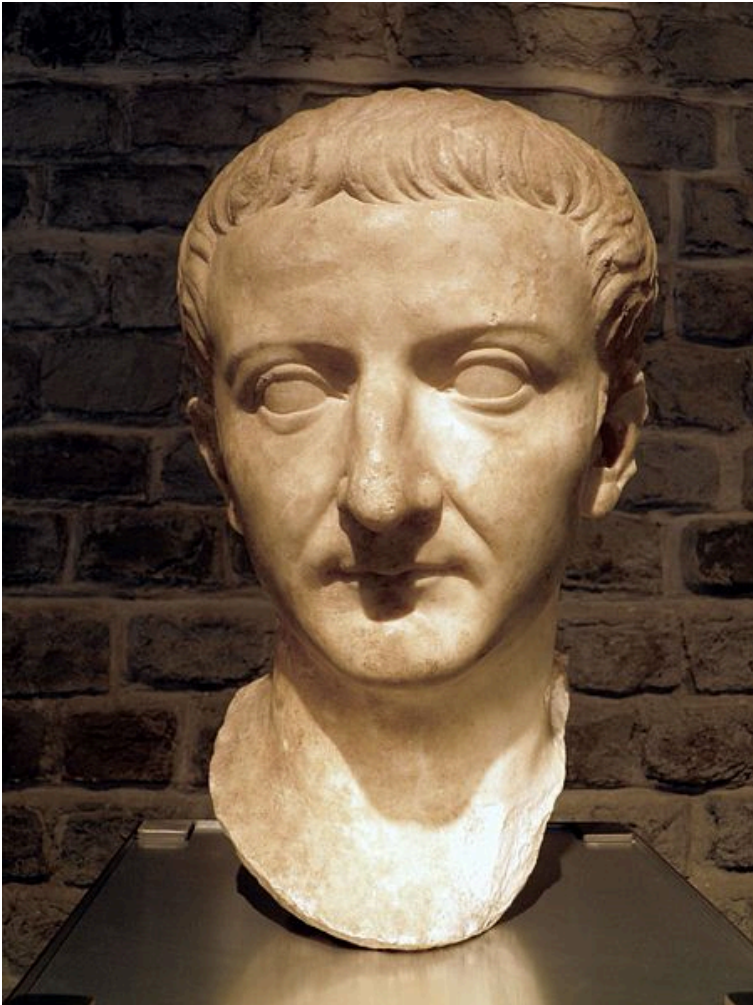
## Tiberius

Tiberius was the second emperor of the Roman Empire and reigned from 14 to 37 CE. The previous emperor, Augustus, was his stepfather; this officially made him a Julian. However, his biological father was Tiberius Claudius Nero, making him a Claudian by birth. Subsequent emperors would continue the blended dynasty of both families for the next 30 years, leading historians to name it the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. Tiberius is also the grand-uncle of Caligula, his successor, the paternal uncle of Claudius, and the great-grand uncle of Nero.

Tiberius is considered one of Rome's greatest generals. During his reign, he conquered Pannonia, Dalmatia, Raetia, and temporarily, parts of Germania. His conquests laid the foundations for the northern frontier. However, he was known by contemporaries to be dark, reclusive, and somber—a ruler who never really wanted to be emperor. The tone was set early in his reign when the Senate convened to validate his position as Princeps. During the proceedings, Tiberius attempted to play the part of the reluctant



public servant, but came across as derisive and obstructive. His direct orders appeared vague, inspiring more debate than action and leaving the Senate to act on its own. After the death of Tiberius's son in 23 CE, the emperor became even more reclusive, leaving the administration largely in the hands of his unscrupulous Praetorian Prefects.



**Tiberius:** Tiberius, Romisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne

# Caligula

When Tiberius died on March 16, 37 CE, his estate and titles were left to Caligula and Tiberius's grandson, Gemellus, with the intention that they would rule as joint heirs. However, Caligula's first act as Princeps was to void Tiberius's will and have Gemellus executed. When Tiberius died, he had not been well liked. Caligula, on the other hand, was almost universally heralded upon his assumption of the throne. There are few surviving sources on Caligula's reign. Caligula's first acts as emperor were generous in spirit, but political in nature. He granted bonuses to the military, including the Praetorian Guard, city troops, and the army outside of Italy. He destroyed Tiberius's treason papers and declared that treason trials would no longer continue as a practice, even going so far as to recall those who had already been sent into exile for treason. He also helped those who had been adversely affected by the imperial tax system, banished certain sexual deviants, and put on large public spectacles, such as gladiatorial games, for the common people.

Although he is described as a noble and moderate ruler during the first six months of his reign, sources portray him as a cruel and sadistic tyrant immediately thereafter. The transitional point seems to center around an illness Caligula experienced in October of 37 CE. It is unclear whether the incident was merely an illness, or if Caligula had been poisoned. Either way, following the incident, the young emperor began dealing with what he considered to be serious threats, by killing or exiling those who were close to him. During the remainder of his reign, he worked to increase the personal power of the emperor during his short reign, and devoted much of his attention to ambitious construction projects and luxurious dwellings for himself.

In 38 CE, Caligula focused his attention on political and public reform. He published the accounts of public funds, which had not been done under Tiberius's reign, provided aid to those who lost

property in fires, and abolished certain taxes. He also allowed new members into the equestrian and senatorial orders. Perhaps most significantly, he restored the practice of democratic elections, which delighted much of the public but was a cause for concern among the aristocracy.

By 39 CE, a financial crisis had emerged as a result of Caligula's use of political payments, which had overextended the state's treasury. In order to restock the treasury, Caligula began falsely accusing, fining, and even killing individuals in order to seize their estates. He also asked the public to lend the state money, and raised taxes on lawsuits, weddings, and prostitution, as well as auctioning the lives of gladiators at shows. Wills that left items to Tiberius were also reinterpreted as having left said items to Caligula. Centurions who had acquired property by plunder were also forced to turn over their spoils to the state, and highway commissioners were accused of incompetence and embezzlement and forced to repay money that they might not have taken in the first place. Around the same time, a brief famine occurred, possibly as a result of the financial crisis, though its causes remain unclear.

Despite financial difficulties, Caligula began a number of construction projects during this time. He initiated the construction of two aqueducts in Rome, *Aqua Claudia* and *Anio Novus*, which were considered contemporary engineering marvels. In 39 CE, he ordered the construction of a temporary floating bridge between the resort of *Baiae* and the port of *Puteoli*, which rivaled the bridge Persian king *Xerxes* had constructed across the *Hellespont*. Caligula had two large ships constructed for himself that were among the largest constructed in the ancient world. The larger of the two was essentially an elaborate floating palace with marble floors and plumbing. He also improved the harbors at *Rhegium* and *Sicily*, which allowed for increased grain imports from *Egypt*, possibly in response to the famine Rome experienced.

During his reign, the Empire annexed the Kingdom of *Mauretania* as a province. *Mauretania* had previously been a client kingdom ruled by *Ptolemy of Mauretania*. Details on how and why *Mauretania*

was ultimately annexed remain unclear. Ptolemy was had been invited to Rome by Caligula and suddenly executed in what was seemingly a personal political move, rather than a calculated response to military or economic needs. However, Roman possession of Mauretania ultimately proved to be a boon to the territory, as the subsequent rebellion of Tacfarinas demonstrated how exposed the African Proconsularis was on its western borders. There also was a northern campaign to Britannia that was aborted during Caligula's reign, though there is not a cohesive narrative of the event.

In 39 CE, relations between Caligula and the Senate deteriorated. Caligula ordered a new set of treason investigations and trials, replacing the consul and putting a number of senators to death. Many other senators were reportedly treated in a degrading fashion and humiliated by Caligula. In 41 CE, Caligula was assassinated as part of a conspiracy by officers of the Praetorian Guard, senators, and courtiers. The conspirators used the assassination as an opportunity to re-institute the Republic, but were ultimately unsuccessful.



**Caligula:** Emperor Caligula, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

## Claudius

Claudius, the fourth emperor of the Roman Empire, was the first

Roman Emperor to be born outside of Italy. He was afflicted with a limp and slight deafness, which caused his family to ostracize him and exclude him from public office until he shared the consulship with his nephew, Caligula, in 37 CE. Due to Claudius's afflictions, it is likely he was spared from the many purges of Tiberius and Caligula's reigns. As a result, Claudius was declared Emperor by the Praetorian Guard after Caligula's assassination, due to his position as the last man in the Julio-Claudian line.

Despite his lack of experience, Claudius was an able and efficient administrator, as well as an ambitious builder; he constructed many roads, aqueducts, and canals across the Empire. His reign also saw the beginning of the conquest of Britain. Additionally, Claudius presided over many public trials, and issued up to 20 edicts a day. However, in spite of his capable rule, Claudius continued to be viewed as vulnerable by the Roman nobility throughout his reign, forcing Claudius to constantly defend his position. He did so by emphasizing his place within the Julio-Claudian family, dropping the cognomen, Nero, from his name, and replacing it with Caesar.

Nonetheless, his appointment as emperor by the Praetorian Guard caused damage to his reputation, and this was amplified when Claudius became the first emperor to resort to bribery as a means to secure army loyalty. Claudius also rewarded the Praetorian Guard that had named him emperor with 15,000 sesterces.



**Claudius:** *Bust of Emperor Claudius.*

## The Last Julio-Claudian Emperors

Nero's consolidation of personal power led to rebellion, civil war,

and a year-long period of upheaval, during which four separate emperors ruled Rome.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how Nero and other factors contributed to the fall of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Nero reigned as Roman Emperor from 54 to 68 CE, and was the last emperor in the Julio-Claudian Dynasty.
- Very early in Nero's rule, problems arose, due to his mother, Agrippina the Younger's competition for influence with Nero's two main advisers, Seneca and Burrus.
- Nero minimized the influence of all of his advisers and effectively eliminating all rivals to his throne. He also slowly removed power from the Senate, despite having promised to grant them with powers equivalent to those they had under republican rule.
- In March 68, Gaius Julius Vindex, the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, rebelled against Nero's tax



policies and called upon the support of Servius Sulpicius Galba, the governor of Hispania Tarraconensis, who not only joined the rebellion, but also declared himself emperor in opposition to Nero. Galba would become the first emperor in what was known as the Year of the Four Emperors.

- Vespasian was the fourth and final emperor to rule in the year 69 CE, and established the stable Flavian Dynasty, that was to succeed the Julio-Claudians.

### *Key Terms*

- **Flavian dynasty:** A Roman imperial dynasty that ruled the Roman Empire from 69 to 96 CE, encompassing the reigns of Vespasian and his two sons, Titus and Domitian.
- **Julio-Claudian dynasty:** The first five Roman emperors who ruled the Roman Empire, including Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero.
- **Praetorian Guard:** A force of bodyguards used by the Roman emperors. They also served as secret police and participated in wars.

## Nero

Nero reigned as Roman Emperor from 54 to 68 CE, and was the last emperor in the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. Nero focused on diplomacy, trade, and enhancing the cultural life of the Empire during his rule.

He ordered theaters to be built and promoted athletic games. However, according to Tacitus, a historian writing one generation after Nero's rule, Nero was viewed by many Romans as compulsive and corrupt. Suetonius, another historian writing a generation after Nero's rule, claims that Nero began the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE, in order to clear land for a palatial complex he was planning.



**Nero:** A marble bust of Nero, at the Antiquarium of the Palatine.

## Early Rule

When Claudius died in 54, Nero was established as the new emperor. According to some ancient historians, Agrippina the Younger, Nero's mother, poisoned Claudius in order to make Nero the youngest Roman emperor (at the age of 17). Very early in Nero's rule, problems arose due to Agrippina's competition for influence with Nero's two main advisers, Seneca and Burrus. For example, in the year 54, Agrippina caused a scandal by attempting to sit with Nero while he met with the Armenian envoy, an unheard of act, since women were not permitted to be in the same room as men while official business was being conducted. The next year, Agrippina attempted to intervene on behalf of Nero's wife, Octavia, with whom Nero was dissatisfied and cheating on with a former slave. With the help of his adviser, Seneca, Nero managed to resist his mother's interference yet again.

Sensing his resistance to her influence, Agrippina began pushing for Britannicus, Nero's stepbrother, to become emperor. Britannicus was still shy of 14 years old, and legally still a minor, but because he was the son of the previous emperor, Claudius, by blood, Agrippina held hope that he would be accepted as the true heir to the throne. Her efforts were thwarted, however, when Britannicus mysteriously died one day short of becoming a legal adult. Many ancient historians claim that Britannicus was poisoned by his stepbrother, Nero. Shortly thereafter, Agrippina was ordered out of the imperial residence.

## Consolidation of Power

Over time, Nero began minimizing the influence of all advisers and effectively eliminating all rivals to his throne. Even Seneca and Burrus were accused of conspiring against, and embezzling from

the emperor; they were eventually acquitted, reducing their roles from careful management of the government to mere moderation of Nero's actions on the throne. In 58 CE, Nero became romantically involved with Poppaea Sabina, the wife of his friend and future emperor, Otho. Because divorcing his current wife and marrying Poppaea did not seem politically feasible with his mother still alive, Nero ordered Agrippina's murder the following year.

Nero's consolidation of power included a slow usurpation of authority from the Senate. Although he had promised the Senate powers equivalent to those it had under republican rule, over the course of the first decade of Nero's rule, the Senate was divested of all its authority, which led directly to the Pisonian Conspiracy of 65. Gaius Calpurnius Piso, a Roman statesman, organized the conspiracy against Nero with the help of Subrius Flavus, a tribune, and Sulpicius Asper, a centurion of the Praetorian Guard, in order to restore the Republic and wrest power from the emperor. However, the conspiracy failed when it was discovered by a freedman, who reported the details to Nero's secretary. This led to the execution of all conspirators. Seneca was also ordered to commit suicide after he admitted to having prior knowledge of the plot.

## Vindex and Galba's Revolt

In March 68, Gaius Julius Vindex, the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, rebelled against Nero's tax policies and called upon the support of Servius Sulpicius Galba, the governor of Hispania Tarraconensis, who not only joined the rebellion, but also declared himself emperor in opposition to Nero. Two months later, Vindex's forces were defeated at the Battle of Vesontio, and Vindex committed suicide. The legions that defeated Vindex then attempted to proclaim their own commander, Verginius, as emperor, but Verginius refused to act against Nero. Meanwhile, public support for Galba grew despite his being officially declared

a public enemy. In response, Nero began to flee Rome only to turn back when the army officers that were with him refused to obey his commands. When Nero returned, he received word that the Senate had declared him a public enemy and intended to beat him to death—although in actuality, the Senate remained open to mediating an end to the conflict, and many senators felt a sense of loyalty to Nero, even if only on account of him being the last of the Julio-Claudian line. However, Nero was unaware of this and convinced his private secretary to help him take his own life.

## Year of the Four Emperors

The suicide of Emperor Nero was followed by a brief period of civil war. Then, between June 68 and December 69, four emperors ruled in succession: Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian.

Galba was recognized as emperor following Nero's suicide, but he did not remain popular for long. On his march to Rome, he either destroyed or took enormous fines from towns that did not accept him immediately. Once in Rome, Galba made many of Nero's reforms redundant, including ones that benefited important people within Roman society. Galba executed many senators and equites without trial, in a paranoid attempt to consolidate his power, which unsettled many, including the Praetorian Guard. Finally, the legions of Germania Inferior refused to swear allegiance and obedience to Galba, instead proclaiming the governor Vitellius as emperor.

This caused Galba to panic and name Lucius Calpurnius Piso Licinianus, a young senator, as his successor. This upset many people, but especially Marcus Salvius Otho, who had coveted after the title for himself. Otho bribed the Praetorian Guard to support him and embarked upon a coup d'état, during which Galba was killed by the Praetorians. Otho was recognized as emperor by the Senate the same day and was expected by many to be a fair ruler.

Unfortunately, soon thereafter, Vitellius declared himself Imperator in Germania, and dispatched half his army to march on Italy.

Otho attempted to broker a peace, but Vitellius was uninterested, especially because his legions were some of the finest in the empire, which gave him a great advantage over Otho. Indeed, Otho was eventually defeated at the Battle of Bedriacum, and rather than flee and attempt a counterattack, Otho committed suicide. He had been emperor for little more than three months. Vitellius was recognized as emperor by the Senate. Very quickly thereafter, he proceeded to bankrupt the imperial treasury by throwing a series of feasts, banquets, and triumphal parades. He tortured and executed money lenders who demanded payment and killed any citizens who named him as their heir. He also lured many political rivals to his palace in order to assassinate them.

Meanwhile, many of the legions in the African province of Egypt, and the Middle East provinces of Iudaea and Syria, including the governor of Syria, acclaimed Vespasian as their emperor. A force marched from the Middle East to Rome, and Vespasian traveled to Alexandria, where he was officially named Emperor. From there, Vespasian invaded Italy and won a crushing victory over Vitellius's army at the Second Battle of Bedriacum. Vitellius was found by Vespasian's men at the imperial palace and put to death. The Senate acknowledged Vespasian as emperor the next day, marking the beginning of the Flavian Dynasty, which was to succeed the Julio-Claudian line. Vespasian remained emperor for the rest of his natural life.



**Vespasian:** A plaster cast of Vespasian in the Pushkin Museum, after an original held in the Louvre.

# 45. Reading: The Flavian Dynasty

## The Flavian Dynasty

The Flavian Dynasty, which began under the rule of Vespasian during the Year of the Four Emperors, is known for several significant historic, economic, and military events.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze how Vespasian consolidated control over the empire

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Vespasian, a general for the Roman army, founded the Flavian Dynasty, which ruled the Empire for 27 years.
- While Vespasian besieged Jerusalem during the



Jewish rebellion, emperor Nero committed suicide and plunged Rome into a year of civil war, known as the Year of the Four Emperors.

- After Galba and Otho perished in quick succession, Vitellius became the third emperor in April 69 CE.
- The Roman legions of Roman Egypt and Judaea reacted by declaring Vespasian, their commander, emperor on July 1, 69 CE.
- In his bid for imperial power, Vespasian joined forces with Mucianus, the governor of Syria, and Primus, a general in Pannonia, leaving his son, Titus, to command the besieging forces at Jerusalem; Primus and Mucianus led the Flavian forces against Vitellius, while Vespasian took control of Egypt.
- On December 20, 69, Vitellius was defeated, and the following day, Vespasian was declared Emperor by the Senate.
- Little information survives about the government during Vespasian's ten-year rule; he reformed the financial system at Rome after the campaign against Judaea ended successfully, and initiated several ambitious construction projects.

### *Key Terms*

- **Praetorian Guard:** A force of bodyguards used by Roman Emperors, who also served as secret police and participated in wars.
- **Year of the Four Emperors:** A year in the history of the Roman Empire, 69 CE, in which four emperors

ruled in succession: Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian.

- **Colosseum:** Also known as the Flavian Amphitheater, an oval amphitheater in the center of the city of Rome, Italy, built of concrete and sand. The largest amphitheater ever built, used for gladiatorial contests and public spectacles, such as mock sea battles, animal hunts, executions, re-enactments of famous battles, and dramas based on Classical mythology.

## Overview

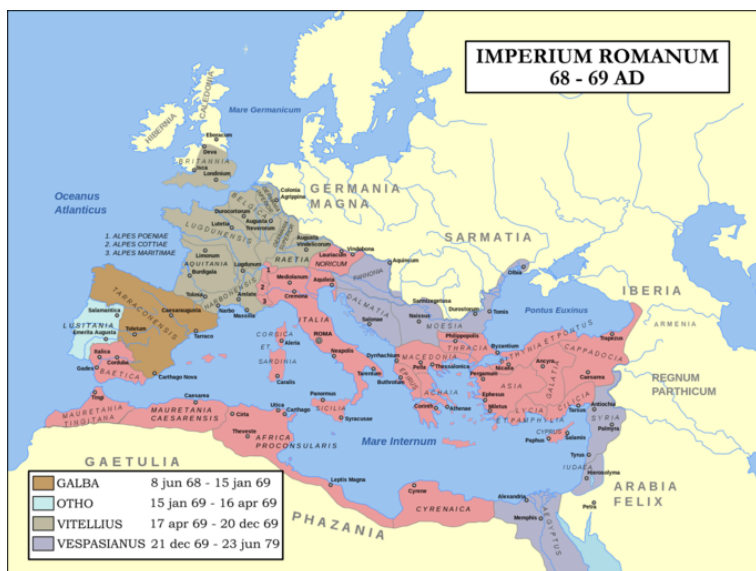
The Flavian Dynasty was a Roman imperial dynasty that ruled the Roman Empire between 69 CE and 96 CE, encompassing the reigns of Vespasian (69-79 CE), and his two sons Titus (79-81 CE) and Domitian (81-96 CE). The Flavians rose to power during the civil war of 69, known as the Year of the Four Emperors. After Galba and Otho died in quick succession, Vitellius became emperor in mid 69 CE. His claim to the throne was quickly challenged by legions stationed in the Eastern provinces, who declared their commander, Vespasian, emperor in his place. The Second Battle of Bedriacum tilted the balance decisively in favor of the Flavian forces, who entered Rome on December 20. The following day, the Roman Senate officially declared Vespasian emperor of the Roman Empire, thus commencing the Flavian Dynasty. Although the dynasty proved to be short-lived, several significant historic, economic, and military events took place during their reign.

The Flavians initiated economic and cultural reforms. Under Vespasian, new taxes were devised to restore the Empire's finances,

while Domitian revalued the Roman coinage by increasing its silver content. A massive building program was enacted to celebrate the ascent of the Flavian Dynasty, leaving multiple enduring landmarks in the city of Rome, the most spectacular of which was the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum.

## Rise to Power

On June 9, 68 CE, amidst growing opposition of the Senate and the army, Nero committed suicide, and with him the Julio-Claudian Dynasty came to an end. Chaos ensued, leading to a year of brutal civil war, known as the Year of the Four Emperors, during which the four most influential generals in the Roman Empire—Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian—successively vied for imperial power. News of Nero's death reached Vespasian as he was preparing to besiege the city of Jerusalem. Almost simultaneously the Senate had declared Galba, then governor of Hispania Tarraconensis (modern Spain), as Emperor of Rome. Rather than continue his campaign, Vespasian decided to await further orders and send Titus to greet the new Emperor. Before reaching Italy however, Titus learned that Galba had been murdered and replaced by Otho, the governor of Lusitania (modern Portugal). At the same time, Vitellius and his armies in Germania had risen in revolt, and prepared to march on Rome, intent on overthrowing Otho. Not wanting to risk being taken hostage by one side or the other, Titus abandoned the journey to Rome and rejoined his father in Judaea.



**Roman Empire in 69 CE:** The Roman Empire during the Year of the Four Emperors (69 CE). Purple areas indicate provinces loyal to Vespasian and Gaius Licinius Mucianus. Green areas indicate provinces loyal to Vitellius.

Otho and Vitellius realized the potential threat posed by the Flavian faction. With four legions at his disposal, Vespasian commanded a strength of nearly 80,000 soldiers. His position in Judaea further granted him the advantage of being nearest to the vital province of Egypt, which controlled the grain supply to Rome. His brother, Titus Flavius Sabinus II, as city prefect, commanded the entire city garrison of Rome. Tensions among the Flavian troops ran high, but as long as Galba and Otho remained in power, Vespasian refused to take action. When Otho was defeated by Vitellius at the First Battle of Bedriacum however, the armies in Judaea and Egypt took matters into their own hands, and declared Vespasian emperor on July 1, 69. Vespasian accepted, and entered an alliance with Gaius Licinius Mucianus, the governor of Syria, against Vitellius. A strong force drawn from the Judean and Syrian legions marched on Rome

under the command of Mucianus, while Vespasian himself travelled to Alexandria, leaving Titus in charge of ending the Jewish rebellion.

Meanwhile in Rome, Domitian was placed under house arrest by Vitellius, as a safeguard against future Flavian aggression. Support for the old emperor was waning however, as more legions throughout the empire pledged their allegiance to Vespasian. On October 24, 69, the forces of Vitellius and Vespasian clashed at the Second Battle of Bedriacum, which ended in a crushing defeat for the armies of Vitellius. In despair, he attempted to negotiate a surrender. Terms of peace, including a voluntary abdication, were agreed upon with Titus Flavius Sabinus II, but the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard—the imperial bodyguard—considered such a resignation disgraceful, and prevented Vitellius from carrying out the treaty. After several skirmishes between the factions, eventually Vitellius was killed and on December 21, the Senate proclaimed Vespasian emperor of the Roman Empire.

Although the war had officially ended, a state of anarchy and lawlessness pervaded in the first days following the demise of Vitellius. In early 70 AD, order was properly restored by Mucianus, who headed an interim government with Domitian as the representative of the Flavian family in the Senate. Upon receiving the tidings of his rival's defeat and death at Alexandria, the new Emperor at once forwarded supplies of urgently needed grain to Rome, along with an edict or a declaration of policy, in which he gave assurance of an entire reversal of the laws of Nero, especially those relating to treason. However, in early 70, Vespasian was still in Egypt, continuing to consolidate support from the Egyptians before departing. By the end of the year, he finally returned to Rome, and was properly installed as Emperor.

## Vespasian's Rule

Little factual information survives about Vespasian's government

during the ten years he was Emperor. Vespasian spent his first year as a ruler in Egypt, during which the administration of the empire was given to Mucianus, aided by Vespasian's son, Domitian. Modern historians believe that Vespasian remained there, in order to consolidate support from the Egyptians. In mid-70, Vespasian first came to Rome and immediately embarked on a widespread propaganda campaign to consolidate his power and promote the new dynasty. His reign is best known for financial reforms following the demise of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty, such as the institution of the tax on urinals, and the numerous military campaigns fought during the 70s. The most significant of these was the First Jewish-Roman War, which ended in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Titus. In addition, Vespasian faced several uprisings in Egypt, Gaul, and Germania, and reportedly survived several conspiracies against him. Vespasian helped rebuild Rome after the civil war, adding a temple of peace, and beginning construction of the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum.

Many modern historians note the increased amount of propaganda that appeared during Vespasian's reign. Stories of a supernatural emperor, who was destined to rule, circulated in the empire. Nearly one-third of all coins minted in Rome under Vespasian celebrated military victory or peace. The word *vindex* was removed from coins so as not to remind the public of rebellious Vindex. Construction projects bore inscriptions praising Vespasian and condemning previous emperors. A temple of peace was constructed in the forum as well. Vespasian approved histories written under his reign, ensuring biases against him were removed.

Vespasian also gave financial rewards to writers. The ancient historians who lived through the period, such as Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, and Pliny the Elder, speak suspiciously well of Vespasian, while condemning the emperors who came before him. Tacitus admits that his status was elevated by Vespasian, Josephus identifies Vespasian as a patron and savior, and Pliny dedicated his *Natural Histories* to Vespasian's son, Titus.

Those who spoke against Vespasian were punished. A number of stoic philosophers were accused of corrupting students with inappropriate teachings and were expelled from Rome. Helvidius Priscus, a pro-republic philosopher, was executed for his teachings.

Vespasian died of natural causes on June 23, 79, and was immediately succeeded by his eldest son, Titus.



**Bust of Vespasian:** Vespasian founded the Flavian Dynasty, which ruled the Empire for twenty-seven years.

## Military Achievements of the Flavians

The Flavian Dynasty's military witnessed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 CE, and substantial conquests in Great Britain under command of Gnaeus Julius Agricola between 77 and 83 CE.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe some of the military achievements and challenges of the Flavian emperors

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The most significant military campaign undertaken during the Flavian period was the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE by Titus; it was a response to a failed Jewish rebellion in 66.
- Contemporary estimates claimed that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish.
- Substantial conquests were made in Great Britain under command of Gnaeus Julius Agricola, between



77 and 83.

- The military campaigns undertaken during Domitian's reign were usually defensive in nature, as the Emperor rejected the idea of expansionist warfare, and the few battles were mainly fought with Germanic tribes, especially the Dacians.

### *Key Terms*

- **the Forum:** A rectangular forum (plaza) surrounded by the ruins of several important ancient government buildings at the center of the city of Rome, originally a large marketplace.
- **Torah:** The central text of the religious Judaic tradition, often referring specifically to the first five books of the twenty-four books of the Tanakh.
- **Limes Germanicus:** A line of frontier fortifications that bounded the ancient Roman provinces of Germania Inferior, Germania Superior and Raetia, dividing the Roman Empire and the unsubdued Germanic tribes, from the years 83 to about 260 CE.

## Overview

The Flavian Dynasty's military witnessed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 CE, following the failed Jewish rebellion of 66. Substantial conquests were made in Great Britain under command of Gnaeus Julius Agricola between 77 and 83, while

Domitian was unable to procure a decisive victory against King Decebalus in the war against the Dacians. In addition, the Empire strengthened its border defenses by expanding the fortifications along the Limes Germanicus.

## Siege of Jerusalem

The most significant military campaign undertaken during the Flavian period was the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 by Titus. The destruction of the city was the culmination of the Roman campaign in Judaea following the Jewish uprising of 66. The Second Temple was completely demolished, after which Titus's soldiers proclaimed him *imperator*, an honorific meaning “commander,” in honor of the victory. Jerusalem was sacked and much of the population killed or dispersed. Josephus claims that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish. 97,000 were captured and enslaved, including Simon Bar Giora and John of Gischala. Many fled to areas around the Mediterranean.

Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, as there is “no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God.” Upon his return to Rome in 71, Titus was awarded a triumph. Accompanied by Vespasian and Domitian, he rode into the city, enthusiastically saluted by the Roman populace, and preceded by a lavish parade containing treasures and captives from the war. Josephus describes a procession with large amounts of gold and silver carried along the route, followed by elaborate re-enactments of the war, Jewish prisoners, and finally the treasures taken from the Temple of Jerusalem, including the Menorah and the Torah. Leaders of the resistance were executed in the Forum, after which the procession closed with religious sacrifices at the Temple of Jupiter. The triumphal Arch of Titus, which stands at one entrance to the Forum, memorializes the victory of Titus.



**Siege of Jerusalem:** This relief from the Arch of Titus depicts Roman soldiers carrying treasures from the Temple of Jerusalem, including the Menorah. The city was besieged and destroyed by Titus in 70 CE.

## Conquest of Britain

The conquest of Britain continued under command of Gnaeus Julius Agricola, who expanded the Roman Empire as far as Caledonia, or modern day Scotland, between 77 and 84 AD. In 82, Agricola crossed an unidentified body of water and defeated peoples unknown to the Romans until then. He fortified the coast facing Ireland, and Tacitus recalled that his father-in-law often claimed the island could be conquered with a single legion and a few auxiliaries. He had given refuge to an exiled Irish king whom he hoped he might use as the excuse for conquest. This conquest never happened, but some historians believe that the crossing referred to was in fact a small-scale exploratory or punitive expedition to Ireland. The following year, Agricola raised a fleet and pushed beyond the Forth into Caledonia. To aid the advance, an expansive legionary fortress was constructed at Inchtuthil. In the summer of 84, Agricola faced the armies of the Caledonians, led by Calgacus, at the Battle of Mons Graupius. Although the Romans inflicted heavy losses on the

Calidonians, two-thirds of their army managed to escape and hide in the Scottish marshes and Highlands, ultimately preventing Agricola from bringing the entire British island under his control.

## Other Military Activity

The military campaigns undertaken during Domitian's reign were usually defensive in nature, as the Emperor rejected the idea of expansionist warfare. His most significant military contribution was the development of the Limes Germanicus, which encompassed a vast network of roads, forts, and watchtowers constructed along the Rhine river to defend the Empire from the unsubdued Germanic tribes. Nevertheless, several important wars were fought in Gaul, against the Chatti, and across the Danube frontier against the Suebi, the Sarmatians, and the Dacians. Led by King Decebalus, the Dacians invaded the province of Moesia around 84 or 85, wreaking considerable havoc and killing the Moesian governor Oppius Sabinus. Domitian immediately launched a counteroffensive, which resulted in the destruction of a legion during an ill-fated expedition into Dacia. Their commander, Cornelius Fuscus, was killed, and the battle standard of the Praetorian Guard lost.

In 87, the Romans invaded Dacia once more, this time under command of Tettius Julianus, and finally managed to defeat Decebalus late in 88, at the same site where Fuscus had previously been killed. An attack on Dacia's capital was cancelled, however, when a crisis arose on the German frontier. This forced Domitian to sign a peace treaty with Decebalus that was severely criticized by contemporary authors. For the remainder of Domitian's reign, Dacia remained a relatively peaceful client kingdom, but Decebalus used the Roman money to fortify his defenses, and continued to defy Rome. It was not until the reign of Trajan, in 106, that a decisive victory against Decebalus was procured. Again, the Roman army sustained heavy losses, but Trajan succeeded in capturing

Sarmizegetusa and, importantly, annexed the gold and silver mines of Dacia.

## Eruptions of Vesuvius and Pompeii

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE was one of the most catastrophic volcanic eruptions in European history, with several Roman settlements obliterated and buried, and thereby preserved, under ash.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the events surrounding the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, during the reign of Emperor Titus, was one of the most catastrophic volcanic eruptions in European history.
- Historians have learned about the eruption from the eyewitness account of Pliny the Younger, a Roman

administrator and poet.

- Mount Vesuvius spewed a deadly cloud of volcanic gas, stones, and ash to a height of 21 miles, ejecting molten rock and pulverized pumice at the rate of 1.5 million tons per second, ultimately releasing a hundred thousand times the thermal energy of the Hiroshima bombing.
- Several Roman settlements were obliterated and buried underneath massive pyroclastic surges and ashfall deposits, the most well known of which are Pompeii and Herculaneum.
- The preserved remains of about 1,500 people have been found at Pompeii and Herculaneum, but the overall death toll is still unknown.

### *Key Terms*

- **Pompeii:** An ancient Roman town-city near modern Naples, in the Campania region of Italy, destroyed during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- **pyroclastic surge:** A fluidized mass of turbulent gas and rock fragments, ejected during some volcanic eruptions.
- **Pliny the Younger:** A lawyer, author, and magistrate of Ancient Rome who witnessed the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

## Overview

Although his administration was marked by a relative absence of major military or political conflicts, Titus faced a number of major disasters during his brief reign. On August 24, 79 CE, barely two months after his accession, Mount Vesuvius erupted, resulting in the almost complete destruction of life and property in the cities and resort communities around the Bay of Naples. The cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried under meters of stone and lava, killing thousands of citizens. Titus appointed two ex-consuls to organize and coordinate the relief effort, while personally donating large amounts of money from the imperial treasury to aid the victims of the volcano. Additionally, he visited Pompeii once after the eruption and again the following year.

The city was lost for nearly 1,700 years before its accidental rediscovery in 1748. Since then, its excavation has provided an extraordinarily detailed insight into the life of a city at the height of the Roman Empire, frozen at the moment it was buried on August 24, 79. The Forum, the baths, many houses, and some out-of-town villas, like the Villa of the Mysteries, remain surprisingly well preserved. Today, it is one of the most popular tourist attractions of Italy and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On-going excavations reveal new insights into the Roman history and culture.

## The Eruption

Reconstructions of the eruption and its effects vary considerably in the details but have the same overall features. The eruption lasted for two days. The morning of the first day, August 24, was perceived as normal by the only eyewitness to leave a surviving document, Pliny the Younger, who at that point was staying at Misenum, on the other side of the Bay of Naples, about 19 miles from the volcano,

which may have prevented him from noticing the early signs of the eruption. He was not to have any opportunity, during the next two days, to talk to people who had witnessed the eruption from Pompeii or Herculaneum (indeed he never mentions Pompeii in his letter), so he would not have noticed early, smaller fissures and releases of ash and smoke on the mountain, if such had occurred earlier in the morning.

Around 1:00 p.m., Mount Vesuvius violently exploded, throwing up a high-altitude column from which ash began to fall, blanketing the area. Rescues and escapes occurred during this time. At some time in the night or early the next day, August 25, pyroclastic flows in the close vicinity of the volcano began. Lights seen on the mountain were interpreted as fires. People as far away as Misenum fled for their lives. The flows were rapid-moving, dense, and very hot, knocking down wholly or partly all structures in their path, incinerating or suffocating all population remaining there and altering the landscape, including the coastline. These were accompanied by additional light tremors and a mild tsunami in the Bay of Naples. By evening of the second day the eruption was over, leaving only haze in the atmosphere, through which the sun shone weakly.

Pliny the Younger wrote an account of the eruption:

Broad sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius; their light and brightness were the more vivid for the darkness of the night... it was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night.

## Casualties

In Pompeii, the eruption destroyed the city, killing its inhabitants and burying it under tons of ash. Evidence for the destruction



originally came from a surviving letter by Pliny the Younger, who saw the eruption from a distance and described the death of his uncle, Pliny the Elder, an admiral of the Roman fleet, who tried to rescue citizens. The site was lost for about 1,500 years until its initial rediscovery in 1599, and broader rediscovery almost 150 years later by Spanish engineer Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre in 1748. The objects that lay beneath the city have been preserved for centuries because of the lack of air and moisture. These artifacts provide an extraordinarily detailed insight into the life of a city during the Pax Romana. During the excavation, plaster was used to fill in the voids in the ash layers that once held human bodies. This allowed archaeologists to see the exact position the person was in when he or she died.



**Pompeii's "Garden of the Fugitives":** Plaster casts of victims still in situ; many casts are in the Archaeological Museum of Naples.

By 2003, around 1,044 casts made from impressions of bodies in the

ash deposits had been recovered in and around Pompeii, with the scattered bones of another 100. The remains of about 332 bodies have been found at Herculaneum (300 in arched vaults discovered in 1980). The percentage these numbers represent of the total dead, or the percentage of the dead to the total number at risk, remain completely unknown.

Thirty-eight percent of the 1,044 were found in the ash fall deposits, the majority inside buildings. These are thought to have been killed mainly by roof collapses, with the smaller number of victims found outside buildings probably killed by falling roof slates, or by larger rocks thrown out by the volcano. This differs from modern experience, since over the last four hundred years only around 4% of victims have been killed by ash falls during explosive eruptions. The remaining 62% of remains found at Pompeii were in the pyroclastic surge deposits, and thus were probably killed by them. It was initially believed that due to the state of the bodies found at Pompeii, and the outline of clothes on the bodies, it was unlikely that high temperatures were a significant cause. But in 2010, studies indicated that during the fourth pyroclastic surge—the first surge to reach Pompeii—temperatures reached 572 °F. Volcanologist Giuseppe Mastrolorenzo, who led the study, noted that “[The temperature was] enough to kill hundreds of people in a fraction of a second.” In reference as to why the bodies were frozen in suspended action, he said, “The contorted postures are not the effects of a long agony, but of the cadaveric spasm, a consequence of heat shock on corpses.”



**Ring Lady:** The skeletal remains of a young woman killed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. The skeleton, unearthed from the ruins of Herculaneum in 1982, was named the “Ring Lady” because of the emerald and ruby rings found on the woman’s left hand. Two gold bracelets and gold earrings were also found by the woman’s side.

# Flavian Architecture

Under the Flavian Dynasty, a massive building program was undertaken, leaving multiple enduring landmarks in the city of Rome, the most spectacular of which was the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify some of the key structures erected by the Flavian emperors

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the Flavian Dynasty was their massive building program, which not only erected new buildings to celebrate their successes, but also renovated buildings, statues, and monuments throughout Rome.
- The most spectacular of these buildings was the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum, built from the spoils of the Siege of Jerusalem.

- The Colosseum was used for gladiatorial contests and public spectacles, such as mock sea battles, animal hunts, executions, re-enactments of famous battles, and dramas based on Classical mythology.
- The bulk of the Flavian construction projects was carried out during the reign of Domitian, who spent lavishly to restore and embellish the city of Rome.

### *Key Terms*

- **Flavian Amphitheatre:** Better known as the Colosseum, an oval amphitheater in the center of the city of Rome, Italy; used for gladiatorial games, among other activities.
- **Apollo:** One of the most important and complex of the Olympian deities, variously recognized as a god of music, truth and prophecy, healing, the sun and light, plague, poetry, and more.

## Overview

The Flavian Dynasty is perhaps best known for its vast construction program on the city of Rome, intended to restore the capital from the damage it had suffered during the Great Fire of 64, and the civil war of 69. Vespasian added the temple of Peace and the temple to the deified Claudius. In 75, a colossal statue of Apollo, begun under Nero as a statue of himself, was finished on Vespasian's orders, and he also dedicated a stage of the theater of Marcellus. Construction

of the Flavian Amphitheater, presently better known as the Colosseum (probably after the nearby statue), was begun in 70 CE under Vespasian, and finally completed in 80 under Titus. In addition to providing spectacular entertainments to the Roman populace, the building was also conceived as a gigantic triumphal monument to commemorate the military achievements of the Flavians during the Jewish wars. Adjacent to the amphitheater, within the precinct of Nero's Golden House, Titus also ordered the construction of a new public bath-house, which was to bear his name. Construction of this building was hastily finished to coincide with the completion of the Flavian Amphitheater.

The bulk of the Flavian construction projects was carried out during the reign of Domitian, who spent lavishly to restore and embellish the city of Rome. Much more than a renovation project however, Domitian's building program was intended to be the crowning achievement of an Empire-wide cultural renaissance. Around 50 structures were erected, restored, or completed, a number second only to the amount erected under Augustus. Among the most important new structures were an odeum, a stadium, and an expansive palace on the Palatine Hill, known as the Flavian Palace, which was designed by Domitian's master architect, Rabirius. The most important building Domitian restored was the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, which was said to have been covered with a gilded roof. Among those he completed were the Temple of Vespasian and Titus, the Arch of Titus, and the Colosseum, to which he added a fourth level and finished the interior seating area.

## The Colosseum

The Colosseum is an oval amphitheater in the center of the city of Rome, Italy. Built of concrete and sand, it is the largest amphitheater ever built. The Colosseum is situated just east of the Roman Forum.

Construction began under the emperor Vespasian in 72 CE, and was completed in 80 CE under his successor and heir, Titus. Further modifications were made during the reign of Domitian (81-96).

The Colosseum could hold, it is estimated, between 50,000 and 80,000 spectators, with an average audience of some 65,000; it was used for gladiatorial contests and public spectacles, such as mock sea battles (for only a short time, as the hypogeum was soon filled in with mechanisms to support the other activities), animal hunts, executions, re-enactments of famous battles, and dramas based on Classical mythology.

Construction was funded by the opulent spoils taken from the Jewish Temple after the Great Jewish Revolt in 70 CE led to the Siege of Jerusalem. According to a reconstructed inscription found on the site, “the emperor Vespasian ordered this new amphitheater to be erected from his general’s share of the booty.” Along with the spoils, estimated 100,000 Jewish prisoners were brought back to Rome after the war, and many contributed to the massive workforce needed for construction. The slaves undertook manual labor, such as working in the quarries at Tivoli where the travertine was quarried, along with lifting and transporting the quarried stones 20 miles from Tivoli to Rome. Along with this free source of unskilled labor, teams of professional Roman builders, engineers, artists, painters and decorators undertook the more specialized tasks necessary for building the Colosseum.





**The Flavian Amphitheater:** *The most enduring landmark of the Flavian Dynasty was the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum. Its construction was begun by Vespasian, and ultimately finished by Titus and Domitian, financed from the spoils of the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple.*

## Fall of the Flavian Emperors

Domitian, the last of the Flavian emperors, was a ruthless autocrat who had many enemies, some of whom eventually assassinated him, giving rise to the long-lived Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze the factors that led to the fall of the Flavian Dynasty

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Flavian rule came to an end on September 18, 96, when Domitian was assassinated and was succeeded by the longtime Flavian supporter and advisor Marcus Cocceius Nerva, who founded the long-lived Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.
- Domitian's government exhibited totalitarian characteristics, which caused disapproval of the Roman Senate, among others.
- He dealt with several revolts during his rule, the last one being a successful assassination.
- The Senate rejoiced at the death of Domitian, and immediately following Nerva's accession as Emperor, passed *damnatio memoriae* on his memory: his coins and statues were melted, his arches were torn down, and his name was erased from all public records.

### *Key Terms*

- **damnatio memoriae:** Latin for “condemnation of memory,” a form of dishonor that could be passed by the Roman Senate on traitors or others who brought discredit to the Roman State; the intent was to erase the malefactor from history, a task somewhat easier in ancient times, when documentation was limited.

- **Marcus Cocceius Nerva:** Succeeded Domitian as emperor the same day as his assassination. Founded the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.
- **Roman Senate:** A political institution in ancient Rome, and one of the most enduring institutions in Roman history, established in the first days of the city. By the time of the Roman Empire, it had lost much of its political power as well as its prestige.

Flavian rule came to an end on September 18, 96, when Domitian was assassinated. He was succeeded by the longtime Flavian supporter and advisor, Marcus Cocceius Nerva, who founded the long-lived Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.

## Opposition to Domitian

Domitian's government exhibited totalitarian characteristics; he saw himself as the new Augustus, an enlightened despot destined to guide the Roman Empire into a new era of brilliance. Religious, military, and cultural propaganda fostered a cult of personality, and by nominating himself perpetual censor, he sought to control public and private morals. As a consequence, Domitian was popular with the people and army, but considered a tyrant by members of the Roman Senate.

Since the fall of the Republic, the authority of the Roman Senate had largely eroded under the quasi-monarchical system of government established by Augustus, known as the Principate. The Principate allowed the existence of a de facto dictatorial regime, while maintaining the formal framework of the Roman Republic. Most Emperors upheld the public facade of democracy, and in

return the Senate implicitly acknowledged the Emperor's status as a *de facto* monarch.

Some rulers handled this arrangement with less subtlety than others. Domitian was not so subtle. From the outset of his reign, he stressed the reality of his autocracy. He disliked aristocrats and had no fear of showing it, withdrawing every decision-making power from the Senate, and instead relying on a small set of friends and equestrians to control the important offices of state.

The dislike was mutual. After Domitian's assassination, the senators of Rome rushed to the Senate house, where they immediately passed a motion condemning his memory to oblivion. Under the rulers of the Nervan-Antonian Dynasty, senatorial authors published histories that elaborated on the view of Domitian as a tyrant. Modern revisionists have instead characterized Domitian as a ruthless but efficient autocrat, whose cultural, economic, and political program provided the foundation of the peaceful 2nd century.

## Assassination

Domitian dealt with several revolts during his rule, the last of which was a successful plot to assassinate him. Domitian was assassinated on September 18, 96, in a palace conspiracy organized by court officials. A highly detailed account of the plot and the assassination is provided by Suetonius, who alleges that Domitian's chamberlain, Parthenius, was the chief instigator behind the conspiracy, citing the recent execution of Domitian's secretary, Epaphroditus, as the primary motive. The murder itself was carried out by a freedman of Parthenius, named Maximus, and a steward of Domitian's niece Flavia Domitilla, named Stephanus.

The precise involvement of the Praetorian Guard is less clear. At the time, the Guard was commanded by Titus Flavius Norbanus and Titus Petronius Secundus, and the latter was almost certainly aware

of the plot. Cassius Dio, writing nearly a hundred years after the assassination, includes Domitia Longina among the conspirators, but in light of her attested devotion to Domitian—even years after her husband had died—her involvement in the plot seems highly unlikely.

Dio further suggests that the assassination was improvised, while Suetonius implies a well-organized conspiracy. For some days before the attack took place, Stephanus feigned an injury so as to be able to conceal a dagger beneath his bandages. On the day of the assassination, the doors to the servants' quarters were locked while Domitian's personal weapon of last resort, a sword he concealed beneath his pillow, had been removed in advance.

Domitian and Stephanus wrestled on the ground for some time, until the Emperor was finally overpowered and fatally stabbed by the conspirators; Stephanus was stabbed by Domitian during the struggle and died shortly afterward. Around noon, Domitian, just one month short of his 45th birthday, was dead. His body was carried away on a common bier, and unceremoniously cremated by his nurse Phyllis, who later mingled the ashes with those of his niece Julia, at the Flavian temple.

## The End of the Flavian Dynasty

The same day as Domitian's death, the Senate proclaimed Marcus Cocceius Nerva to be emperor. Despite his political experience, this was a remarkable choice. Nerva was old and childless, and had spent much of his career out of the public light, prompting both ancient and modern authors to speculate on his involvement in Domitian's assassination.

According to Cassius Dio, the conspirators approached Nerva as a potential successor prior to the assassination, suggesting that he was at least aware of the plot. He does not appear in Suetonius' version of the events, but this may be understandable, since his

works were published under Nerva's direct descendants, Trajan and Hadrian. To suggest the dynasty owed its accession to murder would have been less than sensitive.

On the other hand, Nerva lacked widespread support in the Empire, and as a known Flavian loyalist, his track record would not have recommended him to the conspirators. The precise facts have been obscured by history, but modern historians believe Nerva was proclaimed emperor solely on the initiative of the Senate, within hours after the news of the assassination broke. The decision may have been hasty so as to avoid civil war, but neither appears to have been involved in the conspiracy.

The Senate nonetheless rejoiced at the death of Domitian, and immediately following Nerva's accession as Emperor, passed *damnatio memoriae* on his memory: his coins and statues were melted, his arches were torn down, and his name was erased from all public records. Domitian and, over a century later, Publius Septimius Geta, were the only emperors known to have officially received a *damnatio memoriae*, though others may have received de facto ones. In many instances, existing portraits of Domitian, such as those found on the Cancelleria Reliefs, were simply recarved to fit the likeness of Nerva, which allowed quick production of new images and recycling of previous material. Yet the order of the Senate was only partially executed in Rome, and wholly disregarded in most of the provinces outside Italy.

Although Nerva's brief reign was marred by financial difficulties and his inability to assert his authority over the Roman army (who were still loyal to Domitian), his greatest success was his ability to ensure a peaceful transition of power after his death, thus founding the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.



**Domitian:** Domitian as Emperor (Vatican Museums), possibly recut from a statue of Nero.



# 46. Reading: Nerva-Antonine Dynasty

## The Nerva-Antonine Dynasty

The Golden Age of Rome was a period of prosperity that fell under the “Five Good Emperors” of the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the characteristics of the Golden Age and the achievements of the Five Good Emperors

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The first five of the six successions within the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty were notable in that the reigning emperor adopted the candidate of his choice to be his successor, rather than choosing a biological

heir.

- Although much of his life remains obscure, Nerva was considered a wise and moderate emperor by ancient historians. Nerva's greatest success was his ability to ensure a peaceful transition of power after his death, thus founding the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.
- Trajan is remembered as a successful soldier-emperor who presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history, and led the empire to attain its maximum territorial extent by the time of his death.
- Hadrian was known to be a humanist and a philhellene, renowned for his building projects and commitment to his military lifestyle.
- Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher-emperor, enjoyed not only military successes during his reign, but also authored a defining Stoic tome on equanimity in the midst of conflict.

### *Key Terms*

- **Marcus Aurelius:** Roman Emperor from 161 to 180 CE, as well as a notable Stoic philosopher.
- **Hadrian:** Roman Emperor from 117 to 138 CE. Known for his grand building projects and his philhellenism.
- **Trajan:** Roman emperor from 98 CE until 117 CE. Officially declared by the Senate as *optimus princeps*, and known for his bold expansion of Roman borders.

## Nerva-Antonine Dynasty

The Nerva-Antonine Dynasty was a dynasty of seven Roman Emperors who ruled over the Roman Empire during a period of prosperity from 96 CE to 192 CE. These emperors are Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus.

The first five of the six successions within this dynasty were notable in that the reigning emperor adopted the candidate of his choice to be his successor. Under Roman law, an adoption established a bond legally as strong as that of kinship. As such, the second through sixth Nerva-Antonine emperors are also called Adoptive Emperors.

The importance of official adoption in Roman society has often been considered as a conscious repudiation of the principle of dynastic inheritance, and has been deemed as one of the factors of the period's prosperity. However, this was not a new practice. It was common for patrician families to adopt, and Roman emperors had adopted heirs in the past; Emperor Augustus had adopted Tiberius, and Emperor Claudius had adopted Nero. Julius Caesar, dictator perpetuo and considered to be instrumental in the transition from Republic to Empire, adopted Gaius Octavius, who would become Augustus, Rome's first emperor. Moreover, there was a family connection, as Trajan adopted his first cousin once removed and great-nephew by marriage, Hadrian. Hadrian made his half-nephew by marriage, and heir Antoninus Pius, adopt both Hadrian's second cousin three times removed, and half-great-nephew by marriage, Marcus Aurelius, also Antoninus' nephew by marriage, and the son of his original planned successor, Lucius Verus. The naming by Marcus Aurelius of his son, Commodus, was considered to be an unfortunate choice and the beginning of the Empire's decline.

With Commodus' murder in 192, the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty came to an end; it was followed by a period of turbulence, known as the Year of the Five Emperors.

# The Five Good Emperors

The rulers commonly known as the “Five Good Emperors” were Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. The term was coined by the political philosopher, Niccolò Machiavelli, in 1503:

From the study of this history we may also learn how a good government is to be established; for while all the emperors who succeeded to the throne by birth, except Titus, were bad, all were good who succeeded by adoption, as in the case of the five from Nerva to Marcus. But as soon as the empire fell once more to the heirs by birth, its ruin recommenced. Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus had no need of praetorian cohorts, or of countless legions to guard them, but were defended by their own good lives, the goodwill of their subjects, and the attachment of the Senate.

An alternative hypothesis posits that adoptive succession is thought to have arisen because of a lack of biological heirs. All but the last of the adoptive emperors had no legitimate biological sons to succeed them. They were thus obliged to pick a successor somewhere else; as soon as the Emperor could look towards a biological son to succeed him, adoptive succession was set aside. Nonetheless, this period was a time of peace and prosperity.

## Nerva

In 96 CE, Domitian was assassinated in a palace conspiracy involving members of the Praetorian Guard and several of his freedmen. On the same day, Nerva was declared emperor by the Roman Senate. This occasion marked the first time the Senate elected a Roman Emperor.

Nerva's brief reign was marred by financial difficulties and his inability to assert his authority over the Roman army. A revolt by the Praetorian Guard in October 97 essentially forced him to adopt an heir. After some deliberation, Nerva chose Trajan, a young and popular general, as his successor. After barely fifteen months in office, Nerva died of natural causes in 98, and upon his death, he was succeeded and deified by Trajan. Although much of his life remains obscure, Nerva was considered a wise and moderate emperor by ancient historians. Nerva's greatest success was his ability to ensure a peaceful transition of power after his death, thus founding the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty.

## Trajan

Trajan was Roman emperor from 98 CE until his death in 117 CE. Officially declared by the Senate as *optimus princeps* ("the best ruler"), Trajan is remembered as a successful soldier-emperor who presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history, and led the empire to attain its maximum territorial extent by the time of his death. He is also known for his philanthropic rule, and oversaw extensive public building programs and implemented social welfare policies.



**Bust of Trajan:** Bust of the Emperor Trajan, who ruled from 98-117 CE.

# Hadrian

Hadrian was Roman Emperor from 117 to 138 CE. Known for his grand building projects, he re-built the Pantheon and constructed the Temple of Venus and Roma. He is also known for building Hadrian's Wall, which marked the northern limit of Roman Britain. During his reign, Hadrian traveled to nearly every province of the Empire. An ardent admirer of Greece, he sought to make Athens the cultural capital of the empire, and created a popular cult in the name of his Greek lover, Antinous. He spent extensive amounts of his time with the military; he usually wore military attire and even dined and slept amongst the soldiers.



*Bust of Hadrian: Bust of the Emperor Hadrian, who ruled from 117-138 CE.*

## Marcus Aurelius

Hadrian was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who was subsequently succeeded by Marcus Aurelius, who was Roman Emperor from 161 to 180 CE. He ruled with Lucius Verus as co-emperor from 161 until



Verus' death in 169. He was the last of the Five Good Emperors and was a practitioner of Stoicism. His untitled writing, commonly known as the *Meditations*, is the most significant source of our modern understanding of ancient Stoic philosophy.

Marcus Aurelius was an effective military commander, and Rome enjoyed various military successes against outsiders who were beginning to threaten the Empire. During his reign, the Empire defeated a revitalized Parthian Empire in the East: Aurelius' general, Avidius Cassius, sacked the capital Ctesiphon in 164. In central Europe, Aurelius fought the Marcomanni, Quadi, and Sarmatians with success during the Marcomannic Wars, although the threat of the Germanic tribes began to represent a troubling reality for the empire. A revolt in the East led by Avidius Cassius failed to gain momentum and was suppressed immediately.

His *Meditations*, written in Greek while he was on a campaign between 170 and 180, is still revered as a literary monument to a philosophy of service and duty, which describes how to find and preserve equanimity in the midst of conflict by following nature as a source of guidance and inspiration.



**Bust of Marcus Aurelius:** Bust of Marcus Aurelius, who ruled from 161 to 180 CE.

# Military Successes of the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty

The Nerva-Antonine Dynasty saw the greatest military expansion in Roman history, leading the empire to attain its maximum territorial extent.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Examine the military efforts of the Nerva-Antonine emperors=

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The second emperor in the dynasty, Trajan, is remembered as a successful soldier-emperor who presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history, through the Dacian Wars.
- The conclusion of the Dacian Wars marked the beginning of a period of sustained growth and relative peace in Rome.
- Despite his own great reputation as a military administrator, Hadrian 's reign was marked by a

general lack of documented major military conflicts, apart from the Second Roman–Jewish War, and instead is marked by pacifist tendencies.

- The peace policy was strengthened by the erection of permanent fortifications along the empire's borders, the most famous of these being the massive Hadrian's Wall in Great Britain.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hadrian's Wall:** A defensive fortification in the Roman province of Britannia, begun in 122 CE during the reign of the emperor Hadrian.
- **Dacian Wars:** Two military campaigns fought between the Roman Empire and Dacia during Roman Emperor Trajan's rule.

Several of the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty emperors were known for their notable military successes.

## Trajan and the Dacian Wars

After Nerva's short rule, his adoptive heir, Trajan, a popular military leader, ruled as emperor from 98–117 CE. Officially declared by the Senate as *optimus princeps* ("the best ruler"), Trajan is remembered as a successful soldier-emperor who presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history, leading the empire to attain its maximum territorial extent by the time of his death.

The Dacian Wars (101–102, 105–106) were two military campaigns

fought between the Roman Empire and Dacia during Roman Emperor Trajan's rule. The conflicts were triggered by the constant Dacian threat on the Danubian Roman Province of Moesia, and also by the increasing need for resources in the economy of the Roman Empire.

Dacia, an area north of Macedon and Greece, and east of the Danube, had been on the Roman agenda since before the days of Caesar, when they defeated a Roman army at the Battle of Histria. In 85 CE, the Dacians swarmed over the Danube and pillaged Moesia, and initially defeated the army that Emperor Domitian sent against them. The Romans were defeated in the Battle of Tapae in 88, and a truce was established.

Emperor Trajan recommenced hostilities against Dacia and, following an uncertain number of battles, defeated the Dacian King Decebalus in the Second Battle of Tapae in 101. With Trajan's troops pressing towards the Dacian capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia, Decebalus once more sought truce terms. Decebalus rebuilt his power over the following years and attacked Roman garrisons again in 105. In response, Trajan again marched into Dacia, besieging the Dacian capital in the Siege of Sarmizegetusa, and razing it. With Dacia quelled, Trajan subsequently invaded the Parthian empire to the east, his conquests expanding the Roman Empire to its greatest extent. Rome's borders in the east were indirectly governed through a system of client states for some time, leading to less direct campaigning than in the west in this period.

The conclusion of the Dacian Wars marked a triumph for Rome and its armies. Trajan announced 123 days of celebrations throughout the Empire. Dacia's rich gold mines were secured, and it is estimated that Dacia then contributed 700 million Denarii per annum to the Roman economy, providing finance for Rome's future campaigns, and assisting with the rapid expansion of Roman towns throughout Europe.

The two wars were notable victories in Rome's extensive expansionist campaigns, gaining Trajan the people's admiration and support. The conclusion of the Dacian Wars marked the beginning

of a period of sustained growth and relative peace in Rome. Trajan began extensive building projects and became an honorable civil leader, improving Rome's civic infrastructure, thereby paving the way for internal growth and reinforcement of the empire as a whole.



**Dacian Wars:** Fiery battle scene between the Roman and Dacian armies.

## Hadrian and Hadrian's Wall

Despite his own great reputation as a military administrator, Hadrian's reign was marked by a general lack of documented major military conflicts, apart from the Second Roman-Jewish War. Hadrian had already surrendered Trajan's conquests in Mesopotamia, considering them to be indefensible. In the East, Hadrian contented himself with retaining suzerainty over Osroene, which was ruled by the client king, Parthamaspates, once client king of Parthia under Trajan.

Hadrian's abandonment of an aggressive policy was something the Senate and its historians never forgave: the fourth century historian, Aurelius Victor, charged him with being jealous of Trajan's exploits and deliberately trying to downplay their worthiness. It is

more probable that Hadrian simply considered that the financial strain to be incurred through keeping a policy of conquests was something the Roman Empire could not afford. Proof of this is the disappearance during his reigns of two entire legions. Also, the acknowledgement of the indefensible character of the Mesopotamian conquests had perhaps already been made by Trajan himself, who had disengaged from them at the time of his death.

The peace policy was strengthened by the erection of permanent fortifications along the empire's borders. The most famous of these is the massive Hadrian's Wall in Great Britain, built on stone and doubled on its rear by a ditch (*Vallum Hadriani*), which marked the boundary between a strictly military zone and the province. The Danube and Rhine borders were strengthened with a series of mostly wooden fortifications, forts, outposts, and watchtowers, the latter specifically improving communications and local area security.

To maintain morale and prevent the troops from becoming restive, Hadrian established intensive drill routines, and personally inspected the armies. Although his coins showed military images almost as often as peaceful ones, Hadrian's policy was peace through strength, even threat, with an emphasis on discipline, which was the subject of two monetary series.



**Hadrian's Wall:** Sections of Hadrian's Wall remain along the route, though much of it has been dismantled over the years, in order to use the stones for various nearby construction projects.

## Art and Culture Under the Nerva-Antonines

Emperor Hadrian, among other Nerva-Antonine emperors, patronized the arts, held public festivals, and influenced the culture of Rome and beyond.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe trends in art and culture under the Nerva-Antonines



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Trajan was known for his philanthropic rule, overseeing extensive public building programs and implementing social welfare policies, as well as hosting major public festivals in the Colosseum.
- Emperor Hadrian had a major influence on Roman culture through his love of Greek culture.
- He patronized the arts, building and rebuilding important and influential structures, such as Hadrian's Villa. He also introduced Greek styles into public use, such as wearing a beard instead of being clean-shaven.
- As a cultural Hellenophile, Hadrian was familiar with the work of the philosophers Epictetus, Heliodorus, and Favorinus, and used their ideas to improve social welfare in Rome.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hadrian's Villa:** A large Roman archaeological complex at Tivoli, Italy, built by Emperor Hadrian and based on Greek architectural styles.
- **philhellenism:** Used to describe both non-Greeks, such as Romans, who were fond of Greek culture, and Greeks who patriotically upheld their culture.

Several of the Nerva-Antonine emperors are known for their support of the arts and culture of Rome.

## Trajan

Trajan was known for his philanthropic rule, overseeing extensive public building programs and implementing social welfare policies, which earned him his enduring reputation as the second of the Five Good Emperors who presided over an era of peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean world. During a period of peace after the Dacian wars, he initiated a three-month gladiatorial festival in the great Colosseum in Rome (the precise date is unknown). Combining chariot racing, beast fights, and close-quarters gladiatorial bloodshed, this gory spectacle reputedly left 11,000 dead (mostly slaves and criminals, not to mention the thousands of wild animals killed alongside them), and attracted a total of five million spectators over the course of the festival. The care bestowed by Trajan on the managing of such public spectacles led the orator Fronto to state approvingly that Trajan had paid equal attention to entertainments as well as to serious issues. Fronto concluded that “neglect of serious matters can cause greater damage, but neglect of amusements greater discontent.”

## Hadrian

Hadrian has been described—first in an ancient anonymous source and later echoed by Ronald Syme, among others—as the most versatile of all the Roman emperors. He also liked to demonstrate knowledge of all intellectual and artistic fields. Above all, Hadrian patronized the arts. Hadrian’s Villa at Tibur was the greatest Roman example of an Alexandrian

garden, recreating a sacred landscape, albeit lost in large part to the despoliation of the ruins by the Cardinal d'Este, who had much of the marble removed to build Villa d'Este. In Rome, the Pantheon, originally built by Agrippa but destroyed by fire in 80, was rebuilt under Hadrian in the domed form it retains to this day. It is among the best-preserved of Rome's ancient buildings, and was highly influential to many of the great architects of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods.



**Hadrian's Villa:** *The ruins of Hadrian's Villa in their present state.*

Another of Hadrian's contributions to popular Roman culture was the beard, which symbolised his philhellenism; Dio of Prusa had equated the generalized using of the beard with Hellenic ethos. Since the time of Scipio Africanus, it had been fashionable among

the Romans to be clean-shaven. Also, all Roman emperors before Hadrian, except for Nero (also a great admirer of Greek culture), were clean shaven. Most of the emperors after Hadrian would be portrayed with beards. Their beards, however, were not worn out of an appreciation for Greek culture, but because the beard had, thanks to Hadrian, become fashionable. This new fashion lasted until the reign of Constantine the Great and was revived again by Phocas at the start of the 7th century. Notwithstanding his philhellenism, however, in all other everyday life matters, Hadrian behaved as a Roman civic traditionalist, who demanded the use of the toga by senators and knights in public, and strict separation between the sexes in the public baths and theaters.

Hadrian wrote poetry in both Latin and Greek; one of the few surviving examples is a Latin poem he reportedly composed on his deathbed. Some of his Greek productions found their way into the Palatine Anthology.

As a cultural Hellenophile, Hadrian was familiar with the work of the philosophers Epictetus, Heliodorus, and Favorinus. At home he attended to social needs. Hadrian mitigated slavery; masters were forbidden from killing their slaves unless allowed by a court to punish them for a grave offense. Masters were forbidden to sell slaves to a gladiator trainer or to a procurer, except as justified punishment. Hadrian also had the legal code humanized and forbade torture of free defendants and witnesses, legislating against the common practice of condemning free persons in order to have them tortured as a means of gathering information on their supposed activities and accomplices. He also abolished *ergastula*—private prisons for slaves in which kidnapped free men could also be kept.

# 47. Assignments

## Week 8

### Assignments

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

#### **Group Research & Bibliography**

Points: 100

In this assignment, you will work for the first time with your randomly assigned group members. As you meet virtually or in person, be clear about which group member is expected to complete which task(s), and document your respective responsibilities. If there are issues later with unfulfilled assignments, I will need evidence to hold failing group members accountable.

This is the first step your group will take toward the final completed project: a presentation of your findings regarding the life, work, and details concerning a ‘traveler’ from western civilization. As you begin your research keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Consider possible topics and writers that interest all members of the group and generate a list of some mutually agreed upon choices. Discuss and vote on your one final selection.
2. You may choose a writer I have already used in our primary source readings, but if you do so, expect to research at greater depth and with more supporting evidence than what you provided in your weekly synopsis.
3. Your choice of voyage can be imaginary or partially imaginary

like *The Odyssey*. In this case, your group research would identify what is accepted as fact by the scholarly community, and what is currently considered invention.

4. Generate a bibliography of at least 6 academic resources. You may not use Wikipedia as a source, but you can use it to find other credible sources for your paper.
5. Follow the guidelines here to write an annotated bibliography:
  - Online Writing Lab: Annotated Bibliographies
  - Online Writing Lab: MLA Works Cited

Your bibliography must meet the following requirements:

- Annotations and bibliography in MLA format
- Supply analytical and critical commentary in the annotation
- At least 6 sources, 3 of which must be print – you may have more of each

## Group Presentation

Remember that your **Group Presentation** is due in week 16:

For your final group project you will be creating a living dialogue. It will be published so that your classmates can access it. It is meant to be experienced digitally and exists virtually. Like any good imaginative experience, it should have a mixture of text, sound, images, video and links. Your final dialogue must be accessible online. Use one of the following tools to help make your vision a reality:

- Voicethread
- Storify
- Storybird
- Weebly
- Animoto

- Prezi
- Wikispaces
- TedEd
- Tiki-Toki
- tumblr
- Google Slides

This assignment is worth 100 points, so put the work and effort into it that it deserves. The major themes, words and concepts from your group dialogue must be reflected here in this last assignment. You and your group are welcome to add additional information too, but anything new must include citations where appropriate. Remember to observe the following guidelines:

- A clear statement of your topic.
- A balance of text, sound, images, video and links.
- Organization of material, either thematically or chronologically.
- Visually planned. The visual aesthetic should be planned and coherent.
- Citations for any new material that was not previously included in your group dialogue assignment. Source citations should be seamlessly embedded in the artifact.
- All text must be grammatically correct and have proper spelling. Complete sentences are required.

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.



PART X

WEEK 9: CHRISTIANITY,  
AND THE LATE ROMAN  
EMPIRE



# 48. Introduction

## Week 9

### Introduction

Emperor Constantine I

The History of late ancient Christianity traces Christianity during the Christian Roman Empire – the period from the rise of Christianity under Emperor Constantine (c. 313), until the fall of the Western Roman Empire (c. 476). The end-date of this period varies because the transition to the sub-Roman period occurred gradually and at different times in different areas. One may generally date late ancient Christianity as lasting to the late 6th century and the re-conquests under Justinian (reigned 527-565) of the Byzantine Empire, though a more traditional end-date is 476, the year in which Odoacer deposed Romulus Augustus, traditionally considered the last western emperor.

map

# 49. Reading: Christianity and the Late Roman Empire

## Crises of the Roman Empire

The Crisis of the Third Century was a period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under the combined pressures of invasion, civil war, plague, and economic depression.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the problems afflicting the Roman Empire during the third century

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The situation of the Roman Empire became dire in 235 CE, when emperor Alexander Severus was murdered by his own troops after defeat by Germanic tribes.

- In the years following the emperor's death, generals of the Roman army fought each other for control of the Empire, and neglected their duties of defending the empire from invasion. As a result, various provinces became victims of frequent raids.
- By 268, the Empire had split into three competing states: the Gallic Empire, including the Roman provinces of Gaul, Britannia, and Hispania; the Palmyrene Empire, including the eastern provinces of Syria Palaestina and Aegyptus; and the Italian-centered and independent Roman Empire proper.
- One of the most profound and lasting effects of the Crisis of the Third Century was the disruption of Rome 's extensive internal trade network under the Pax Romana.
- The continuing problems of the Empire would be radically addressed by Diocletian, allowing the Empire to continue to survive in the West for over a century, and in the East for over a millennium.

### *Key Terms*

- **Crisis of the Third Century:** A period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under the combined pressures of invasion, civil war, plague, and economic depression.
- **coloni:** A tenant farmer from the late Roman Empire and Early Middle Ages; sharecroppers.
- **Pax Romana:** The long period of relative peacefulness and minimal expansion by the Roman

military force that was experienced by the Roman Empire after the end of the Final War of the Roman Republic, and before the beginning of the Crisis of the Third Century.

## Overview

The Crisis of the Third Century, also known as Military Anarchy or the Imperial Crisis, (235-284 CE) was a period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under the combined pressures of invasion, civil war, plague, and economic depression. The Crisis began with the assassination of Emperor Severus Alexander by his own troops in 235, initiating a 50-year period in which there were at least 26 claimants to the title of Emperor, mostly prominent Roman army generals, who assumed imperial power over all or part of the Empire. Twenty-six men were officially accepted by the Roman Senate as emperor during this period, and thus became legitimate emperors.

By 268, the Empire had split into three competing states: the Gallic Empire, including the Roman provinces of Gaul, Britannia, and (briefly) Hispania; the Palmyrene Empire, including the eastern provinces of Syria Palaestina and Aegyptus; and the Italian-centered and independent Roman Empire proper, between them. Later, Aurelian (270-275) reunited the empire; the Crisis ended with the ascension and reforms of Diocletian in 284.

The Crisis resulted in such profound changes in the Empire's institutions, society, economic life, and, eventually, religion, that it is increasingly seen by most historians as defining the transition between the historical periods of classical antiquity and late antiquity.



**The Roman Empire in 271 CE:** The divided Empire during the Crisis of the Third Century.

## History of the Crisis

The situation of the Roman Empire became dire in 235 CE, when Emperor Alexander Severus was murdered by his own troops. Many Roman legions had been defeated during a campaign against Germanic peoples raiding across the borders, while the emperor was focused primarily on the dangers from the Sassanid Persian Empire. Leading his troops personally, Alexander Severus resorted to diplomacy and paying tribute, in an attempt to pacify the Germanic chieftains quickly. According to Herodian, this cost him the respect of his troops, who may have felt they should be punishing the tribes who were intruding on Rome's territory.

In the years following the emperor's death, generals of the Roman army fought each other for control of the Empire and neglected their duties of defending the empire from invasion. Provincials became victims of frequent raids along the length of the Rhine and Danube rivers, by such foreign tribes as the Carpians, Goths, Vandals, and Alamanni, and attacks from Sassanids in the east.

Climate changes and a rise in sea levels ruined the agriculture of what is now the Low Countries, forcing tribes to migrate. Additionally, in 251, the Plague of Cyprian (possibly smallpox) broke out, causing large-scale death, and possibly weakened the ability of the Empire to defend itself.

After the loss of Valerian in 260, the Roman Empire was beset by usurpers, who broke it up into three competing states. The Roman provinces of Gaul, Britain, and Hispania broke off to form the Gallic Empire. After the death of Odaenathus in 267, the eastern provinces of Syria, Palestine, and Aegyptus became independent as the Palmyrene Empire, leaving the remaining Italian-centered Roman Empire proper in the middle.

An invasion by a vast host of Goths was defeated at the Battle of Naissus in 268 or 269. This victory was significant as the turning point of the crisis, when a series of tough, energetic soldier-emperors took power. Victories by Emperor Claudius II Gothicus over the next two years drove back the Alamanni and recovered Hispania from the Gallic Empire. When Claudius died in 270 of the plague, Aurelian, who had commanded the cavalry at Naissus, succeeded him as the emperor and continued the restoration of the Empire.

Aurelian reigned (270-275) through the worst of the crisis, defeating the Vandals, the Visigoths, the Palmyrenes, the Persians, and then the remainder of the Gallic Empire. By late 274, the Roman Empire was reunited into a single entity, and the frontier troops were back in place. More than a century would pass before Rome again lost military ascendancy over its external enemies. However, dozens of formerly thriving cities, especially in the Western Empire, had been ruined, their populations dispersed and, with the breakdown of the economic system, could not be rebuilt. Major cities and towns, even Rome itself, had not needed fortifications for many centuries; many then surrounded themselves with thick walls.

Finally, although Aurelian had played a significant role in restoring the Empire's borders from external threat, more fundamental problems remained. In particular, the right of succession had never



been clearly defined in the Roman Empire, leading to continuous civil wars as competing factions in the military, Senate, and other parties put forward their favored candidate for emperor. Another issue was the sheer size of the Empire, which made it difficult for a single autocratic ruler to effectively manage multiple threats at the same time. These continuing problems would be radically addressed by Diocletian, allowing the Empire to continue to survive in the West for over a century, and in the East for over a millennium.

## Impact

One of the most profound and lasting effects of the Crisis of the Third Century was the disruption of Rome's extensive internal trade network. Ever since the Pax Romana, starting with Augustus, the Empire's economy had depended in large part on trade between Mediterranean ports and across the extensive road systems to the Empire's interior. Merchants could travel from one end of the Empire to the other in relative safety within a few weeks, moving agricultural goods produced in the provinces to the cities, and manufactured goods produced by the great cities of the East to the more rural provinces.

With the onset of the Crisis of the Third Century, however, this vast internal trade network broke down. The widespread civil unrest made it no longer safe for merchants to travel as they once had, and the financial crisis that struck made exchange very difficult with the debased currency. This produced profound changes that, in many ways, foreshadowed the very decentralized economic character of the coming Middle Ages.

Large landowners, no longer able to successfully export their crops over long distances, began producing food for subsistence and local barter. Rather than import manufactured goods from the Empire's great urban areas, they began to manufacture many goods locally, often on their own estates, thus beginning the self-sufficient

“house economy” that would become commonplace in later centuries, reaching its final form in the Middle Ages’ manorialism. The common free people of the Roman cities, meanwhile, began to move out into the countryside in search of food and better protection.

Made desperate by economic necessity, many of these former city dwellers, as well as many small farmers, were forced to give up hard-earned, basic civil rights in order to receive protection from large land-holders. In doing so, they became a half-free class of Roman citizen known as *coloni*. They were tied to the land, and in later Imperial law their status was made hereditary. This provided an early model for serfdom, the origins of medieval feudal society and of the medieval peasantry.

## Diocletian and the Tetrarchy

Facing the pressures of civil war, plague, invasion, and economic depression, Diocletian was able to stabilize the Roman Empire for another hundred years through economic reform and the establishment of the Tetrarchy.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the change in attitudes towards Christians and their statuses within the Roman Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Diocletian secured the empire's borders and purged it of all threats to his power. He separated and enlarged the empire's civil and military services, and reorganized the empire's provincial divisions, establishing the largest and most bureaucratic government in the history of the empire.
- Diocletian also restructured the Roman government by establishing the Tetrarchy, a system of rule in which four men shared rule over the massive Roman Empire. The empire was effectively divided in two, with an Augustus and a subordinate Caesar in each half.
- Diocletian established administrative capitals for each of the Tetrarchs, which were located closer to the empire's borders. Though Rome retained its unique Prefect of the City, it was no longer the administrative capital.
- By 313, therefore, there remained only two emperors: Constantine in the west and Licinius in the east. The tetrarchic system was at an end, although it took until 324 for Constantine to finally defeat Licinius, reunite the two halves of the Roman Empire, and declare himself sole Augustus.

### *Key Terms*

- **Diocletian:** Roman emperor from 284 to 305 CE. Established the tetrarchy and instituted economic and tax reforms to stabilize the Roman Empire.
- **tetrarchy:** A form of government in which power is divided between four individuals. In ancient Rome, a system of government instituted by Diocletian that split power between two rulers in the east, and two rulers in the west.

## Diocletian and the Stabilization of the Roman Empire

Diocletian was Roman emperor from 284 to 305 CE. Born to a family of low status in the Roman province of Dalmatia, Diocletian rose through the ranks of the military to become cavalry commander to the Emperor Carus. After the deaths of Carus and his son Numerian on campaign in Persia, Diocletian was proclaimed emperor. Diocletian's reign stabilized the empire, and marked the end of the Crisis of the Third Century. He appointed fellow officer, Maximian, as Augustus, co-emperor, in 286. Diocletian delegated further in 293, appointing Galerius and Constantius as caesars, junior co-emperors. Under this "tetrarchy," or "rule of four," each emperor would rule over a quarter-division of the empire. Diocletian further secured the empire's borders and purged it of all threats to his power.

He separated and enlarged the empire's civil and military services

and reorganized the empire's provincial divisions, establishing the largest and most bureaucratic government in the history of the empire. He established new administrative centers in Nicomedia, Mediolanum, Antioch, and Trier, closer to the empire's frontiers than the traditional capital at Rome had been. Building on third-century trends towards absolutism, he styled himself an autocrat, elevating himself above the empire's masses with imposing forms of court ceremonies and architecture. Bureaucratic and military growth, constant campaigning, and construction projects increased the state's expenditures and necessitated a comprehensive tax reform. From at least 297 on, imperial taxation was standardized, made more equitable, and levied at generally higher rates.

image

**Illustration depicting Diocletian's Palace (original**

**appearance):** Reconstruction of Diocletian's Palace in its original appearance, upon completion in 305 CE (viewed from the south-west).

While it is referred to as a “palace” because of its intended use as the retirement residence of Diocletian, the term can be misleading as the structure is massive and more resembles a large fortress: about half of it was for Diocletian's personal use, and the rest housed the military garrison.

## The Tetrarchy

The first phase of Diocletian's government restructuring, sometimes referred to as the diarchy (“rule of two”), involved the designation of the general Maximian as co-emperor—first as Caesar (junior emperor) in 285, then Augustus in 286. This reorganization allowed Diocletian to take care of matters in the eastern regions of the empire, while Maximian similarly took charge of the western

regions, thereby halving the administrative work required to oversee an empire as large as Rome's. In 293, feeling more focus was needed on both civic and military problems, Diocletian, with Maximian's consent, expanded the imperial college by appointing two Caesars (one responsible to each Augustus)—Galerius and Constantius Chlorus.

In 305, the senior emperors jointly abdicated and retired, allowing Constantius and Galerius to be elevated in rank to Augusti. They in turn appointed two new Caesars—Severus II in the west under Constantius, and Maximinus in the east under Galerius—thereby creating the second tetrarchy.

The four tetrarchs based themselves not at Rome but in other cities closer to the frontiers, mainly intended as headquarters for the defense of the empire against bordering rivals. Although Rome ceased to be an operational capital, it continued to be the nominal capital of the entire Roman Empire, not reduced to the status of a province, but under its own, unique Prefect of the City (*praefectus urbis*).



**Zones of Influence in the Roman Tetrarchy:** This map shows the four zones of influence under Diocletian's tetrarchy.

In terms of regional jurisdiction, there was no precise division between the four tetrarchs, and this period did not see the Roman state actually split up into four distinct sub-empires. Each emperor had his zone of influence within the Roman Empire, but this influence mainly applied to the theater of war. The tetrarch was himself often in the field, while delegating most of the administration to the hierarchic bureaucracy headed by his respective Praetorian Prefect. The Praetorian Prefect was the title of a high office in the Roman Empire, originating as the commander of the Praetorian Guard, the office gradually acquired extensive legal and administrative functions, with its holders becoming the emperor's chief aides.

## Demise of the Tetrarchy

When, in 305, the 20-year term of Diocletian and Maximian ended, both abdicated. Their Caesares, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, were both raised to the rank of Augustus, and two new Caesares were appointed: Maximinus (Caesar to Galerius) and Flavius Valerius Severus (Caesar to Constantius). These four formed the second tetrarchy.

However, the system broke down very quickly thereafter. When Constantius died in 306, Galerius promoted Severus to Augustus while Constantine, Constantius' son, was proclaimed Augustus by his father's troops. At the same time, Maxentius, the son of Maximian, who also resented being left out of the new arrangements, defeated Severus before forcing him to abdicate and then arranging his murder in 307. Maxentius and Maximian both then declared themselves Augusti. By 308, there were therefore no fewer than four claimants to the rank of Augustus (Galerius, Constantine, Maximian and Maxentius), and only one to that of Caesar (Maximinus).

In 308, Galerius, together with the retired emperor Diocletian and the supposedly retired Maximian, called an imperial "conference" at Carnuntum on the River Danube. The council agreed that Licinius would become Augustus in the West, with Constantine as his Caesar. In the East, Galerius remained Augustus, and Maximinus remained his Caesar. Maximian was to retire, and Maxentius was declared an usurper. This agreement proved disastrous: by 308 Maxentius had become *de facto* ruler of Italy and Africa even without any imperial rank, and neither Constantine nor Maximinus—who had both been Caesares since 306 and 305, respectively—were prepared to tolerate the promotion of the Augustus Licinius as their superior.

After an abortive attempt to placate both Constantine and Maximinus with the meaningless title *filius Augusti* ("son of the Augustus," essentially an alternative title for Caesar), they both had



to be recognized as Augusti in 309. However, four full Augusti all at odds with each other did not bode well for the tetrarchic system.

Between 309 and 313, most of the claimants to the imperial office died or were killed in various civil wars. Constantine forced Maximian's suicide in 310. Galerius died naturally in 311. Maxentius was defeated by Constantine at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, and subsequently killed. Maximinus committed suicide at Tarsus in 313, after being defeated in battle by Licinius.

By 313, therefore, there remained only two emperors: Constantine in the west and Licinius in the east. The tetrarchic system was at an end, although it took until 324 for Constantine to finally defeat Licinius, reunite the two halves of the Roman Empire, and declare himself sole Augustus.

## The Rise of Christianity

Though the early Christians were persecuted under some emperors, such as Nero and Diocletian, the religion continued to thrive and grow, eventually becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the challenges Christians faced in the Roman Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Christians suffered from sporadic and localized persecutions over a period of two and a half centuries, as their refusal to participate in Imperial Cult of Rome was considered an act of treason, and was thus punishable by execution.
- The Diocletianic, or Great Persecution, was the last and most severe persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, which lasted from 302–311 CE. Galerius issued an edict of toleration in 311, which granted Christians the right to practice their religion, but did not restore any taken property back to them.
- The Edict of Milan in 313 made the empire officially neutral with regard to religious worship; it neither made the traditional religions illegal nor made Christianity the state religion.

### *Key Terms*

- **the Great Persecution:** The last and most severe persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire.
- **Edict of Milan:** An agreement in 313 CE by Constantine and Licinius to treat Christians benevolently within the Roman Empire.

## Persecution of Early Christians

Christianity posed a serious threat to the traditional Romans. The idea of monotheism was considered offensive against the polytheistic Roman pantheon, and came into further conflict with the Imperial Cult, in which emperors and some members of their families were worshipped as divine. As such, Christianity was considered criminal and was punished harshly.

The first recorded official persecution of Christians on behalf of the Roman Empire was in 64 CE, when, as reported by the Roman historian Tacitus, Emperor Nero blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome. According to Church tradition, it was during the reign of Nero that Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. However, modern historians debate whether the Roman government distinguished between Christians and Jews prior to Nerva's modification of the *Fiscus Judaicus* in 96, from which point practicing Jews paid the tax and Christians did not.

The Diocletianic or Great Persecution was the last and most severe persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, which lasted from 302–311 CE. In 303, the emperors Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius issued a series of edicts rescinding the legal rights of Christians and demanding that they comply with traditional Roman religious practices. Later edicts targeted the clergy and ordered all inhabitants to sacrifice to the Roman gods (a policy known as universal sacrifice). The persecution varied in intensity across the empire—it was weakest in Gaul and Britain, where only the first edict was applied, and strongest in the Eastern provinces. Persecutory laws were nullified by different emperors at different times, but Constantine and Licinius's Edict of Milan (313) has traditionally marked the end of the persecution.

During the Great Persecution, Diocletian ordered Christian buildings and the homes of Christians torn down, and their sacred books collected and burned during the Great Persecution. Christians were arrested, tortured, mutilated, burned, starved, and

condemned to gladiatorial contests to amuse spectators. The Great Persecution officially ended in April of 311, when Galerius, senior emperor of the Tetrarchy, issued an edict of toleration which granted Christians the right to practice their religion, though it did not restore any property to them. Constantine, Caesar in the western empire, and Licinius, Caesar in the east, also were signatories to the edict of toleration. It has been speculated that Galerius' reversal of his long-standing policy of Christian persecution has been attributable to one or both of these co-Caesars.

## The Rise of Christianity

The Diocletianic persecution was ultimately unsuccessful. As one modern historian has put it, it was simply "too little and too late." Christians were never purged systematically in any part of the empire, and Christian evasion continually undermined the edicts' enforcement. Although the persecution resulted in death, torture, imprisonment, or dislocation for many Christians, the majority of the empire's Christians avoided punishment. Some bribed their way to freedom or fled. In the end, the persecution failed to check the rise of the church. By 324, Constantine was sole ruler of the empire, and Christianity had become his favored religion.

By 324, Constantine, the Christian convert, ruled the entire empire alone. Christianity became the greatest beneficiary of imperial largesse. The persecutors had been routed. As the historian J. Liebeschuetz has written: "The final result of the Great Persecution provided a testimonial to the truth of Christianity, which it could have won in no other way." After Constantine, the Christianization of the Roman empire would continue apace. Under Theodosius I (r. 378-395), Christianity became the state religion. By the 5th century, Christianity was the empire's predominant faith, and filled the same role paganism had at the end of the 3rd century.

Because of the persecution, however, a number of Christian communities were riven between those who had complied with imperial authorities (*traditores*) and those who had refused. In Africa, the Donatists, who protested the election of the alleged traitor, Caecilian, to the bishopric of Carthage, continued to resist the authority of the central church until after 411. The Melitians in Egypt left the Egyptian Church similarly divided.

## The Edict of Milan

In 313, Constantine and Licinius announced in the Edict of Milan “that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best,” thereby granting tolerance to all religions, including Christianity. The Edict of Milan went a step further than the earlier Edict of Toleration by Galerius in 311, and returned confiscated Church property. This edict made the empire officially neutral with regard to religious worship; it neither made the traditional religions illegal, nor made Christianity the state religion (as did the later Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE). The Edict of Milan did, however, raise the stock of Christianity within the empire, and it reaffirmed the importance of religious worship to the welfare of the state.

## Constantine

Constantine the Great was a Roman Emperor from 306 to 337 CE; he adopted Christianity and declared it the religion of the Roman Empire.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Type your learning objectives here.

- First
- Second

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The age of Constantine marked a distinct epoch in the history of the Roman Empire, both for founding Byzantium in the east, as well as his adoption of Christianity as a state religion.
- As emperor, Constantine enacted many administrative, financial, social, and military reforms to strengthen the empire.
- Constantine experienced a dramatic event in 312 at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, after which Constantine claimed the emperorship in the west and converted to Christianity.
- According to some sources, on the evening of October 27, with the armies preparing for battle, Constantine had a vision of a cross, which led him to fight under the protection of the Christian god.

- The accession of Constantine was a turning point for early Christianity; after his victory, Constantine took over the role of patron of the Christian faith.

### *Key Terms*

- **Edict of Milan:** The February 313 CE agreement to treat Christians benevolently within the Roman Empire, thereby ending years of persecution.
- **Chi-Rho:** One of the earliest forms of christogram, which is used by some Christians, and was used by the Roman emperor, Constantine I (r. 306-337), as part of a military standard.
- **Battle of the Milvian Bridge:** A battle that took place between the Roman Emperors, Constantine I and Maxentius, on October 28, 312, and is often seen as the beginning of Constantine's conversion to Christianity.

Constantine the Great was a Roman Emperor from 306-337 CE. Constantine was the son of Flavius Valerius Constantius, a Roman army officer, and his consort, Helena. His father became Caesar, the deputy emperor in the west, in 293 CE. Constantine was sent east, where he rose through the ranks to become a military tribune under the emperors Diocletian and Galerius. In 305, Constantius was raised to the rank of Augustus, senior western emperor, and Constantine was recalled west to campaign under his father in Britannia (modern Great Britain). Acclaimed as emperor by the army at Eboracum (modern-day York) after his father's death in 306 CE, Constantine emerged victorious in a series of civil wars against the

emperors Maxentius and Licinius, to become sole ruler of both west and east by 324 CE.

As emperor, Constantine enacted many administrative, financial, social, and military reforms to strengthen the empire. The government was restructured and civil and military authority separated. A new gold coin, the solidus, was introduced to combat inflation. It would become the standard for Byzantine and European currencies for more than a thousand years. As the first Roman emperor to claim conversion to Christianity, Constantine played an influential role in the proclamation of the Edict of Milan in 313, which decreed tolerance for Christianity in the empire. He called the First Council of Nicaea in 325, at which the Nicene Creed was professed by Christians. In military matters, the Roman army was reorganized to consist of mobile field units and garrison soldiers capable of countering internal threats and barbarian invasions. Constantine pursued successful campaigns against the tribes on the Roman frontiers—the Franks, the Alamanni, the Goths, and the Sarmatians—even resettling territories abandoned by his predecessors during the Crisis of the Third Century.

Constantine's reputation flourished during the lifetime of his children and for centuries after his reign. The medieval church upheld him as a paragon of virtue, while secular rulers invoked him as a prototype, a point of reference, and the symbol of imperial legitimacy and identity. One of his major political legacies, aside from moving the capital of the empire to Constantinople, was that, in leaving the empire to his sons, he replaced Diocletian's tetrarchy with the principle of dynastic succession.

## The Battle of the Milvian Bridge

Eusebius of Caesarea, and other Christian sources, record that Constantine experienced a dramatic event in 312 at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, after which Constantine claimed the emperorship in



the west, and converted to Christianity. The Battle of the Milvian Bridge took place between the Roman Emperors, Constantine I and Maxentius, on October 28, 312. It takes its name from the Milvian Bridge, an important route over the Tiber. Constantine won the battle and started on the path that led him to end the tetrarchy and become the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. Maxentius drowned in the Tiber during the battle, and his body was later taken from the river and decapitated.

According to chroniclers, such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Lactantius, the battle marked the beginning of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Eusebius of Caesarea recounts that Constantine looked up to the sun before the battle and saw a cross of light above it, and with it the Greek words *Ἐν Τούτῳ Νικά* ("in this sign, conquer!"), often rendered in a Latin version, "*in hoc signo vinces*." Constantine commanded his troops to adorn their shields with a Christian symbol (the Chi-Rho), and thereafter they were victorious. The Arch of Constantine, erected in celebration of the victory, certainly attributes Constantine's success to divine intervention; however, the monument does not display any overtly Christian symbolism, so there is no scholarly consensus on the events' relation to Constantine's conversion to Christianity.



**Constantine:** Missorium depicting Constantine's son Constantius II, accompanied by a guardsman with the Chi Rho monogram depicted on his shield.

Following the battle, Constantine ignored the altars to the gods prepared on the Capitoline, and did not carry out the customary sacrifices to celebrate a general's victorious entry into Rome, instead heading directly to the imperial palace. Most influential people in the empire, however, especially high military officials, had not been converted to Christianity, and still participated in the traditional religions of Rome; Constantine's rule exhibited at least a willingness to appease these factions. The Roman coins minted up to eight years after the battle still bore the images of Roman

gods. The monuments he first commissioned, such as the Arch of Constantine, contained no reference to Christianity.

## Constantine and Christianity

While the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great reigned (306-337 CE), Christianity began to transition to the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. Historians remain uncertain about Constantine's reasons for favoring Christianity, and theologians and historians have argued about which form of Early Christianity he subscribed to. There is no consensus among scholars as to whether he adopted his mother Helena's Christianity in his youth, or (as claimed by Eusebius of Caesarea) encouraged her to convert to the faith himself. Some scholars question the extent to which he should be considered a Christian emperor: "Constantine saw himself as an 'emperor of the Christian people.' If this made him a Christian is the subject of debate," although he allegedly received a baptism shortly before his death.

Constantine's decision to cease the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was a turning point for early Christianity, sometimes referred to as the Triumph of the Church, the Peace of the Church, or the Constantinian Shift. In 313, Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, decriminalizing Christian worship. The emperor became a great patron of the Church and set a precedent for the position of the Christian emperor within the Church, and the notion of orthodoxy, Christendom, ecumenical councils, and the state church of the Roman Empire, declared by edict in 380. He is revered as a saint and isapostolos in the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Church for his example as a "Christian monarch."

## The Shift East

Constantine built a new imperial residence in Byzantium and renamed the city Constantinople after himself; the city eventually became the capital of the empire for over one thousand years.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why Constantine moved the capital of the empire to Constantinople, and the consequences that had for the empire as a whole

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- After defeating Maxentius and his rebellion, Constantine gradually consolidated his military superiority over his rivals in the crumbling Tetrarchy, in particular Licinius.
- Eventually, Constantine defeated Licinius, making him the sole emperor of the empire, thereby ending the tetrarchy.
- Licinius' defeat came to represent the defeat of a rival center of Pagan and Greek-speaking political

activity in the east, and it was proposed that a new eastern capital should represent the integration of the east into the Roman Empire as a whole; Constantine chose Byzantium.

- The city was thus founded in 324, dedicated on May 11, 330, and renamed Constantinople.
- The Byzantine Empire considered Constantine its founder, and the Holy Roman Empire reckoned him among the venerable figures of its tradition.

### *Key Terms*

- **Byzantium:** An ancient Greek colony on the site that later became Constantinople, and eventually Istanbul.
- **Byzantine Empire:** Also referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the east during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when the empire's capital city was Constantinople.

The age of Constantine marked a distinct epoch in the history of the Roman Empire. He built a new imperial residence at Byzantium, and renamed the city Constantinople after himself (the laudatory epithet of “New Rome ” came later, and was never an official title). It would later become the capital of the empire for over one thousand years; for this reason the later Eastern Empire would come to be known as the Byzantine Empire.

## Background: War With Licinius

After defeating Maxentius, Constantine gradually consolidated his military superiority over his rivals in the crumbling tetrarchy. In 313, he met Licinius in Milan to secure their alliance by the marriage of Licinius and Constantine's half-sister, Constantia. During this meeting, the emperors agreed on the so-called Edict of Milan, officially granting full tolerance to Christianity and all religions in the Empire. In the year 320, Licinius allegedly reneged on the religious freedom promised by the Edict of Milan in 313, and began to oppress Christians anew, generally without bloodshed, but resorting to confiscations and sacking of Christian office-holders.

This dubious arrangement eventually became a challenge to Constantine in the west, climaxing in the great civil war of 324. Licinius, aided by Goth mercenaries, represented the past and the ancient Pagan faiths. Constantine and his Franks marched under the standard of the *labarum* Chi-Rho, and both sides saw the battle in religious terms. Outnumbered, but fired by their zeal, Constantine's army emerged victorious in the Battle of Adrianople. Licinius fled across the Bosphorus and appointed Martius Martinianus, the commander of his bodyguard, as Caesar, but Constantine next won the Battle of the Hellespont, and finally the Battle of Chrysopolis on September 18, 324. Licinius and Martinianus surrendered to Constantine at Nicomedia on the promise their lives would be spared: they were sent to live as private citizens in Thessalonica and Cappadocia, respectively, but in 325, Constantine accused Licinius of plotting against him and had them both arrested and hanged. Licinius's son (the son of Constantine's half-sister) was also killed. Thus, Constantine became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire.

## Foundation of Constantinople

Licinius' defeat came to represent the defeat of a rival center of Pagan and Greek-speaking political activity in the east, as opposed to the Christian and Latin-speaking Rome, and it was proposed that a new eastern capital should represent the integration of the east into the Roman Empire as a whole, as a center of learning, prosperity, and cultural preservation for the whole of the eastern Roman Empire. Among the various locations proposed for this alternative capital, Constantine appears to have toyed earlier with Serdica (present-day Sofia), as he was reported saying that "Serdica is my Rome." Sirmium and Thessalonica were also considered. Eventually, however, Constantine decided to work on the Greek city of Byzantium, which offered the advantage of having already been extensively rebuilt on Roman patterns of urbanism, during the preceding century, by Septimius Severus and Caracalla, who had already acknowledged its strategic importance.

The city was thus founded in 324, dedicated on May 11, 330, and renamed *Constantinopolis* ("Constantine's City" or Constantinople in English). Special commemorative coins were issued in 330 to honor the event. The new city was protected by the relics of the True Cross, the Rod of Moses, and other holy relics, though a cameo now at the Hermitage Museum also represented Constantine crowned by the tyche of the new city. The figures of old gods were either replaced or assimilated into a framework of Christian symbolism. Constantine built the new Church of the Holy Apostles on the site of a temple to Aphrodite. Generations later there was the story that a divine vision led Constantine to this spot, and an angel no one else could see led him on a circuit of the new walls. The capital would often be compared to the 'old' Rome as *Nova Roma Constantinopolitana*, the "New Rome of Constantinople." Constantinople was a superb base from which to guard the Danube River, and it was reasonably close to the eastern frontiers.

Constantine also began the building of the great fortified walls, which were expanded and rebuilt in subsequent ages.



**Constantinopolis Coin:** Coin struck by Constantine I to commemorate the founding of Constantinople.

## Legacy

Historian J.B. Bury asserts that “the foundation of Constantinople [...] inaugurated a permanent division between the Eastern and Western, the Greek and the Latin, halves of the empire—a division to which events had already pointed—and affected decisively the whole subsequent history of Europe.”

The Byzantine Empire considered Constantine its founder, and the Holy Roman Empire reckoned him among the venerable figures of its tradition. In the later Byzantine state, it had become a great honor for an emperor to be hailed as a “new Constantine.” Ten emperors, including the last emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, carried the name. Monumental Constantinian forms were used at the court of Charlemagne to suggest that he was Constantine’s successor and equal. Constantine acquired a mythic role as a warrior against “heathens.”



# The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

The Fall of the Western Roman Empire was the period of decline during which the empire disintegrated and split into numerous successor states.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze, broadly, the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Throughout the 5th century, the empire's territories in western Europe and northwestern Africa, including Italy, fell to various invading or indigenous peoples, in what is sometimes called the Migration Period.
- By the late 3rd century, the city of Rome no longer served as an effective capital for the emperor, and various cities were used as new administrative capitals. Successive emperors, starting with Constantine, privileged the eastern city of Byzantium,

which he had entirely rebuilt after a siege.

- In 476, after being refused lands in Italy, Odacer and his Germanic mercenaries took Ravenna, the Western Roman capital at the time, and deposed Western Emperor Romulus Augustus. The whole of Italy was quickly conquered, and Odoacer's rule became recognized in the Eastern Empire.
- Four broad schools of thought exist on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire: decay owing to general malaise, monocausal decay, catastrophic collapse, and transformation.

### *Key Terms*

- **Odoacer:** A soldier, who came to power in the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE. His reign is commonly seen as marking the end of the Western Roman Empire.
- **Migration Period:** Also known as the period of the Barbarian Invasions, it was a period of intensified human migration in Europe from about 400 to 800 CE, during the transition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.

The Fall of the Western Roman Empire was the process of decline during which the empire failed to enforce its rule, and its vast territory was divided into several successor polities. The Roman Empire lost the strengths that had allowed it to exercise effective control; modern historians mention factors including the effectiveness and numbers of the army, the health and numbers

of the Roman population, the strength of the economy, the competence of the emperor, the religious changes of the period, and the efficiency of the civil administration. Increasing pressure from barbarians outside Roman culture also contributed greatly to the collapse. The reasons for the collapse are major subjects of the historiography of the ancient world, and they inform much modern discourse on state failure.

By 476 CE, when Odoacer deposed Emperor Romulus, the Western Roman Empire wielded negligible military, political, or financial power and had no effective control over the scattered western domains that could still be described as Roman. Invading “barbarians” had established their own polities on most of the area of the Western Empire. While its legitimacy lasted for centuries longer and its cultural influence remains today, the Western Empire never had the strength to rise again.

It is important to note, however, that the so-called fall of the Roman Empire specifically refers to the fall of the *Western* Roman Empire, since the Eastern Roman Empire, or what became known as the Byzantine Empire, whose capital was founded by Constantine, remained for another 1,000 years. Theodosius was the last emperor who ruled over the whole empire. After his death in 395, he gave the two halves of the empire to his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius; Arcadius became ruler in the east, with his capital in Constantinople, and Honorius became ruler in the west, with his capital in Milan, and later Ravenna.

## Rome in the 5th Century CE

Throughout the 5th century, the empire’s territories in western Europe and northwestern Africa, including Italy, fell to various invading or indigenous peoples in what is sometimes called the Migration Period, also known as the Barbarian Invasions, from the Roman and South European perspective. The first migrations of

peoples were made by Germanic tribes, such as the Goths, Vandals, Angles, Saxons, Lombards, Suebi, Frisii, Jutes and Franks; they were later pushed westwards by the Huns, Avars, Slavs, and Bulgars.

Although the eastern half still survived with borders essentially intact for several centuries (until the Muslim conquests), the Empire as a whole had initiated major cultural and political transformations since the Crisis of the Third Century, with the shift towards a more openly autocratic and ritualized form of government, the adoption of Christianity as the state religion, and a general rejection of the traditions and values of Classical Antiquity.

The reasons for the decline of the Empire are still debated today, and are likely multiple. Historians infer that the population appears to have diminished in many provinces (especially western Europe), judging from the diminishing size of fortifications built to protect the cities from barbarian incursions from the 3rd century on. Some historians even have suggested that parts of the periphery were no longer inhabited, because these fortifications were restricted to the center of the city only. By the late 3rd century, the city of Rome no longer served as an effective capital for the emperor, and various cities were used as new administrative capitals. Successive emperors, starting with Constantine, privileged the eastern city of Byzantium, which he had entirely rebuilt after a siege. Later renamed Constantinople, and protected by formidable walls in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, it was to become the largest and most powerful city of Christian Europe in the Early Middle Ages. Since the Crisis of the Third Century, the empire was intermittently ruled by more than one emperor at once (usually two), presiding over different regions.

The Latin-speaking west, under dreadful demographic crisis, and the wealthier Greek-speaking east, also began to diverge politically and culturally. Although this was a gradual process, still incomplete when Italy came under the rule of barbarian chieftains in the last quarter of the 5th century, it deepened further afterward, and had lasting consequences for the medieval history of Europe.

In 476, after being refused lands in Italy, Orestes' Germanic

mercenaries, under the leadership of the chieftain Odoacer, captured and executed Orestes and took Ravenna, the Western Roman capital at the time, deposing Western Emperor Romulus Augustus. The whole of Italy was quickly conquered, and Odoacer's rule became recognized in the Eastern Empire. Meanwhile, much of the rest of the Western provinces were conquered by waves of Germanic invasions, most of them being disconnected politically from the east altogether, and continuing a slow decline. Although Roman political authority in the west was lost, Roman culture would last in most parts of the former western provinces into the 6th century and beyond.



**Romulus Augustus Resigns the Crown:** Charlotte Mary Yonge's 1880 artist rendition of Romulus Augustus resigning the crown to Odoacer.

# Theories on the Decline and Fall

The various theories and explanations for the fall of the Roman Empire in the west may be very broadly classified into four schools of thought (although the classification is not without overlap):

- Decay owing to general malaise
- Monocausal decay
- Catastrophic collapse
- Transformation

The tradition positing general malaise goes back to the historian, Edward Gibbon, who argued that the edifice of the Roman Empire had been built on unsound foundations from the beginning. According to Gibbon, the fall was—in the final analysis—inevitable. On the other hand, Gibbon had assigned a major portion of the responsibility for the decay to the influence of Christianity, and is often, though perhaps unjustly, seen as the founding father of the school of monocausal explanation. On the other hand, the school of catastrophic collapse holds that the fall of the empire had not been a pre-determined event and need not be taken for granted. Rather, it was due to the combined effect of a number of adverse processes, many of them set in motion by the Migration Period, that together applied too much stress to the empire's basically sound structure. Finally, the transformation school challenges the whole notion of the 'fall' of the empire, asking instead to distinguish between the fall into disuse of a particular political dispensation, anyway unworkable towards its end; and the fate of the Roman civilization that undergirded the empire. According to this school, drawing its basic premise from the Pirenne thesis, the Roman world underwent a gradual (though often violent) series of transformations, morphing into the medieval world. The historians belonging to this school often prefer to speak of Late Antiquity, instead of the Fall of the Roman Empire.



**Ostrogothic Kingdom:** *The Ostrogothic Kingdom, which rose from the ruins of the Western Roman Empire.*

# 50. Reading: Byzantium: The New Rome

## Naming of the Byzantine Empire

While the Western Roman Empire fell, the Eastern Roman Empire, now known as the Byzantine Empire, thrived.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe identifying characteristics of the Byzantine Empire

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- While the Western Roman Empire fell in 476 CE, the Eastern Roman Empire, centered on the city of Constantinople, survived and thrived.
- After the Eastern Roman Empire's much later fall in 1453 CE, western scholars began calling it the "



Byzantine Empire ” to emphasize its distinction from the earlier, Latin-speaking Roman Empire centered on Rome.

- The “Byzantine Empire” is now the standard term used among historians to refer to the Eastern Roman Empire.
- Although the Byzantine Empire had a multi-ethnic character during most of its history and preserved Romano-Hellenistic traditions, it became identified with its increasingly predominant Greek element and its own unique cultural developments.

### *Key Terms*

- **Constantinople:** Formerly Byzantium, the capital of the Byzantine Empire as established by its first emperor, Constantine the Great. (Today the city is known as Istanbul.)

The Byzantine Empire, sometimes referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the east during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when its capital city was Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, originally founded as Byzantium ). It survived the fragmentation and fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century CE, and continued to exist for an additional thousand years until it fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. During most of its existence, the empire was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe. Both “Byzantine Empire” and “Eastern Roman Empire” are historiographical terms created after the end of the realm; its citizens continued to refer

to their empire as the Roman Empire, and thought of themselves as Romans. Although the people living in the Eastern Roman Empire referred to themselves as Romans, they were distinguished by their Greek heritage, Orthodox Christianity, and their regional connections. Over time, the culture of the Eastern Roman Empire transformed. Greek replaced Latin as the language of the empire. Christianity became more important in daily life, although the culture's pagan Roman past still exerted an influence.

Several signal events from the 4th to 6th centuries mark the period of transition during which the Roman Empire's Greek east and Latin west divided. Constantine I (r. 324–337) reorganized the empire, made Constantinople the new capital, and legalized Christianity. Under Theodosius I (r. 379–395), Christianity became the empire's official state religion, and other religious practices were proscribed. Finally, under the reign of Heraclius (r. 610–641), the empire's military and administration were restructured and adopted Greek for official use instead of Latin. Thus, although the Roman state continued and Roman state traditions were maintained, modern historians distinguish Byzantium from ancient Rome insofar as it was centered on Constantinople, oriented towards Greek rather than Latin culture, and characterized by Orthodox Christianity.

Just as the Byzantine Empire represented the political continuation of the Roman Empire, Byzantine art and culture developed directly out of the art of the Roman Empire, which was itself profoundly influenced by ancient Greek art. Byzantine art never lost sight of this classical heritage. For example, the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was adorned with a large number of classical sculptures, although they eventually became an object of some puzzlement for its inhabitants. And indeed, the art produced during the Byzantine Empire, although marked by periodic revivals of a classical aesthetic, was above all marked by the development of a new aesthetic. Thus, although the Byzantine Empire had a multi-ethnic character during most of its history, and preserved Romano-Hellenistic traditions, it became identified by its western

and northern contemporaries with its increasingly predominant Greek element and its own unique cultural developments.



**Map of Constantinople:** A map of Constantinople, the capital and founding city of the Byzantine Empire, drawn in 1422 CE by Florentine cartographer Cristoforo Buondelmonti. This is the oldest surviving map of the city and the only one that predates the Turkish conquest of the city in 1453 CE.

## Nomenclature

The first use of the term “Byzantine” to label the later years of the Roman Empire was in 1557, when the German historian Hieronymus Wolf published his work, *Corpus Historiæ Byzantinæ*, a collection of historical sources. The term comes from “Byzantium,” the name of the city of Constantinople before it became Constantine’s capital. This older name of the city would rarely be used from this point onward except in historical or poetic contexts. However, it was not until the mid-19th century that the term came into general use in the western world; calling it the “Byzantine Empire” helped to emphasize its differences from the earlier Latin-speaking Roman Empire, centered on Rome.

The term “Byzantine” was also useful to the many western European states that also claimed to be the true successors of the Roman Empire, as it was used to delegitimize the claims of the Byzantines as true Romans. In modern times, the term “Byzantine” has also come to have a pejorative sense, used to describe things that are overly complex or arcane. “Byzantine diplomacy” has come to mean excess use of trickery and behind-the-scenes manipulation. These are all based on medieval stereotypes about the Byzantine Empire that developed as western Europeans came into contact with the Byzantines, and were perplexed by their more structured government.

No such distinction existed in the Islamic and Slavic worlds, where the empire was more straightforwardly seen as the continuation of the Roman Empire. In the Islamic world, the Roman Empire was known primarily as Rûm. The name millet-i Rûm, or “Roman nation,” was used by the Ottomans through the 20th century to refer to the former subjects of the Byzantine Empire, that is, the Orthodox Christian community within Ottoman realms.

## The Eastern Roman Empire, Constantine the

## Great, and Byzantium

The Christian, Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire had its capital at Constantinople, established by Emperor Constantine the Great.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the role of Constantine in Byzantine Empire history

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Byzantine Empire (the Eastern Roman Empire) was distinct from the Western Roman Empire in several ways; most importantly, the Byzantines were Christians and spoke Greek instead of Latin.
- The founder of the Byzantine Empire and its first emperor, Constantine the Great, moved the capital of the Roman Empire to the city of Byzantium in 330 CE, and renamed it Constantinople.
- Constantine the Great also legalized Christianity, which had previously been persecuted in the Roman Empire. Christianity would become a major element

of Byzantine culture.

- Constantinople became the largest city in the empire and a major commercial center, while the Western Roman Empire fell in 476 CE.

### *Key Terms*

- **Germanic barbarians:** An uncivilized or uncultured person, originally compared to the hellenistic Greco-Roman civilization; often associated with fighting or other such shows of strength.
- **Christianity:** An Abrahamic religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and various scholars who wrote the Christian Bible. It was legalized in the Byzantine Empire by Constantine the Great, and the religion became a major element of Byzantine culture.

## Constantine the Great and the Beginning of Byzantium

It is a matter of debate when the Roman Empire officially ended and transformed into the Byzantine Empire. Most scholars accept that it did not happen at one time, but that it was a slow process; thus, late Roman history overlaps with early Byzantine history. Constantine I (“the Great”) is usually held to be the founder of the Byzantine Empire. He was responsible for several major changes that would help create a Byzantine culture distinct from the Roman past.

As emperor, Constantine enacted many administrative, financial,

social, and military reforms to strengthen the empire. The government was restructured and civil and military authority separated. A new gold coin, the *solidus*, was introduced to combat inflation. It would become the standard for Byzantine and European currencies for more than a thousand years. As the first Roman emperor to claim conversion to Christianity, Constantine played an influential role in the development of Christianity as the religion of the empire. In military matters, the Roman army was reorganized to consist of mobile field units and garrison soldiers capable of countering internal threats and barbarian invasions. Constantine pursued successful campaigns against the tribes on the Roman frontiers—the Franks, the Alamanni, the Goths, and the Sarmatians—, and even resettled territories abandoned by his predecessors during the turmoil of the previous century.

The age of Constantine marked a distinct epoch in the history of the Roman Empire. He built a new imperial residence at Byzantium and renamed the city Constantinople after himself (the laudatory epithet of “New Rome ” came later, and was never an official title). It would later become the capital of the empire for over one thousand years; for this reason the later Eastern Empire would come to be known as the Byzantine Empire. His more immediate political legacy was that, in leaving the empire to his sons, he replaced Diocletian ‘s tetrarchy (government where power is divided among four individuals) with the principle of dynastic succession. His reputation flourished during the lifetime of his children, and for centuries after his reign. The medieval church upheld him as a paragon of virtue, while secular rulers invoked him as a prototype, a point of reference, and the symbol of imperial legitimacy and identity.





**Constantine the Great:** Byzantine Emperor Constantine the Great presents a representation of the city of Constantinople as tribute to an enthroned Mary and Christ Child in this church mosaic. St Sophia, c. 1000 CE.

## Constantinople and Civil Reform

Constantine moved the seat of the empire, and introduced important changes into its civil and religious constitution. In 330, he founded Constantinople as a second Rome on the site of Byzantium, which was well-positioned astride the trade routes between east and west; it was a superb base from which to guard the Danube river, and was reasonably close to the eastern frontiers. Constantine



also began the building of the great fortified walls, which were expanded and rebuilt in subsequent ages. J. B. Bury asserts that “the foundation of Constantinople [...] inaugurated a permanent division between the Eastern and Western, the Greek and the Latin, halves of the empire—a division to which events had already pointed—and affected decisively the whole subsequent history of Europe.”

Constantine built upon the administrative reforms introduced by Diocletian. He stabilized the coinage (the gold *solidus* that he introduced became a highly prized and stable currency), and made changes to the structure of the army. Under Constantine, the empire had recovered much of its military strength and enjoyed a period of stability and prosperity. He also reconquered southern parts of Dacia, after defeating the Visigoths in 332, and he was planning a campaign against Sassanid Persia as well. To divide administrative responsibilities, Constantine replaced the single praetorian prefect, who had traditionally exercised both military and civil functions, with regional prefects enjoying civil authority alone. In the course of the 4th century, four great sections emerged from these Constantinian beginnings, and the practice of separating civil from military authority persisted until the 7th century.

## Constantine and Christianity

Constantine was the first emperor to stop Christian persecutions and to legalize Christianity, as well as all other religions and cults in the Roman Empire.

In February 313, Constantine met with Licinius in Milan, where they developed the Edict of Milan. The edict stated that Christians should be allowed to follow the faith without oppression. This removed penalties for professing Christianity, under which many had been martyred previously, and returned confiscated Church property. The edict protected from religious persecution not only

Christians but all religions, allowing anyone to worship whichever deity they chose.

Scholars debate whether Constantine adopted Christianity in his youth from his mother, St. Helena,, or whether he adopted it gradually over the course of his life. According to Christian writers, Constantine was over 40 when he finally declared himself a Christian, writing to Christians to make clear that he believed he owed his successes to the protection of the Christian High God alone. Throughout his rule, Constantine supported the Church financially, built basilicas, granted privileges to clergy (e.g. exemption from certain taxes), promoted Christians to high office, and returned property confiscated during the Diocletianic persecution. His most famous building projects include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Old Saint Peter's Basilica.

The reign of Constantine established a precedent for the position of the emperor as having great influence and ultimate regulatory authority within the religious discussions involving the early Christian councils of that time (most notably, the dispute over Arianism, and the nature of God). Constantine himself disliked the risks to societal stability that religious disputes and controversies brought with them, preferring where possible to establish an orthodoxy. One way in which Constantine used his influence over the early Church councils was to seek to establish a consensus over the oft debated and argued issue over the nature of God. In 325, he summoned the Council of Nicaea, effectively the first Ecumenical Council. The Council of Nicaea is most known for its dealing with Arianism and for instituting the Nicene Creed, which is still used today by Christians.

## The Fall of the Western Roman Empire

After Constantine, few emperors ruled the entire Roman Empire. It was too big and was under attack from too many directions.

Usually, there was an emperor of the Western Roman Empire ruling from Italy or Gaul, and an emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire ruling from Constantinople. While the Western Empire was overrun by Germanic barbarians (its lands in Italy were conquered by the Ostrogoths, Spain was conquered by the Visigoths, North Africa was conquered by the Vandals, and Gaul was conquered by the Franks), the Eastern Empire thrived. Constantinople became the largest city in the empire and a major commercial center. In 476 CE, the last Western Roman Emperor was deposed and the Western Roman Empire was no more. Thus the Eastern Roman Empire was the only Roman Empire left standing.

## Justinian and Theodora

Emperor Justinian was responsible for substantial expansion, a legal code, and the Hagia Sophia, but suffered defeats against the Persians.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss the accomplishments and failures of Emperor Justinian the Great

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Emperor Justinian the Great was responsible for substantial expansion of the Byzantine Empire, and for conquering Africa, Spain, Rome, and most of Italy.
- Justinian was responsible for the construction of the Hagia Sophia, the center of Christianity in Constantinople. Even today, the Hagia Sophia is recognized as one of the greatest buildings in the world.
- Justinian also systematized the Roman legal code that served as the basis for law in the Byzantine Empire.
- After a plague reduced the Byzantine population, they lost Rome and Italy to the Ostrogoths, and several important cities to the Persians.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hagia Sophia:** A church built by Byzantine Emperor Justinian; the center of Christianity in Constantinople and one of the greatest buildings in the world to this day. It is now a mosque in the Muslim Istanbul.
- **Nika riots:** When angry racing fans, already angry over rising taxes, became enraged at Emperor Justinian for arresting two popular charioteers, and

tried to depose him in 532 CE.

## Byzantine Empire from Constantine to Justinian

One of Constantine's successors, Theodosius I (379-395), was the last emperor to rule both the Eastern and Western halves of the empire. In 391 and 392, he issued a series of edicts essentially banning pagan religion. Pagan festivals and sacrifices were banned, as was access to all pagan temples and places of worship. The state of the empire in 395 may be described in terms of the outcome of Constantine's work. The dynastic principle was established so firmly that the emperor who died in that year, Theodosius I, could bequeath the imperial office jointly to his sons, Arcadius in the East and Honorius in the West.

The Eastern Empire was largely spared the difficulties faced by the west in the third and fourth centuries, due in part to a more firmly established urban culture and greater financial resources, which allowed it to placate invaders with tribute and pay foreign mercenaries. Throughout the fifth century, various invading armies overran the Western Empire but spared the east. Theodosius II further fortified the walls of Constantinople, leaving the city impervious to most attacks; the walls were not breached until 1204.

To fend off the Huns, Theodosius had to pay an enormous annual tribute to Attila. His successor, Marcian, refused to continue to pay the tribute, but Attila had already diverted his attention to the west. After his death in 453, the Hunnic Empire collapsed, and many of the remaining Huns were often hired as mercenaries by Constantinople.

Leo I succeeded Marcian as emperor, and after the fall of Attila, the true chief in Constantinople was the Alan general, Aspar. Leo I managed to free himself from the influence of the non-Orthodox

chief by supporting the rise of the Isaurians, a semi-barbarian tribe living in southern Anatolia. Aspar and his son, Ardabur, were murdered in a riot in 471, and henceforth, Constantinople restored Orthodox leadership for centuries.

When Leo died in 474, Zeno and Ariadne's younger son succeeded to the throne as Leo II, with Zeno as regent. When Leo II died later that year, Zeno became emperor. The end of the Western Empire is sometimes dated to 476, early in Zeno's reign, when the Germanic Roman general, Odoacer, deposed the titular Western Emperor Romulus Augustulus, but declined to replace him with another puppet.

## Emperor Justinian I

In 527 CE, Justinian I came to the throne in Constantinople. He dreamed of reconquering the lands of the Western Roman Empire and ruling a single, united Roman Empire from his seat in Constantinople.



**Emperor Justinian:** Byzantine Emperor Justinian I depicted on one of the famous mosaics of the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna.

The western conquests began in 533, as Justinian sent his general, Belisarius, to reclaim the former province of Africa from the Vandals, who had been in control since 429 with their capital at Carthage. Belisarius successfully defeated the Vandals and claimed Africa for Constantinople. Next, Justinian sent him to take Italy from the Ostrogoths in 535 CE. Belisarius defeated the Ostrogoths in a series of battles and reclaimed Rome. By 540 CE, most of Italy was in Justinian's hands. He sent another army to conquer Spain.



**The Byzantine Empire under Justinian:** The Byzantine Empire at its greatest extent, in 555 CE under Justinian the Great.

## Accomplishments in Byzantium

Justinian also undertook many important projects at home. Much of Constantinople was burned down early in Justinian's reign after a series of riots called the Nika riots, in 532 CE, when angry racing fans became enraged at Justinian for arresting two popular charioteers (though this was really just the last straw for a populace increasingly angry over rising taxes) and tried to depose him. The riots were put down, and Justinian set about rebuilding the city on a grander scale. His greatest accomplishment was the Hagia Sophia, the most important church of the city. The Hagia Sophia was a staggering work of Byzantine architecture, intended to awe all who set foot in the church. It was the largest church in the world for nearly a thousand years, and for the rest of Byzantine history it was the center of Christian worship in Constantinople.





**The Hagia Sophia:** Byzantine Emperor Justinian built the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Wisdom of God, the Hagia Sophia, which was completed in only four and a half years (532 CE-537 CE). Even now, it is universally acknowledged as one of the greatest buildings in the world.

Emperor Justinian's most important contribution, perhaps, was a unified Roman legal code. Prior to his reign, Roman laws had differed from region to region, and many contradicted one another. The Romans had attempted to systematize the legal code in the fifth century but had not completed the effort. Justinian set up a commission of lawyers to put together a single code, listing each law by subject so that it could be easily referenced. This not only served as the basis for law in the Byzantine Empire, but it was the main influence on the Catholic Church's development of canon law, and went on to become the basis of law in many European countries. Justinian's law code continues to have a major influence on public international law to this day.

The impact of a more unified legal code and military conflicts was the increased ability for the Byzantine Empire to establish trade and improve their economic standing. Byzantine merchants traded not

only all over the Mediterranean region, but also throughout regions to the east. These included areas around the Black Sea, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

## Theodora

Theodora was empress of the Byzantine Empire and the wife of Emperor Justinian I. She was one of the most influential and powerful of the Byzantine empresses. Some sources mention her as empress regnant, with Justinian I as her co-regent. Along with her husband, she is a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church, commemorated on November 14.

Theodora participated in Justinian's legal and spiritual reforms, and her involvement in the increase of the rights of women was substantial. She had laws passed that prohibited forced prostitution and closed brothels. She created a convent on the Asian side of the Dardanelles called the Metanoia (Repentance), where the ex-prostitutes could support themselves. She also expanded the rights of women in divorce and property ownership, instituted the death penalty for rape, forbade exposure of unwanted infants, gave mothers some guardianship rights over their children, and forbade the killing of a wife who committed adultery.

## Justinian's Difficulties

A terrible plague swept through the empire, killing Theodora and almost killing him. The plague wiped out huge numbers of the empire's population, leaving villages empty and crops unharvested. The army was also afflicted, and the Ostrogoths were able to effectively regain Italy in 546 CE, through guerrilla warfare against the Byzantine occupiers.

With Justinian's army bogged down fighting in Italy, the empire's defenses against the Persians on its eastern frontiers were weakened. In the Roman-Persian Wars, the Persians invaded and destroyed a number of important cities. Justinian was forced to establish a humiliating 50-year peace treaty with them in 561 CE.

Still, Justinian kept the empire from collapse. He sent a new general, Narses, to Italy with a small force. Narses finally defeated the Ostrogoths and drove them back out of Italy. By the time the war was over, Italy, once one of the most prosperous lands in the ancient world, was wrecked. The city of Rome changed hands multiple times, and most of the cities of Italy were abandoned or fell into a long period of decline. The impoverishment of Italy and the weakened Byzantine military made it impossible for the empire to hold the peninsula. Soon a new Germanic tribe, the Lombards, came in and conquered most of Italy, though Rome, Naples, and Ravenna remained isolated pockets of Byzantine control. At the same time, another new barbarian enemy, the Slavs, appeared from north of the Danube. They devastated Greece and the Balkans, and in the absence of strong Byzantine military might, they settled in small communities in these lands.

## The Justinian Code

Justinian I achieved lasting fame through his judicial reforms, particularly through the complete revision of all Roman law that was compiled in what is known today as the *Corpus juris civilis*.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the historical significance of Justinian's legal reforms

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Shortly after Justinian became emperor in 527, he decided the empire's legal system needed repair.
- Early in his reign, Justinian appointed an official, Tribonian, to oversee this task.
- The project as a whole became known as *Corpus juris civilis*, or the Justinian Code.
- It consists of the *Codex Iustinianus*, the *Digesta*, the *Institutiones*, and the *Novellae*.
- Many of the laws contained in the Codex were aimed at regulating religious practice.
- The *Corpus* formed the basis not only of Roman jurisprudence (including ecclesiastical Canon Law ), but also influenced civil law throughout the Middle Ages and into modern nation states.

## Key Terms

- **Corpus juris civilis:** The modern name for a collection of fundamental works in jurisprudence, issued from 529 to 534 by order of Justinian I, Eastern Roman Emperor.
- **Justinian I:** A Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565. During his reign, he sought to revive the empire's greatness and reconquer the lost western half of the historical Roman Empire; he also enacted important legal codes.

Byzantine Emperor Justinian I achieved lasting fame through his judicial reforms, particularly through the complete revision of all Roman law, something that had not previously been attempted. There existed three codices of imperial laws and other individual laws, many of which conflicted or were out of date. The total of Justinian's legislature is known today as the *Corpus juris civilis*.

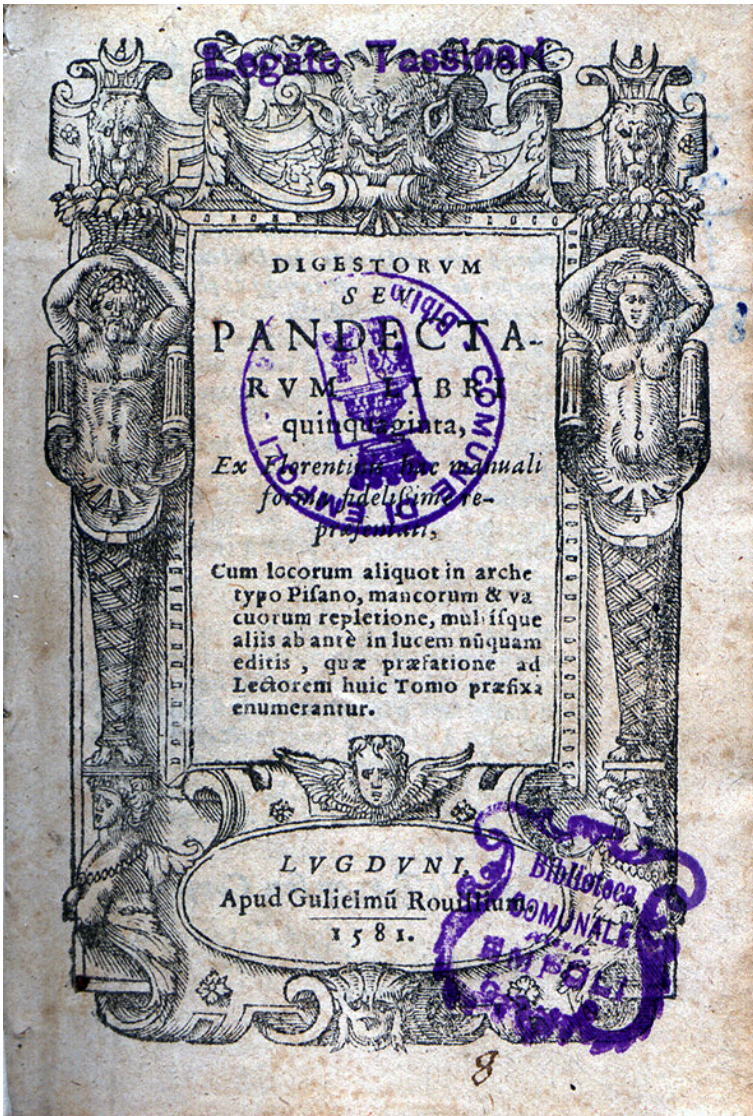
The work as planned had three parts:

1. *Codex*: a compilation, by selection and extraction, of imperial enactments to date, going back to Hadrian in the 2nd century CE.
2. *Digesta*: an encyclopedia composed of mostly brief extracts from the writings of Roman jurists. Fragments were taken out of various legal treatises and opinions and inserted in the *Digesta*.
3. *Institutiones*: a student textbook, mainly introducing the *Codex*, although it has important conceptual elements that are less developed in the *Codex* or the *Digesta*.

All three parts, even the textbook, were given force of law. They were intended to be, together, the sole source of law; reference to any other source, including the original texts from which the *Codex* and the *Digesta* had been taken, was forbidden. Nonetheless, Justinian found himself having to enact further laws, and today these are counted as a fourth part of the *Corpus*, the *Novellae Constitutiones*. As opposed to the rest of the *Corpus*, the *Novellae* appeared in Greek, the common language of the Eastern Empire.

The work was directed by Tribonian, an official in Justinian's court. His team was authorized to edit what they included. How far they made amendments is not recorded and, in the main, cannot be known because most of the originals have not survived. The text was composed and distributed almost entirely in Latin, which was still the official language of the government of the Byzantine Empire in 529-534, whereas the prevalent language of merchants, farmers, seamen, and other citizens was Greek.

Many of the laws contained in the *Codex* were aimed at regulating religious practice, included numerous provisions served to secure the status of Christianity as the state religion of the empire, uniting church and state, and making anyone who was not connected to the Christian church a non-citizen. It also contained laws forbidding particular pagan practices; for example, all persons present at a pagan sacrifice may be indicted as if for murder. Other laws, some influenced by his wife, Theodora, include those to protect prostitutes from exploitation, and women from being forced into prostitution. Rapists were treated severely. Further, by his policies, women charged with major crimes should be guarded by other women to prevent sexual abuse; if a woman was widowed, her dowry should be returned; and a husband could not take on a major debt without his wife giving her consent twice.



**Justinian Digesta:** A later copy of Justinian's Digesta: Digestorum, seu Pandectarum libri quinquaginta. Lugduni apud Gulielmum Rouillium, 1581. From Biblioteca Comunale "Renato Fucini" di Empoli.

## Legacy

The *Corpus* forms the basis of Latin jurisprudence (including ecclesiastical Canon Law) and, for historians, provides a valuable insight into the concerns and activities of the later Roman Empire. As a collection, it gathers together the many sources in which the laws and the other rules were expressed or published (proper laws, senatorial consults, imperial decrees, case law, and jurists' opinions and interpretations). It formed the basis of later Byzantine law, as expressed in the *Basilika* of Basil I and Leo VI the Wise. The only western province where the Justinian Code was introduced was Italy, from where it was to pass to western Europe in the 12th century, and become the basis of much European law code. It eventually passed to eastern Europe, where it appeared in Slavic editions, and it also passed on to Russia.

It was not in general use during the Early Middle Ages. After the Early Middle Ages, interest in it revived. It was “received” or imitated as private law, and its public law content was quarried for arguments by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The revived Roman law, in turn, became the foundation of law in all civil law jurisdictions. The provisions of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* also influenced the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church; it was said that *ecclesia vivit lege romana*—the church lives by Roman law. Its influence on common law legal systems has been much smaller, although some basic concepts from the *Corpus* have survived through Norman law—such as the contrast, especially in the Institutes, between “law” (statute) and custom. The *Corpus* continues to have a major influence on public international law. Its four parts thus constitute the foundation documents of the western legal tradition.



# 51. Reading: The Heraclian and Isaurian Dynasties

## Emperor Heraclius

Emperor Heraclius defended the Byzantine Empire from the Persians, but lost the reconquered land to the Arabs shortly thereafter.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify the reason for the reduction in size of the Byzantine Empire

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- After Justinian, the Byzantine Empire continued to lose land to the Persians.
- Emperor Heraclius seized the throne in 610 CE, and beat back the Persians by 628 CE.

- However, after Heraclius' victory against the Persians, he had taken such losses that he was unable to defend the empire against the Arabs, and so they again lost the lands they had just reconquered by 641 CE.
- Heraclius tried to unite all of the various religious factions within the empire with a new formula that was more inclusive and more elastic, called monothelitism, which was eventually deemed heretical by all factions.

### *Key Terms*

- **Muhammad:** The central figure of Islam, widely regarded as its founder.
- **Monothelitism:** The view that Jesus Christ has two natures but only one will, a doctrine developed during Heraclius' rule to bring unity to the Church.

## Conflict with the Persians and Chaos in the Empire

Ever since the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire had continued to see western Europe as rightfully Imperial territory. However, only Justinian I attempted to enforce this claim with military might. Temporary success in the west was achieved at the cost of Persian dominance in the east, where the Byzantines were forced to pay tribute to avert war.

However, after Justinian's death, much of newly recovered Italy fell to the Lombards, and the Visigoths soon reduced the imperial holdings in Spain. At the same time, wars with the Persian Empire brought no conclusive victory. In 591 however, the long war was ended with a treaty favorable to Byzantium, which gained Armenia. Thus, after the death of Justinian's successor, Tiberius II, Maurice sought to restore the prestige of the Empire.

Even though the empire had gained smaller successes over the Slavs and Avars in pitched battles across the Danube, both enthusiasm for the army and faith in the government had lessened considerably. Unrest had reared its head in Byzantine cities as social and religious differences manifested themselves into Blue and Green factions that fought each other in the streets. The final blow to the government was a decision to cut the pay of its army in response to financial strains. The combined effect of an army revolt led by a junior officer named Phocas and major uprisings by the Greens and Blues forced Maurice to abdicate. The Senate approved Phocas as the new emperor, and Maurice, the last emperor of the Justinian Dynasty, was murdered along with his four sons.

The Persian King Khosrau II responded by launching an assault on the empire, ostensibly to avenge Maurice, who had earlier helped him to regain his throne. Phocas was already alienating his supporters with his repressive rule (introducing torture on a large scale), and the Persians were able to capture Syria and Mesopotamia by 607.

While the Persians were making headway in their conquest of the eastern provinces, Phocas chose to divide his subjects, rather than unite them against the threat of the Persians. Perhaps seeing his defeats as divine retribution, Phocas initiated a savage and bloody campaign to forcibly convert the Jews to Christianity. Persecutions and alienation of the Jews, a frontline people in the war against the Persians helped drive them into aiding the Persian conquerors. As Jews and Christians began tearing each other apart, some fled the butchery into Persian territory. Meanwhile, it appears that the

disasters befalling the empire led the emperor into a state of paranoia.

## The Heraclian Dynasty Under Heraclius

Due to the overwhelming crises that had pitched the empire into chaos, Heraclius the Younger now attempted to seize power from Phocas in an effort to better Byzantium's fortunes. As the empire was led into anarchy, the Exarchate of Carthage remained relatively out of reach of Persian conquest. Far from the incompetent Imperial authority of the time, Heraclius, the Exarch of Carthage, with his brother Gregorius, began building up his forces to assault Constantinople. In 608, after cutting off the grain supply to the capital from his territory, Heraclius led a substantial army and a fleet to restore order in the Empire. The reign of Phocas officially ended in his execution, and the crowning of Heraclius by the Patriarch of Constantinople two days later on October 5, 610. After marrying his wife in an elaborate ceremony and being crowned by the Patriarch, the 36-year-old Heraclius set out to perform his work as emperor. The early portion of his reign yielded results reminiscent of Phocas' reign, with respect to trouble in the Balkans.

To recover from a seemingly endless string of defeats, Heraclius drew up a reconstruction plan of the military, financing it by fining those accused of corruption, increasing taxes, and debasing the currency to pay more soldiers and forced loans.

Instead of facing the waves of invading Persians, he went around them, sailing over the Black Sea and regrouping in Armenia, where he found many Christian allies. From there, he invaded the Persian Empire. By fighting behind enemy lines, he caused the Persians to retreat from Byzantine lands. He defeated every Persian army sent against him and then threatened the Persian capital. In a panic, the Persians killed their king and replaced him with a new ruler who was

willing to negotiate with the Byzantines. In 628 CE, the war ended with Heraclius' defeat of the Persians.



**Emperor Heraclius:** A plaque depicting Byzantine Emperor Heraclius overcoming Persian King Khosrau II, c. 1160–1170 CE.

## The Arab Invasion

By this time, it was generally expected by the Byzantine populace that the emperor would lead Byzantium into a new age of glory. However, all of Heraclius' achievements would come to naught, when, in 633, the Byzantine–Arab Wars began.

On June 8, 632, the Islamic Prophet Muhammad died of a fever. However, the religion he left behind would transform the Middle East. In 633, the armies of Islam marched out of Arabia with a goal

to spread the word of the prophet, with force if needed. In 634, the Arabs defeated a Byzantine force sent into Syria and captured Damascus. The arrival of another large Byzantine army outside Antioch (some 80,000 troops) forced the Arabs to retreat. The Byzantines advanced in May 636. However, a sandstorm blew in against the Byzantines on August 20, 636, and when the Arabs charged against them, they were utterly annihilated.

Jerusalem surrendered to the Arabs in 637, following a stout resistance; in 638, the Caliph Omar rode into the city. Heraclius stopped by Jerusalem to recover the True Cross whilst it was under siege. The Arab invasions are seen by some historians as the start of the decline of the Byzantine Empire. Only parts of Syria and Cilicia would be recovered.

## Religious Controversy

The recovery of the eastern areas of the Roman Empire from the Persians during the early phase of Heraclius' rule raised the problem of religious unity centering on the understanding of the true nature of Christ. Most of the inhabitants of these provinces were Monophysites who rejected the Council of Chalcedon of 451. The Chalcedonian Definition of Christ as being of two natures, divine and temporal, maintains that these two states remain distinct within the person of Christ and yet come together within his one true substance. This position was opposed by the Monophysites, who held that Christ possessed one nature only; the human and divine natures of Christ were fused into one new single (mono) nature. This internal division was dangerous for the Byzantine Empire, which was under constant threat from external enemies, many of whom were in favor of Monophysitism, people on the periphery of the Empire who also considered the religious hierarchy at Constantinople to be heretical and only interested in crushing their faith.

Heraclius tried to unite all of the various factions within the empire with a new formula that was more inclusive and more elastic. With the successful conclusion to the Persian War, Heraclius would devote more time to promoting his compromise.

The patriarch Sergius came up with a formula, which Heraclius released as the *Ekthesis* in 638. It forbade all mention of Christ possessing one or two energies, that is, one or two wills; instead, it now proclaimed that Christ, while possessing two natures, had but a single *will*. This approach seemed to be an acceptable compromise, and it secured widespread support throughout the east. The two remaining patriarchs in the east also gave their approval to the doctrine, now referred to as Monothelitism, and so it looked as if Heraclius would finally heal the divisions in the imperial church.

Unfortunately, he had not counted on the popes at Rome. During that same year of 638, Pope Honorius I had died. His successor, Pope Severinus (640), condemned the *Ekthesis* outright, and so was forbidden his seat until 640. His successor, Pope John IV (640–42), also rejected the doctrine completely, leading to a major schism between the eastern and western halves of the Chalcedonian Church. When news reached Heraclius of the pope's condemnation, he was already old and ill, and the news only hastened his death, declaring with his dying breath that the controversy was all due to Sergius, and that the patriarch had pressured him to give his unwilling approval to the *Ekthesis*.

## The Theme System

The Byzantine-Arab wars wrought havoc on the Byzantine Dynasty, but led to the creation of the highly efficient military theme system.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Diagram the Byzantine military and social structure under Heraclius

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- In the Byzantine-Arab wars of the Heraclian Dynasty, the Arabs nearly destroyed the Byzantine Empire altogether.
- In order to fight back, the Byzantines created a new military system, known as the theme system, in which land was granted to farmers who, in return, would provide the empire with loyal soldiers. The efficiency of this system allowed the dynasty to keep hold of Asia Minor.
- The Arabs were finally repulsed through the use of Greek fire, but Constantinople had decreased massively in size, due to relocation.
- The empire was now poorer and society was dominated by the military, as a result of the many Arab invasions.



## *Key Terms*

- **Caliphate:** Islamic state led by a supreme religious and political leader, known as a caliph (i.e., “successor”) to Muhammad and the other prophets of Islam.
- **cosmopolitan:** A city/place or person that embraces multicultural demographics.
- **Greek fire:** A military weapon invented during the Byzantine Heraclian Dynasty; flaming projectiles that could burn while floating on water, and thus could be used for naval warfare.
- **theme system:** A new military system created during the Heraclian Dynasty of the Byzantine Empire, in which land was granted to farmers who, in return, would provide the empire with loyal soldiers. Similar to the feudal system of medieval western Europe.

The themes (*themata* in Greek) were the main administrative divisions of the middle Byzantine Empire. They were established in the mid-7th century in the aftermath of the Slavic invasion of the Balkans, and Muslim conquests of parts of Byzantine territory. The themes replaced the earlier provincial system established by Diocletian and Constantine the Great. In their origin, the first themes were created from the areas of encampment of the field armies of the East Roman army, and their names corresponded to the military units that had existed in those areas. The theme system reached its apogee in the 9th and 10th centuries, as older themes were split up and the conquest of territory resulted in the creation

of new ones. The original theme system underwent significant changes in the 11th and 12th centuries, but the term remained in use as a provincial and financial circumscription, until the very end of the empire.

## Background

During the late 6th and early 7th centuries, the Eastern Roman Empire was under frequent attack from all sides. The successors of Heraclius had to fight a desperate war against the Arabs in order to keep them from conquering the entire Byzantine Empire; these conflicts were known as the Byzantine-Arab wars. The Arab invasions were unlike any other threat the Byzantines ever faced. Fighting a zealous holy war for Islam, the Arabs defeated army after army of the Byzantines, and nearly destroyed the empire. Egypt fell to the Arabs in 642 CE, and Carthage as well in 647 CE, and the Eastern Mediterranean slightly later. From 674-678 CE the Arabs laid siege to Constantinople itself.

In order to survive and fight back, the Byzantines created a new military system, known as the theme system. Abandoning the professional army inherited from the Roman past, the Byzantines granted land to farmers who, in return, would provide the empire with loyal soldiers. This was similar to the feudal system in medieval western Europe, but it differed in one important way—in the Byzantine theme system, the state continued to own the land, and simply leased it in exchange for service, whereas in the feudal system ownership of the lands was given over entirely to vassals. This efficiency of the theme system allowed the dynasty to keep hold of the imperial heartland of Asia Minor.

Thus, by the turning of the 8th century, the themes had become the dominant feature of imperial administration. Their large size and power, however, made their generals prone to revolt, as had

been evidenced in the turbulent period 695-715, and would again during the great revolt of Artabasdos in 741-742.



**The Theme System:** Map depicting the locations of the themes established during the Heraclian Dynasty of the Byzantine Empire.

Despite the prominence of the themes, it was some time before they became the basic unit of the imperial administrative system. Although they had become associated with specific regions by the early 8th century, it took until the end of the 8th century for the civil fiscal administration to begin being organized around them, instead of following the old provincial system. This process, resulting in unified control over both military and civil affairs of each theme by its strategos, was complete by the mid-9th century, and is the “classical” thematic model.

## Structure of the Themes

The term theme was ambiguous, referring both to a form of military

tenure and to an administrative division. A theme was an arrangement of plots of land given for farming to the soldiers. The soldiers were still technically a military unit, under the command of a strategos, and they did not own the land they worked, as it was still controlled by the state. Therefore, for its use the soldiers' pay was reduced. By accepting this proposition, the participants agreed that their descendants would also serve in the military and work in a theme, thus simultaneously reducing the need for unpopular conscription, as well as cheaply maintaining the military. It also allowed for the settling of conquered lands, as there was always a substantial addition made to public lands during a conquest.

The commander of a theme, however, did not only command his soldiers. He united the civil and military jurisdictions in the territorial area in question. Thus the division set up by Diocletian between civil governors (*praesides*) and military commanders (*duces*) was abolished, and the empire returned to a system much more similar to that of the Republic or the Principate, where provincial governors had also commanded the armies in their area.

## Consequences of the Theme System

Early on, Heraclius had proven himself to be an excellent Emperor—his reorganization of the empire into themes allowed the Byzantines to extract as much as they possibly could to increase their military potential. This became essential after 650, when the Islamic Caliphate was far more resourceful and powerful than the Byzantines were. As a result, a high level of efficiency was needed to combat the Arabs, achieved in part due to the theme system.

The Arabs were finally repulsed through the use of Greek fire, flaming projectiles that could burn while floating on water, and thus, could be used for naval warfare. Greek fire was a closely guarded state secret, a secret that has since been lost. The composition of Greek fire remains a matter of speculation and debate, with

proposals including combinations of pine resin, naphtha, quicklime, sulfur, or niter. Byzantine use of incendiary mixtures was especially effective, thanks to the use of pressurized nozzles or siphōn to project the liquid onto the enemy. The Arab-Muslim navies eventually adapted to their use. Under constant threat of attack, Constantinople had dropped substantially in size, due to relocation, from 500,000 to 40,000-70,000.



**Greek Fire:** Image from an illuminated manuscript (the Skylitzes manuscript) showing the Byzantine Navy's use of Greek fire against the fleet of the rebel Thomas the Slav, c. 12th century CE. The caption above the left ship reads “the fleet of the Romans setting ablaze the fleet of the enemies.”

By the end of the Heraclian Dynasty in 711 CE, the empire had transformed from the Eastern Roman Empire, with its urbanized, cosmopolitan civilization, to the medieval Byzantine Empire, an agrarian, military-dominated society in a lengthy struggle with the Muslims. The loss of the empire's richest provinces, coupled with successive invasions, had reduced the imperial economy to a relatively impoverished state, compared to the resources available to the Caliphate. The monetary economy persisted, but the barter economy experienced a revival as well. However, this state was also far more homogeneous than the Eastern Roman Empire; the borders had shrunk, such that many of the Latin-speaking

territories were lost and the dynasty was reduced to its mostly Greek-speaking territories. This enabled it to weather these storms and enter a period of stability under the next dynasty, the Isaurian Dynasty.

## The Isaurian Dynasty

The Isaurian Dynasty is characterized by relative political stability, after an important defeat of the Arabs by Leo III, and Iconoclasm, which resulted in considerable internal turmoil.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe governmental and religious changes that occurred during the Isaurian Dynasty

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Isaurian Dynasty, founded by Leo III, was a time of relative stability, compared to the constant warfare against the Arabs that characterized the preceding Heraclian Dynasty.

- However, the Bulgars, a nomadic tribe, rose up in Europe and took some Byzantine lands.
- The Isaurian Dynasty is chiefly associated with Byzantine Iconoclasm, an attempt to restore divine favor by purifying the Christian faith from excessive adoration of icons, which resulted in considerable internal turmoil.
- The Second Arab siege of Constantinople in 717-718 was an unsuccessful offensive by the Muslim Arabs of the Umayyad Caliphate against the capital city of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople.
- The outcome of the siege was of considerable macrohistorical importance; the Byzantine capital's survival preserved the empire as a bulwark against Islamic expansion into Europe until the 15th century, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks.
- By the end of the Isaurian Dynasty in 802 CE, the Byzantines were continuing to fight the Arabs and the Bulgars, and the empire had been reduced from a Mediterranean-wide empire to only Thrace and Asia Minor.

### *Key Terms*

- **Bulgars:** A nomadic tribe related to the Huns; they presented a threat to the Byzantine Empire.
- **iconoclasm:** The deliberate destruction within a culture of the culture's own religious icons and other symbols or monuments, usually for religious or political motives. It is a frequent component of major

political or religious changes.

The Byzantine Empire was ruled by the Isaurian or Syrian Dynasty from 717-802. The Isaurian emperors were successful in defending and consolidating the empire against the Caliphate after the onslaught of the early Muslim conquests, but were less successful in Europe, where they suffered setbacks against the Bulgars, had to give up the Exarchate of Ravenna, and lost influence over Italy and the Papacy to the growing power of the Franks.

The Isaurian Dynasty is chiefly associated with Byzantine Iconoclasm, an attempt to restore divine favor by purifying the Christian faith from excessive adoration of icons, which resulted in considerable internal turmoil.

By the end of the Isaurian Dynasty in 802, the Byzantines were continuing to fight the Arabs and the Bulgars for their very existence, with matters made more complicated when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne *Imperator Romanorum* ("Emperor of the Romans"), which was seen as making the Carolingian Empire the successor to the Roman Empire, or at least the western half.

Leo III, who would become the founder of the so-called Isaurian Dynasty, was actually born in Germanikeia in northern Syria c. 685; his alleged origin from Isauria derives from a reference in Theophanes the Confessor, which may be a later addition. After being raised to spatharios by Justinian II, he fought the Arabs in Abasgia, and was appointed as *strategos* of the Anatolics by Anastasios II. Following the latter's fall in 716, Leo allied himself with Artabasdus, the general of the Armeniacs, and was proclaimed emperor while two Arab armies campaigned in Asia Minor. Leo averted an attack by Maslamah through clever negotiations, in which he promised to recognize the Caliph's suzerainty. However, on March 25, 717, he entered Constantinople and deposed Theodosios.



## Leo III's Rule

Having preserved the empire from extinction by the Arabs, Leo proceeded to consolidate its administration, which in the previous years of anarchy had become completely disorganized. In 718, he suppressed a rebellion in Sicily and in 719 did the same on behalf of the deposed Emperor Anastasios II.

Leo secured the empire's frontiers by inviting Slavic settlers into the depopulated districts, and by restoring the army to efficiency; when the Umayyad Caliphate renewed their invasions in 726 and 739, as part of the campaigns of Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik, the Arab forces were decisively beaten, particularly at Akroinon in 740. His military efforts were supplemented by his alliances with the Khazars and the Georgians.

Leo undertook a set of civil reforms, including the abolition of the system of prepaying taxes, which had weighed heavily upon the wealthier proprietors; the elevation of the serfs into a class of free tenants; and the remodeling of family, maritime law, and criminal law, notably substituting mutilation for the death penalty in many cases. The new measures, which were embodied in a new code called the *Ecloga* (Selection), published in 726, met with some opposition on the part of the nobles and higher clergy. The emperor also undertook some reorganization of the theme structure by creating new themata in the Aegean region.



**Byzantine Coin:** A gold coin, or solidus, engraved with the emperors of the Byzantine Isaurian Dynasty, from c. 780 CE. Left: Leo IV with his son Constantine VI; Right: Leo III with his son Constantine V on the reverse.

## The Siege of Constantinople

The Second Arab siege of Constantinople in 717-718 was a combined land and sea offensive by the Muslim Arabs of the Umayyad Caliphate against the capital city of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. The campaign marked the culmination of twenty years of attacks and progressive Arab occupation of the Byzantine borderlands, while Byzantine strength was sapped by prolonged internal turmoil. In 716, after years of preparations, the Arabs, led by Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik, invaded Byzantine Asia Minor. The Arabs initially hoped to exploit Byzantine civil strife, and made common cause with the general Leo III the Isaurian, who had risen up against Emperor Theodosius III. Leo, however, tricked them and secured the Byzantine throne for himself.

After wintering in the western coastlands of Asia Minor, the Arab army crossed into Thrace in early summer 717 and built siege lines to blockade the city, which was protected by the massive Theodosian Walls. The Arab fleet, which accompanied the land army and was meant to complete the city's blockade by sea, was neutralized soon after its arrival by the Byzantine navy through the use of Greek

fire. This allowed Constantinople to be resupplied by sea, while the Arab army was crippled by famine and disease during the unusually hard winter that followed. In spring 718, two Arab fleets sent as reinforcements were destroyed by the Byzantines after their Christian crews defected, and an additional army sent overland through Asia Minor was ambushed and defeated. Coupled with attacks by the Bulgars on their rear, the Arabs were forced to lift the siege on August 15, 718. On its return journey, the Arab fleet was almost completely destroyed by natural disasters and Byzantine attacks.

The Arab failure was chiefly logistical, as they were operating too far from their Syrian bases, but the superiority of the Byzantine navy through the use of Greek fire, the strength of Constantinople's fortifications, and the skill of Leo III in deception and negotiations, also played important roles.

The siege's failure had wide-ranging repercussions. The rescue of Constantinople ensured the continued survival of Byzantium, while the Caliphate's strategic outlook was altered: although regular attacks on Byzantine territories continued, the goal of outright conquest was abandoned. Historians consider the siege to be one of history's most important battles, as its failure postponed the Muslim advance into Southeastern Europe for centuries. The Byzantine capital's survival preserved the empire as a bulwark against Islamic expansion into Europe until the 15th century, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks. Along with the Battle of Tours in 732, the successful defense of Constantinople has been seen as instrumental in stopping Muslim expansion into Europe.

## Iconoclasm in Byzantium

The Byzantine Iconoclasm was the banning of the worship of religious images, a movement that sparked internal turmoil.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understand the reasoning and events that led to iconoclasm

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Isaurian Emperor Leo III interpreted his many military failures as a judgment on the empire by God, and decided that it was being judged for the worship of religious images. He banned religious images in about 730 CE, the beginning of the Byzantine Iconoclasm.
- At the Council of Hieria in 754 CE, the Church endorsed an iconoclast position and declared image worship to be blasphemy.
- At the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 CE, the decrees of the previous iconoclast council were reversed and image worship was restored, marking the end of the First Iconoclasm.
- Emperor Leo V instituted a second period of iconoclasm in 814 CE, again possibly motivated by military failures seen as indicators of divine displeasure, but only a few decades later, in 842 CE,

icon worship was again reinstated.

### *Key Terms*

- **iconoclasm:** The deliberate destruction within a culture of the culture's own religious icons and other symbols or monuments.
- **Council of Hieria:** The first church council concerned with religious imagery. On behalf of the church, the council endorsed an iconoclast position and declared image worship to be blasphemy.
- **Second Council of Nicaea:** This council reversed the decrees of the Council of Hieria and restored image worship, marking the end of the First Byzantine Iconoclasm.

Iconoclasm, Greek for “image-breaking,” is the deliberate destruction within a culture of the culture's own religious icons and other symbols or monuments. Iconoclasm is generally motivated by an interpretation of the Ten Commandments that declares the making and worshipping of images, or icons, of holy figures (such as Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and saints) to be idolatry and therefore blasphemy.

Most surviving sources concerning the Byzantine Iconoclasm were written by the victors, or the iconodules (people who worship religious images), so it is difficult to obtain an accurate account of events. However, the Byzantine Iconoclasm refers to two periods in the history of the Byzantine Empire when the use of religious images or icons was opposed by religious and imperial authorities. The “First Iconoclasm,” as it is sometimes called, lasted between

about 730 CE and 787 CE, during the Isaurian Dynasty. The “Second Iconoclasm” was between 814 CE and 842 CE. The movement was triggered by changes in Orthodox worship that were themselves generated by the major social and political upheavals of the seventh century for the Byzantine Empire.



**Byzantine Iconoclasm:** A depiction of the destruction of a religious image under the Byzantine Iconoclasm, by Chludov Psalter, 9th century CE.

## Causes

Traditional explanations for Byzantine Iconoclasm have sometimes focused on the importance of Islamic prohibitions against images

influencing Byzantine thought. According to Arnold J. Toynbee, for example, it was the prestige of Islamic military successes in the 7th and 8th centuries that motivated Byzantine Christians to adopt the Islamic position of rejecting and destroying idolatrous images. The role of women and monks in supporting the veneration of images has also been asserted. Social and class-based arguments have been put forward, such as the assertion that iconoclasm created political and economic divisions in Byzantine society, and that it was generally supported by the eastern, poorer, non-Greek peoples of the empire who had to constantly deal with Arab raids. On the other hand, the wealthier Greeks of Constantinople, and also the peoples of the Balkan and Italian provinces, strongly opposed iconoclasm. In recent decades in Greece, iconoclasm has become a favorite topic of progressive and Marxist historians and social scientists, who consider it a form of medieval class struggle and have drawn inspiration from it. Re-evaluation of the written and material evidence relating to the period of Byzantine Iconoclasm by scholars, including John Haldon and Leslie Brubaker, has challenged many of the basic assumptions and factual assertions of the traditional account.

## The First Iconoclasm: Leo III

The seventh century had been a period of major crisis for the Byzantine Empire, and believers had begun to lean more heavily on divine support. The use of images of the holy increased in Orthodox worship, and these images increasingly came to be regarded as points of access to the divine. Leo III interpreted his many military failures as a judgment on the empire by God, and decided that they were being judged for their worship of religious images.

Emperor Leo III, the founder of the Isaurian Dynasty, and the iconoclasts of the eastern church, banned religious images in about 730 CE, claiming that worshipping them was heresy; this ban

continued under his successors. He accompanied the ban with widespread destruction of religious images and persecution of the people who worshipped them.

The western church remained firmly in support of the use of images throughout the period, and the whole episode widened the growing divergence between the eastern and western traditions in what was still a unified church, as well as facilitating the reduction or removal of Byzantine political control over parts of Italy.

Leo died in 741 CE, and his son and heir, Constantine V, furthered his views until the end of his own rule in 775 CE. In 754 CE, Constantine summoned the first ecumenical council concerned with religious imagery, the Council of Hieria; 340 bishops attended. On behalf of the church, the council endorsed an iconoclast position and declared image worship to be blasphemy. John of Damascus, a Syrian monk living outside Byzantine territory, became a major opponent of iconoclasm through his theological writings.

## The Brief Return of Icon Worship

After the death of Constantine's son, Leo IV (who ruled from 775 CE-780 CE), his wife, Irene, took power as regent for her son, Constantine VI (who ruled from 780 CE-97 CE). After Leo IV too died, Irene called another ecumenical council, the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787 CE, that reversed the decrees of the previous iconoclast council and restored image worship, marking the end of the First Iconoclasm. This may have been an attempt to soothe the strained relations between Constantinople and Rome.

## The Second Iconoclasm (814 CE-842 CE)

Emperor Leo V the Armenian instituted a second period of



Iconoclasm in 814 CE, again possibly motivated by military failures seen as indicators of divine displeasure. The Byzantines had suffered a series of humiliating defeats at the hands of the Bulgarian Khan Krum. It was made official in 815 CE at a meeting of the clergy in the Hagia Sophia. But only a few decades later, in 842 CE, the regent Theodora again reinstated icon worship.

## The Emperor Irene

Irene of Athens, the first woman emperor of the Byzantine Empire, fought for recognition as imperial leader throughout her rule, and is best known for ending the First Iconoclasm in the Eastern Church.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze the significance of Emperor Irene

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Irene of Athens was an orphan from a noble family, and was married to the son of the current emperor, Leo IV, in 768.

- When Leo died in 780, Irene became regent for their nine-year-old son, Constantine, who was too young to rule as emperor, thereby giving her administrative control over the empire.
- As imperial regent, Irene subdued rebellions and fought the Arabs with mixed success. She also ended the First Iconoclasm in the Eastern Church.
- When Constantine became old enough to become emperor proper, he eventually rebelled against Irene, although he let her keep the title of empress.
- Soon after, Irene organized her own rebellion and eventually killed her son, thereby claiming sole rulership over the empire as empress, the first woman to have that title in the empire.
- Although it is often asserted that, as monarch, Irene called herself “emperor” rather than “empress,” in fact she used “empress” in most of her documents, coins, and seals.
- The pope would not recognize a woman as ruler, and in 800, crowned Charlemagne as imperial ruler over the entire Roman territory, including Byzantium.
- Charlemagne did not attempt to rule Byzantium, but relations between the two empires remained difficult.
- Irene was eventually deposed by her finance minister.

### *Key Terms*

- **regent:** A person appointed to administer a state

because the monarch is a minor, is absent, or is incapacitated.

- **strategos:** A military governor in the Byzantine Empire.
- **Iconoclasm:** The destruction of religious icons, and other images or monuments, for religious or political motives.

Irene of Athens (c. 752–803 CE) was Byzantine empress from 797 to 802. Before that, Irene was empress consort from 775 to 780, and empress dowager and regent from 780 to 797. She is best known for ending iconoclasm.



**Empress Irene:** Image from “Pala d’Oro,” Venice, c. 10th century.

## Early Life

Irene was related to the noble Greek Sarantapechos family of Athens. Although she was an orphan, her uncle or cousin, Constantine Sarantapechos, was a patrician and was possibly the *strategos* of the theme of Hellas at the end of the 8th century. She was brought to Constantinople by Emperor Constantine V on November 1, 768, and was married to his son, Leo IV, on December 17.

On 14 January 771, Irene gave birth to a son, the future Constantine VI. When Constantine V died in September 775, Leo succeeded to the throne at the age of twenty-five years. Leo, though an iconoclast, pursued a policy of moderation towards iconodules, but his policies became much harsher in August 780, when a number of courtiers were punished for venerating icons. According to tradition, he discovered icons concealed among Irene’s possessions and refused to share the marriage bed with her thereafter. Nevertheless, when Leo died on September 8, 780, Irene became regent for their nine-year-old son, Constantine, thereby giving her administrative control over the empire.

## Regency

Irene was almost immediately confronted with a conspiracy that tried to raise Caesar Nikephoros, a half-brother of Leo IV, to the throne. To overcome this challenge, she had Nikephoros and his co-conspirators ordained as priests, a status which disqualified them from ruling.

As early as 781, Irene began to seek a closer relationship with

the Carolingian Dynasty and the Papacy in Rome. She negotiated a marriage between her son, Constantine, and Rotrude, a daughter of Charlemagne by his third wife, Hildegard. During this time, Charlemagne was at war with the Saxons, and would later become the new king of the Franks. Irene went as far as to send an official to instruct the Frankish princess in Greek; however, Irene herself broke off the engagement in 787, against her son's wishes.

Irene next had to subdue a rebellion led by Elpidius, the *strategos* of Sicily. Irene sent a fleet, which succeeded in defeating the Sicilians. Elpidius fled to Africa, where he defected to the Abbasid Caliphate. After the success of Constantine V's general, Michael Lachanodrakon, who foiled an Abbasid attack on the eastern frontiers, a huge Abbasid army under Harun al-Rashid invaded Anatolia in summer 782. The *strategos* of the Bucellarian Theme, Tatzates, defected to the Abbasids, and Irene, in exchange for a three-year truce, had to agree to pay an annual tribute of 70,000 or 90,000 *dinars* to the Abbasids, give them 10,000 silk garments, and provide them with guides, provisions, and access to markets during their withdrawal.

## Ending Iconoclasm

Irene's most notable act was the restoration of the veneration of icons, thereby ending the First Iconoclasm of the Eastern Church. Having chosen Tarasios, one of her partisans and her former secretary, as Patriarch of Constantinople in 784, she summoned two church councils. The first of these, held in 786 at Constantinople, was frustrated by the opposition of the iconoclast soldiers. The second, convened at Nicaea in 787, formally revived the veneration of icons and reunited the Eastern Church with that of Rome.

While this greatly improved relations with the Papacy, it did not prevent the outbreak of a war with the Franks, who took over Istria and Benevento in 788. In spite of these reverses, Irene's military

efforts met with some success: in 782 her favored courtier, Staurakios, subdued the Slavs of the Balkans and laid the foundations of Byzantine expansion and re-Hellenization in the area. Nevertheless, Irene was constantly harried by the Abbasids, and in 782 and 798, had to accept the terms of the respective Caliphs Al-Mahdi and Harun al-Rashid.

## Rule as Empress

As Constantine approached maturity, he began to grow restless under her autocratic sway. An attempt to free himself by force was met and crushed by the empress, who demanded that the oath of fidelity should thenceforward be taken in her name alone. The discontent that this occasioned swelled in 790 into open resistance, and the soldiers, headed by the army of the Armeniacs, formally proclaimed Constantine VI as the sole ruler.

A hollow semblance of friendship was maintained between Constantine and Irene, whose title of empress was confirmed in 792; however, the rival factions remained, and in 797, Irene, by cunning intrigues with the bishops and courtiers, organized a conspiracy on her own behalf. Constantine could only flee for aid to the provinces, but even there participants in the plot surrounded him. Seized by his attendants on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, Constantine was carried back to the palace at Constantinople. His eyes were gouged out, and according to most contemporary accounts, he died from his wounds a few days later, leaving Irene to be crowned as first empress regnant of Constantinople.

As empress, Irene made determined efforts to stamp out iconoclasm everywhere in the empire, including within the ranks of the army. During Irene's reign, the Arabs were continuing to raid into and despoil the small farms of the Anatolian section of the empire. These small farmers of Anatolia owed a military obligation to the Byzantine throne. Indeed, the Byzantine army and the

defense of the empire was largely based on this obligation and the Anatolian farmers. The iconodule (icon worship) policy drove these farmers out of the army, and thus off their farms. Thus, the army was weakened and was unable to protect Anatolia from the Arab raids. Many of the remaining farmers of Anatolia were driven from the farm to settle in the city of Byzantium, further reducing the army's ability to raise soldiers. Additionally, the abandoned farms fell from the tax rolls and reduced the amount of income that the government received. These farms were taken over by the largest land owner in the Byzantine Empire, the monasteries. To make the situation even worse, Irene had exempted all monasteries from all taxation.

Given the financial ruin into which the empire was headed, it was no wonder, then, that Irene was, eventually, deposed by her own minister of finance. The leader of this successful revolt against Irene replaced her on the Byzantine throne under the name Nicephorus I.

Although it is often asserted that, as monarch, Irene called herself “*basileus*” (emperor), rather than “*basilissa*” (empress), in fact there are only three instances where it is known that she used the title “*basileus*”: two legal documents in which she signed herself as “Emperor of the Romans,” and a gold coin of hers found in Sicily bearing the title of “*basileus*.” She used the title “*basilissa*” in all other documents, coins, and seals.

## Relationship with the Carolingian Empire

Irene's unprecedented position as an empress ruling in her own right was emphasized by the coincidental rise of the Carolingian Empire in western Europe, which rivaled Irene's Byzantium in size and power. In 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III, on Christmas Day. The clergy and nobles attending the ceremony proclaimed Charlemagne as “Emperor of the Roman Empire.” In support of Charlemagne's coronation, some argued that



the imperial position was actually vacant, deeming a woman unfit to be emperor. However, Charlemagne made no claim to the Byzantine Empire. Relations between the two empires remained difficult.

# 52. Reading: The Germanic Tribes

## The Germanic Tribes

The Germanic tribes, an ancient nomadic civilization, used their superior military strength to lay the foundation for modern Europe.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the importance of battle and military strength to the Germanic tribes

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Germanic people were a diverse group of migratory tribes with common linguistic and cultural roots who dominated much of Europe during the Iron Age. When the Roman Empire lost strength during the 5th century, Germanic peoples migrated into

Great Britain and Western Europe, and their settlements became fixed territories.

- Various Germanic tribes migrated into Italy, Gaul, Spain, and North Africa. Many Germanic tribes merged, including the Jutes with the Danes in Denmark, the Geats and Gutes with the Swedes in Sweden, and the Angles with the Saxons in England.
- Germanic peoples had a strong military, and warriors were fiercely devoted to their military leaders, or chieftains.
- Political leaders Odoacer and Theoderic the Great shaped later European civilizations.

### *Key Terms*

- **nomadic:** Leading a wandering life with no fixed abode; peripatetic, itinerant.
- **retinues:** Bodies of persons “retained” in the service of a noble or royal personage.

## Origins

The Germanic peoples (also called Teutonic, Suebian, or Gothic in older literature) are an ethno-linguistic Indo-European group of northern European origin. They are identified by their use of Germanic languages, which diversified out of Proto-Germanic during the Pre-Roman Iron Age.

The term “Germanic” originated in classical times when groups of

tribes living in Lower, Upper, and Greater Germania were referred to using this label by Roman scribes. These tribes generally lived to the north and east of the Gauls. They were chronicled by Rome 's historians as having had a critical impact on the course of European history during the Roman-Germanic wars, particularly at the historic Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, where the vanquishment of three Roman legions at the hands of Germanic tribal warriors precipitated the Roman Empire's strategic withdrawal from Magna Germania.

As a linguistic group, modern Germanic peoples include the Afrikaners, Austrians, Danes, Dutch, English, Flemish, Frisians, Germans, Icelanders, Lowland Scots, Norwegians, Swedes, and others (including diaspora populations, such as some groups of European Americans).

Northernmost Europe, in what now constitutes the European plains of Denmark and southern Scandinavia, is where the Germanic peoples most likely originated. This is a region that was "remarkably stable" as far back as the Neolithic Age, when humans first began controlling their environment through the use of agriculture and the domestication of animals. Archeological evidence gives the impression that the Germanic people were becoming more uniform in their culture as early as 750 BCE. As their population grew, the Germanic people migrated westwards into coastal floodplains due to the exhaustion of the soil in their original settlements.

## Germanic Tribes

By approximately 250 BCE, additional expansion further southwards into central Europe took place, and five general groups of Germanic people emerged, each employing distinct linguistic dialects but sharing similar language innovations. These five dialects are distinguished as North Germanic in southern Scandinavia; North Sea Germanic in the regions along the North Sea and in the Jutland

peninsula, which forms the mainland of Denmark together with the north German state of Schleswig-Holstein; Rhine-Weser Germanic along the middle Rhine and Weser river, which empties into the North Sea near Bremerhaven; Elbe Germanic directly along the middle Elbe river; and East Germanic between the middle of the Oder and Vistula rivers.

Some recognizable trends in the archaeological records exist, as it is known that, generally speaking, western Germanic people, while still migratory, were more geographically settled, whereas the eastern Germanics remained transitory for a longer period. Three settlement patterns and solutions come to the fore; the first being the establishment of an agricultural base in a region that allowed them to support larger populations; the second being that the Germanic peoples periodically cleared forests to extend the range of their pasturage; and the third (and the most frequent occurrence) being that they often emigrated to other areas as they exhausted the immediately available resources.

War and conquest followed as the Germanic people migrated, bringing them into direct conflict with the Celts who were forced to either Germanize or migrate elsewhere as a result. West Germanic people eventually settled in central Europe and became more accustomed to agriculture, and it is the various western Germanic people that are described by Caesar and Tacitus. Meanwhile, the eastern Germanic people continued their migratory habits. Roman writers characteristically organized and classified people, and it may very well have been deliberate on their part to recognize the tribal distinctions of the various Germanic people so as to pick out known leaders and exploit these differences for their benefit. For the most part however, these early Germanic people shared a basic culture, operated similarly from an economic perspective, and were not nearly as differentiated as the Romans implied. In fact, the Germanic tribes are hard to distinguish from the Celts on many accounts simply based on archaeological records.

## Migration Period

During the 5th century, as the Western Roman Empire lost military strength and political cohesion, numerous nomadic Germanic peoples, under pressure from population growth and invading Asian groups, began migrating en masse in various directions, taking them to Great Britain and far south through present-day Continental Europe to the Mediterranean and Northern Africa.

Over time this wandering meant intrusions into other tribal territories, and the ensuing wars for land escalated with the dwindling amount of unoccupied territory. Wandering tribes then began staking out permanent homes as a means of protection. This resulted in fixed settlements from which many tribes, under a powerful leader, expanded outwards.

Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Lombards made their way into Italy; Vandals, Burgundians, Franks, and Visigoths conquered much of Gaul; Vandals and Visigoths also pushed into Spain, with the Vandals additionally making it into North Africa; and the Alamanni established a strong presence in the middle Rhine and Alps. In Denmark, the Jutes merged with the Danes; and in Sweden, the Geats and Gutes merged with the Swedes. In England, the Angles merged with the Saxons and other groups (notably the Jutes), and absorbed some natives, to form the Anglo-Saxons (later known as the English). Essentially, Roman civilization was overrun by these variants of Germanic peoples during the 5th century.



**The Germanic Kingdoms and the Eastern Roman Empire in 526 CE**

## Military

Germanic people were fierce in battle, creating a strong military. Their love of battle was linked to their religious practices and two of their most important gods, Wodan and his son, Thor, both believed to be gods of war. The Germanic idea of warfare was quite different from the pitched battles fought by Rome and Greece, and the Germanic tribes focused on raids to capture resources and secure prestige.

Warriors were strong in battle and had great fighting abilities, making the tribes almost unbeatable. Men began battle training at a young age and were given a shield and a spear upon manhood, illustrating the importance of combat in Germanic life. The loss of the shield or spear meant a loss of honor. The Germanic warrior's

intense devotion to his tribe and his chieftain led to many important military victories.

Chieftains were the leaders of clans, and clans were divided into groups by family ties. The earlier Germans elected chieftains, but as time went on it became hereditary. One of the chieftain's jobs was to keep peace in the clans, and he did this by keeping the warriors together and united.

Military chieftains relied upon retinues, a body of followers "retained" by the chieftain. A chieftain's retinue might include, but was not limited to, close relatives. The followers depended on the retinue for military and other services, and in return provided for the retinue's needs and divided with them the spoils of battle. This relationship between a chieftain and his followers became the basis for the more complicated feudal system that developed in medieval Europe.

## Major Historical Figures

Political and diplomatic leaders, such as Odoacer and Theoderic the Great, changed the course of history in the late 400s CE and paved the way for later kings and conquerors. Odoacer, a German general, took over the Western Roman Empire in his own name, becoming the first barbarian king of Italy. Theoderic the Great became a barbarian king of Italy after he killed Odoacer. He initiated three decades of peace between the Ostrogoths and the Romans and united the two Germanic tribes.

Theoderic the Great lived as a hostage at the court of Constantinople for many years and learned a great deal about Roman government and military tactics, which served him well when he became the Gothic ruler of a mixed but largely Romanized "barbarian people."



image

**Theodoric the Great:** Bronze statue of Theoderic the Great, king of the Ostrogoths, by Peter Vischer the Elder (1512-13) at the tomb of Emperor Maximilian I in the Court Church in Innsbruck, Austria.

## Odoacer and the Fall of Rome

Odoacer was a Germanic soldier in the Roman army who deposed emperor Augustulus and became the first King of Italy, marking the end of the Western Roman Empire, the fall of ancient Rome, and the beginning of the Middle Ages in Western Europe.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe Odoacer's rise to power

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

#### *Key Points*

- Odoacer was a Germanic soldier in the Roman army who in 476 became the first King of Italy.
- At the time, Rome used many mercenary armies from other nations, called *foederati*, who with the rise

of Emperor Augustulus became frustrated by their treatment and status. These armies, led by Odoacer, revolted against Emperor Augustulus and deposed him in 476, and granted Odoacer kingship.

- Odoacer cooperated with the existing Roman Senate and elevated them to prestige, thereby stabilizing his power in Italy.
- As Odoacer's position improved, Zeno, the Eastern Emperor, increasingly saw him as a rival, and in response pitted the Ostrogoth Theoderic the Great against him; Theoderic proved victor against Odoacer repeatedly and eventually killed him in 493.

### *Key Terms*

- **Western Roman Empire:** The western provinces of the Roman Empire at any one time during which they were administered by a separate independent imperial court, coequal with (or only nominally subordinate to) that administering the eastern provinces.
- **foederati:** Any one of several outlying nations to which ancient Rome provided benefits in exchange for military assistance. The term was also used, especially under the Roman Empire, for groups of “barbarian” mercenaries of various sizes, who were typically allowed to settle within the Empire.
- **Romulus Augustulus:** An emperor of the Western Roman Empire from 475–476 AD; his deposition by Odoacer traditionally marks the end of the Western

Roman Empire, the fall of ancient Rome, and the beginning of the Middle Ages in Western Europe.

- **Arian Christian:** A Christian sect that asserts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was created by God the Father at a point in time, is distinct from the Father, and is therefore subordinate to the Father.

## Overview

Flavius Odoacer (433–493) was a soldier, probably of Scirian descent, who in 476 became the first King of Italy (476–493). His reign is commonly seen as marking the end of the Western Roman Empire. Though the real power in Italy was in his hands, he represented himself as the client of Julius Nepos and, after Nepos's death in 480, of the Emperor in Constantinople. Odoacer generally used the Roman honorific patrician, granted by the Emperor Zeno, but is referred to as a king (Latin rex) in many documents. He used the term "rex" himself at least once, and on another occasion it was used by the consul Basilius. Odoacer introduced few important changes into the administrative system of Italy. He had the support of the Roman Senate and was able to distribute land to his followers without much opposition. Unrest among his warriors led to violence in 477–478, but no such disturbances occurred during the later period of his reign. Although Odoacer was an Arian Christian, he rarely intervened in the affairs of the orthodox and trinitarian state church of the Roman Empire.



**Coin of Odoacer:** Coin of Odoacer, Ravenna, 477, with Odoacer in profile, depicted with a “barbarian” moustache.

## Rise to Power

Odoacer was a military leader in Italy who led the revolt of Herulian, Rugian, and Scirian soldiers that deposed Romulus Augustulus on September 4, 476. Augustulus had been declared Western Roman Emperor by his father, the rebellious general of the army in Italy, less than a year before, but had been unable to gain allegiance or recognition beyond central Italy.

In 475 a Roman general named Orestes was appointed *Magister militum* and patrician by the Western Roman Emperor Julius Nepos and became head of the Germanic *foederati* (barbarian mercenary armies for Rome). However, Orestes proved to be ambitious, and before the end of that year drove Nepos from Italy. Orestes then proclaimed his young son Romulus the new emperor, Romulus

Augustulus. However, Nepos reorganized his court in Salona, Dalmatia, and received homage and affirmation from the remaining fragments of the Western Empire beyond Italy and, most importantly, from Constantinople, which refused to accept Augustulus and branded him and his father traitors and usurpers.

At around this time, the *foederati*, who had been quartered on the Italians all of these years, had grown weary of this arrangement. In the words of J. B. Bury, “They desired to have roof-trees and lands of their own, and they petitioned Orestes to reward them for their services, by granting them lands and settling them permanently in Italy.” Orestes refused their petition, and they turned to Odoacer to lead a revolt against Orestes. Orestes was killed at Placentia, and his brother Paulus killed outside Ravenna. The Germanic *foederati*, the Scirians, and the Heruli, as well as a large segment of the Italic Roman army, then proclaimed Odoacer *rex Italiae* (“king of Italy”). In 476 Odoacer advanced to Ravenna and captured the city, compelling the young emperor Romulus to abdicate on September 4. According to the *Anonymus Valesianus*, Odoacer was moved by Romulus’s youth and beauty to not only spare his life, but also to give him a pension of 6,000 solidii and send him to Campania to live with his relatives.



**Romulus Augustulus and Odoacer:** Romulus Augustulus resigns the crown  
(from a 19th-century illustration)

## King of Italy

In 476, Odoacer became the first barbarian King of Italy, initiating a new era. With the backing of the Roman Senate, Odoacer thenceforth ruled Italy autonomously, paying lip service to the authority of Julius Nepos, the last Western emperor, and Zeno, the emperor of the East. Upon Nepos's murder in 480, Odoacer invaded Dalmatia to punish the murderers. He did so, executing the

conspirators, but within two years also conquered the region and incorporated it into his domain.

As J.B. Bury points out, “It is highly important to observe that Odovacar established his political power with the co-operation of the Roman Senate, and this body seems to have given him their loyal support throughout his reign, so far as our meagre sources permit us to draw inferences.” He regularly nominated members of the Senate to the Consulate and other prestigious offices: “Basilius, Decius, Venantius, and Manlius Boethius held the consulship and were either Prefects of Rome or Praetorian Prefects; Symmachus and Sividius were consuls and Prefects of Rome; another senator of old family, Cassiodorus, was appointed a minister of finance.” A. H. M. Jones also notes that under Odoacer the Senate acquired “enhanced prestige and influence” in order to counter any desires for restoration of Imperial rule. As the most tangible example of this renewed prestige, for the first time since the mid-3rd century copper coins were issued with the legend *S(enatus) C(onsulto)*.

## Fall and Death

As Odoacer's position improved, Zeno, the Eastern Emperor, increasingly saw him as a rival. When Illus, master of soldiers of the Eastern Empire, asked for Odoacer's help in 484 in his struggle to depose Zeno, Odoacer invaded Zeno's westernmost provinces. Zeno responded first by inciting the Rugi of present-day Austria to attack Italy. During the winter of 487–488 Odoacer crossed the Danube and defeated the Rugi in their own territory. In his quest to destroy Odoacer, Zeno promised Theoderic the Great and his Ostrogoths the Italian peninsula if they were to defeat and remove Odoacer from power. In 489, Theoderic led the Ostrogoths across the Julian Alps and into Italy. On August 28, Odoacer met him at the Isonzo, only to be defeated. He withdrew to Verona, reaching its outskirts on September 27, where he immediately set up a fortified

camp. Theoderic followed him and three days later defeated him again. While Odoacer took refuge in Ravenna, Theoderic continued across Italy to Mediolanum, where the majority of Odoacer's army, including his chief general, Tufa, surrendered to the Ostrogothic king.

The following summer, the Visigothic king Alaric II demonstrated what Wolfram calls "one of the rare displays of Gothic solidarity" and sent military aid to help his kinsman, forcing Odoacer to raise his siege. On August 11, 490, the armies of the two kings clashed on the Adda River. Odoacer was again defeated and forced back into Ravenna, where Theoderic besieged him. Ravenna proved to be invulnerable, surrounded by marshes and estuaries and easily supplied by small boats from its hinterlands, as Procopius later pointed out in his *History*.

By this time, Odoacer had to have lost all hope of victory. A large-scale sortie out of Ravenna on the night of the 9/10 of July, 491, ended in failure with the death of his commander-in-chief, Livilia, along with the best of his Herulian soldiers. On August 29, 492, the Goths were about to assemble enough ships at Rimini to set up an effective blockade of Ravenna. Despite these decisive losses, the war dragged on until February 25, 493, when John, bishop of Ravenna, was able to negotiate a treaty between Theoderic and Odoacer that provided for them to occupy Ravenna together and rule jointly. After a three-year siege, Theoderic entered the city on March 5. Odoacer was dead ten days later, slain by Theoderic while they shared a meal. Theoderic had plotted to have a group of his followers kill Odoacer while the two kings were feasting together in the imperial palace of Honorius "*Ad Laurentum*" ("At the Laurel Grove"); when this plan went astray, Theoderic drew his sword and struck Odoacer on the collarbone. In response to Odoacer's dying question, "Where is God?" Theoderic cried, "This is what you did to my friends." Theoderic was said to have stood over the body of his dead rival and exclaim, "There certainly wasn't a bone in this wretched fellow."



# Theoderic the Great

Theoderic the Great was the King of the Ostrogoths and ruler of Italy after defeating the first barbarian king, Odoacer; he ruled Italy in its most peaceful and prosperous period since Valentinian until his death in 526.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze the political and military considerations that led to Theoderic's rise to power

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Theoderic the Great was King of the Ostrogoths, a tribe of Germanic peoples in close relation to the Eastern Roman Empire.
- Zeno, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, enlisted Theoderic to defeat the current King of Italy, Odoacer.
- Theoderic defeated and killed Odoacer and took over as ruler of Italy, where he reigned successfully for 33 years.

- Under Theoderic, a considerable degree of Roman and Germanic cultural and political fusion was achieved; slowly but surely, the distinction between Germanic rulers and Roman subjects faded, followed by varying degrees of “cultural assimilation,” which included the adoption of the Gothic language by some of the indigenous people of the former Roman Empire.
- Theoderic died in 526 while planning an expedition to restore his power over the Vandal kingdom; his death soon led to the collapse of the Ostrogothic reign.

### *Key Terms*

- **Zeno:** Eastern Roman Emperor from 474–475 and again from 476–491, whose reign saw the end of the Western Roman Empire under Romulus Augustus.
- **Ostrogoths:** The eastern branch of the Germanic tribes; they traced their origins to the Greutungi, a branch of the Goths who had migrated southward from the Baltic Sea and established a kingdom north of the Black Sea during the 3rd and 4th centuries.
- **Visigoths:** The western branches of the nomadic tribes of Germanic peoples referred to collectively as the Goths.

## Overview

Theoderic the Great (454–526) was king of the Ostrogoths (475–526), ruler of Italy (493–526), regent of the Visigoths (511–526), and a patricius of the Roman Empire. His Gothic name translates into “people-king” or “ruler of the people.”

Theoderic was born in Pannonia in 454, after his people had defeated the Huns at the Battle of Nedao. His father was King Theodemir, a Germanic Amali nobleman, and his mother was Ereleuva. Theoderic grew up as a hostage in Constantinople, received a privileged education, and succeeded his father as leader of the Pannonian Ostrogoths in 473. Settling his people in lower Moesia, Theoderic came into conflict with Thracian Ostrogoths led by Theodoric Strabo, whom he eventually supplanted, uniting their peoples in 484.

Emperor Zeno subsequently gave Theoderic the title of Patrician and the office of *Magister militum* (master of the soldiers), and even appointed him Roman Consul. Seeking further gains, Theoderic frequently ravaged the provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire, eventually threatening Constantinople itself. In 488, Emperor Zeno ordered Theoderic to overthrow the German Foederatus Odoacer, who had likewise been made Patrician and even King of Italy, but who had since betrayed Zeno, supporting the rebellious Leontius. After a victorious three-year war, Theoderic killed Odoacer with his own hands, settled his 200,000 to 250,000 people in Italy, and founded an Ostrogothic Kingdom based in Ravenna. While he promoted separation between the Arian Ostrogoths and the Roman population, Theoderic stressed the importance of racial harmony, though intermarriage was outlawed. Seeking to restore the glory of Ancient Rome, he ruled Italy in its most peaceful and prosperous period since Valentinian until his death in 526. Memories of his reign made him a hero of German legend as Dietrich von Bern.



**Theoderic the Great:** Bronze statue of Theoderic the Great (by Peter Vischer, 1512–13), from the monument of Emperor Maximilian I in the Court Church at Innsbruck.

## Relationship with Byzantium and Overthrow of Odoacer

At the time, the Ostrogoths were settled in Byzantine territory as *foederati* (allies) of the Romans, but were becoming restless and increasingly difficult for Zeno to manage. Not long after Theoderic became king, he and Zeno worked out an arrangement beneficial to both sides. The Ostrogoths needed a place to live, and Zeno was having serious problems with Odoacer, the King of Italy who had come to power in 476. Ostensibly a viceroy for Zeno, Odoacer was menacing Byzantine territory and not respecting the rights of Roman citizens in Italy. At Zeno's encouragement, Theoderic invaded Odoacer's kingdom.

Theoderic came with his army to Italy in 488, where he won the battles of Isonzo and Verona in 489 and the battle at the Adda in 490. In 493 he took Ravenna. On February 2, 493, Theoderic and Odoacer signed a treaty that assured both parties would rule over Italy. A banquet was organized in order to celebrate this treaty. It was at this banquet that Theoderic, after making a toast, drew his sword and struck Odoacer on the collarbone, killing him.

## Ruler of Italy

Like Odoacer, Theoderic was ostensibly only a viceroy for the emperor in Constantinople. In reality, he was able to avoid imperial supervision, and dealings between the emperor and Theoderic were as relations between equals. Unlike Odoacer, however, Theoderic respected the agreement he had made and allowed Roman citizens within his kingdom to be subject to Roman law and the Roman judicial system. The Goths, meanwhile, lived under their own laws and customs. In 519, when a mob burned down the synagogues of

Ravenna, Theoderic ordered the town to rebuild them at its own expense.

Theoderic the Great sought alliances with, or hegemony over, the other Germanic kingdoms in the West. He allied with the Franks by his marriage to Audofleda, sister of Clovis I, and married his own female relatives to princes or kings of the Visigoths, Vandals, and Burgundians. He stopped the Vandals from raiding his territories by threatening the weak Vandal king Thrasamund with invasion, and sent a guard of 5,000 troops with his sister Amalafrida when she married Thrasamund in 500.

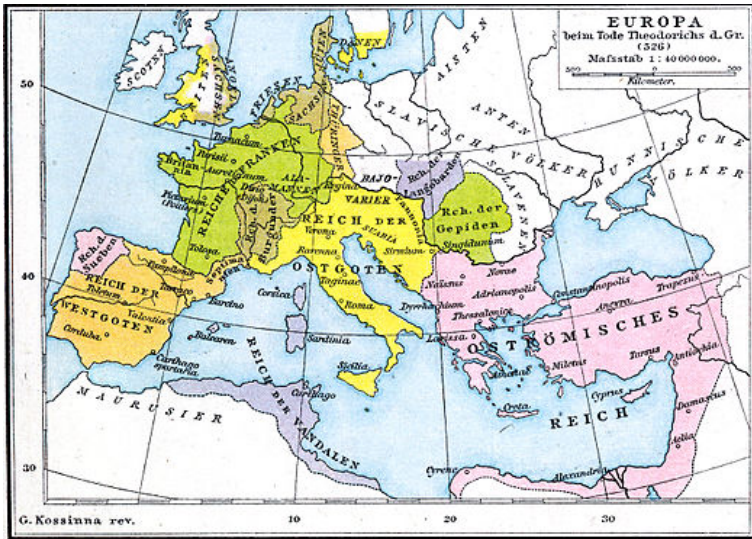
For much of his reign, Theoderic was the *de facto* king of the Visigoths as well, becoming regent for the infant Visigothic king, his grandson Amalaric, following the defeat of Alaric II by the Franks under Clovis in 507. The Franks were able to wrest control of Aquitaine from the Visigoths, but otherwise Theoderic was able to defeat their incursions. The term “Visigoth” was actually an invention of this period. Cassiodorus, a Roman in the service of Theoderic the Great, invented the term “Visigothi” to match that of “Ostrogothi;” he thought of these terms as signifying “western Goths” and “eastern Goths” respectively. The western–eastern division was a simplification (and a literary device) of 6th-century historians; political realities were more complex. Both tribes had variable relations with Rome throughout their history, ranging from direct conflict to treaties and mutual support.

## Decline and Death

Theoderic’s achievements began to unravel even before his death. He had married off his daughter Amalasuntha to the Visigoth Eutharic, but Eutharic died in August 522 or 523, so no lasting dynastic connection of Ostrogoths and Visigoths was established. In 522, the Catholic Burgundian king Sigismund killed his own son, Theoderic’s grandson, Sergeric. Theoderic retaliated by invading the

Burgundian kingdom and then annexing its southern part, probably in 523. The rest was ruled by Sigismund's Arian brother Godomar, under Gothic protection against the Franks who had captured Sigismund. This brought the territory ruled by Theoderic to its height (see map below), but in 523 or 524 the new Catholic Vandal king Hilderic imprisoned Theoderic's sister Amalafrida and killed her Gothic guard. Theoderic was planning an expedition to restore his power over the Vandal kingdom when he died in 526.

After his death in Ravenna in 526, Theoderic was succeeded by his grandson Athalaric. Athalaric was at first represented by his mother Amalasuntha, who was a regent queen from 526 until 534. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths, however, began to wane and was conquered by Justinian I starting after the rebellion of 535 and finally ending in 553 with the Battle of Mons Lactarius. Theoderic may have tried too hard to accommodate the various people under his dominion; indulging "Romans and Goths, Catholics and Arians, Latin and barbarian culture" resulted in the eventual failure of the Ostrogothic reign and the subsequent "end of Italy as the heartland of late antiquity."



**Europe in 526:** The Ostrogothic Kingdom (in yellow) at the death of Theoderic the Great in 526 AD.

## The Vikings

Vikings originated in Scandinavia and raided, traded, explored, and settled in wide areas of Europe, Asia, and the North Atlantic islands.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Illustrate how Viking ships were an integral part of Viking culture, influencing trade and warfare



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The late 8th to the mid-11th centuries is commonly known as the Viking Age of Scandinavian history.
- Vikings were renowned for their ships, which were an integral part of their culture, facilitating, trade, exploration, and warfare.
- Weapons indicated the social status of a Viking, and warfare and violence were heavily influenced by pagan religious beliefs.
- The Vikings established and engaged in extensive trading networks throughout the known world and had a profound influence on the economic development of Europe and Scandinavia.
- Vikings are often thought of as brutal warriors due to the manner in which they settled in the northeast of England, though in recent years they have been recognized for their technological skills and seamanship.
- Viking culture and stories were written about in the Sagas, stories compiled almost one to three hundred years after Viking raids had mostly ceased.
- When settling land in Greenland and Iceland, Vikings established their form of democratic government which included discussion of rules of law and other issues during Things, assemblies open to all free people.

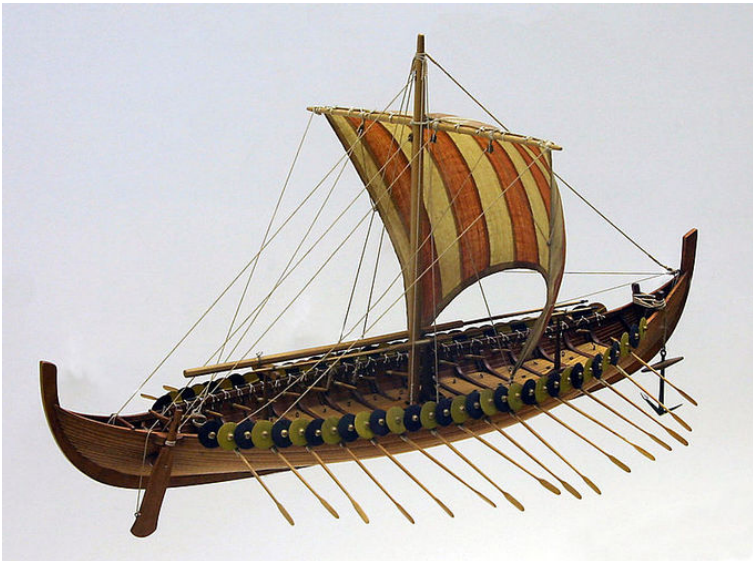
## *Key Terms*

- **longship:** A Viking ship intended for warfare and exploration and designed for speed and agility. Longships were equipped with a sail as well as oars, making navigation independent of the wind possible.
- **Obotrites:** A confederation of medieval West Slavic tribes within the territory of modern northern Germany.
- **Charlemagne:** A ruler of the Carolingian Dynasty renowned for his thirty-year military campaign to spread Christianity in Europe and for his interests in education and religion.
- **Constantinople:** The capital city of the Roman, Byzantine, Latin, and Ottoman empires. During the 12th century, it was the largest and wealthiest city in Europe.
- **Scandinavia:** A historical and cultural-linguistic region in northern Europe characterized by a common Germanic heritage and related languages. It includes the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Vikings were Norse seafarers who originated in Scandinavia and raided, traded, explored, and settled in wide areas of Europe, Asia, and the North Atlantic islands. The period from the earliest recorded raids in the 790s until the Norman conquest of England in 1066 is commonly known as the Viking Age of Scandinavian history. Vikings used the Norwegian Sea and Baltic Sea for sea routes to the south.

# Viking Ships

There have been several archaeological finds of Viking ships of all sizes, providing knowledge of the craftsmanship that went into building them. There were many types of Viking ships, built according to their intended uses, though the most iconic type is probably the longship. Longships were intended for warfare and exploration, designed for speed and agility, and equipped with oars to complement the sail, making navigation independent of the wind possible. It was the longship that allowed the Norse to “go Viking” (on an expedition), which might explain why this type of ship has become almost synonymous with the concept of Vikings. Longships were the epitome of Scandinavian naval power at the time, and were highly valued possessions.



**Model of a Viking longship:** Model of the Gokstad ship. The Gokstad ship is a Viking ship found in a burial mound at Gokstad farm in Sandar, Sandefjord, Vestfold, Norway. Dendrochronological dating suggests that the ship was built around 890 AD.

Ships were an integral part of Viking culture. They facilitated everyday transportation across seas and waterways, exploration of new lands, raids, conquests, and trade with neighboring cultures. They also held a major religious importance; magnates and people with a high status were sometimes buried in a ship along with animal sacrifices, weapons, provisions, and other items.

## Weapons and Warfare

Our knowledge about the arms and armor of the Viking age is based on archaeological finds, pictorial representation, and to some extent on the accounts in the Norse sagas and Norse laws recorded in the 13th century. According to custom, all free Norse men were required to own weapons and were permitted to carry them all the time. Weapons were indicative of a Viking's social status; a wealthy Viking would have a complete ensemble of a helmet, shield, mail shirt, and sword. A typical *bóndi* (freeman) was more likely to fight with a spear and shield, and most also carried a knife and side-arm. Bows were used in the opening stages of land battles and at sea, but they tended to be considered less “honorable” than a weapon that could be used in close combat. Vikings were relatively unusual for the time in their use of axes as a main battle weapon.

The warfare and violence of the Vikings were often motivated and fueled by their belief in Norse religion, focusing on Thor and Odin, the gods of war and death. Apart from two or three representations of (ritual) helmets with protrusions that may be either stylized ravens, snakes, or horns, no depiction of the helmets of Viking warriors, and no preserved helmet, has horns. The stereotypical Viking helmet was thus mainly a fiction of a later romanticized image of the Viking. The formal, close-quarters style of Viking combat (either in shield walls or aboard “ship islands”) would have made horned helmets cumbersome and hazardous to the warrior's own side.

The Vikings are believed to have engaged in a disordered style of frenetic, furious fighting, although the brutal perception of the Vikings is largely a misconception, likely attributed to Christian misunderstandings regarding paganism at the time.

## Viking Expansion

Facilitated by advanced seafaring skills, Viking activities at times also extended into the Mediterranean littoral, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Following extended phases of exploration on seas and rivers, expansion, and settlement, Viking communities and polities were established in diverse areas of northwestern Europe, European Russia, and the North Atlantic islands, and as far as the northeastern coast of North America. During their explorations, Vikings raided and pillaged, but also engaged in trade, settled wide-ranging colonies, and acted as mercenaries. This period of expansion witnessed the wider dissemination of Norse culture while simultaneously introducing strong foreign cultural influences into Scandinavia itself, with profound developmental implications in both directions.

Vikings under Leif Ericsson, the heir to Erik the Red, reached North America and set up a short-lived settlement in present-day L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Longer and more-established settlements were formed in Greenland, Iceland, Great Britain, and Normandy.

Viking expansion into continental Europe was limited. Their realm was bordered by powerful cultures to the south. Early on it was the Saxons, who occupied Old Saxony, located in what is now northern Germany. The Saxons were a fierce and powerful people and were often in conflict with the Vikings. To counter the Saxon aggression and solidify their own presence, the Danes constructed the huge defense fortification of Danevirke in and around Hedeby. The Vikings soon witnessed the violent subduing of the Saxons by

Charlemagne in the thirty-year Saxon Wars from 772–804. The Saxon defeat resulted in their forced christening and the absorption of Old Saxony into the Carolingian Empire.

Fear of the Franks led the Vikings to further expand Danewirke, and the defense constructions remained in use throughout the Viking Age and even up until 1864. The south coast of the Baltic Sea was ruled by the Obotrites, a federation of Slavic tribes loyal to the Carolingians and later the Frankish empire. The Vikings, led by King Gudfred, destroyed the Obotrite city of Reric on the southern Baltic coast in 808 and transferred the merchants and traders to Hedeby. This secured their supremacy in the Baltic Sea, which endured throughout the Viking Age.



**Viking expeditions (blue line):** Light blue: Itineraries of the Vikings, depicting the immense breadth of their voyages through most of Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, Northern Africa, Asia Minor, the Arctic, and North America. Light green: main settlement areas, in the first millennium

## Legacy

The 200-year Viking influence on European history is filled with tales of plunder and colonization, and the majority of these chronicles came from western witnesses and their descendants. Medieval Christians in Europe were totally unprepared for the Viking incursions and could find no explanation for their arrival and the accompanying suffering they experienced at their hands, save the “Wrath of God.” More than any other single event, the attack on Lindisfarne demonized perception of the Vikings for the next twelve centuries. Not until the 1890s did scholars outside Scandinavia begin to seriously reassess the achievements of the Vikings, recognizing their artistry, technological skills, and seamanship.

Studies of genetic diversity have provided scientific confirmation to accompany archaeological evidence of Viking expansion. They additionally indicate patterns of ancestry, imply new migrations, and show the actual flow of individuals between disparate regions. Genetic evidence contradicts the common perception that Vikings were primarily pillagers and raiders. An article by Roger Highfield summarizes recent research and concludes that, as both male and female genetic markers are present, the evidence is indicative of colonization instead of raiding and occupying. However, this is also disputed by unequal ratios of male and female haplotypes, which indicate that more men settled than women, an element of a raiding or occupying population.

# 53. Reading: The Catholic Church

## The Catholic Church

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the Catholic Church became a powerful social and political institution and its influence spread throughout Europe.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the role of the Catholic Church in Medieval Europe

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Christianity spread throughout the early Roman Empire despite persecutions due to conflicts with the pagan state religion.
- When the Western Roman Empire fell in 476, the



Catholic Church competed with Arian Christians for the conversion of the barbarian tribes and quickly became the dominant form of Christianity.

- Monastic communities were centers for learning and preservation of classical culture.
- Once the cultural and political boundaries of Rome were weakened, Catholicism spread throughout Europe to the Irish, English, Franks, and Goths.

### *Key Terms*

- **Byzantine Empire:** Sometimes referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the East during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when its capital city was Constantinople.
- **Orthodoxy:** Conforming to the Christian faith as represented in the creeds of the early church.
- **Pope:** The Bishop of Rome and the leader of the worldwide Catholic Church, and the traditional successor to Saint Peter, to whom Jesus is supposed to have given the keys of Heaven, naming him as the “rock” upon which the church would be built.
- **missionaries:** Members of a religious group sent into an area to evangelize or offer ministries of service, such as education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development.

## Early History and the Fall of Rome

The history of the Catholic Church begins with the teachings of Jesus Christ, who lived in the 1st century CE in the province of Judea of the Roman Empire. The contemporary Catholic Church says that it is the continuation of the early Christian community established by Jesus.

Christianity spread throughout the early Roman Empire despite persecutions due to conflicts with the pagan state religion. In 313, the struggles of the early church were lessened by the legalization of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine I. In 380, under Emperor Theodosius I, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire by the decree of the emperor, which would persist until the fall of the Western Empire, and later with the Eastern Roman Empire until the fall of Constantinople.

After the destruction of the Western Roman Empire, the church in the West was a major factor in preserving classical civilization, establishing monasteries, and sending missionaries to convert the peoples of northern Europe as far north as Ireland. In the East, the Byzantine Empire preserved Orthodoxy well after the massive invasions of Islam in the mid-7th century.

## The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the Catholic faith competed with Arianism for the conversion of the barbarian tribes. The 496 conversion of Clovis I, pagan king of the Franks, saw the beginning of a steady rise of the Catholic faith in the West.



**Saint Remigius baptizes Clovis**

In 530, Saint Benedict wrote his *Rule of Saint Benedict* as a practical guide for monastic community life, and its message spread to monasteries throughout Europe. Monasteries became major conduits of civilization, preserving craft and artistic skills while

maintaining intellectual culture within their schools, scriptoria, and libraries. They functioned as centers for spiritual life as well as for agriculture, economy, and production.

During this period the Visigoths and Lombards moved away from Arianism toward Catholicism. Pope Gregory the Great played a notable role in these conversions and dramatically reformed the ecclesiastical structures and administration, which then launched renewed missionary efforts. Missionaries such as Augustine of Canterbury, who was sent from Rome to begin the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and, coming the other way in the Hiberno-Scottish mission, Saints Colombanus, Boniface, Willibrord, and Ansgar, among many others, took Christianity into northern Europe and spread Catholicism among the Germanic and Slavic peoples. Such missions reached the Vikings and other Scandinavians in later centuries. The Synod of Whitby of 664, though not as decisive as sometimes claimed, was an important moment in the reintegration of the Celtic Church of the British Isles into the Roman hierarchy, after having been effectively cut off from contact with Rome by the pagan invaders.

In the early 8th century, Byzantine iconoclasm became a major source of conflict between the eastern and western parts of the church. Byzantine emperors forbade the creation and veneration of religious images as violations of the Ten Commandments. Sometime between 726 and 730 the Byzantine Emperor Leo III the Isaurian ordered that an image of Jesus prominently placed over the Chalke gate, the ceremonial entrance to the Great Palace of Constantinople, be removed, and replaced with a cross. This was followed by orders banning the pictorial representation of the family of Christ, subsequent Christian saints, and biblical scenes. Other major religions in the East, such as Judaism and Islam, had similar prohibitions, but Pope Gregory III vehemently disagreed. Empress Irene, siding with the pope, called for an Ecumenical Council. In 787, the fathers of the Second Council of Nicaea “warmly received the papal delegates and his message.” At the conclusion,

300 bishops, who were led by the representatives of Pope Hadrian I “adopted the Pope’s teaching,” in favor of icons.

## Spread of Catholicism Beyond Rome

As the political boundaries of the Roman Empire diminished and then collapsed in the West, Christianity spread beyond the old borders of the Empire and into lands that had never been under Rome.

Beginning in the 5th century, a unique culture developed around the Irish Sea, consisting of what today would be called Wales and Ireland. In this environment, Christianity spread from Roman Britain to Ireland, especially aided by the missionary activity of Saint Patrick. Patrick had been captured into slavery in Ireland and, following his escape and later consecration as bishop, he returned to the isle that had enslaved him so that he could bring them the Gospel. Soon, Irish missionaries such as Saints Columba and Columbanus spread this Christianity, with its distinctively Irish features, to Scotland and the Continent. One such feature was the system of private penitence, which replaced the former practice of penance as a public rite.

Although southern Britain had been a Roman province, in 407 the imperial legions left the isle, and the Roman elite followed. Some time later that century, various barbarian tribes went from raiding and pillaging the island to settling and invading. These tribes are referred to as the “Anglo-Saxons,” predecessors of the English. They were entirely pagan, having never been part of the Empire, and although they experienced Christian influence from the surrounding peoples, they were converted by the mission of Saint Augustine sent by Pope Gregory the Great. Later, under Archbishop Theodore, the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed a golden age of culture and scholarship. Soon, important English missionaries such as Saints

Wilfrid, Willibrord, Lullus, and Boniface would begin evangelizing their Saxon relatives in Germany.

## The Development of Papal Supremacy

During the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire, and throughout the Middle Ages, the office of pope not only gained supremacy over the entire Christian Church but also developed political power rivaling that of the secular rulers of Europe.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the development of papal supremacy

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- During the early history of Christianity, Rome became an increasingly important center of the faith, which gave the bishop of Rome (the pope ) more power over the entire church, thereby ushering in the era of papal supremacy.
- When Catholicism became the official religion of

the Roman Empire in 380, the power of the pope increased, although he was still subordinate to the emperor.

- After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the pope served as a source of authority and continuity; however, for several centuries afterward the Eastern Roman Emperor still maintained authority over the church.
- From the late-6th to the late-8th century there was a turning of the papacy to the West and an escape from subordination to the authority of the Byzantine emperors of Constantinople.
- When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Roman Emperor in 800, he established the precedent that, in Western Europe, no man would be emperor without being crowned by a pope.
- After a conflict known as the Investiture Controversy, as well as from the launching of the Crusades, the papacy increased its power in relation to the secular rulers of Europe.
- Throughout the Middle Ages, popes struggled with monarchs over power.

### *Key Terms*

- **Byzantine Papacy:** A period of Byzantine domination of the papacy from 537 to 752, when popes required the approval of the Byzantine Emperor for episcopal consecration.
- **Arianism:** A Christian sect in late antiquity that

asserts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was created by God the Father at a point in time, is distinct from the Father, and is therefore subordinate to the Father.

- **Investiture Controversy:** The most significant conflict between church and state in medieval Europe, in which a series of popes challenged the authority of European monarchies.
- **Papal supremacy:** The doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that the pope, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire Christian Church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church.

## Overview

Papal supremacy is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that the pope, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire Christian Church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered—that, in brief, “the Pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls.”

The doctrine had the most significance in the relationship between the church and the temporal state, in matters such as ecclesiastic privileges, the actions of monarchs, and even successions. The creation of the term “papal supremacy” dates back to the 6th century, at the time of the fall of the Western Roman Empire, which was the beginning of the rise of the bishops of Rome to not just the position religious authority, but the power to be



the ultimate ruler of the kingdoms within the Christian community (Christendom), which it has since retained.

## The Church and the Roman Empire

In the early Christian era, Rome and a few other cities had claims on the leadership of the worldwide church. During the 1st century of the church (c. 30–130), the Roman capital became recognized as a Christian center of exceptional importance. In the late 2nd century CE, there were more manifestations of Roman authority over other churches. In 189, assertion of the primacy of the Church of Rome may be indicated in Irenaeus's *Against Heresies*: “With [the Church of Rome], because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree... and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition.” In 195 CE, Pope Victor I, in what is seen as an exercise of Roman authority over other churches, excommunicated the Quartodecimans for observing Easter on the 14th of Nisan, the date of the Jewish Passover. Celebration of Easter on a Sunday, as insisted on by the pope, is the system that has prevailed.

When Constantine became emperor of the Western Roman Empire in 312, he attributed his victory to the Christian God. Many soldiers in his army were Christians, and his army was his base of power. With Licinius (Eastern Roman emperor), he issued the Edict of Milan, which mandated toleration of all religions in the empire. Decisions made at the Council of Nicea (325) about the divinity of Christ led to a schism; the new religion, Arianism, flourished outside the Roman Empire. Partially to distinguish themselves from Arians, Catholic devotion to Mary became more prominent. This led to further schisms.

In 380, the Edict of Thessalonica declared Nicene Christianity, as opposed to Arianism, to be the state religion of the empire, with the name “Catholic Christians” reserved for those who accepted that

faith. While the civil power in the Eastern Roman Empire controlled the church, and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, the capital, wielded much power, in the Western Roman Empire the Bishops of Rome were able to consolidate the influence and power they already possessed. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, barbarian tribes were converted to Arian Christianity or Catholicism; Clovis I, king of the Franks, was the first important barbarian ruler to convert to Catholicism rather than Arianism, allying himself with the papacy. Other tribes, such as the Visigoths, later abandoned Arianism in favor of Catholicism.

## The Middle Ages

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the pope served as a source of authority and continuity. Pope Gregory I (c. 540–604) administered the church with strict reform. Gregory was from an ancient senatorial family, and worked with the stern judgement and discipline typical of ancient Roman rule. Theologically, he represents the shift from the classical to the medieval outlook; his popular writings are full of dramatic miracles, potent relics, demons, angels, ghosts, and the approaching end of the world.



**Gregory the Great:** Pope Gregory I (c. 540–604) who established medieval themes in the church, in a painting by Carlo Saraceni, c. 1610, Rome.

The Byzantine Papacy was a period of Byzantine domination of the papacy from 537 to 752, when popes required the approval of

the Byzantine Emperor for episcopal consecration, and many popes were chosen from the *apocrisiarii* (liaisons from the pope to the emperor) or the inhabitants of Byzantine Greece, Byzantine Syria, or Byzantine Sicily. Justinian I conquered the Italian peninsula in the Gothic War (535–554) and appointed the next three popes, a practice that would be continued by his successors and later be delegated to the Exarchate of Ravenna. With the exception of Pope Martin I, no pope during this period questioned the authority of the Byzantine monarch to confirm the election of the bishop of Rome before consecration could occur.

From the late-6th to the late-8th century there was a turning of the papacy to the West and an escape from subordination to the authority of the Byzantine emperors of Constantinople. This phase has sometimes incorrectly been credited to Pope Gregory I (who reigned from 590 to 604 CE), who, like his predecessors, represented to the people of the Roman world a church that was still identified with the empire. Unlike some of those predecessors, Gregory was compelled to face the collapse of imperial authority in northern Italy. As the leading civil official of the empire in Rome, he was compelled to take over the civil administration of the cities and negotiate for the protection of Rome itself with the Lombard invaders threatening it. Another part of this phase occurred in the 8th century, after the rise of the new religion of Islam had weakened the Byzantine Empire and the Lombards had renewed their pressure in Italy. The popes finally sought support from the Frankish rulers of the West and received from the Frankish king Pepin The Short the first part of the Italian territories later known as the Papal States. With Pope Leo III's coronation of Charlemagne, first of the Carolingian emperors, the papacy also gained the emperor's protection; this action established the precedent that, in Western Europe, no man would be emperor without being crowned by a pope.

## Second Phase of Papal Supremacy

The second great phase in the process of papal supremacy's rise to prominence extended from the mid-11th to the mid-13th century. It was distinguished, first, by Gregory VII's bold attack after 1075 on the traditional practices whereby the emperor had controlled appointments to the higher church offices. This attack spawned the protracted civil and ecclesiastical strife in Germany and Italy known as the Investiture Controversy. At issue was who, the pope or the monarchs, had the authority to appoint (invest) local church officials such as bishops of cities and abbots of monasteries. The conflict ended in 1122, when Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II agreed on the Concordat of Worms, which differentiated between the royal and spiritual powers and gave the emperors a limited role in selecting bishops. The outcome seemed mostly a victory for the pope and his claim that he was God's chief representative in the world. However, the emperor did retain considerable power over the Church.

Papal supremacy was also increased by Urban II's launching in 1095 of the Crusades, which, in an attempt to liberate the Holy Land from Muslim domination, marshaled under papal leadership the aggressive energies of the European nobility. Both these efforts, although ultimately unsuccessful, greatly enhanced papal prestige in the 12th and 13th centuries. Such powerful popes as Alexander III (r. 1159–81), Innocent III (r. 1198–1216), Gregory IX (r. 1227–41), and Innocent IV (r. 1243–54) wielded a primacy over the church that attempted to vindicate a jurisdictional supremacy over emperors and kings in temporal and spiritual affairs. Throughout the rest of the Middle Ages, popes struggled with monarchs over power.

# The Rise of the Monasteries

Christian monasticism, which consists of individuals living ascetic and often cloistered lives that are dedicated to Christian worship, became popular during the Middle Ages and gave rise to several monastic orders with different goals and lifestyles.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Compare and contrast some of the monastic orders that were formed during the Middle Ages

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Because of the ubiquitous power of religion, and especially Christianity, monasticism flourished in medieval Europe.
- Medieval monastic life consisted of prayer, reading, and manual labor.
- From the 6th century onward, most of the monasteries in the West were of the Benedictine Order, founded by Benedict of Nursia, who wrote influential rules for monastic life.

- By the 11th century, the Cistercians reformed the Benedictine way of life, adhering more strictly to Benedict's original rules and focusing on manual labour and self-sufficiency.
- During the rule of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216), two mendicant orders, the Franciscan and the Dominican, were founded.
- Francis of Assisi founded the order of the Franciscans, who were known for their charitable work.
- The Dominicans, founded by Saint Dominic, focused on teaching, preaching, and suppressing heresy.

### *Key Terms*

- **mendicant:** Certain Christian religious orders that have adopted a lifestyle of poverty, traveling, and living in urban areas for purposes of preaching, evangelization, and ministry, especially to the poor; more generally an ascetic lifestyle that includes poverty and begging.
- **Benedict's Rule:** A book of precepts written by Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–550) for monks living communally under the authority of an abbot.
- **Christian monasticism:** The devotional practice of individuals who live ascetic and typically cloistered lives that are dedicated to Christian worship.

# Monasticism in the Middle Ages

Christian monasticism is the devotional practice of individuals who live ascetic and typically cloistered lives that are dedicated to Christian worship. Monasticism became quite popular in the Middle Ages, with religion being the most important force in Europe. Monks and nuns were to live isolated from the world to become closer to God. Monks provided service to the church by copying manuscripts, creating art, educating people, and working as missionaries. Convents were especially appealing to women. It was the only place they would receive any sort of education or power. It also let them escape unwanted marriages.

## The Benedictines

From the 6th century onward most of the monasteries in the West were of the Benedictine Order. The Benedictines were founded by Benedict of Nursia, the most influential of western monks and called “the father of western monasticism.” He was educated in Rome but soon sought the life of a hermit in a cave at Subiaco, outside the city. He then attracted followers with whom he founded the monastery of Monte Cassino, between Rome and Naples, around 520. He established the Rule, adapting in part the earlier anonymous Rule of the Master (*Regula magistri*), which was written somewhere south of Rome around 500, and defined the activities of the monastery, its officers, and their responsibilities.

By the 9th century, largely under the inspiration of Emperor Charlemagne, Benedict’s Rule became the basic guide for Western monasticism. Early Benedictine monasteries were relatively small and consisted of an oratory, a refectory, a dormitory, a scriptorium, guest accommodation, and out-buildings, a group of often quite separate rooms more reminiscent of a decent-sized Roman villa



than a large medieval abbey. A monastery of about a dozen monks would have been normal during this period.

Medieval monastic life consisted of prayer, reading, and manual labor. Prayer was a monk's first priority. Apart from prayer, monks performed a variety of tasks, such as preparing medicine, lettering, and reading. These monks would also work in the gardens and on the land. They might also spend time in the Cloister, a covered colonnade around a courtyard, where they would pray or read. Some monasteries held a scriptorium where monks would write or copy books. When the monks wrote, they used very neat handwriting and would draw illustrations in the books. As a part of their unique writing style, they decorated the first letter of each paragraph.

The efficiency of Benedict's cenobitic Rule, in addition to the stability of the monasteries, made them very productive. The monasteries were the central storehouses and producers of knowledge.



**Saint Benedict:** Saint Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine Monastic Rule, by Herman Nieg, Heiligenkreuz Abbey, Austria.

## Cistercian Movement

The next wave of monastic reform after the Benedictines came with the Cistercian movement. The first Cistercian abbey was founded in 1098, at Cîteaux Abbey. The keynote of Cistercian life was a return to a literal observance of the Benedictine Rule, rejecting the developments of the Benedictines. The most striking feature in the reform was the return to manual labour, and especially to field work. Inspired by Bernard of Clairvaux, the primary builder of the Cistercians, the Cistercians became the main force of technological diffusion in medieval Europe. By the end of the 12th century the Cistercian houses numbered 500, and at its height in the 15th century the order claimed to have close to 750 houses. Most of these were built in wilderness areas, and played a major part in bringing such isolated parts of Europe into economic cultivation.

## Mendicant Orders

During the rule of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216), two of the most famous monastic orders were founded. They were called the mendicant, or begging, orders because their members begged for the food and clothes. At their foundation these orders rejected the previously established monastic model of living in one stable, isolated community where members worked at a trade and owned property in common, including land, buildings, and other wealth. By contrast, the mendicants avoided owning property, did not work at a trade, and embraced a poor, often itinerant lifestyle. They depended for their survival on the goodwill of the people to whom they preached. They would usually travel in pairs, preaching, healing the sick, and helping the poor. Francis of Assisi founded the order of the Franciscans, who were known for their charitable work. The

Dominicans, founded by Saint Dominic, focused on teaching, preaching, and suppressing heresy.

The Dominican Order came into being in the Middle Ages at a time when religion was starting to be contemplated in a new way. Men of God were no longer expected to stay behind the walls of a cloister. Instead, they traveled among the people, taking as their examples the apostles of the primitive Church. Like his contemporary, Francis, Dominic saw the need for a new type of organization, and the quick growth of the Dominicans and Franciscans during their first century of existence confirms that the orders of mendicant friars met a need.

The inspiration for the Franciscan Order came in 1209 when Francis heard a sermon on Matthew 10:9 that made such an impression on him that he decided to devote himself wholly to a life of apostolic poverty. Clad in a rough garment, barefoot, and, after the Evangelical precept, without staff or scrip, he began to preach repentance.

Francis was soon joined by a prominent fellow townsman, Bernard of Quintavalle, who contributed all that he had to the work, and by other companions, who are said to have reached eleven within a year. The brothers lived in the deserted leper colony of Rivo Torto near Assisi, but they spent much of their time traveling through the mountainous districts of Umbria, always cheerful and full of songs, yet making a deep impression on their hearers by their earnest exhortations. Their life was extremely ascetic, though such practices were apparently not prescribed by the first rule that Francis gave them (probably as early as 1209), which seems to have been nothing more than a collection of Scriptural passages emphasizing the duty of poverty.

Similar to Francis, Dominic sought to establish a new kind of order, one that would bring the dedication and systematic education of the older monastic orders like the Benedictines to bear on the religious problems of the burgeoning population of cities, but with more organizational flexibility than either monastic orders or the secular clergy. Dominic's new order was to be a preaching order,

with its members trained to preach in the vernacular languages. Rather than earning their living on vast farms as the monasteries had done, the new friars would survive by begging— “selling” themselves through persuasive preaching.

Dominic inspired his followers with loyalty to learning and virtue, a deep recognition of the spiritual power of worldly deprivation and the religious state, and a highly developed governmental structure. At the same time, Dominic encouraged the members of his order to develop a “mixed” spirituality. They were both active in preaching and contemplative in study, prayer, and meditation. The brethren of the Dominican Order were urban and learned, as well as contemplative and mystical in their spirituality. While these traits had an impact on the women of the order, the nuns especially absorbed the latter characteristics and made them their own. In England, the Dominican nuns blended these elements with their own defining characteristics and created a spirituality and collective personality that set them apart.



**Saint Francis:** *Saint Francis of Assisi, founder of the Order of Friars Minor.*

## The Western Schism

The Western Schism was a prolonged period of crisis in Latin Christendom from 1378 to 1416, when there was conflict concerning the rightful holder of the papacy.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the events that led to the Western Schism, as well as its eventual resolution

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- From 1309 to 1377, the seat of the papacy resided in Avignon, France, rather than Rome.
- Gregory XI returned to Rome in 1377, thus ending the Avignon Papacy, at which point Romans rioted to ensure the election of a Roman for pope.
- Urban VI, born Bartolomeo Prignano, the Archbishop of Bari, was elected in 1378.
- As pope, Urban VI proved suspicious, reformist, and prone to violent outbursts of temper, and thus many of the cardinals who had elected him soon regretted their decision and moved to Anagni, where they elected Robert of Geneva as a rival pope on September 20 of the same year.
- The second election threw the church into turmoil, and it quickly escalated from a church problem to a diplomatic crisis that divided Europe.
- The conflict was finally resolved by a council was

convened by a third Pisan pope, John XXIII, in 1414, which resulted in the excommunication of some of the claimants to the papacy.

### *Key Terms*

- **Avignon Papacy:** The period from 1309 to 1377, during which seven successive popes resided in Avignon, France, rather than in Rome.
- **Antipope:** A person who, in opposition to the one who is generally seen as the legitimately elected pope, makes a significantly accepted competing claim to be the pope.

The Western Schism, or Papal Schism, was a split within the Roman Catholic Church that lasted from 1378 to 1417. During that time, three men simultaneously claimed to be the true pope. Driven by politics rather than any theological disagreement, the schism was ended by the Council of Constance (1414–1418). For a time these rival claims to the papal throne damaged the reputation of the office.

## Origin

The schism in the Western Roman Church resulted from the return of the papacy to Rome under Gregory XI on January 17, 1377, ending the Avignon Papacy, which had developed a reputation for corruption that estranged major parts of western Christendom. This reputation can be attributed to perceptions of predominant French



influence and to the papal curia's efforts to extend its powers of patronage and increase its revenues.

After Pope Gregory XI died in 1378, the Romans rioted to ensure the election of a Roman for pope. On April 8, 1378 the cardinals elected a Neapolitan when no viable Roman candidates presented themselves. Urban VI, born Bartolomeo Prignano, the Archbishop of Bari, was elected. Urban had been a respected administrator in the papal chancery at Avignon, but as pope he proved suspicious, reformist, and prone to violent outbursts of temper. Many of the cardinals who had elected him soon regretted their decision; the majority removed themselves from Rome to Anagni, where, even though Urban was still reigning, they elected Robert of Geneva as a rival pope on September 20, 1378. Robert took the name Clement VII and reestablished a papal court in Avignon. This second election threw the church into turmoil. There had been antipopes—rival claimants to the papacy—before, but most of them had been appointed by various rival factions; in this case, a single group of church leaders had created both the pope and the antipope.

The conflict quickly escalated from a church problem to a diplomatic crisis that divided Europe. Secular leaders had to choose which claimant they would recognize. France, Aragon, Castile and León, Cyprus, Burgundy, Savoy, Naples, Scotland, and Owain Glyndwr's rebellion in Wales recognized the Avignon claimant. Denmark, England, Flanders, the Holy Roman Empire, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Sweden, Republic of Venice, and other city states of northern Italy recognized the Roman claimant. In the Iberian Peninsula there were the Ferdinand Wars and the 1383–1385 Crisis in Portugal, during which dynastic opponents supported rival claimants to the papal office.

## Consequences

Sustained by such national and factional rivalries throughout

Catholic Christianity, the schism continued after the deaths of both initial claimants; Boniface IX, crowned at Rome in 1389, and Benedict XIII, who reigned in Avignon from 1394, maintained their rival courts. When Boniface died in 1404, the eight cardinals of the Roman conclave offered to refrain from electing a new pope if Benedict would resign, but when his legates refused on his behalf, the Roman party then proceeded to elect Innocent VII. In the intense partisanship characteristic of the Middle Ages, the schism engendered a fanatical hatred between factions.

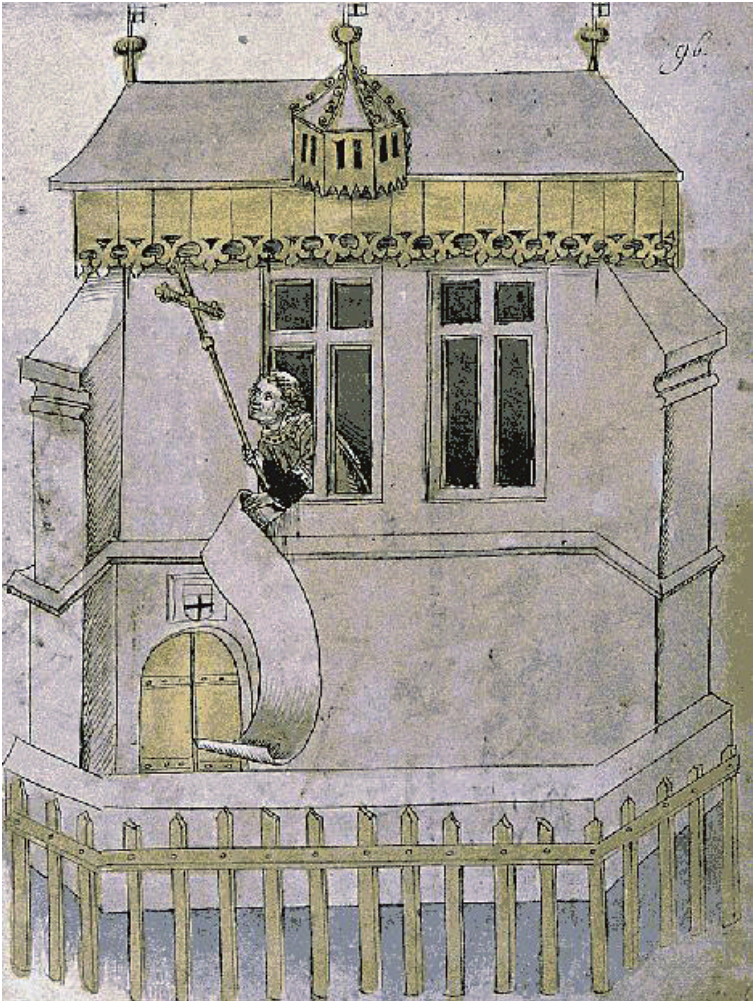
Efforts were made to end the schism through force or diplomacy. The French crown even tried to coerce Benedict XIII, whom it nominally supported, into resigning. None of these remedies worked. The suggestion to have a church council resolve the schism was first made in 1378, but was not initially adopted because canon law required that a pope call a council. Eventually, theologians like Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson, as well as canon lawyers like Francesco Zabarella, adopted arguments that equity permitted the Church to act for its own welfare in defiance of the letter of the law.

Eventually the cardinals of both factions secured an agreement that Benedict and Pope Gregory XII would meet at Savona. They balked at the last moment, and both colleges of cardinals abandoned their popes. A church council was held at Pisa in 1409 under the auspices of the cardinals to try solving the dispute. At the fifteenth session, on June 5, 1409, the Council of Pisa deposed the two pontiffs as schismatical, heretical, perjured, and scandalous. But it then added to the problem by electing another incumbent, Alexander V. He reigned briefly from June 26, 1409, until his death in 1410, when he was succeeded by John XXIII, who won some, but not universal, support.

## Resolution

Finally, a council was convened at Constance by Pisan pope John

XXIII in 1414 to resolve the issue. This was endorsed by Gregory XII, Innocent VII's successor in Rome, thus ensuring the legitimacy of any election. The council, advised by the theologian Jean Gerson, secured the resignations of John XXIII and Gregory XII in 1415, while excommunicating the claimant who refused to step down, Benedict XIII. The council elected Pope Martin V in 1417, essentially ending the schism. Nonetheless, the Crown of Aragon did not recognize Martin V and continued to recognize Benedict XIII. Archbishops loyal to Benedict XIII subsequently elected Antipope Benedict XIV (Bernard Garnier), and three followers simultaneously elected Antipope Clement VIII, but the Western Schism was by then practically over. Clement VIII resigned in 1429 and apparently recognized Martin V.



**Habemus Papam 1415:** *Habemus Papam* (the announcement of a new pope) at the Council of Constance, 1415.

# 54. Assignments

## Week 9

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

##### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – *“Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.”*
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.
- It is acceptable to analyze. *“The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.”*
- It is not acceptable to editorialize. *“The author is super biased*

*against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”*

- Don't worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

# 55. Primary Source Reading 4: Mt. Vesuvius Eruption 79 AD

## Primary Source Reading: Mt. Vesuvius eruption 79 AD

Pompeii, Italy

*On August 24, 79 Mount Vesuvius literally blew up, spewing tons of molten ash, pumice and sulfuric gas miles into the atmosphere. A “firestorm” of poisonous vapors and molten debris engulfed the surrounding area suffocating the inhabitants of the neighboring Roman resort cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae. Tons of falling debris filled the streets until nothing remained to be seen of the once thriving communities. The cities remained buried and undiscovered for almost 1700 years until excavation began in 1748. These excavations continue today and provide insight into life during the Roman Empire. An ancient voice reaches out from the past to tell us of the disaster. This voice belongs to Pliny the Younger whose letters describe his experience during the eruption while he was staying in the home of his Uncle, Pliny the Elder. The elder Pliny was an official in the Roman Court, in charge of the fleet in the area of the Bay of Naples and a naturalist.*

*by Pliny the Younger (AD 61-113)*

*My dear Tacitus,*

*You ask me to write you something about the death of my uncle so that the account you transmit to posterity is as reliable as possible. I am grateful to you, for I see that his death will be remembered forever if you treat it [sc. in your Histories]. He perished in a devastation of the loveliest of lands, in a memorable disaster shared by peoples and cities, but this will be a kind of eternal life for him.*

Although he wrote a great number of enduring works himself, the imperishable nature of your writings will add a great deal to his survival. Happy are they, in my opinion, to whom it is given either to do something worth writing about, or to write something worth reading; most happy, of course, those who do both. With his own books and yours, my uncle will be counted among the latter. It is therefore with great pleasure that I take up, or rather take upon myself the task you have set me.

He was at Misenum in his capacity as commander of the fleet on the 24th of August [sc. in 79 AD], when between 2 and 3 in the afternoon my mother drew his attention to a cloud of unusual size and appearance. He had had a sunbath, then a cold bath, and was reclining after dinner with his books. He called for his shoes and climbed up to where he could get the best view of the phenomenon. The cloud was rising from a mountain-at such a distance we couldn't tell which, but afterwards learned that it was Vesuvius. I can best describe its shape by likening it to a pine tree. It rose into the sky on a very long "trunk" from which spread some "branches." I imagine it had been raised by a sudden blast, which then weakened, leaving the cloud unsupported so that its own weight caused it to spread sideways. Some of the cloud was white, in other parts there were dark patches of dirt and ash. The sight of it made the scientist in my uncle determined to see it from closer at hand.

He ordered a boat made ready. He offered me the opportunity of going along, but I preferred to study-he himself happened to have set me a writing exercise. As he was leaving the house he was brought a letter from Tascius' wife Rectina, who was terrified by the looming danger. Her villa lay at the foot of Vesuvius, and there was no way out except by boat. She begged him to get her away. He changed his plans. The expedition that started out as a quest for knowledge now called for courage. He launched the quadriremes and embarked himself; a source of aid for more people than just Rectina, for that delightful shore was a populous one. He hurried to a place from which others were fleeing, and held his course directly into danger. Was he afraid? It seems not, as he kept up a continuous



observation of the various movements and shapes of that evil cloud, dictating what he saw.

Ash was falling onto the ships now, darker and denser the closer they went. Now it was bits of pumice, and rocks that were blackened and burned and shattered by the fire. Now the sea is shoal; debris from the mountain blocks the shore. He paused for a moment wondering whether to turn back as the helmsman urged him. "Fortune helps the brave," he said, "Head for Pomponianus."

At Stabiae, on the other side of the bay formed by the gradually curving shore, Pomponianus had loaded up his ships even before the danger arrived, though it was visible and indeed extremely close, once it intensified. He planned to put out as soon as the contrary wind let up. That very wind carried my uncle right in, and he embraced the frightened man and gave him comfort and courage. In order to lessen the other's fear by showing his own unconcern he asked to be taken to the baths. He bathed and dined, carefree or at least appearing so (which is equally impressive). Meanwhile, broad sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius; their light and brightness were the more vivid for the darkness of the night. To alleviate people's fears my uncle claimed that the flames came from the deserted homes of farmers who had left in a panic with the hearth fires still alight. Then he rested, and gave every indication of actually sleeping; people who passed by his door heard his snores, which were rather resonant since he was a heavy man. The ground outside his room rose so high with the mixture of ash and stones that if he had spent any more time there escape would have been impossible. He got up and came out, restoring himself to Pomponianus and the others who had been unable to sleep. They discussed what to do, whether to remain under cover or to try the open air. The buildings were being rocked by a series of strong tremors, and appeared to have come loose from their foundations and to be sliding this way and that. Outside, however, there was danger from the rocks that were coming down, light and fire-consumed as these bits of pumice were. Weighing the relative dangers they chose the outdoors; in my uncle's case it was a rational

decision, others just chose the alternative that frightened them the least.

They tied pillows on top of their heads as protection against the shower of rock. It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night. But they had torches and other lights. They decided to go down to the shore, to see from close up if anything was possible by sea. But it remained as rough and uncooperative as before. Resting in the shade of a sail he drank once or twice from the cold water he had asked for. Then came an smell of sulfur, announcing the flames, and the flames themselves, sending others into flight but reviving him. Supported by two small slaves he stood up, and immediately collapsed. As I understand it, his breathing was obstructed by the dust-laden air, and his innards, which were never strong and often blocked or upset, simply shut down. When daylight came again 2 days after he died, his body was found untouched, unharmed, in the clothing that he had had on. He looked more asleep than dead.

Meanwhile at Misenum, my mother and I-but this has nothing to do with history, and you only asked for information about his death. I'll stop here then. But I will say one more thing, namely, that I have written out everything that I did at the time and heard while memories were still fresh. You will use the important bits, for it is one thing to write a letter, another to write history, one thing to write to a friend, another to write for the public.

Farewell.

PART XI

WEEK 10: THE RISE OF  
ISLAM AND THE  
BYZANTINE EMPIRE



# 56. Introduction

## Week 10

### Introduction

Madina Munavara

The expansion of the Muslim Empire in the years following the Prophet Muhammad's death led to the creation of the caliphates, occupying a vast geographical area and conversion to Islam was boosted by missionary activities particularly those of Imams, who easily intermingled with local populace to propagate the religious teachings. These early caliphates, coupled with Muslim economics and trading and the later expansion of the Ottoman Empire, resulted in Islam's spread outwards from Mecca towards both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the creation of the Muslim world. Trading played an important role in the spread of Islam in several parts of the world, notably southeast Asia.

Muslim dynasties were soon established and subsequent empires such as those of the Abbasids, Fatimids, Almoravids, Seljukids, Ajuran, Adal and Warsangali in Somalia, Mughals in India and Safavids in Persia and Ottomans in Anatolia were among the largest and most powerful in the world. The people of the Islamic world created numerous sophisticated centers of culture and science with far-reaching mercantile networks, travelers, scientists, hunters, mathematicians, doctors and philosophers, all contributing to the Golden Age of Islam.

The Byzantine Empire, also referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the East during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when its capital city was

Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, which had been founded as Byzantium). It survived the fragmentation and fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD and continued to exist for an additional thousand years until it fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. During most of its existence, the empire was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe. Both “Byzantine Empire” and “Eastern Roman Empire” are historiographical terms created after the end of the realm; its citizens continued to refer to their empire as the Roman Empire (Greek: *Βασιλεία τῶν Ῥωμαίων*, tr. *Basileia tôn Rhōmaiōn*; Latin: *Imperium Romanum*), or Romania (*Ῥωμανία*), and to themselves as “Romans”.

map

# 57. Reading: The Late Byzantine Empire

## The Macedonian Dynasty

The Macedonian Dynasty saw expansion and the Byzantine Renaissance, but also instability, due to competition among nobles in the theme system.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss hegemony under the Macedonian Dynasty

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Shortly after the extended controversy over the Byzantine Iconoclasm, the Byzantine Empire would recover under the Macedonian Dynasty, starting in 867 CE.
- The Macedonian Dynasty saw the Byzantine

Renaissance, a time of increased interest in classical scholarship and the assimilation of classical motifs into Christian artwork.

- The empire also expanded during this period, conquering Crete, Cyprus, and most of Syria.
- However, the Macedonian Dynasty also saw increasing dissatisfaction and competition for land among nobles in the theme system, which weakened the authority of the emperors and led to instability.

### *Key Terms*

- **Byzantine Renaissance:** The time during the Macedonian Dynasty when art, literature, science, and philosophy flourished.

## Emperor Basil I

Shortly after the extended controversy over iconoclasm, which more or less ended (at least in the east) with the regent Theodora reinstating icon worship in 842 CE, Emperor Basil I founded a new dynasty, the Macedonian Dynasty, in 867 CE. Basil was born a simple peasant in the Byzantine theme of Macedonia; he rose in the Imperial Court, and usurped the imperial throne from Emperor Michael III (r. 842-867). Despite his humble origins, he showed great ability in running the affairs of state, leading to a revival of imperial power and a renaissance of Byzantine art. He was perceived by the Byzantines as one of their greatest emperors, and the Macedonian



Dynasty ruled over what is regarded as the most glorious and prosperous era of the Byzantine Empire.

It was under this dynasty that the Byzantine Empire would recover from its previous turmoil, and become the most powerful state in the medieval world. This was also a period of cultural and artistic flowering in the Byzantine world. The cities of the empire expanded, and affluence spread across the provinces because of the new-found security. The population rose, and production increased, stimulating new demand, while also helping to encourage trade. The iconoclast movement experienced a steep decline; the decline was advantageous to the emperors who had softly suppressed iconoclasm, and to the reconciliation of the religious strife that had drained the imperial resources in the previous centuries.



**Emperor Basil I:** A depiction of Byzantine Emperor Basil I, of the Macedonian Dynasty, on horseback.

## Macedonian Renaissance

The time of the Macedonian Dynasty's rule over the Byzantine Empire is sometimes called the Byzantine Renaissance or the Macedonian Renaissance. A long period of military struggle for survival had recently dominated the life of the Byzantine Empire, but the Macedonians ushered in an age when art and literature once again flourished. The classical Greco-Roman heritage of Byzantium was central to the writers and artists of the period. Byzantine scholars, most notably Leo the Mathematician, read the scientific and philosophical works of the ancient Greeks and expanded upon them. Artists adopted their naturalistic style and complex techniques from ancient Greek and Roman art, and mixed them with Christian themes. Byzantine painting from this period would have a strong influence on the later painters of the Italian Renaissance.

## Political and Religious Expansion

The Macedonian Dynasty also oversaw the expansion of the Byzantine Empire, which went on the offensive against its enemies. For example, Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (who ruled from 912 CE-969 CE) pursued an aggressive policy of expansion. Before rising to the throne, he had conquered Crete from the Muslims, and as emperor he led the conquest of Cyprus and most of Syria.

The Macedonian period also included events of momentous religious significance. The conversion of the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Rus' to Orthodox Christianity permanently changed the religious map of Europe, and still impacts demographics today. Cyril and Methodius, two Byzantine Greek brothers, contributed significantly to the Christianization of the Slavs, and in the process devised the Glagolitic alphabet, ancestor to the Cyrillic script.

Throughout this period there was great competition among nobles for land in the theme system. Since such governors could collect taxes and control the military forces of their themes, they became independent of the emperors and acted independently, weakening the authority of the emperors. They tended to increase taxes on small farmers in order to enrich themselves, thereby causing massive dissatisfaction.

## The Great Schism of 1054

The centuries-long gradual religious separation between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires culminated in the institutional separation known as the East-West Schism.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify the consequences of the East-West Schism

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- By the turn of the millennium, the Eastern and Western Roman Empires had been gradually

separating along religious fault lines for centuries. A separation in the Roman world can be marked with the construction of Constantine The Great's New Rome in Byzantium.

- The Byzantine Iconoclasm, in particular, widened the growing divergence and tension between east and west—the Western Church remained firmly in support of the use of religious images—though the church was still unified at this time.
- In response, the pope in the west declared a new emperor in Charlemagne, solidifying the rift and causing outrage in the east. The empire in the west became known as the Holy Roman Empire.
- Finally, 1054 CE saw the East-West Schism: the formal declaration of institutional separation between east, into the Orthodox Church (now Eastern Orthodox Church), and west, into the Catholic Church (now Roman Catholic Church).

### *Key Terms*

- **East-West Schism:** The formal institutional separation in 1054 CE between the Eastern Church of the Byzantine Empire (into the Orthodox Church, now called the Eastern Orthodox Church) and the Western Church of the Holy Roman Empire (into the Catholic Church, now called the Roman Catholic Church).
- **Iconoclasm:** The destruction or prohibition of religious icons and other images or monuments for

religious or political motives.

The East-West Schism, also called the Great Schism and the Schism of 1054, was the break of communion between what are now the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches, which has lasted since the 11th century.

The ecclesiastical differences and theological disputes between the Greek east and Latin west pre-existed the formal rupture that occurred in 1054. Prominent among these were the issues of the source of the Holy Spirit, whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used in the Eucharist, the Bishop of Rome's claim to universal jurisdiction, and the place of the See of Constantinople in relation to the Pentarchy.

## Tensions Between East and West

By the turn of the millennium, the Eastern and Western Roman Empires had been gradually separating along religious fault lines for centuries, beginning with Emperor Leo III's pioneering of the Byzantine Iconoclasm in 730 CE, in which he declared the worship of religious images to be heretical. The Western Church remained firmly in support of the use of religious images. Leo tried to use military force to compel Pope Gregory III, but he failed, and the pope condemned Leo's actions. In response, Leo confiscated papal estates and placed them under the governance of Constantinople.

Therefore, the Iconoclasm widened the growing divergence and tension between east and west, though the church was still unified at this time. It also decisively ended the so-called Byzantine Papacy, under which, since the reign of Justinian I a century before, the popes in Rome had been nominated or confirmed by the emperor

in Constantinople. The deference of the Western Church to Constantinople dissolved, and Rome would maintain a consistently iconodule position (meaning it supports or is in favor of religious images or icons and their veneration).

## A New Emperor in the West

Regent Irene convened the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 CE, which temporarily restored image worship, in an attempt to soothe the strained relations between Constantinople and Rome—but it was too late. After Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, saved Rome from a Lombard attack, Pope Leo III (not to be confused with the Byzantine Leo III) declared him the new Roman emperor in 800 CE, since a woman (Irene) could not be emperor. It was also a message that the popes were now loyal to the Franks, who could protect them, instead of the Byzantines, who had only caused trouble. To the Byzantines, this was an outrage, attacking their claim to be the true successors of Rome.

From this point on, the Frankish Empire is usually known as the Holy Roman Empire. With two Roman empires, the Byzantines and the Franks, the authority of the Byzantine Empire was weakened. In the west they were no longer called “Romans,” but “Greeks” (and eventually “Byzantines”). The Byzantines, however, continued to consider themselves Romans, and looked to the patriarch of Constantinople, not the pope, as the most important religious figure of the church.

## Crisis and Permanent Schism

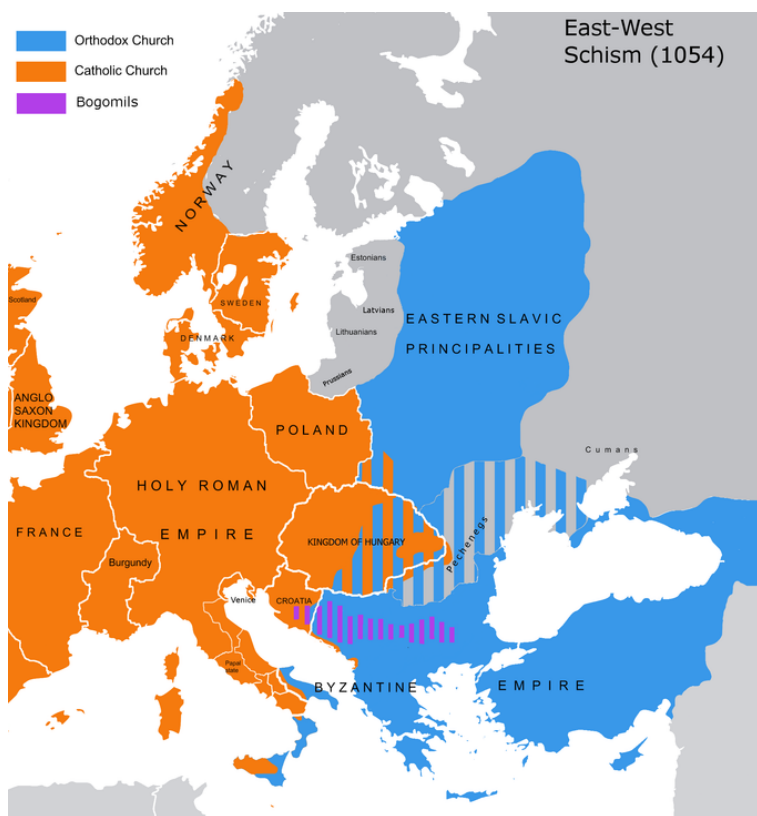
The differences in practice and worship between the Church of

Rome in the west and the Church of Constantinople in the east only increased over time.

In 1053, the first step was taken in the process that led to formal schism; the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael I Cerularius, ordered the closure of all Latin churches in Constantinople, in response to the Greek churches in southern Italy having been forced to either close or conform to Latin practices. According to the historian J. B. Bury, Cerularius' purpose in closing the Latin churches was "to cut short any attempt at conciliation."

Finally, in 1054 CE, relations between the Eastern and Western traditions within the Christian Church reached a terminal crisis. The papal legate sent by Leo IX traveled to Constantinople for purposes that included refusing to Cerularius the title of "Ecumenical Patriarch," and insisting that he recognize the Pope's claim to be the head of all the churches. The main purpose of the papal legation was to seek help from the Byzantine emperor in view of the Norman conquest of southern Italy, and to deal with recent attacks by Leo of Ohrid against the use of unleavened bread and other Western customs, attacks that had the support of Cerularius. Historian Axel Bayer contends that the legation was sent in response to two letters, one from the emperor seeking assistance in arranging a common military campaign by the Eastern and Western Empires against the Normans, and the other from Cerularius. On the refusal of Cerularius to accept the demand, the leader of the legation, Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, excommunicated him, and in return Cerularius excommunicated Humbert and the other legates. This was only the first act in a centuries-long process that eventually became a complete schism.

The gradual separation of the last several centuries culminated in a formal declaration of institutional separation between east, into the Orthodox Church (now Eastern Orthodox Church), and west, into the Catholic Church (now Roman Catholic Church). This was known as the East-West Schism.



**The East-West Schism:** *The religious distribution after the East-West Schism between the churches of the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire in 1054 CE.*

The church split along doctrinal, theological, linguistic, political, and geographical lines, and the fundamental breach has never been healed, with each side sometimes accusing the other of having fallen into heresy and of having initiated the division. Conflicts over the next several centuries (such as the Crusades, the Massacre of the Latins in 1182 CE, the west's retaliation in the Sacking of Thessalonica in 1185 CE, the capture and sack of Constantinople in



1204 CE, and the imposition of Latin patriarchs) would only make reconciliation more difficult.

## The Byzantine-Bulgarian Wars

The Byzantine Empire had a long and tumultuous relationship with the Bulgar Empire to its north.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Distinguish between the different threats that the Byzantines faced around the turn of the millennium

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Bulgarian Empire was founded in the 5th century and continued to expand and clash with the Byzantine Empire for centuries.
- During a period of peace, in 864 the Bulgar Empire converted to Christianity and adopted many Byzantine cultural practices.
- Ending 80 years of peace between the two states,

the powerful Bulgarian tsar Simeon I invaded in 894, but was pushed back by the Byzantines.

- In 971, John I Tzimiskes, the Byzantine emperor, subjugated much of the weakening Bulgarian Empire.
- In 1185, however, Bulgarians Theodore Peter and Ivan Asen started a revolt, and the weakening Byzantine Empire, facing internal dynastic troubles of its own, was unable to prevent the revolt from being successful.
- In 1396, Bulgaria fell to the Ottoman Turks, and in 1453, Constantinople was captured. Since both became part of the Ottoman Empire, this was the end of the long series of Bulgarian-Byzantine Wars.

### *Key Terms*

- **lingua franca:** A language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language or dialect.
- **Bulgarian:** A South Slavic ethnic group who are native to Bulgaria and neighbouring regions.

## The Bulgarian Empire

The First Bulgarian Empire was a medieval Bulgarian state that existed in southeastern Europe between the 7th and 11th centuries CE. It was founded circa 681, when Bulgar tribes led by Asparukh moved to the northeastern Balkans. There they secured Byzantine

recognition of their right to settle south of the Danube, by defeating—possibly with the help of local South Slavic tribes—the Byzantine army led by Constantine IV. At the height of its power, Bulgaria spread from the Danube Bend to the Black Sea, and from the Dnieper River to the Adriatic Sea.

As the state solidified its position in the Balkans, it entered into a centuries-long interaction, sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile, with the Byzantine Empire. Bulgaria emerged as Byzantium's chief antagonist to its north, resulting in several wars. The two powers also enjoyed periods of peace and alliance, most notably during the Second Arab siege of Constantinople, where the Bulgarian army broke the siege and destroyed the Arab army, thus preventing an Arab invasion of southeastern Europe. Byzantium had a strong cultural influence on Bulgaria, which also led to the eventual adoption of Christianity in 864.

After the adoption of Christianity, Bulgaria became the cultural center of Slavic Europe. Its leading cultural position was further consolidated with the invention of the Glagolitic and Early Cyrillic alphabets shortly after in the capital of Preslav, and literature produced in Old Bulgarian soon began spreading north. Old Bulgarian became the *lingua franca* of much of eastern Europe and it came to be known as Old Church Slavonic. In 927, the fully independent Bulgarian Patriarchate was officially recognized.

## The Byzantine-Bulgarian Wars

The Byzantine-Bulgarian Wars were a series of conflicts fought between the Byzantines and Bulgarians, which began when the Bulgars first settled in the Balkan peninsula in the 5th century, and intensified with the expansion of the Bulgarian Empire to the southwest after 680 CE. The Byzantines and Bulgarians continued to clash over the next century with variable success, until the Bulgarians, led by Krum, inflicted a series of crushing defeats on

the Byzantines. After Krum died in 814, his son, Omurtag, negotiated a thirty-year peace treaty. The traditional struggle with the See of Rome continued through the Macedonian period, spurred by the question of religious supremacy over the newly Christianized state of Bulgaria. Ending 80 years of peace between the two states, the powerful Bulgarian tsar, Simeon I, invaded in 894 but was pushed back by the Byzantines, who used their fleet to sail up the Black Sea to attack the Bulgarian rear, enlisting the support of the Hungarians. The Byzantines were defeated at the Battle of Boulgarophygon in 896, however, and agreed to pay annual subsidies to the Bulgarians.

In 971 John I Tzimiskes, the Byzantine emperor, subjugated much of the weakening Bulgarian Empire, as it faced wars with Russians, Pechenegs, Magyars and Croatians, and by defeating Boris II and capturing Preslav, the Bulgarian capital. Byzantine Emperor Basil II completely conquered Bulgaria in 1018, as a result of the 1014 Battle of Kleidion. There were rebellions against Byzantine rule from 1040 to 1041, and in the 1070s and the 1080s, but these failed. In 1185, however, Theodore Peter and Ivan Asen started a revolt, and the weakening Byzantine Empire, facing internal dynastic troubles of its own, was unable to prevent the revolt from being successful.

The rebellion failed to immediately capture Bulgaria's historic capital, Preslav, but established a new capital city at Tŕnovo, presumably the center of the revolt. In 1186, the rebels suffered a defeat, but Isaac II Angelos failed to exploit his victory and returned to Constantinople. With the help of the chiefly Cuman population north of the Danube, Peter and Asen recovered their positions and raided into Thrace. When Isaac II Angelos penetrated into Moesia again in 1187, he failed to capture either Tŕnovo or Loveč, and he signed a treaty effectively recognizing the Second Bulgarian Empire, but neither side had any intention of keeping the peace.

Fighting continued until 1396, when Bulgaria fell to the Ottoman Turks, and 1453, when Constantinople was captured. Since both became part of the Ottoman Empire, this was the end of the long series of Bulgarian-Byzantine Wars.



**Bulgarians Fighting the Byzantines:** A Byzantine painting depicting Bulgarians slaughtering Byzantines, who can be seen with halos on their head.

## The Double Disasters

In 1071, the Byzantine Empire suffered two important defeats, against the Turks in the Battle of Manzikert, and against the Normans in Bari. These are sometimes called the Double Disasters.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify the Double Disasters and their consequences

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- A number of wars between the Normans and the Byzantine Empire were fought from c. 1040 until 1185.
- In 1071, the Byzantines were defeated by the Normans during their conquest of Italy, thereby driving the Byzantines from southern Italy.
- Even more dangerous than the Normans was a new enemy from the steppe: the Turks.
- The Battle of Manzikert was fought between the Byzantine Empire and the Seljuq Turks on August 26, 1071, and proved a decisive defeat of the Byzantine army.
- This defeat and the capture of the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes played an important role in undermining Byzantine authority in Anatolia and Armenia, the heartland of the Byzantine Empire.

### *Key Terms*

- **Battle of Manzikert:** A major battle between the Byzantines and the Turks that ended in a Byzantine defeat and ushered in the decline of the Byzantine Empire.
- **Normans:** The people who in the 10th and 11th centuries gave their name to Normandy, a region in

France. They were descended from Norse raiders and pirates from Denmark, Iceland, and Norway who, under their leader Rollo, agreed to swear fealty to King Charles III of West Francia.

## The Normans and the Defeat at Bari

A number of wars between the Normans and the Byzantine Empire were fought from 1040 until 1185, when the last Norman invasion of Byzantine territory was defeated. At the end of the conflict, neither the Normans nor the Byzantines could boast much power. A Byzantine defeat in 1071 proved decisive for the disintegration and collapse of the empire.

The Normans had come from the Duchy of Normandy in West Francia, which in 911 had been granted to the Viking Rollo in the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte by the French king Charles the Simple. The Normans and their new land took the name of these “Northmen.” During the time that the Normans had conquered southern Italy, and the Byzantine Empire was in a state of internal decay; the administration of the empire had been wrecked, and the efficient government institutions that provided Basil II with a quarter of a million troops and adequate resources by taxation had collapsed within a period of three decades. Attempts by Isaac I Komnenos and Romanos IV Diogenes to reverse the situation proved unfruitful. The premature death of the former, and the overthrow of the latter, led to further collapse as the Normans consolidated their conquest of Sicily and Italy.

Reggio Calabria, the capital of the tagma of Calabria, was captured by Robert Guiscard in 1060. At the time, the Byzantines held a few coastal towns in Apulia, including the capital of the catepanate of

Italy, Bari. Otranto was besieged and fell in October 1068; in the same year, the Normans besieged Bari itself, and, after defeating the Byzantines in a series of battles in Apulia, and after any attempt of relief had failed, the city surrendered in April 1071, ending the Byzantine presence in southern Italy.

The Norman adventurer Robert Guiscard allied with the pope to drive the remaining Byzantines from southern Italy and replace them with a Roman Catholic Norman Kingdom. Guiscard was incredibly successful, and he turned his eye to conquering the entire Byzantine Empire. He crossed over into Greece, pillaged the countryside, and defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Dyrrhachium in 1081 CE. He died before he could complete his conquests, but southern Italy would never again be ruled by the Byzantine Empire.

## The Turks and the Defeat at Manzikert

Even more dangerous than the Normans was a new enemy from the steppe, the Turks. These former pastoral nomads converted to Islam and ushered in a new phase of Islamic conquests. While the Normans were pillaging Italy, the Turks invaded Asia Minor. Emperor Romanos Diogenes moved the Byzantine army to meet them. At the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 CE, the Byzantine army was totally wiped out by the Turks. It was perhaps the most severe military disaster in Byzantine history. With this defeat, Anatolia fell into the hands of the Turks. Anatolia had been the heartland of the Byzantine Empire, the home of most of its soldiers and farmers. This defeat at Manzikert meant that the theme system, which had effectively supplied Byzantium with its army, was destroyed. The Byzantine Empire was now vulnerable to conquest.





**Battle of Manzikert:** In this 15th-century French miniature depicting the Battle of Manzikert, the combatants are clad in contemporary western European armor.

The brunt of the battle was borne by the professional soldiers from the eastern and western tagmata, as large numbers of mercenaries and Anatolian levies fled early and survived the battle. The fallout from Manzikert was disastrous for the Byzantines, resulting in civil conflicts and an economic crisis that severely weakened the Byzantine Empire's ability to adequately defend its borders. This led to the mass movement of Turks into central Anatolia—by 1080, an area of 78,000 square kilometers (30,000 sq. miles) had been gained

by the Seljuk Turks. It took three decades of internal strife before Alexius I (1081 to 1118) restored stability to Byzantium. Historian Thomas Asbridge says, “In 1071, the Seljuqs crushed an imperial army at the Battle of Manzikert (in eastern Asia Minor), and though historians no longer consider this to have been an utterly cataclysmic reversal for the Greeks, it still was a stinging setback.” It was the first time in history a Byzantine emperor had become the prisoner of a Muslim commander.

Years and decades later, Manzikert came to be seen as a disaster for the empire; later sources, therefore, greatly exaggerate the numbers of troops and the number of casualties. Byzantine historians would often look back and lament the “disaster” of that day, pinpointing it as the moment the decline of the empire began. It was not an immediate disaster, but the defeat showed the Seljuks that the Byzantines were not invincible—they were not the unconquerable, millennium-old Roman Empire (as both the Byzantines and Seljuks still called it). The usurpation of Andronikos Doukas also politically destabilized the empire, and it was difficult to organize resistance to the Turkish migrations that followed the battle.

## Crisis and Fragmentation

Tensions between eastern and western European powers boiled over during the Komnenian Dynasty; the west destroyed Constantinople and, with it, the Byzantine Empire.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze the relationship between the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Komnenian Dynasty saw a restoration of the empire after the disastrous defeat by the Turks. But, for the first time, the Byzantines had to look to the estranged western Europe for help.
- The west came to the aid of the east, but tensions mounted between them until 1182 CE, when riots escalated into a massacre of tens of thousands of Latins.
- Two decades later, western European knights sacked Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade. This was a disaster for the Byzantine Empire, which for all purposes ceased to exist.
- The leaders of several states fought over who would become the new Byzantine emperor and regain control; the Empire of Nicaea won.

### *Key Terms*

- **First Crusade:** The 1095 CE campaign begun by the pope in the Holy Roman Empire to win back Jerusalem from the Muslims.

## The Komnenian Dynasty: Cooperation with the Holy Roman Empire

In 1081 CE, with the attacks from the Normans and Turks reaching their height, a new emperor, Alexios I, came to the throne. His dynasty, the Komnenian Dynasty, would oversee a restoration of the empire after these disasters. But for the first time, the Byzantines would have to look west for help, to their estranged fellow Christians in western Europe. Although western Europe had a history of religious disagreements with the Byzantines, they now realized that the Byzantine Empire was all that was holding back the Muslims from invading Europe.

Having achieved stability in the west, Alexios could turn his attention to the severe economic difficulties and the disintegration of the empire's traditional defenses. However, he still did not have enough manpower to recover the lost territories in Asia Minor, and to advance against the Seljuks. At the Council of Piacenza in 1095, envoys from Alexios spoke to Pope Urban II about the suffering of the Christians of the east, and underscored that without help from the west, they would continue to suffer under Muslim rule.

Urban saw Alexios' request as a dual opportunity to cement western Europe and reunite the Eastern Orthodox Churches with

the Roman Catholic Church under his rule. On November 27, 1095, Pope Urban II called together the Council of Clermont, and urged all those present to take up arms under the sign of the cross, and launch an armed pilgrimage to recover Jerusalem and the east from the Muslims. The response in western Europe was overwhelming.

## Tensions Mount During the First Crusade

Alexios had anticipated help in the form of mercenary forces from the west, but he was totally unprepared for the immense and undisciplined force which soon arrived in Byzantine territory. It was no comfort to Alexios to learn that four of the eight leaders of the main body of the Crusade were Normans, among them Bohemund.

Relations were rocky from the start. To the Byzantines, the crusaders were dirty, uneducated brutes. To the crusaders, the Byzantines were untrustworthy, over-pampered schemers. Still, they tried to work together. The Byzantines and crusaders agreed that whatever formerly Byzantine lands the crusaders recaptured from the Turks would be returned to Byzantine control. The crusaders went back on this agreement, however, and took the lands for themselves. The crusaders succeeded in conquering Jerusalem in 1099 CE, but the Byzantines had come to regard them as just as big a threat as the Muslims.



**The First Crusade:** The capture of Jerusalem in 1099 CE marked the success of western Europe's First Crusade against the Muslims.

Still, thanks to the Crusades, the Byzantines were able to reassert control of Anatolia. Emperor Alexios created a new system of leasing land in exchange for military service, called the *Pronoia* System, which was similar to the old *theme* system. Under his successors, the Byzantines did not win any major victories, but they were able to keep the Turks out of Byzantium's Anatolian heartland.

At the same time, in order to secure military aid from the western powers, the Byzantine emperors had granted financial and trade concessions to Italy. Large numbers of Italian merchants settled in Constantinople and put the local merchants out of business. Tensions between them and the Byzantines of the city worsened.

In 1182 CE, these tensions spilled over into riots and a massacre of Latins (the people from western Europe) by an angry mob. Tens of thousands were killed.

The recent anti-Latin resentment in the empire led to the Crusader states losing their protection from Byzantium. However, while the Crusader states did not rely on Byzantium for protection, the Byzantines certainly did in that it kept the aggressive expansionism of Islam in check.

## Western Europe Sacks Constantinople

In 1198 CE, the pope called a new crusade to permanently secure western Europe's hold on Jerusalem. When the western Europeans arrived at Constantinople in 1204 CE, they found civil war among the Byzantines. In part sparked by the massacre of the Latins of 1182 CE, and in part motivated by the tempting wealth of Constantinople, the western European knights sacked Constantinople, in what is known as the Fourth Crusade. They pillaged the city, carrying away the vast wealth amassed over nine centuries in the Byzantine capital. For this reason, many great examples of Byzantine art can be found today in Venice, especially at St. Mark's Cathedral. The sack was a disaster for the Byzantine Empire, which for all purposes ceased to exist. The crusaders parceled out Byzantine lands among themselves. Constantinople became the capital of a new empire, called the Latin Empire, ruled by western knights.

Constantinople was considered as a bastion of Christianity that defended Europe from the advancing forces of Islam, and the Fourth Crusade's sack of the city dealt an irreparable blow to this eastern bulwark. Although the Greeks retook Constantinople after 57 years of Latin rule, the Byzantine Empire had been crippled by the Fourth Crusade.



**The Fourth Crusade:** An oil painting by Eugène Delacroix depicting the arrival of the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople in 1204 CE.

## Fragmentation of the Byzantine Empire

The Siege of Constantinople in 1204 CE was a turning point in Byzantine history, but it was not the end. Several members of the Komnenian royal family had been away from the capital at the time of the sack, and they declared their own successor states. Each emperor of these states declared himself to be the rightful Byzantine emperor. They fought each other and the Latins for control of the former lands of the Byzantine Empire. It was the Empire of Nicaea, closest to Constantinople, that would be most successful.



# The Last Byzantine Dynasty

Michael VIII recaptured Constantinople and restored the Byzantine Empire, giving rise to the last dynasty of the empire and a brief time of cultural flourishing.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify the role of Michael VIII and the Palaiologos Dynasty

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After Constantinople was sacked by the west, and the Byzantine Empire was mostly destroyed with it, Michael VIII of the Empire of Nicaea, a smaller state, claimed the throne and founded the Palaiologos Dynasty, the longest and last dynasty of Byzantine rulers.
- In 1261 CE, Michael's forces recaptured Constantinople, though it was a shell of its former self, marking the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.
- Michael attempted to end the schism between the

Catholic and Orthodox churches, but this outraged many of his citizens, who now hated the Latins of western Europe more than even the Muslims, due to their sacking of Constantinople.

- During the Palaiologan Dynasty, however, the empire experienced the short but vibrant Palaiologan Renaissance, when learning, art, and philosophy flourished.

### *Key Terms*

- **Nicaean Empire:** The largest of the three Byzantine Greek successor states founded by the aristocracy of the Byzantine Empire that fled after Constantinople was occupied by western European and Venetian forces during the Fourth Crusade.
- **Palaiologan Renaissance:** The short but vibrant period when emperors attempted to restore Constantinople from destruction and encouraged art, philosophy, and education. The attempt at restoring this cultural foundation occurred during the Byzantine Empire's longest-lived dynasty in Byzantine history. Migration of Byzantine scholars at the end of this period helped to spark the Renaissance in Italy.

## Background

Following the Fourth Crusade, the Byzantine Empire had fractured

into the Greek successor-states of Nicaea, Epirus and Trebizond, with a multitude of Frankish and Latin possessions occupying the remainder, nominally subject to the Latin emperors at Constantinople. In addition, the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire allowed the Bulgarians, the Serbs, and the various Turcoman emirates of Anatolia to make gains. Although Epirus was initially the strongest of the three Greek states, the Nicaeans were the ones who succeeded in taking back the city of Constantinople from the Latin Empire

The Nicaean Empire was successful in holding its own against its Latin and Seljuk opponents. At the Battle of Meander Valley, a Turkic force was repelled and an earlier assault on Nicaea led to the death of the Seljuk Sultan. In the west, the Latins were unable to expand into Anatolia; consolidating Thrace against Bulgaria was a challenge that kept the Latins occupied for the duration of the Latin Empire.

In 1261, the Empire of Nicaea was ruled by John IV Laskaris, a boy of ten years. However, John IV was overshadowed by his co-emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos. Palaiologos was a leading noble of military standing and the main figure of the regency of John IV, who had used this role to propel himself to the throne, and set the stage for his becoming sole emperor of the restored Byzantine Empire.

## Restoration of the Byzantine Empire

In 1259 CE, Michael VIII came to the throne of the Empire of Nicaea. He founded the Palaiologos Dynasty, the longest and last dynasty of Byzantine rulers. In 1261 CE, Michael's forces succeeded in capturing Constantinople while the Latin knights were off fighting elsewhere. They found the city a shell of its former self, sparsely populated and largely ruined. Still, Michael VIII returned to the city and was proclaimed emperor there, marking the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.



**Byzantine Coin:** A gold Byzantine coin, called the hyperpyrron (which replaced the earlier solidus), depicting the first emperor of the Byzantine Palaiologan Dynasty, Michael VIII.

In order to protect his empire from further attacks by western knights, he attempted to end the schism between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. This outraged many of his citizens, who blamed the Catholics for the sack of Constantinople. A decisive change had taken place: among the citizens of the restored Byzantine Empire, the “Latins” of western Europe were more hated than even the Muslims.

The war-ravaged empire was ill-equipped to deal with the enemies that now surrounded it. In order to maintain his campaigns against the Latins, Michael pulled troops from Asia Minor, and levied crippling taxes on the peasantry, causing much resentment. Massive construction projects were completed in Constantinople to repair the damages of the Fourth Crusade, but none of these initiatives was of any comfort to the farmers in Asia Minor, suffering raids from fanatical ghazis.

As a result, Anatolia, which had formed the very heart of the shrinking empire, was systematically lost to numerous Turkic ghazis, whose raids evolved into conquering expeditions inspired by Islamic zeal. With a decreasing source of food and manpower, the Palaiologoi were forced to fight on several fronts, most of them

being Christian states: the Second Bulgarian Empire, the Serbian Empire, the remnants of the Latin Empire, and even the Knights Hospitaller.

The loss of land in the east to the Turks, and in the west to the Bulgarians, was complemented by two disastrous civil wars, the Black Death and the 1354 earthquake at Gallipoli, whose destruction and evacuation allowed the Turks to occupy it. By 1380, the Byzantine Empire consisted of the capital Constantinople and a few other isolated exclaves, which only nominally recognized the emperor as their lord. Nonetheless, Byzantine diplomacy coupled with the adroit exploitation of internal divisions and external threats among their enemies, and above all the invasion of Anatolia by Timur, allowed Byzantium to survive until 1453.

## The Palaiologan Renaissance

During the Palaiologan Dynasty, the empire experienced a short but vibrant renaissance, known as the Palaiologan Renaissance. As the Palaiologan emperors attempted to restore the glory of Constantinople, they sponsored art and encouraged philosophy. Artists and philosophers looked to the classical past and rediscovered much ancient learning. Although the Palaiologan Renaissance came too late to save the struggling Byzantine civilization, it would be a major catalyst for the Italian Renaissance, especially as Byzantine artists and scholars traveled to Italy to seek shelter from the new threats that besieged the empire.

Towards the 14th century, as the empire entered into a phase of terminal crisis, such achievements became less valued. All was not lost for these seemingly rejected scholars—many in Italy who had been opened up to Byzantium by the maritime expansions of Genoa and Venice came to appreciate their achievements, facilitating the Renaissance. As such, these scholars found themselves in Italian institutions, expressing their Greco-Roman culture for pay.

Immigration to Italy was made less attractive by the idea of abandoning the Orthodox faith to practice Catholicism. Nonetheless, a significant and increasing number of Greeks began traveling to Italy, first temporarily, to Italian colonies such as Crete or Cyprus before returning to Byzantium, then, as the Empire began to fail horribly, in a more permanent manner. The Fall of Constantinople was marked by large amounts of Greek refugees escaping Turkic rule into Europe via Italy, and thus accelerating the Renaissance.

## The Fall of Constantinople

The restored Byzantine Empire converted to Catholicism to get aid from the west against the Ottoman Turks, but the Turks defeated them by conquering Constantinople, thereby causing the final collapse of the Byzantines.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the political situation leading up to the Turkish conquest of the Byzantine Empire

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The restored Byzantine Empire was surrounded by enemies. The Bulgarian Empire and the Serbian Empire conquered many Byzantine lands, and the Turks overran Asia Minor altogether.
- Anatolia gradually transformed from a Byzantine Christian land into an Islamic land dominated by the Turks. It would ultimately become the Ottoman Empire.
- The west would only provide the east with help against the Turks if the east converted from Orthodox to Catholic Christianity. This sparked riots among the eastern Orthodox populace, who hated the western Catholics for the sack of Constantinople.
- Meanwhile, the Ottomans defeated most of the empire except for Constantinople.
- The east ultimately capitulated and accepted Catholicism, but it was too late. On May 29, 1453 CE, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks and the Byzantine Empire came to an end. Constantinople was transformed into the Islamic city of Istanbul.

### *Key Terms*

- **Ottoman Empire:** A large empire that began as a

Turkish sultanate centered on modern Turkey; founded in the late 13th century, it lasted until the end of World War I. This empire also defeated Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire in 1453 CE.

- **Mehmed II:** An Ottoman sultan who, at the age of 21, conquered Constantinople and brought an end to the Eastern Roman Empire.

## The Rise of the Turks and the Ottoman Empire

The restored Byzantine Empire was surrounded by enemies. The Bulgarian Empire, which had rebelled against the Byzantines centuries earlier, now matched it in strength. A new empire arose in the western Balkans, the Serbian Empire, who conquered many Byzantine lands. Even more dangerous to the Byzantines, the Turks were once again raiding Byzantine lands, and Asia Minor was overrun. With the theme system a thing of the past, the emperors had to rely on foreign mercenaries to supply troops, but these soldiers-for-hire were not always reliable. Anatolia gradually transformed from a Byzantine Christian land into an Islamic land dominated by the Turks.

For a long time the Turks in Anatolia were divided up into a patchwork of small Islamic states. However, one ruler, Osman I, built up a powerful kingdom that soon absorbed all the others and formed the Ottoman Empire.

In the century after the death of Osman I, Ottoman rule began to extend over the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. Osman's son, Orhan, captured the city of Bursa in 1324 and made it the new capital of the Ottoman state. The fall of Bursa meant the loss of Byzantine control over northwestern Anatolia. The important city of



Thessaloniki was captured from the Venetians in 1387. The Ottoman victory at Kosovo in 1389 effectively marked the end of Serbian power in the region, paving the way for Ottoman expansion into Europe. The Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, widely regarded as the last large-scale crusade of the Middle Ages, failed to stop the advance of the victorious Ottoman Turks. With the extension of Turkish dominion into the Balkans, the strategic conquest of Constantinople became a crucial objective.

The empire controlled nearly all former Byzantine lands surrounding the city, but the Byzantines were temporarily relieved when Timur invaded Anatolia in the Battle of Ankara in 1402. He took Sultan Bayezid I as a prisoner. The capture of Bayezid I threw the Turks into disorder. The state fell into a civil war that lasted from 1402 to 1413, as Bayezid's sons fought over succession. It ended when Mehmed I emerged as the sultan and restored Ottoman power.

When Mehmed I's grandson, Mehmed II (also known as Mehmed the Conqueror) ascended to the throne in 1451, he devoted himself to strengthening the Ottoman navy and made preparations for the taking of Constantinople.

## Byzantium Looks West for Aid

Against all these enemies, the Byzantines could only look west in search of help. The pope, however, continued to stress that aid would only come if the Byzantines adopted the Catholicism of the Latin church. While the Byzantine emperors were willing to do so in order to save their empire, the populace hated the Catholics for the sack of Constantinople, and so attempts to reconcile with the Catholic Church only led to riots. Further theological disagreements inflamed the bitterness between the Orthodox and the Catholics.

While civil war and religious disputes occupied the Byzantines, the Ottomans slowly closed in on the empire. They crossed into Europe and annexed most of the lands around Constantinople. By

1400 CE, the Byzantine Empire was little more than the city-state of Constantinople. It was clear that the only way they would receive Europe-wide help in pushing back the Ottomans was if they reconciled with the Catholic Church.

This was not acceptable for most Byzantines. A popular saying at the time was “Better the Turkish turban than the Papal tiara.” In other words, the Orthodox Byzantines considered it better to be ruled by the Muslim Turks than to go against their religious beliefs and give in to the Catholic Church. Still, the emperors realized that Byzantium would soon fall without help from the west.

In 1439 CE, Emperor John VIII Palaiologos and the most important Byzantine bishops reached an agreement with the Catholic Church at the Council of Florence, in which they accepted Catholic Christianity. When the bishops returned to the Byzantine Empire, however, they found themselves under attack by their congregations. Their agreement to join the Catholic Church was exceedingly unpopular.



**The Rise of the Ottoman Empire:** The borders of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires in the eastern Mediterranean just before the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE.

## The Fall of Constantinople

By this stage, Constantinople was underpopulated and dilapidated. The population of the city had collapsed so severely that it was now little more than a cluster of villages separated by fields. On April 2, 1453, the Ottoman army, led by the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmed II, laid siege to the city with 80,000 men. Despite a desperate last-ditch defense of the city by the massively outnumbered Christian forces (7,000 men, 2,000 of whom were sent by Rome), Constantinople finally fell to the Ottomans after a two-month siege

on May 29, 1453. The last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos, was last seen casting off his imperial regalia and throwing himself into hand-to-hand combat after the walls of the city were taken.

On the third day of the conquest, Mehmed II ordered all looting to stop and sent his troops back outside the city walls. Byzantine historian George Sphrantzes, an eyewitness to the fall of Constantinople, described the Sultan's actions:

On the third day after the fall of our city, the Sultan celebrated his victory with a great, joyful triumph. He issued a proclamation: the citizens of all ages who had managed to escape detection were to leave their hiding places throughout the city and come out into the open, as they were to remain free and no question would be asked. He further declared the restoration of houses and property to those who had abandoned our city before the siege, if they returned home, they would be treated according to their rank and religion, as if nothing had changed.

The capture of Constantinople (and two other Byzantine splinter territories soon thereafter) marked the end of the Roman Empire, an imperial state that had lasted for nearly 1,500 years. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople also dealt a massive blow to Christendom, as the Islamic Ottoman armies thereafter were left unchecked to advance into Europe without an adversary to their rear. After the conquest, Sultan Mehmed II transferred the capital of the Ottoman Empire from Edirne to Constantinople. Constantinople was transformed into an Islamic city: the Hagia Sophia became a mosque, and the city eventually became known as Istanbul.

The conquest of the city of Constantinople, and the end of the Byzantine Empire, was a key event in the Late Middle Ages, which also marks, for some historians, the end of the Middle Ages.



**The Walls of Constantinople:** Sometimes known as “The Great Wall of Europe,” the walls of Constantinople stood strong for centuries. Yet in 1453, they fell to the Ottoman Turks.

## Byzantium’s Legacy

The Byzantine Empire had a lasting legacy in religion, architecture, art, literature, and law.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Give examples of how the Byzantine Empire continued to have an impact even after its collapse

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Byzantine Empire had lasting legacies on many subsequent cultures.
- The Byzantine Empire insulated Europe from enemies and gave it the time it needed to recover from the chaotic medieval period.
- Byzantium 's role in shaping Orthodoxy was also hugely influential; the modern-day Eastern Orthodox Church is the second largest Christian church in the world.
- Byzantine architecture, particularly in religious buildings, can be found in diverse regions, from Egypt and Arabia to Russia and Romania.
- Byzantine painting from this period would have a strong influence on the later painters of the Italian Renaissance.

### *Key Terms*

- **lingua franca:** A common language used by people of diverse backgrounds to communicate with one another; often a basic form of speech with simplified grammar.

Byzantium has been often identified with absolutism, orthodox

spirituality, orientalism and exoticism, while the terms “Byzantine” and “Byzantinism” have been used as metaphors for decadence, complex bureaucracy, and repression. Both eastern and western European authors have often perceived Byzantium as a body of religious, political, and philosophical ideas contrary to those of the west. Even in 19th-century Greece, the focus was mainly on the classical past, while Byzantine tradition had been associated with negative connotations.

This traditional approach towards Byzantium has been partially or wholly disputed and revised by modern studies, which focus on the positive aspects of Byzantine culture and legacy. Historian Averil Cameron, for example, regards the Byzantine contribution to the formation of medieval Europe undeniable, and both Cameron and Obolensky recognize the major role of Byzantium in shaping Orthodoxy. The Byzantines also preserved and copied classical manuscripts, and they are thus regarded as transmitters of the classical knowledge, as important contributors to the modern European civilization, and as precursors of both the Renaissance humanism and the Slav Orthodox culture.

Following the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Sultan Mehmed II took the title “Kaysar-i Rûm” (the Ottoman Turkish equivalent of Caesar of Rome ), since he was determined to make the Ottoman Empire the heir of the Eastern Roman Empire.

## Protection of Europe

The Byzantine Empire had kept Greek and Roman culture alive for nearly a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire in the west. It had preserved this cultural heritage until it was taken up in the west during the Renaissance. The Byzantine Empire had also acted as a buffer between western Europe and the conquering armies of Islam. Thus, in many ways the Byzantine Empire had

insulated Europe and given it the time it needed to recover from its chaotic medieval period.

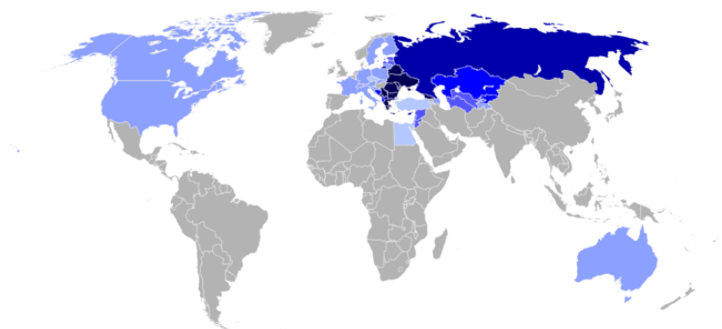


**Constantinople in the Byzantine era:** An artist-restructured photo of what the city of Constantinople looked like during the Byzantine era.

## Religion

Orthodoxy now occupies a central position in the history and societies of Greece, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia, and other countries. Following the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 CE, the Ottomans regarded themselves as the “heirs” of Byzantium and preserved important aspects of its tradition, which in turn facilitated an “Orthodox revival” during the post-communist period of the eastern European states. The modern-day Eastern Orthodox Church is the second largest Christian church in the world.





**Modern-Day Eastern Orthodoxy:** Distribution of Eastern Orthodox Christians in the world by country, as of 2012. Darker blues indicate main religion (over 50%).

## Diplomacy and Law

After the fall of Rome, the key challenge to the empire was to maintain a set of relations between itself and its neighbors. When these nations set about forging formal political institutions, they often modeled themselves on Constantinople. Byzantine diplomacy soon managed to draw its neighbors into a network of international and inter-state relations. This network revolved around treaty-making, and included the welcoming of the new ruler into the family of kings, as well as the assimilation of Byzantine social attitudes, values and institutions. The preservation of the ancient civilization in Europe was due to the skill and resourcefulness of Byzantine diplomacy, which remains one of Byzantium's lasting contributions to the history of Europe.

In the field of law, Justinian I's reforms to the legal code would come to serve as the basis of not only Byzantine law, but law in many European countries, and continues to have a major influence on public international law to this day. Leo III's *Ecloga* influenced the formation of legal institutions in the Slavic world. In the 10th century, Leo VI the Wise achieved the complete codification of the

whole of Byzantine law in Greek, which became the foundation of all subsequent Byzantine law, which generates interest to the present day.

## Art and Literature

Influences from Byzantine architecture, particularly in religious buildings, can be found in diverse regions, from Egypt and Arabia to Russia and Romania.

During the Byzantine Renaissance of the Macedonian Dynasty, art and literature flourished, and artists adopted a naturalistic style and complex techniques from ancient Greek and Roman art, mixing them with Christian themes. Byzantine painting from this period would have a strong influence on the later painters of the Italian Renaissance.

The migration waves of Byzantine scholars and émigrés in the period following the sacking of Constantinople and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is considered by many scholars to be key to the revival of Greek and Roman studies that led to the development of the Renaissance in humanism and science. These émigrés were grammarians, humanists, poets, writers, printers, lecturers, musicians, astronomers, architects, academics, artists, scribes, philosophers, scientists, politicians and theologians. They brought to western Europe the far greater preserved and accumulated knowledge of their own (Greek) civilization.



## 58. Reading: Pre-Islamic Arabia

# The Nomadic Tribes of Arabia

The nomadic pastoralist Bedouin tribes inhabited the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam around 700 CE.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the societal structure of tribes in Arabia

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Nomadic Bedouin tribes dominated the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam.
- Family groups called clans formed larger tribal units, which reinforced family cooperation in the difficult living conditions on the Arabian peninsula and protected its members against other tribes.
- The Bedouin tribes were nomadic pastoralists who relied on their herds of goats, sheep, and camels for meat, milk, cheese, blood, fur/wool, and other sustenance.
- The pre-Islamic Bedouins also hunted, served as bodyguards, escorted caravans, worked as

mercenaries, and traded or raided to gain animals, women, gold, fabric, and other luxury items.

- Arab tribes begin to appear in the south Syrian deserts and southern Jordan around 200 CE, but spread from the central Arabian Peninsula after the rise of Islam in the 630s CE.

### *Key Terms*

- **Nabatean:** an ancient Semitic people who inhabited northern Arabia and Southern Levant, ca. 37–100 CE.
- **Bedouin:** a predominantly desert-dwelling Arabian ethnic group traditionally divided into tribes or clans.

## Pre-Islamic Arabia

Pre-Islamic Arabia refers to the Arabian Peninsula prior to the rise of Islam in the 630s.

Some of the settled communities in the Arabian Peninsula developed into distinctive civilizations. Sources for these civilizations are not extensive, and are limited to archaeological evidence, accounts written outside of Arabia, and Arab oral traditions later recorded by Islamic scholars. Among the most prominent civilizations were Thamud, which arose around 3000 BCE and lasted to about 300 CE, and Dilmun, which arose around the end of the fourth millennium and lasted to about 600 CE. Additionally, from the beginning of the first millennium BCE, Southern Arabia was the home to a number of kingdoms, such as



## Nomadic Tribes in Pre-Islamic Arabia

One of the major cultures that dominated the Arabian Peninsula just before the rise of Islam was that of the nomadic Bedouin people. The polytheistic Bedouin clans placed heavy emphasis on kin-related groups, with each clan clustered under tribes. The immediate family shared one tent and can also be called a clan. Many of these tents and their associated familial relations comprised a tribe. Although clans were made up of family members, a tribe might take in a non-related member and give them familial status. Society was patriarchal, with inheritance through the male lines. Tribes provided a means of protection for its members; death to one clan member meant brutal retaliation.

Non-members of the tribe were viewed as outsiders or enemies. Tribes shared common ethical understandings and provided an individual with an identity. Warfare between tribes was common among the Bedouin, and warfare was given a high honor. The difficult living conditions in the Arabian Peninsula created a heavy emphasis on family cooperation, further strengthening the clan system.





**Bedouin shepherd in the Syrian desert:** While most modern Bedouins have abandoned their nomadic and tribal traditions for modern urban lifestyles, they retain traditional Bedouin culture with traditional music, poetry, dances, and other cultural practices.

The Bedouin tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia were nomadic-pastoralists. Pastoralists depend on their small herds of goats, sheep, camels, horses, or other animals for meat, milk, cheese,

blood, fur/wool, and other sustenance. Because of the harsh climate and the seasonal migrations required to obtain resources, the Bedouin nomadic tribes generally raised sheep, goats, and camels. Each member of the family had a specific role in taking care of the animals, from guarding the herd to making cheese from milk. The nomads also hunted, served as bodyguards, escorted caravans, and worked as mercenaries. Some tribes traded with towns in order to gain goods, while others raided other tribes for animals, women, gold, fabric, and other luxury items.



**Bedouin tribes raised camels as part of their nomadic-pastoralist lifestyle:** Tribes migrated seasonally to reach resources for their herds of sheep, goats, and camels. Each member of the family had a specific role in taking care of the animals, from guarding the herd to making cheese from milk.

## Origin of Jewish and Other Tribes

The first mention of Jews in the areas of modern-day Saudi Arabia dates back, by some accounts, to the time of the First Temple. Immigration to the Arabian Peninsula began in earnest in the 2nd century CE, and by the 6th and 7th centuries there was a

considerable Jewish population in Hejaz, mostly in and around Medina. This was partly because of the embrace of Judaism by leaders such as Abu Karib Asad and Dhu Nuwas, who was very aggressive about converting his subjects to Judaism, and who persecuted Christians in his kingdom as a reaction to Christian persecution of Jews there by the local Christians. Before the rise of Islam, there were three main Jewish tribes in the city of Medina: the Banu Nadir, the Banu Qainuqa, and the Banu Qurayza. Arab tribes, most notably the Ghassanids and Lakhmids, began to appear in the south Syrian deserts and southern Jordan from the mid 3rd century CE, during the mid to later stages of the Roman Empire and Sassanid Empire. The Nabatean civilization in Jordan was an Aramaic-speaking ethnic mix of Canaanites, Arameans, and Arabs. According to tradition, the Saudi Bedouin are descendants of two groups. One group, the Yemenis, settled in southwestern Arabia, in the mountains of Yemen, and claimed they descended from a semi-legendary ancestral figure, Qahtan (or Joktan). The second group, the Qaysis, settled in north-central Arabia and claimed they were descendants of the Biblical Ishmael.

## Arabian Cities

Cities like Mecca and Medina acted as important centers of trade and religion in pre-Islamic Arabia.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Examine the historical significance of Mecca and Medina

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- As sea trade routes became more dangerous, several tribes built the Arabian city of Mecca into a center of trade to direct more secure overland caravan routes.
- Once a year, the nomadic tribes would declare a truce and converge upon Mecca in a pilgrimage to pay homage to their idols at the Kaaba and drink from the Zamzam Well.
- The oasis city of Yathrib, also known as Medina, was ruled by several Jewish tribes until Arab tribes gained political power around 400 CE.

### *Key Terms*

- **Ishmael:** A figure in the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an, and Abraham's first son according to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He was born of Abraham's marriage to Sarah's handmaiden Hagar.
- **Zamzam Well:** A well located in the city of Mecca that, according to Islamic belief, is a miraculously generated source of water from God.
- **Kaaba:** A sacred building in the city of Mecca that housed the tribal idols until the rise of Islam in 7th century, when it became the center of Islam's most

sacred mosque.

Although the majority of pre-Islamic Arabia was nomadic, there were several important cities that came into being as centers of trade and religion, such as Mecca, Medina (Yathrib), Karbala, and Damascus. The most important of these cities was Mecca, which was an important center of trade in the area, as well as the location of the Kaaba (or Ka'ba), one of the most revered shrines in polytheistic Arabia. After the rise of Islam, the Kaaba became the most sacred place in Islam.

Islamic tradition attributes the beginning of Mecca to Ishmael 's descendants. Many Muslims point to the Old Testament chapter Psalm 84:3–6 and a mention of a pilgrimage at the Valley of Baca, which is interpreted as a reference to Mecca as Bakkah in Qur'an Surah 3:96. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who lived between 60 BCE and 30 BCE, wrote about the isolated region of Arabia in his work *Bibliotheca historica*, describing a holy shrine that Muslims see as Kaaba at Mecca: "And a temple has been set up there, which is very holy and exceedingly revered by all Arabians." Some time in the 5th century, the Kaaba was a place to worship the deities of Arabia's pagan tribes. Mecca's most important pagan deity was Hubal, whose idol had been placed there by the ruling Quraysh tribe and remained until the 7th century.

## The City of Mecca

In the 5th century, the Quraysh tribes took control of Mecca and became skilled merchants and traders. In the 6th century, they joined the lucrative spice trade, since battles in other parts of the world were causing traders to divert from the dangerous sea routes

to the more secure overland routes. The Byzantine Empire had previously controlled the Red Sea, but piracy had been increasing. Another previous route, which ran through the Persian Gulf via the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was also threatened by exploitations from the Sassanid Empire, and disrupted by the Lakhmids, the Ghassanids, and the Roman–Persian Wars.

Mecca's prominence as a trading center eventually surpassed the cities of Petra and Palmyra. Historical accounts also provide some indication that goods from other continents may also have flowed through Mecca. Camel caravans, said to have first been used by Muhammad 's great-grandfather, were a major part of Mecca's bustling economy. Alliances were struck between the merchants in Mecca and the local nomadic tribes, who would bring goods—leather, livestock, and metals mined in the local mountains—to Mecca to be loaded on the caravans and carried to cities in Syria and Iraq. Historical accounts provide some indication that goods from other continents may also have flowed through Mecca. Goods from Africa and the Far East passed through en route to Syria. The Meccans signed treaties with both the Byzantines and the Bedouins to negotiate safe passages for caravans and give them water and pasture rights. Mecca became the center of a loose confederation of client tribes, which included those of the Banu Tamim. Other regional powers such as the Abyssinian, Ghassan, and Lakhm were in decline, leaving Meccan trade to be the primary binding force in Arabia in the late 6th century.

The harsh conditions and terrain of the Arabian peninsula meant a near-constant state of conflict between the local tribes, but once a year they would declare a truce and converge upon Mecca in a pilgrimage. Up to the 7th century, this journey was undertaken by the pagan Arabs to pay homage to their shrine and drink from the Zamzam Well. However, it was also the time each year when disputes would be arbitrated, debts would be resolved, and trading would occur at Meccan fairs. These annual events gave the tribes a sense of common identity and made Mecca an important focus for the peninsula.



**A modern-day caravan crossing the Arabian Peninsula:** As sea trade routes became more dangerous, several tribes built the Arabian city of Mecca into a center of trade to direct more secure overland caravan routes.

## The City of Medina (Yathrib)

Although the city of Medina did not have any great distinction until the introduction of Islam, it has always held an important place in trade and agriculture because of its location in a fertile region of the Hejaz. The city was able to maintain decent amounts of food and water, and therefore was an important pit stop for trade caravans traveling along the Red Sea. This was especially important given the merchant culture of Arabia. Along with the port of Jidda, Medina and Mecca thrived through years of pilgrimage.

During the pre-Islamic period up until 622 CE, Medina was known as Yathrib, an oasis city. Yathrib was dominated by Jewish tribes until around 400 CE, when several Arab tribes gained political power. Medina is celebrated for containing the mosque of Muhammad. Medina is 210 miles (340 km) north of Mecca and about 120 miles (190 km) from the Red Sea coast. It is situated in the most

fertile part of the Hejaz territory, where the streams of the vicinity converge. An immense plain extends to the south; in every direction the view is bounded by hills and mountains.

In 622 CE, Muhammad and around 70 Meccan Muhajirun believers left Mecca for sanctuary in Yathrib, an event that transformed the religious and political landscape of the city completely. The longstanding enmity between the Aus and Khazraj tribes was dampened as many tribe members, and some local Jews, embraced Islam. Muhammad, linked to the Khazraj through his great-grandmother, was agreed on as civic leader.

The Muslim converts native to Yathrib—whether pagan Arab or Jewish—were called Ansar (“the Patrons” or “the Helpers”). According to Ibn Ishaq, the local pagan Arab tribes, the Muslim Muhajirun from Mecca, the local Muslims (Ansar), and the Jews of the area signed an agreement, the Constitution of Medina, which committed all parties to mutual cooperation under the leadership of Muhammad. The nature of this document as recorded by Ibn Ishaq and transmitted by Ibn Hisham is the subject of dispute among modern Western historians. Many maintain that this “treaty” is possibly a collage of different agreements, oral rather than written, of different dates, and that it is not clear when they were made. Other scholars, however, both Western and Muslim, argue that the text of the agreement—whether it was originally a single document or several—is possibly one of the oldest Islamic texts we possess.





**Medina:** Old depiction of Medina during Ottoman times.

## Culture and Religion in Pre-Islamic Arabia

The nomadic tribes of pre-Islamic Arabia primarily practiced polytheism, although some tribes converted to Judaism and Christianity.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the significance of polytheism and monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Before the rise of the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, most Bedouin tribes practiced polytheism in the form of animism and idolatry.
- Three of the ruling tribes of Yathrib (Medina) were Jewish, one of the oldest monotheistic religions.
- Christianity spread to Arabia after Constantinople conquered Byzantium in 324 CE, and it was adopted by several Bedouin tribes.
- Poetry was a large part of tribal culture and communication, and it was often used as propaganda against other tribes.

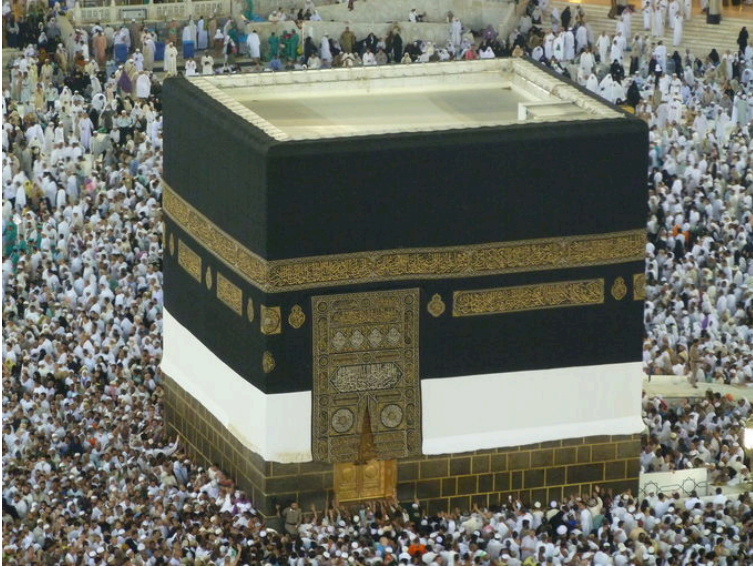
### *Key Terms*

- **polytheism:** The worship of or belief in multiple deities usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, along with their own religions and rituals.
- **Ka'aba:** A building at the center of Islam's most sacred mosque, Al-Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca, al-Hejaz, Saudi Arabia. It is the most sacred Muslim site in the world.
- **monotheism:** The belief in the existence of a single god.

- **idolatry:** The worship of an idol or a physical object, such as a cult image, as a god.
- **animism:** The worldview that non-human entities (animals, plants, and inanimate objects or phenomena) possess a spiritual essence; often practiced by tribal groups before organized religion.

## Overview

Religion in pre-Islamic Arabia was a mix of polytheism, Christianity, Judaism, and Iranian religions. Arab polytheism, the dominant belief system, was based on the belief in deities and other supernatural beings such as djinn. Gods and goddesses were worshipped at local shrines, such as the Kaaba in Mecca. Some scholars postulate that Allah may have been one of the gods of the Meccan religion to whom the shrine was dedicated, although it seems he had little relevance in the religion. Many of the physical descriptions of the pre-Islamic gods are traced to idols, especially near the Kaaba, which is believed to have contained up to 360 of them.



**The Kaaba:** The Kaaba is a cube-shaped building in Mecca held to be sacred both by Muslims and pre-Islamic polytheistic tribes.

Other religions were represented to varying, lesser degrees. The influence of the adjacent Roman, Axumite, and Sasanian empires resulted in Christian communities in the northwest, northeast, and south of Arabia. Christianity made a lesser impact, but secured some conversions in the remainder of the peninsula. With the exception of Nestorianism in the northeast and the Persian Gulf, the dominant form of Christianity was Monophysitism. The Arabian peninsula had been subject to Jewish migration since Roman times, which had resulted in a diaspora community supplemented by local converts. Additionally, the influence of the Sasanian Empire resulted in the presence Iranian religions. Zoroastrianism existed in the east and south, and there is evidence of Manichaeism or possibly Mazdakism being practiced in Mecca.

## Polytheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia

Before the rise of Islam, most Bedouin tribes practiced polytheism, most often in the form of animism. Animists believe that non-human entities (animals, plants, and inanimate objects or phenomena) possess a spiritual essence. Totemism and idolatry, or worship of totems or idols representing natural phenomena, were also common religious practices in the pre-Islamic world. Idols were housed in the Kaaba, an ancient sanctuary in the city of Mecca. The site housed about 360 idols and attracted worshippers from all over Arabia. According to the holy Muslim text the Quran, Ibrahim, together with his son Ishmael, raised the foundations of a house and began work on the Kaaba around 2130 BCE.

The chief god in pre-Islamic Arabia was Hubal, the Syrian god of the moon. The three daughters of Hubal were the chief goddesses of Meccan Arabian mythology: Allāt, Al-‘Uzzá, and Manāt. Allāt was the goddess associated with the underworld. Al-‘Uzzá, “The Mightiest One” or “The Strong,” was a fertility goddess, and she was called upon for protection and victory before war. Manāt was the goddess of fate; the Book of Idols describes her as the most ancient of all these idols. The Book of Idols describes gods and rites of Arabian religion, but criticizes the idolatry of pre-Islamic religion.



**Relief of the goddess Allāt, one of the three patron gods of the city of Mecca:** Before the rise of the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, most Bedouin tribes practiced polytheism in the form of animism and idolatry.

# Monotheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia

## Judaism

The most well-known monotheists were the Hebrews, although the Persians and the Medes had also developed monotheism. Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions.

A thriving community of Jewish tribes existed in pre-Islamic Arabia and included both sedentary and nomadic communities. Jews migrated into Arabia starting Roman times. Arabian Jews spoke Arabic as well as Hebrew and Aramaic and had contact with Jewish religious centers in Babylonia and Palestine. The Yemeni Himyarites converted to Judaism in the 4th century, and some of the Kindah, a tribe in central Arabia who were the Himyarites' vassals, were also converted in the 4th/5th century. There is evidence that Jewish converts in the Hejaz were regarded as Jews by other Jews and non-Jews alike, and sought advice from Babylonian rabbis on matters of attire and kosher food. In at least one case, it is known that an Arab tribe agreed to adopt Judaism as a condition for settling in a town dominated by Jewish inhabitants. Some Arab women in Yathrib/Medina are said to have vowed to make their child a Jew if the child survived, since they considered the Jews to be people "of knowledge and the book." Historian Philip Hitti infers from proper names and agricultural vocabulary that the Jewish tribes of Yathrib consisted mostly of Judaized clans of Arabian and Aramaean origin.

## Christianity

After Constantine conquered Byzantium in 324 CE, Christianity spread to Arabia. The principal tribes that embraced Christianity were the Himyar, Ghassan, Rabi'a, Tagh'ab, Bahra, and Tunukh, parts

of the Tay and Khud'a, the inhabitants of Najran, and the Arabs of Hira. Traditionally, both Jews and Christians believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for Jews the God of the Tanakh, for Christians the God of the Old Testament, the creator of the universe. Both religions reject the view that God is entirely transcendent, and thus separate from the world, as the pre-Christian Greek Unknown God. Both religions also reject atheism on one hand and polytheism on the other.

The main areas of Christian influence in Arabia were on the northeastern and northwestern borders and in what was to become Yemen in the south. The northwest was under the influence of Christian missionary activity from the Roman Empire, where the Ghassanids, residents of a client kingdom of the Romans, were converted to Christianity. In the south, particularly at Najran, a center of Christianity developed as a result of the influence of the Christian kingdom of Axum based on the other side of the Red Sea in Ethiopia. Both the Ghassanids and the Christians in the south adopted Monophysitism. The spread of Christianity was halted in 622 CE by the rise of Islam, though the city of Mecca provided a central location for an intermingling of the two cultures. For example, in addition to the animistic idols, the pre-Islamic Kaaba housed statues of Jesus and his holy mother, Mary.

## Nomadic Culture and Poetry

Like later cultures in the region, the Bedouin tribes placed heavy importance on poetry and oral tradition as a means of communication. Poetry was used to communicate within the community and sometimes promoted tribal propaganda. Tribes constructed verses against their enemies, often discrediting their people or fighting abilities. Poets maintained sacred places in their tribes and communities because they were thought to be divinely inspired. Poets often wrote in classical Arabic, which differed from



the common tribal dialect. Poetry was also a form of entertainment, as many poets constructed prose about the nature and beauty surrounding their nomadic lives.

## Music

Arabian music extended from the Islamic peoples in Arabia to North Africa, Persia, and Syria. Although the major writings on Arabian music appeared after the dawn of Islam (622 CE), music had already been cultivated for thousands of years. Pre-Islamic Arabian music was primarily vocal, and it may have developed from simple caravan songs (huda) to a more sophisticated secular song (nasb). Instruments were generally used alone and served only to accompany the singer. The short lute ('ud), long lute (tunbur), flute (qussaba), tambourine (duff), and drum (tabl) were the most popular instruments.

image

**An 'ud:** *The 'ud was one of the instruments used to accompany singers. Pre-Islamic and post-Islamic music was important for poetry and oral traditions.*

## Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia

Women had almost no legal status under tribal law in pre-Islamic Arabia.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Assess the role and rights of women in Islamic and pre-Islamic Arabia

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- In the nomadic Bedouin tribes, tribal law determined women's rights, while in the Christian and Jewish southern Arabian Peninsula, Christian and Hebrew edicts determined women's rights.
- Under the customary tribal law existing in Arabia before the rise of Islam, women, as a general rule, had virtually no legal status; fathers sold their daughters into marriage for a price, the husband could terminate the union at will, and women had little or no property or succession rights.
- One of the most important roles for women was to produce children, especially male offspring; women also cooked meals, milked animals, washed clothes, prepared butter and cheese, spun wool, and wove fabric for tents.
- Upper-class women usually had more rights than tribal women and might own property or even inherit

from relatives.

- In many modern-day Islamic countries, politics and religion are linked by Sharia law, including the mandatory wearing of the hijab in countries like Saudi Arabia.

### *Key Terms*

- **Sharia:** (Islamic law) deals with many topics addressed by secular law, including crime, politics, and economics, as well as personal matters such as sexual intercourse, hygiene, diet, prayer, everyday etiquette and fasting. Historically, adherence to Islamic law has served as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Muslim faith.
- **Jahiliyyah:** The period of ignorance before the rise of Islam.
- **hijab:** A veil that covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by some Muslim women in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, women's status varied widely according to the laws and cultural norms of the tribes in which they lived. In the prosperous southern region of the Arabian Peninsula, for example, the religious edicts of Christianity and Judaism held sway among the Sabians and Himyarites. In other places, such as the city of Mecca, and in the nomadic Bedouin tribes, tribal law determined women's rights. Therefore, there was no single definition of the roles played and rights held by women prior to the advent of Islam.



**Depiction of the costumes of women in the 4th-6th centuries:** Under the customary tribal law existing in Arabia before the rise of Islam, as a general rule women had virtually no legal status; fathers sold their daughters into marriage for a price, the husband could terminate the union at will, and women had little or no property or succession rights.

## Tribal Law

Under the customary tribal law existing in Arabia at the advent of Islam, as a general rule women had virtually no legal status. The tribe acted as the main functional unit of Arabian society and

was composed of people with connections to a common relative. These tribes were patriarchal and inheritance was passed through the male lines; women could not inherit property. The tribal leader enforced the tribe's spoken rules, which generally limited the rights of the women. Women were often considered property to be inherited or seized in a tribal conflict.

There were also patterns of homicidal abuse of women and girls, including instances of killing female infants if they were considered a liability. The Quran mentions that the Arabs in Jahiliyyah (the period of ignorance or pre-Islamic period) used to bury their daughters alive. The motives were twofold: the fear that an increase in female offspring would result in economic burden, and the fear of the humiliation frequently caused when girls were captured by a hostile tribe and subsequently preferring their captors to their parents and brothers.

## Women in Islam and the Hijab

After the rise of Islam, the Quran (the word of God) and the Hadith (the traditions of the prophet Muhammad) developed into Sharia, or Islamic religious law. Sharia dictates that women should cover themselves with a veil. Women who follow these traditions feel it wearing the hijab is their claim to respectability and piety. One of the relevant passages from the Quran translates as "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons, that are most convenient, that they should be known and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Quran Surat Al-Ahzab 33:59). These areas of the body are known as "awrah" (parts of the body that should be covered) and are referred to in both the Quran and the Hadith. "Hijab" can also be used to refer to the seclusion of women from men in the public sphere.



**Modern-day female art students in Afghanistan:** In many modern Islamic countries, Sharia combines politics and religion. For example, in Saudi Arabia it is mandatory for women to wear the hijab, while in Afghanistan it is very common but not legally required by the state.

The practice of women covering themselves with veils was also known during pre-Islamic times. In the Byzantine Empire and pre-Islamic Persia, a veil was a symbol of respect worn by the elite and upper-class women.



**Standing woman holding her veil. Terracotta figurine, c. 400–375 BC:** Veils were present in the Byzantine Empire and pre-Islamic Persia, and veil wearing is now a basic principle of the Islamic faith.

## Marriage

In pre-Islamic Arabian culture, women had little control over their marriages and were rarely allowed to divorce their husbands. Marriages usually consisted of an agreement between a man and his future wife's family, and occurred either within the tribe or between two families of different tribes. As part of the agreement, the man's family might offer property such as camels or horses in exchange for the woman. Upon marriage, the woman would leave her family

and reside permanently in the tribe of her husband. Marriage by capture, or “Ba’al,” was also a common pre-Islamic practice.

Under Islam, polygyny (the marriage of multiple women to one man) is allowed, but not widespread. In some Islamic countries, such as Iran, a woman’s husband may enter into temporary marriages in addition to permanent marriage. Islam forbids Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims.

## Family Structure

One of the most important roles for women in pre-Islamic tribes was to produce children, especially male offspring. A woman’s male children could inherit property and increased the wealth of the tribe. While men often tended the herds of livestock and guarded the tribe, women played integral roles within tribal society. Women cooked meals, milked animals, washed clothes, prepared butter and cheese, spun wool, and wove fabric for tents.

## Upper-Class Women

While the general population of women in pre-Islamic Arabia did not enjoy the luxury of many rights, many women of upper-class status did. They married into comfortable homes and were sometimes able to own property or even inherit from relatives.



# 59. Reading: Muhammad and the Rise of Islam

## Early Life of Muhammad

Born c. 570 CE in Mecca, Muhammad was raised by his uncle Abu Talib and later worked as a merchant.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe Muhammad's life before 622 CE

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Muhammad was born in or around the year 570 CE to the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe, one of Mecca's prominent families.
- Muhammad was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his paternal uncle Abu Talib.

- Muhammad worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and married Khadijah, a 40-year-old widow, in 595 CE when he was twenty-five.
- In 605 CE, Muhammad honored all the Meccan clan leaders and set the Black Stone back into the correct spot in the Ka'aba.

### *Key Terms*

- **the Black Stone:** The eastern cornerstone of the Kaaba, the ancient stone building located in the center of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is revered by Muslims as an Islamic relic that, according to Muslim tradition, dates back to the time of Adam and Eve.
- **Quraysh tribe:** A powerful merchant group that controlled Mecca and the Kaaba.

## Overview

Muhammad unified Arabia into a single religious polity under Islam. Muslims and Bahá'ís believe he is a messenger and prophet of God. The Quran, the central religious text in Islam, alludes to Muhammad's life. Muhammad's life is traditionally defined into two periods: pre-hijra (emigration) in Mecca (from 570 to 622 CE) and post-hijra in Medina (from 622 until 632 CE). There are also traditional Muslim biographies of Muhammad (the *sira* literature), which provide additional information about Muhammad's life.

Muhammad is almost universally considered by Muslims as the last prophet sent by God to mankind. While non-Muslims regard Muhammad as the founder of Islam, Muslims consider him to have restored the unaltered original monotheistic faith of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets.

## Childhood

Muhammad was born around the year 570 CE to the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe, one of Mecca's prominent families. His father, Abdullah, died almost six months before Muhammad was born. According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad was sent to live with a Bedouin family in the desert, as desert life was considered healthier for infants. Muhammad stayed with his foster mother, Halimah bint Abi Dhuayb, and her husband until he was two years old. At the age of six, Muhammad lost his biological mother, Amina, to illness and was raised by his paternal grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, until he died when Muhammad was eight. He then came under the care of his uncle Abu Talib, the new leader of Banu Hashim.

## Adolescence and Early Adulthood

While still in his teens, Muhammad accompanied his uncle on trading journeys to Syria, gaining experience in commercial trade, which was the only career open to him as an orphan. Islamic tradition states that when Muhammad was either nine or twelve, while accompanying a caravan to Syria he met a Christian monk or hermit named Bahira, who is said to have foreseen Muhammed's career as a prophet of God. Little is known of Muhammad during his later youth; available information is fragmented, and it is difficult

to separate history from legend. It is known that he became a merchant and “was involved in trade between the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.” Due to his upright character during this time, he acquired the nickname “al-Amin,” meaning “faithful, trustworthy,” and “al-Sadiq,” meaning “truthful.”

Muhammad worked as a trader for Khadija, a widow, until he married her in 595 CE at the age of 25. The marriage lasted for 25 years and was reported to be a happy one. Muhammad relied upon Khadija and did not enter into a marriage with another woman during his first marriage. After Khadija’s death, Khawla bint Hakim suggested that Muhammad should marry Sawda bint Zama, a Muslim widow, or Aisha, daughter of Um Ruman and Abu Bakr of Mecca. Muhammad is said to have asked for arrangements to marry both.

According to a text collected by historian Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad was involved with a well-known story about setting the Black Stone in place in the wall of the Kaaba in 605 CE. The Black Stone, a sacred object, had been removed to facilitate renovations to the Kaaba. The leaders of Mecca could not agree on which clan should have the honor of setting the Black Stone back in its place. They agreed to wait for the next man to come through the gate and ask him to choose. That man was the 35-year-old Muhammad, five years before his first revelation. He asked for a cloth and put the Black Stone in its center. The clan leaders held the corners of the cloth and together carried the Black Stone to the right spot; then Muhammad set the stone in place, satisfying all who were present.



**Muhammad and the Black Stone:** An illustration from c. 1315 depicting Muhammad's role in re-setting the Black Stone in 605 CE.

Occasionally he would retreat to a cave in the mountains for several nights of seclusion and prayer; it is reported that it was at this spot that he was visited by Gabriel and received his first revelation from God.

## The Quran

Muhammad received revelations from 609–632 CE, and they became the basis for the Quran, the central religious text of Islam.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the origins of the first Muslim converts

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Muhammad first received revelations in 609 CE in a cave on Mount Hira, near Mecca.
- Muslims regard the Quran as the most important miracle of Muhammad, the proof of his prophethood, and the culmination of a series of divine messages revealed by the angel Gabriel from 609–632 CE.
- The key themes of the early Quranic verses included the responsibility of man towards his creator; the resurrection of the dead, God's final judgment followed by vivid descriptions of the tortures in Hell and pleasures in Paradise; and the signs of God in all aspects of life. Religious duties included belief in God, asking for forgiveness of sins, offering frequent prayers, assisting others particularly those in need, rejecting cheating and the love of wealth, being chaste, and not killing newborn girls.
- Muhammad's immediate family were the first to

believe he was a prophet, followed by three main groups of early converts to Islam: younger brothers and sons of great merchants, people who had fallen out of the first rank in their tribe or failed to attain it, and unprotected foreigners.

- Muslims believe the Quran to be both the unaltered and the final revelation of God. Religious concepts and practices include the five pillars of Islam, which are obligatory acts of worship, and following Islamic law, which touches on virtually every aspect of life and society, from banking and welfare to the status of women and the environment.

### *Key Terms*

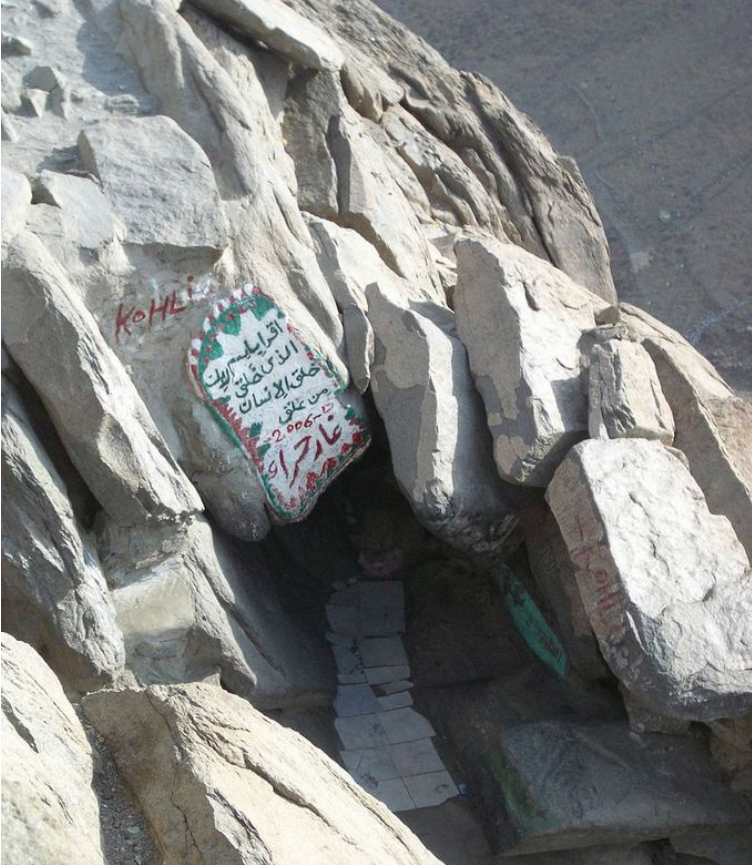
- **Quran:** Literally meaning “the recitation,” it is the central religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from God.
- **Khadijah:** The first wife of Muhammad.
- **Five Pillars of Islam:** Five basic acts in Islam, considered mandatory by believers and are the foundation of Muslim life.

## Muhammad’s First Revelations

When he was nearly 40, Muhammad began spending many hours alone in prayer and speculating over the aspects of creation. He was concerned with the “ignorance of divine guidance” (*Jahiliyyah*),

social unrest, injustice, widespread discrimination (particularly against women), fighting among tribes, and abuse of tribal authorities prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia. The moral degeneration of his fellow people, and his own quest for a true religion, further lent fuel to this, with the result that he began to withdraw periodically to a cave called Mount Hira, three miles north of Mecca, for contemplation and reflection. During this period Muhammad began to have dreams replete with spiritual significance that were fulfilled according to their true import; this was the commencement of his divine revelation. Islamic tradition holds that during one of his visits to Mount Hira in the year 609 CE, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and commanded Muhammad to recite verses that would later be included in the Quran. Upon receiving his first revelations, Muhammad was deeply distressed. When he returned home, he was consoled and reassured by Khadijah and her Christian cousin. Muhammad feared that others would dismiss his claims as evidence of him being possessed. On the other hand, Shi'a tradition maintains that Muhammad was neither surprised nor frightened at the appearance of Gabriel, but rather welcomed him as if he was expected.





**The cave Hira:** The cave Hira in the mountain Jabal al-Nour where, according to Muslim belief, Muhammad received his first revelation from the angel Gabriel.

The initial revelation was followed by a pause of three years (a period known as *fatra*) during which Muhammad felt depressed and further gave himself to prayers and spiritual practices. When the revelations resumed, he was reassured and began preaching.

# The Quran



**Quran Al-Qur`n** : Arabic calligraphy for “Quran”

Muslims believe that the Quran was verbally revealed from God to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel gradually over a period of approximately 23 years, beginning on 22 December 609 CE, when Muhammad was 40, and concluding in 632 CE, the year of his death. At the beginning of these revelations, Muhammad was confident that he could distinguish his own thoughts from the messages. Sahih al-Bukhari narrates Muhammad describing the revelations as, “Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell,” and Aisha reported, “I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the Inspiration was over).”

Muhammad’s first revelation, according to the Quran, was accompanied by a vision. The agent of revelation is mentioned as the “one mighty in power,” the one who “grew clear to view when he was on the uppermost horizon. Then he drew nigh and came down till he was (distant) two bows’ length or even nearer.” The Islamic

studies scholar Welch states in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* that he believes the graphic descriptions of Muhammad's condition at these moments may be regarded as genuine, because he was severely disturbed after these revelations. According to Welch, these seizures would have been seen by those around him as evidence for the superhuman origin of Muhammad's inspirations. However, Muhammad's critics accused him of being a possessed man, a soothsayer or a magician, since his experiences were similar to those claimed by such figures well known in ancient Arabia. Welch additionally states that it remains uncertain whether these experiences occurred before or after Muhammad's initial claim of prophethood.

The Quran describes Muhammad as "ummi," which is traditionally interpreted as "illiterate," but the meaning is more complex. Medieval commentators such as Al-Tabari maintained that the term induced two meanings: firstly, the inability to read or write in general, and secondly, the inexperience or ignorance of books or scriptures. However, priority was given to the first meaning. Muhammad's illiteracy was taken as a sign of the genuineness of his prophethood. For example, according to Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, if Muhammad had mastered writing and reading he possibly would have been suspected of having studied the books of the ancestors. Some scholars such as Watt prefer the second meaning.

According to the Quran, one of the main roles of Muhammad is to warn the unbelievers of their punishment at the end of the world. The Quran does not explicitly refer to Judgment Day, but provided examples from the history of extinct communities and warns Muhammad's contemporaries of similar calamities. Muhammad did not only warn those who rejected God's revelation, but also dispensed good news for those who abandoned evil, listening to the divine words and serving God. Muhammad's mission also involves preaching monotheism; the Quran commands Muhammad to proclaim and praise the name of his Lord and instructs him not to worship idols or associate other deities with God.



**A depiction of Muhammad receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel:** Muslims regard the Quran as the most important miracle of Muhammad, the proof of his prophethood, and the culmination of a series of divine messages revealed by the angel Gabriel from 609–632 CE. (From the manuscript *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid-al-Din Hamadani, 1307, Ilkhanate period)

The key themes of the early Quranic verses included the responsibility of man towards his creator; the resurrection of the dead, God's final judgment followed by vivid descriptions of the tortures in Hell and pleasures in Paradise; and the signs of God in all aspects of life. Religious duties required of the believers at this time were few: belief in God, asking for forgiveness of sins, offering frequent prayers, assisting others, particularly those in need, rejecting cheating and the love of wealth (considered to be significant in the commercial life of Mecca), being chaste, and not killing newborn girls.

## Rise of Islam in Mecca

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad's wife Khadija was the first to believe he was a prophet. She was followed by Muhammad's ten-year-old cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib, close friend Abu Bakr, and adopted son Zaid. Around 613, Muhammad began to preach to the public. Most Meccans ignored and mocked him, but he did begin to gain followers. There were three main groups of early converts to Islam: younger brothers and sons of great merchants; people who had fallen out of the first rank in their tribe or failed to attain it; and the weak, mostly unprotected foreigners.

## Basic Tenets and Practices of Islam

Islam is a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion articulated by the Quran, which is considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Allah), and, for the vast majority of adherents, by the teachings and normative example (called the *sunnah*, composed of accounts called *hadith*) of Muhammad. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim. Muslims believe that God is one and incomparable and that the purpose of existence is to worship God. Nearly all Muslims consider Muhammad to be the last prophet of God.

Muslims also believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed many times before through prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims believe the Quran to be both the unaltered and the final revelation of God. Religious concepts and practices include the Five Pillars of Islam and following Islamic law, which touches on virtually every aspect of life and society, from banking and welfare to the status of women and the environment.

The Five Pillars of Islam are five basic acts in Islam; they are considered mandatory by believers and are the foundation of

Muslim life. They are summarized in the famous *hadith* of Gabriel. The Five Pillars are:

1. *Shahada* (faith): there is only one God (Allah), and Muhammad is God's messenger. It is a set statement normally recited in Arabic: *lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāhu muḥammadun rasūlu-llāh* (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ) "There is no god but God (and) Muhammad is the messenger of God."
2. *Salat* (prayer): consists of five daily prayers, the names referring to the prayer times: *Fajr* (dawn), *Dhuhr* (noon), *ʿAṣr* (afternoon), *Maghrib* (evening), and *Ishāʿ* (night). All of these prayers are recited while facing in the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, and are accompanied by a series of set positions including bowing with hands on knees, standing, prostrating, and sitting in a special position.
3. *Zakāt* (charity): the practice of charitable giving based on accumulated wealth. It is the personal responsibility of each Muslim to ease the economic hardship of others and to strive towards eliminating inequality. *Zakāt* consists of spending a portion of one's wealth for the benefit of the poor or needy, like debtors or travelers.
4. *Sawm* (fasting): three types of fasting are recognized by the Quran: ritual fasting, fasting as compensation for repentance, and ascetic fasting. Ritual fasting is an obligatory act during the month of Ramadan. The fast is meant to allow Muslims to seek nearness to and look for forgiveness from God, to express their gratitude to and dependence on him, to atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the needy.
5. *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca): every able-bodied Muslim is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her life. The main rituals of the *Hajj* include walking seven times around the Kaaba, termed *Tawaf*; touching the Black Stone, termed *Istilam*; traveling seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah, termed *Sa'yee*; and symbolically

stoning the Devil in Mina, termed *Ramee*.

## Flight from Mecca to Medina

As Islam faced more political and religious opposition in Mecca, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina in 622 CE.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the basis for opposition to Muhammad

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- As Islam spread in Mecca, the ruling tribes began to oppose Muhammad 's preaching and his condemnation of idolatry.
- The Quraysh tribe controlled the Kaaba and drew their religious and political power from its polytheistic shrines, so they began to persecute the Muslims and many of Muhammad's followers became martyrs.
- When Muhammad's wife Khadijah and uncle Abu

Talib both died in 619 CE, Abu Lahab assumed leadership of the Banu Hashim clan and withdrew the clan's protection from Muhammad.

- In 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Yathrib in the Hijra to escape persecution, renaming the city Medina in honor of the prophet.
- Among the first things Muhammad did to ease the longstanding grievances among the tribes of Medina was draft a document known as the Constitution of Medina.

### *Key Terms*

- **Mecca:** The birthplace of Muhammad and the site of Muhammad's first revelation of the Quran, this city is regarded as the holiest city in the religion of Islam.
- **Banu Hashim clan:** One of Mecca's prominent families and part of the Quraysh tribe.
- **Medina:** Muhammad's destination during the Hijra, which became the power base of Islam in its first century (renamed from Yathrib).
- **Hijra:** The migration or journey of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in June 622 CE.

## Muhammad Starts Preaching

During the first three years of his ministry, Muhammad preached



Islam privately, mainly among his near relatives and close acquaintances. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad's wife Khadija was the first to believe he was a prophet. She was followed by Muhammad's ten-year-old cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib, close friend Abu Bakr, and adopted son Zaid. According to Islamic belief, in the fourth year of Muhammad's prophethood, around 613, he was ordered by God to make his propagation of this monotheistic faith public. Muhammad's earliest teachings were marked by his insistence on the oneness of God, the denunciation of polytheism, belief in the last judgment and its recompense, and social and economic justice.

Most Meccans ignored and mocked him, though a few became his followers. There were three main groups of early converts to Islam: younger brothers and sons of great merchants; people who had fallen out of the first rank in their tribe or failed to attain it; and the weak, mostly unprotected foreigners.

## Opposition in Mecca

According to Ibn Sad, one of Muhammad's companions, the opposition in Mecca started when Muhammad delivered verses that condemned idol worship and polytheism. However, the Quran maintains that it began when Muhammad started public preaching. As Islam spread, Muhammad threatened the local tribes and Meccan rulers because their wealth depended on the Kaaba. Muhammad's preaching was particularly offensive to his own Quraysh tribe because they guarded the Kaaba and drew their political and religious power from its polytheistic shrines.

The ruling tribes of Mecca perceived Muhammad as a danger that might cause tensions similar to the rivalry of Judaism and Bedouin Polytheism in Yathrib. The powerful merchants in Mecca attempted to convince Muhammad to abandon his preaching by offering him

admission into the inner circle of merchants and an advantageous marriage. However, Muhammad turned down both offers.



**The last ayah from the sura An-Najm in the Quran:** Muhammad's message of monotheism challenged the traditional social order in Mecca. The Quraysh tribe controlled the Kaaba and drew their religious and political power from its polytheistic shrines, so they began to persecute the Muslims and many of Muhammad's followers became martyrs.

At first, the opposition was confined to ridicule and sarcasm, but later morphed into active persecution that forced a section of new converts to migrate to neighboring Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia). Upset by the rate at which Muhammad was gaining new followers, the Quraysh proposed adopting a common form of worship, which was denounced by the Quran.

Muhammad himself was protected from physical harm as long as he belonged to the Banu Hashim clan, but his followers were not so lucky. Sumayyah bint Khabbab, a slave of the prominent Meccan leader Abu Jahl, is famous as the first martyr of Islam; her master

killed her with a spear when she refused to give up her faith. Bilal, another Muslim slave, was tortured by Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who placed more and more rocks on his chest to force his conversion, until he died.

## Death of Khadijah and Abu Talib in 619 CE

Muhammad's wife Khadijah and uncle Abu Talib both died in 619 CE, the year that became known as the "year of sorrow." With the death of Abu Talib, Abu Lahab assumed leadership of the Banu Hashim clan. Soon after, Abu Lahab withdrew the clan's protection from Muhammad, endangering him and his followers. Muhammad took this opportunity to look for a new home for himself and his followers. After several unsuccessful negotiations, he found hope with some men from Yathrib (later called Medina). The Arab population of Yathrib were familiar with monotheism and were prepared for the appearance of a prophet because a Jewish community existed there as well. They also hoped, by the means of Muhammad and the new faith, to gain supremacy over Mecca; the Yathrib were jealous of its importance as the place of pilgrimage. Converts to Islam came from nearly all Arab tribes in Medina; by June of the subsequent year, seventy-five Muslims came to Mecca for pilgrimage and to meet Muhammad.

## The Delegation from Medina

A delegation from Medina, consisting of the representatives of the twelve important clans of Medina, invited Muhammad as a neutral outsider to serve as the chief arbitrator for the entire community. There was fighting in Yathrib (Medina) mainly involving its Arab and Jewish inhabitants for around a hundred years before 620. The

recurring slaughters and disagreements over the resulting claims, especially after the battle of Bu'ath, in which all the clans were involved, made it obvious that the tribal conceptions of blood feud and an eye for an eye were no longer workable unless there was one man with authority to adjudicate in disputed cases. The delegation from Medina pledged themselves and their fellow citizens to accept Muhammad into their community and physically protect him as one of their own.

## The Hijra in 622 CE

The Hijra is the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina, 320 kilometers (200 miles) north, in 622 CE. Muhammad instructed his followers to emigrate to Medina until nearly all of them left Mecca. According to tradition, the Meccans, alarmed at the departure, plotted to assassinate Muhammad. In June 622, when he was warned of the plot, Muhammad slipped out of Mecca with his companion, Abu Bakr.

On the night of his departure, Muhammad's house was besieged by the appointed men of Quraysh. It is said that when Muhammad emerged from his house, he recited the a verse from the Quran and threw a handful of dust in the direction of the besiegers, which prevented them seeing him. When the Quraysh learned of Muhammad's escape, they announced a large reward for bringing him back to them, alive or dead, and pursuers scattered in all directions. After eight days' journey, Muhammad entered the outskirts of Medina, but did not enter the city directly. He stopped at a place called Quba, some miles from the main city, and established a mosque there. After a fourteen-days stay at Quba, Muhammad started for Medina, participating in his first Friday prayer on the way, and upon reaching the city was greeted cordially by its people.



**The Hijra and other early Muslim migrations:** The Hijra is the migration or journey of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Yathrib, which he later renamed Medina, in 622 CE.

## Muhammad in Medina

Among the first things Muhammad did to ease the longstanding

grievances among the tribes of Medina was draft a document known as the Constitution of Medina, “establishing a kind of alliance or federation” among the eight Medinan tribes and Muslim emigrants from Mecca. The document specified rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the different communities in Medina (including between the Muslim community and other communities, specifically the Jews and other “Peoples of the Book”). The community defined in the Constitution of Medina, *Ummah*, had a religious outlook, also shaped by practical considerations, and substantially preserved the legal forms of the old Arab tribes.

The first group of pagan converts to Islam in Medina were the clans who had not produced great leaders for themselves but had suffered from warlike leaders from other clans. This was followed by the general acceptance of Islam by the pagan population of Medina, with some exceptions.

## Reconciliation and Consolidation of the Islamic State

Around 628 CE, the nascent Islamic state was somewhat consolidated when Muhammad left Medina to perform pilgrimage at Mecca. The Quraysh intercepted him en route and made a treaty with the Muslims. Though the terms of the Hudaibiyyah treaty may have been unfavorable to the Muslims of Medina, the Quran declared it a clear victory. Muslim historians suggest that the treaty mobilized the contact between the Meccan pagans and the Muslims of Medina. The treaty demonstrated that the Quraysh recognized Muhammad as their equal and Islam as a rising power.

# Islam Ascendant

After eight years of warring with Mecca and finally conquering the city in 630 CE, Muhammad united Arabia into a single Islamic state.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the rise of Islam under Muhammad

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Muhammad created the first Islamic state when he wrote the Constitution of Medina, a formal agreement between Muhammad and all of the significant tribes and families of Medina, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, and pagans.
- The Battle of Badr was a key battle in the early days of Islam and a turning point in Muhammad's struggle with his opponents among the Quraysh in Mecca.
- The Battle of Uḥud in 625 CE was the second military encounter between the Meccans and the Muslims, but the Muslims suffered defeat and withdrew.

- After eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, Muhammad gathered an army of 10,000 followers and conquered the city of Mecca, destroying the pagan idols in the Kaaba.
- By the time of Muhammad's unexpected death in 632 CE, he had united Arabia into a single Muslim religious polity.

### *Key Terms*

- **Constitution of Medina:** A formal agreement between Muhammad and all of the significant tribes and families of Medina, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, and pagans, that formed the basis of the first Islamic state.
- **Ummah:** The collective community of Islamic peoples.
- **Farewell Pilgrimage:** The only Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca by the Islamic prophet Muhammad, in 632 CE.

## The Constitution of Medina

Upon his arrival in Medina, Muhammad unified the tribes by drafting the Constitution of Medina, which was a formal agreement between Muhammad and all of the significant tribes and families of Medina, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, and pagans. This constitution instituted rights and responsibilities and united the



different Medina communities into the first Islamic state, the Ummah.

An important feature of the Constitution of Medina is the redefinition of ties between Muslims. It set faith relationships above blood ties and emphasized individual responsibility. Tribal identities were still important, and were used to refer to different groups, but the constitution declared that the “main binding tie” for the newly created Ummah was religion. This contrasts with the norms of pre-Islamic Arabia, which was a thoroughly tribal society. This was an important event in the development of the small group of Muslims in Medina to the larger Muslim community and empire. While praying in the Masjid al-Qiblatain in Medina in 624 CE, Muhammad received revelations that he should be facing Mecca rather than Jerusalem during prayer. Muhammad adjusted to the new direction, and his companions praying with him followed his lead, beginning the tradition of facing Mecca during prayer.



***The Masjid al-Qiblatain, where Muhammad established the new Qibla, or direction of prayer: Muhammad received revelations that he should face Mecca, rather than Jerusalem, in 624 CE.***

## Beginning of Armed Conflict

Economically uprooted by their Meccan persecutors and with no available profession, the Muslim migrants turned to raiding Meccan caravans. This response to persecution and effort to provide sustenance for Muslim families initiated armed conflict between the Muslims and the pagan Quraysh of Mecca. Muhammad delivered Quranic verses permitting the Muslims, “those who have been expelled from their homes,” to fight the Meccans in opposition to

persecution. The caravan attacks provoked and pressured Mecca by interfering with trade, and allowed the Muslims to acquire wealth, power, and prestige while working toward their ultimate goal of inducing Mecca's submission to the new faith.

## Battle of Badr

In March 624, Muhammad led three hundred warriors in a raid on a Meccan merchant caravan. The Muslims set an ambush for the caravan at Badr, but a Meccan force intervened and the Battle of Badr commenced. Although outnumbered more than three to one, the Muslims won the battle, killing at least forty-five Meccans. Muhammad and his followers saw the victory as confirmation of their faith, and Muhammad said the victory was assisted by an invisible host of angels. The victory strengthened Muhammad's position in Medina and dispelled earlier doubts among his followers.

## Battle of Uhud

To maintain economic prosperity, the Meccans needed to restore their prestige after their defeat at Badr. Abu Sufyan, the leader of the ruling Quraysh tribe, gathered an army of 3,000 men and set out for an attack on Medina. Muhammad led his Muslim force to the Meccans to fight the Battle of Uhud on March 23, 625 CE. When the battle seemed close to a decisive Muslim victory, the Muslim archers left their assigned posts to raid the Meccan camp. Meccan war veteran Khalid ibn al-Walid led a surprise attack, which killed many Muslims and injured Muhammad. The Muslims withdrew up the slopes of Uḥud. The Meccans did not pursue the Muslims further, but marched back to Mecca declaring victory.

For the Muslims, the battle was a significant setback. According

to the Quran, the loss at Uhud was partly a punishment and partly a test for steadfastness.

## Conquest of Mecca and Arabia

After eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, Muhammad gathered an army of 10,000 Muslim converts and marched on the city of Mecca. The attack went largely uncontested and Muhammad took over the city with little bloodshed. Most Meccans converted to Islam. Muhammad declared an amnesty for past offenses, except for ten men and women who had mocked and made fun of him in songs and verses. Some of these people were later pardoned. Muhammad destroyed the pagan idols in the Kaaba and then sent his followers out to destroy all of the remaining pagan temples in Eastern Arabia.

Following the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad was alarmed by a military threat from the confederate tribes of Hawazin, who were raising an army twice the size of Muhammad's. The Banu Hawazin were old enemies of the Meccans. They were joined by the Banu Thaqif, who adopted an anti-Meccan policy due to the decline of the prestige of Meccans. Muhammad defeated the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes in the Battle of Hunayn.

At the end of the 10th year after the migration to Medina, Muhammad performed his first truly Islamic pilgrimage, thereby teaching his followers the rules governing the various ceremonies of the annual Great Pilgrimage. In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from the Farewell Pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time Muhammad died, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam, and he had united Arabia into a single Muslim religious polity.

# 60. Assignments

## Week 10

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Group Research and Bibliography

Points: 60

In this assignment, you will work collaboratively with your group members. As you meet virtually or in person, be clear about which group member is expected to complete which task(s), and document your respective responsibilities. If there are issues later with unfulfilled assignments, I will need evidence to hold failing group members accountable.

This is the first work your group will take toward the final completed project: a presentation of a dialogue between two historical personalities representing an opinion in one of the major conflicts in Western Civilization:

1. The Reformation [16<sup>th</sup> century]
2. Witchcraft trials [16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century]
3. Secular government [17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century]
4. Evolutionary theory [19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century]
5. Women's Suffrage [19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century]
6. Imperialism [18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century]
7. The motive of Hitler's anti-Semitism [20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century]

Each group will consult the two primary sources assigned for that

topic. Then, begin to research in greater depth. What were the opinions, views, concepts and ideas expressed by Western thinkers on your groups' topic? Who were the major players in the debate, and what were the big ideas expressed in the debate? Keep your research confined to the Western world and the time period associated with your group. Ultimately for your final presentation, you will be selecting two people from your original research who best demonstrate the conflicting beliefs of the time, so it is better to find a few strong and intelligent voices, rather than ten different opinions.

Write a 300 word, double-spaced paper listing your choices. You should have 3 to 5 people that your group has identified. For each person, relate the basic facts; when did they live? Where? What were their major books, articles? What position did they take on your topic? Did this position change over time? How influential were his/her ideas? Your paper will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least 6 secondary academic sources in MLA format. This assignment is worth 60 points.

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

PART XII

WEEK II: ISLAM, CON'T,  
CHARLEMAGNE AND  
RUSSIA





# 6I. Introduction

## Week II

### Introduction

The Coronation of Charlemagne - a painting by Raphael

Charlemagne or Charles the Great (2 April 742 – 28 January 814), numbered Charles I, was King of the Franks from 768, King of the Lombards from 774 and Emperor of the Romans from 800. He united much of Europe during the early Middle Ages. He was the first recognized emperor in western Europe since the fall of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier. The expanded Frankish state that Charlemagne founded is called the Carolingian Empire.

map

## 62. Reading: The Umayyad and Abbasid Empires

### Muhammad's Successors

After Muhammad's death in 632 CE, there were conflicts among his followers as to who would become his successor, which created a split in Islam between the Sunni and Shi'a sects.

#### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Assess the Caliphates' rise to power

#### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

##### *Key Points*

- After Muhammad's death in 632 CE, his friend Abu Bakr was named caliph and ruler of the Islamic community, or Ummah.
- Sunni Muslims believe that Abu Bakr was the proper successor, while Shi'a Muslims believe that Ali

should have succeed Muhammad as caliph.

- After Muhammad's death and the rebellion of several tribes, Abu Bakr initiated several military campaigns to bring Arabia under Islam and into the caliphate.
- The Rashidun Caliphate (632–661) was led by Abu Bakr, then by Umar ibn al-Khattab as the second caliph, Uthman ibn Affan as the third caliph, and Ali as the fourth caliph.
- Muslim armies conquered most of Arabia by 633, followed by north Africa, Mesopotamia, and Persia, significantly shaping the history of the world through the spread of Islam.

### *Key Terms*

- **Sunni:** The branch of Islam that believes that a caliph should be elected by Muslims or their representatives and that Abu Bakr was the first caliph.
- **Ummah:** An Arabic word meaning “nation” or “community;” usually refers to the collective community of Islamic peoples.
- **Shi'a:** The minority Islamic branch that believes Muhammad appointed his cousin Ali as his successor and that the caliph should be decided based on this family lineage.
- **caliph:** The head of state in a caliphate, and the title for the ruler of the Islamic Ummah; a successor of Muhammad.

## Succession after Muhammad's Death

Muhammad united the tribes of Arabia into a single Arab Muslim religious polity in the last years of his life. He established a new unified Arabian Peninsula, which led to the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates and the rapid expansion of Muslim power over the next century.

With Muhammad's death in 632 CE, disagreement broke out among his followers over deciding his successor. Muhammad's prominent companion Umar ibn al-Khattab nominated Abu Bakr, Muhammad's friend and collaborator. With additional support, Abu Bakr was confirmed as the first caliph (religious successor to Muhammad) that same year. This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, had been designated the successor by Muhammad at Ghadir Khumm. Ali was Muhammad's first cousin and closest living male relative, as well as his son-in-law, having married Muhammad's daughter Fatimah. Ali would eventually become the fourth Sunni caliph. These disagreements over Muhammad's true successor led to a major split in Islam between what became the Sunni and Shi'a denominations, a division that still holds to this day.

Sunni Muslims believe and confirm that Abu Bakr was chosen by the community and that this was the proper procedure. Sunnis further argue that a caliph should ideally be chosen by election or community consensus. Shi'a Muslims believe that just as God alone appoints a prophet, only God has the prerogative to appoint the successor to his prophet. They believe God chose Ali to be Muhammad's successor and the first caliph of Islam.

## Rise of the Caliphates

After Muhammad's death, many Arabian tribes rejected Islam or

withheld the alms tax established by Muhammad. Many tribes claimed that they had submitted to Muhammad and that with Muhammad's death, their allegiance had ended. Caliph Abu Bakr insisted that they had not just submitted to a leader, but joined the Islamic community of Ummah.

To retain the cohesion of the Islamic state, Abu Bakr divided his Muslim army to force the Arabian tribes into submission. After a series of successful campaigns, Abu Bakr's general Khalid ibn Walid defeated a competing prophet and the Arabian peninsula was united under the caliphate in Medina. Once the rebellions had been quelled, Abu Bakr began a war of conquest. In just a few short decades, his campaigns led to one of the largest empires in history. Muslim armies conquered most of Arabia by 633, followed by north Africa, Mesopotamia, and Persia, significantly shaping the history of the world through the spread of Islam.

## Rashidun Caliphate (632–661)

Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor on his deathbed. Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, was killed by a Persian named Piruz Nahavandi. Umar's successor, Uthman Ibn Affan, was elected by a council of electors (Majlis). Uthman was killed by members of a disaffected group. Ali then took control, but was not universally accepted as caliph by the governors of Egypt, and later by some of his own guard. He faced two major rebellions and was assassinated by Abd al-Rahman, a Kharijite. Ali's tumultuous rule lasted only five years. This period is known as the Fitna, or the first Islamic civil war.

The followers of Ali later became the Shi'a minority sect of Islam, which rejects the legitimacy of the first three caliphs. The followers of all four Rashidun caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali) became the majority Sunni sect. Under the Rashidun, each region (Sultanate) of the caliphate had its own governor (Sultan). Muawiyah, a relative of Uthman and governor (Wali) of Syria,

became one of Ali's challengers, and after Ali's assassination managed to overcome the other claimants to the caliphate. Muawiyah transformed the caliphate into a hereditary office, thus founding the Umayyad dynasty. In areas that were previously under Sassanid Persian or Byzantine rule, the caliphs lowered taxes, provided greater local autonomy (to their delegated governors), granted greater religious freedom for Jews and some indigenous Christians, and brought peace to peoples demoralized and disaffected by the casualties and heavy taxation that resulted from the decades of Byzantine-Persian warfare.

## Expansion Under the Umayyad Caliphates

The Umayyad Caliphate, the second of the four major Arab caliphates established after the death of Muhammad, expanded the territory of the Islamic state to one of the largest empires in history.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the advancements made under the Umayyad Caliphate

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Umayyad Caliphate, which emerged after the Rashidun Caliphate collapsed, was characterized by hereditary elections and territory expansion.
- The Umayyad Caliphate became one of the largest unitary states in history and one of the few states to ever extend direct rule over three continents.
- When the Abbasid dynasty revolted against the Umayyads and killed many of their ruling family members, a few Umayyads escaped to the Iberian peninsula and founded the Cordoba Caliphate, characterized by peaceful diplomacy, religious tolerance, and cultural flourishing.

### *Key Terms*

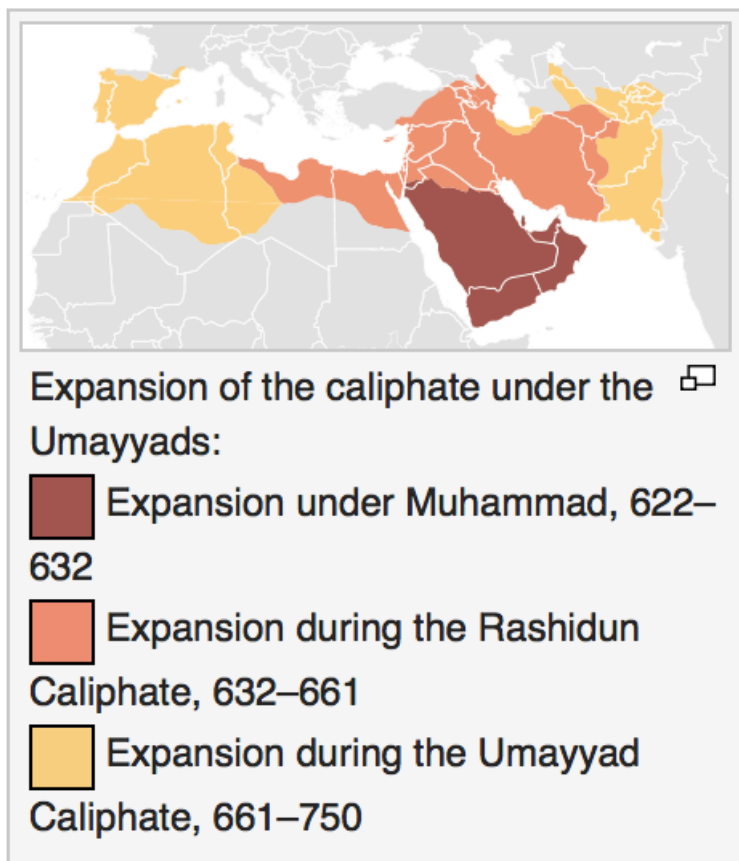
- **Al-Andalus:** Also known as Muslim Spain or Islamic Iberia, a medieval Muslim territory and cultural domain occupying at its peak most of modern-day Spain and Portugal.
- **Dome of the Rock:** A shrine located on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem.
- **Umayyad Caliphate:** The second of the four major Arab caliphates established after the death of Muhammad.

## Umayyad Caliphate (661–750)

The Umayyad Caliphate was the second of the four major Arab caliphates established after the death of Muhammad. This caliphate was centered on the Umayyad dynasty, hailing from Mecca. The Umayyad family had first come to power under the third caliph, Uthman ibn Affan (r. 644–656), but the Umayyad regime was founded by Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, long-time governor of Syria, after the end of the First Muslim Civil War in 661 CE. Syria remained the Umayyads' main power base thereafter, and Damascus was their capital.

Under the Umayyads, the caliphate territory grew rapidly. The Islamic Caliphate became one of the largest unitary states in history, and one of the few states to ever extend direct rule over three continents (Africa, Europe, and Asia). The Umayyads incorporated the Caucasus, Transoxiana, Sindh, the Maghreb, and the Iberian Peninsula ( Al-Andalus ) into the Muslim world. At its greatest extent, the Umayyad Caliphate covered 5.79 million square miles and included 62 million people (29% of the world's population), making it the fifth largest empire in history in both area and proportion of the world's population. Although the Umayyad Caliphate did not rule all of the Sahara, nomadic Berber tribes paid homage to the caliph. However, although these vast areas may have recognized the supremacy of the caliph, *de facto* power was in the hands of local sultans and emirs.





**Expansion of the caliphate:** This map shows the extension of Islamic rule under Muhammad, the Rashidun Caliphate, and the Umayyad Caliphate

The Umayyad dynasty was not universally supported within the Muslim community for a variety of reasons, including their hereditary election and suggestions of impious behavior. Some Muslims felt that only members of Muhammad's Banu Hashim clan or those of his own lineage, such as the descendants of Ali, should rule. Some Muslims thought that Umayyad taxation and administrative practices were unjust. While the non-Muslim

population had autonomy, their judicial matters were dealt with in accordance with their own laws and by their own religious heads or their appointees. Non-Muslims paid a poll tax for policing to the central state. Muhammad had stated explicitly during his lifetime that each religious minority should be allowed to practice its own religion and govern itself, and the policy had on the whole continued.

There were numerous rebellions against the Umayyads, as well as splits within the Umayyad ranks, which notably included the rivalry between Yaman and Qays. Allegedly, The Sunnis killed Ali's son Hussein and his family at the Battle of Karbala in 680, solidifying the Shi'a-Sunni split. Eventually, supporters of the Banu Hashim and the supporters of the lineage of Ali united to bring down the Umayyads in 750. However, the Shi'at 'Alī, "the Party of Ali," were again disappointed when the Abbasid dynasty took power, as the Abbasids were descended from Muhammad's uncle 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, and not from Ali.

The Abbasid victors desecrated the tombs of the Umayyads in Syria, sparing only that of Umar II, and most of the remaining members of the Umayyad family were tracked down and killed. When Abbasids declared amnesty for members of the Umayyad family, eighty gathered to receive pardons, and all were massacred. One grandson of Hisham, Abd al-Rahman I, survived and established a kingdom in Al-Andalus (Moorish Iberia), proclaiming his family to be the Umayyad Caliphate revived.

## Umayyad Dynasty in Cordoba, Spain

The revival of the Umayyad Caliphate in Al-Andalus (what would become modern Spain) was called the Caliphate of Córdoba, which lasted until 1031. The period was characterized by an expansion of trade and culture, and saw the construction of masterpieces of al-Andalus architecture.

The caliphate enjoyed increased prosperity during the 10th century. Abd-ar-Rahman III united al-Andalus and brought the Christian kingdoms of the north under control through force and diplomacy. Abd-ar-Rahman stopped the Fatimid advance into caliphate land in Morocco and al-Andalus. This period of prosperity was marked by increasing diplomatic relations with Berber tribes in north Africa, Christian kings from the north, and France, Germany, and Constantinople.

Córdoba was the cultural and intellectual center of al-Andalus. Mosques, such as the Great Mosque, were the focus of many caliphs' attention. The caliph's palace, Medina Azahara, was on the outskirts of the city, and had many rooms filled with riches from the East. The library of Al-Ḥakam II was one of the largest libraries in the world, housing at least 400,000 volumes, and Córdoba possessed translations of ancient Greek texts into Arabic, Latin and Hebrew. During the Umayyad Caliphate period, relations between Jews and Arabs were cordial; Jewish stonemasons helped build the columns of the Great Mosque. Al-Andalus was subject to eastern cultural influences as well. The musician Ziryab is credited with bringing hair and clothing styles, toothpaste, and deodorant from Baghdad to the Iberian peninsula. Advances in science, history, geography, philosophy, and language occurred during the Umayyad Caliphate as well.



**Mosque:** Interior of the Mezquita (Mosque), one of the finest examples of Umayyad architecture in Spain.

## Legacy of the Umayyad Caliphate

The Umayyad caliphate was marked both by territorial expansion and by the administrative and cultural problems that such expansion created. Despite some notable exceptions, the Umayyads tended to favor the rights of the old Arab families, and in particular their own, over those of newly converted Muslims (mawali). Therefore, they held to a less universalist conception of Islam than did many of their rivals.

During the period of the Umayyads, Arabic became the administrative language, in which state documents and currency were issued. Mass conversions brought a large influx of Muslims to the caliphate. The Umayyads also constructed famous buildings such as the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus.

According to one common view, the Umayyads transformed the caliphate from a religious institution (during the Rashidun) to a

dynastic one. However, the Umayyad caliphs do seem to have understood themselves as the representatives of God on Earth.

The Umayyads have met with a largely negative reception from later Islamic historians, who have accused them of promoting a kingship (*mulk*, a term with connotations of tyranny) instead of a true caliphate (*khilafa*). In this respect it is notable that the Umayyad caliphs referred to themselves not as *khalifat rasul Allah* (“successor of the messenger of God,” the title preferred by the tradition), but rather as *khalifat Allah* (“deputy of God”).

Many Muslims criticized the Umayyads for having too many non-Muslim, former Roman administrators in their government. St. John of Damascus was also a high administrator in the Umayyad administration. As the Muslims took over cities, they left the people’s political representatives and the Roman tax collectors and administrators. The people’s political representatives calculated and negotiated taxes. The central government and the local governments got paid respectively for the services they provided. Many Christian cities used some of the taxes to maintain their churches and run their own organizations. Later, the Umayyads were criticized by some Muslims for not reducing the taxes of the people who converted to Islam.

## Spread of Islam

In the years following the Prophet Muhammad’s death, the expansion of Islam was carried out by his successor caliphates, who increased the territory of the Islamic state and sought converts from both polytheistic and monotheistic religions.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the spread of Islam and identify how the caliphs maintained authority over conquered territories.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The expansion of the Arab Empire in the years following the Prophet Muhammad 's death led to the creation of caliphates, who occupied a vast geographical area and sought converts to Islamic faith.
- The people of the Islamic world created numerous sophisticated centers of culture and science with far-reaching mercantile networks, travelers, scientists, hunters, mathematicians, doctors, and philosophers.
- Historians distinguish between two separate strands of converts of the time. One is animists and polytheists of tribal societies of the Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile crescent; the other is the monotheistic populations of the Middle Eastern agrarian and urbanized societies.
- The Arab conquerors generally respected the traditional middle-Eastern pattern of religious

pluralism with regard to the conquered populations, respecting the practice of other faiths in Arab territory, although widespread conversions to Islam came about as a result of the breakdown of historically religiously organized societies.

### *Key Terms*

- **Zoroastrianism:** an ancient Iranian religion and religious philosophy that arose in the eastern ancient Persian Empire, when the religious philosopher Zoroaster simplified the pantheon of early Iranian gods into two opposing forces.
- **Imam:** An Islamic leadership position, most commonly in the context of a worship leader of a mosque and Sunni Muslim community.

## Overview

The expansion of the Arab Empire in the years following the Prophet Muhammad's death led to the creation of caliphates occupying a vast geographical area. Conversion to Islam was boosted by missionary activities, particularly those of Imams, who easily intermingled with local populace to propagate religious teachings. These early caliphates, coupled with Muslim economics and trading and the later expansion of the Ottoman Empire, resulted in Islam's spread outwards from Mecca towards both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the creation of the Muslim world. Trading played an

important role in the spread of Islam in several parts of the world, notably southeast Asia.

Muslim dynasties were soon established and subsequent empires such as those of the Abbasids, Fatimids, Almoravids, Seljukids, and Ajurans, Adal and Warsangali in Somalia, Mughals in India, Safavids in Persia, and Ottomans in Anatolia were among the largest and most powerful in the world. The people of the Islamic world created numerous sophisticated centers of culture and science with far-reaching mercantile networks, travelers, scientists, hunters, mathematicians, doctors, and philosophers, all contributing to the Golden Age of Islam. Islamic expansion in South and East Asia fostered cosmopolitan and eclectic Muslim cultures in the Indian subcontinent, Malaysia, Indonesia, and China.

Within the first century of the establishment of Islam upon the Arabian Peninsula and the subsequent rapid expansion of the Arab Empire during the Muslim conquests, one of the most significant empires in world history was formed. For the subjects of this new empire, formerly subjects of the greatly reduced Byzantine and obliterated Sassanid empires, not much changed in practice. The objective of the conquests was of a practical nature more than anything else, as fertile land and water were scarce in the Arabian Peninsula. A real Islamization therefore only came about in the subsequent centuries.

## Conversions to Islam

Historians distinguish between two separate strands of converts of the time. One is animists and polytheists of tribal societies of the Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile crescent; the other is the monotheistic populations of the Middle Eastern agrarian and urbanized societies.

For the polytheistic and pagan societies, apart from the religious and spiritual reasons each individual may have had, conversion to



Islam “represented the response of a tribal, pastoral population to the need for a larger framework for political and economic integration, a more stable state, and a more imaginative and encompassing moral vision to cope with the problems of a tumultuous society.” In contrast, for sedentary and often already monotheistic societies, “Islam was substituted for a Byzantine or Sassanian political identity and for a Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian religious affiliation.” Initially, conversion was neither required nor necessarily wished for: “[The Arab conquerors] did not require the conversion as much as the subordination of non-Muslim peoples. At the outset, they were hostile to conversions because new Muslims diluted the economic and status advantages of the Arabs.”

Only in subsequent centuries, with the development of the religious doctrine of Islam and with that the understanding of the Muslim Ummah, did mass conversion take place. The new understanding by the religious and political leadership led in many cases to a weakening or breakdown of the social and religious structures of parallel religious communities such as Christians and Jews. With the weakening of many churches, for example, and with the favoring of Islam and the migration of substantial Muslim Turkish populations into the areas of Anatolia and the Balkans, the “social and cultural relevance of Islam” were enhanced and a large number of peoples were converted.

During the Abbasid Caliphate, expansion ceased and the central disciplines of Islamic philosophy, theology, law, and mysticism became more widespread, and the gradual conversions of the populations within the empire occurred. Significant conversions also occurred beyond the extents of the empire, such as that of the Turkic tribes in Central Asia and peoples living in regions south of the Sahara in Africa through contact with Muslim traders active in the area and Sufi orders. In Africa it spread along three routes—across the Sahara via trading towns such as Timbuktu, up the Nile Valley through the Sudan up to Uganda, and across the Red

Sea and down East Africa through settlements such as Mombasa and Zanzibar. These initial conversions were of a flexible nature.

The Arab-Muslim conquests followed a general pattern of nomadic conquests of settled regions, whereby conquering peoples became the new military elite and reached a compromise with the old elites by allowing them to retain local political, religious, and financial authority. Peasants, workers, and merchants paid taxes, while members of the old and new elites collected them.



**The Great Mosque of Kairouan:** *The Great Mosque of Kairouan, founded in 670 CE by the Arab general and conqueror Uqba Ibn Nafi, is the oldest mosque in western Islamic lands and represents an architectural symbol of the spread of Islam in North Africa, situated in Kairouan, Tunisia.*

## Policy Toward Non-Muslims

The Arab conquerors did not repeat the mistake made by the Byzantine and Sasanian empires, who had tried and failed to impose an official religion on subject populations, which had caused resentments that made the Muslim conquests more acceptable to

them. Instead, the rulers of the new empire generally respected the traditional middle-Eastern pattern of religious pluralism, which was not one of equality but rather of dominance by one group over the others. After the end of military operations, which involved the sacking of some monasteries and confiscation of Zoroastrian fire temples in Syria and Iraq, the early caliphate was characterized by religious tolerance, and people of all ethnicities and religions blended in public life. Before Muslims were ready to build mosques in Syria, they accepted Christian churches as holy places and shared them with local Christians. In Iraq and Egypt, Muslim authorities cooperated with Christian religious leaders. Numerous churches were repaired and new ones built during the Umayyad era.

Some non-Muslim populations did experience persecution, however. After the Muslim conquest of Persia, Zoroastrians were given dhimmi (non-Muslim) status and subjected to persecutions; discrimination and harassment began in the form of sparse violence. Zoroastrians were made to pay an extra tax called Jizya; if they failed, they were killed, enslaved, or imprisoned. Those paying Jizya were subjected to insults and humiliation by the tax collectors. Zoroastrians who were captured as slaves in wars were given their freedom if they converted to Islam.

## The Islamic Golden Age

Abbasid leadership cultivated intellectual, cultural, and scientific developments in the Islamic Golden Age.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify the causes of, and developments during, the Islamic Golden Age

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Islamic Golden Age started with the rise of Islam and establishment of the first Islamic state in 622.
- The introduction of paper in the 10th century enabled Islamic scholars to easily write manuscripts; Arab scholars also saved classic works of antiquity by translating them into various languages.
- The Arabs assimilated the scientific knowledge of the civilizations they had overrun, including the ancient Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, and Phoenician civilizations.
- Scientists advanced the fields of algebra, calculus, geometry, chemistry, biology, medicine, and astronomy.
- Many forms of art flourished during the Islamic Golden Age, including ceramics, metalwork, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, woodwork, and calligraphy.

## *Key Terms*

- **calligraphy:** A visual art related to writing—the design and execution of lettering with a broad tip instrument or brush in one stroke.
- **arabesque:** A form of artistic decoration consisting of surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils, and other elements.
- **Averroës:** A medieval Andalusian polymath famous for his translations and commentaries of Aristotle.

## Overview

The Islamic Golden Age refers to a period in the history of Islam, traditionally dated from the 8th century to the 13th century, during which much of the historically Islamic world was ruled by various caliphates and science, economic development, and cultural works flourished. This period is traditionally understood to have begun during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809) with the inauguration of the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, where scholars from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds were mandated to gather and translate all of the world's classical knowledge into the Arabic language.

The end of the age is variously given as 1258 with the Mongolian Sack of Baghdad, or 1492 with the completion of the Christian Reconquista of the Emirate of Granada in Al-Andalus, Iberian Peninsula. During the Golden Age, the major Islamic capital cities of

Baghdad, Cairo, and Córdoba became the main intellectual centers for science, philosophy, medicine, and education. The government heavily patronized scholars, and the best scholars and notable translators, such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq, had salaries estimated to be the equivalent of those of professional athletes today.

The School of Nisibis and later the School of Edessa became centers of learning and transmission of classical wisdom. The House of Wisdom was a library, translation institute, and academy, and the Library of Alexandria and the Imperial Library of Constantinople housed new works of literature. Nestorian Christians played an important role in the formation of Arab culture, with the Jundishapur hospital and medical academy prominent in the late Sassanid, Umayyad, and early Abbasid periods. Notably, eight generations of the Nestorian Bukhtishu family served as private doctors to caliphs and sultans between the 8th and 11th centuries.

## Literature and Philosophy

With the introduction of paper, information was democratized and it became possible to make a living from simply writing and selling books. The use of paper spread from China into Muslim regions in the 8th century, and then to Spain (and then the rest of Europe) in the 10th century. Paper was easier to manufacture than parchment and less likely to crack than papyrus, and could absorb ink, making it difficult to erase and ideal for keeping records. Islamic paper makers devised assembly-line methods of hand-copying manuscripts to turn out editions far larger than any available in Europe for centuries. The best known fiction from the Islamic world is *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*, which took form in the 10th century and reached its final form by the 14th century, although the number and type of tales vary.



**Painting of the Ali Baba story in *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights* by Maxfield Parrish:** The introduction of paper in the 10th century enabled Islamic scholars to easily write manuscripts, including *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*. Arab scholars also saved classic works of antiquity by translating them into various languages.

Christians (particularly Nestorian Christians) contributed to the Arab Islamic civilization during the Umayyad and the Abbasid

periods by translating works of Greek philosophers to Syriac and then to Arabic. During the 4th through the 7th centuries, scholarly work in the Syriac and Greek languages was either newly initiated or carried on from the Hellenistic period. Many classic works of antiquity might have been lost if Arab scholars had not translated them into Arabic and Persian and later into Turkish, Hebrew, and Latin. Islamic scholars also absorbed ideas from China and India, and in turn Arabic philosophic literature contributed to the development of modern European philosophy.

## Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd, also known by his Latinized name Averroës (April 14, 1126–December 10, 1198), was an Al-Andalus Muslim polymath, a master of Aristotelian philosophy, Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, Maliki law and jurisprudence, logic, psychology, politics, Andalusian classical music theory, medicine, astronomy, geography, mathematics, physics, and celestial mechanics. Averroes was born in Córdoba, Al-Andalus, present-day Spain, and died in Marrakesh, present-day Morocco.

The 13th-century philosophical movement based on Averroes' work is called Averroism. Both Ibn Rushd and the scholar Ibn Sina played a major role in saving the works of Aristotle, whose ideas came to dominate the non-religious thought of the Christian and Muslim worlds. Ibn Rushd has been described as the “founding father of secular thought in Western Europe.” He tried to reconcile Aristotle's system of thought with Islam. According to him, there is no conflict between religion and philosophy; rather they are different ways of reaching the same truth. He believed in the eternity of the universe. Ibn Rushd also held that the soul is divided into two parts, one individual and one divine; while the individual soul is not eternal, all humans at the basic level share one and the same divine soul.



## Science and Mathematics

The Arabs assimilated the scientific knowledge of the civilizations they had conquered, including the ancient Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, and Phoenician civilizations. Scientists recovered the Alexandrian mathematical, geometric, and astronomical knowledge, such as that of Euclid and Claudius Ptolemy.

Persian scientist Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī significantly developed algebra in his landmark text, *Kitab al-Jabr wa-l-Muqabala*, from which the term “algebra” is derived. The term “algorithm” is derived from the name of the scholar al-Khwarizmi, who was also responsible for introducing the Arabic numerals and Hindu-Arabic numeral system beyond the Indian subcontinent. In calculus, the scholar Alhazen discovered the sum formula for the fourth power, using a method readily generalizable to determine the sum for any integral power. He used this to find the volume of a paraboloid.

## Medicine

Medicine was a central part of medieval Islamic culture. Responding to circumstances of time and place, Islamic physicians and scholars developed a large and complex medical literature exploring and synthesizing the theory and practice of medicine. Islamic medicine was built on tradition, chiefly the theoretical and practical knowledge developed in India, Greece, Persia, and Rome. Islamic scholars translated their writings from Syriac, Greek, and Sanskrit into Arabic and then produced new medical knowledge based on those texts. In order to make the Greek tradition more accessible, understandable, and teachable, Islamic scholars organized the Greco-Roman medical knowledge into encyclopedias.



**The eye, according to Hunain ibn Ishaq:** Scholars developed large encyclopedias of medical knowledge during the Islamic Golden Age, such as this one from a manuscript dated circa 1200.

## Art

Ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, and

woodwork flourished during the Islamic Golden Age. Manuscript illumination became an important and greatly respected art, and portrait miniature painting flourished in Persia. Calligraphy, an essential aspect of written Arabic, developed in manuscripts and architectural decoration.

## Arabesque

Typically, though not entirely, Islamic art depicts nature patterns and Arabic calligraphy, rather than figures, because many Muslims feared that the depiction of the human form is idolatry and thereby a sin against God, forbidden in the Quran. There are repeating elements in Islamic art, such as the use of geometrical floral or vegetal designs in a repetition known as the arabesque. The arabesque in Islamic art is often used to symbolize the transcendent, indivisible, and infinite nature of God. Mistakes in repetitions may be intentionally introduced as a show of humility by artists who believe only God can produce perfection, although this theory is disputed.



**Detail of arabesque decoration at the Alhambra in Spain:** Arabesque in Islamic art is often used to symbolize the transcendent, indivisible, and infinite nature of God.

## Calligraphy

The traditional instrument of the Arabic calligrapher is the qalam, a pen made of dried reed or bamboo. Qalam ink is often in color, and chosen such that its intensity can vary greatly, so that the greater strokes of the compositions can be very dynamic in their effect. Islamic calligraphy is applied on a wide range of decorative mediums other than paper, such as tiles, vessels, carpets, and inscriptions. Before the advent of paper, papyrus and parchment were used for writing.

image

**Qur'an manuscript Surat al-Nisa**

Coins were another support for calligraphy. Beginning in 692, the Islamic caliphate reformed the coinage of the Near East by replacing visual depiction with words. This was especially true for dinars, or gold coins of high value, which were inscribed with quotes from the Quran.

image

**Hamdanid gold dinar:** 10th-century Syria

By the 10th century, the Persians, who had converted to Islam, began weaving inscriptions on elaborately patterned silks. These calligraphic-inscribed textiles were so precious that Crusaders brought them to Europe as prized possessions. A notable example is the Suaire de Saint-Josse, used to wrap the bones of St. Josse in the abbey of St. Josse-sur-Mer near Caen in northwestern France.

## Architecture and Tilework

There were many advances in architectural construction, and mosques, tombs, palaces, and forts were inspired by Persian and Byzantine architecture. Islamic mosaic art anticipated principles of quasicrystalline geometry, which would not be discovered for 500 more years. This art used symmetric polygonal shapes to create patterns that can continue indefinitely without repeating. These patterns have even helped modern scientists understand quasicrystals at the atomic levels.



**Mosque Archway:** Geometric patterns: an archway in the Sultan's lodge in the Ottoman Green Mosque in Bursa, Turkey (1424), its girih strapwork forming 10-point stars and pentagons.

## The Abbasid Empire

The Abbasid Caliphate was the third of the Islamic caliphates to succeed the Islamic prophet Muhammad in 750 CE, and ruled over a large, flourishing empire for three centuries.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the political stability during the Abbasid Era and the Abbasids' rise to power

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Abbasids overthrew the Umayyad dynasty in 750 CE, supporting the mawali, or non-Arab Muslims, by moving the capital to Baghdad in 762 CE.
- The Persian bureaucracy slowly replaced the old Arab aristocracy as the Abbasids established the new positions of vizier and emir to delegate their central authority.
- The Abbasids maintained an unbroken line of caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East in the Golden Age of Islam.
- The Fatimid dynasty broke from the Abbasids in 909 and created separate line of caliphs in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Palestine until 1171 CE.
- Abbasid control eventually disintegrated, and the



edges of the empire declared local autonomy.

- Though lacking in political power, the dynasty continued to claim authority in religious matters until after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

### *Key Terms*

- **mawali:** Non-Arab Muslims.
- **vizier:** A high-ranking political advisor or minister in the Muslim world.
- **emir:** A title of high office used in a variety of places in the Muslim world.
- **Fatimid dynasty:** A Shi'a Islamic caliphate that spanned a large area of North Africa, from the Red Sea in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west; they claimed lineage from Muhammad's daughter.

## Rise of the Abbasid Empire (c. 750 CE)

The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown by another family of Meccan origin, the Abbasids, in 750 CE. The Abbasids distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their moral character and administration. In particular, they appealed to non-Arab Muslims, known as *mawali*, who remained outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were perceived as a lower class within the Umayyad empire. The Abbasid dynasty descended from Muhammad's youngest uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566–653 CE), from whom the dynasty takes its name. Muhammad ibn 'Ali, a



great-grandson of Abbas, began to campaign for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashimites, in Persia during the reign of Umar II, an Umayyad caliph who ruled from 717–720 CE.



*Coin of the Abbasids, Baghdad, Iraq, 765 CE*

## Power in Baghdad

The Abbasids moved the empire's capital from Damascus, in modern-day Syria, to Baghdad, in modern-day Iraq, in 762 CE. The Abbasids had depended heavily on the support of Persians in their overthrow of the Umayyads, and the geographic power shift

appeased the Persian mawali support base. Abu al-'Abbas's successor, Al-Mansur, welcomed non-Arab Muslims to his court. While this helped integrate Arab and Persian cultures, it alienated the Arabs who had supported the Abbasids in their battles against the Umayyads. The Abbasids established the new position of vizier to delegate central authority, and delegated even greater authority to local emirs. As the viziers exerted greater influence, many Abbasid caliphs were relegated to a more ceremonial role as Persian bureaucracy slowly replaced the old Arab aristocracy.

The Abbasids, who ruled from Baghdad, had an unbroken line of caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East in the Golden Age of Islam. By 940 CE, however, the power of the caliphate under the Abbasids began waning as non-Arabs gained influence and the various subordinate sultans and emirs became increasingly independent.



**Map of the Abbasid Caliphate at its greatest extent, c. 850 CE:** The Abbasid dynasty ruled as caliphs from their capital in Baghdad, in modern Iraq, after taking over authority of the Muslim empire from the Umayyads in 750 CE.

## Decline of the Abbasid Empire

The Abbasid leadership worked to overcome the political challenges of a large empire with limited communication in the last half of the 8th century (750–800 CE). While the Byzantine Empire was fighting Abbasid rule in Syria and Anatolia, the caliphate's military operations were focused on internal unrest. Local governors had begun to exert greater autonomy, using their increasing power to make their positions hereditary. Simultaneously, former supporters of the Abbasids had broken away to create a separate kingdom around Khorosan in northern Persia.

Several factions left the empire to exercise independent authority. In 793 CE, the Shi'a (also called Shi'ite) dynasty of Idrisids gained authority over Fez in Morocco. The Berber Kharijites set up an independent state in North Africa in 801 CE. A family of governors under the Abbasids became increasingly independent until they founded the Aghlabid Emirate in the 830s. Within 50 years, the Idrisids in the Maghreb, the Aghlabids of Ifriqiya, and the Tulunids and Ikshidids of Misr became independent in Africa.

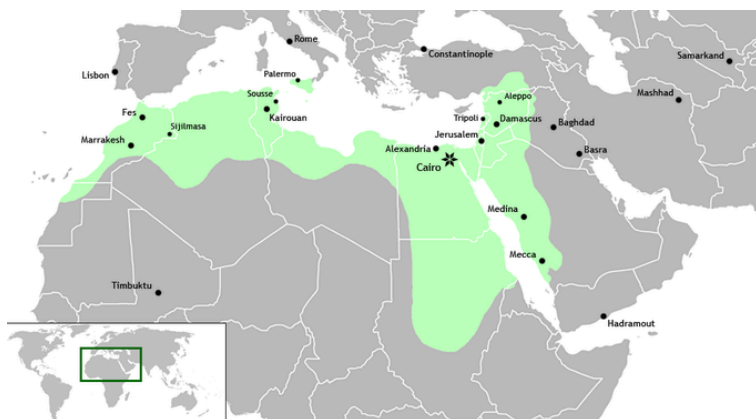
By the 860s governors in Egypt set up their own Tulunid Emirate, so named for its founder Ahmad ibn Tulun, starting a dynastic rule separate from the caliph. In the eastern territories, local governors decreased their ties to the central Abbasid rule. The Saffarids of Herat and the Samanids of Bukhara seceded in the 870s to cultivate a more Persian culture and rule. The Tulunid dynasty managed Palestine, the Hijaz, and parts of Egypt. By 900 CE, the Abbasids controlled only central Mesopotamia, and the Byzantine Empire began to reconquer western Anatolia.

## The Fatimid Caliphate (909–1171 CE)

Several factions challenged the Abbasids' claims to the caliphate.

Most Shi'a Muslims had supported the Abbasid war against the Umayyads because the Abbasids claimed legitimacy with their familial connection to Muhammad, an important issue for Shi'a. However, once in power, the Abbasids embraced Sunni Islam and disavowed any support for Shi'a beliefs.

The Shi'a Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah of the Fatimid dynasty, who claimed descent from Muhammad's daughter, declared himself Caliph in 909 CE and created a separate line of caliphs in North Africa. The Fatimid caliphs initially controlled Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, and they expanded for the next 150 years, taking Egypt and Palestine. The Abbasid dynasty finally challenged Fatimid rule, limiting them to Egypt. By the 920s, a Shi'a sect that only recognized the first five Imams and could trace its roots to Muhammad's daughter Fatima, took control of Idrisi and then Aghlabid domains. This group advanced to Egypt in 969 CE, establishing their capital near Fustat in Cairo, which they built as a bastion of Shi'a learning and politics. By 1000 CE, they had become the chief political and ideological challenge to Abbasid Sunni Islam. At this point, the Abbasid dynasty had fragmented into several governorships that were mostly autonomous, although they official recognized caliphal authority from Baghdad. The caliph himself was under "protection" of the Buyid Emirs, who possessed all of Iraq and western Iran, and were quietly Shi'a in their sympathies.



**The Fatimid Caliphate at its height, c. 969 CE:** The Fatimid dynasty broke from the Abbasids in 909 CE and created separate lines of caliphs in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Palestine until 1171 CE.

Outside Iraq, all the autonomous provinces slowly became states with hereditary rulers, armies, and revenues. They operated under only nominal caliph authority, with emirs ruling their own provinces from their own capitals. Mahmud of Ghazni took the title of “sultan,” instead of “emir,” signifying the Ghaznavid Empire’s independence from caliphal authority, despite Mahmud’s ostentatious displays of Sunni orthodoxy and ritual submission to the caliph. In the 11th century, the loss of respect for the caliphs continued, as some Islamic rulers no longer mentioned the caliph’s name in the Friday khutba, or struck it off their coinage. The political power of the Abbasids largely ended with the rise of the Buyids and the Seljuq Turks in 1258 CE. Though lacking in political power, the dynasty continued to claim authority in religious matters until after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

# 63. Reading: The Carolingian Dynasty

## The Coronation of 800 CE

Charlemagne reached the height of his power in 800 when he was crowned Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day at Old St. Peter's Basilica.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the reasons for Charlemagne receiving the title of Emperor

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- In 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne the Emperor of the Romans, thereby extending Charlemagne's power and authority.
- Some historians believe that Charlemagne was

surprised by the coronation and would not have gone into the church that day had he known the pope's plan.

- Nonetheless, Charlemagne used these circumstances to claim that he was the renewer of the Roman Empire, which would remain in continuous existence for nearly a millennium, as the Holy Roman Empire.
- Although one of the aims was ostensibly to reunite the entire Roman Empire, given that many at the time (including the pope) did not recognize Empress Irene of the Byzantine Empire as a legitimate ruler, the two empires remained independent and continued to fight for sovereignty throughout the Middle Ages.
- The Pope's motivation for crowning Charlemagne was to give the papacy and the church implicit authority over the empire, since with this act Leo set a precedent for crowning emperors, which subsequent popes would do throughout the reign of the Holy Roman Empire.

### *Key Terms*

- **Empress Irene:** A Byzantine empress who ruled from 797–802, during the time of Charlemagne's coronation.
- **Byzantine Empire:** Sometimes referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the East during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when its capital city was

Constantinople.

- **Holy Roman Empire:** A multi-ethnic complex of territories in central Europe that developed during the Early Middle Ages and continued until its dissolution in 1806; founded by the coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III.

## Coronation

In 799, after Pope Leo III was abused by Romans who tried to put out his eyes and tear out his tongue, he escaped and fled to Charlemagne at Paderborn. Charlemagne, advised by scholar Alcuin of York, travelled to Rome in November 800 and held a council on December 1. On December 23, Leo swore an oath of innocence. At Mass, on Christmas Day (December 25), when Charlemagne knelt at the altar to pray, the pope crowned him *Imperator Romanorum* ("Emperor of the Romans") in Saint Peter's Basilica. In so doing, the pope effectively nullified the legitimacy of Empress Irene of Constantinople. As historian James Bryce writes:

When Odoacer compelled the abdication of Romulus Augustulus, he did not abolish the Western Empire as a separate power, but caused it to be reunited with or sink into the Eastern, so that from that time there was a single undivided Roman Empire... [Pope Leo III and Charlemagne], like their predecessors, held the Roman Empire to be one and indivisible, and proposed by the coronation of [Charlemagne] not to proclaim a severance of the East and West.



Charlemagne's coronation as emperor, though intended to represent the continuation of the unbroken line of emperors from Augustus to Constantine VI, had the effect of setting up two separate (and often opposing) empires and two separate claims to imperial authority. For centuries to come, the emperors of both West and East would make competing claims of sovereignty over the whole.

In support of Charlemagne's coronation, some argued that the imperial position had actually been vacant, deeming a woman (Irene) unfit to be emperor. However, Charlemagne made no claim to the Byzantine Empire. Whether he actually desired a coronation at all remains controversial—his biographer Einhard related that Charlemagne had been surprised by the pope. Regardless, Byzantium felt its role as the sole heir of the Roman Empire threatened and began to emphasize its superiority and its Roman identity. Relations between the two empires remained difficult. Irene is said to have sought a marriage alliance between herself and Charlemagne, but according to Theophanes the Confessor, who alone mentions it, the scheme was frustrated by Aetios, one of her favorite advisors.



**Coronation of Charlemagne:** *The Coronation of Charlemagne*, by assistants of Raphael, c. 1516–1517.

## Motivation

For both the pope and Charlemagne, the Roman Empire remained a significant power in European politics at this time, and continued to hold a substantial portion of Italy, with borders not far south of the city of Rome itself. This is the empire that historiography has been labelled the Byzantine Empire, for its capital was Constantinople (ancient Byzantium) and its people and rulers were Greek; it was a thoroughly Hellenic state. Indeed, Charlemagne was usurping the prerogatives of the Roman emperor in Constantinople simply by sitting in judgement over the pope in the first place. Historian John Julius Norwich writes of their motivation:

By whom, however, could he [the Pope] be tried? In normal circumstances the only conceivable answer to that question would have been the Emperor at Constantinople; but the imperial throne was at this moment occupied by Irene. That the Empress was notorious for having blinded and murdered her own son was, in the minds of both Leo and Charles, almost immaterial: it was enough that she was a woman. The female sex was known to be incapable of governing, and by the old Salic tradition was debarred from doing so. As far as Western Europe was concerned, the Throne of the Emperors was vacant: Irene's claim to it was merely an additional proof, if any were needed, of the degradation into which the so-called Roman Empire had fallen.

For the pope, then, there was “no living Emperor at the that time.” Furthermore, the papacy had since 727 been in conflict with Irene's predecessors in Constantinople over a number of issues, chiefly the continued Byzantine adherence to the doctrine of iconoclasm, the destruction of Christian images. From 750, the secular power of the Byzantine Empire in central Italy had been nullified.

Norwich explains that by bestowing the imperial crown upon Charlemagne, the pope arrogated to himself “the right to appoint the Emperor of the Romans, establishing the imperial crown as his own personal gift but simultaneously granting himself implicit superiority over the Emperor whom he had created.” And “because the Byzantines had proved so unsatisfactory from every point of view—political, military and doctrinal—he would select a westerner: the one man who by his wisdom and statesmanship and the vastness of his dominions stood out head and shoulders above his contemporaries.”

How realistic either Charlemagne or the pope felt it to be that the people of Constantinople would ever accept the king of the Franks as their emperor, we cannot know; Alcuin speaks hopefully in his letters of an *Imperium Christianum* (“Christian Empire”), wherein, “just as the inhabitants of the [Roman Empire] had been united by a

common Roman citizenship,” presumably this new empire would be united by a common Christian faith.

## Roman Emperor

In any event, Charlemagne used these circumstances to claim that he was the renewer of the Roman Empire, which was perceived to have fallen into degradation under the Byzantines. The title of Emperor remained in the Carolingian family for years to come, but divisions of territory and in-fighting over supremacy of the Frankish state weakened its power and ability to lead. The papacy itself never forgot the title nor abandoned the right to bestow it. When the family of Charlemagne ceased to produce worthy heirs, the pope gladly crowned whichever Italian magnate could best protect him from his local enemies. This devolution led to the dormancy of the title from 924 to 962. The title was revived when Otto I was crowned emperor in 962, fashioning himself as the successor of Charlemagne. The empire would remain in continuous existence for nearly a millennium, as the Holy Roman Empire, a true imperial successor to Charlemagne.

## The Rise of Charlemagne

Charlemagne is considered the greatest ruler of the Carolingian Dynasty because of the actions he took to bring Europe out of turmoil.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the political and territorial achievements of Charlemagne

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Charlemagne was determined to improve education and religion and bring Europe out of turmoil; to do this he launched a thirty-year military campaign of conquests that united Europe and spread Christianity.
- First he conquered the Lombards in Italy, supporting Pope Adrian I.
- In the Saxon Wars, spanning thirty years and eighteen battles, he conquered Saxony and proceeded to convert the conquered to Christianity.
- By 800 he was the ruler of Western Europe and had control of present-day France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and parts of Austria and Spain.

## *Key Terms*

- **Carolingian Dynasty:** An empire during the late medieval realm of the Franks, ruled by the Carolingian family, a Frankish noble family to which Charlemagne belonged.
- **Frankish state:** Territory inhabited and ruled by the Franks, a confederation of Germanic tribes, from the 400s to 800s CE.
- **Saxons:** A group of Germanic tribes first mentioned as living near the North Sea coast of what is now Germany (Old Saxony) in late Roman times.
- **Lombards:** A Germanic people who ruled large parts of the Italian Peninsula from 568 to 774.

## Charlemagne's Rise to Power

Charlemagne, also known as Charles the Great or Charles I, was the king of the Franks from 768 and the king of Italy from 774, and from 800 was the first emperor in western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier. The expanded Frankish state he founded is called the Carolingian Empire. Charlemagne is considered to be the greatest ruler of the Carolingian Dynasty because of the achievements he made during what seemed like the very middle of the Dark Ages.

Charlemagne was the oldest son of Pepin the Short and Bertrada of Laon. He became king in 768 following the death of his father, and initially was a co-ruler with his brother, Carloman I. Charles

received Pepin's original share as Mayor—the outer parts of the kingdom bordering on the sea, namely Neustria, western Aquitaine, and the northern parts of Austrasia—while Carloman was awarded his uncle's former share, the inner parts—southern Austrasia, Septimania, eastern Aquitaine, Burgundy, Provence, and Swabia, lands bordering Italy. Carloman's sudden death in 771 under unexplained circumstances left Charlemagne as the undisputed ruler of the Frankish Kingdom.

## Territorial Expansion

Charlemagne was determined to improve education and religion and bring Europe out of turmoil. To do this he launched a thirty-year military campaign from 772–804 of conquests that united Europe and spread Christianity. Charlemagne was engaged in almost constant battle throughout his reign, often at the head of his elite scara bodyguard squadrons, with his legendary sword Joyeuse in hand. The first step that Charlemagne took in building his empire was to conquer new territories.

The first of these conquering campaigns was against the Lombards; Charlemagne came out victorious and won the Lombard lands to the north of Italy. At his succession in 772, Pope Adrian I demanded the return of certain cities in the former exarchate of Ravenna in accordance with a promise at the succession of Desiderius. Instead, Desiderius took over certain papal cities and invaded the Pentapolis, heading for Rome. Adrian sent ambassadors to Charlemagne in the autumn, requesting he enforce the policies of his father, Pepin. Desiderius sent his own ambassadors denying the pope's charges. The ambassadors met at Thionville, and Charlemagne upheld the pope's side. Charlemagne demanded that Desiderius comply with the pope, but Desiderius promptly swore he never would.

Charlemagne and his uncle Bernard crossed the Alps in 773 and

chased the Lombards back to Pavia, which they then besieged. The siege lasted until the spring of 774, when Charlemagne visited the pope in Rome. There he confirmed his father's grants of land. Some later chronicles falsely claimed that he also expanded them, granting Tuscany, Emilia, Venice, and Corsica. After the pope granted Charlemagne the title of patrician, he returned to Pavia, where the Lombards were on the verge of surrendering. In return for their lives, the Lombards conceded and opened the gates in early summer.



**Charlemagne and Pope Adrian I:** The Frankish king Charlemagne was a devout Catholic who maintained a close relationship with the papacy throughout his life. In 772, when Pope Adrian I was threatened by invaders, the king rushed to Rome to provide assistance. Shown here, the pope asks Charlemagne for help at a meeting near Rome.

## The Saxon Wars and Beyond

In the Saxon Wars, spanning thirty years and eighteen battles,



Charlemagne overthrew Saxony and proceeded to convert the conquered to Christianity.

The Germanic Saxons were divided into four subgroups in four regions. Nearest to Austrasia was Westphalia, and furthest away was Eastphalia. Engria was between these two kingdoms, and to the north, at the base of the Jutland peninsula, was Nordalbingia. In his first campaign against the Saxons, in 773, Charlemagne cut down an Irminsul pillar near Paderborn and forced the Engrians to submit. The campaign was cut short by his first expedition to Italy. He returned to Saxony in 775, marching through Westphalia and conquering the Saxon fort at Sigiburg. He then crossed Engria, where he defeated the Saxons again. Finally, in Eastphalia, he defeated a Saxon force and converted its leader, Hessi, to Christianity. Charlemagne returned through Westphalia, leaving encampments at Sigiburg and Eresburg, which had been important Saxon bastions. With the exception of Nordalbingia, Saxony was under his control, but Saxon resistance had not ended.

Following his campaign in Italy to subjugate the dukes of Friuli and Spoleto, Charlemagne returned rapidly to Saxony in 776, where a rebellion had destroyed his fortress at Eresburg. The Saxons were once again brought to heel, but their main leader, Widukind, managed to escape to Denmark, home of his wife. Charlemagne built a new camp at Karlstadt. In 777, he called a national assembly at Paderborn to integrate Saxony fully into the Frankish kingdom. Many Saxons were baptized as Christians.

Outside Charlemagne's Saxon campaigns, he expanded his empire towards southern Germany, southern France, and the island of Corsica. He fought the Avars, adding modern-day Hungary to his empire, and also fought against the Moors of Spain, gaining the northern part of Spain. Through these conquests Charlemagne united Europe and spread Christianity.

By 800 he was the ruler of Western Europe and had control of present-day France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and parts of Austria and Spain. Charlemagne's successful military campaigns were due to his abilities as a military

commander and planner, and to the training of his warriors. He controlled his vast empire by sending agents to supervise its different areas. Charlemagne's accomplishments restored much of the unity of the old Roman Empire and paved the way for the development of modern Europe.

## Charlemagne's Reforms

As emperor, Charlemagne stood out for his many reforms—monetary, governmental, military, cultural, and ecclesiastical—and ushered in an era known as the Carolingian Renaissance.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the significance of Charlemagne's reforms

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Charlemagne is known for his many reforms, including the economy, education, and government administration.

- Charlemagne's rule spurred the Carolingian Renaissance, a period of energetic cultural and intellectual activity within the Western church.
- Charlemagne took a serious interest in scholarship, promoting the liberal arts at the court, ordering that his children and grandchildren be well educated, and even studying himself.
- Charlemagne established a new monetary standard, the *livre carolinienne*, which was based upon a pound of silver, as well as a universal accounting system.
- Charlemagne expanded the reform program of the church, including strengthening the church's power structure, advancing the skill and moral quality of the clergy, standardizing liturgical practices, improving on the basic tenets of the faith and moral, and rooting out paganism.
- Charlemagne's improvements on governance have been lauded by historians for instigating increased central control, efficient bureaucracy, accountability, and cultural renaissance.

### *Key Terms*

- **Carolingian Renaissance:** The first of three medieval renaissances; was a period of cultural activity in the Carolingian Empire occurring from the late-8th century to the 9th century.
- **livre carolinienne:** Charlemagne's monetary standard, based upon a pound of silver, equivalent to the modern pound.

- **literati:** Well-educated, scholarly people; intellectuals who are interested in written works.

## The Carolingian Renaissance

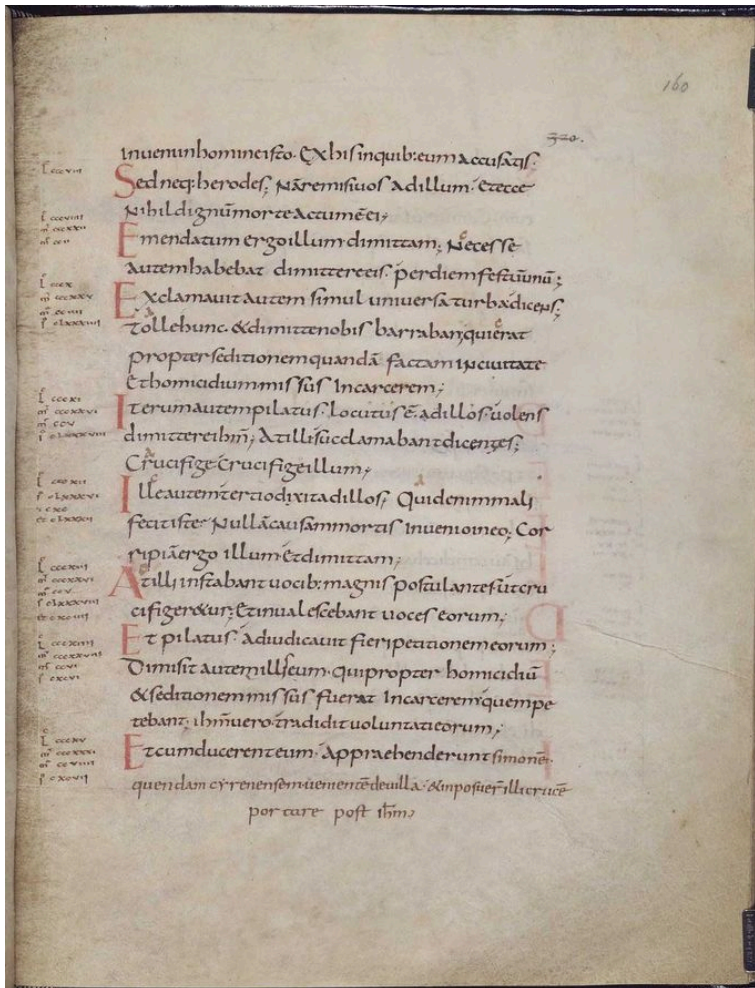
As emperor, Charlemagne stood out for his many reforms—monetary, governmental, military, cultural, and ecclesiastical. He was the main initiator and proponent of the “Carolingian Renaissance,” the first of three medieval renaissances. It was a period of cultural activity in the Carolingian Empire occurring from the late-8th century to the 9th century, taking inspiration from the Christian Roman Empire of the 4th century. During this period there was an expansion of literature, writing, the arts, architecture, jurisprudence, liturgical reforms, and scriptural studies.

The effects of this cultural revival were largely limited to a small group of court *literati*; according to John Contreni, “it had a spectacular effect on education and culture in Francia, a debatable effect on artistic endeavors, and an unmeasurable effect on what mattered most to the Carolingians, the moral regeneration of society.” Beyond their efforts to write better Latin, to copy and preserve patristic and classical texts, and to develop a more legible, classicizing script, the secular and ecclesiastical leaders of the Carolingian Renaissance applied rational ideas to social issues for the first time in centuries, providing a common language and writing style that allowed for communication across most of Europe.

## Education Reform

Part of Charlemagne's success as a warrior, an administrator, and a ruler can be traced to his admiration for learning and education. The era ushered in by his reign, the Carolingian Renaissance, was so called because of the flowering of scholarship, literature, art, and architecture that characterized it. Charlemagne's vast conquests brought him into contact with the cultures and learnings of other countries, especially Moorish Spain, Anglo-Saxon England, and Lombard Italy, and greatly increased the provision of monastic schools and scriptoria (centers for book copying) in Francia.

Most of the presently surviving works of classical Latin were copied and preserved by Carolingian scholars. Indeed, the earliest manuscripts available for many ancient texts are Carolingian. It is almost certain that a text that survived to the Carolingian age endures still.



**Carolingian Minuscule:** Carolingian minuscule, one of the products of the Carolingian Renaissance.

The pan-European nature of Charlemagne's influence is indicated by the origins of many of the men who worked for him: Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon from York; Theodulf, a Visigoth, probably from Septimania; Paul the Deacon, a Lombard; Peter of Pisa and Paulinus

of Aquileia, both Italians; and Angilbert, Angilram, Einhard, and Waldo of Reichenau, Franks. Charlemagne took a serious interest in scholarship, promoting the liberal arts at the court, ordering that his children and grandchildren be well-educated, and even studying himself (in a time when many leaders who promoted education did not take time to learn themselves). He studied grammar with Peter of Pisa; rhetoric, dialectic (logic), and astronomy (he was particularly interested in the movement of the stars) with Alcuin; and arithmetic with Einhard.

Charlemagne's great scholarly failure, as Einhard related, was his inability to write. When in his old age he attempted to learn—practicing the formation of letters in his bed during his free time on books and wax tablets he hid under his pillow—“his effort came too late in life and achieved little success.” His ability to read—which Einhard is silent about, and which no contemporary source supports—has also been called into question.

## Economic Reform

Charlemagne had an important role in determining the immediate economic future of Europe. Pursuing his father's reforms, Charlemagne abolished the monetary system based on the gold sou, and he and the Anglo-Saxon King Offa of Mercia took up the system set in place by Pepin. There were strong pragmatic reasons for this abandonment of a gold standard, notably a shortage of gold itself.

The gold shortage was a direct consequence of the conclusion of peace with Byzantium, which resulted in ceding Venice and Sicily to the East and losing their trade routes to Africa. The resulting standardization economically harmonized and unified the complex array of currencies that had been in use at the commencement of Charlemagne's reign, thus simplifying trade and commerce.

Charlemagne established a new standard, the *livre carolinienne* (from the Latin *libra*, the modern pound), which was

based upon a pound of silver—a unit of both money and weight—and was worth 20 sous (from the Latin *solidus*, the modern shilling) or 240 deniers (from the Latin *denarius*, the modern penny). During this period, the *livre* and the *sou* were counting units; only the *denier* was a coin of the realm.



**Coinage from Charlemagne's empire:** Denier from the era of Charlemagne, Tours, 793–812

Charlemagne instituted principles for accounting practice by means of the *Capitulare de villis* of 802, which laid down strict rules for the way in which incomes and expenses were to be recorded.

Early in Charlemagne's rule he tacitly allowed the Jews to monopolize money lending. When lending money for interest was proscribed in 814, being against Church law at the time,



Charlemagne introduced the *Capitulary for the Jews*, a prohibition on Jews engaging in money lending due to the religious convictions of the majority of his constituents, in essence banning it across the board, a reversal of his earlier recorded general policy. In addition to this macro-oriented reform of the economy, Charlemagne also performed a significant number of microeconomic reforms, such as direct control of prices and levies on certain goods and commodities.

His *Capitulary for the Jews*, however, was not representative of his overall economic relationship or attitude toward the Frankish Jews, and certainly not his earlier relationship with them, which had evolved over his lifespan. His paid personal physician, for example, was Jewish, and he employed at least one Jew for his diplomatic missions, a personal representative to the Muslim caliphate of Baghdad. Letters have been credited to him inviting Jews to settle in his kingdom for economic purposes, generally welcoming them through his overall progressive policies.

## Church Reform

Unlike his father, Pepin, and uncle Carloman, Charlemagne expanded the reform program of the church. The deepening of the spiritual life was later to be seen as central to public policy and royal governance. His reform focused on the strengthening of the church's power structure, advancing the skill and moral quality of the clergy, standardizing liturgical practices, improving on the basic tenets of the faith and moral, and rooting out paganism. His authority was now extended over church and state; he could discipline clerics, control ecclesiastical property, and define orthodox doctrine. Despite the harsh legislation and sudden change, he had grown a well-developed support from the clergy who approved his desire to deepen the piety and morals of his Christian subjects.

## Political and Administrative Reform

In 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor and adapted his existing royal administration to live up to the expectations of his new title. The political reforms wrought in his capital, Aachen, were to have an immense impact on the political definition of Western Europe for the rest of the Middle Ages. Charlemagne's improvements on the old Merovingian mechanisms of governance have been lauded by historians for the increased central control, efficient bureaucracy, accountability, and cultural renaissance.

The Carolingian Empire was the largest western territory since the fall of Rome, and historians have come to suspect the depth of the emperor's influence and control. Legally, Charlemagne exercised the *bannum*, the right to rule and command, over all of his territories. Also, he had supreme jurisdiction in judicial matters, made legislation, led the army, and protected both the church and the poor. His administration attempted to organize the kingdom, church, and nobility around him; however, its efficacy was directly dependent upon the efficiency, loyalty, and support of his subjects.

Around 780 Charlemagne reformed the local system of administering justice and created the *scabini*, professional experts on law. Every count had the help of seven of these *scabini*, who were supposed to know every national law so that all men could be judged according to it. Judges were also banned from taking bribes and were supposed to use sworn inquests to establish facts. In 802, all law was written down and amended.

The Frankish kingdom was subdivided by Charlemagne into three separate areas to make administration easier. These areas, Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgandy, were the inner "core" of the kingdom and were supervised directly by the *missatica* system and the itinerant household. Outside this was the *regna*, where Frankish administration rested upon the counts, and beyond *regna* were the marcher areas, ruled by powerful governors. These marcher lordships were present in Brittany, Spain, and Avaria. Charlemagne

also created two sub-kingdoms in Aquitaine and Italy, ruled by his sons Louis and Pepin respectively. Bavaria was also under the command of an autonomous governor, Gerold, until his death in 796. While Charlemagne still had overall authority in these areas, they were fairly autonomous, with their own chancery and minting facilities.

The annual meeting, the *Placitum Generalis* or Marchfield, was held every year (between March and May) at a place appointed by the king. It was called for three reasons: to gather the Frankish host to go on campaign, to discuss political and ecclesiastical matters affecting the kingdom and legislate for them, and to make judgements. All important men had to go the meeting, and so it was an important way for Charlemagne to make his will known. Originally the meeting worked effectively, but later it became merely a forum for discussion and for nobles to express their dissatisfaction.



**Kloster Lorsch:** Lorsch Abbey gatehouse, c. 800, an example of the Carolingian architectural style, a first, albeit isolated classical movement in architecture.

## Charles Martel and Pepin the Short

Charles Martels's victory at the Battle of Tours is widely believed to have stopped the northward advance of Muslim forces and to have preserved Christianity in Europe during a period when Muslim rule was overrunning the remains of the old Roman and Persian empires.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the significance of Charles Martel's victory at the Battle of Tours

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Charles Martel was the de facto ruler of Francia (France) who defeated the Umayyad Caliphate in the Battle of Tours.
- The Battle of Tours was historically significant because it stopped the advance of the Muslim empire, which had successfully conquered much of Europe; many historians believe that had Charles failed, no power in Europe would have been able to halt Islamic expansion.

- Charles divided his land between his sons Carloman and Pepin.
- After Carloman retired to religious life, Pepin became the sole ruler of the Franks and continued to consolidate and expand his power to become one of the most powerful and successful rulers of his time.

### *Key Terms*

- **Franks:** Historically known first as a group of Germanic tribes that inhabited the land between the Lower and Middle Rhine in the 3rd century CE, and second as the people of Gaul who merged with the Gallo-Roman populations during succeeding centuries, passing on their name to modern-day France and becoming part of the heritage of the modern French people.
- **Umayyad Caliphate:** The second of the four major Arab caliphates established after the death of Muhammad; continued the Muslim conquests, incorporating the Caucasus, Transoxiana, Sindh, the Maghreb, and the Iberian Peninsula into the Muslim world, making it the fifth largest empire in history in both area and proportion of the world's population.
- **Battle of Tours:** A battle that pitted Frankish and Burgundian forces under Charles Martel against an army of the Umayyad Caliphate led by 'Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi, Governor-General of al-Andalus. The latter was defeated, thus ending the expansion of the Muslim empire into Europe.

- **Donation of Pepin:** Donations bestowed by Pepin the Short that provided a legal basis for the formal organizing of the “Papal States,” which inaugurated papal temporal rule over civil authorities.

## Charles Martel

Charles Martel (688-741) was a Frankish statesman and military leader who, as Duke and Prince of the Franks and Mayor of the Palace, was de facto ruler of Francia from 718 until his death. The son of the Frankish statesman Pepin of Herstal and a noblewoman named Alpaida, Charles successfully asserted his claims to dominance as successor to his father, who was the power behind the throne in Frankish politics. Continuing and building on his father's work, he restored centralized government in Francia and began the series of military campaigns that re-established the Franks as the undisputed masters of all Gaul.

Apart from his military endeavors, Charles is considered to be a founding figure of the European Middle Ages. Skilled as an administrator as well as a warrior, he is credited with a seminal role in the emerging responsibilities of the knights of courts, and so in the development of the Frankish system of feudalism. Moreover, Charles—a great patron of Saint Boniface—made the first attempt at reconciliation between the Franks and the papacy. Pope Gregory III, whose realm was being menaced by the Lombards, offered Charles the Roman consulship in exchange for becoming the defender of the Holy See, but Charles declined.

Although Charles never assumed the title of king, he divided Francia, as a king would have, between his sons Carloman and Pepin. The latter became the first of the Carolingians, the family of Charles

Martel, to become king. Charles's grandson, Charlemagne, extended the Frankish realms to include much of the West, and became the first emperor in the West since the fall of Rome. Therefore, on the basis of his achievements, Charles is seen as laying the groundwork for the Carolingian Empire. In summing up the man, Gibbon wrote that Charles was "the hero of the age," whereas Guerard described him as being the "champion of the Cross against the Crescent."

## Battles of Tours

After working to establish a unity in Gaul, Charles's attention was called to foreign conflicts; dealing with the Islamic advance into Western Europe was a foremost concern. Arab and Berber Islamic forces had conquered Spain (711), crossed the Pyrenees (720), seized a major dependency of the Visigoths (721-725), and after intermittent challenges, under Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi, Governor-General of al-Andalus, advanced toward Gaul and on Tours, "the holy town of Gaul." In October 732, the army of the Umayyad Caliphate, led by Al Ghafiqi, met Frankish and Burgundian forces under Charles in an area between the cities of Tours and Poitiers (modern north-central France), leading to a decisive, historically important Frankish victory known as the Battle of Tours.

Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi was killed, and Charles subsequently extended his authority in the south. Charles further took the offensive after Tours, destroying fortresses at Agde, Béziers, and Maguelonne, and engaging Islamic forces at Nimes, though ultimately failing to recover Narbonne (737) or to fully reclaim the Visigoth's Narbonensis. He thereafter made significant external gains against fellow Christian realms, establishing Frankish control over Bavaria, Alemannia, and Frisia, and compelling some of the Saxon tribes to offer tribute (738). Details of the Battle of Tours, including its exact location and the number of combatants, cannot

be determined from accounts that have survived. Notably, the Frankish troops won the battle without cavalry.

Charles's victory is widely believed to have stopped the northward advance of Umayyad forces from the Iberian Peninsula, and to have preserved Christianity in Europe during a period when Muslim rule was overrunning the remains of the old Roman and Persian empires.

Ninth-century chroniclers, who interpreted the outcome of the battle as divine judgment in Charles's favor, gave him the nickname Martellus ("The Hammer"). Later Christian chroniclers and pre-20th-century historians praised Charles Martel as the champion of Christianity, characterizing the battle as the decisive turning point in the struggle against Islam, a struggle which preserved Christianity as the religion of Europe. According to modern military historian Victor Davis Hanson, "most of the 18th and 19th century historians, like Gibbon, saw Poitiers (Tours), as a landmark battle that marked the high tide of the Muslim advance into Europe." Leopold von Ranke felt that "Poitiers (Tours) was the turning point of one of the most important epochs in the history of the world."

There is little dispute that the battle helped lay the foundations of the Carolingian Empire and Frankish domination of Europe for the next century. Most historians agree that "the establishment of Frankish power in western Europe shaped that continent's destiny and the Battle of Tours confirmed that power."





**Steuben's *Bataille de Poitiers*:** A painting of the Battle of Tours by Charles de Steuben, 1834–1837.

## Pepin the Short

Charles Martel divided his realm between his sons Pepin, called Pepin the Short, and Carloman. Succeeding his father as the Mayor of the Palace in 741, Pepin reigned over Francia jointly with his elder brother Carloman. Pepin ruled in Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence, while Carloman established himself in Austrasia, Alemannia, and Thuringia. The brothers were active in subjugating revolts led by the Bavarians, Aquitanians, Saxons, and Alemanni in the early years of their reign. In 743, they ended the Frankish interregnum by choosing Childeric III, who was to be the last Merovingian monarch, as figurehead king of the Franks.

Being well disposed towards the church and papacy on account of

their ecclesiastical upbringing, Pepin and Carloman continued their father's work supporting Saint Boniface in reforming the Frankish church and evangelizing the Saxons. After Carloman, who was an intensely pious man, retired to religious life in 747, Pepin became the sole ruler of the Franks. He suppressed a revolt led by his half-brother Grifo, and succeeded in becoming the undisputed master of all Francia. Giving up pretense, Pepin then forced Childeric into a monastery and had himself proclaimed king of the Franks with the support of Pope Zachary in 751. The decision was not supported by all members of the Carolingian family, and Pepin had to put down another revolt led by Grifo and by Carloman's son, Drogo.

As king, Pepin embarked on an ambitious program to expand his power. He reformed the legislation of the Franks and continued the ecclesiastical reforms of Boniface. Pepin also intervened in favor of the papacy of Stephen II against the Lombards in Italy. He was able to secure several cities, which he then gave to the pope as part of the Donation of Pepin. This formed the legal basis for the Papal States in the Middle Ages. The Byzantines, keen to make good relations with the growing power of the Frankish empire, gave Pepin the title of Patricius. In wars of expansion, Pepin conquered Septimania from the Islamic Umayyads, and subjugated the southern realms by repeatedly defeating Waifer of Aquitaine and his Basque troops, after which the Basque and Aquitanian lords saw no option but to pledge loyalty to the Franks. Pepin was, however, troubled by the relentless revolts of the Saxons and the Bavarians. He campaigned tirelessly in Germany, but the final subjugation of these tribes was left to his successors.

Pepin died in 768 and was succeeded by his sons Charlemagne and Carloman. Although unquestionably one of the most powerful and successful rulers of his time, Pepin's reign is largely overshadowed by that of his more famous son.

# The End of the Carolingians

After Charlemagne's death in 814, the Carolingian Dynasty began an extended period of fragmentation and decline that would eventually lead to the evolution of the territories of France and Germany.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify the reasons for the fall of the Carolingian Dynasty

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Carolingian dynasty was a Frankish noble family with origins in the Arnulfing and Pippinid clans of the 7th century, which saw its reached its peak with the crowning of Charlemagne as the Roman emperor in 800.
- Charlemagne's death in 814 began an extended period of fragmentation and decline of the dynasty that would eventually lead to the evolution of the territories of France and Germany.
- Following the death of Louis the Pious

(Charlemagne's son), the surviving adult Carolingians fought a three-year civil war ending only in the Treaty of Verdun, which divided the territory into three separate regions and began the breakup of the empire.

- The Carolingians were displaced in most of the *regna* of the empire in 888, but ruled in East Francia until 911 and held the throne of West Francia intermittently until 987.
- One chronicler dates the end of Carolingian rule with the coronation of Robert II of France as junior co-ruler with his father, Hugh Capet, thus beginning the Capetian dynasty, descendants of which unified France.
- The Carolingian dynasty became extinct in the male line with the death of Eudes, Count of Vermandois. His sister Adelaide, the last Carolingian, died in 1122.

### *Key Terms*

- **regna:** Territorial regions of independent rule.
- **Carolingian:** Refers to topics concerning or in the time of Charlemagne and his heirs.
- **Francia:** The territory inhabited and ruled by the Franks, a confederation of West Germanic tribes, during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

## Charlemagne's Death

The Carolingian dynasty began with Charlemagne's grandfather Charles Martel, but began its official reign with Charlemagne's father, Pepin the Short, displacing the Merovingian dynasty. The dynasty reached its peak with the crowning of Charlemagne as the first emperor in the west in over three centuries. Charlemagne's death in 814 began an extended period of fragmentation and decline that would eventually lead to the evolution of the territories of France and Germany.

In 813, Charlemagne called Louis the Pious, king of Aquitaine and his only surviving legitimate son, to his court. There Charlemagne crowned his son with his own hands as co-emperor and sent him back to Aquitaine. He then spent the autumn hunting before returning to Aachen on November 1. In January, he fell ill with pleurisy. He took to his bed on January 21 and as Einhard tells it:

He died January twenty-eighth, the seventh day from the time that he took to his bed, at nine o'clock in the morning, after partaking of the Holy Communion, in the seventy-second year of his age and the forty-seventh of his reign.

He had a testament of 811, not updated prior to his death, that allocated his assets. He was succeeded by his son, Louis, but his empire lasted only another generation in its entirety; its division, according to custom, between Louis's own sons after their father's death laid the foundation for the modern states of Germany and France.

## The Carolingian Dynasty and Its Decline

Charlemagne, who was crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III at Rome in 800, was the greatest Carolingian monarch. His empire, ostensibly a

continuation of the Roman Empire, is referred to historiographically as the Carolingian Empire. The traditional Frankish (and Merovingian) practice of dividing inheritances among heirs was not given up by the Carolingian emperors, though the concept of the indivisibility of the Empire was also accepted. The Carolingians had the practice of making their sons minor kings in the various regions (*regna*) of the Empire, which they would inherit on the death of their father.

Following the death of Louis the Pious (Charlemagne's son), the surviving adult Carolingians fought a three-year civil war ending only in the Treaty of Verdun, which divided the empire into three *regna* while according imperial status and a nominal lordship to Lothair I. By this treaty, Lothair received northern Italy and a long stretch of territory from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, essentially along the valleys of the Rhine and the Rhône; this territory includes the regions of Lorraine, Alsace, Burgundy, and Provence. He soon ceded Italy to his eldest son, Louis, and remained in his new kingdom, engaging in alternate quarrels and reconciliations with his brothers and in futile efforts to defend his lands from the attacks of the Northmen (as Vikings were known in Frankish writings) and the Saracens.

The Carolingians differed markedly from the Merovingians in that they disallowed inheritance to illegitimate offspring, possibly in an effort to prevent infighting among heirs and assure a limit to the division of the realm. In the late 9th century, however, the lack of suitable adults among the Carolingians necessitated the rise of Arnulf of Carinthia, an illegitimate child of a legitimate Carolingian king.

The Carolingians were displaced in most of the *regna* of the Empire in 888. They ruled on in East Francia until 911 and held the throne of West Francia intermittently until 987. Carolingian cadet branches continued to rule in Vermandois and Lower Lorraine after the last king died in 987, but they never sought thrones of principalities, and they made peace with the new ruling families. One chronicler dates the end of Carolingian rule with the

coronation of Robert II of France as junior co-ruler with his father, Hugh Capet, thus beginning the Capetian dynasty. Capet's descendants—the Capetians, the House of Valois, and the House of Bourbon—progressively unified the country through wars and dynastic inheritance into the Kingdom of France, which was fully declared in 1190 by Philip II Augustus. Thus West Francia of the Carolingian dynasty became France.

Following the breakup of the Frankish Realm, the history of Germany was for 900 years intertwined with the history of the Holy Roman Empire, which subsequently emerged from the eastern portion of Charlemagne's original empire. The territory initially known as East Francia stretched from the Rhine in the west to the Elbe River in the east, and from the North Sea to the Alps. Germany as we know it today did not come into existence until after WWI when the various principalities of the region were united as a modern nation-state.

The Carolingian dynasty became extinct in the male line with the death of Eudes, Count of Vermandois. His sister Adelaide, the last Carolingian, died in 1122.



**Carolingian dynasty:** Carolingian family tree, from the Chronicon Universale of Ekkehard of Aura, 12th century



# 64. Reading: The Princes of Rus

## Rurik and the Foundation of Rus'

Rurik was a Varangian chieftain who established the first ruling dynasty in Russian history called the Rurik Dynasty in 862 near Novgorod. This dynasty went on to establish Kievan Rus'.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Understand the key aspects of Rurik's rise to power and the establishment of Kievan Rus'

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Rurik and his followers likely originated in Scandinavia and were related to Norse Vikings.
- The Primary Chronicle is one of the few written documents available that tells us how Rurik came to

power.

- Local leaders most likely invited Rurik to establish order in the Ladoga region around 862, beginning a powerful legacy of Varangian leaders.
- The capital of Kievan Rus' moved from Novgorod to Kiev after Rurik's successor, Oleg, captured this southern city.

### *Key Terms*

- **Primary Chronicle:** A text written in the 12th century that relates a detailed history of Rurik's rise to power.
- **Varangians:** Norse Vikings who established trade routes throughout Eurasia and eventually established a powerful dynasty in Russia.
- **Rurik Dynasty:** The founders of Kievan Rus' who stayed in power until 1598 and established the first incarnation of a unified Russia.

## Rurik

Rurik (also spelled Riurik) was a Varangian chieftain who arrived in the Ladoga region in modern-day Russia in 862. He built the Holmgard settlement = near Novgorod in the 860s and founded the first significant dynasty in Russian history called the Rurik Dynasty. Rurik and his heirs also established a significant geographical and political formation known as Kievan Rus', the first incarnation of

modern Russia. The Rurik rulers continued to rule Russia into the 16th century and the mythology surrounding the man Rurik is often referred to as the official beginning of Russian history.

## Primary Chronicle

The identity of the mythic leader Rurik remains obscure and unknown. His original birthplace, family history, and titles are shrouded in mystery with very few historical clues. Some 19th-century scholars attempted to identify him as Rorik of Dorestad (a Viking-Age trading outpost situated in the northern part of modern-day Germany). However, no concrete evidence exists to confirm this particular origin story.

[illegible]

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бниства сотвори. ѿ колога гнѣкомъ и разбѣша  
много полаты. и по жгоща и рѣки. и нѣже и м  
хѣу плѣнники. ѿ пѣхъ пасисахъ. дрѣвнѣи жемъ  
та хѣу. и нынѣ жерасхъ хѣу. а дрѣвнѣи  
аморѣмъ та хѣу. и нынѣ много глгъмъ хѣу роу  
гнѣкомъ. Елико жератни и твара тѣ; а

**A page from the Primary Chronicle or The Tale of Bygone Years:** This rare written document was created in the 12th century and provides the most promising clues as to the arrival of Rurik in Ladoga.

The debate also continues as to how Rurik came to control the Novgorod region. However, some clues are available from the *Primary Chronicle*. This document is also known as *The Tale of Bygone Years* and was compiled in Kiev around 1113 by the monk Nestor. It relates the history of Kievan Rus' from 850 to 1110 with various updates and edits made throughout the 12th century by scholarly monks. It is difficult to untangle legend from fact, but this document provides the most promising clues regarding Rurik. *The Primary Chronicle* contends the Varangians were a Viking group, most likely from Sweden or northern Germany, who controlled trade routes across northern Russia and tied together various cultures across Eurasia.



**A monument celebrating the millennial anniversary of the arrival of Rurik in Russia:** This modern interpretation of Rurik illustrates his powerful place in Russian history and lore.

The various tribal groups, including Chuds, Eastern Slavs, Merias, Veses, and Krivichs, along the northern trade routes near Novgorod often cooperated with the Varangian Rus' leaders. But in the late

850s they rose up in rebellion, according to the *Primary Chronicle*. However, soon after this rebellion, the local tribes near the Novgorod region began to experience internal disorder and conflict. These events prompted local tribal leaders to invite Rurik and his Varangian leaders back to the region in 862 to reinstate peace and order. This moment in history is known as the *Invitation of the Varangians* and is commonly regarded as the starting point of official Russian history.

## Development of Kievan Rus'

According to legend, at the call of the local tribal leaders Rurik, along with his brothers Truvor and Sineus, founded the Holmgard settlement in Ladoga. This settlement is supposed to be at the site of modern-day Novgorod. However, newer archeological evidence suggests that Novgorod was not regularly settled until the 10th century, leading some to speculate that Holmgard refers to a smaller settlement just southeast of the city. The founding of Holmgard signaled a new era in Russian history and the three brothers became the famous founders of the first Rus' ruling dynasty.





**Kievan Rus' in 1015:** The expansion and shifting borders of Kievan Rus' become apparent when looking at this map, which includes the two centers of power in Novgorod and Kiev.

Rurik died in 879 and his successor, Oleg, continued the Varangian Rus' expansion in 882 by taking the southern city of Kiev from the Khasars and establishing the medieval state of Kievan Rus'. The capital officially moved to Kiev at this point. With this shift in power, there were two distinct capitals in Kievan Rus', the northern seat of



Novgorod and the southern center in Kiev. In Kievan Rus' tradition, the heir apparent would oversee the northern site of Novgorod while the ruling Rus' king stayed in Kiev. Over the next 100 years local tribes consolidated and unified under the Rurik Dynasty, although local fractures and cultural differences continued to play a significant role in the attempt to maintain order under Varangian rule.

## Vladimir I and Christianization

Vladimir I ruled from 980 to 1015 and was the first Kievan Rus' ruler to officially establish Orthodox Christianity as the new religion of the region.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the shift from pagan culture to Orthodox Christianity under the rule of Vladimir I

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Vladimir I became the ruler of Kievan Rus' after

overthrowing his brother Yaropolk in 978.

- Vladimir I formed an alliance with Basil II of the Byzantine Empire and married his sister Anna in 988.
- After his marriage Vladimir I officially changed the state religion to Orthodox Christianity and destroyed pagan temples and icons.
- He built the first stone church in Kiev in 989, called the Church of the Tithes.

### *Key Terms*

- **Constantinople:** The capital of the Byzantine Empire.
- **Perun:** The pagan thunder god that many locals, and possibly Vladimir I, worshipped before Christianization.
- **Basil II:** The Byzantine emperor who encouraged Vladimir to convert to Christianity and offered a political marriage alliance with his sister, Anna.

## Vladimir I

Vladimir I, also known as Vladimir the Great or Vladimir Sviatoslavich the Great, ruled Kievan Rus' from 980 to 1015 and is famous for Christianizing this territory during his reign. Before he gained the throne in 980, he had been the Prince of Novgorod while his father, Sviatoslav of the Rurik Dynasty, ruled over Kiev. During his rule as the Prince of Novgorod in the 970s, and by the time

Vladimir claimed power after his father's death, he had consolidated power between modern-day Ukraine and the Baltic Sea. He also successfully bolstered his frontiers against incursions from Bulgarian, Baltic, and Eastern nomads during his reign.

## Early Myths of Christianization

The original Rus' territory was comprised of hundreds of small towns and regions, each with its own beliefs and religious practices. Many of these practices were based on pagan and localized traditions. The first mention of any attempts to bring Christianity to Rus' appears around 860. The Byzantine Patriarch Photius penned a letter in the year 867 that described the Rus' region right after the Rus'-Byzantine War of 860. According to Photius, the people of the region appeared enthusiastic about the new religion and he claims to have sent a bishop to convert the population. However, this low-ranking official did not successfully convert the population of Rus' and it would take another twenty years before a significant change in religious practices would come about.

The stories regarding these first Byzantine missions to Rus' during the 860s vary greatly and there is no official record to substantiate the claims of the Byzantine patriarchs. Any local people in small villages who embraced Christian practices would have had to contend with fears of change from their neighbors.

## Vladimir I and His Rise to Power

The major player in the Christianization of the Rus' world is traditionally considered Vladimir I. He was born in 958, the youngest of three sons, to the Rus' king Sviatoslav. He ascended to the position of Prince of Novgorod around 969 while his oldest

brother, Yaropolk, became the designated heir to the throne in Kiev. Sviatoslav died in 972, leaving behind a fragile political scene among his three sons. Vladimir was forced to flee to Scandinavia in 976 after Yaropolk murdered their brother Oleg and violently took control of Rus'.



**Vladimir I:** A Christian representation of Vladimir I, who was the first Rus' leader to officially bring Christianity to the region.

Vladimir fled to his kinsman Haakon Sigurdsson, who ruled Norway at the time. Together they gathered an army with the intent to regain control of

Rus' and establish Vladimir as the ruler. In 978, Vladimir returned to Kievan Rus' and successfully recaptured the territory. He also slew his brother Yaropolk in Kiev in the name of treason and, in turn, became the ruler of all of Kievan Rus'.

## Constantinople and Conversion

Vladimir spent the next decade expanding his holdings, bolstering his military might, and establishing stronger borders against outside invasions.

He also remained a practicing pagan during these first years of his rule. He continued to build shrines to pagan gods, traveled with multiple wives and concubines, and most likely continued to promote the worship of the thunder god Perun. However, the *Primary Chronicle* (one of the few written documents about this time) states that in 987 Vladimir decided to send envoys to investigate the various religions neighboring Kievan Rus'.

According to the limited documentation from the time, the envoys that came back from Constantinople reported that the festivities and the presence of

God in the Christian Orthodox faith were more beautiful than anything they had ever seen, convincing Vladimir of his future religion.

Another version of events claims that Basil II of Byzantine needed a military and political ally in the face of a local uprising near Constantinople. In this version of the story, Vladimir demanded a royal marriage in return for his military help. He also announced he would Christianize Kievan Rus' if he was offered a desirable marriage tie. In either version of events, Vladimir vied for the hand of Anna, the sister of the ruling Byzantine emperor, Basil II. In order

to marry her he was baptized in the Orthodox faith with the name Basil, a nod to his future brother-in-law.



**17th-century Church of the Tithes:** *The original stone Church of the Tithes collapsed from fire and sacking in the 12th century. However, two later versions were erected and destroyed in the 17th and 19th centuries.*

He returned to Kiev with his bride in 988 and proceeded to destroy all pagan temples and monuments. He also built the first stone church in Kiev named the Church of the Tithes starting in 989. These moves confirmed a deep political alliance between the Byzantine Empire and Rus' for years to come.

## Baptism of Kiev

On his return in 988, Vladimir baptized his twelve sons and many boyarsin official recognition of the new faith. He also sent out a message to all residents of Kiev, both rich and poor, to appear at the Dnieper River the following day. The next day the residents of Kiev

who appeared were baptized in the river while Orthodox priests prayed. This event became known as the Baptism of Kiev.



**Monument of Saint Vladimir in Kiev:** This statue sits close to the site of the original Baptism of Kiev.

Pagan uprisings continued throughout Kievan Rus' for at least another century. Many local populations violently rejected the new religion and a particularly brutal uprising occurred in Novgorod in 1071. However, Vladimir became a symbol of the Russian Orthodox religion, and when he died in 1015 his body parts were distributed throughout the country to serve as holy relics.

## Yaroslav the Wise

Yaroslav I, also known as Yaroslav the Wise, developed the first legal codes, beautified Kievan Rus', and formed major political alliances with the West during his nearly 40-year reign.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the key elements of Yaroslav the Wise's reign and cultural influence

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Yaroslav I came to power after a bloody civil war between brothers.



- He captured the Kievan throne because of the devotion of the Novgorodian and Varangian troops to his cause.
- Grand Prince Yaroslav was the first Kievan ruler to codify legal customs into the Pravda Yaroslava.
- He bolstered borders and encouraged political alliances with other major European powers during his reign.

### *Key Terms*

- **primogeniture:** A policy that designates the oldest son as the heir to the throne upon the death of the father.
- **Novgorod Republic:** The northern stronghold of Kievan Rus' where Yaroslav gained early support for his cause.

## Yaroslav the Wise

Yaroslav the Wise was the Grand Prince of Kiev from 1016 until his death in 1054. He was also vice-regent of Novgorod from 1010 to 1015 before his father, Vladimir the Great, died. During his reign he was known for spreading Christianity to the people of Rus', founding the first monasteries in the country, encouraging foreign alliances, and translating Greek texts in Church Slavonic. He also created some of the first legal codes in Kievan Rus'. These accomplishments during

his lengthy rule granted him the title of Yaroslav the Wise in early chronicles of his life, and his legacy endures in both political and religious Russian history.

## Youth and Rise to Power

Yaroslav was the son of the Varangian Grand Prince Vladimir the Great and most likely his second son with Rogneda of Polotsk. His youth remains shrouded in mystery. Evidence from the *Primary Chronicle* and examination of his skeleton suggests he is one of the youngest sons of Vladimir, and possibly a son from a different mother. He was most likely born around the year 978.



***Facial reconstruction of Yaroslav I by Mikhail Gerasimov***

He was set as vice-regent of Novgorod in 1010, as befitted a senior heir to the throne. In this same time period Vladimir the Great granted the Kievan throne to his younger son, Boris. Relations were strained in this family. Yaroslav refused to pay Novgorodian tribute

to Kiev in 1014, and only Vladimir's death in 1015 prevented a severe war between these two regions. However, the next few years were spent in a bitter civil war between the brothers. Yarslav was vying for the seat in Kiev against his brother Sviatopolk I, who was supported by Duke Boleslaw I of Chrobry. In the ensuing years of carnage, three of his brothers were murdered (Boris, Gleb, and Svyatoslav). Yaroslav won the first battle at Kiev against Sviatopolk in 1016 and Sviatopolk was forced to flee to Poland.

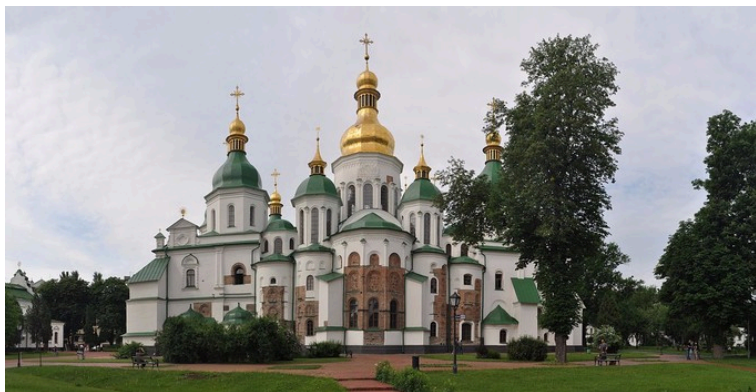
After this significant triumph Yaroslav's ascent to greatness began, and he granted freedoms and privileges to the Novgorod Republic, who had helped him gain the Kievan throne. These first steps also most likely led to the first legal code in Kievan Rus' under Yaroslav. He was chronicled as Yaroslav the Wise in retellings of these events because of his even-handed dealing with the wars, but it is highly possible he was involved in the murder of his brothers and other gruesome acts of war.

## Wise Reign

The civil war did not completely end in 1016. Sviatopolk returned in 1018 and retook Kiev. However, Varangian and Novgorodian troops recaptured the capital and Sviatopolk fled to the West never to return. Another fraternal conflict arose in 1024 when another brother of Yaroslav's, Mstislav of Chernigov, attempted to capture Kiev. After this conflict, the brothers split the Kievan Rus' holdings, with Mstislav ruling over the region left of the Dnieper River.

Yaroslav the Wise was instrumental in defending borders and expanding the holdings of Kievan Rus'. He protected the southern borders from nomadic tribes, such as the Pechenegs, by constructing a line of military forts. He also successfully laid claim to Chersonesus in the Crimea and came to a peaceful agreement

with the Byzantine Empire after many years of conflict and disagreements over land holdings.



***Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev:*** This iconic cathedral fell into disrepair and was almost destroyed during the Soviet era, but it was saved and restored to its former glory.

Yaroslav the Wise garnered his thoughtful reputation due to his prolific years in power. He was a ruler that loved literature, religion, and the written language. His many accomplishments included:

- Building the Saint Sophia Cathedral and the first monasteries in Russia, named Saint George and Saint Irene.
- Founding a library and a school at the Saint Sophia Cathedral and encouraging the translation of Greek texts into Church Slavonic.
- Developing a more established hierarchy within the Russian Orthodox Church, including a statute outlining the rights of the clergy and establishing the sobor of bishops.
- Beautifying Kiev with elements of design taken from the Byzantine Empire, including the Golden Gate of Kiev.
- Compiling the first book of laws in Kievan Rus', called the Pravda Yaroslava. This first compilation set down clear laws

that reflected the feudal landscape of the 11th century. This initial legal code would live on and be refined into the Russkaya Pravda in the 12th century.

- Establishing primogeniture, which meant that his eldest son would succeed him as Grand Prince over Novgorod and Kiev, hoping that future conflict between his children would be avoided.



**Golden Gate of Kiev in 2016:** This important monument was one of the great architectural accomplishments created under Yaroslav the Wise, and now features a monument to the ruler, seen in the foreground.

## Family and Death

Yaroslav married Ingegerd Olofsdotter, the daughter of the king of Sweden, in 1019. He had many sons and encouraged them to remain on good terms, after all the years of warfare and bloodshed with his own brothers.

He also married three of his daughters to European royalty. Elizabeth, Anna, and Anastasia married Harald III of Norway, Henry I of France, and Andrew I of Hungary respectively. These marriages forged powerful alliances with European states.



**Daughters of Yaroslav the Wise:** This 11th-century fresco in Saint Sophia's Cathedral shows four of Yaroslav's daughter, probably Anne, Anastasia, Elizabeth, and Agatha.

The Grand Prince Yaroslav I died in 1054 and was buried in Saint Sophia's Cathedral. His expansion of culture and military might, along with his unification of Kievan Rus', left a powerful impression on Russian history. Many towns and monuments remain dedicated to this leader.

## The Mongol Threat

The Mongol Empire expanded its holdings in the 13th century and

established its rule over most of the major Kievan Rus' principalities after brutal military invasions over the course of many years.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the attacks by the Mongols on the Russian principality

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- The major principalities of Kievan Rus' became increasingly fractured and independent after the death of Yaroslav the Wise in 1054.
- The first Mongol attempt to capture Kievan territories occurred in 1223 at the Battle of the Kalka River.
- The Mongol forces began a heavy military campaign on Kievan Rus' in 1237 under the rule of Batu Khan.
- Kiev was sacked and taken in 1240, starting a long era of Mongol rule in the region.



### *Key Terms*

- **Tatar yoke:** The name given to the years of Mongol rule in Kievan Rus', which meant heavy taxation and the possibility of local invasions at any time.
- **Golden Horde:** The western section of the Mongol Empire that included Kievan Rus' and parts of Eastern Europe.
- **Sarai:** The new capital of the Mongol Empire in the southern part of Kievan Rus'.

## Mongol Invasion

The Mongol invasion of the Kievan Rus' principalities began in 1223 at the Battle of the Kalka River. However, the Mongol armies ended up focusing their military might on other regions after this bloody meeting, only to return in 1237. For the next three years the Mongol forces took over the major princely cities of Kievan Rus' and finally forced most principalities to submit to foreign rule and taxation. Rus' became part of what is known as the Golden Horde, the western extension of the Mongol Empire located in the eastern Slavic region. Some of the new taxes and rules of law lasted until 1480 and had a lasting impact on the shape and character of modern Russia.

## Fragmented Kievan Rus'

After the end of the unifying reign of Yaroslav the Wise, Kievan Rus' became fragmented and power was focused on smaller polities. The great ruler's death in 1054 brought about major power struggles between his sons and princes in outlying provinces. By the 12th century, after years of fighting amongst the princes, power was centered around smaller principalities. This unsettled trend left Kievan Rus' much more fragmented. Power was passed down to the eldest in the local ruling dynasty and cities were responsible for their own defenses. The Byzantine Empire was also facing major upheaval, which meant a central Russian ally and trading partner was weakened, which, in turn, weakened the strength and wealth of Kievan Rus'.



**The principalities of Kievan Rus' at its height, 1054-1132:** The princely regions were relatively unified into the 12th century but slowly separated and became more localized as fights over regions and power among the nobility continued.

## Mongol Invasion

The already fragile alliances between the smaller Rus' principalities faced further tension when the nomadic invaders, the Mongols, arrived on the scene during this fractured era. These invaders originated on the steppes of central Asia and were unified under the infamous warrior and leader Genghis

Khan. The Mongols began to expand their power across the continent. The Battle of the Kalka River in 1223 initiated the first attempt of the Mongol forces to capture Kievan Rus'. It was a bloody battle that ended with the execution of Mstislav of Kiev executed the Kievan forces greatly weakened. The Mongols were superior in their military tactics and stretched the Rus' forces considerably, however after executing the Kievan prince, the forces went back to Asia to rejoin Genghis Khan. However, the Mongol threat was far from over, and they returned in 1237.



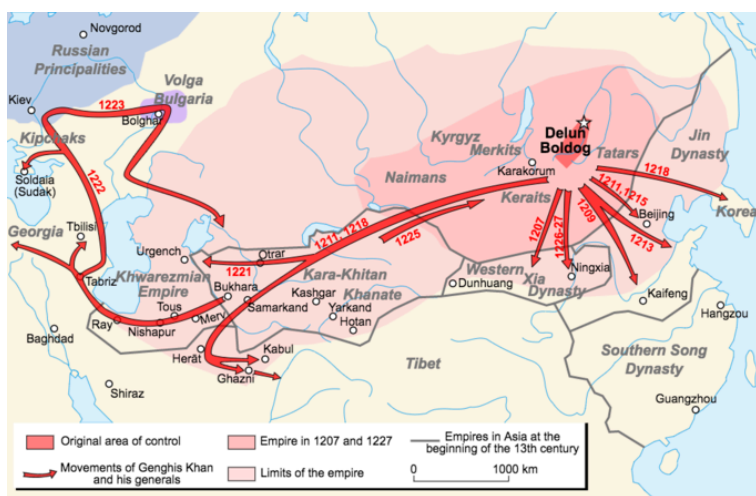
**The Sacking of Suzdal in 1238 by Batu Khan:** This 16th-century depiction of the Mongol invasion highlights the bloodshed and military might of the invaders.

Over the course of the years 1237 and 1238, the Mongol leader, Batu Khan, led his 35,000 mounted archers to burn down Moscow and Kolomna. Then he split his army into smaller units that tackled

the princely polities one at a time. Only Novgorod and Pskov were spared major destruction during this time. Refugees from the southern principalities, where destruction was widespread and devastating, were forced to flee to the harsh northern forests, where good soil and resources were scarce. The final victory for Batu Khan came in December 1240 when he stormed the great capital of Kiev and prevailed.

## Tatar Rule and the Golden Horde

The Mongols, also known as the Tatars, built their new capital, Sarai, in the south along the Volga River. All the major principalities, such as Novgorod, Smolensk, and Pskov, submitted to Mongol rule. The age of this economic and cultural rule is often called the Tatar yoke, but over the course of 200 years, it was a relatively peaceful rule. The Tatars followed in the footsteps of Genghis Khan and refrained from settling the entire region or forcing local populations to adopt specific religious or cultural traditions. However, Rus' principalities paid tribute and taxes to the Mongol rulers regularly, under the umbrella of the Golden Horde (the western portion of the Mongol Empire). Around 1259 this tribute was organized into a census that was enforced by the locals Rus' princes on a regular schedule, collected, and taken to the capital of Sarai for the Mongol leaders.



**A map of the Mongol Empire as it expanded:** This illustration shows the rapid expansion of the Mongol Empire as it traveled west into what became known as the Golden Horde.

## Effects of Mongol Rule

Despite the fact that the established Tatar rule was relatively peaceful, demanding taxation and the devastation from years of invasion left many major cities in disrepair for decades. It took years to rebuild Kiev and Pskov. However, Novgorod continued to flourish and the relatively new city centers of the Moscow and Tver began to prosper. Another downside to the Tatar presence was the continued threat of invasion and destruction, which happened sporadically during their presence. Each new military invasion meant heavy tolls on the local population and years of reconstruction.

Culturally, the Mongol rule brought about major shifts during the first century of their presence. Extensive postal road systems, military organization, and powerful dynasties were established by Tatar alliances. Capital punishment and torture also became more widespread during the years of Tatar rule. Some noblemen also

changed their names and adopted the Tatar language, bringing about a shift in the aesthetic, linguistic, and cultural ties of Russia life. Many scholars also note that the Mongol rule was a major cause of the division of East Slavic people in Rus' into three distinctive modern-day nations, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

## Ivan I and the Rise of Moscow

The small trading outpost of Moscow in the north of Rus' transformed into a wealthy cultural center in the 14th century under the leadership of Ivan I.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the key points that helped Moscow become so powerful and how Ivan I accomplished these major victories

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Moscow was considered a small trading outpost under the principality of Vladimir-Suzdal into the 13th century.



- Power struggles and constant raids under the Mongol Empire's Golden Horde caused once powerful cities, such as Kiev, to struggle financially and culturally.
- Ivan I utilized the relative calm and safety of the northern city of Moscow to entice a larger population and wealth to move there.
- Alliances between Golden Horde leaders and Ivan I saved Moscow from many of the raids and destruction of other centers, like Tver.

### *Key Terms*

- **Tver:** A rival city to Moscow that eventually lost favor under the Golden Horde.
- **Grand Prince of Vladimir:** The title given to the ruler of this northern province, where Moscow was situated.

## The Rise of Moscow

Moscow was only a small trading outpost in the principality of Vladimir-Suzdal in Kievan Rus' before the invasion of Mongol forces during the 13th century. However, due to the unstable environment of the Golden Horde, and the deft leadership of Ivan I at a critical time during the 13th century, Moscow became a safe haven of prosperity during his reign. It also became the new seat of power of the Russian Orthodox Church.

## Ivan I

Ivan I (also known as Ivan Kalita) was born around 1288 to the Prince of Moscow, Daniil Aleksandrovich. He was born during a time of devastation and upheaval in Rus'. Kiev had been overtaken by the invading Mongol forces in 1240, and most of the Rus' principalities had been absorbed into the Golden Horde of the Mongol Empire by the time Ivan was born. He ascended to the seat of Prince of Moscow after the death of his father, and then the death of his older brother Yury.



**Ivan I:** He was born around 1288 and died in either 1340 or 1341, still holding the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir.

Ivan I stepped into a role that had already been expanded by his predecessors. Both his older brother and his father had captured nearby lands, including Kolomna and Mozhaisk. Yury had also made

a successful alliance with the Mongol leader Uzbeg Khan and married his sister, securing more power and advantages within the hierarchy of the Golden Horde.

Ivan I continued the family tradition and petitioned the leaders of the Golden Horde to gain the seat of Grand Prince of Vladimir. His other three rivals, all princes of Tver, had previously been granted the title in prior years. However they were all subsequently deprived of the title and all three aspiring princes also eventually ended up murdered. Ivan I, on the other hand, garnered the title from Khan Muhammad Ozbeg in 1328. This new title, which he kept until his death around 1340, meant he could collect taxes from the Russian lands as a ruling prince and position his tiny city as a major player in the Vladimir region.

## Moscow's Rise

During this time of upheaval, the tiny outpost of Moscow had multiple advantages that repositioned this town and set it up for future prosperity under Ivan I. Three major contributing factors helped Ivan I relocate power to this area:

- It was situated in between other major principalities on the east and west so it was often protected from the more devastating invasions.
- This relative safety, compared to Tver and Ryazan, for example, started to bring in tax-paying citizens who wanted a safe place to build a home and earn a livelihood.
- Finally, Moscow was set up perfectly along the trade route from Novgorod to the Volga River, giving it an economic advantage from the start.

Ivan I also spurred on the growth of Moscow by actively recruiting people to move to the region. In addition, he bought the freedom of

people who had been captured by the extensive Mongol raids. These recruits further bolstered the population of Moscow. Finally, he focused his attention on establishing peace and routing out thieves and raiding parties in the region, making for a safe and calm metaphorical island in a storm of unsettled political and military upsets.



**Kievan Rus' 1220-1240:** This map illustrates the power dynamics at play during the 13th century shortly before Ivan I was born. Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde, sat to the southeast, while Moscow (not visible on this map) was tucked up in the northern forests of Vladimir-Suzdal.

Ivan I knew that the peace of his region depended upon keeping up an alliance with the Golden Horde, which he did faithfully. Moscow's increased wealth during this era also allowed him to loan money to neighboring principalities. These regions then became indebted to Moscow, bolstering its political and financial position.

In addition, a few neighboring cities and villages were subsumed into Moscow during the 1320s and 1330s, including Uglich, Belozero, and Galich. These shifts slowly transformed the tiny trading outpost into a bustling city center in the northern forests of what was once Kievan Rus'.

## Russian Orthodox Church and The Center of Moscow

Ivan I committed some of Moscow's new wealth to building a splendid city center and creating an iconic religious setting. He built stone churches in the center of Moscow with his newly gained wealth. Ivan I also tempted one of the most important religious leaders in Rus', the Orthodox Metropolitan Peter, to the city of Moscow. Before the rule of the Golden Horde the original Russian Orthodox Church was based in Kiev. After years of devastation, Metropolitan Peter transferred the seat of power to Moscow where a new Renaissance of culture was blossoming. This perfectly timed transformation of Moscow coincided with the decades of devastation in Kiev, effectively transferring power to the north once again.



**Peter of Moscow and scenes from his life as depicted in a 15th-century icon:** This religious leader helped bring cultural power to Moscow by moving the seat of the Russian Orthodox Church there during Ivan I's reign.

One of the most lasting accomplishments of Ivan I was to petition the Khan based in Sarai to designate his son, who would become Simeon the Proud, as the heir to the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir. This agreement a line of succession that meant the ruling head of Moscow would almost always hold power over the principality of Vladimir, ensuring Moscow held a powerful position for decades to come.



# 65. Reading: The Grand Duchy of Moscow

## The Formation of Russia

Ivan III became Grand Prince of Moscow in 1462 and proceeded to refuse the Tatar yoke, collect surrounding lands, and consolidate political power around Moscow. His son, Vasili III, continued in his footsteps marking an era known as the “Gathering of the Russian Lands.”

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the key points that led to a consolidated northern region under Ivan III and Vasili III in Moscow

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Moscow had risen to a powerful position in the north due to its location and relative wealth and



stability during the height of the Golden Horde.

- Ivan III overtook Novgorod, along with his four brothers' landholdings, which began a process consolidating power under the Grand Prince of Moscow.
- Ivan III was the first prince of Rus' to style himself as the Tsar in the grand tradition of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire.
- Vasili III followed in his father's footsteps and continued a regime of consolidating land and practicing domestic intolerance that suppressed any attempts to disobey the seat of Moscow.

### *Key Terms*

- **Muscovite Sudebnik:** The legal code crafted by Ivan III that further consolidated his power and outlined harsh punishments for disobedience.
- **Novgorod:** Moscow's most prominent rival in the northern region.
- **boyars:** Members of the highest ruling class in feudal Rus', second only to the princes.

## Gathering of the Russian Lands

Ivan III was the first Muscovite prince to consolidate Moscow's position of power and successfully incorporate the rival cities of Tver and Novgorod under the umbrella of Moscow's rule. These

shifts in power in the Northern provinces created the first semblance of a “Russian” state (though that name would not be utilized for another century). Ivan the Great was also the first Rus’ prince to style himself a Tsar, thereby setting up a strong start for his successor son, Vasili III. Between the two leaders, what would become known as the “Gathering of the Russian Lands” would occur and begin a new era of Russian history after the Mongol Empire’s Golden Horde.

## Ivan III and the End of the Golden Horde

Ivan III Vasilyevich, also known as Ivan the Great, was born in Moscow in 1440 and became Grand Prince of Moscow in 1462. He ruled from this seat of power until his death in 1505. He came into power when Moscow had many economic and cultural advantages in the northern provinces. His predecessors had expanded Moscow’s holdings from a mere 600 miles to 15,000. The seat of the Russian Orthodox Church was also centered in Moscow starting in the 14th century. In addition, Moscow had long been a loyal ally to the ruling Mongol Empire and had an optimal position along major trade routes between Novgorod and the Volga River.



**Ivan III:** He held the title of Grand Prince of Moscow between 1462 and 1505.

However, one of Ivan the Great's most substantial accomplishments was refusing the Tatar yoke (as the Mongol Empire's stranglehold on Rus' lands has been called) in 1476. Moscow refused to pay its normal Golden Horde taxes starting in that year, which spurred

Khan Ahmed to wage war against the city in 1480. It took a number of months before the Khan retreated back to the steppe. During the following year, internal fractures within the Mongol Empire greatly weakened the hold of Mongol rulers on the northeastern Rus' lands, which effectively freed Moscow from its old duties.

## Moscow's Land Grab

The other major political change that Ivan III instigated was a major consolidation of power in the northern principalities, often called the "Gathering of the Russian Lands." Moscow's primary rival, Novgorod, became Ivan the Great's first order of business. The two grand cities had been locked in dispute for over a century, but Ivan III waged a harsh war that forced Novgorod to cede its land to Moscow after many uprisings and attempted alliances between Novgorod and Lithuania. The official state document accepting Moscow's rule was signed by Archbishop Feofil of Novgorod in 1478. Any revolts that arose out of Novgorod over the next decade were swiftly put down and any disobedient Novgorodian royal family members were removed to Moscow or other outposts to discourage further outbursts.

In addition to capturing his greatest rival city, Ivan III also collected his four brothers' local lands over the course of his rule, further expanding and consolidating the land under the power of the Grand Prince of Moscow. Ivan III also levied his political, economic, and military might over the course of his reign to gain control of Yaroslavl, Rostov, Tver, and Vyatka, forming one of the most unified political formations in the region since Vladimir the Great. This new political formation was in contrast to centuries of local princes ruling over their regions relatively autonomously.



**Palace of Facets pillar:** This decadent pillar resides in the Palace of Facets built by Italian architects in stone in the mostly wooden Moscow Kremlin. This banquet hall was only one of many major architectural feats Ivan III built during his reign in Moscow.

Ivan the Great also greatly shaped the future of the Rus' lands. These major shifts included:

- Styling himself the “Tsar and Autocrat” in Byzantine style, essentially stepping into the new leadership position in Orthodoxy after the fall of the Byzantine Empire. These changes also occurred after he married Sophia Paleologue of Constantinople, who had brought court and religious rituals from the Byzantine Empire.
- He stripped the boyars of their localized and state power and essentially created a sovereign state that paid homage to Moscow.
- He oversaw the creation of a new legal code, called Muscovite Sudebnik in 1497, which further consolidated his place as the highest ruler of the northern Rus’ lands and instated harsh penalties for disobedience, sacrilege, or attempts to undermine the crown.
- The princes of formerly powerful principalities now under Moscow’s rule were placed in the role of service nobility, rather than sovereign rulers as they once were.
- Ivan III’s power was partly due to his alliance with Russian Orthodoxy, which created an atmosphere of anti-Catholicism and stifled the chance to build more powerful western alliances.

## Vasili III

Vasili III was the son of Sophia Paleologue and Ivan the Great and the Grand Prince of Moscow from 1505 to 1533. He followed in his father’s footsteps and continued to expand Moscow’s landholdings and political clout. He annexed, Pskov, Volokolamsk, Ryazan, and Novgorod-Seversky during his reign. His most spectacular grab for power was his capture of Smolensk, the great stronghold of Lithuania. He utilized a rebellious ally in the form of the Lithuanian prince Mikhail Glinski to gain this major victory.





**Vasili III:** This piece was created by a contemporary artist and depicts Vasili III as a scholar and leader.

Vasili III also followed in his father's oppressive footsteps. He utilized alliances with the Orthodox Church to put down any rebellions or feudal disputes. He limited the power of the boyars and the once-powerful Rurikid dynasties in newly conquered provinces. He also increased the gentry's landholdings, once more consolidating power around Moscow. In general, Vasili III's reign was marked by an oppressive atmosphere; he carried out harsh

penalties for speaking out against the power structure or showing the slightest disobedience to the crown.

## Ivan the Terrible

Ivan IV, or Ivan the Terrible, reigned from 1547 to 1584 and became the first tsar of Russia. His reign was punctuated with severe oppression and cultural and political expansion, leaving behind a complex legacy.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the key points of Ivan IV's policies and examine the positive and negative aspects of his rule

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Ivan IV is often known as Ivan the Terrible, even though the more correct translation is akin to Ivan the Fearsome or Ivan the Awesome.
- Ivan IV was the first Rus' prince to title himself "Tsar of All the Russias" beginning the long tradition



of rule under the tsars.

- Lands in the Crimea, Siberia, and modern-day Tatarstan were all subsumed into Russian lands under Ivan IV.
- The persecution of the boyars during Ivan IV's reign began under the harsh regulations of the oprichnina.

### *Key Terms*

- **Moscow Print Yard:** The first publishing house in Russia, which was opened in 1553.
- **boyar:** A member of the feudal ruling elite who was second only to the princes in Russian territories.
- **oprichnina:** A state policy enacted by Ivan IV that made him absolute monarch of much of the north and hailed in an era of boyar persecution. Ivan IV successfully grabbed large chunks of land from the nobility and created his own personal guard, the oprichniki, during this era.

## Ivan IV

Ivan IV Vasilevich is widely known as Ivan the Terrible or Ivan the Fearsome. He was the Grand Prince of Moscow from 1533 to 1547 and reigned as the “Tsar of all the Russias” from 1547 until he died in 1584. His complex years in power precipitated military conquests, including Kazan and Astrakhan, that changed the shape and demographic character of Russia forever. He also reshaped the

political formation of the Russian state, oversaw a cultural Renaissance in Russia, and shifted power to the head of state, the tsar, a title that had never before been given to a prince in the Rus' lands.

## Rise to Power

Ivan IV was born in 1530 to Vasili III and Elena Glinskaya. He was three when he was named the Grand Prince of Moscow after his father's death. Some say his years as the child vice-regent of Moscow under manipulative boyar powers shaped his views for life. In 1547, at the age of sixteen, he was crowned "Tsar of All the Russias" and was the first person to be coronated with that title. This title claimed the heritage of Kievan Rus' while firmly establishing a new unified Russian state. He also married Anastasia Romanovna, which tied him to the powerful Romanov family.

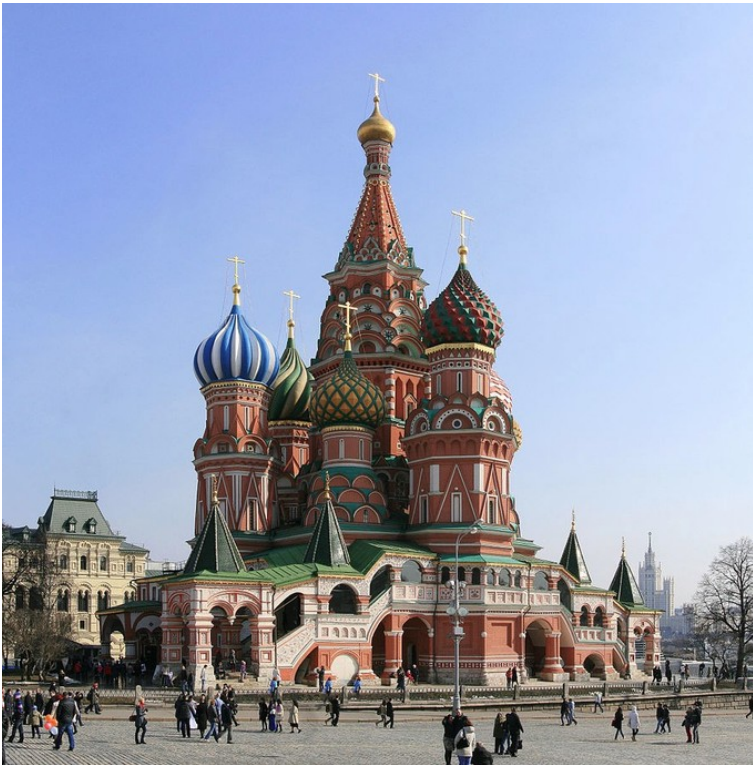


**18th-century portrait of Ivan IV:** Images of Ivan IV often display a prominent brow and a frowning mouth.

## Domestic Innovations and Changes

Despite Ivan IV's reputation as a paranoid and moody ruler, he also contributed to the cultural and political shifts that would shape Russia for centuries. Among these initial changes in relatively peaceful times he:

- Revised the law code, the Sudebnik of 1550, which initiated a standing army, known as the streltsy. This army would help him in future military conquests.
- Developed the Zemsky Sobor, a Russian parliament, along with the council of the nobles, known as the Chosen Council.
- Regulated the Church more effectively with the Council of the Hundred Chapters, which regulated Church traditions and the hierarchy.
- Established the Moscow Print Yard in 1553 and brought the first printing press to Russia.
- Oversaw the construction of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow.



**St. Basil's Cathedral:** This iconic structure was one cultural accomplishment created under Ivan IV's rule.

## Oprichnina and Absolute Monarchy

The 1560s were difficult with Russia facing drought and famine, along with a number of Tatar invasions, and a sea-trading blockade from the Swedes and Poles. Ivan IV's wife, Anastasia, was also likely poisoned and died in 1560, leaving Ivan shaken and, some sources say, mentally unstable. Ivan IV threatened to abdicate and fled from Moscow in 1564. However, a group of boyars went to beg Ivan to return in order to keep the peace. Ivan agreed to return with the understanding he would be granted absolute power and then instituted what is known as the oprichnina.



**1911 painting by Apollinary Vasnetsov:** This painting represents people fleeing from the Oprichniki, the secret service and military oppressors of Ivan IV's reign.

This agreement changed the way the Russian state worked and began an era of oppression, executions, and state surveillance. It split the Russian lands into two distinct spheres, with the northern region around the former Novgorod Republic placed under the absolute power of Ivan IV. The boyar council oversaw the rest of

the Russian lands. This new proclamation also started a wave of persecution and against the boyars. Ivan IV executed, exiled, or forcibly removed hundreds of boyars from power, solidifying his legacy as a paranoid and unstable ruler.

## Military Conquests and Foreign Relations

Ivan IV established a powerful trade agreement with England and even asked for asylum, should he need it in his fights with the boyars, from Elizabeth I. However, Ivan IV's greatest legacy remains his conquests, which reshaped Russia and pushed back Tatar powers who had been dominating and invading the region for centuries.

His first conquest was the Kazan Khanate, which had been raiding the northeast region of Russia for decades. This territory sits in modern-day Tatarstan. A faction of Russian supporters were already rising up in the region but Ivan IV led his army of 150,000 to battle in June of 1552. After months of siege and blocking Kazan's water supply, the city fell in October. The conquest of the entire Kazan Khanate reshaped relations between the nomadic people and the Russian state. It also created a more diverse population under the fold of the Russian state and the Church.

Ivan IV also embarked on the Livonian War, which lasted 24 years. The war pitted Russia against the Swedish Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Poland. The Polish leader, Stefan Batory, was an ally of the Ottoman Empire in the south, which was also in a tug-of-war with Russia over territory. These two powerful entities on each edge of Russian lands, and the prolonged wars, left the economy in Moscow strained and Russian resources scarce in the 1570s.

Ivan IV also oversaw two decisive territorial victories during his reign. The first was the defeat of the Crimean horde, which meant

the southern lands were once again under Russian leadership. The second expansion of Russian territory was headed by Cossack leader Yermak Timofeyevich. He led expeditions into Siberian territories that had never been under Russian rule. Between 1577 and 1580 many new Siberian regions had reached agreements with Russian leaders, allowing Ivan IV to style himself “Tsar of Siberia” in his last years.





**Ivan IV's throne:** This decadent throne mirrors Ivan the Terrible's love of power and opulence.

## Madness and Legacy

Ivan IV left behind a compelling and contradictory legacy. Even



his nickname “terrible” is a source for confusion. In Russian the word *grozny* means “awesome,” “powerful” or “thundering,” rather than “terrible” or “mad.” However, Ivan IV often behaved in ruthless and paranoid ways that favors the less flattering interpretation. He persecuted the long-ruling boyars and often accused people of attempting to murder him (which makes some sense when you look at his family’s history). His often reckless foreign policies, such as the drawn out Livonian War, left the economy unstable and fertile lands a wreck. Legend also suggests he murdered his son Ivan Ivanovich, whom he had groomed for the throne, in 1581, leaving the throne to his childless son Feodor Ivanovich. However, his dedication to culture and innovation reshaped Russia and solidified its place in the East.

## The Time of Troubles

The Time of Troubles occurred between 1598 and 1613 and was caused by severe famine, prolonged dynastic disputes, and outside invasions from Poland and Sweden. The worst of it ended with the coronation of Michael I in 1613.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Outline the distinctive features of the Time of Troubles and how they eventually ended

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Time of Troubles started with the death of the childless Tsar Feodor Ivanovich, which spurred an ongoing dynastic dispute.
- Famine between 1601 and 1603 caused massive starvation and further strained Russia.
- Two false heirs to the throne, known as False Dmitris, were backed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that wanted to grab power in Moscow.
- Rurikid Prince Dmitry Pozharsky and Novgorod merchant Kuzma Minin led the final resistance against Polish invasion that ended the dynastic dispute and reclaimed Moscow in 1613.

### *Key Terms*

- **Feodor Ivanovich:** The last tsar of the Rurik Dynasty, whose death spurred on a major dynastic dispute.
- **Dmitry Pozharsky:** The Rurikid prince that successfully ousted Polish forces from Moscow.
- **Zemsky Sobor:** A form of Russian parliament that met to vote on major state decisions, and was comprised of nobility, Orthodox clergy, and merchant

representatives.

The Time of Troubles was an era of Russian history dominated by a dynastic crisis and exacerbated by ongoing wars with Poland and Sweden, as well as a devastating famine. It began with the death of the childless last Russian Tsar of the Rurik Dynasty, Feodor Ivanovich, in 1598 and continued until the establishment of the Romanov Dynasty in 1613. It took another six years to end two of the wars that had started during the Time of Troubles, including the Dymitriads against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

## Famine and Unrest

At the death of Feodor Ivanovich, the last Rurikid Tsar, in 1598, his brother-in-law and trusted advisor, Boris Godunov, was elected his successor by the Zemsky Sobor (Great National Assembly). Godunov was a leading boyar and had accomplished a great deal under the reign of the mentally-challenged and childless Feodor. However, his position as a boyar caused unrest among the Romanov clan who saw it as an affront to follow a lowly boyar. Due to the political unrest, strained resources, and factions against his rule, he was not able to accomplish much during his short reign, which only lasted until 1605.



**Tsar Boris Godunov:** His short-lived reign was beset by famine and resistance from the boyars.

While Godunov was attempting to keep the country stitched together, a devastating famine swept across Russian from 1601 to 1603. Most likely caused by a volcanic eruption in Peru in 1600, the temperatures stayed well below normal during the summer months and often went below freezing at night. Crops failed and about two million Russians, a third of the population, perished during this

famine. This famine also caused people to flock to Moscow for food supplies, straining the capital both socially and financially.

## Dynastic Uncertainty and False Dmitris

The troubles did not cease after the famine subsided. In fact, 1603 brought about new political and dynastic struggles. Feodor Ivanovich's younger brother was reportedly stabbed to death before the Tsar's death, but some people still believed he had fled and was alive. The first of the nicknamed False Dmitris appeared in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1603 claiming he was the lost young brother of Ivan the Terrible. Polish forces saw this pretender's appearance as an opportunity to regain land and influence in Russia and the some 4,000 troops comprised of Russian exiles, Lithuanians, and Cossacks crossed the border and began what is known as the Dymitriad wars.



**Vasili IV of Russia:** He was the last member of the Rurikid Dynasty to rule in Moscow between 1606 and 1610.

False Dmitri was supported by enough Polish and Russian rebels hoping for a rich reward that he was married to Marina Mniszech and ascended to the throne in Moscow at Boris Godunov's death in 1605. Within a year Vasily Shuisky (a Rurikid prince) staged an uprising against False Dmitri, murdered him, and seized control of power in Moscow for himself. He ruled between 1606 and 1610 and

was known as Vasili IV. However, the boyars and mercenaries were still displeased with this new ruler. At the same time as Shuisky's ascent, a new False Dmitri appeared on the scene with the backing of the Polish-Lithuanian magnates.

## An Empty Throne and Wars

Shuisky retained power long enough to make a treaty with Sweden, which spurred a worried Poland into officially beginning the Polish-Muscovite War that lasted from 1605 to 1618. The struggle over who would gain control of Moscow became entangled and complex once Poland became an acting participant. Shuisky was still on the throne, both the second False Dmitri and the son of the Polish king, Władysław, were attempting to take control.

None of the three pretenders succeeded, however, when the Polish king himself, Sigismund III, decided he would take the seat in Moscow.

Russia was stretched to its limit by 1611. Within the five years after Boris Godunov's death powers had shifted considerably:

- The boyars quarreled amongst themselves over who should rule Moscow while the throne remained empty.
- Russian Orthodoxy was imperiled and many Orthodox religious leaders were imprisoned.
- Catholic Polish forces occupied the Kremlin in Moscow and Smolensk.
- Swedish forces had taken over Novgorod in retaliation to Polish forces attempting to ally with Russia.
- Tatar raids continued in the south leaving many people dead and stretched for resources.

## The End of Troubles

Two strong leaders arose out of the chaos of the first decade of the 17th century to combat the Polish invasion and settle the dynastic dispute. The powerful Novgordian merchant Kuzma Minin along with the Rurikid Prince Dmitry Pozharsky rallied enough forces to push back the Polish forces in Russia. The new Russian rebellion first pushed Polish forces back to the Kremlin, and between November 3rd and 6th (New Style) Prince Pozharsky had forced the garrison to surrender in Moscow. November 4 is known as National Unity Day, however it fell out of favor during Communism, only to be reinstated in 2005.

The dynastic wars finally came to an end when the Grand National Assembly elected Michael Romanov, the son of the metropolitan Philaret, to the throne in 1613. The new Romanov Tsar, Michael I, quickly had the second False Dmitri's son and wife killed, to stifle further uprisings.





**Michael I:** *The first Romanov Tsar to be crowned in 1613.*

Despite the end to internal unrest, the wars with Sweden and Poland would last until 1618 and 1619 respectively, when peace

treaties were finally enacted. These treaties forced Russia to cede some lands, but the dynastic resolution and the ousting of foreign powers unified most people in Russia behind the new Romanov Tsar and started a new era.

## The Romanovs

The Romanov Dynasty was officially founded at the coronation of Michael I in 1613. It was the second royal dynasty in Russia after the Rurikid princes of the Middle Ages. The Romanov name stayed in power until the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the rise of power of the House of Romanov and the first major Russian Tsars of this dynasty

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Romanovs were exiled during the Time of Troubles but brought back when Romanovs Patriarch Philaret and his son Michael were politically

advantageous.

- Michael I was the first Romanov Tsar and began a long line of powerful rulers.
- Alexis I successfully navigated Russia through multiple uprisings and wars and created long-lasting political bureaus.
- After a long dynastic dispute, Peter the Great rose to power and changed Russia with the new capital of St. Petersburg and western influences.

### *Key Terms*

- **Old Believers:** Followers of the Orthodox faith the way it was practiced before Alexis I convened the Great Moscow Synod and changed the traditions.
- **Duma chancellor:** The first provincial administrative bureau created under Alexis I. In Russian it is called Razryadny Prikaz.
- **Rurikid:** A descendent of the Rurik Dynasty, which dominated seats of power throughout Russian lands for over six centuries before the Romanov Dynasty began.

## The House of Romanov

The House of Romanov was the second major royal dynasty in Russia, and arose after the Rurikid Dynasty. It was founded in 1613 with the coronation of Michael I and ended in 1917 with the

abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. However, the direct male blood line of the Romanov Dynasty ended when Elizabeth of Russia died in 1762, and Peter III, followed by Catherine the Great, were placed in power, both German-born royalty.

## Roots of the Romanovs

The earliest common ancestor for the Romanov clan goes back to Andrei Kobyla. Sources say he was a boyar under the leadership of the Rurikid prince Semyon I of Moscow in 1347. This figure remains somewhat mysterious with some sources claiming he was the high-born son of a Rus' prince. Others point to the name Kobyla, which means horse, suggesting he was descended from the Master of Horse in the royal household.

Whatever the real origins of this patriarch-like figure, his descendants split into about a dozen different branches over the next couple of centuries. One such descendent, Roman Yurievich Zakharyin-Yuriev, gave the Romanov Dynasty its name. Grandchildren of this patriarch changed their name to Romanov and it remained there until they rose to power.

## Michael I

The Romanov Dynasty proper was founded after the Time of Troubles, an era between 1598 and 1613, which included a dynastic struggle, wars with Sweden and Poland, and severe famine. Tsar Boris Godunov's rule, which lasted until 1605, saw the Romanov families exiled to the Urals and other remote areas. Michael I's father was forced to take monastic vows and adopt the name Philaret. Two impostors attempting to gain the throne in Moscow attempted to leverage Romanov power after Godunov died in 1605.

And by 1613, the Romanov family had again become a popular name in the running for power.

Patriarch Philaret's son, Michael I, was voted into power by the zemsky sober in July 1613, ending a long dynastic dispute. He unified the boyars and satisfied the Moscow royalty as the son of Feodor Nikitich Romanov (now Patriarch Philaret) and the nephew of the Rurikid Tsar Feodor I. He was only sixteen at his coronation, and both he and his mother were afraid of his future in such a difficult political position.



**Representation of a young Michael I:** He rose to power in Moscow when he was just sixteen and went on to become an influential leader in Russian history.

Michael I reinstated order in Moscow over his first years in power

and also developed two major government offices, the Posolsky Prikaz (Foreign Office) and the Razryadny Prikaz (Duma chancellory, or provincial administration office). These two offices remained essential to Russian order for a many decades.

## Alexis I

Michael I ruled until his death in 1645 and his son, Alexis, took over the throne at the age of sixteen, just like his father. His reign would last over 30 years and ended at his death in 1676. His reign was marked by riots in cities such Pskov and Novgorod, as well as continued wars with Sweden and Poland.





**Alexis I of Russian in the 1670s:** His policies toward the Church and peasant uprisings created new legal codes and traditions that lasted well into the 19th century.

However, Alexis I established a new legal code called Subornoye Ulozheniye, which created a serf class, made hereditary class



unchangeable, and required official state documentation to travel between towns. These codes stayed in effect well into the 19th century. Under Alexis I's rule, the Orthodox Church also convened the Great Moscow Synod, which created new customs and traditions. This historic moment created a schism between what are termed Old Believers (those attached to the previous hierarchy and traditions of the Church) and the new Church traditions. Alexis I's legacy paints him as a peaceful and reflective ruler, with a propensity for progressive ideas.

## Dynastic Dispute and Peter the Great

At the death of Alexis I in 1676, a dynastic dispute erupted between the children of his first wife, namely Fyodor III, Sofia Alexeyevna, Ivan V, and the son of his second wife, Peter Alexeyevich (later Peter the Great). The crown was quickly passed down through the children of his first wife. Fyodor III died from illness after ruling for only six years. Between 1682 and 1689 power was contested between Sofia Alexeyevna, Ivan V, and Peter. Sofia served as regent from 1682 to 1689. She actively opposed Peter's claim to the throne in favor of her own brother, Ivan. However, Ivan V and Peter shared the throne until Ivan's death in 1696.



This portrait was a gift to the King of England and displays a western style that was rarely scene in royal portraits before this time. He is not wearing a

*beard or the traditional caps and robes that marked Russian nobility before his rule.*

Peter went on to rule over Russia, and even style himself Emperor of all Russia in 1721, and ruled until his death in 1725. He built a new capital in St. Petersburg, where he built a navy and attempted to wrest control of the Baltic Sea. He is also remembered for bringing western culture and Enlightenment ideas to Russia, as well as limiting the control of the Church.

# 66. Assignments

## Week 11

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – “Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.”
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.
- It is acceptable to analyze. “The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.”

- It is not acceptable to editorialize. *“The author is super biased against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”*
- Don’t worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

# 67. Primary Source Reading 5: Saga of Erik The Red

## Primary Source Reading: Saga of Erik The Red

Summer in the Greenland coast circa year 1000

*Discovery and Colonization of Greenland, CE 985*

*The earliest and most complete information we have about Vinland is found in two sagas, Greenlanders' Saga and The Saga of Erik the Red which tell of the Viking discovery of North America. The two accounts were written independently, though both tell of things which took place in the early 11th century that were passed down by word of mouth in Greenland and Iceland until they were written down in the 13th century in Iceland. Both give general descriptions of the native peoples the Vikings met, relative sailing distances, and landscape features which help us determine the location of Vinland. But the two versions are also contradictory in a number of ways, and while they provide much information about the new lands, they do not conclusively resolve the question, "where was Vinland?"*

Although the main object of the writer of this narrative appears to have been to enumerate the deeds and adventures of Erik and his sons, short accounts are also given of the discoveries of succeeding voyagers, the most distinguished of whom was Thorfinn Karlsefne. Thorvald hight (name) a man, a son of Osvald, a son of Ulf-Oxne-Thorersson. Thorvald and his son Erik the Red removed from Jæder to Iceland, in consequence of murder. At that time was Iceland colonized wide around. They lived at Drange on Hornstand; there died Thorvald. Erik then married Thorhild, the daughter of Jærunda

and Thorbjorg Knarrarbringa, who afterwards married Thorbjorn of Haukadal.

Then went Erik northwards and lived at Erikstad near Vatshorn. The son of Erik and Thorhild hight Leif. But after Eyulf Soers and Rafn the duelists' murder, was Erik banished from Haukadal, and he removed westwards to Breidafjord, and lived at Oexney at Erikstad. He lent Thorgest his seat-posts, and could not get them back again; he then demanded them; upon this arose disputes and frays between him and Thorgest, as is told in Erik's saga. Styr Thorgrimson, Eyulf of Svinoe, and the sons of Brand of Alptafjord, and Thorbjorn Vifilson assisted Erik in this matter, but the sons of Thorgeller and Thorgeir of Hitardal stood by the Thorgestlingers. Erik was declared outlawed by the Thornesthing, and he then made ready his ship in Erik's creek, and when he was ready, Styr and the others followed him out past the islands.

Erik told them that he intended to go in search of the land, which Ulf Krages son Gunnbjorn saw, when he was driven out to the westward in the sea, the time when he found the rocks of Gunnbjorn. He said he would come back to his friends if he found the land. Erik sailed out from Snæfellsjokul; he found land, and came in from the sea to the place which he called Midjokul; it is now hight Blaserkr. He then went southwards to see whether it was there habitable land. The first winter he was at Eriksey, nearly in the middle of the eastern settlement; the spring after repaired he to Eriksfjord, and took up there his abode. He removed in summer to the we-sterne settlement, and gave to many places names. He was the second winter at Holm in Hrafnsgnipa, but the third summer went he to Iceland, and came with his ship into Breidafjord. He called the land which he had found Greenland, because, quoth he, "people will be attracted thither, if the land has a good name." Erik was in Iceland for the winter, but the summer after, went he to colonize the land; he dwelt at Brattahlid in Eriksfjord. Informed people say that the same summer Erik the Red went to colonize Greenland, thirty-five ships sailed from Breidafjord and Borgafjord, but only fourteen arrived; some were driven back, and others were

lost. This was fifteen winters before Christianity was established by law in Iceland. The following men who went out with Eirik took land in Greenland: Herjulf took Herjulfsfjord (he lived at Herjulfsness), Ketil Ketilsfjord, Rafn Rafnsfjord, Sælvæ Sælvædal, Helge Thorbrandsson Alptefjord, Thorbjørn glora Sigleffjord, Einar Einarsfjord, Hafgrim Hafgrimsfjord and Vatnahverf, Arnlaug Arnlaugsfjord, but some went to the western settlement.

### **Bjarne Seeks out Greenland**

A. D. 986.

Herjulf was the son of Bard Herjulfson; he was kinsman to the colonist Ingolf. To Herjulf gave Ingolf land between Vog and Reykjaness. Herjulf lived first at Drepstock; Thorgerd his wife, and Bjarne was their son, a very hopeful man. He conceived, when yet young, a desire to travel abroad, and soon earned for himself both riches and respect, and he was every second winter abroad, every other at home with his father. Soon possessed Bjarne his own ship, and the last winter he was in Norway, Herjulf prepared for a voyage to Greenland with Erik. In the ship with Herjulf was a Christian from the Hebrides, who made a hymn respecting the whirlpool, in which was the following verse:-

O thou who triest holy men!  
Now guide me on my way,  
Lord of the earth's wide vault, extend  
Thy gracious hand to me!

Herjulf lived at Herjulfsness; he was a very respectable man. Erik the Red lived at Brattahlid; he was the most looked up to, and every one regulated themselves by him. These were Erik's children: Leif, Thorvald and Thorstein, but Freydis his daughter; she was married to a man who Thorvard his name; they lived in Garde, where is now the Bishop's seat; she was very haughty, but Thorvard was narrow-minded; she was married to him chiefly on account of his money. Heathen were the people in Greenland at this time. Bjarne came to Eyra with his ship the summer of the same year in which his father had sailed away in spring. These tidings appeared serious



to Bjarne, and he was unwilling to unload his ship. Then his seamen asked him what he would do; he answered that he intended to continue his custom, and pass the winter with his father; "and I will," said he, "bear for Greenland if ye will give me your company." All said that they would follow his counsel. Then said Bjarne: "Imprudent will appear our voyage since none of us has been in the Greenland ocean." However, they put to sea so soon as they were ready and sailed for three days, until the land was out of sight under the water; but then the fair wind fell, and there arose north winds and fogs, and they knew not where they were, and thus it continued for many days. After that saw they the sun again, and could discover the sky; they now made sail, and sailed for that day, before they saw land, and counselled with each other about what land that could be, and Bjarne said that he thought it could not be Greenland. They asked whether he wished to sail to this land or not. "My advice is," said he, "to sail close to the land;" and so they did, and soon saw that the land was without mountains, and covered with wood, and had small heights. Then left they the land on their larboard side, and let the stern turn from the land. Afterwards they sailed two days before they saw another land. They asked if Bjarne thought that this was Greenland, but he said that he as little believed this to be Greenland as the other; "because in Greenland are said to be very high ice hills." They soon approached the land, and saw that it was a flat land covered with wood. Then the fair wind fell, and the sailors said that it seemed to them most advisable to land there; but Bjarne was unwilling to do so. They pretended that they were in want of both wood and water. "Ye have no want of either of the two," said Bjarne; for this, however, he met with some reproaches from the sailors. He bade them make sail, and so was done; they turned the prow from the land, and, sailing out into the open sea for three days, with a southwest wind, saw then the third land; and this land was high, and covered with mountains and ice-hills. Then asked they whether Bjarne would land there, but he said that he would not: "for to me this land appears little inviting." Therefore did they not lower the sails, but held on along this land, and saw that it

was an island; again turned they the stern from the land, and sailed out into the sea with the same fair wind; but the breeze freshened, and Bjarne then told them to shorten sail, and not sail faster than their ship and ship's gear could hold out. They sailed now four days, when they saw the fourth land. Then asked they Bjarne whether he thought that this was Greenland or not. Bjarne answered: "This is the most like Greenland, according to what I have been told about it and here will we steer for land." So did they, and landed in the evening under a ness; and there was a boat by the ness, and just here lived Bjarne's father, and from him has the ness taken its name, and is since called Herjulsness. Bjarne now repaired to his father's, and gave up seafaring, and was with his father so long as Herjulf lived, and afterwards he dwelt there after his father.

PART XIII

WEEK 12: THE HOLY  
ROMAN EMPIRE AND  
ENGLAND



# 68. Introduction

## Week 12

### Introduction

#### Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc, nicknamed “The Maid of Orléans”, is considered a heroine of France for her role during the Lancastrian phase of the Hundred Years’ War and was canonized as a Roman Catholic saint. Joan of Arc was born to Jacques d’Arc and Isabelle Romée, a peasant family, at Domrémy in north-east France. Joan said she received visions of the Archangel Michael, Saint Margaret, and Saint Catherine of Alexandria instructing her to support Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years’ War. The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Joan to the siege of Orléans as part of a relief mission. She gained prominence after the siege was lifted only nine days later. Several additional swift victories led to Charles VII’s coronation at Reims. This long-awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory.

# 69. Reading: The Holy Roman Empire

## Rise of the Holy Roman Empire

The formation of the Holy Roman Empire was initiated by Charlemagne's coronation as "Emperor of the Romans" in 800, and consolidated by Otto I when he was crowned emperor in 962 by Pope John XII.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the rise of the Holy Roman Empire

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- In 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans, reviving the title in Western Europe after more than three centuries, thus creating the Carolingian Empire, whose territory came to be

known as the Holy Roman Empire.

- After the dissolution of the Carolingian Dynasty and the breakup of the empire into conflicting territories, Otto I became king of Francia and worked to unify all the German tribes into a single kingdom and greatly expand his powers.
- The title of Emperor was again revived in 962 when Otto I was crowned by Pope John XII, fashioning himself as the successor of Charlemagne and thus establishing the Holy Roman Empire.

### *Key Terms*

- **Charlemagne:** The first recognized emperor in Western Europe since the fall of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier, known for unifying Francia and ushering in a period of cultural renaissance and reform.
- **Otto I:** German king from 936 and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 962 until his death in 973; his reign began a continuous existence of the Holy Roman Empire for over eight centuries.

## Overview

The Holy Roman Empire was a multi-ethnic complex of territories in central Europe that developed during the Early Middle Ages and continued until its dissolution in 1806. The largest territory of the

empire after 962 was Eastern Francia, though it also came to include the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Kingdom of Burgundy, the Kingdom of Italy, and numerous other territories.

In 800, Pope Leo III crowned the Frankish king Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans, reviving the title in Western Europe after more than three centuries. The title continued in the Carolingian family until 888, and from 896 to 899, after which it was contested by the rulers of Italy in a series of civil wars until the death of the last Italian claimant, Berengar, in 924. The title was revived again in 962 when Otto I was crowned emperor, fashioning himself as the successor of Charlemagne and beginning a continuous existence of the empire for over eight centuries. Some historians refer to the coronation of Charlemagne as the origin of the empire, while others prefer the coronation of Otto I as its beginning. Scholars generally concur, however, in relating an evolution of the institutions and principles constituting the empire, describing a gradual assumption of the imperial title and role.

## The Rise of the Empire

After Charlemagne died in 814, the imperial crown was disputed among the Carolingian rulers of Western Francia and Eastern Francia, with first the western king (Charles the Bald) and then the eastern (Charles the Fat) attaining the prize. After the death of Charles the Fat in 888, however, the Carolingian Empire broke apart, and was never restored. According to Regino of Prüm, the parts of the realm “spewed forth kinglets,” and each part elected a kinglet “from its own bowels.” After the death of Charles the Fat, those crowned emperor by the pope controlled only territories in Italy. The last such emperor was Berengar I of Italy, who died in 924.

A few decades earlier, around 900, autonomous stem duchies (Franconia, Bavaria, Swabia, Saxony, and Lotharingia) reemerged in East Francia. After the Carolingian king Louis the Child died without



issue in 911, East Francia did not turn to the Carolingian ruler of West Francia to take over the realm, but instead elected one of the dukes, Conrad of Franconia, as *Rex Francorum Orientalium*. On his deathbed, Conrad yielded the crown to his main rival, Henry the Fowler of Saxony, who was elected king at the Diet of Fritzlar in 919. Henry reached a truce with the raiding Magyars, and in 933 he won a first victory against them in the Battle of Riade.

## Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor

Henry the Fowler died in 936, but his descendants, the Liudolfing (or Ottonian) dynasty, would continue to rule the eastern kingdom for roughly a century. Upon Henry's death, Otto I, his son and designated successor, was elected King in Aachen in 936. Otto continued his father's work of unifying all German tribes into a single kingdom and greatly expanded the king's powers at the expense of the aristocracy. Through strategic marriages and personal appointments, Otto installed members of his family in the kingdom's most important duchies. This reduced the various dukes, who had previously been co-equals with the king, to royal subjects under his authority. Otto transformed the Roman Catholic Church in Germany to strengthen the royal office and subjected its clergy to his personal control.

After putting down a brief civil war among the rebellious duchies, Otto defeated the Magyars at the Battle of Lechfeld in 955, thus ending the Hungarian invasions of Western Europe. The victory against the pagan Magyars earned Otto a reputation as a savior of Christendom and secured his hold over the kingdom. In 951, Otto came to the aid of Adelaide, the widowed queen of Italy, defeating her enemies, marrying her, and taking control of Italy. By 961, Otto had conquered the Kingdom of Italy and extended his realm's borders to the north, east, and south. Following the example of Charlemagne's coronation as "Emperor of the Romans" in 800, Otto

was crowned emperor in 962 by Pope John XII in Rome, thus intertwining the affairs of the German kingdom with those of Italy and the papacy. Otto's coronation as emperor marked the German kings as successors to the empire of Charlemagne, which through the concept of *translatio imperii* also made them consider themselves successors to Ancient Rome.

Otto's later years were marked by conflicts with the papacy and struggles to stabilize his rule over Italy. Reigning from Rome, Otto sought to improve relations with the Byzantine Empire, which opposed his claim to emperorship and his realm's further expansion to the south. To resolve this conflict, the Byzantine princess Theophanu married Otto's son, Otto II, in April 972. Otto finally returned to Germany in August 972 and died at Memleben in 973. Otto II succeeded him as Holy Roman Emperor.



**Otto I:** Replica of the Magdeburger Reiter, equestrian monument traditionally regarded as portrait of Otto I (Magdeburg, original c. 1240).

## Administration of the Empire

The Holy Roman Empire was divided into dozens—eventually

hundreds—of individual entities governed by kings, dukes, counts, bishops, abbots, and other rulers, collectively known as princes, who governed their land independently from the emperor, whose power was severely restricted by these various local leaders.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Explain the relationship between the Holy Roman Emperor and the other German nobles

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Holy Roman Empire was made up of many small principalities that were governed by local rulers who had authority over their land that mostly superseded the power of the emperor.
- The emperor could not simply issue decrees and govern autonomously over the empire; his power was severely restricted by the various local leaders.
- The power of the emperor declined over time until the individual territories operated almost like *de facto* sovereign states.
- The Imperial Diet was the legislative body of the Holy Roman Empire and theoretically superior to the

emperor himself; it included positions called prince-electors who elected the prospective emperor.

- After being elected, the King of the Romans could claim the title of “Emperor” only after being crowned by the Pope.

### *Key Terms*

- **Reichsstand:** An imperial estate in the Holy Roman Empire.
- **Peace of Westphalia:** A series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 that ended the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) in the Holy Roman Empire.
- **Imperial Diet:** The general assembly of the Imperial Estates of the Holy Roman Empire that emerged from the earlier informal assemblies, and the legislative body of the empire.

## Overview

The Holy Roman Empire was not a highly centralized state like most countries today. Instead, it was divided into dozens—eventually hundreds—of individual entities governed by kings, dukes, counts, bishops, abbots, and other rulers, collectively known as princes. There were also some areas ruled directly by the emperor. At no time could the emperor simply issue decrees and govern

autonomously over the empire. His power was severely restricted by the various local leaders.

From the High Middle Ages onwards, the Holy Roman Empire was marked by an uneasy coexistence with the princes of the local territories who were struggling to take power away from it. To a greater extent than in other medieval kingdoms such as France and England, the Roman emperors were unable to gain much control over the lands that they formally owned. Instead, to secure their own position from the threat of being deposed, emperors were forced to grant more and more autonomy to local rulers, both nobles and bishops. This process began in the 11th century with the Investiture Controversy and was more or less concluded with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. Several emperors attempted to reverse this steady dissemination of their authority, but were thwarted both by the papacy and by the princes of the empire.

## The Emperor's Loss of Centralized Authority

After the reign of Otto I, the centralized power of the emperor began to fade and local rulers, as well as the Catholic Church, gained more and more power in relation to the emperor. Eventually, the emperor held little authority over the empire and the territories began to function more like modern nation-states. The Hohenstaufen dynasty, which started in 1125, and especially Emperor Frederick I, represented both a final attempt at unified power and the beginning of the dissolution of that power.

Despite his imperial claims, Frederick's rule was a major turning point towards the disintegration of central rule in the Holy Roman Empire. While concentrated on establishing a modern, centralized state in Sicily, he was mostly absent from Germany and issued far-reaching privileges to Germany's secular and ecclesiastical princes. In the 1220 *Confoederatio cum principibus ecclesiasticis*, Frederick gave up a number of regalia in favor of the bishops, among them

tariffs, coining, and fortification. The 1232 *Statutum in favorem principum* mostly extended these privileges to secular territories. Although many of these privileges had existed earlier, they were now granted globally, and once and for all, to allow the German princes to maintain order north of the Alps while Frederick concentrated on Italy. The 1232 document marked the first time that the German dukes were called *domini terræ*, owners of their lands, a remarkable change in terminology as well.



**The Holy Roman Empire, 12th century:** The Hohenstaufen-ruled Holy Roman Empire and Kingdom of Sicily. Imperial and directly held Hohenstaufen land in the empire is shown in bright yellow. This map shows the patchwork of relatively autonomous principalities that made up the Holy Roman Empire.

The shift in power away from the emperor is revealed in the way the post-Hohenstaufen kings attempted to sustain their power. Earlier, the empire's strength (and finances) greatly relied on the empire's



own lands, the so-called *Reichsgut*, which always belonged to the king of the day and included many imperial cities. After the 13th century, the relevance of the *Reichsgut* faded, even though some parts of it did remain until the empire's end in 1806. The *Reichsgut* was increasingly pawned to local dukes, sometimes to raise money for the empire, but more frequently to reward faithful duty or as an attempt to establish control over the dukes. The direct governance of the *Reichsgut* no longer matched the needs of either the king or the dukes.

The “constitution” of the empire still remained largely unsettled at the beginning of the 15th century. Although some procedures and institutions had been fixed, for example by the Golden Bull of 1356, the rules of how the king, the electors, and the other dukes should cooperate in the empire much depended on the personality of the respective king. It therefore proved somewhat damaging that Sigismund of Luxemburg (king 1410, emperor 1433–1437) and Frederick III of Habsburg (king 1440, emperor 1452–1493) neglected the old core lands of the empire and mostly resided in their own lands. Without the presence of the king, the old institution of the *Hoftag*, the assembly of the realm's leading men, deteriorated. The Imperial Diet as a legislative organ of the empire did not exist at that time. The dukes often conducted feuds against each other—feuds that, more often than not, escalated into local wars. The medieval idea of unifying all Christendom into a single political entity, with the church and the empire as its leading institutions, began to decline.

## Imperial Diet

The Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*) was the legislative body of the Holy Roman Empire and theoretically superior to the emperor himself. It was divided into three classes. The first class, the Council of Electors, consisted of the electors, or the princes who could vote

for King of the Romans. The second class, the Council of Princes, consisted of the other princes, and was divided into two “benches,” one for secular rulers and one for ecclesiastical ones. Higher-ranking princes had individual votes, while lower-ranking princes were grouped into “colleges” by geography. Each college had one vote. The precise role and function of the Imperial Diet changed over the centuries, as did the empire itself, in that the estates and separate territories gained more and more control of their own affairs at the expense of imperial power.

## King of the Romans

Another check on the emperor’s power was the fact that he was elected. A prospective emperor first had to be elected King of the Romans by the prince-electors, the highest office of the Imperial Diet. German kings had been elected since the 9th century; at that point they were chosen by the leaders of the five most important tribes (the Salian Franks of Lorraine, Ripuarian Franks of Franconia, Saxons, Bavarians, and Swabians). In the Holy Roman Empire, the main dukes and bishops of the kingdom elected the King of the Romans. In 1356, Emperor Charles IV issued the Golden Bull, which limited the electors to seven: the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier. During the Thirty Years’ War, the Duke of Bavaria and the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg were given the right to vote as the eighth and ninth electors, respectively. Additionally, the Napoleonic Wars resulted in several electorates being reallocated, but these new electors never voted before the empire’s dissolution. A candidate for election would be expected to offer concessions of land or money to the electors in order to secure their vote.

After being elected, the King of the Romans could theoretically claim the title of “Emperor” only after being crowned by the pope.

In many cases, this took several years while the king was held up by other tasks; frequently he first had to resolve conflicts in rebellious northern Italy, or was quarreling with the pope himself.



**Pen-and-ink miniature of the seven prince-electors:** The prince-electors, the highest-ranking noblemen of the empire, usually elected one of their peers as “King of the Romans,” and he would later be crowned emperor by the pope.

## Imperial Estates

The number of territories in the empire was considerable, rising to about 300 at the time of the Peace of Westphalia. Many of these *Kleinstaaten* (“little states”) covered no more than a few square miles, and/or included several non-contiguous pieces, so the empire was often called a *Flickenteppich* (“patchwork carpet”).

An entity was considered a *Reichsstand* (imperial estate) if, according to feudal law, it had no authority above it except the Holy Roman Emperor himself. The imperial estates comprised:

- Territories ruled by a hereditary nobleman, such as a prince, archduke, duke, or count.
- Territories in which secular authority was held by a clerical dignitary, such as an archbishop, bishop, or abbot. Such a cleric was a prince of the church. In the common case of a prince-bishop, this temporal territory (called a prince-bishopric) frequently overlapped with his often-larger ecclesiastical diocese, giving the bishop both civil and clerical powers. Examples are the prince-archbishoprics of Cologne, Trier, and Mainz.
- Free imperial cities, which were subject only to the jurisdiction of the emperor.

## The Investiture Controversy

The Investiture Controversy, on the surface a conflict about the appointments of religious offices, was a powerful struggle for control over who held ultimate authority, the Holy Roman Emperor or the pope.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze the events of the Investiture Controversy

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- When the Holy Roman Empire developed as a force during the 10th century, it was the first real non-barbarian challenge to the authority of the church.
- A dispute between the secular and ecclesiastical powers known as the Investiture Controversy emerged beginning in the mid-11th century.
- The Investiture Controversy was resolved with the Concordat of Worms in 1122, which gave the church power over investiture, along with other reforms.
- By undercutting the imperial power established by previous emperors, the controversy led to nearly fifty years of civil war in Germany, and the triumph of the great dukes and abbots.
- The papacy grew stronger in its power and authority from the controversy.

### *Key Terms*

- **Concordat of Worms:** An agreement between Pope Calixtus II and Holy Roman Emperor Henry V on September 23, 1122, that found a resolution to the Investiture Controversy.
- **simony:** The sale of church offices to a successor.
- **investiture:** The authority to appoint local church

officials such as bishops of cities and abbots of monasteries.

## Overview

The Investiture Controversy was the most significant conflict between church and state in medieval Europe, specifically the Holy Roman Empire.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, a series of popes challenged the authority of European monarchies. At issue was who, the pope or monarchs, had the authority to appoint (invest) local church officials such as bishops of cities and abbots of monasteries. The conflict ended in 1122, when Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II agreed on the Concordat of Worms. It differentiated between the royal and spiritual powers and gave the emperors a limited role in selecting bishops. The outcome seemed mostly a victory for the pope and his claim that he was God's chief representative in the world. However, the emperor did retain considerable power over the church.

The Investiture Controversy began as a power struggle between Pope Gregory VII (1072–1085) and Holy Roman Emperor Henry V (1056–1106). A brief but significant struggle over investiture also occurred between Henry I of England and Pope Paschal II in the years 1103–1107, and the issue also played a minor role in the struggles between church and state in France.

By undercutting the imperial power established by previous emperors, the controversy led to nearly fifty years of civil war in Germany, and the triumph of the great dukes and abbots. Imperial power was finally re-established under the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Historian Norman Cantor writes of its significance:

The age of the investiture controversy may rightly be regarded as the turning-point in medieval civilization. It was the fulfillment of the early Middle Ages because in it the acceptance of the Christian religion by the Germanic peoples reached its final and decisive stage...The greater part of the religious and political system of the high Middle Ages emerged out of the events and ideas of the investiture controversy.



**Investiture:** A woodcut by Philip Van Ness (1905), A medieval king investing a bishop with the symbols of office.

## Origins

After the decline of the Roman Empire and prior to the Investiture Controversy, investiture, while theoretically a task of the church, was in practice performed by members of the religious nobility. Many bishops and abbots were themselves part of the ruling nobility. Since an eldest son would inherit the title of the father, siblings often found careers in the church. This was particularly true where the family may have established a proprietary church or abbey on their estate. Since Otto I (936-972) the bishops had been princes of the empire, had secured many privileges, and had become to a great extent feudal lords over great districts of the imperial territory. The control of these great units of economic and military power was for the king a question of primary importance, as it affected the imperial authority. It was essential for a ruler or nobleman to appoint (or sell the office to) someone who would remain loyal.

Since a substantial amount of wealth and land was usually associated with the office of a bishop or abbot, the sale of church offices (a practice known as simony ) was an important source of income for leaders among the nobility, who themselves owned the land and by charity allowed the building of churches.

The crisis began when a group within the church, members of the Gregorian Reform, decided to rebel against the rule of simony by forcefully taking the power of investiture from the ruling secular power, i.e., the Holy Roman Emperor, and placing that power wholly within control of the church. The Gregorian reformers knew this would not be possible so long as the emperor maintained the ability to appoint the pope, so their first step was to forcibly gain the papacy from the control of the emperor. An opportunity came in 1056 when six-year-old Henry IV became the German king; the reformers took advantage of his young age and inability to react by seizing the papacy by force. In 1059 a church council in Rome declared, with *In Nomine Domini*, that leaders of the nobility would



have no part in the selection of popes, and created the College of Cardinals as a body of electors made up entirely of church officials. Once Rome regained control of the election of the pope, it was ready to attack the practice of investiture and simony on a broad front.

In 1075, Pope Gregory VII composed the *Dictatus Papae*. One clause asserted that the deposal of an emperor was under the sole power of the pope. It declared that the Roman church was founded by God alone—that the papal power was the sole universal power. By this time, Henry IV was no longer a child, and he continued to appoint his own bishops. He reacted to this declaration by sending Gregory VII a letter in which he withdrew his imperial support of Gregory as pope in no uncertain terms.

The situation was made even more dire when Henry IV installed his chaplain, Tedald, a Milanese priest, as Bishop of Milan when another priest of Milan, Atto, had already been chosen by the pope for candidacy. In 1076 the pope responded by excommunicating Henry and deposing him as German king, releasing all Christians from their oath of allegiance to him.

Enforcing these declarations was a different matter, but the advantage gradually came to the side of the pope. German princes and the aristocracy were happy to hear of the king's deposition. They used religious reasons to continue the rebellion started at the First Battle of Langensalza in 1075, and to seize royal holdings. Aristocrats claimed local lordships over peasants and property, built forts, which had previously been outlawed, and built up localized fiefdoms to secure their autonomy from the empire.

The Investiture Controversy continued for several decades as each succeeding pope tried to diminish imperial power by stirring up revolt in Germany. These revolts were gradually successful. Henry IV was succeeded upon his death in 1106 by his son Henry V, who had rebelled against his father in favor of the papacy, and who had made his father renounce the legality of his antipopes before he died. Nevertheless, Henry V chose one more antipope, Gregory VIII. Later, he renounced some of the rights of investiture with the

Concordat of Worms, abandoned Gregory, and was received back into communion and recognized as legitimate emperor as a result.



**Henry IV:** This illustration shows Henry IV requesting mediation from Matilda of Tuscany and abbot Hugh of Cluny.

## The Concordat of Worms and Its Significance

After fifty years of fighting, the Concordat of Worms provided a

lasting compromise when it was signed on September 23, 1122. It eliminated lay investiture while leaving secular leaders some room for unofficial but significant influence in the appointment process. The emperor renounced the right to invest ecclesiastics with ring and crosier, the symbols of their spiritual power, and guaranteed election by the canons of cathedral or abbey and free consecration.

The Concordat of Worms brought an end to the first phase of the power struggle between the papacy and the Holy Roman emperors, and has been interpreted as containing within itself the germ of nation-based sovereignty that would one day be confirmed in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). In part this was an unforeseen result of strategic maneuvering between the church and the European sovereigns over political control within their domains.

While the monarchy was embroiled in the dispute with the church, it declined in power and broke apart. Localized rights of lordship over peasants grew. This resulted in multiple effects:

1. Increased serfdom that reduced human rights for the majority;
2. Increased taxes and levies that royal coffers declined;
3. Localized rights of justice where courts did not have to answer to royal authority.

In the long term, the decline of imperial power would divide Germany until the 19th century. Similarly, in Italy, the Investiture Controversy weakened the emperor's authority and strengthened local separatist forces. However, the papacy grew stronger from the controversy. Assembling for public opinion engaged lay people in religious affairs that increased lay piety, setting the stage for the Crusades and the great religious vitality of the 12th century.

The conflict did not end with the Concordat of Worms. Future disputes between popes and Holy Roman emperors continued until northern Italy was lost to the empire entirely. The church would crusade against the Holy Roman Empire under Frederick II.

# 70. Reading: The Development of England

## The Anglo-Saxons

The Anglo-Saxons were a people who inhabited Great Britain from 450 to 1066; their reign saw the creation of a unified English nation, culture, and identity, setting the foundation for modern England.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe what Anglo-Saxon life was like before 1066

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Anglo- Saxons were comprised of people from Germanic tribes who migrated to Great Britain from continental Europe; they inhabited the island from 450-1066.
- In the 5th century, Britain fell from Roman rule and

established an independent culture and society.

- In the 6th century, Christianity was re-established and Britain began to flourish as a center for learning and cultural production.
- By the 7th century, smaller territories began coalescing into kingdoms, with the kingdom of Mercia one of the most dominant.
- The 9th century saw the rise of the Wessex kingdom, especially with King Alfred the Great, who fashioned himself “King of the Anglo-Saxons” and oversaw an increasing unity of the English people and improved the kingdom’s legal system and military structure and his people’s quality of life.
- During the course of the 10th century, the West Saxon kings extended their power first over Mercia, then over the southern Danelaw, and finally over Northumbria, thereby imposing a semblance of political unity.
- This society continued to develop and thrive until the Norman Conquest in 1066.
- The Anglo-Saxon culture was centered around three classes of men: the working man, the churchman, and the warrior.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hadrian’s Wall:** A defensive fortification that ran from the banks of the River Tyne near the North Sea to the Solway Firth on the Irish Sea, and was the northern limit of the Roman Empire.

- **Norman Conquest:** The 11th-century invasion and occupation of England by an army of Norman, Breton, and French soldiers led by Duke William II of Normandy.
- **King Alfred the Great:** King of Wessex from 871 to 899, known as a learned and merciful man who encouraged education and improved his kingdom's legal system and military structure and his people's quality of life.

## Overview

The Anglo-Saxons were a people who inhabited Great Britain from the 5th century. They comprised people from Germanic tribes who migrated to the island from continental Europe, their descendants, and indigenous British groups who adopted some aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture and language. The Anglo-Saxon period denotes the period of British history between about 450 and 1066, after their initial settlement and up until the Norman Conquest.

The Anglo-Saxon period includes the creation of an English nation, with many of the aspects that survive today, including regional government of shires and hundreds. During this period, Christianity was re-established and there was a flowering of literature and language. Charters and law were also instituted.

The history of the Anglo-Saxons is the history of a cultural identity. It developed from divergent groups in association with the people's adoption of Christianity, and was integral to the establishment of various kingdoms. Threatened by extended Danish invasions and occupation of eastern England, this identity persevered; it dominated until after the Norman Conquest.

## Anglo-Saxon History

The early Anglo-Saxon period covers the period of medieval Britain that starts from the end of Roman rule. By the year 400, southern Britain—Britain below Hadrian's Wall—was a peripheral part of the Western Roman Empire, occasionally lost to rebellion or invasion, but until then always eventually recovered. Around 410, Britain slipped beyond direct imperial control into a phase which has generally been termed “sub-Roman.”

In the second half of the 6th century, four structures contributed to the development of Anglo-Saxon society: the position and freedoms of the *ceorl* (peasants), the smaller tribal areas coalescing into larger kingdoms, the elite developing from warriors to kings, and Irish monasticism developing under Finnian.

In 565, Columba, a monk from Ireland who studied at the monastic school of Moville under Saint Finnian, reached Iona as a self-imposed exile. The influence of the monastery of Iona would grow into what Peter Brown has described as an “unusually extensive spiritual empire,” which “stretched from western Scotland deep to the southwest into the heart of Ireland and, to the southeast, it reached down throughout northern Britain, through the influence of its sister monastery Lindisfarne.” Michael Drouot calls this period the “Golden Age,” when learning flourished with a renaissance in classical knowledge.

By 660 the political map of Lowland Britain had developed, with smaller territories coalescing into kingdoms; from this time larger kingdoms started dominating the smaller kingdoms. The establishment of kingdoms, with a particular king being recognized as an overlord, developed out of an early loose structure. Simon Keynes suggests that the 8th century–9th century was period of economic and social flourishing that created stability both below the Thames and above the Humber. However, between the Humber and Thames, one political entity, the kingdom of Mercia, grew in influence and power and attracted attention in the East.



**England, 650:** A political map of Britain c. 650 (the names are in modern English); the black text denotes kingdoms ruled by Anglo-Saxons.

The 9th century saw the rise of Wessex, from the foundations laid by King Egbert in the first quarter of the century to the achievements of King Alfred the Great in its closing decades. Alfred successfully defended his kingdom against the Viking attempt at conquest and became the dominant ruler in England. He was the first king of



the West Saxons to style himself “King of the Anglo-Saxons.” Alfred had a reputation as a learned and merciful man with a gracious and level-headed nature who encouraged education and improved his kingdom’s legal system and military structure and his people’s quality of life.

During the course of the 10th century, the West Saxon kings extended their power first over Mercia, then over the southern Danelaw, and finally over Northumbria, thereby imposing a semblance of political unity on peoples who nonetheless would remain conscious of their respective customs and their separate pasts. The prestige and pretensions of the monarchy increased, the institutions of government strengthened, and kings and their agents sought in various ways to establish social order. This was the society that would see three invasions in the 11th century, the third of which was led successfully by William of Normandy in 1066 and transferred political rule to the Normans.

## Anglo-Saxon Culture and Society

The visible Anglo-Saxon culture can be seen in the material culture of buildings, dress styles, illuminated texts, and grave goods. Behind the symbolic nature of these cultural emblems, there are strong elements of tribal and lordship ties. The elite declared themselves kings who developed *burhs* (fortifications or fortified settlements), and identified their roles and peoples in Biblical terms. Above all, as Helena Hamerow has observed, “local and extended kin groups remained...the essential unit of production throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.” The effects persist in the 21st century as, according to a study published in March 2015, the genetic makeup of British populations today shows divisions of the tribal political units of the early Anglo-Saxon period.

The ties of loyalty to a lord were to his person, not to his station; there was no real concept of patriotism or loyalty to a cause. This

explains why dynasties waxed and waned so quickly; a kingdom was only as strong as its leader-king. There was no underlying administration or bureaucracy to maintain any gains beyond the lifetime of a leader.

The culture of the Anglo-Saxons was especially solidified and cultivated by King Alfred. The major kingdoms had grown by absorbing smaller principalities, and the means by which they did it and the character their kingdoms acquired as a result represent one of the major themes of the Middle Saxon period. A “good” king was a generous king who won the support that would ensure his supremacy over other kingdoms through his wealth. King Alfred’s digressions in his translation of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* provided these observations about the resources that every king needed:

In the case of the king, the resources and tools with which to rule are that he have his land fully manned: he must have praying men, fighting men and working men. You know also that without these tools no king may make his ability known. Another aspect of his resources is that he must have the means of support for his tools, the three classes of men. These, then, are their means of support: land to live on, gifts, weapons, food, ale, clothing and whatever else is necessary for each of the three classes of men.

The first group of King Alfred’s three-fold Anglo-Saxon society are praying men—people who work at prayer. Although Christianity dominates the religious history of the Anglo-Saxons, life in the 5th and 6th centuries was dominated by “pagan” religious beliefs with a Scando-Germanic heritage. Almost every poem from before the Norman Conquest, no matter how Christian its theme, is steeped in pagan symbolism, but the integration of pagan beliefs into the new faith goes beyond the literary sources. Anglo-Saxon England found ways to synthesize the religion of the church with the existing “northern” customs and practices. Thus the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was not just their switching from one practice to

another, but making something fresh out of their old inheritance and their new beliefs and learning. Monasticism, and not just the church, was at the center of Anglo-Saxon Christian life. The role of churchmen was analogous with that of the warriors waging heavenly warfare.

The second element of Alfred's society is fighting men. The subject of war and the Anglo-Saxons is a curiously neglected one; however, it is an important element of their society.

The third aspect of Alfred's society is working men. Helena Hamerow suggested that the prevailing model of working life and settlement, particularly for the early period, was one of shifting settlement and building tribal kinship. The mid-Saxon period saw diversification, the development of enclosures, the beginning of the toft system, closer management of livestock, the gradual spread of the mould-board plough, "informally regular plots," and a greater permanence, with further settlement consolidation thereafter foreshadowing post-Conquest villages. The later periods saw a proliferation of "service features," including barns, mills, and latrines, most markedly on high-status sites. Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, Helena Hamerow suggested: "local and extended kin groups remained...the essential unit of production."



**West Stow Anglo-Saxon village:** Panorama of the reconstructed 7th-century village, characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon peasant villages.

## The Norman Invasion of 1066 CE

The Norman Invasion of England was led by William I of Normandy, who defeated Harold II of England in the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Evaluate the extent to which Harold's loss at the Battle of Hastings was due to the fact that he was ill-prepared for battle and whether it might have been possible to mitigate the circumstances that led to that fact

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Harold was crowned king after the death of Edward the Confessor in January 1066. Shortly after he was crowned king, Harold faced invasions by his brother Tostig, the Norwegian King Harald III of Norway, and Duke William II of Normandy.
- Harold defeated Tostig and Harald III at the battle of Stamford Bridge on September 25, 1066.
- Harold's army marched south to confront William at the Battle of Hastings on October 14, 1066. Harold was defeated by the strength of William's attack and because his army was still recovering from Stamford.

### *Key Terms*

- **Normans:** The Normans, a people descended from Norse Vikings who settled in the territory of Normandy in France after being given land by the French king, conquered other lands and protected the French coast from foreign attacks.
- **Battle of Hastings:** The decisive battle in the Norman Conquest of England fought on October 14, 1066, between the Norman-Fench army of Duke William II of Normandy and the English army under Anglo-Saxon King Harold II.

## Background

The Norman conquest of England was the 11th-century invasion and occupation of England by an army of Norman, Breton, and French soldiers led by Duke William II of Normandy, later styled William the Conqueror.

William's claim to the English throne derived from his familial relationship with the childless Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor, who may have encouraged William's hopes for the throne. Edward died in January 1066 and was succeeded by his brother-in-law Harold Godwinson. Harold faced invasions by William, his own brother Tostig, and the Norwegian King Harald Hardrada (Harold III of Norway).

## Preparations and Early Battles

The English army was organized along regional lines, with the *fyrð*, or local levy, serving under a local magnate—an earl, bishop, or sheriff. The *fyrð* was composed of men who owned their own land and were equipped by their community to fulfill the king's demands for military forces. As a whole, England could furnish about 14,000 men for the *fyrð* when it was called out. The *fyrð* usually served for two months, except in emergencies. It was rare for the whole national *fyrð* to be called out; between 1046 and 1065 it was done only three times—in 1051, 1052, and 1065. The king also had a group of personal armsmen known as housecarls, who formed the backbone of the royal forces. The composition, structure, and size of Harold's army contributed to his defeat against William.

Harold had spent mid-1066 on the south coast with a large army and fleet, waiting for William to invade. The bulk of his forces were militia who needed to harvest their crops, so on September 8 Harold dismissed the militia and the fleet. Learning of the Norwegian

invasion, he rushed north, gathering forces as he went, and took the Norwegians by surprise, defeating them at the Battle of Stamford Bridge on September 25. Harald of Norway and Tostig were killed, and the Norwegians suffered such great losses that only 24 of the original 300 ships were required to carry away the survivors. The English victory came at great cost, as Harold's army was left in a battered and weakened state.

Meanwhile, William had assembled a large invasion fleet and gathered an army from Normandy and the rest of France, including large contingents from Brittany and Flanders. William spent almost nine months on his preparations, as he had to construct a fleet from nothing. The Normans crossed to England a few days after Harold's victory over the Norwegians, following the dispersal of Harold's naval force, and landed at Pevensey in Sussex on September 28. A few ships were blown off course and landed at Romney, where the Normans fought the local fyrd. After landing, William's forces built a wooden castle at Hastings, from which they raided the surrounding area. More fortifications were erected at Pevensey

## Battle of Hastings

The deaths of Tostig and Hardrada at Stamford left William as Harold's only serious opponent. While Harold and his forces were recovering from Stamford, William landed his invasion forces at Pevensey and established a beachhead for his conquest of the kingdom. Harold was forced to march south swiftly, gathering forces as he went.

Harold's army confronted William's invaders on October 14 at the Battle of Hastings. The battle began at about 9 a.m. and lasted all day, but while a broad outline is known, the exact events are obscured by contradictory accounts in the sources. Although the numbers on each side were probably about equal, William had both cavalry and infantry, including many archers, while Harold had only

foot soldiers and few archers. In the morning, the English soldiers formed up as a shield wall along the ridge, and were at first so effective that William's army was thrown back with heavy casualties. Some of William's Breton troops panicked and fled, and some of the English troops appear to have pursued them. Norman cavalry then attacked and killed the pursuing troops. While the Bretons were fleeing, rumors swept the Norman forces that the duke had been killed, but William rallied his troops. Twice more the Normans made feigned withdrawals, tempting the English into pursuit, and allowing the Norman cavalry to attack them repeatedly.

The available sources are more confused about events in the afternoon, but it appears that the decisive event was the death of Harold, about which differing stories are told. William of Jumieges claimed that Harold was killed by William. It has also been claimed that the Bayeux Tapestry shows Harold's death by an arrow to the eye, but this may be a later reworking of the tapestry to conform to 12th-century stories. Other sources stated that no one knew how Harold died because the press of battle was so tight around the king that the soldiers could not see who struck the fatal blow.





**The Bayeux Tapestry:** The controversial panel depicting Harold II's death: The tapestry depicts the loss of the Anglo-Saxon troops to the Norman forces. Here, a figure some think to be Harold Godwinson is shown falling at the Battle of Hastings. Harold is shown with an arrow to the eye.

## William the Conqueror's Rule

William the Conqueror's rule was marked by struggles to consolidate his hold over England, which led to the compiling of the Domesday Book, a manuscript surveying the land of England in order to understand the holdings of each household.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze the reasons behind the creation of the Domesday Book and why it is such an important historical document

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After he launched the Norman conquest of England in 1066, William was crowned king and set about consolidating his power and authority.
- Several unsuccessful rebellions followed, but by 1075 William's hold on England was mostly secure, allowing him to spend the majority of the rest of his reign on the continent.
- After the political upheaval of the Norman conquest, and the confiscation of lands that followed, William's interest was to determine property holdings across the land and understand the financial resources of his kingdom, which was carried out in the Domesday Book.
- The aim of the Domesday Book was to determine what each landholder had in worth (land, livestock etc. ) to determine what taxes had been owed under Edward the Confessor.

- The Domesday Book is considered the oldest public record in England; no survey approaching the scope and extent of the Domesday Book was attempted again until 1873.

### *Key Terms*

- **William the Conqueror:** The first Norman king of England, reigning from 1066 until his death in 1087.
- **Edward the Confessor:** One of the last Anglo-Saxon kings of England and usually regarded as the last king of the House of Wessex, ruling from 1042 to 1066.

## William the Conqueror 's Rule

Although William's main rivals were gone after the Battle of Hastings, he still faced rebellions over the following years and was not secure on his throne until after 1072. After further military efforts, William was crowned king on Christmas Day 1066 in London. He made arrangements for the governance of England in early 1067 before returning to Normandy. Several unsuccessful rebellions followed, but by 1075 William's hold on England was mostly secure, allowing him to spend the majority of the rest of his reign on the continent. The lands of the resisting English elite were confiscated; some of the elite fled into exile.

To control his new kingdom, William gave lands to his followers and built castles commanding military strongpoints throughout the land. Other effects of the conquest included the introduction of

Norman French as the language of the elites and changes in the composition of the upper classes, as William reclaimed territory to be held directly by the king and settled new Norman nobility on the land. More gradual changes affected the agricultural classes and village life; the main change appears to have been the formal elimination of slavery, which may or may not have been linked to the invasion. There was little alteration in the structure of government, as the new Norman administrators took over many of the forms of Anglo-Saxon government.

William did not try to integrate his various domains into one empire, but instead continued to administer each part separately. William took over an English government that was more complex than the Norman system. England was divided into shires or counties, which were further divided into either hundreds or wapentakes. To oversee his expanded domain, William was forced to travel even more than he had as duke. He crossed back and forth between the continent and England at least nineteen times between 1067 and his death.

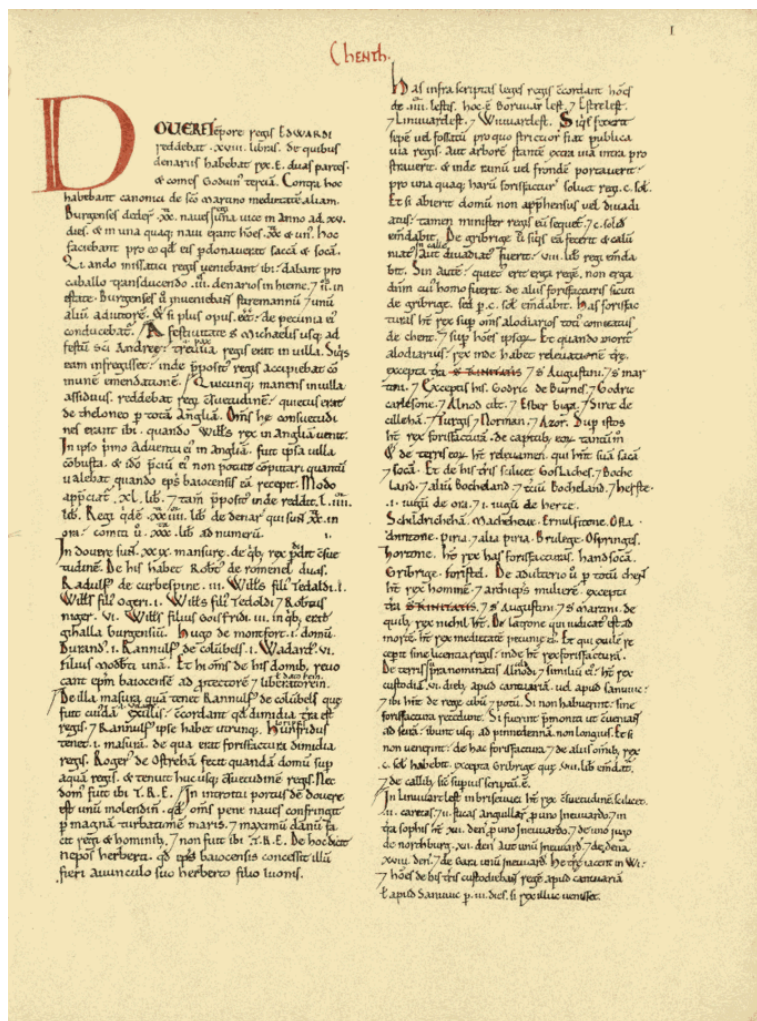
William's lands were divided after his death; Normandy went to his eldest son, Robert, and England to his second surviving son, William.

## Domesday Book

The Domesday Book is a manuscript record of the great survey, completed in 1086 on orders of William the Conqueror, of much of England and parts of Wales. The aim of the great survey was to determine what or how much each landholder had in land and livestock, and how much it was worth. The survey's ultimate purpose was to determine what taxes had been owed under Edward the Confessor.

The assessors' reckoning of a man's holdings and their value, as

given in the book, was dispositive and without appeal, and thus the name Domesday Book came into use in the 12th century.



**Kent, page 1 of the Domesday Book:** Domesday Book images from the Open Domesday Book project, which created the first free online copy of the Domesday Book. Image credit: Professor J.J.N. Palmer and George Slater.

## Purpose of the Domesday Book

After a great political convulsion like the Norman Conquest, and the wholesale confiscation of landed estates that followed, it was in William's interest to make sure that the rights of the crown, which he claimed to have inherited, had not suffered in the process. In particular, his Norman followers were more likely to evade the liabilities of their English predecessors, and there was growing discontent at the Norman land-grab that had occurred in the years following the invasion. William required certainty and definitive reference points as to property holdings across the nation so that they might be used as evidence in disputes and purported authority for crown ownership.

The Domesday survey therefore recorded the names of the new landholders and the assessments on which their taxes were to be paid. But it did more than this; by the king's instructions, it endeavored to make a national valuation list, estimating the annual value of all the land in the country at three points in time:

1. At the time of Edward the Confessor's death;
2. When the new owners received it;
3. At the time of the survey.

Further, it reckoned, by command, the potential value as well. It is evident that William desired to know the financial resources of his kingdom, and it is probable that he wished to compare them with the existing assessment. The great bulk of the Domesday Book is devoted to the somewhat arid details of the assessment and valuation of rural estates, which were as yet the only important sources of national wealth. After stating the assessment of a manor, the record sets forth the amount of arable land, and the number of plough teams (each reckoned at eight oxen) available for working it, with the additional number (if any) that might be employed; then the river-meadows, woodland, pasture, fisheries (i.e. fishing weirs), water-mills, salt-pans (if by the sea), and other subsidiary sources of

revenue; then the number of peasants in their several classes; and finally a rough estimate of the annual value of the whole, past and present.

## Importance

The importance of the Domesday Book for understanding the period in which it was written is difficult to overstate. It is considered the oldest public record in England and is probably the most remarkable statistical document in the history of Europe.

No survey approaching the scope and extent of the Domesday Book was attempted until the 1873 *Return of Owners of Land* (sometimes termed the *Modern Domesday*), which presented the first complete, post-Domesday picture of the distribution of landed property in the British Isles.

## The Magna Carta

The Magna Carta was the first document imposed upon a king of England to limit his powers by law and protect civil rights.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why the Magna Carta was created and why it is considered a failure of democracy

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Magna Carta was signed by King John in June 1215 and was the first document to impose legal limits on the king's personal powers.
- Clause 61 stated that a committee of twenty five barons could meet and overrule the will of the king—a serious challenge to John's authority as ruling monarch.
- The charter was renounced as soon as the barons left London; the pope annulled the document, saying it impaired the church's authority over the "papal territories" of England and Ireland.
- England moved to civil war, with the barons trying to replace the monarch they disliked with an alternative. They offered the crown to Prince Louis of France, who was declared king in London in May 1216.
- The Magna Carta survived to become a "sacred text," but in practice did not limit the power of kings in the medieval period. Instead, it paved the way for later constitutional documents, including the Constitution of the United States.

### *Key Terms*

- **English Civil War:** A series of armed conflicts and



political machinations in the period 1642-1651 between Parliamentarians (Roundheads) and Royalists (Cavaliers) in the Kingdom of England, principally over the manner of its government.

- **clause 61:** Section of the Magna Carta that stated a committee of twenty-five barons could at any time meet and overrule the will of the king if he defied the provisions of the charter, and could seize his castles and possessions if it was considered necessary.

## Norman Kings after the Conquest

At the death of William the Conqueror in 1087, his lands were divided into two parts. His Norman lands went to his eldest son, Robert Curthose and his English lands to his second son, William Rufus. This presented a dilemma for those nobles who held land on both sides of the English Channel, who decided to unite England and Normandy once more under one ruler. The pursuit of this aim led them to revolt against William in favor of Robert in the Rebellion of 1088. As Robert failed to appear in England to rally his supporters, William won the support of the English lords with silver and promises of better government, and defeated the rebellion. William died while hunting in 1100.

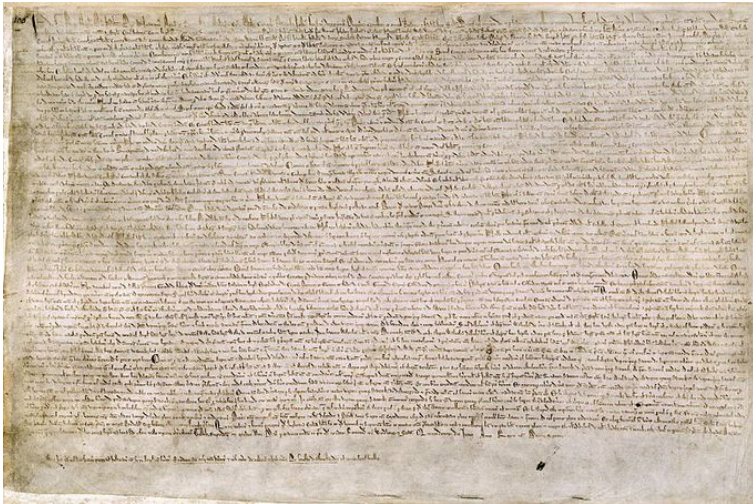
Despite Robert's rival claims to William's land, his younger brother Henry immediately seized power in England. Robert, who invaded in 1101, disputed Henry's control of England. This military campaign ended in a negotiated settlement that confirmed Henry as king. The peace was short lived, and Henry invaded the Duchy of Normandy in 1105 and 1106, finally defeating Robert at the Battle of Tinchebray.

Henry I of England named his daughter Matilda his heir, but when

he died in 1135 Matilda was far from England in Anjou or Maine, while her cousin Stephen was closer in Boulogne, giving him the advantage he needed to race to England and have himself crowned and anointed king of England. After Stephen's death in 1154, Henry II succeeded as the first Angevin king of England, so-called because he was also the Count of Anjou in northern France. He therefore added England to his extensive holdings in Normandy and Aquitaine. England became a key part of a loose-knit assemblage of lands spread across Western Europe, later termed the Angevin Empire. Henry was succeeded by his third son, Richard, whose reputation for martial prowess won him the epithet "Lionheart." When Richard died, his brother John—Henry's fifth and only surviving son—took the throne

## Magna Carta

Over the course of King John's reign (1199-1216), a combination of higher taxes, unsuccessful wars, and conflict with the pope had made him unpopular with his barons. In 1215 some of the most important barons engaged in open rebellion against their king. King John met with the leaders of the barons, along with their French and Scot allies, to seal the Great Charter (*Magna Carta* in Latin), which imposed legal limits on the king's personal powers. It was sealed under oath by King John at Runnymede, on the bank of the River Thames near Windsor, England, on June 15, 1215. It promised the protection of church rights, protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and limitations on feudal payments to the Crown, to be implemented through a council of twenty-five barons.



**Magna Carta:** One of four known surviving original copies of the Magna Carta of 1215, written in iron gall ink on parchment in medieval Latin, authenticated with the Great Seal of King John. This document is held at the British Library.

## Background

Although the kingdom had a robust administrative system, the nature of government under the Angevin monarchs was ill-defined and uncertain. John and his predecessors had ruled using the principle of *vis et voluntas*, or “force and will,” making executive and sometimes arbitrary decisions, often justified on the basis that a king was above the law. Many contemporary writers believed that monarchs should rule in accordance with the custom and the law, with the counsel of the leading members of the realm, but there was no model for what should happen if a king refused to do so.

John had lost most of his ancestral lands in France to King Philip II in 1204 and had struggled to regain them for many years, raising extensive taxes on the barons to accumulate money to fight a war that ultimately ended in expensive failure in 1214. Following the

defeat of his allies at the Battle of Bouvines, John had to sue for peace and pay compensation. John was already personally unpopular with a number of the barons, many of whom owed money to the Crown, and little trust existed between the two sides. A triumph would have strengthened his position, but within a few months after his unsuccessful return from France, John found that rebel barons in the north and east of England were organizing resistance to his rule.

John met the rebel leaders at Runnymede, a water-meadow on the south bank of the River Thames, on June 10, 1215. Here the rebels presented John with their draft demands for reform, the “Articles of the Barons.” Stephen Langton’s pragmatic efforts at mediation over the next ten days turned these incomplete demands into a charter capturing the proposed peace agreement; a few years later, this agreement was renamed *Magna Carta*, meaning “Great Charter.”

## Clause 61

The 1215 document contained a large section that is now called clause 61 (the clauses were not originally numbered). This section established a committee of twenty-five barons who could at any time meet and overrule the will of the king if he defied the provisions of the charter, and could seize his castles and possessions if it was considered necessary. It contained a commitment from John that he would “seek to obtain nothing from anyone, in our own person or through someone else, whereby any of these grants or liberties may be revoked or diminished.”

Clause 61 was a serious challenge to John’s authority as a ruling monarch. He renounced it as soon as the barons left London; Pope Innocent III also annulled the “shameful and demeaning agreement, forced upon the King by violence and fear.” The pope rejected any call for restraints on the king, saying it impaired John’s dignity. He saw the charter as an affront to the church’s authority over the king

and the “papal territories” of England and Ireland, and he released John from his oath to obey it. The rebels knew that King John could never be restrained by Magna Carta, and so they sought a new King.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online*

*here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=98>*

### **The Magna Carta – Failed Diplomacy That Changed the World:**

A National History Day group documentary. The theme that year (2011) was Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, and Consequences. As a result, you will notice a great emphasis on these ideas throughout the course of the video.

## The First Barons’ War

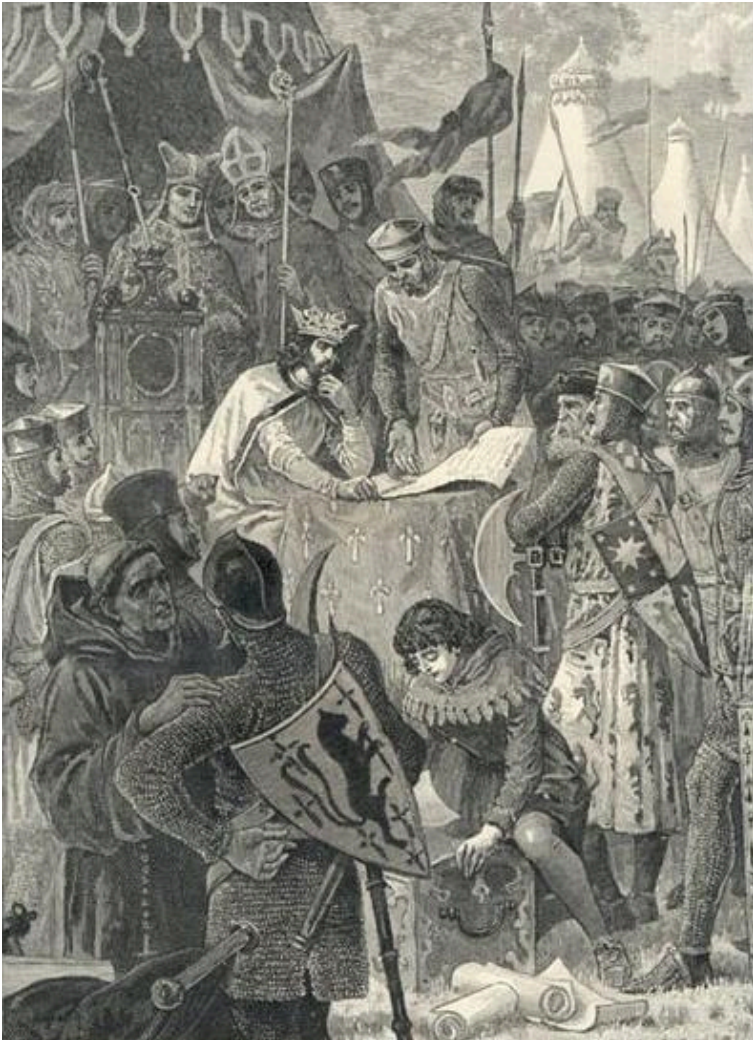
With the failure of the Magna Carta to achieve peace or restrain John, the barons reverted to the more traditional type of rebellion by trying to replace the monarch they disliked with an alternative. In a measure of some desperation, despite the tenuousness of his claim and despite the fact that he was French, they offered the crown of England to Prince Louis of France, who was proclaimed king in London in May 1216. John travelled around the country to oppose the rebel forces, directing, among other operations, a two-month siege of the rebel-held Rochester Castle. He died of dysentery contracted whilst on campaign in eastern England during late 1216; supporters of his son Henry III went on to achieve victory over Louis and the rebel barons the following year.



**John of England vs Louis VIII of France:** Created in the 14th Century; the image King John of England in battle with the Franks (left), Prince Louis VIII of France on the march (right).

## Legacy

As a means of preventing war, the Magna Carta was a failure, rejected by most of the barons, and was legally valid for no more than three months. In practice, the Magna Carta did not generally limit the power of kings in the medieval period, but by the time of the English Civil War it had become an important symbol for those who wished to show that the king was bound by the law. The charter is widely known throughout the English-speaking world as having influenced common and constitutional law, as well as political representation and the development of parliament. The text's association with ideals of democracy, limitation of power, equality, and freedom under law led to the rule of constitutional law in England and beyond. It influenced the early settlers in New England and inspired later constitutional documents, including the Constitution of the United States.



**John of England signs the Magna Carta:** John of England signs the Magna Carta. Image from Cassell's History of England, Century Edition, published c. 1902. This image depicts the stress under the king and all those in England struggling for power.

# The Hundred Years' War

The Hundred Years' War was a series of conflicts between the kingdoms of England and France for control of the French throne.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the three phases of conflict in the Hundred Years' War and Joan of Arc's role in it

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The root causes of the conflict can be found in the demographic, economic, and social crises of 14th-century Europe. The outbreak of war was motivated by a gradual rise in tension between the kings of France and England about Guyenne, Flanders, and Scotland. The Hundred Years' War is commonly divided into three phases separated by truces: the Edwardian Era War (1337–1360); the Caroline War (1369–1389); and the Lancastrian War (1415–1453).
- The Edwardian War was driven by Edward III's ambition to maintain sovereignty in Aquitaine and



assert his claim as the rightful king of France by unseating his rival, Philip VI of France.

- The Caroline War was named after Charles V of France, who resumed the war after the Treaty of Brétigny.
- The Lancastrian War was the third phase of the Anglo-French Hundred Years' War. It lasted from 1415, when Henry V of England invaded Normandy, to 1453, when the English failed to recover Bordeaux.
- Joan of Arc was a French peasant woman who had visions commanding her to drive out the invaders. She inspired the French troops, and they retook many French cities held by the English. Joan was burned at the stake and, 25 years after her death, declared a martyr.

### *Key Terms*

- **the Black Prince:** A name used to refer to Edward of Woodstock, used chiefly since the 16th century, and not during Edward's lifetime. The name is thought to stem from his black armor or brutal attitude in battle.
- **Treaty of Brétigny:** A treaty signed on May 25, 1360, between King Edward III of England and King John II (the Good) of France. It is seen as having marked the end of the first phase of the Hundred Years' War.
- **the Black Death:** One of the most devastating pandemics in human history, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 75 to 200 million people and peaking

in Europe in the years 1348–1350.

- **duchy:** A territory, fief, or domain ruled by a duke or duchess.
- **Joan of Arc:** Considered a heroine of France for her role during the Lancastrian phase of the Hundred Years' War; canonized as a Roman Catholic saint.

## Background

In the 13th century, after the Magna Carta failed to prevent the Baron Wars, King John and his son King Henry III's reigns were characterized by numerous rebellions and civil wars, often provoked by incompetence and mismanagement in government. The reign of Henry III's son Edward I (1272–1307), was rather more successful. Edward enacted numerous laws strengthening the powers of his government, and he summoned the first officially sanctioned Parliaments of England. He conquered Wales and attempted to use a succession dispute to gain control of the Kingdom of Scotland, though this developed into a costly and drawn-out military campaign.

After the disastrous reign of Edward II, which saw military losses and the Great Famine, Edward III reigned from 1327–1377, restoring royal authority and transforming the Kingdom of England into the most efficient military power in Europe. His reign saw vital developments in legislature and government—in particular the evolution of the English parliament—as well as the ravages of the Black Death. After defeating, but not subjugating, the Kingdom of Scotland, he declared himself rightful heir to the French throne in 1338, but his claim was denied. This started what would become known as the Hundred Years' War.

# The Hundred Years' War

The Hundred Years' War is the term used to describe a series of conflicts from 1337 to 1453, between the rulers of the Kingdom of England and the House of Valois for control of the French throne. These 116 years saw a great deal of battle on the continent, most of it over disputes as to which family line should rightfully be upon the throne of France. By the end of the Hundred Years' War, the population of France was about half what it had been before the era began.

The root causes of the conflict can be found in the demographic, economic, and social crises of 14th-century Europe. The outbreak of war was motivated by a gradual rise in tension between the kings of France and England about Guyenne, Flanders, and Scotland. The dynastic question, which arose due to an interruption of the direct male line of the Capetians, was the official pretext.

The dispute over Guyenne is even more important than the dynastic question in explaining the outbreak of the war. Guyenne posed a significant problem to the kings of France and England; Edward III was a vassal of Philip VI of France and was required to recognize the sovereignty of the king of France over Guyenne. In practical terms, a judgment in Guyenne might be subject to an appeal to the French royal court. The king of France had the power to revoke all legal decisions made by the king of England in Aquitaine, which was unacceptable to the English. Therefore, sovereignty over Guyenne was a latent conflict between the two monarchies for several generations.

The war owes its historical significance to multiple factors. Although primarily a dynastic conflict, the war gave impetus to ideas of French and English nationalism. By its end, feudal armies had been largely replaced by professional troops, and aristocratic dominance had yielded to a democratization of the manpower and weapons of armies. The wider introduction of weapons and tactics supplanted the feudal armies where heavy cavalry had dominated.

The war precipitated the creation of the first standing armies in Western Europe since the time of the Western Roman Empire, composed largely of commoners and thus helping to change their role in warfare. With respect to the belligerents, English political forces over time came to oppose the costly venture. The dissatisfaction of English nobles, resulting from the loss of their continental landholdings, became a factor leading to the civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses (1455–1487). In France, civil wars, deadly epidemics, famines, and bandit free-companies of mercenaries reduced the population drastically. Deprived of its continental possessions, England was left with the sense of being an island nation, which profoundly affected its outlook and development for more than 500 years.

Historians commonly divide the war into three phases separated by truces: 1) the Edwardian Era War (1337–1360); 2) the Caroline War (1369–1389); and 3) the Lancastrian War (1415–1453), which saw the slow decline of English fortunes after the appearance of Joan of Arc in 1429.

## The Edwardian Era War

The Edwardian War was the first series of hostilities of the Hundred Years' War. It was a series of punctuated, separate conflicts waged between the kingdoms of England and France and their various allies for control of the French throne. The Edwardian War was driven by Edward III's ambition to maintain sovereignty in Aquitaine and assert his claim as the rightful king of France by unseating his rival, Philip VI of France.

Edward had inherited the duchy of Aquitaine, and as duke of Aquitaine he was a vassal to Philip VI of France. He refused, however, to acknowledge his fealty to Philip, who responded by confiscating the duchy of Aquitaine in 1337; this precipitated war, and soon, in 1340, Edward declared himself king of France. Edward III and

his son the Black Prince led their armies on a largely successful campaign across France. Hostilities were paused in the mid-1350s for the deprivations of the Black Death. Then war continued, and the English were victorious at the Battle of Poitiers (1356), where the French king, John II, was captured and held for ransom. The Truce of Bordeaux was signed in 1357 and was followed by two treaties in London in 1358 and 1359.

After the treaties of London failed, Edward launched the Rheims campaign. Though largely unsuccessful, this campaign led to the Treaty of Brétigny (signed 1360), which settled certain lands in France on Edward for renouncing his claim to the French throne. This peace lasted nine years, until a second phase of hostilities known as the Caroline War began.

## The Caroline War

The Caroline War was named after Charles V of France, who resumed the war after the Treaty of Brétigny. In May 1369, the Black Prince, son of Edward III of England, refused an illegal summons from the French king demanding he come to Paris, and Charles responded by declaring war. He immediately set out to reverse the territorial losses imposed at Brétigny, but was largely successful. His successor, Charles VI, made peace with Richard II, son of the Black Prince, in 1389. This truce was extended many times until the war was resumed in 1415.

## The Lancastrian War

The Lancastrian War was the third phase of the Anglo-French Hundred Years' War. It lasted from 1415, when Henry V of England invaded Normandy, to 1453, when the English failed to recover

Bordeaux. It followed a long period of peace from 1389, at end of the Caroline War. This phase was named after the House of Lancaster, the ruling house of the Kingdom of England, to which Henry V belonged. After the invasion of 1419, Henry V and, after his death, his brother John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, brought the English to the height of their power in France, with an English king crowned in Paris.

However, by that time, with charismatic leaders such as Joan of Arc, strong French counterattacks had started to win back all English continental territories, except the Pale of Calais, which was finally captured in 1558. Charles VII of France was crowned in Notre-Dame de Reims in 1429. The Battle of Castillon (1453) was the last battle of the Hundred Years' War, but France and England remained formally at war until the Treaty of Picquigny in 1475. English, and later British, monarchs would continue to claim the French throne until 1800.



*Attacks on England by the Franco-Castilian Navy, 1374-1380: The Franco-Castilian Navy, led by Admirals de Vienne and Tovar, managed to raid the English coasts for the first time since the beginning of the Hundred Years' War.*

## Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc is considered a heroine of France for her role during the Lancastrian phase of the Hundred Years' War, and was canonized as a Roman Catholic saint. Joan of Arc was born to Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Romée, a peasant family, at Domrémy, in northeast France. Joan said she received visions of the Archangel Michael, Saint Margaret, and Saint Catherine of Alexandria instructing her to support Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years' War. The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Joan to the siege of Orléans as part of a relief mission. She gained prominence after the siege was lifted only nine days later. Several additional swift victories led to Charles VII's coronation at Reims. This long-awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory.

On May 23, 1430, Joan was captured at Compiègne by the English-allied Burgundian faction. She was later handed over to the English and then put on trial by the pro-English Bishop of Beauvais Pierre Cauchon on a variety of charges. She was convicted on May 30, 1431, and burned at the stake when she was about nineteen years old.



**Joan of Arc:** Painting, c. 1485. An artist's interpretation, since the only known direct portrait has not survived.



Twenty-five years after her execution, an inquisitorial court authorized by Pope Callixtus III examined the trial, pronounced her innocent, and declared her a martyr. Joan of Arc was beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920. She is one of the nine secondary patron saints of France, along with St. Denis, St. Martin of Tours, St. Louis, St. Michael, St. Remi, St. Petronilla, St. Radegund, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=98>*

**Joan of Arc biography:** Joan of Arc (1412–1431) was born a peasant and became a heroine of France.

# 71. Reading: Medieval Life

# Feudalism

Feudalism was a set of legal and military customs in medieval Europe that was determined by the ownership of land.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Recall the structure of the feudal state and the responsibilities and obligations of each level of society

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Feudalism flourished in Europe between the 9th and 15th centuries.
- Feudalism in England determined the structure of society around relationships derived from the holding and leasing of land, or *fiefs*.
- In England, the feudal pyramid was made up of the king at the top with the nobles, knights, and vassals below him.
- Before a lord could grant land to a tenant he would have to make him a vassal at a formal ceremony. This ceremony bound the lord and vassal in a contract.

- While modern writers such as Marx point out the negative qualities of feudalism, such as the exploitation and lack of social mobility for the peasants, the French historian Marc Bloch contends that peasants were part of the feudal relationship; while the vassals performed military service in exchange for the fief, the peasants performed physical labour in return for protection, thereby gaining some benefit despite their limited freedom.
- The 11th century in France saw what has been called by historians a “feudal revolution” or “mutation” and a “fragmentation of powers” that increased localized power and autonomy.

### *Key Terms*

- **mesne tenant:** A lord in the feudal system who had vassals who held land from him, but who was himself the vassal of a higher lord.
- **vassals:** Persons who entered into a mutual obligation to a lord or monarch in the context of the feudal system in medieval Europe.
- **fiefs:** Heritable property or rights granted by an overlord to a vassal.
- **homage:** In the Middle Ages this was the ceremony in which a feudal tenant or vassal pledged reverence and submission to his feudal lord, receiving in exchange the symbolic title to his new position.
- **fealty:** An oath, from the Latin fidelitas (faithfulness); a pledge of allegiance of one person to

another.

## Overview

Feudalism was a set of legal and military customs in medieval Europe that flourished between the 9th and 15th centuries. It can be broadly defined as a system for structuring society around relationships derived from the holding of land, known as a fiefdom or fief, in exchange for service or labour.

The classic version of feudalism describes a set of reciprocal legal and military obligations among the warrior nobility, revolving around the three key concepts of lords, vassals, and fiefs. A lord was in broad terms a noble who held land, a vassal was a person who was granted possession of the land by the lord, and a fief was what the land was known as. In exchange for the use of the fief and the protection of the lord, the vassal would provide some sort of service to the lord. There were many varieties of feudal land tenure, consisting of military and non-military service. The obligations and corresponding rights between lord and vassal concerning the fief formed the basis of the feudal relationship.

Feudalism, in its various forms, usually emerged as a result of the decentralization of an empire, especially in the Carolingian empires, which lacked the bureaucratic infrastructure necessary to support cavalry without the ability to allocate land to these mounted troops. Mounted soldiers began to secure a system of hereditary rule over their allocated land, and their power over the territory came to encompass the social, political, judicial, and economic spheres.

Many societies in the Middle Ages were characterized by feudal organizations, including England, which was the most structured feudal society, France, Italy, Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, and

Portugal. Each of these territories developed feudalism in unique ways, and the way we understand feudalism as a unified concept today is in large part due to critiques after its dissolution. Karl Marx theorized feudalism as a pre-capitalist society, characterized by the power of the ruling class (the aristocracy) in their control of arable land, leading to a class society based upon the exploitation of the peasants who farm these lands, typically under serfdom and principally by means of labour, produce, and money rents.

While modern writers such as Marx point out the negative qualities of feudalism, the French historian Marc Bloch contends that peasants were an integral part of the feudal relationship: while the vassals performed military service in exchange for the fief, the peasants performed physical labour in return for protection, thereby gaining some benefit despite their limited freedom. Feudalism was thus a complex social and economic system defined by inherited ranks, each of which possessed inherent social and economic privileges and obligations. Feudalism allowed societies in the Middle Ages to retain a relatively stable political structure even as the centralized power of empires and kingdoms began to dissolve.

## Structure of the Feudal State in England

Feudalism in 12th-century England was among the better structured and established systems in Europe at the time. The king was the absolute “owner” of land in the feudal system, and all nobles, knights, and other tenants, termed vassals, merely “held” land from the king, who was thus at the top of the feudal pyramid.

Below the king in the feudal pyramid was a tenant-in-chief (generally in the form of a baron or knight), who was a vassal of the king. Holding from the tenant-in-chief was a mesne tenant—generally a knight or baron who was sometimes a tenant-in-chief

in their capacity as holder of other fiefs. Below the mesne tenant, further mesne tenants could hold from each other in series.

## Vassalage

Before a lord could grant land (a fief) to someone, he had to make that person a vassal. This was done at a formal and symbolic ceremony called a commendation ceremony, which was composed of the two-part act of homage and oath of fealty. During homage, the lord and vassal entered into a contract in which the vassal promised to fight for the lord at his command, while the lord agreed to protect the vassal from external forces.



**Roland pledges his fealty to Charlemagne:** Roland (right) receives the sword, Durandal, from the hands of Charlemagne (left). From a manuscript of a *chanson de geste*, c. 14th Century.

Once the commendation ceremony was complete, the lord and vassal were in a feudal relationship with agreed obligations to one another. The vassal's principal obligation to the lord was "aid," or military service. Using whatever equipment the vassal could obtain by virtue of the revenues from the fief, he was responsible for answering calls to military service on behalf of the lord. This



security of military help was the primary reason the lord entered into the feudal relationship. In addition, the vassal could have other obligations to his lord, such as attendance at his court, whether manorial or baronial, or at the king's court.

The vassal's obligations could also involve providing "counsel," so that if the lord faced a major decision he would summon all his vassals and hold a council. At the level of the manor this might be a fairly mundane matter of agricultural policy, but could also include sentencing by the lord for criminal offenses, including capital punishment in some cases. In the king's feudal court, such deliberation could include the question of declaring war. These are only examples; depending on the period of time and location in Europe, feudal customs and practices varied.

## Feudalism in France

In its origin, the feudal grant of land had been seen in terms of a personal bond between lord and vassal, but with time and the transformation of fiefs into hereditary holdings, the nature of the system came to be seen as a form of "politics of land." The 11th century in France saw what has been called by historians a "feudal revolution" or "mutation" and a "fragmentation of powers" that was unlike the development of feudalism in England, Italy, or Germany in the same period or later. In France, counties and duchies began to break down into smaller holdings as castellans and lesser seigneurs took control of local lands, and (as comital families had done before them) lesser lords usurped/privatized a wide range of prerogatives and rights of the state—most importantly the highly profitable rights of justice, but also travel dues, market dues, fees for using woodlands, obligations to use the lord's mill, etc. Power in this period became more personal and decentralized.

# The Manor System

The manor system was an element of feudal society in the Middle Ages characterized by the legal and economic power of the lord of a manor.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Illustrate the hierarchy of the manor system by describing the roles of lords, villeins, and serfs

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The lord of a manor was supported by his land holdings and contributions from the peasant population. Serfs who occupied land belonging to the lord were required to work the land, and in return received certain entitlements.
- Serfdom was the status of peasants in the manor system, and villeins were the most common type of serf in the Middle Ages.
- Villeins rented small homes with or without land; as part of their contract with the lord they were

expected to spend some time working the land.

- Villeins could not move away without the lord's consent and the acceptance of the new lord whose manor they were to move to. Because of the protection villeins received from the lord's manor, it was generally not favorable to move away unless the landlord proved to be especially tyrannical.
- The manor system was made up of three types of land: demesne, dependent, and free peasant land.
- Manorial structures could be found throughout medieval Western and Eastern Europe: in Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Baltic nations, Holland, Prussia, England, France, and the Germanic kingdoms.

### *Key Terms*

- **villein:** The most common type of serf in the Middle Ages. They had more rights and a higher status than the lowest serf, but existed under a number of legal restrictions that differentiated them from freemen.
- **demesne:** All the land, not necessarily all physically connected to the manor house, that was retained by the lord of a manor for his own use and support, under his own management.
- **serfs:** Peasants under feudalism, specifically relating to manorialism. It was a condition of bondage that developed primarily during the High Middle Ages in Europe.
- **freemen:** Men who were not serfs in the feudal

system.

Manorialism was an essential element of feudal society and was the organizing principle of rural economy that originated in the villa system of the Late Roman Empire. Manorialism was widely practiced in medieval Western Europe and parts of central Europe, and was slowly replaced by the advent of a money-based market economy and new forms of agrarian contract.

Manorialism was characterized by the vesting of legal and economic power in the lord of a manor. The lord was supported economically from his own direct landholding in a manor (sometimes called a *fief*), and from the obligatory contributions of the peasant population who fell under the jurisdiction of the lord and his court. These obligations could be payable in several ways: in labor, in kind, or, on rare occasions, in coin. Manorial structures could be found throughout medieval Western and Eastern Europe: in Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Baltic nations, Holland, Prussia, England, France, and the Germanic kingdoms.

The main reason for the development of the system was perhaps also its greatest strength: the stabilization of society during the destruction of Roman imperial order. With a declining birthrate and population, labor was the key factor of production. Successive administrations tried to stabilize the imperial economy by freezing the social structure into place: sons were to succeed their fathers in their trade, councilors were forbidden to resign, and coloni, the cultivators of land, were not to move from the land they were attached to. The workers of the land were on their way to becoming serfs. As the Germanic kingdoms succeeded Roman authority in the West in the 5th century, Roman landlords were often simply replaced by Gothic or Germanic ones, with little change to the underlying situation or displacement of populations. Thus the system of manorialism became ingrained into medieval societies.

# The Manor System

Manors each consisted of three classes of land:

- Demesne, the part directly controlled by the lord and used for the benefit of his household and dependents;
- Dependent (serf or villein) holdings carrying the obligation that the peasant household supply the lord with specified labor services or a part of its output; and
- Free peasant land, without such obligation but otherwise subject to manorial jurisdiction and custom, and owing money rent fixed at the time of the lease.

Additional sources of income for the lord included charges for use of his mill, bakery, or wine-press, or for the right to hunt or to let pigs feed in his woodland, as well as court revenues and single payments on each change of tenant. On the other side of the account, manorial administration involved significant expenses, perhaps a reason why smaller manors tended to rely less on villein tenure.

## Serfdom

Serfdom was the status of peasants under feudalism, specifically relating to manorialism. It was a condition of bondage that developed primarily during the Middle Ages in Europe.

Serfs who occupied a plot of land were required to work for the lord of the manor who owned that land, and in return were entitled to protection, justice, and the right to exploit certain fields within the manor to maintain their own subsistence. Serfs were often required to work on not only the lord's fields, but also his mines, forests, and roads. The manor formed the basic unit of feudal society, and the lord of a manor and his serfs were bound legally,

economically, and socially. Serfs formed the lowest class of feudal society.



**A serf digging the land, c. 1170 CE:** “Digging,” detail from the Hunterian Psalter, Glasgow University Library MS Hunter.

Many of the negative components of manorialism, and feudalism in general, revolve around the bondage of the serf, his lack of social mobility, and his low position on the social hierarchy. However, a serf had some freedoms within his constraints. Though the common wisdom is that a serf owned “only his belly”—even his clothes were the property, in law, of his lord—he might still accumulate personal property and wealth, and some serfs became wealthier than their free neighbors, although this happened rarely. A well-to-do serf might even be able to buy his freedom. A serf could grow what crops he saw fit on his lands, although a serf’s taxes often had to be paid in wheat. The surplus crops he would sell at market.

The landlord could not dispossess his serfs without legal cause, was supposed to protect them from the depredations of robbers or other lords, and was expected to support them by charity in times of famine. Many such rights were enforceable by the serf in the manorial court.

## Villeins

A villein (or *villain*) was the most common type of serf in the Middle Ages. Villeins had more rights and a higher status than the lowest serf, but existed under a number of legal restrictions that differentiated them from freemen. Villeins generally rented small homes with or without land. As part of the contract with the landlord, the lord of the manor, they were expected to spend some of their time working on the lord’s fields. Contrary to popular belief, the requirement was not often greatly onerous, and was often only seasonal, as was the duty to help at harvest-time, for example. The rest of villeins’ time was spent farming their own land for their own profit.

Like other types of serfs, villeins were required to provide other services, possibly in addition to paying rent of money or produce. Villeins were tied to the land and could not move away without their



lord's consent and the acceptance of the lord to whose manor they proposed to migrate to. Villeins were generally able to hold their own property, unlike slaves.

Villeinage was not a purely uni-directional exploitative relationship. In the Middle Ages, land within a lord's manor provided sustenance and survival, and being a villein guaranteed access to land and kept crops secure from theft by marauding robbers. Landlords, even where legally entitled to do so, rarely evicted villeins, because of the value of their labour. Villeinage was preferable to being a vagabond, a slave, or an un-landed laborer.

In many medieval countries, a villein could gain freedom by escaping from a manor to a city or borough and living there for more than a year, but this action involved the loss of land rights and agricultural livelihood, a prohibitive price unless the landlord was especially tyrannical or conditions in the village were unusually difficult.

image

**Plowing a French field (French ducal manor in March Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, c.1410):** In the foreground, a farmer plowing a field with a plow pulled by two oxen; man the leader with a long pole. Winemakers prune the vine in a pen and till the soil with a hoe to aerate the soil. On the right, a man leans on a bag, presumably to draw seeds that he will then sow. Finally, in the background, a shepherd takes the dog that keeps his flock. In the background is the castle of Lusignan (Poitou), property of the Duke of Berry. Seen on the right of the picture, above the tower Poitiers, is a winged dragon representing the fairy Melusine.

## Trade and Commerce

Trade started to expand during the late-13th and early-14th centuries as forms of partnerships and financing began to appear.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

List the factors that led to a change in commerce and trade in the Late Middle Ages

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Explorers opened up new trade routes to the south of Africa, India, and America due to the dominant position of the Ottoman Empire impeding trade routes to the west.
- The Commercial Revolution began in the late-13th and early-14th centuries with the rise of insurance issuing, forms of credit, and new forms of accounting allowing for better financial oversight and accuracy.
- In England, the crises caused by the Great Famine and the Black Death from 1290–1348, as well as subsequent epidemics, produced many challenges for the economy, culminating in the Peasant 's Revolt.
- The English agricultural economy remained depressed throughout the 15th century, with growth coming from the greatly increased English cloth trade and manufacturing.
- Fairs grew in popularity, reaching their heyday in

the 13th century, as the international wool trade increased. Despite an overall decline after the 14th century, the great fairs continued to play an important role in exchanging money and regional commerce.

- In cities linked to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, the Hanseatic League developed as a trade monopoly.

### *Key Terms*

- **guild:** Association of artisans or merchants who controlled the practice of their craft in a particular town. They were organized in a manner similar to something between a professional association and a trade union.
- **usury:** The practice of making unethical or immoral monetary loans intended to unfairly enrich the lender.
- **bullion:** Gold bars, silver bars, and other precious metals bars or ingots.
- **Ottoman Empire:** Empire founded by Oghuz Turks under Osman Bey in northwestern Anatolia in 1299 and dissolved in 1923 in the aftermath of World War I, forming the new state of Turkey.

During the Late Middle Ages, the increasingly dominant position of the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean presented an impediment to trade for the Christian nations of the west, who started looking for alternatives. Portuguese and Spanish explorers

found new trade routes south of Africa to India, and across the Atlantic Ocean to America.

## Start of the Commercial Revolution

In the late-13th and early-14th centuries, a process took place—primarily in Italy but partly also in the Holy Roman Empire—that historians have termed a “commercial revolution.” Among the innovations of the period were new forms of partnership and the issuing of insurance, both of which contributed to reducing the risk of commercial ventures; the bill of exchange and other forms of credit that circumvented the canonical laws for gentiles against usury and eliminated the dangers of carrying bullion; and new forms of accounting, in particular double-entry bookkeeping, which allowed for better oversight and accuracy.

## Guilds

With the financial expansion, trading rights were more jealously guarded by the commercial elite. Towns saw the growing power of guilds that arose in the 14th century as craftsmen uniting to protect their common interest. The appearance of the European guilds was tied to the emergent money economy and to urbanization. Before this time it was not possible to run a money-driven organization, as commodity money was the normal way of doing business.

In medieval cities, craftsmen started to form associations based on their trades. Confraternities of textile workers, masons, carpenters, carvers, and glass workers, all controlled secrets of traditionally imparted technology—the “arts” or “mysteries” of their crafts. Usually the founders were free independent master craftsmen who hired apprentices. These guilds were organized in

a manner similar to something between a professional association, a trade union, a cartel, and a secret society. They often depended on grants of letters patented by a monarch or other authority to enforce the flow of trade to their self-employed members, and to retain ownership of tools and the supply of materials. A lasting legacy of traditional guilds are the guildhalls constructed and used as meeting places.

Where guilds were in control, they shaped labor, production, and trade; they had strong controls over instructional capital, and the modern concepts of a lifetime progression of apprentice to craftsman, and then from journeyman eventually to widely recognized master and grandmaster, began to emerge. European guilds imposed long standardized periods of apprenticeship and made it difficult for those lacking the capital to set up for themselves or without the approval of their peers to gain access to materials or knowledge, or to sell into certain markets, an area that equally dominated the guilds' concerns. These are defining characteristics of mercantilism in economics, which dominated most European thinking about political economy until the rise of classical economics.

## Hanseatic League

In cities linked to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, the Hanseatic League developed as a trade monopoly. This facilitated the growth of trade among cities in close proximity to these two seas. Long-distance trade in the Baltic intensified as the major trading towns came together in the Hanseatic League under the leadership of Lübeck.

The Hanseatic League was a business alliance of trading cities and their guilds that dominated trade along the coast of Northern Europe and flourished from 1200–1500, and continued with lesser importance after that. The chief cities were Cologne on the Rhine

River, Hamburg and Bremen on the North Sea, and Lübeck on the Baltic Sea. The Hanseatic cities each had their own legal system and a degree of political autonomy.

The league was founded for the purpose of joining forces for promoting mercantile interests, defensive strength, and political influence. By the 14th century, the Hanseatic League held a near-monopoly on trade in the Baltic, especially with Novgorod and Scandinavia.

## English Economy

The crises caused by the Great Famine and the Black Death between 1290 and 1348, as well as subsequent epidemics, produced many challenges for the English economy. The Peasant's Revolt of 1381 had various causes, including the socio-economic and political tensions generated by the Black Death in the 1340s, the high taxes resulting from the conflict with France during the Hundred Years' War, and instability within the local leadership of London.

Although the revolt was suppressed, it undermined many of the vestiges of the feudal economic order and the countryside became dominated by estates organized as farms, frequently owned or rented by the new economic class of the gentry. The English agricultural economy remained depressed throughout the 15th century, with growth coming from the greatly increased English cloth trade and manufacturing.

## Fairs

From the 12th century onwards, many English towns acquired a charter from the Crown allowing them to hold an annual fair, usually serving a regional or local customer base and lasting for two or

three days. Fairs grew in popularity, reaching their heyday in the 13th century, as the international wool trade increased. The fairs allowed English wool producers and ports on the east coast to engage with visiting foreign merchants, circumnavigating those English merchants in London keen to make a profit as middlemen. At the same time, wealthy magnate consumers in England began to use the new fairs as a way to buy goods like spices, wax, preserved fish, and foreign cloth in bulk from the international merchants at the fairs, again bypassing the usual London merchants.



**Bridgnorth marketplace:** The market place at Bridgnorth, one of many medieval English towns to be granted the right to hold fairs, in this case annually on the feast of the Translation of St. Leonard. Photo taken by Pam Brophy.



Towards the end of the 14th century, the position of fairs started to decline. The larger merchants, particularly in London, had begun to establish direct links with the larger landowners such as the nobility and the church; rather than the landowner buying from a chartered fair, they would buy directly from the merchant. Nonetheless, the great fairs remained important well into the 15th century, as illustrated by their role in exchanging money, regional commerce, and providing choice for individual consumers.

## Daily Medieval Life

During the High Middle Ages, the population of Europe more than doubled, but daily life remained harsh, with risk of disease and illness.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Compare and contrast the lives of different groups of the population during the Middle Ages

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- During the High Middle Ages, the population of Europe grew from 35 to 80 million between 1000 and 1347, probably due to improved agricultural techniques and a more mild climate.
- 90% of the European population remained rural peasants gathered into small communities of manors or villages.
- Towns grew up around castles and were often fortified by walls in response to disorder and raids.
- Daily life for peasants consisted of working the land. Life was harsh, with a limited diet and little comfort.
- Women were subordinate to men, in both the peasant and noble classes, and were expected to ensure the smooth running of the household.
- Children had a 50% survival rate beyond age one, and began to contribute to family life around age twelve.

### *Key Terms*

- **kinsman:** A male relative.
- **husbandry:** Farming or agriculture.
- **agrarian:** Based around producing and maintaining

crops and farmland.

- **sickle:** Hand-held agricultural tool with a variously curved blade typically used for harvesting grain crops or cutting succulent forage (either freshly cut or dried as hay) used chiefly to feed livestock.

The High Middle Ages was a period of tremendous expansion of population. The estimated population of Europe grew from 35 to 80 million between 1000 and 1347, but the exact causes remain unclear; improved agricultural techniques, the decline of slaveholding, a warmer climate, and the lack of invasion have all been suggested. As much as 90% of the European population remained rural peasants. Many were no longer settled in isolated farms but had gathered into small communities, usually known as manors or villages. These peasants were often subject to noble overlords and owed them rents and other services, in a system known as manorialism. There remained a few free peasants throughout this period and beyond, with more of them in the regions of southern Europe than in the north. The practice of assarting, or bringing new lands into production by offering incentives to the peasants who settled them, also contributed to the expansion of population.

## Development of Towns

Castles began to be constructed in the 9th and 10th centuries in response to the disorder of the time, and provided protection from invaders and rival lords. They were initially built of wood, then of stone. Once castles were built, towns built up around them.

A major factor in the development of towns included Viking invasions during the early Middle Ages, which led to villages

erecting walls and fortifying their positions. Following this, great medieval walled cities were constructed with homes, shops, and churches contained within the walls. York, England, which prospered during much of the later medieval era, is famed for its medieval walls and bars (gates), and has the most extensive medieval city walls remaining in England today.

The practice of sending children away to act as servants was more common in towns than in the countryside. The inhabitants of towns largely made their livelihoods as merchants or artisans, and this activity was strictly controlled by guilds. The members of these guilds would employ young people—primarily boys—as apprentices, to learn the craft and later take position as guild members themselves. These apprentices made up part of the household, or “family,” as much as the children of the master.



**York city and walls:** View of the city looking northeast from the city wall. The spires of York Minster are visible in the background.

## Peasant Life

Medieval villages consisted mostly of peasant farmers, with the structure comprised of houses, barns, sheds, and animal pens clustered around the center of the village. Beyond this, the village was surrounded by plowed fields and pastures.

For peasants, daily medieval life revolved around an agrarian calendar, with the majority of time spent working the land and trying to grow enough food to survive another year. Church feasts marked sowing and reaping days and occasions when peasant and lord could rest from their labors.

Peasants that lived on a manor by the castle were assigned strips of land to plant and harvest. They typically planted rye, oats, peas, and barley, and harvested crops with a scythe, sickle, or reaper. Each peasant family had its own strips of land; however, the peasants worked cooperatively on tasks such as plowing and haying. They were also expected to build roads, clear forests, and work on other tasks as determined by the lord.

The houses of medieval peasants were of poor quality compared to modern houses. The floor was normally earthen, and there was very little ventilation and few sources of light in the form of windows. In addition to the human inhabitants, a number of livestock animals would also reside in the house. Towards the end of the medieval period, however, conditions generally improved. Peasant houses became larger in size, and it became more common to have two rooms, and even a second floor.

Comfort was not always found even in the rich houses. Heating was always a problem with stone floors, ceilings, and walls. Not much light came in from small windows, and oil- and fat-based candles often produced a pungent aroma. Furniture consisted of wooden benches, long tables, cupboards, and pantries. Linen, when affordable, could be glued or nailed to benches to provide some comfort. Beds, though made of the softest materials, were often full of bedbugs, lice, and other biting insects.

Peasants usually ate warm porridges made of wheat, oats, and barley. Broths, stews, vegetables, and bread were also part of a peasant's diet. Peasants rarely ate meat, and when they did, it was their own animals that were saved for the winter. Peasants drank wine and ale, never water.

Even though peasant households were significantly smaller than aristocratic ones, the wealthiest peasants would also employ servants. Service was a natural part of the cycle of life, and it was common for young people to spend some years away from home in the service of another household. This way they would learn the skills needed later in life, and at the same time earn a wage. This was particularly useful for girls, who could put the earnings towards their dowries.

## Nobility

Nobles, both the titled nobility and simple knights, exploited the manors and the peasants, although they did not own land outright but were granted rights to the income from a manor or other lands by an overlord through the system of feudalism. During the 11th and 12th centuries, these lands, or fiefs, came to be considered hereditary, and in most areas they were no longer divisible between all the heirs as had been the case in the early medieval period. Instead, most fiefs and lands went to the eldest son. The dominance of the nobility was built upon its control of the land, its military service as heavy cavalry, its control of castles, and various immunities from taxes or other impositions.

Nobles were stratified; kings and the highest-ranking nobility controlled large numbers of commoners and large tracts of land, as well as other nobles. Beneath them, lesser nobles had authority over smaller areas of land and fewer people. Knights were the lowest level of nobility; they controlled but did not own land, and had to serve other nobles.

The court of a monarch, or at some periods an important nobleman, was the extended household and all those who regularly attended on the ruler or central figure. These courtiers included the monarch or noble's camarilla and retinue, the household, nobility, those with court appointments, and bodyguards, and may also have included emissaries from other kingdoms or visitors to the court. Foreign princes and foreign nobility in exile could also seek refuge at a court.

Etiquette and hierarchy flourished in highly structured court settings. Most courts featured a strict order of precedence, often involving royal and noble ranks, orders of chivalry, and nobility. Some courts even featured court uniforms. One of the major markers of a court was ceremony. Most monarchical courts included ceremonies concerning the investiture or coronation of the monarch and audiences with the monarch. Some courts had ceremonies around the waking and the sleeping of the monarch, called a *levée*.

Court officials or office-bearers (one type of courtier) derived their positions and retained their titles from their original duties within the courtly household. With time, such duties often became archaic. However, titles survived involving the ghosts of arcane duties. These styles generally dated back to the days when a noble household had practical and mundane concerns as well as high politics and culture. These positions include butler, confessor, falconer, royal fool, gentleman usher, master of the hunt, page, and secretary. Elaborate noble households included many roles and responsibilities, held by these various courtiers, and these tasks characterized their daily lives.

Daily life of nobility also included playing games, including chess, which echoed the hierarchy of the nobles, and playing music, such as the music of the troubadours and trouvères. This involved a vernacular tradition of monophonic secular song, probably accompanied by instruments, sung by professional, occasionally itinerant, musicians who were skilled poets as well as singers and instrumentalists.

## Women in the Middle Ages

Women in the Middle Ages were officially required to be subordinate to some male, whether their father, husband, or other kinsman. Widows, who were often allowed some control over their own lives, were still restricted legally. Three main activities performed by peasant men and women were planting food, keeping livestock, and making textiles, as depicted in Psalters from southern Germany and England. Women of different classes performed different activities. Rich urban women could be merchants like their husbands or even became money lenders, and middle-class women worked in the textile, inn-keeping, shop-keeping, and brewing industries. Townswomen, like peasant women, were responsible for the household and could also engage in trade. Poorer women often peddled and huckstered food and other merchandise in the market places or worked in richer households as domestic servants, day laborers, or laundresses.

There is evidence that women performed not only housekeeping responsibilities like cooking and cleaning, but even other household activities like grinding, brewing, butchering, and spinning produced items like flour, ale, meat, cheese, and textiles for direct consumption and for sale. An anonymous 15th-century English ballad described activities performed by English peasant women, like housekeeping, making foodstuffs and textiles, and childcare.





**Peasant household:** An image of a peasant household, including a woman preparing cheese.

Noblewomen were responsible for running a household and could occasionally be expected to handle estates in the absence of male relatives, but they were usually restricted from participation in military or government affairs. The only role open to women in the church was that of a nun, as they were unable to become priests.

## Children

For most children growing up in medieval England, the first year of life was one of the most dangerous, with as many as 50% of children succumbing to fatal illness during that year. Moreover, 20% of women died in childbirth. During the first year of life children were cared for and nursed, either by parents if the family belonged to the peasant class, or perhaps by a wet nurse if the family belonged to a noble class.

By age twelve, a child began to take on a more serious role in family duties. Although according to canon law girls could marry at the age of twelve, this was relatively uncommon unless a child was an heiress or belonged to a family of noble birth. Peasant children at this age stayed at home and continued to learn and develop domestic skills and husbandry. Urban children moved out of their homes and into the homes of their employer or master (depending on their future roles as servants or apprentices). Noble boys learned skills in arms, and noble girls learned basic domestic skills. The end of childhood and entrance into adolescence was marked by leaving home and moving to the house of the employer or master, entering a university, or entering church service.

## Intellectual Life

Developments in philosophy and theology and the formation of universities from the 11th century led to increased intellectual activity.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe intellectual life in the Middle Ages

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Increased contact with Byzantium and with the Islamic world in Muslim-dominated Spain and Sicily, the Crusades, and the Reconquista allowed Europeans to seek and translate the works of Hellenic and Islamic philosophers and scientists, especially Aristotle.
- The groundwork for the rebirth of learning was also laid by the process of political consolidation and centralization of the monarchies of Europe, especially of Charlemagne and Otto I.
- Cathedral schools and universities started to develop, with young men proceeding to university to study the *trivium* and *quadrivium*.
- Scholasticism was a fusing of philosophy and theology by 12th- and 13th-century scholars that tried to employ a systematic approach to truth and reason.
- Royal and noble courts saw the development of

poems and songs spread by traveling minstrels.

- Legal studies advanced in Western Europe.
- Algebra was invented, allowing more developed mathematics, and astronomy and medicine advanced.

### *Key Terms*

- **Ptolemy:** Greco-Roman writer of Alexandria (c. CE 90–c. 168 CE) known as a mathematician, astronomer, geographer, astrologer, and poet. Ptolemy was the author of several scientific treatises, three of which were of continuing importance to later Islamic and European science.
- **quadrivium:** The four subjects, or arts, taught after the trivium. It consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy and was considered preparatory work for the serious study of philosophy and theology.
- **trivium:** In medieval universities, the trivium comprised the three subjects that were taught first: grammar, logic, and rhetoric.
- **Thomas Aquinas:** Italian Dominican friar and priest (c. 1225 CE–1274 CE) and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism.
- **Corpus Juris Civilis:** The modern name for a collection of fundamental works in jurisprudence, issued from 529–534 CE by order of Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I.
- **Aristotle:** Greek philosopher and scientist born in

Stagirius, northern Greece, in 384 BCE. His writings covered many subjects and constitute the first comprehensive system of Western philosophy.

- **scholasticism:** Method of critical thought that dominated teaching by the academics (scholastics, or schoolmen) of medieval universities in Europe from about 1100–1700 CE.

During the 11th century, developments in philosophy and theology led to increased intellectual activity, sometimes called the renaissance of 12th century. The intellectual problems discussed throughout this period were the relation of faith to reason, the existence and simplicity of God, the purpose of theology and metaphysics, and the issues of knowledge, of universals, and of individuation. Philosophical discourse was stimulated by the rediscovery of Aristotle—more than 3,000 pages of his works would eventually be translated—and his emphasis on empiricism and rationalism. Scholars such as Peter Abelard (d. 1142) and Peter Lombard (d. 1164) introduced Aristotelian logic into theology.

## Historical Conditions

The groundwork for the rebirth of learning was also laid by the process of political consolidation and centralization of the monarchies of Europe. This process of centralization began with Charlemagne, King of the Franks (768–814) and later Holy Roman Emperor (800–814). Charlemagne's inclination towards education, which led to the creation of many new churches and schools where students were required to learn Latin and Greek, has been called the "Carolingian Renaissance." A second "renaissance" occurred

during the reign of Otto I, King of the Saxons from 936–973 and Holy Roman Emperor from 952. Otto was successful in unifying his kingdom and asserting his right to appoint bishops and archbishops throughout the kingdom. Otto's assumption of this ecclesiastical power brought him into close contact with the best-educated and ablest class of men in his kingdom. From this close contact, many new reforms were introduced in the Saxon kingdom and in the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, Otto's reign has also been called a "renaissance." The renaissance of the twelfth century has been identified as the third and final of the medieval renaissances. Yet the renaissance of the 12th century was far more thoroughgoing than those renaissances that preceded in the Carolingian and Ottonian periods.

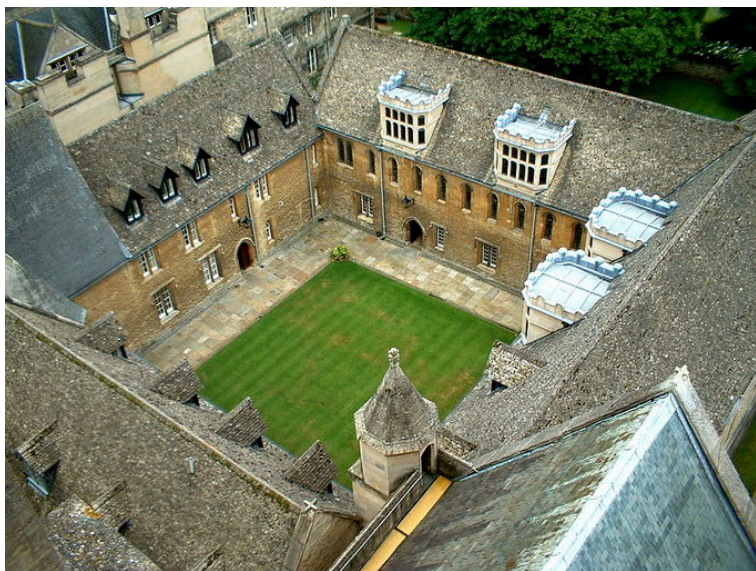
Conquest of and contact with the Muslim world through the Crusades and the reconquest of Spain also yielded new texts and knowledge. Most notably, contact with Muslims led to the the European rediscovery and translation of Aristotle, whose wide-ranging works influenced medieval philosophy, theology, science, and medicine.

## Schools and Universities

The late-11th and early-12th centuries also saw the rise of cathedral schools throughout Western Europe, signaling the shift of learning from monasteries to cathedrals and towns. Cathedral schools were in turn replaced by the universities established in major European cities.

The first universities in Europe included the University of Bologna (1088), the University of Paris (c. 1150, later associated with the Sorbonne), and the University of Oxford (1167). In Europe, young men proceeded to university when they had completed their study of the *trivium*—the preparatory arts of grammar, rhetoric, and

dialectic or logic—and the *quadrivium*—arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.



**Mob Quad at Merton College, University of Oxford:** Aerial view of Merton College's Mob Quad, the oldest quadrangle of the university, constructed from 1288-1378.

Philosophy and theology fused in scholasticism, an attempt by 12th- and 13th-century scholars to reconcile authoritative texts, most notably Aristotle and the Bible. This movement tried to employ a systemic approach to truth and reason and culminated in the thought of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), who wrote the *Summa Theologica*, or Summary of Theology.

The development of medieval universities allowed them to aid materially in the translation and propagation of these texts and started a new infrastructure, which was needed for scientific communities. In fact, the European university put many of these texts at the center of its curriculum, with the result that the

“medieval university laid far greater emphasis on science than does its modern counterpart and descendent.”

## Poems and Stories

Royal and noble courts saw the development of chivalry and the ethos of courtly love. This culture was expressed in the vernacular languages rather than Latin, and comprised poems, stories, legends, and popular songs spread by troubadours, or wandering minstrels. Often the stories were written down in the *chansons de geste*, or “songs of great deeds,” such as “The Song of Roland” or “The Song of Hildebrand.” Secular and religious histories were also produced. Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. c. 1155) composed his *Historia Regum Britanniae*, a collection of stories and legends about Arthur. Other works were more clearly pure history, such as Otto von Freising’s (d. 1158) *Gesta Friderici Imperatoris*, detailing the deeds of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, or William of Malmesbury’s (d. c. 1143) *Gesta Regum*, on the kings of England.

## Legal Studies

Legal studies advanced during the 12th century. Both secular law and canon law, or ecclesiastical law, were studied in the High Middle Ages. Secular law, or Roman law, was advanced greatly by the discovery of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* in the 11th century, and by 1100 Roman law was being taught at Bologna. This led to the recording and standardization of legal codes throughout Western Europe. Canon law was also studied, and around 1140 a monk named Gratian, a teacher at Bologna, wrote what became the standard text of canon law—the *Decretum*.



## Algebra and Astronomy

Among the results of the Greek and Islamic influence on this period in European history were the replacement of Roman numerals with the decimal positional number system and the invention of algebra, which allowed more advanced mathematics. Astronomy advanced following the translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest* from Greek into Latin in the late 12th century. Medicine was also studied, especially in southern Italy, where Islamic medicine influenced the school at Salerno.



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here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=99>

**The Weird Truth about Arabic Numerals:** How the world came to use so-called Arabic numerals—from the scholarship of ancient Hindu mathematicians, to Muslim scientist Al-Khwarizmi, to the merchants of medieval Italy.

## Arts and Sciences

The renaissance of the 12th century was a highly productive time of social, political, and economic transformations, and saw important artistic, technological, and scientific advancements.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Write about the scientific and artistic advancements of the High Middle Ages and how these advancements were influenced by certain technological advancements and changes in thinking

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages was a time of little scientific and artistic advancement until the renaissance of the 12th century, when increased contact with the Islamic world and Byzantium revived the arts.
- William of Ockham insisted that the world of reason and the world of faith had to be kept apart, and this new approach liberated scientific speculation from the dogmatic restraints of Aristotelian science, paving the way for new approaches.
- After the renaissance of the 12th century, medieval Europe saw a radical change in the rate of new inventions, innovations in the ways of managing traditional means of production, and economic

growth.

- The period saw major technological advances, including the adoption of gunpowder, the invention of vertical windmills, spectacles, and mechanical clocks, and greatly improved water mills, building techniques (Gothic architecture, medieval castles), and agriculture in general (three-field crop rotation).
- In northern European countries, Gothic architecture remained the norm, and the Gothic cathedral was further embellished. In Italy, architecture took on a new form, inspired by classical ideals.
- The most important development of late medieval literature was the ascendancy of the vernacular languages.

### *Key Terms*

- **Hellenic:** From Ancient Greek; Hellenikos, “of or relating to Greece or Greeks.”
- **Thomistic:** The philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), philosopher, theologian, and Doctor of the Church.
- **the Reconquista:** Period of approximately 781 years in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, from after the Islamic conquest in 711–718 to the fall of Granada, the last Islamic state on the peninsula, in 1492.
- **Nicolaus Copernicus:** A Renaissance mathematician and astronomer (1473–1543) who

formulated a heliocentric model of the universe that placed the Sun, rather than Earth, at the center.

- **Gutenberg:** German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher who introduced printing to Europe. His invention of mechanical movable type printing started the Printing Revolution and is widely regarded as the most important event of the modern period.
- **Euclid:** A Greek mathematician (~300 BCE), often referred to as the “Father of Geometry.” His *Elements* is one of the most influential works in the history of mathematics.
- **vernacular:** The native language or native dialect of a specific population, especially as distinguished from a literary, national, or standard variety of the language, such as Latin.

## Overview

The renaissance of the 12th century was a period of many changes at the outset of the High Middle Ages. It included social, political, and economic transformations, and an intellectual revitalization of Western Europe with strong philosophical and scientific roots. For some historians these changes paved the way for later achievements such as the literary and artistic movement of the Italian Renaissance in the 15th century and the scientific developments of the 17th century.

After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, Western Europe had entered the Middle Ages with great difficulties. Apart from depopulation and other factors, most classical scientific treatises of classical antiquity, written in Greek, had become unavailable.

Philosophical and scientific teaching of the Early Middle Ages was based upon the few Latin translations and commentaries on ancient Greek scientific and philosophical texts that remained in the Latin West.

This scenario changed during the renaissance of the 12th century. The increased contact with Byzantium and with the Islamic world in Spain and Sicily, the Crusades, and the Reconquista allowed Europeans to seek and translate the works of Hellenic and Islamic philosophers and scientists, especially Aristotle.

## Scientific Advancement

The rediscovery of the works of Aristotle allowed the full development of the new Christian philosophy and the method of scholasticism. By 1200 there were reasonably accurate Latin translations of the main works of Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, Archimedes, and Galen—that is, all the intellectually crucial ancient authors except Plato. Also, many of the medieval Arabic and Jewish key texts, such as the main works of Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides became available in Latin. During the 13th century, scholastics expanded the natural philosophy of these texts by commentaries (associated with teaching in the universities) and independent treatises. Notable among these were the works of Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, John of Sacrobosco, Albertus Magnus, and Duns Scotus.

Scholastics believed in empiricism and supporting Roman Catholic doctrines through secular study, reason, and logic. The most famous scholastic was Thomas Aquinas (later declared a “Doctor of the Church”), who led the move away from the Platonic and Augustinian and towards Aristotelianism.

Meanwhile, precursors of the modern scientific method can be seen in Grosseteste’s emphasis on mathematics as a way to understand nature and in the empirical approach admired by Roger

Bacon. Grosseteste was the founder of the famous Oxford Franciscan school. He built his work on Aristotle's vision of the dual path of scientific reasoning. He concluded from particular observations into a universal law, and then back again—from universal laws to prediction of particulars. Grosseteste called this “resolution and composition.” Further, Grosseteste said that both paths should be verified through experimentation in order to verify the principals. These ideas established a tradition that carried forward to Padua and Galileo Galilei in the 17th century.

Under the tuition of Grosseteste and inspired by the writings of Arab alchemists who had preserved and built upon Aristotle's portrait of induction, Bacon described a repeating cycle of observation, hypothesis, and experimentation, and the need for independent verification. He recorded the manner in which he conducted his experiments in precise detail so that others could reproduce and independently test his results—a cornerstone of the scientific method, and a continuation of the work of researchers like Al Battani.

The first half of the 14th century saw the scientific work of great thinkers. The logic studies by William of Ockham led him to postulate a specific formulation of the principle of parsimony, known today as Ockham's Razor. This principle is one of the main heuristics used by modern science to select between two or more underdetermined theories.



**William of Ockham:** William of Ockham, from stained glass window at a church in Surrey. He is considered one of the major figures of medieval thought and was at the center of the major intellectual and political controversies of the 14th century.

Thomas Bradwardine and his partners, the Oxford Calculators of Merton College, Oxford, distinguished kinematics from dynamics, emphasizing kinematics, and investigating instantaneous velocity. They formulated the mean speed theorem: a body moving with constant velocity travels distance and time equal to an accelerated body whose velocity is half the final speed of the accelerated body. They also demonstrated this theorem—the essence of “The Law of Falling Bodies”—long before Galileo, who has gotten the credit.

In his turn, Nicole Oresme showed that the reasons proposed by the physics of Aristotle against the movement of Earth were not

valid, and adduced the argument of simplicity for the theory that Earth moves, and not the heavens. Despite this argument in favor of Earth's motion, Oresme fell back on the commonly held opinion that "everyone maintains, and I think myself, that the heavens do move and not the Earth."

The historian of science Ronald Numbers notes that the modern scientific assumption of methodological naturalism can be also traced back to the work of these medieval thinkers

## Technological Developments

After the renaissance of the 12th century, medieval Europe saw a radical change in the rate of new inventions, innovations in the ways of managing traditional means of production, and economic growth. The period saw major technological advances, including the adoption of gunpowder, the invention of vertical windmills, spectacles, mechanical clocks, and greatly improved water mills, building techniques (Gothic architecture, medieval castles), and agriculture in general (three-field crop rotation).

The development of water mills from their ancient origins was impressive, and extended from agriculture to sawmills both for timber and stone. By the time of the Domesday Book, most large villages had turnable mills; there were around 6,500 in England alone. Water power was also widely used in mining for raising ore from shafts, crushing ore, and even powering bellows.

European technical advancements from the 12th to 14th centuries were either built on long-established techniques in medieval Europe, originating from Roman and Byzantine antecedents, or adapted from cross-cultural exchanges through trading networks with the Islamic world, China, and India. Often, the revolutionary aspect lay not in the act of invention itself, but in its technological refinement and application to political and economic power. Though gunpowder and other weapons had been started by the



Chinese, it was the Europeans who developed and perfected its military potential, precipitating European expansion and eventual imperialism in the Modern Era.

Also significant in this respect were advances in maritime technology. Advances in shipbuilding included the multi-masted ships with lateen sails, the sternpost-mounted rudder, and the skeleton-first hull construction. Along with new navigational techniques such as the dry compass, the Jacob's staff, and the astrolabe, these allowed economic and military control of the seas adjacent to Europe and enabled the global navigational achievements of the dawning Age of Exploration.

At the turn to the Renaissance, Gutenberg's invention of mechanical printing made possible a dissemination of knowledge to a wider population that would lead to not only a gradually more egalitarian society, but one more able to dominate other cultures, drawing from a vast reserve of knowledge and experience. The technical drawings of late-medieval artist-engineers Guido da Vigevano and Villard de Honnecourt can be viewed as forerunners of later Renaissance works by people like Taccola or da Vinci.

image

*European output of printed books c. 1450-1800: Estimated output of printed books in Europe from c. 1450 to 1800. A book is defined as printed matter containing more than 49 pages.*

## Visual Arts and Architecture

A precursor to Renaissance art can be seen in the early 14th century works of Giotto. Giotto was the first painter since antiquity to attempt the representation of a three-dimensional reality, and to endow his characters with true human emotions. The most important developments, however, came in 15th-century Florence.

The affluence of the merchant class allowed extensive patronage of the arts, and foremost among the patrons were the Medici.

There were several important technical innovations in visual arts, like the principle of linear perspective found in the work of Masaccio and later described by Brunelleschi. Greater realism was also achieved through the scientific study of anatomy, championed by artists like Donatello. This can be seen particularly well in his sculptures, inspired by the study of classical models.

In northern European countries, Gothic architecture remained the norm, and the Gothic cathedral was further embellished. In Italy, on the other hand, architecture took a different direction, also inspired by classical ideals. The crowning work of the period was the Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, with Giotto's clock tower, Ghiberti's baptistery gates, and Brunelleschi's cathedral dome of unprecedented proportions.



***Duomo in Florence, Italy, seen at night from Michelangelo's Piazza:*** Giotto's clock tower on the right and Brunelleschi's cathedral dome on the left. In one structure, two of the most influential architectural designs in the world.

## Literature

The most important development of late medieval literature was the ascendancy of the vernacular languages. The vernacular had been in use in England since the 8th century and in France since the 11th century. The most popular genres of written works had been the *chanson de geste*, troubadour lyrics, and romantic epics, or the romance. Though Italy was later in evolving a native literature in the vernacular language, it was here that the most important developments of the period were to come.

Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, written in the early 14th century, merged a medieval world view with classical ideals. Another promoter of the Italian language was Boccaccio with his *Decameron*. The application of the vernacular did not entail a rejection of Latin, and both Dante and Boccaccio wrote prolifically in Latin as well as Italian, as would Petrarch later (whose *Canzoniere* also promoted the vernacular and is considered the first modern lyric poetry collection). Together these three poets established the Tuscan dialect as the norm for the modern Italian language.

## The Black Death

The Black Death was an infamous pandemic of bubonic plague and one of the most devastating pandemics in human history.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the impact of the Black Death on European society in the Middle Ages

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Black Death resulted in the deaths of an estimated 75-200 million people—approximately 30% of Europe's population.
- It spread from central Asia on rat fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on merchant ships, and traveled towards Europe as people fled from one area to another.
- The Great Famine of 1315-1317 and subsequent malnutrition in the population likely caused weakened immunity and susceptibility to disease.
- Medieval doctors thought the plague was created by air corrupted by humid weather, decaying unburied bodies, and fumes produced by poor sanitation.
- The aftermath of the plague created a series of religious, social, and economic upheavals, which had profound effects on the course of European history.
- As people struggled to understand the causes of the Black Death, renewed religious fervor and fanaticism bloomed in its wake, leading to the widespread persecution of minorities.
- Flagellatism, the practice of self-inflicted pain, especially with a whip, became popular as a radical movement during the time of the Black Death, and was eventually deemed heretical by the church.
- The great population loss wrought by the plague

brought favorable results to the surviving peasants in England and Western Europe, such as wage increases and more access to land, and was one of the factors in the ending of the feudal system.

### *Key Terms*

- **bubonic plague:** Disease circulating mainly in fleas on small rodents. Without treatment, the bacterial infection kills about two thirds of infected humans within four days.
- **the Silk Road:** Series of trade and cultural routes that were central to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent, connecting the West and East from China to the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Flagellant:** Practitioners of an extreme form of mortification of their own flesh by whipping it with various instruments.

In the Late Middle Ages (1340–1400) Europe experienced the most deadly disease outbreak in history when the Black Death, the infamous pandemic of bubonic plague, hit in 1347. The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 75–200 million people and peaking in Europe in the years 1348–1350.

## Path of the Black Death to Europe

The Black Death is thought to have originated in the arid plains of Central Asia, where it then travelled along the Silk Road, reaching the Crimea by 1346. It was most likely carried by Oriental rat fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on merchant ships.

Mongol dominance of Eurasian trade routes enabled safe passage through more secured trade routes. Goods were not the only thing being traded; disease also was passed between cultures. From Central Asia the Black Death was carried east and west along the Silk Road by Mongol armies and traders making use of the opportunities of free passage within the Mongol Empire offered by the Pax Mongolica. The epidemic began in Europe with an attack that Mongols launched on the Italian merchants' last trading station in the region, Caffa in the Crimea. In the autumn of 1346, plague broke out among the besiegers and then penetrated into the town. When spring arrived, the Italian merchants fled on their ships, unknowingly carrying the Black Death. The plague initially spread to humans near the Black Sea and then outwards to the rest of Europe as a result of people fleeing from one area to another.



**The spread of the Black Death:** Animation showing the spread of The Black Death from Central Asia to East Asia and Europe from 1346 to 1351.

Spreading throughout the Mediterranean and Europe, the Black Death is estimated to have killed 30–60% of Europe's total population. While Europe was devastated by the disease, the rest of the world fared much better. In India, populations rose from 91 million in 1300, to 97 million in 1400, to 105 million in 1500. Sub-Saharan Africa also remained largely unaffected by the plagues.

## Symptoms and Treatment

The most infamous symptom of bubonic plague is an infection of the lymph glands, which become swollen and painful and are known as *buboes*. *Buboes* associated with the bubonic plague are commonly found in the armpits, groin, and neck region. Gangrene of the fingers, toes, lips, and nose is another common symptom.

Medieval doctors thought the plague was created by air corrupted by humid weather, decaying unburied bodies, and fumes produced

by poor sanitation. The recommended treatment for the plague was a good diet, rest, and relocating to a non-infected environment so the individual could get access to clean air. This did help, but not for the reasons the doctors of the time thought. In actuality, because they recommended moving away from unsanitary conditions, people were, in effect, getting away from the rodents that harbored the fleas carrying the infection.

Plague doctors advised walking around with flowers in or around the nose to “ward off the stench and perhaps the evil that afflicted them.” Some doctors wore a beak-like mask filled with aromatic items. The masks were designed to protect them from putrid air, which was seen as the cause of infection.





**A plague doctor:** Drawing illustrating the clothes and “beak” of a plague doctor.

Since people didn't have the knowledge to understand the plague, people believed it was a punishment from God. The thought the only way to be rid of the plague was to be forgiven by God. One method was to carve the symbol of the cross onto the front door of a house with the words "Lord have mercy on us" near it.

## Impact of the Black Death on Society and Culture

The aftermath of the plague created a series of religious, social, and economic upheavals, which had profound effects on the course of European history. It took 150 years for Europe's population to recover, and the effects of the plague irrevocably changed the social structure, resulting in widespread persecution of minorities such as Jews, foreigners, beggars, and lepers. The uncertainty of daily survival has been seen as creating a general mood of morbidity, influencing people to "live for the moment."

Because 14th-century healers were at a loss to explain the cause of the plague, Europeans turned to astrological forces, earthquakes, and the poisoning of wells by Jews as possible reasons for the plague's emergence. No one in the 14th century considered rat control a way to ward off the plague, and people began to believe only God's anger could produce such horrific displays. Giovanni Boccaccio, an Italian writer and poet of the 14th century, questioned whether plague was sent by God for human's correction, or if it came through the influence of the heavenly bodies. Christians accused Jews of poisoning public water supplies in an effort to ruin European civilization. The spreading of this rumor led to complete destruction of entire Jewish towns, but it was caused simply by suspicion on the part of the Christians, who noticed that the Jews had lost fewer lives in the Plague due to their hygienic practices. In February 1349, 2,000 Jews were murdered in Strasbourg. In August of the same year, the Jewish communities of Mainz and Cologne were exterminated.

There was a significant impact on religion, as many believed the plague was God's punishment for sinful ways. Church lands and buildings were unaffected, but there were too few priests left to maintain the old schedule of services. Over half the parish priests, who gave the final sacraments to the dying, died themselves. The church moved to recruit replacements, but the process took time. New colleges were opened at established universities, and the training process sped up. The shortage of priests opened new opportunities for lay women to assume more extensive and important service roles in local parishes.

Flagellantism was a 13th and 14th centuries movement involving radicals in the Catholic Church. It began as a militant pilgrimage and was later condemned by the Catholic Church as heretical. The peak of the activity was during the Black Death. Flagellant groups spontaneously arose across Northern and Central Europe in 1349, except in England. The German and Low Countries movement, the Brothers of the Cross, is particularly well documented. They established their camps in fields near towns and held their rituals twice a day. The followers would fall to their knees and scourge themselves, gesturing with their free hands to indicate their sin and striking themselves rhythmically to songs, known as *Geisslerlieder*, until blood flowed. Sometimes the blood was soaked up by rags and treated as a holy relic. Some towns began to notice that sometimes Flagellants brought plague to towns where it had not yet surfaced. Therefore, later they were denied entry. The flagellants responded with increased physical penance.

The Black Death had a profound impact on art and literature. After 1350, European culture in general turned very morbid. The common mood was one of pessimism, and contemporary art turned dark with representations of death. *La Danse Macabre*, or the dance of death, was a contemporary allegory, expressed as art, drama, and printed work. Its theme was the universality of death, expressing the common wisdom of the time that no matter one's station in life, the dance of death united all. It consisted of the personified Death leading a row of dancing figures from all walks of life to the

grave—typically with an emperor, king, pope, monk, youngster, and beautiful girl, all in skeleton-state. Such works of art were produced under the impact of the Black Death, reminding people of how fragile their lives and how vain the glories of earthly life were.



**Danse Macabre:** *The Dance of Death* (1493) by Michael Wolgemut, from the *Liber chronicarum* by Hartmann Schedel.

## Economic Impact of the Plague

The great population loss wrought by the plague brought favorable results to the surviving peasants in England and Western Europe. There was increased social mobility, as depopulation further eroded the peasants' already weakened obligations to remain on their traditional holdings. Feudalism never recovered. Land was plentiful,

wages high, and serfdom had all but disappeared. It was possible to move about and rise higher in life.

The Black Death encouraged innovation of labor-saving technologies, leading to higher productivity. There was a shift from grain farming to animal husbandry. Grain farming was very labor-intensive, but animal husbandry needed only a shepherd, a few dogs, and pastureland.

Since the plague left vast areas of farmland untended, they were made available for pasture and thus put more meat on the market; the consumption of meat and dairy products went up, as did the export of beef and butter from the Low Countries, Scandinavia, and northern Germany. However, the upper classes often attempted to stop these changes, initially in Western Europe, and more forcefully and successfully in Eastern Europe, by instituting sumptuary laws. These regulated what people (particularly of the peasant class) could wear so that nobles could ensure that peasants did not begin to dress and act as higher class members with their increased wealth. Another tactic was to fix prices and wages so that peasants could not demand more with increasing value. In England, the Statute of Labourers of 1351 was enforced, meaning no peasant could ask for more wages than they had in 1346. This was met with varying success depending on the amount of rebellion it inspired; such a law was one of the causes of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt in England.

Plague brought an eventual end of serfdom in Western Europe. The manorial system was already in trouble, but the Black Death assured its demise throughout much of Western and Central Europe by 1500. Severe depopulation and migration of people from village to cities caused an acute shortage of agricultural laborers. In England, more than 1300 villages were deserted between 1350 and 1500.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded*

from this version of the text. You can view them online  
here: [https://library.achievingthedream.org/  
pimawesternciv1/?p=99](https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=99)

**Black Death (“Hollaback Girl” by Gwen Stefani):** It’s hard to find a song to parody for such a gruesome subject. Our apologies to Gwen’s fans, but it’s for the cause of education!

# 72. Assignments

## Week 12

### Assignment

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

Remember your **Group Dialogue** is due week 12:

Now comes the fun part! Your research is completed and you and your group members will select two individuals who best represent the key positions of your topic. You may stick with the historical authors that I have already supplied in our primary source readings, or someone else. However, you must choose actual people (not composite characters) who lived during the era assigned, and who authored material that can be reliably attributed to them. You may even decide to choose a council, committee or society, as long as their collective opinion and authorship on your topic can be demonstrated.

Start writing. Construct a traditional dialogue after an opening paragraph introducing your two combatants. Set the scene and in this case, you are free to invent some (believable) facts. Since Pope Leo X and John Calvin never met, for example, but did take opposing positions on the Reformation, your group might decide to have them confront one another in a meeting in Rome, or write a series of disputatious letters or challenge each other via pamphlets. As long as your choice is historically appropriate, we can bend the actual record a bit. As always, if you need some helpful input, I am here as a group consultant.

The dialogue should be 2,000 words and accurately portray the

position of each character as well as the complexity of the issues at hand. Try to employ the tone, vocabulary and style appropriate to the historical period and your historical individuals. Fairly represent their opinions, even if you don't agree! Avoid vulgar language and insults unless you can justify its inclusion. Most of the dialogue should consist of the words, phrases and ideas you and your group develops; however, if you determine that a direct quote or two cannot be passed by, you may selectively use those words too. But, keep the direct quotes to a minimum, and remember, direct quotes must always be properly cited.

This will be the basis of your final project where the words you write here will be presented to the rest of your class, so be clear and write for an educated and curious audience, who will need some background and explanation to make sense of the interplay. Don't be afraid to be dramatic and creative!

This assignment is worth 100 points.

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.



PART XIV

WEEK 13: THE CRUSADES  
AND THE LATE MIDDLE  
AGES



# 73. Introduction

## Week 13

### Introduction

Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204

The Late Middle Ages or Late Medieval Period were the period of European history generally comprising the 14th and 15th centuries (c. 1301–1500). The Late Middle Ages followed the High Middle Ages and preceded the onset of the early modern era (and, in much of Europe, the Renaissance).

Around 1300, centuries of prosperity and growth in Europe came to a halt. A series of famines and plagues, including the Great Famine of 1315–1317 and the Black Death, reduced the population to around half of what it was before the calamities. Along with depopulation came social unrest and endemic warfare. France and England experienced serious peasant uprisings, such as the Jacquerie and the Peasants' Revolt, as well as over a century of intermittent conflict in the Hundred Years' War. To add to the many problems of the period, the unity of the Catholic Church was temporarily shattered by the Western Schism. Collectively these events are sometimes called the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages.

Despite these crises, the 14th century was also a time of great progress in the arts and sciences. Following a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman texts that took root in the High Middle Ages, the Italian Renaissance began. The absorption of Latin texts had started before the Renaissance of the 12th century through contact with Arabs during the Crusades, but the availability of important Greek texts accelerated with the capture of

Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks, when many Byzantine scholars had to seek refuge in the West, particularly Italy.[4]  
map

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# 74. Reading: The Crusades

## The Crusades

The Crusades were military campaigns sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church during the High and Late Middle Ages.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the origins of the Crusades

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Crusades were a series of military conflicts conducted by Christian knights to defend Christians and the Christian empire against Muslim forces.
- The Holy Land was part of the Roman Empire until the Islamic conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries. Thereafter, Christians were permitted to visit parts of the Holy Land until 1071, when Christian pilgrimages were stopped by the Seljuq Turks.

- The Seljuq Turks had taken over much of Byzantium after the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.
- In 1095 at the Council of Piacenza, Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos requested military aid from Urban II to fight the Turks.
- In July 1095, Urban turned to his homeland of France to recruit men for the expedition. His travels there culminated in the Council of Clermont in November, where he gave speeches combining the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land with that of waging a holy war against infidels, which received an enthusiastic response.

### *Key Terms*

- **Seljuq Empire:** A medieval Turko-Persian Sunni Muslim empire that controlled a vast area stretching from the Hindu Kush to eastern Anatolia and from Central Asia to the Persian Gulf. The Seljuq Turk attack on Byzantium helped spur the crusades.
- **heretical:** Relating to departure from established beliefs or customs.
- **Byzantine Empire:** The predominantly Greek-speaking continuation of the eastern half of the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.
- **schism:** A division or a split, usually between groups belonging to a religious denomination.

The Crusades were a series of military conflicts conducted by Christian knights for the defense of Christians and for the expansion of Christian domains between the 11th and 15th centuries. Generally, the Crusades refer to the campaigns in the Holy Land sponsored by the papacy against Muslim forces. There were other crusades against Islamic forces in southern Spain, southern Italy, and Sicily, as well as campaigns of Teutonic knights against pagan strongholds in Eastern Europe. A few crusades, such as the Fourth Crusade, were waged within Christendom against groups that were considered heretical and schismatic. Crusades were fought for many reasons—to capture Jerusalem, recapture Christian territory, or defend Christians in non-Christian lands; as a means of conflict resolution among Roman Catholics; for political or territorial advantage; and to combat paganism and heresy.

## Origin of the Crusades

The origin of the Crusades in general, and particularly of the First Crusade, is widely debated among historians. The confusion is partially due to the numerous armies in the First Crusade, and their lack of direct unity. The similar ideologies held the armies to similar goals, but the connections were rarely strong, and unity broke down often. The Crusades are most commonly linked to the political and social situation in 11th-century Europe, the rise of a reform movement within the papacy, and the political and religious confrontation of Christianity and Islam in Europe and the Middle East. Christianity had spread throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East in Late Antiquity, but by the early 8th century Christian rule had become limited to Europe and Anatolia after the Muslim conquests.

## Background in Europe

The Holy Land had been part of the Roman Empire, and thus the Byzantine Empire, until the Islamic conquests. In the 7th and 8th centuries, Islam was introduced in the Arabian Peninsula by the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers. This formed a unified Muslim polity, which led to a rapid expansion of Arab power, the influence of which stretched from the northwest Indian subcontinent, across Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, southern Italy, and the Iberian Peninsula, to the Pyrenees. Tolerance, trade, and political relationships between the Arabs and the Christian states of Europe waxed and waned. For example, the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but his successor allowed the Byzantine Empire to rebuild it. Pilgrimages by Catholics to sacred sites were permitted, resident Christians were given certain legal rights and protections under *Dhimmi* status, and interfaith marriages were not uncommon. Cultures and creeds coexisted and competed, but the frontier conditions became increasingly inhospitable to Catholic pilgrims and merchants.

At the western edge of Europe and of Islamic expansion, the Reconquista (recapture of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims) was well underway by the 11th century, reaching its turning point in 1085 when Alfonso VI of León and Castile retook Toledo from Muslim rule. Increasingly in the 11th century, foreign knights, mostly from France, visited Iberia to assist the Christians in their efforts.

The heart of Western Europe had been stabilized after the Christianization of the Saxon, Viking, and Hungarian peoples by the end of the 10th century. However, the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire gave rise to an entire class of warriors who now had little to do but fight among themselves. The random violence of the knightly class was regularly condemned by the church, and so it established the Peace and Truce of God to prohibit fighting on certain days of the year.



At the same time, the reform-minded papacy came into conflict with the Holy Roman Emperors, resulting in the Investiture Controversy. The papacy began to assert its independence from secular rulers, marshaling arguments for the proper use of armed force by Catholics. Popes such as Gregory VII justified the subsequent warfare against the emperor's partisans in theological terms. It became acceptable for the pope to utilize knights in the name of Christendom, not only against political enemies of the papacy, but also against Al-Andalus, or, theoretically, against the Seljuq dynasty in the east. The result was intense piety, an interest in religious affairs, and religious propaganda advocating a just war to reclaim Palestine from the Muslims. Participation in such a war was seen as a form of penance that could counterbalance sin.

## Aid to Byzantium

To the east of Europe lay the Byzantine Empire, composed of Christians who had long followed a separate Orthodox rite; the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches had been in schism since 1054. Historians have argued that the desire to impose Roman church authority in the east may have been one of the goals of the Crusades, although Urban II, who launched the First Crusade, never refers to such a goal in his letters on crusading. The Seljuq Empire had taken over almost all of Anatolia after the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071; however, their conquests were piecemeal and led by semi-independent warlords, rather than by the sultan. A dramatic collapse of the empire's position on the eve of the Council of Clermont brought Byzantium to the brink of disaster. By the mid-1090s, the Byzantine Empire was largely confined to Balkan Europe and the northwestern fringe of Anatolia, and faced Norman enemies in the west as well as Turks in the east. In response to the defeat at Manzikert and subsequent Byzantine

losses in Anatolia in 1074, Pope Gregory VII had called for the *milites Christi* (“soldiers of Christ”) to go to Byzantium’s aid.

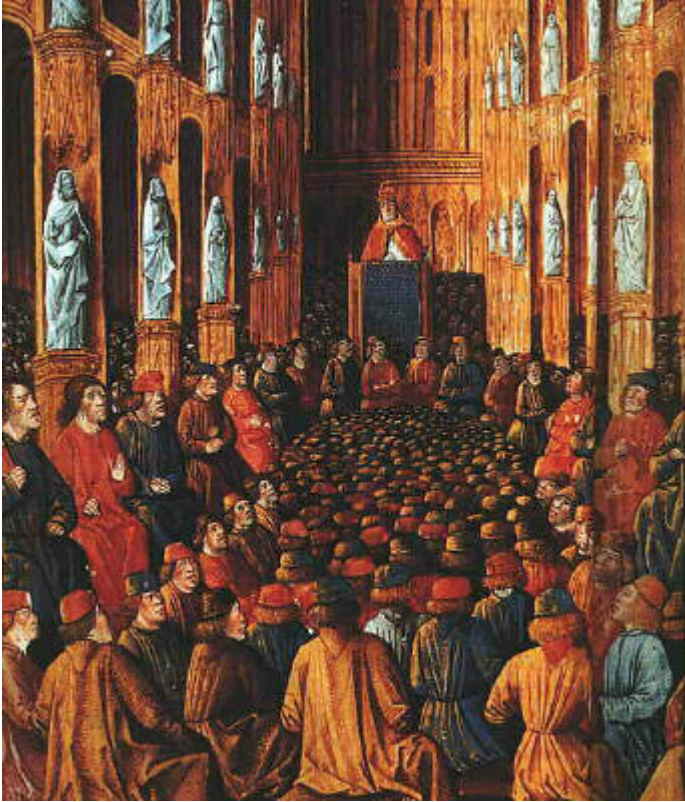


**Seljuq Empire:** The Great Seljuq Empire at its greatest extent (1092).

While the Crusades had causes deeply rooted in the social and political situations of 11th-century Europe, the event actually triggering the First Crusade was a request for assistance from Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos. Alexios was worried about the advances of the Seljuqs, who had reached as far west as Nicaea, not far from Constantinople. In March 1095, Alexios sent envoys to the Council of Piacenza to ask Pope Urban II for aid against the Turks.

Urban responded favorably, perhaps hoping to heal the Great Schism of forty years earlier, and to reunite the Church under papal primacy by helping the eastern churches in their time of need. Alexios and Urban had previously been in close contact in 1089 and later, and had openly discussed the prospect of the (re)union of the Christian church. There were signs of considerable co-operation between Rome and Constantinople in the years immediately before the Crusade.

In July 1095, Urban turned to his homeland of France to recruit men for the expedition. His travels there culminated in the Council of Clermont in November, where, according to the various speeches attributed to him, he gave an impassioned sermon to a large audience of French nobles and clergy, graphically detailing the fantastical atrocities being committed against pilgrims and eastern Christians. Urban talked about the violence of European society and the necessity of maintaining the Peace of God; about helping the Greeks, who had asked for assistance; about the crimes being committed against Christians in the east; and about a new kind of war, an armed pilgrimage, and of rewards in heaven, where remission of sins was offered to any who might die in the undertaking. Combining the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land with that of waging a holy war against infidels, Urban received an enthusiastic response to his speeches and soon after began collecting military forces to begin the First Crusade.



**Council of Clermont:** Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, where he gave speeches in favor of a Crusade.

## The First Crusade

The First Crusade (1095–1099) was a military expedition by Roman Catholic Europe to regain the Holy Lands taken in Muslim conquests, ultimately resulting in the recapture of Jerusalem.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the events of the First Crusade

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The First Crusade (1095–1099), called for by Pope Urban II, was the first of a number of crusades that attempted to recapture the Holy Lands.
- It was launched on November 27, 1095, by Pope Urban II with the primary goal of responding to an appeal from Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who had been defeated by Turkish forces.
- An additional goal soon became the principal objective—the Christian reconquest of the sacred city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the freeing of the Eastern Christians from Muslim rule.
- The first object of the campaign was Nicaea, previously a city under Byzantine rule, which the Crusaders captured on June 18, 1097, by defeating the troops of Kilij Arslan.
- After marching through the Mediterranean region, the Crusaders arrived at Jerusalem, launched an assault on the city, and captured it in July 1099,

massacring many of the city's Muslim and Jewish inhabitants.

- In the end, they established the crusader states of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, the Principality of Antioch, and the County of Edessa.

### *Key Terms*

- **Church of the Holy Sepulchre:** A church within the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem that contains, according to traditions dating back to at least the 4th century, the two holiest sites in Christendom—the site where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and Jesus's empty tomb, where he is said to have been buried and resurrected.
- **Pope Urban II:** Pope from March 12, 1088, to his death in 1099, he is best known for initiating the First Crusade.
- **People's Crusade:** An expedition seen as the prelude to the First Crusade that lasted roughly six months, from April to October 1096, and was led mostly by peasants.
- **Alexios I Komnenos:** Byzantine emperor from 1081 to 1118, whose appeals to Western Europe for help against the Turks were also the catalyst that likely contributed to the convoking of the Crusades.

## Overview

The First Crusade (1095–1099), called for by Pope Urban II, was the first of a number of crusades intended to recapture the Holy Lands. It started as a widespread pilgrimage in western Christendom and ended as a military expedition by Roman Catholic Europe to regain the Holy Lands taken in the Muslim conquests of the Mediterranean (632–661), ultimately resulting in the recapture of Jerusalem in 1099.

It was launched on November 27, 1095, by Pope Urban II with the primary goal of responding to an appeal from Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who requested that western volunteers come to his aid and help to repel the invading Seljuq Turks from Anatolia (modern-day Turkey). An additional goal soon became the principal objective—the Christian reconquest of the sacred city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the freeing of the Eastern Christians from Muslim rule.

During the crusade, knights, peasants, and serfs from many regions of Western Europe travelled over land and by sea, first to Constantinople and then on toward Jerusalem. The Crusaders arrived at Jerusalem, launched an assault on the city, and captured it in July 1099, massacring many of the city's Muslim and Jewish inhabitants. They also established the crusader states of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, the Principality of Antioch, and the County of Edessa.

## People's Crusade

Pope Urban II planned the departure of the crusade for August 15, 1096; before this, a number of unexpected bands of peasants and low-ranking knights organized and set off for Jerusalem on their own, on an expedition known as the People's Crusade, led by a monk named Peter the Hermit. The peasant population had been afflicted

by drought, famine, and disease for many years before 1096, and some of them seem to have envisioned the crusade as an escape from these hardships. Spurring them on had been a number of meteorological occurrences beginning in 1095 that seemed to be a divine blessing for the movement—a meteor shower, an aurorae, a lunar eclipse, and a comet, among other events. An outbreak of ergotism had also occurred just before the Council of Clermont. Millenarianism, the belief that the end of the world was imminent, widespread in the early 11th century, experienced a resurgence in popularity. The response was beyond expectations; while Urban might have expected a few thousand knights, he ended up with a migration numbering up to 40,000 Crusaders of mostly unskilled fighters, including women and children.

Lacking military discipline in what likely seemed a strange land (Eastern Europe), Peter's fledgling army quickly found itself in trouble despite the fact that they were still in Christian territory. This unruly mob began to attack and pillage outside Constantinople in search of supplies and food, prompting Alexios to hurriedly ferry the gathering across the Bosphorus one week later. After crossing into Asia Minor, the crusaders split up and began to plunder the countryside, wandering into Seljuq territory around Nicaea, where they were massacred by an overwhelming group of Turks.





**People's Crusade massacre:** An illustration showing the defeat of the People's Crusade by the Turks.

# The First Crusade

The four main Crusader armies left Europe around the appointed time in August 1096. They took different paths to Constantinople and gathered outside the city walls between November 1096 and April 1097; Hugh of Vermandois arrived first, followed by Godfrey, Raymond, and Bohemond. This time, Emperor Alexios was more prepared for the Crusaders; there were fewer incidents of violence along the way.

The Crusaders may have expected Alexios to become their leader, but he had no interest in joining them, and was mainly concerned with transporting them into Asia Minor as quickly as possible. In return for food and supplies, Alexios requested that the leaders to swear fealty to him and promise to return to the Byzantine Empire any land recovered from the Turks. Before ensuring that the various armies were shuttled across the Bosphorus, Alexios advised the leaders on how best to deal with the Seljuq armies they would soon encounter.

## Siege of Nicaea and March to Jerusalem

The Crusader armies crossed over into Asia Minor during the first half of 1097, where they were joined by Peter the Hermit and the remainder of his little army. Alexios also sent two of his own generals, Manuel Boutoumites and Tatikios, to assist the Crusaders. The first object of their campaign was Nicaea, previously a city under Byzantine rule, but which had become the capital of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum under Kilij Arslan I. Arslan was away campaigning against the Danishmends in central Anatolia at the time, and had left behind his treasury and his family, underestimating the strength of these new Crusaders.

Subsequently, upon the Crusaders' arrival, the city was subjected

to a lengthy siege, and when Arslan had word of it he rushed back to Nicaea and attacked the Crusader army on May 16. He was driven back by the unexpectedly large Crusader force, with heavy losses suffered on both sides in the ensuing battle. The siege continued, but the Crusaders had little success as they found they could not blockade Lake Iznik, which the city was situated on, and from which it could be provisioned. To break the city, Alexios had the Crusaders' ships rolled over land on logs, and at the sight of them the Turkish garrison finally surrendered, 18 June 18. The city was handed over to the Byzantine troops.

At the end of June, the Crusaders marched on through Anatolia. They were accompanied by some Byzantine troops under Tatikios, and still harbored the hope that Alexios would send a full Byzantine army after them. After a battle with Kilij Arslan, the Crusaders marched through Anatolia unopposed, but the journey was unpleasant, as Arslan had burned and destroyed everything he left behind in his army's flight. It was the middle of summer, and the Crusaders had very little food and water; many men and horses died. Fellow Christians sometimes gave them gifts of food and money, but more often than not the Crusaders simply looted and pillaged whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Proceeding down the Mediterranean coast, the crusaders encountered little resistance, as local rulers preferred to make peace with them and furnish them with supplies rather than fight.

## Capture of Jerusalem

On June 7, the Crusaders reached Jerusalem, which had been recaptured from the Seljuqs by the Fatimids only the year before. Many Crusaders wept upon seeing the city they had journeyed so long to reach. The arrival at Jerusalem revealed an arid countryside, lacking in water or food supplies. Here there was no prospect of relief, even as they feared an imminent attack by the local Fatimid

rulers. The Crusaders resolved to take the city by assault. They might have been left with little choice, as it has been estimated that only about 12,000 men, including 1,500 cavalry, remained by the time the army reached Jerusalem.

After the failure of the initial assault, a meeting between the various leaders was organized in which it was agreed upon that a more concerted attack would be required in the future. On June 17, a party of Genoese mariners under Guglielmo Embriaco arrived at Jaffa and provided the Crusaders with skilled engineers, and perhaps more critically, supplies of timber (cannibalized from the ships) with which to build siege engines. The Crusaders' morale was raised when a priest, Peter Desiderius, claimed to have had a divine vision of Bishop Adhemar instructing them to fast and then march in a barefoot procession around the city walls, after which the city would fall, following the Biblical story of Joshua at the siege of Jericho.

The final assault on Jerusalem began on July 13; Raymond's troops attacked the south gate while the other contingents attacked the northern wall. Initially the Provençals at the southern gate made little headway, but the contingents at the northern wall fared better, with a slow but steady attrition of the defense. On July 15, a final push was launched at both ends of the city, and eventually the inner rampart of the northern wall was captured. In the ensuing panic, the defenders abandoned the walls of the city at both ends, allowing the Crusaders to finally enter.



**Capture of Jerusalem:** A depiction of the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 from a medieval manuscript. The burning buildings of Jerusalem are centered in the image. The various Crusaders are surrounding and besieging the village armed for an attack.

The massacre that followed the capture of Jerusalem has attained particular notoriety, as a “juxtaposition of extreme violence and anguished faith.” The eyewitness accounts from the Crusaders themselves leave little doubt that there was a great slaughter in the aftermath of the siege. Nevertheless, some historians propose that the scale of the massacre was exaggerated in later medieval sources. The slaughter lasted a day; Muslims were indiscriminately killed, and Jews who had taken refuge in their synagogue died when it was burnt down by the Crusaders. The following day, Tancred’s prisoners in the mosque were slaughtered. Still, it is clear that some

Muslims and Jews of the city survived the massacre, either escaping or being taken prisoner to be ransomed. The Eastern Christian population of the city had been expelled before the siege by the governor, and thus escaped the massacre.

On July 22, a council was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to establish a king for the newly created Kingdom of Jerusalem. Raymond IV of Toulouse and Godfrey of Bouillon were recognized as the leaders of the crusade and the siege of Jerusalem. Raymond was the wealthier and more powerful of the two, but at first he refused to become king, perhaps attempting to show his piety and probably hoping that the other nobles would insist upon his election anyway. The more popular Godfrey did not hesitate like Raymond, and accepted a position as secular leader.

Having captured Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Crusaders had fulfilled their vow.

## The Second Crusade

The Second Crusade (1147–1149) was the second major crusade launched against Islam by Catholic Europe, started in response to the fall of the County of Edessa founded in the First Crusade; it was largely a failure for the Europeans.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the successes and failures of the Second Crusade

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Second Crusade was started in 1147 in response to the fall of the County of Edessa the previous year to the forces of Zengi; Edessa was founded during the First Crusade.
- The Second Crusade was led by two European kings— Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany.
- The German and French armies took separate routes to Anatolia, fighting skirmishes along the way, and both were defeated separately by the Seljuq Turks.
- Louis and Conrad and the remnants of their armies eventually reached Jerusalem and participated in an ill-advised attack on Damascus in 1148.
- The Second Crusade was a failure for the Crusaders and a great victory for the Muslims.

### *Key Terms*

- **Moors:** The Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb, North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, and Malta during the Middle Ages, who initially were Berber and Arab peoples of North African descent.
- **Conrad III:** First German king of the Hohenstaufen

dynasty, who led troops in the Second Crusade.

- **Manuel I Komneno:** A Byzantine Emperor of the 12th century who reigned over a crucial turning point in the history of Byzantium and the Mediterranean, including the Second Crusade.
- **Louis VII:** A Capetian king of the Franks from 1137 until his death who led troops in the Second Crusade.

## The Second Crusade

The Second Crusade (1147–1149) was the second major crusade launched from Europe as a Catholic holy war against Islam. The Second Crusade was started in 1147 in response to the fall of the County of Edessa the previous year to the forces of Zengi. The county had been founded during the First Crusade by King Baldwin of Boulogne in 1098. While it was the first Crusader state to be founded, it was also the first to fall.

The Second Crusade was announced by Pope Eugene III, and was the first of the crusades to be led by European kings, namely Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany, who had help from a number of other European nobles. The armies of the two kings marched separately across Europe. After crossing Byzantine territory into Anatolia, both armies were separately defeated by the Seljuq Turks. The main Western Christian source, Odo of Deuil, and Syriac Christian sources claim that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos secretly hindered the Crusaders' progress, particularly in Anatolia, where he is alleged to have deliberately ordered Turks to attack them. Louis and Conrad and the remnants of their armies reached Jerusalem and participated in an ill-advised attack on Damascus in 1148. The Crusade in the east was a failure for the



Crusaders and a great victory for the Muslims. It would ultimately have a key influence on the fall of Jerusalem and give rise to the Third Crusade at the end of the 12th century.

The only Christian success of the Second Crusade came to a combined force of 13,000 Flemish, Frisian, Norman, English, Scottish, and German Crusaders in 1147. Traveling by ship from England to the Holy Land, the army stopped and helped the smaller (7,000) Portuguese army capture Lisbon, expelling its Moorish occupants.

## Crusade in the East

Joscelin II had tried to take back Edessa, but Nur ad-Din defeated him in November 1146. On February 16, 1147, the French Crusaders met to discuss their route. The Germans had already decided to travel overland through Hungary, as the sea route was politically impractical because Roger II, king of Sicily, was an enemy of Conrad. Many of the French nobles distrusted the land route, which would take them through the Byzantine Empire, the reputation of which still suffered from the accounts of the First Crusaders. Nevertheless, it was decided to follow Conrad, and to set out on June 15.

## German Route

The German crusaders, accompanied by the papal legate and Cardinal Theodwin, intended to meet the French in Constantinople. Ottokar III of Styria joined Conrad at Vienna, and Conrad's enemy Géza II of Hungary allowed them to pass through unharmed. When the German army of 20,000 men arrived in Byzantine territory, Emperor Manuel I Komnenos feared they were going to attack him, and Byzantine troops were posted to ensure that there was no

trouble. On September 10, the Germans arrived at Constantinople, where relations with Manuel were poor. There was a battle, after which the Germans were convinced that they should cross into Asia Minor as quickly as possible.

In Asia Minor, Conrad decided not to wait for the French, and marched towards Iconium, capital of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rûm. Conrad split his army into two divisions. The authority of the Byzantine Empire in the western provinces of Asia Minor was more nominal than real, with much of the provinces being a no-man's land controlled by Turkish nomads. Conrad underestimated the length of the march against Anatolia, and anyhow assumed that the authority of Emperor Manuel was greater in Anatolia than was in fact the case. Conrad took the knights and the best troops with him to march overland and sent the camp followers with Otto of Freising to follow the coastal road. The king's contingent was almost totally destroyed by the Seljuqs on October 25, 1147, at the second Battle of Dorylaeum.

## French Route

The French crusaders departed from Metz in June 1147, led by Louis, Thierry of Alsace, Renaut I of Bar, Amadeus III, Count of Savoy and his half-brother William V of Montferrat, William VII of Auvergne, and others, along with armies from Lorraine, Brittany, Burgundy, and Aquitaine. A force from Provence, led by Alphonse of Toulouse, chose to wait until August and cross by sea. At Worms, Louis joined with crusaders from Normandy and England.

They followed Conrad's route fairly peacefully, although Louis came into conflict with King Geza of Hungary when Geza discovered Louis had allowed an attempted Hungarian usurper to join his army. Relations within Byzantine territory were grim, and the Lorrainers, who had marched ahead of the rest of the French,

also came into conflict with the slower Germans whom they met on the way.

The French met the remnants of Conrad's army at Lopadion, and Conrad joined Louis's force. They followed Otto of Freising's route, moving closer to the Mediterranean coast, and they arrived at Ephesus in December, where they learned that the Turks were preparing to attack them. Manuel had sent ambassadors complaining about the pillaging and plundering that Louis had done along the way, and there was no guarantee that the Byzantines would assist them against the Turks. Meanwhile, Conrad fell sick and returned to Constantinople, where Manuel attended to him personally, and Louis, paying no attention to the warnings of a Turkish attack, marched out from Ephesus with the French and German survivors. The Turks were indeed waiting to attack, but in a small battle outside Ephesus, the French and Germans were victorious.

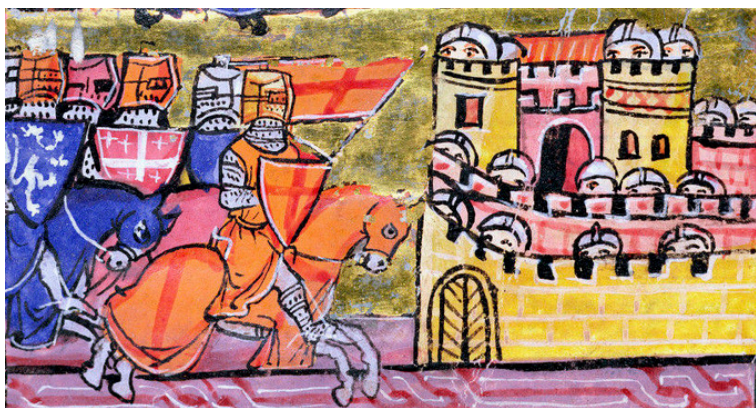
They reached Laodicea on the Lycus early in January 1148, around the same time Otto of Freising's army had been destroyed in the same area. After resuming the march, the vanguard under Amadeus of Savoy was separated from the rest of the army at Mount Cadmus, and Louis's troops suffered heavy losses from the Turks. After being delayed for a month by storms, most of the promised ships from Provence did not arrive at all. Louis and his associates claimed the ships that did make it for themselves, while the rest of the army had to resume the long march to Antioch. The army was almost entirely destroyed, either by the Turks or by sickness.

## Siege of Damascus

The remains of the German and French armies eventually continued on to Jerusalem, where they planned an attack on the Muslim forces in Damascus. The Crusaders decided to attack Damascus from the west, where orchards would provide them with a constant food

supply. They arrived at Daraiya on July 23. The following day, the well-prepared Muslims constantly attacked the army advancing through the orchards outside Damascus. The defenders had sought help from Saif ad-Din Ghazi I of Mosul and Nur ad-Din of Aleppo, who personally led an attack on the Crusader camp. The Crusaders were pushed back from the walls into the orchards, where they were prone to ambushes and guerrilla attacks.

According to William of Tyre, on July 27 the Crusaders decided to move to the plain on the eastern side of the city, which was less heavily fortified, but also had much less food and water. Some records indicate that Unur had bribed the leaders to move to a less defensible position, and that Unur had promised to break off his alliance with Nur ad-Din if the Crusaders went home. Meanwhile, Nur ad-Din and Saif ad-Din had by now arrived. With Nur ad-Din in the field it was impossible for the Crusaders to return to their better position. The local Crusader lords refused to carry on with the siege, and the three kings had no choice but to abandon the city. First Conrad, then the rest of the army, decided to retreat to Jerusalem on July 28, and they were followed the whole way by Turkish archers, who constantly harassed them.



**Siege of Damascus:** A print of the Siege of Damascus.

## Aftermath

Each of the Christian forces felt betrayed by the other. In Germany, the Crusade was seen as a huge debacle, with many monks writing that it could only have been the work of the Devil. Despite the distaste for the memory of the Second Crusade, the experience had notable impact on German literature, with many epic poems of the late 12th century featuring battle scenes clearly inspired by the fighting in the crusade. The cultural impact of the Second Crusade was even greater in France. Unlike Conrad, the Louis's image was improved by the crusade, with many of the French seeing him as a suffering pilgrim king who quietly bore God's punishments.

Relations between the Eastern Roman Empire and the French were badly damaged by the Second Crusade. Louis and other French leaders openly accused Emperor Manuel I of colluding with Turkish attackers during the march across Asia Minor. The memory of the Second Crusade was to color French views of the Byzantines for the rest of the 12th and 13th centuries.

## The Third Crusade

The Third Crusade (1189–1192) was an attempt by European leaders to reconquer the Holy Land from the Muslim sultan Saladin; it resulted in the capture of the important cities Acre and Jaffa, but failed to capture Jerusalem, the main motivation of the crusade.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Compare and contrast the Third Crusade with the first two

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- After the failure of the Second Crusade, the Zengid dynasty controlled a unified Syria and engaged in a successful conflict with the Fatimid rulers of Egypt; the Egyptian and Syrian forces were ultimately unified under Saladin, who employed them to reduce the Christian states and recapture Jerusalem in 1187.
- The Crusaders, mainly under the leadership of King Richard of England, captured Acre and Jaffa on their way to Jerusalem.
- Because of conflict with King Richard and to settle succession disputes, the German and French armies left the crusade early, weakening the Christian forces.
- After trying to overtake Jerusalem and having Jaffa change hands several times, Richard and Saladin finalized a treaty granting Muslim control over Jerusalem but allowing unarmed Christian pilgrims and merchants to visit the city.

- The Third Crusade differed from the First Crusade in several ways: kings led the armies into battle, it was in response to European losses, and it resulted in a treaty.

### *Key Terms*

- **Richard the Lionheart:** King of England from July 6, 1189, until his death; famous for his reputation as a great military leader and warrior.
- **Saladin:** The first sultan of Egypt and Syria and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty; he led the Muslim military campaign against the Crusader states in the Levant.

## Overview

The Third Crusade (1189–1192), also known as The Kings' Crusade, was an attempt by European leaders to reconquer the Holy Land from Saladin. The campaign was largely successful, capturing the important cities of Acre and Jaffa, and reversing most of Saladin's conquests, but it failed to capture Jerusalem, the emotional and spiritual motivation of the crusade.

After the failure of the Second Crusade, the Zengid dynasty controlled a unified Syria and engaged in a conflict with the Fatimid rulers of Egypt. The Egyptian and Syrian forces were ultimately unified under Saladin, who employed them to reduce the Christian states and recapture Jerusalem in 1187. Spurred by religious zeal,

King Henry II of England and King Philip II of France (known as Philip Augustus) ended their conflict with each other to lead a new crusade. The death of Henry in 1189, however, meant the English contingent came under the command of his successor, King Richard I of England (known as Richard the Lionheart). The elderly Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa also responded to the call to arms, leading a massive army across Anatolia, but he drowned in a river in Asia Minor on June 10, 1190, before reaching the Holy Land. His death caused tremendous grief among the German Crusaders, and most of his troops returned home.

After the Crusaders had driven the Muslims from Acre, Philip and Frederick's successor, Leopold V, Duke of Austria (known as Leopold the Virtuous), left the Holy Land in August 1191. On September 2, 1192, Richard and Saladin finalized a treaty granting Muslim control over Jerusalem but allowing unarmed Christian pilgrims and merchants to visit the city. Richard departed the Holy Land on October 2. The successes of the Third Crusade allowed the Crusaders to maintain considerable states in Cyprus and on the Syrian coast. However, the failure to recapture Jerusalem would lead to the Fourth Crusade.

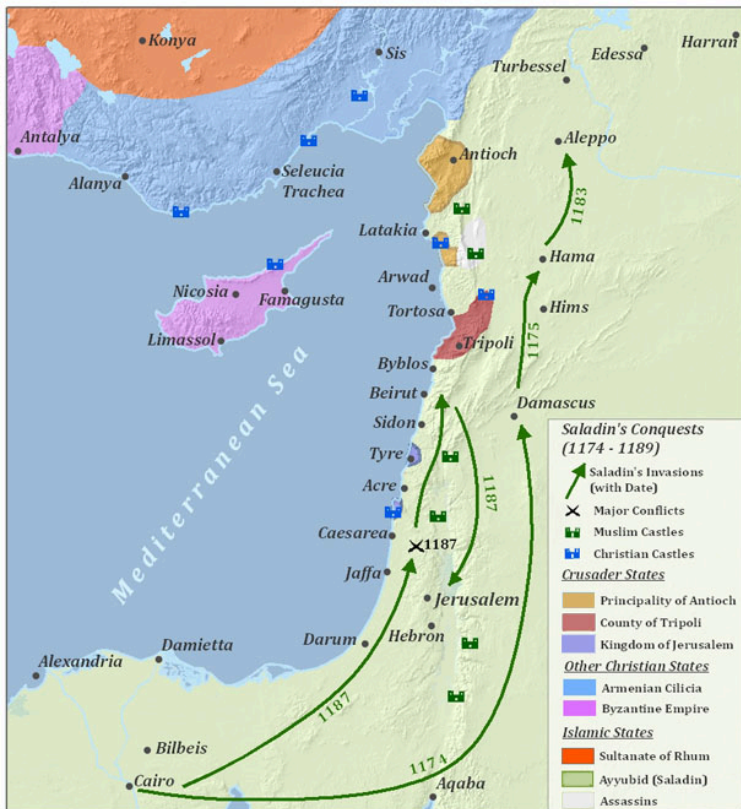
## Background

One of the major differences between the First and Third Crusades is that by the time of the Third Crusade, and to a certain degree during the Second, the Muslim opponents had unified under a single powerful leader. At the time of the First Crusade, the Middle East was severely divided by warring rulers. Without a unified front opposing them, the Christian troops were able to conquer Jerusalem, as well as the other Crusader states. But under the powerful force of the Seljuq Turks during the Second Crusade and the even more unified power of Saladin during the Third, the



Europeans were unable to achieve their ultimate aim of holding Jerusalem.

After the failure of the Second Crusade, Nur ad-Din Zangi had control of Damascus and a unified Syria. Nur ad-Din also took over Egypt through an alliance, and appointed Saladin the sultan of these territories. After Nur ad-Din's death, Saladin also took over Acre and Jerusalem, thereby wresting control of Palestine from the Crusaders, who had conquered the area 88 years earlier. Pope Urban III is said to have collapsed and died upon hearing this news, but it is not actually feasible that tidings of the fall of Jerusalem could have reached him by the time he died, although he did know of the battle of Hattin and the fall of Acre.



**Saladin's Conquest (1174-1189):** Map of Saladin's Conquest into the Levant, including invasions routes, major conflicts, strongholds, and occupations.

## Siege of Acre

The Siege of Acre was one of the first confrontations of the Third Crusade, and a key victory for the Crusaders but a serious defeat for Saladin, who had hoped to destroy the whole of the Crusader kingdom.

Richard arrived at Acre on June 8, 1191, and immediately began supervising the construction of siege weapons to assault the city,

which was captured on July 12. Richard, Philip, and Leopold quarreled over the spoils of the victory. Richard cast down the German flag from the city, slighting Leopold. The rest of the German army returned home.

On July 31, Philip also returned home, to settle the succession in Vermandois and Flanders, and Richard was left in sole charge of the Christian expeditionary forces. As in the Second Crusade, these disagreements and divisions within the European armies led to a weakening of the Christian forces.



**Siege of Acre:** The Siege of Acre was the first major confrontation of the Third Crusade.

## Battle of Arsuf

After the capture of Acre, Richard decided to march to the city of Jaffa. Control of Jaffa was necessary before an attack on Jerusalem could be attempted. On September 7, 1191, however, Saladin attacked Richard's army at Arsuf, thirty miles north of Jaffa. Richard then ordered a general counterattack, which won the battle. Arsuf was an important victory. The Muslim army was not destroyed, despite the considerable casualties it suffered, but it was scattered; this was considered shameful by the Muslims and boosted the morale of the Crusaders. Richard was able to take, defend, and hold Jaffa, a strategically crucial move toward securing Jerusalem. By depriving Saladin of the coast, Richard seriously threatened his hold on Jerusalem.

## Advances on Jerusalem and Negotiations

Following his victory at Arsuf, Richard took Jaffa and established his new headquarters there. In November 1191 the Crusader army advanced inland toward Jerusalem. On December 12 Saladin was forced by pressure from his emirs to disband the greater part of his army. Learning this, Richard pushed his army forward, spending Christmas at Latrun. The army then marched to Beit Nuba, only twelve miles from Jerusalem. Muslim morale in Jerusalem was so low that the arrival of the Crusaders would probably have caused the city to fall quickly. Appallingly bad weather—cold with heavy rain and hailstorms—combined with fear that if the Crusader army besieged Jerusalem it might be trapped by a relieving force, led to the decision to retreat back to the coast. In July 1192, Saladin's army suddenly attacked and captured Jaffa with thousands of men.

Richard was intending to return to England when he heard the news that Saladin and his army had captured Jaffa. Richard and

a small force of little more than 2,000 men went to Jaffa by sea in a surprise attack. They stormed Jaffa from their ships and the Ayyubids, who had been unprepared for a naval attack, were driven from the city.

On September 2, 1192, following his defeat at Jaffa, Saladin was forced to finalize a treaty with Richard providing that Jerusalem would remain under Muslim control, but allowing unarmed Christian pilgrims and traders to visit the city. The city of Ascalon was a contentious issue, as it threatened communication between Saladin's dominions in Egypt and Syria; it was eventually agreed that Ascalon, with its defenses demolished, be returned to Saladin's control. Richard departed the Holy Land on October 9, 1192.

## Aftermath and Comparisons

Neither side was entirely satisfied with the results of the war. Though Richard's victories had deprived the Muslims of important coastal territories and re-established a viable Frankish state in Palestine, many Christians in the Latin West felt disappointed that Richard had elected not to pursue the recapture of Jerusalem. Likewise, many in the Islamic world felt disturbed that Saladin had failed to drive the Christians out of Syria and Palestine. However, trade flourished throughout the Middle East and in port cities along the Mediterranean coastline.

The motivations and results of the Third Crusade differed from those of the First in several ways. Many historians contend that the motivations for the Third Crusade were more political than religious, thereby giving rise to the disagreements between the German, French, and English armies throughout the crusade. By the end, only Richard of England was left, and his small force was unable to finally overtake Saladin, despite successes at Acre and Jaffa. This infighting severely weakened the power of the European forces.

In addition, unlike the First Crusade, in the Second and Third

Crusades kings led Crusaders into battle. The presence of European kings in battle set the armies up for instability, for the monarchs had to ensure their own territories were not threatened during their absence. During the Third Crusade, both the German and French armies were forced to return home to settle succession disputes and stabilize their kingdoms.

Furthermore, both the Second and Third Crusades were in response to European losses, first the fall of the Kingdom of Edessa and then the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin. These defensive expeditions could be seen as lacking the religious fervor and initiative of the First Crusade, which was entirely on the terms of the Christian armies.

Finally, the Third Crusade resulted in a treaty that left Jerusalem under Muslim dominion but allowed Christians access for trading and pilgrimage. In the past two crusades, the result had been to conquer and massacre or retreat, with no compromise or middle ground achieved. Despite the agreement in the Third Crusade, the failure to overtake Jerusalem led to still another crusade soon after.

## The Fourth Crusade

Crusading became increasingly widespread in terms of geography and objectives during the 13th century and beyond, and crusades were aimed more at maintaining political and religious control over Europe than reclaiming the Holy Land.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the failures of the Fourth Crusade

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Terms*

- **Crusader states:** A number of mostly 12th- and 13th-century feudal states created by Western European crusaders in Asia Minor, Greece, and the Holy Land, and in the eastern Baltic area during the Northern Crusades.
- **Great Schism:** The break of communion between what are now the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches, which has lasted since the 11th century.
- **Knights Templar:** Among the wealthiest and most powerful of the Western Christian military orders; prominent actors in the Crusades.
- **heretics:** People who holds beliefs or theories that are strongly at variance with established beliefs or customs, especially those held by the Roman Catholic Church.

## Evolution of the Crusades

The Crusades were a series of religious wars undertaken by the Latin church between the 11th and 15th centuries. Crusades were fought for many reasons: to capture Jerusalem, recapture Christian territory, or defend Christians in non-Christian lands; as a means of conflict resolution among Roman Catholics; for political or territorial advantage; and to combat paganism and heresy.

The First Crusade arose after a call to arms in 1095 sermons by Pope Urban II. Urban urged military support for the Byzantine Empire and its Emperor, Alexios I, who needed reinforcements for his conflict with westward-migrating Turks in Anatolia. One of Urban's main aims was to guarantee pilgrims access to the holy sites in the Holy Land that were under Muslim control. Urban's wider strategy may have been to unite the eastern and western branches of Christendom, which had been divided since their split in 1054, and establish himself as head of the unified church. Regardless of the motivation, the response to Urban's preaching by people of many different classes across Western Europe established the precedent for later crusades.

As a result of the First Crusade, four primary Crusader states were created: the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch, and the County of Tripoli. On a popular level, the First Crusade unleashed a wave of impassioned, pious Catholic fury, which was expressed in the massacres of Jews that accompanied the Crusades and the violent treatment of the "schismatic" Orthodox Christians of the east.

Under the papacies of Calixtus II, Honorius II, Eugenius III, and Innocent II, smaller-scale crusading continued around the Crusader states in the early 12th century. The Knights Templar were recognized, and grants of crusading indulgences to those who opposed papal enemies are seen by some historians as the beginning of politically motivated crusades. The loss of Edessa in 1144 to Imad ad-Din Zengi led to preaching for what subsequently became known as the Second Crusade. King Louis VII and Conrad III led armies from France and Germany to Jerusalem and Damascus without winning any major victories. Bernard of Clairvaux, who had encouraged the Second Crusade in his preachings, was upset with the violence and slaughter directed toward the Jewish population of the Rhineland.

In 1187 Saladin united the enemies of the Crusader states, was victorious at the Battle of Hattin, and retook Jerusalem. According to Benedict of Peterborough, Pope Urban III died of deep sadness



on October 19, 1187, upon hearing news of the defeat. His successor, Pope Gregory VIII, issued a papal bull that proposed a third crusade to recapture Jerusalem. This crusade failed to win control of Jerusalem from the Muslims, but did result in a treaty that allowed trading and pilgrimage there for Europeans.

Crusading became increasingly widespread in terms of geography and objectives during the 13th century; crusades were aimed at maintaining political and religious control over Europe and beyond and were not exclusively focused on the Holy Land. In Northern Europe the Catholic church continued to battle peoples whom they considered pagans; Popes such as Celestine III, Innocent III, Honorius III, and Gregory IX preached crusade against the Livonians, Prussians, and Russians. In the early 13th century, Albert of Riga established Riga as the seat of the Bishopric of Riga and formed the Livonian Brothers of the Sword to convert the pagans to Catholicism and protect German commerce.

## Fourth Crusade

Innocent III began preaching what became the Fourth Crusade in 1200 in France, England, and Germany, but primarily in France. The Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) was a Western European armed expedition originally intended to conquer Muslim-controlled Jerusalem by means of an invasion through Egypt. Instead, a sequence of events culminated in the Crusaders sacking the city of Constantinople, the capital of the Christian-controlled Byzantine Empire. The Fourth Crusade never came to within 1,000 miles of its objective of Jerusalem, instead conquering Byzantium twice before being routed by the Bulgars at Adrianople.

In January 1203, en route to Jerusalem, the majority of the Crusader leadership entered into an agreement with the Byzantine prince Alexios Angelos to divert to Constantinople and restore his deposed father as emperor. The intention of the Crusaders was then

to continue to the Holy Land with promised Byzantine financial and military assistance. On June 23, 1203, the main Crusader fleet reached Constantinople. Smaller contingents continued to Acre.

In August 1203, following clashes outside Constantinople, Alexios Angelos was crowned co-emperor (as Alexios IV Angelos) with Crusader support. However, in January 1204, he was deposed by a popular uprising in Constantinople. The Western Crusaders were no longer able to receive their promised payments, and when Alexios was murdered on February 8, 1204, the Crusaders and Venetians decided on the outright conquest of Constantinople. In April 1204, they captured and brutally sacked the city and set up a new Latin Empire, as well as partitioned other Byzantine territories among themselves.

Byzantine resistance based in unconquered sections of the empire such as Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epirus ultimately recovered Constantinople in 1261.

The Fourth Crusade is considered to be one of the final acts in the Great Schism between the Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church, and a key turning point in the decline of the Byzantine Empire and Christianity in the Near East.



**Conquest of Constantinople:** A Medieval painting of the Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204.

## Later Crusades

After the failure of the Fourth Crusade to hold Constantinople or reach Jerusalem, Innocent III launched the first crusade against heretics, the Albigensian Crusade, against the Cathars in France and the County of Toulouse. Over the early decades of the century the Cathars were driven underground while the French monarchy asserted control over the region. Andrew II of Hungary waged the Bosnian Crusade against the Bosnian church, which was theologically Catholic but in long-term schism with the Roman Catholic Church. The conflict only ended with the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241. In the Iberian peninsula, Crusader privileges were given to those aiding the Templars, the Hospitallers, and the Iberian orders that merged with the Order of Calatrava and the Order of Santiago. The papacy declared frequent Iberian crusades, and from 1212 to 1265 the Christian kingdoms drove the Muslims back to the Emirate of Granada, which held out until 1492, when the Muslims and Jews were expelled from the peninsula.

Around this time, popularity and energy for the Crusades declined. One factor in the decline was the disunity and conflict among Latin Christian interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Pope Martin IV compromised the papacy by supporting Charles of Anjou, and tarnished its spiritual luster with botched secular “crusades” against Sicily and Aragon. The collapse of the papacy’s moral authority and the rise of nationalism rang the death knell for crusading, ultimately leading to the Avignon Papacy and the Western Schism. The mainland Crusader states were extinguished with the fall of Tripoli in 1289 and the fall of Acre in 1291.

Centuries later, during the middle of the 15th century, the Latin church tried to organize a new crusade aimed at restoring the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, which was gradually being torn down by the advancing Ottoman Turks. The attempt failed, however, as the vast majority of Greek civilians and a growing part of their clergy refused to recognize and accept the short-lived near-

union of the churches of East and West signed at the Council of Florence and Ferrara by the Ecumenical patriarch Joseph II of Constantinople. The Greek population, reacting to the Latin conquest, believed that the Byzantine civilization that revolved around the Orthodox faith would be more secure under Ottoman Islamic rule. Overall, religious-observant Greeks preferred to sacrifice their political freedom and political independence in order to preserve their faith's traditions and rituals in separation from the Roman See.

In the late-14th and early-15th centuries, “crusades” on a limited scale were organized by the kingdoms of Hungary, Poland, Wallachia, and Serbia. These were not the traditional expeditions aimed at the recovery of Jerusalem but rather defensive campaigns intended to prevent further expansion to the west by the Ottoman Empire.

# 75. Assignments

## Week 13

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – “*Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.*”
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.
- It is acceptable to analyze. “*The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.*”

- It is not acceptable to editorialize. *“The author is super biased against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”*
- Don’t worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

# 76. Primary Source Reading

## 6: Travels of Sir John Mandeville (table of Contents)

### Primary Source Reading: The Travels of Sir John Mandeville

Sir John Mandeville

PROLOGUE

CHAPTER I: To teach you the way out of England to Constantinople

CHAPTER II: Of the cross and the crown of our Lord Jesu Christ

CHAPTER III: Of the city of Constantinople, and of the faith of Greeks

CHAPTER IV: [Of the Way from Constantinople to Jerusalem.] Of Saint John the Evangelist. And of the Ypocras Daughter, transformed from a Woman to a Dragon

CHAPTER V: [Of diversities in Cyprus; of the Road from Cyprus to Jerusalem, and of the Marvel of a Fosse full of Sand]

CHAPTER VI: Of many names of Soldans, and of the Tower Of Babylon

CHAPTER VII: Of the country of Egypt; of the bird phoenix of Arabia; of the city of Cairo; of the cunning to know balm and to prove it; and of the garners of Joseph

CHAPTER VIII: Of the isle of Sicily; of the way from Babylon to the Mount Sinai; of the church of Saint Catherine and of all the marvels there

CHAPTER IX: Of the desert between the church of Saint Catherine and Jerusalem. Of the dry tree; and how roses came first into the world

CHAPTER X: Of the pilgrimages in Jerusalem, and of the holy places thereabout

CHAPTER XI: Of the temple of our Lord. Of the cruelty of King Herod. Of the Mount Sion. Of probatica piscina; and of natatorium siloe

CHAPTER XII: Of the Dead Sea; and of the flome Jordan. Of the head of Saint John the Baptist; and of the usages of the Samaritans

CHAPTER XIII: Of the province of Galilee, and where antichrist shall be born. Of Nazareth. Of the age of Our Lady. Of the day of doom. And of the customs of Jacobites, Syrians; and of the usages of Georgians

CHAPTER XIV: Of the city of Damascus. Of three ways to Jerusalem; one, by land and by sea; another, more by land than by sea; and the third way to Jerusalem, all by land

CHAPTER XV: Of the customs of Saracens, and of their law. And how the Soldan reasoned me, author of this book; and of the beginning of Mohammed

CHAPTER XVI: Of the lands of Albania and of Libia. Of the wishings for watching of the sparrow-hawk; and of Noah's ship

CHAPTER XVII: Of the land of Job; and of his age. Of the array of men of Chaldea. Of the land where women dwell without company of men. Of the knowledge and virtues of the very diamond

CHAPTER XVIII: Of the customs of isles about Ind. Of the difference betwixt idols and simulacres. Of three manner growing of pepper upon one tree. Of the well that changeth his odour every hour of the day; and that is marvel

CHAPTER XIX: Of the dooms made by St. Thomas's hand. Of devotion and sacrifice made to idols there, in the city of Calamye; and of the procession in going about the city

CHAPTER XX: Of the evil customs used in the isle of Lamary. And how the earth and the sea be of round form and shape, by proof of the star that is clept Antarctic, that is fixed in the south



CHAPTER XXI: Of the palace of the king of the isle of Java. Of the trees that bear meal, honey, wine, and venom; and of other marvels and customs used in the isles marching thereabout

CHAPTER XXII: How men know by the idol, if the sick shall die or not. Of folk of diverse shape and marvellously disfigured. And of the monks that gave their relief to baboons, apes, and marmosets, and to other beasts

CHAPTER XXIII: Of the Great Chan of Cathay. Of the royalty of his palace, and how he sits at meat; and of the great number of officers that serve him

CHAPTER XXIV: Wherefore he is clept the Great Chan. Of the style of his letters, and of the superscription about his great seal and his privy seal

CHAPTER XXV: Of the governance of the Great Chan's court, and when he maketh solemn feasts. Of his philosophers. And of his array, when he rideth by the country

CHAPTER XXVI: Of the law and the customs of the Tartarians dwelling in Cathay. And how that men do when the emperor shall die, and how he shall be chosen

CHAPTER XXVII: Of the realm of Tharse and the lands and kingdoms towards the septentrional parts, in coming down from the land of Cathay

CHAPTER XXVIII: The emperor of Persia, and of the land of darkness; and of other kingdoms that belong to the Great Chan of Cathay, and other lands of his, unto the sea of Greece

CHAPTER XXIX: Of the countries and isles that be beyond the land of Cathay; and of the fruits there; and of twenty-two kings enclosed within the mountains

CHAPTER XXX: Of the royal estate of Prester John. And of a rich man that made a marvellous castle and cleped it paradise; and of his subtlety

CHAPTER XXXI: Of the devil's head in the valley perilous. And of the customs of folk in diverse isles that be about in the lordship of Prester John

CHAPTER XXXII: Of the goodness of the folk of the isle of

Bragman. Of King Alexander. And wherefore the emperor of Ind is clept Prester John

CHAPTER XXXIII: Of the hills of gold that Pismires keep. And of the four floods that come from paradise terrestrial

CHAPTER XXXIV: Of the customs of kings and other that dwell in the isles coasting to Prester John's land. And of the worship that the son doth to the father when he is dead

# 77. Primary Source Reading 6: Sir John Mandeville (Excerpts)

## Primary Source Reading: Sir John Mandeville Explorer

Sir John Mandeville

*Sir John Mandeville is the supposed author of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a travel memoir which first circulated between 1357 and 1371. The earliest surviving text is in French. By aid of translations into many other languages, the work acquired extraordinary popularity. Despite the extremely unreliable and often fantastical nature of the travels it describes, it was used as a work of reference—Christopher Columbus, for example, was heavily influenced by it. Although the book is real, it is widely believed that “Sir John Mandeville” himself was not. Common theories point to a Frenchman by the name of Jehan a la Barbe. Recent scholarly work suggests that *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* was “the work of Jan de Langhe, a Fleming who wrote in Latin under the name Johannes Longus and in French as Jean le Long. Jan de Langhe was born in Ypres early in the 1300s and by 1334 had become a Benedictine monk.*

### **Chapter I**

*To teach you the Way out of England to Constantinople*

*In the name of God, Glorious and Almighty!*

*He that will pass over the sea and come to land [to go to the city of Jerusalem, he may wend many ways, both on sea and land], after the country that he cometh from; [for] many of them come to one end. But troweth not that I will tell you all the towns, and cities and*

castles that men shall go by; for then should I make too long a tale; but all only some countries and most principal steads that men shall go through to go the right way.

First, if a man come from the west side of the world, as England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, or Norway, he may, if that he will, go through Almayne and through the kingdom of Hungary, that marcheth to the land of Polayne, and to the land of Pannonia, and so to Silesia.

And men pass through the land of Pyncemartz and come to Greece to the city of Nye, and to the city of Fynepape, and after to the city of Dandrenoble, and after to Constantinople, that was wont to be clept Bezanon. And there dwelleth commonly the Emperor of Greece. And there is the most fair church and the most noble of all the world; and it is of Saint Sophie.

## **Chapter II**

### *Of the Cross and the Crown of our Lord Jesu Christ*

At Constantinople is the cross of our Lord Jesu Christ, and his coat without seams, that is clept *Tunica inconsutilis*, and the sponge, and the reed, of the which the Jews gave our Lord eysell and gall, in the cross. And there is one of the nails, which Christ was nailed with on the cross.

And some men trow that half the cross, that Christ was done on be in Cyprus, in an abbey.

This holy cross had the Jews hid in the earth, under a rock of the mount of Calvary; and it lay there two hundred year and more, into the time that St. Helen, that was mother to Constantine the Emperor of Rome. And she was daughter of King Cole, born in Colchester, that was King of England, that was clept then Britain the more; the which the Emperor Constance wedded to his wife, for her beauty, and gat upon her Constantine, that was after Emperor of Rome, and King of England.

And if all it be so, that men say, that this crown is of thorns, ye shall understand, that it was of jonkes of the sea, that is to say, rushes of the sea, that prick as sharply as thorns. For I have seen and beholden many times that of Paris and that of Constantinople;

for they were both one, made of rushes of the sea. But men have departed them in two parts: of the which, one part is at Paris, and the other part is at Constantinople. And I have one of those precious thorns, that seemeth like a white thorn; and that was given to me for great specially. For there are many of them broken and fallen into the vessel that the crown lieth in; for they break for dryness when men move them to show them to great lords that come thither.

And after he was led into the chamber of Pilate, and there he was examined and crowned. And the Jews set him in a chair, and clad him in a mantle; and there made they the crown of jonkes of the sea; and there they kneeled to him, and scorned him, saying, Ave, Rex Judeorum! That is to say, 'Hail, King of Jews!' And of this crown, half is at Paris, and the other half at Constantinople. And this crown had Christ on his head, when he was done upon the cross; and therefore ought men to worship it and hold it more worthy than any of the others.

### **Chapter III**

#### *Of the City of Constantinople , and of the Faith of Greeks*

At Constantinople lieth Saint Anne, our Lady's mother, whom Saint Helen let bring from Jerusalem. And there lieth also the body of John Chrisostome that was Archbishop of Constantinople. And there lieth also Saint Luke the Evangelist: for his bones were brought from Bethany, where he was buried. And many other relics be there. And there is the vessel of stone, as it were of marble, that men clepe enydros, that evermore droppeth water, and filleth himself every year, till that it go over above, without that that men take from within.

Constantinople is a full fair city, and a good, and well walled; and it is three-cornered. And there is an arm of the sea Hellespont: and some men call it the Mouth of Constantinople; and some men call it the Brace of Saint George: and that arm closeth the two parts of the city. And upward to the sea, upon the water, was wont to be the great city of Troy, in a full fair plain: but that city was destroyed by them of Greece, and little appeareth thereof, because it is so long sith it was destroyed.

In this country be right high hills, toward the end of Macedonia. And there is a great hill, that men clepe Olympus that departeth Macedonia and Thrace. And it is so high, that it passeth the clouds. And there is another hill that is clept Athos that is so high, that the shadow of him reacheth to Lemne, that is an isle; and it is seventy-six mile between. And above at the cop of the hill is the air so clear, that men may find no wind there, and therefore may no beast live there, so is the air dry.

And men say in these countries, that philosophers some time went upon these hills, and held to their nose a sponge moisted with water, for to have air; for the air above was so dry. And above, in the dust and in the powder of those hills, they wrote letters and figures with their fingers. And at the year's end they came again, and found the same letters and figures, which they had written the year before, without any default. And therefore it seemeth well, that these hills pass the clouds and join to the pure air.

At Constantinople is the palace of the emperor, right fair and well-dight: and therein is a fair place for joustings, or for other plays and desports. And it is made with stages, and hath degrees about, that every man may well see, and none grieve other. And under these stages be stables well vaulted for the emperor's horses; and all the pillars be of marble.

#### **Chapter IV**

*Of the Way from Constantinople to Jerusalem – Of Saint John the Evangelist. And of the Ypocras Daughter, transformed from a Woman to a Dragon*

Now return I again, for to teach you the way from Constantinople to Jerusalem. He that will through Turkey, he goeth toward the city of Nyke, and passeth through the gate of Chienetout, and always men see before them the hill of Chienetout, that is right high; and it is a mile and an half from Nyke.

And whoso will go by water, by the brace of St. George, and by the sea where St. Nicholas lieth, and toward many other places—first men go to an isle that is clept Sylo. In that isle groweth mastick on

small trees, and out of them cometh gum as it were of plum-trees or of cherry-trees.

And after go men through the isle of Patmos; and there wrote St. John the Evangelist the Apocalypse. And ye shall understand, that St. John was of age thirty-two year, when our Lord suffered his passion; and after his passion, he lived sixty-seven year, and in the hundredth year of his age he died.

From Patmos men go unto Ephesus, a fair city and nigh to the sea. And there died St. John, and was buried behind the high altar in a tomb. And there is a fair church; for Christian men were wont to holden that place always. And in the tomb of St. John is nought but manna that is clept angels' meat; for his body was translated into Paradise. And Turks hold now all that place, and the city and the church; and all Asia the less is y-clept Turkey. And ye shall understand, that St. John let make his grave there in his life, and laid himself therein all quick; and therefore some men say, that he died not, but that he resteth there till the day of doom. And, forsooth, there is a great marvel; for men may see there the earth of the tomb apertly many times stir and move, as there were quick things under.

And from Ephesus men go through many isles in the sea, unto the city of Patera, where St. Nicholas was born, and so to Martha, where he was chosen to be bishop; and there groweth right good wine and strong, and that men call wine of Martha. And from thence go men to the isle of Crete, that the emperor gave sometime to [the] Genoese.

And then pass men through the isles of Colcos and of Lango, of which isles Ypocras was lord of. And some men say, that in the isle of Lango is yet the daughter of Ypocras, in form and likeness of a great dragon that is a hundred fathom of length, as men say, for I have not seen her. And they of the isles call her Lady of the Land. And she lieth in an old castle, in a cave, and sheweth twice or thrice in the year, and she doth no harm to no man, but if men do her harm. And she was thus changed and transformed, from a fair damosel, into likeness of a dragon, by a goddess that was clept Diana. And men say, that she shall so endure in that form of a dragon, unto [the] time

that a knight come, that is so hardy, that dare come to her and kiss her on the mouth; and then shall she turn again to her own kind, and be a woman again, but after that she shall not live long.

And it is not long sithen that a knight of Rhodes, that was hardy and doughty in arms, said that he would kiss her. And when he was upon his courser, and went to the castle, and entered into the cave, the dragon lift up her head against him. And when the knight saw her in that form so hideous and so horrible he fled away. And the dragon bare the knight upon a rock, maugre his head; and from that rock, she cast him into the sea. And so was lost both horse and man.

And also a young man, that wist not of the dragon, went out of a ship, and went through the isle till that he came to the castle, and came into the cave, and went so long, till that he found a chamber; and there he saw a damosel that combed her head and looked in a mirror; and she had much treasure about her. And he trowed that she had been a common woman, that dwelled there to receive men to folly. And he abode, till the damosel saw the shadow of him in the mirror. And she turned her toward him, and asked him what he would? And he said, he would be her leman or paramour. And she asked him, if that he were a knight? And he said, nay. And then she said, that he might not be her leman; but she bade him go again unto his fellows, and make him knight, and come again upon the morrow, and she should come out of the cave before him, and then come and kiss her on the mouth and have no dread,—for I shall do thee no manner of harm, albeit that thou see me in likeness of a dragon; for though thou see me hideous and horrible to look on, I do thee to wit that it is made by enchantment; for without doubt, I am none other than thou seest now, a woman, and therefore dread thee nought. And if thou kiss me, thou shalt have all this treasure, and be my lord, and lord also of all the isle.

And he departed from her and went to his fellows to ship, and let make him knight and came again upon the morrow for to kiss this damosel. And when he saw her come out of the cave in form of a dragon, so hideous and so horrible, he had so great dread, that he fled again to the ship, and she followed him. And when she



saw that he turned not again, she began to cry, as a thing that had much sorrow; and then she turned again into her cave. And anon the knight died. And sithen hitherward might no knight see her, but that he died anon. But when a knight cometh, that is so hardy to kiss her, he shall not die; but he shall turn the damosel into her right form and kindly shape, and he shall be lord of all the countries and isles above said.

And from thence men come to the isle of Rhodes, which isle Hospitallers holden and govern; and that took they some-time from the emperor. And it was wont to be clept Collos; and so call it the Turks yet. And Saint Paul in his epistle writeth to them of that isle *ad Colossenses*. This isle is nigh eight hundred mile long from Constantinople.

### **Chapter V**

*Of diversities in Cyprus ; of the Road from Cyprus to Jerusalem, and of the Marvel of a Fosse full of Sand*

And from this isle of Rhodes men go to Cyprus, where be many vines, that first be red and after one year they become white; and those wines that be most white, be most clear and best of smell.

And men pass by that way, by a place that was wont to be a great city, and a great land; and the city was clept Cathailye, which city and land was lost through folly of a young man. For he had a fair damosel, that he loved well to his paramour; and she died suddenly, and was done in a tomb of marble. And for the great lust that he had to her, he went in the night unto her tomb and opened it, and went in and lay by her, and went his way. And when it came to the end of nine months, there came a voice to him and said, Go to the tomb of that woman, and open it and behold what thou hast begotten on her; and if thou let to go, thou shalt have a great harm. And he yede and opened the tomb, and there flew out an adder right hideous to see; which as swithe flew about the city and the country, and soon after the city sank down. And there be many perilous passages without fail.

From Rhodes to Cyprus be five hundred mile and more. But men may go to Cyprus, and come not at Rhodes. Cyprus is right a good

isle, and a fair and a great, and it hath four principal cities within him. And there is an Archbishop at Nicosea, and four other bishops in that land. And at Famagost is one of the principal havens of the sea that is in the world; and there arrive Christian men and Saracens and men of all nations. In Cyprus is the Hill of the Holy Cross; and there is an abbey of monks black and there is the cross of Dismas the good thief, as I have said before. And some men trow, p. 20 that there is half the cross of our Lord; but it is not so, and they do evil that make men to believe so.

In Cyprus is the manner of lords and all other men all to eat on the earth. For they make ditches in the earth all about in the hall, deep to the knee, and they do pave them; and when they will eat, they go therein and sit there. And the skill is for they may be the more fresh; for that land is much more hotter than it is here. And at great feasts, and for strangers, they set forms and tables, as men do in this country, but they had lever sit in the earth.

And whoso will go long time on the sea, and come nearer to Jerusalem, he shall go from Cyprus by sea to Port Jaffa. For that is the next haven to Jerusalem; for from that haven is not but one day journey and a half to Jerusalem. And the town is called Jaffa; for one of the sons of Noah that hight Japhet founded it, and now it is clept Joppa. And ye shall understand that it is one of the oldest towns of the world, for it was founded before Noah's flood. And yet there sheweth in the rock, there as the iron chains were fastened, that Andromeda, a great giant, was bounden with, and put in prison before Noah's flood, of the which giant, is a rib of his side that is forty foot long.

## **Chapter VI**

*Of many Names of Soldans , and of the Tower of Babylon*

At Babylon there is a fair church of our Lady, where she dwelled seven year, when she fled out of the land of Judea for dread of King Herod. And there lieth the body of Saint Barbara the virgin and martyr. And there dwelled Joseph, when he was sold of his brethren. And there made Nebuchadnezzar the king put three children into the furnace of fire, for they were in the right truth of belief, the

which children men clept Anania, Azariah, Mishael, as the Psalm of *Benedicite* saith: but Nebuchadnezzar clept them otherwise, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that is to say, God glorious, God victorious, and God over all things and realms: and that was for the miracle, that he saw God's Son go with the children through the fire, as he said.

And wit ye well that the soldan may lead out of Egypt more than 20,000 men of arms, and out of Syria, and out of Turkey and out of other countries that he holds, he may arrere more than 50,000. And all those be at his p. 26 wages, and they be always at him, without the folk of his country, that is without number. And every each of them hath by year the mountance of six score florins; but it behoveth, that every of them hold three horses and a camel. And by the cities and by towns be admirals, that have the governance of the people; one hath to govern four, and another hath to govern five, another more, and another well more. And as many taketh the admiral by him alone, as all the other soldiers have under him; and therefore, when the soldan will advance any worthy knight, he maketh him an admiral. And when it is any dearth, the knights be right poor, and then they sell both their horse and their harness.

And the soldan hath four wives, one Christian and three Saracens, of which one dwelleth at Jerusalem, and another at Damascus, and another at Ascalon; and when them list, they remove to other cities, and when the soldan will he may go to visit them. And he hath as many paramours as him liketh. For he maketh to come before him the fairest and the noblest of birth, and the gentlest damosels of his country, and he maketh them to be kept and served full honorably. And when he will have one to lie with him, he maketh them all to come before him, and he beholdeth in all, which of them is most to his pleasure, and to her anon he sendeth or casteth a ring from his finger. And then anon she shall be bathed and richly attired, and anointed with delicate things of sweet smell, and then led to the soldan's chamber; and thus he doth as often as him list, when he will have any of them.

And understandeth, that that Babylon that I have spoken of, where

that the sultan dwelleth, is not that great Babylon where the diversity of languages was first made for vengeance by the miracle of God, when the great Tower of Babel was begun to be made; of the which the walls were sixty-four furlongs of height; that is in the great desert of Arabia, upon the way as men go toward the kingdom of Chaldea. But it is full long since that any man durst nigh to the tower; for it is all desert and full of dragons and great serpents, and full of diverse venomous beasts all about. That tower, with the city, was of twenty-five mile in circuit of the walls, as they of the country say, and as men may deem by estimation, after that men tell of the country.

And though it be clept the Tower of Babylon, yet nevertheless, there were ordained within many mansions and many great dwelling-places, in length and breadth. And that tower contained great country in circuit, for the tower alone contained ten mile square. That tower founded King Nimrod that was king of that country; and he was the first king of the world. And he let make an image in the likeness of his father, and constrained all his subjects for to worship it; and anon began other lords to do the same, and so began the idols and the simulacres first.

The town and the city were full well set in a fair country and a plain that men clepe the country of Samar, of which the walls of the city were two hundred cubits in height, and fifty cubits of deepness; and the river of Euphrates ran throughout the city and about the tower also. But Cyrus the King of Persia took from them the p. 28 river, and destroyed all the city and the tower also; for he departed that river in 360 small rivers, because that he had sworn, that he should put the river in such point, that a woman might well pass there, without casting off of her clothes, forasmuch as he had lost many worthy men that trowed to pass that river by swimming.

And beyond the river of Tigris is Chaldea that is a full great kingdom. In that realm, at Bagdad above-said, was wont to dwell the caliph, that was wont to be both as Emperor and Pope of the Arabians, so that he was lord spiritual and temporal; and he was successor to Mahommet, and of his generation. That city of Bagdad

was wont to be clept Sūtis, and Nebuchadnezzar founded it; and there dwelled the holy prophet Daniel, and there he saw visions of heaven, and there he made the exposition of dreams.

And in old time there were wont to be three caliphs, he of Arabia and of Chaldea dwelt in the city of Bagdad above-said; and at Cairo beside Babylon dwelt the Caliph of Egypt; and at Morocco, upon the West Sea, dwelt the Caliph of the people of Barbary and of Africans. And now is there none of the caliphs, nor nought have been since the time of the Soldan Saladin; for from that time hither the soldan clepeth himself caliph, and so have the caliphs lost their name.

That river of Nile, all the year, when the sun entereth into the sign of Cancer, it beginneth to wax, and it waxeth always as long as the sun is in Cancer and in the sign of the Lion; and it waxeth in such manner, that it is sometimes p. 30 so great, that it is twenty cubits or more of deepness, and then it doth great harm to the goods that be upon the land. For then may no man travail to plough the lands for the great moisture, and therefore is there dear time in that country. And also, when it waxeth little, it is dear time in that country, for default of moisture. And when the sun is in the sign of Virgo, then beginneth the river for to wane and to decrease little and little, so that when the sun is entered into the sign of Libra, then they enter between these rivers. This river cometh, running from Paradise terrestrial, between the deserts of Ind, and after it smiteth unto land, and runneth long time many great countries under earth. And after it goeth out under an high hill, that men clepe Alothe, that is between Ind and Ethiopia the mountance of five months' journeys from the entry of Ethiopia; and after it environeth all Ethiopia and Mauritania, and goeth all along from the land of Egypt unto the city of Alexandria to the end of Egypt, and there it falleth into the sea. About this river be many birds and fowls, as sikonies, that they clepen ibes.



PART XV

WEEK 14: ITALIAN  
CITY-STATES AND  
RENAISSANCE





# 78. Introduction

## Week 14

### Introduction

Christ before Pilate, an illuminated manuscript by Willem Vrelant

The Italian city-states were a political phenomenon of small independent states mostly in the central and northern Italian peninsula between the 9th and 15th centuries.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, urban settlements in Italy generally enjoyed a greater continuity than in the rest of western Europe. Many of these towns were survivors of earlier Etruscan, Umbrian and Roman towns which had existed within the Roman Empire. The republican institutions of Rome had also survived. Some feudal lords existed with a servile labor force and huge tracts of land, but by the 11th century, many cities, including Venice, Milan, Florence, Genoa, Pisa, Lucca, Cremona, Siena, Città di Castello, Perugia, and many others, had become large trading metropolises, able to obtain independence from their formal sovereigns.

map

# 79. Reading: The Renaissance

# Introduction to the Renaissance

The Renaissance was a cultural movement that began in Italy in the 14th century, and spread to the rest of Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the influences of the Renaissance and historical perspectives by modern-day writers

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- There is a consensus that the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy, in the 14th century, most likely due to the political structure and the civil and social nature of the city. The Renaissance encompassed the flowering of Latin languages, a change in artistic style, and gradual, widespread educational reform.
- The development of conventions of diplomacy and an increased reliance on observation in science were also markers of the Renaissance.
- The Renaissance is probably best known for its

artistic developments and for the development of "Humanism," a movement that emphasized the importance of creating citizens who were able to engage in the civil life of their community.

- Some historians debate the 19th-century glorification of the Renaissance and individual culture heroes as "Renaissance men."
- Some have called into question whether the Renaissance was a cultural "advance" from the Middle Ages, instead seeing it as a period of pessimism and nostalgia for classical antiquity.

### *Key Terms*

- **Medici:** The last name of a powerful and influential aristocratic Florentine family from the 13th to the 17th century.
- **studia humanitatis:** Specifically, a cultural and intellectual movement in 14th–16th century Europe characterized by attention to classical culture and a promotion of vernacular texts, notably during the Renaissance.
- **Renaissance:** A cultural movement from the 14th to the 17th century, beginning in Italy and later spreading to the rest of Europe.
- **Petrarch:** An Italian scholar and poet in Renaissance Italy, and one of the earliest humanists.

## Overview

The Renaissance was a period in Europe, from the 14th to the 17th century, regarded as the cultural bridge between the Middle Ages and modern history. It started as a cultural movement in Italy, specifically in Florence, in the late medieval period and later spread to the rest of Europe, marking the beginning of the early modern age.

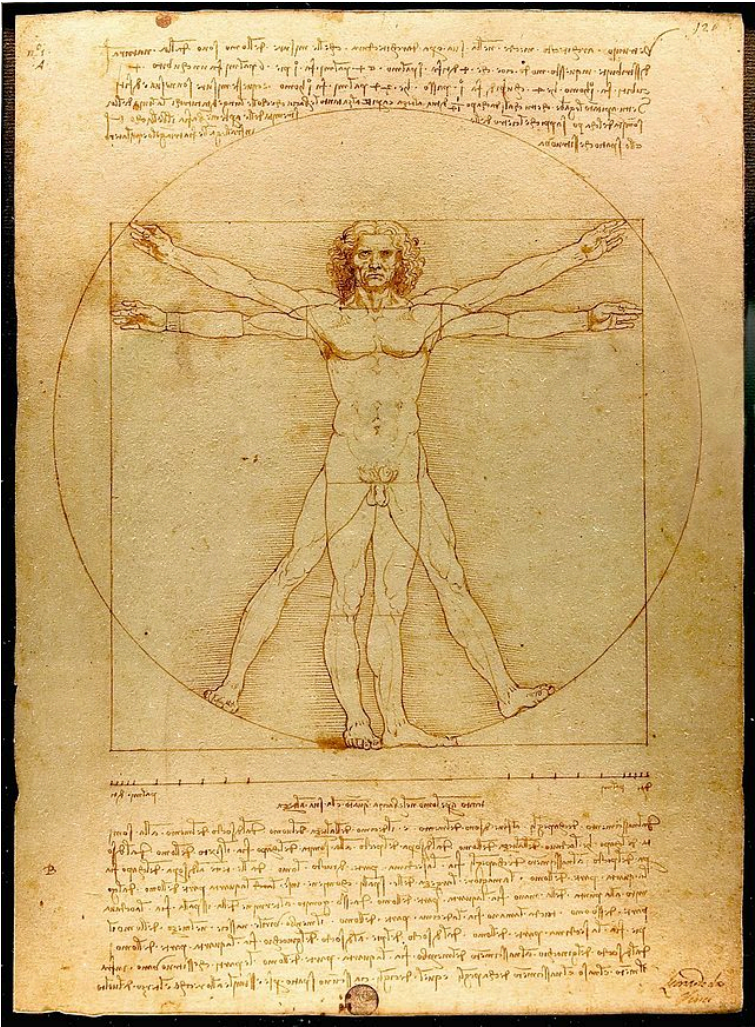
The intellectual basis of the Renaissance was its own invented version of humanism, derived from the rediscovery of classical Greek philosophy, such as that of Protagoras, who said that “Man is the measure of all things.” This new thinking became manifest in art, architecture, politics, science, and literature. Early examples were the development of perspective in oil painting and the recycled knowledge of how to make concrete. Though availability of paper and the invention of metal movable type sped the dissemination of ideas from the later 15th century, the changes of the Renaissance were not uniformly experienced across Europe.

## Cultural, Political, and Intellectual Influences

As a cultural movement, the Renaissance encompassed the innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, beginning with the 14th-century resurgence of learning based on classical sources, which contemporaries credited to Petrarch; the development of linear perspective and other techniques of rendering a more natural reality in painting; and gradual but widespread educational reform.

In politics, the Renaissance contributed the development of the conventions of diplomacy, and in science an increased reliance on observation. Although the Renaissance saw revolutions in many intellectual pursuits, as well as social and political upheaval, it is

perhaps best known for its artistic developments and the contributions of such polymaths as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, who inspired the term “Renaissance man.”



**Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man:** Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man shows clearly the effect writers of Antiquity had on Renaissance thinkers. Based on the specifications in Vitruvius' *De architectura* (1st century BCE), Leonardo tried to draw the perfectly proportioned man.

## Beginnings

Various theories have been proposed to account for the origins and characteristics of the Renaissance, focusing on a variety of factors, including the social and civic peculiarities of Florence at the time; its political structure; the patronage of its dominant family, the Medici; and the migration of Greek scholars and texts to Italy following the Fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

Many argue that the ideas characterizing the Renaissance had their origin in late 13th-century Florence, in particular in the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Petrarch (1304–1374), as well as the paintings of Giotto di Bondone (1267–1337). Some writers date the Renaissance quite precisely; one proposed starting point is 1401, when the rival geniuses Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi competed for the contract to build the bronze doors for the Baptistry of the Florence Cathedral (Ghiberti won). Others see more general competition between artists and polymaths such as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Masaccio for artistic commissions as sparking the creativity of the Renaissance. Yet it remains much debated why the Renaissance began in Italy, and why it began when it did. Accordingly, several theories have been put forward to explain its origins.

## Historical Perspectives on the Renaissance

The Renaissance has a long and complex historiography, and in line with general skepticism of discrete periodizations there has been much debate among historians reacting to the 19th-century glorification of the Renaissance and individual culture heroes as “Renaissance men,” questioning the usefulness of “Renaissance” as a term and as a historical delineation.

Some observers have called into question whether the Renaissance was a cultural advance from the Middle Ages, seeing it instead as a period of pessimism and nostalgia for classical antiquity, while social and economic historians, especially of the *longue durée* (long-term) have focused on the continuity between the two eras, which are linked, as Panofsky observed, “by a thousand ties.”

The word “Renaissance,” whose literal translation from French into English is “Rebirth,” appears in English writing from the 1830s. The word occurs in Jules Michelet’s 1855 work, *Histoire de France*. The word “Renaissance” has also been extended to other historical and cultural movements, such as the Carolingian Renaissance and the Renaissance of the 12th century.



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*here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=109>*

## **The Renaissance: Was it a Thing? – Crash Course World History**

**#22:** European learning changed the world in the 15th and 16th centuries, but was it a cultural revolution, or an evolution? We’d argue that any cultural shift that occurs over a couple of hundred years isn’t too overwhelming to the people who live through it. In retrospect though, the cultural bloom in Europe during this time was pretty impressive.



# 80. Reading: Italy During the Renaissance

## Italian Trade Cities

Italian city-states trading during the late Middle Ages set the stage for the Renaissance by moving resources, culture, and knowledge from the East.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Show how Northern Italy and the wealthy city-states within it became such huge European powers

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- While Northern Italy was not richer in resources than many other parts of Europe, the level of development, stimulated by trade, allowed it to prosper. In particular, Florence became one of the

wealthiest cities in Northern Italy.

- Florence became the center of this financial industry, and the gold florin became the main currency of international trade.
- Luxury goods bought in the Levant, such as spices, dyes, and silks, were imported to Italy and then resold throughout Europe.
- The Italian trade routes that covered the Mediterranean and beyond were also major conduits of culture and knowledge.

### *Key Terms*

- **Vitruvius:** A Roman author, architect, and civil engineer (born c. 80–70 BC, died after c. 15 BCE), perhaps best known for his multi-volume work entitled *De Architectura*.
- **Hanseatic League:** A commercial and defensive confederation of merchant guilds and their market towns that dominated trade along the coast of Northern Europe.
- **Tacitus:** A senator and a historian of the Roman Empire (c. 56–after 117 CE).
- **Levant:** The countries bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea.
- **city-state:** A political phenomenon of small independent states mostly in the central and northern Italian peninsula between the 9th and 15th centuries.

## Prosperous City-States

During the late Middle Ages, Northern and Central Italy became far more prosperous than the south of Italy, with the city-states, such as Venice and Genoa, among the wealthiest in Europe. The Crusades had built lasting trade links to the Levant, and the Fourth Crusade had done much to destroy the Byzantine Roman Empire as a commercial rival to the Venetians and Genoese.

The main trade routes from the east passed through the Byzantine Empire or the Arab lands and onwards to the ports of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice. Luxury goods bought in the Levant, such as spices, dyes, and silks, were imported to Italy and then resold throughout Europe. Moreover, the inland city-states profited from the rich agricultural land of the Po valley.

From France, Germany, and the Low Countries, through the medium of the Champagne fairs, land and river trade routes brought goods such as wool, wheat, and precious metals into the region. The extensive trade that stretched from Egypt to the Baltic generated substantial surpluses that allowed significant investment in mining and agriculture.

Thus, while Northern Italy was not richer in resources than many other parts of Europe, the level of development, stimulated by trade, allowed it to prosper. In particular, Florence became one of the wealthiest cities in Northern Italy, due mainly to its woolen textile production, developed under the supervision of its dominant trade guild, the *Arte della Lana*. Wool was imported from Northern Europe (and in the 16th century from Spain), and together with dyes from the east was used to make high quality textiles.

## Revitalizing Trade Routes

In the 13th century, much of Europe experienced strong economic

growth. The trade routes of the Italian states linked with those of established Mediterranean ports, and eventually the Hanseatic League of the Baltic and northern regions of Europe, to create a network economy in Europe for the first time since the 4th century. The city-states of Italy expanded greatly during this period, and grew in power to become *de facto* fully independent of the Holy Roman Empire; apart from the Kingdom of Naples, outside powers kept their armies out of Italy. During this period, the modern commercial infrastructure developed, with double-entry bookkeeping, joint stock companies, an international banking system, a systematized foreign exchange market, insurance, and government debt. Florence became the center of this financial industry, and the gold florin became the main currency of international trade.

While Roman urban republican sensibilities persisted, there were many movements and changes afoot. Italy first felt the changes in Europe from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Typically there was:

- A rise in population—the population doubled in this period (the demographic explosion)
- An emergence of huge cities (Venice, Florence, and Milan had over 100,000 inhabitants by the 13th century, and many others, such as Genoa, Bologna, and Verona, had over 50,000)
- Rebuilding of the great cathedrals
- Substantial migration from country to city (in Italy the rate of urbanization reached 20%, making it the most urbanized society in the world at that time)
- An agrarian revolution
- Development of commerce

The decline of feudalism and the rise of cities influenced each other; for example, the demand for luxury goods led to an increase in trade, which led to greater numbers of tradesmen becoming wealthy, who, in turn, demanded more luxury goods.



**Palazzo della Signoria e Uffizi, Florence:** *Florence was one of the most important city-states in Italy.*

## The Transfer of Culture and Knowledge

The Italian trade routes that covered the Mediterranean and beyond were also major conduits of culture and knowledge. The recovery of lost Greek texts, which had been preserved by Arab scholars, following the Crusader conquest of the Byzantine heartlands revitalized medieval philosophy in the Renaissance of the 12th century. Additionally, Byzantine scholars migrated to Italy during and following the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantines between the 12th and 15th centuries, and were important in sparking the new linguistic studies of the Renaissance, in newly created academies in Florence and Venice. Humanist scholars searched monastic libraries for ancient manuscripts and recovered Tacitus and other Latin authors. The rediscovery of Vitruvius meant that the architectural

principles of Antiquity could be observed once more, and Renaissance artists were encouraged, in the atmosphere of humanist optimism, to excel the achievements of the Ancients, like Apelles, of whom they read.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=110>*

### **Venice and the Ottoman Empire: Crash Course World History #19:**

John Green discusses the strange and mutually beneficial relationship between a republic, the city-state of Venice, and an Empire, the Ottomans—and how studying history can help you to be a better boyfriend and/or girlfriend. Together, the Ottoman Empire and Venice grew wealthy by facilitating trade: The Venetians had ships and nautical expertise; the Ottomans had access to many of the most valuable goods in the world, especially pepper and grain. Working together across cultural and religious divides, they both become very rich, and the Ottomans became one of the most powerful political entities in the world.

## **Italian Politics**

Italian politics during the time of the Renaissance was dominated by the rising merchant class, especially one family, the House of Medici, whose power in Florence was nearly absolute.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the intricacies of Italian politics during this time

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Northern and Central Italy became prosperous in the late Middle Ages through the growth of international trade and the rise of the merchant class, who eventually gained almost complete control of the governments of the Italian city-states.
- A popular explanation for the Italian Renaissance is the thesis that the primary impetus of the early Renaissance was the long-running series of wars between Florence and Milan, whereby the leading figures of Florence rallied the people by presenting the war as one between the free republic and a despotic monarchy.
- The House of Medici was an Italian banking family, political dynasty, and later royal house in Florence who were the major sponsors of art and architecture in the early and High Renaissance.

## *Key Terms*

- **House of Medici:** An Italian banking family, political dynasty, and later royal house in the Republic of Florence during the first half of the 15th century that had a major impact on the rise of the Italian Renaissance.
- **Hundred Years' War:** A series of conflicts waged from 1337 to 1453 by the House of Plantagenet, rulers of the Kingdom of England, against the House of Valois, rulers of the Kingdom of France, for control of the Kingdom of France.

## Italy in the Late Middle Ages

By the Late Middle Ages (circa 1300 onward), Latium, the former heartland of the Roman Empire, and southern Italy were generally poorer than the north. Rome was a city of ancient ruins, and the Papal States were loosely administered and vulnerable to external interference such as that of France, and later Spain. The papacy was affronted when the Avignon Papacy was created in southern France as a consequence of pressure from King Philip the Fair of France. In the south, Sicily had for some time been under foreign domination, by the Arabs and then the Normans. Sicily had prospered for 150 years during the Emirate of Sicily, and later for two centuries during the Norman Kingdom and the Hohenstaufen Kingdom, but had declined by the late Middle Ages.



## The Rise of the Merchant Class

In contrast, Northern and Central Italy had become far more prosperous, and it has been calculated that the region was among the richest in Europe. The new mercantile governing class, who gained their position through financial skill, adapted to their purposes the feudal aristocratic model that had dominated Europe in the Middle Ages. A feature of the High Middle Ages in Northern Italy was the rise of the urban communes, which had broken from the control of bishops and local counts. In much of the region, the landed nobility was poorer than the urban patriarchs in the high medieval money economy, whose inflationary rise left land-holding aristocrats impoverished. The increase in trade during the early Renaissance enhanced these characteristics.

This change also gave the merchants almost complete control of the governments of the Italian city-states, again enhancing trade. One of the most important effects of this political control was security. Those that grew extremely wealthy in a feudal state ran constant risk of running afoul of the monarchy and having their lands confiscated, as famously occurred to Jacques Coeur in France. The northern states also kept many medieval laws that severely hampered commerce, such as those against usury and prohibitions on trading with non-Christians. In the city-states of Italy, these laws were repealed or rewritten.

The 14th century saw a series of catastrophes that caused the European economy to go into recession, including the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and numerous famines. It was during this period of instability that the Renaissance authors such as Dante and Petrarch lived, and the first stirrings of Renaissance art were to be seen, notably in the realism of Giotto. Paradoxically, some of these disasters would help establish the Renaissance. The Black Death wiped out a third of Europe's population. The resulting labor shortage increased wages, and the reduced population was therefore much wealthier and better fed, and, significantly, had

more surplus money to spend on luxury goods. As incidences of the plague began to decline in the early 15th century, Europe's devastated population once again began to grow. The new demand for products and services also helped create a growing class of bankers, merchants, and skilled artisans.

## Warring Italians

Northern Italy and upper Central Italy were divided into a number of warring city-states, the most powerful being Milan, Florence, Pisa, Siena, Genoa, Ferrara, Mantua, Verona, and Venice. High medieval Northern Italy was further divided by the long-running battle for supremacy between the forces of the papacy and of the Holy Roman Empire; each city aligned itself with one faction or the other, yet was divided internally between the two warring parties, Guelfs and Ghibellines. Warfare between the states was common, but invasion from outside Italy was confined to intermittent sorties of Holy Roman emperors. Renaissance politics developed from this background. Since the 13th century, as armies became primarily composed of mercenaries, prosperous city-states could field considerable forces, despite their low populations. In the course of the 15th century, the most powerful city-states annexed their smaller neighbors. Florence took Pisa in 1406, Venice captured Padua and Verona, and the Duchy of Milan annexed a number of nearby areas, including Pavia and Parma.

A popular explanation for the Italian Renaissance is the thesis, first advanced by historian Hans Baron, that the primary impetus of the early Renaissance was the long-running series of wars between Florence and Milan. By the late 14th century, Milan had become a centralized monarchy under the control of the Visconti family. Giangaleazzo Visconti, who ruled the city from 1378 to 1402, was renowned both for his cruelty and for his abilities, and set about building an empire in Northern Italy. He launched a long series

of wars, with Milan steadily conquering neighboring states and defeating the various coalitions led by Florence that sought in vain to halt the advance. This culminated in the 1402 siege of Florence, when it looked as though the city was doomed to fall, before Giangaleazzo suddenly died and his empire collapsed.

Baron's thesis suggests that during these long wars, the leading figures of Florence rallied the people by presenting the war as one between the free republic and a despotic monarchy, between the ideals of the Greek and Roman Republics and those of the Roman Empire and medieval kingdoms. For Baron, the most important figure in crafting this ideology was Leonardo Bruni. This time of crisis in Florence was the period when the most influential figures of the early Renaissance were coming of age, such as Ghiberti, Donatello, Masolino, and Brunelleschi. Inculcated with this republican ideology, they later went on to advocate republican ideas that were to have an enormous impact on the Renaissance.

## The Medici Family

The House of Medici was an Italian banking family, political dynasty, and later royal house that first began to gather prominence under Cosimo de' Medici in the Republic of Florence during the first half of the 15th century. The family originated in the Mugello region of the Tuscan countryside, gradually rising until they were able to fund the Medici Bank. The bank was the largest in Europe during the 15th century, which helped the Medici gain political power in Florence—though officially they remained citizens rather than monarchs. The biggest accomplishments of the Medici were in the sponsorship of art and architecture, mainly early and High Renaissance art and architecture. The Medici were responsible for the majority of Florentine art during their reign.

Their wealth and influence initially derived from the textile trade guided by the guild of the *Arte della Lana*. Like other signore

families, they dominated their city's government, they were able to bring Florence under their family's power, and they created an environment where art and Humanism could flourish. They, along with other families of Italy, such as the Visconti and Sforza of Milan, the Este of Ferrara, and the Gonzaga of Mantua, fostered and inspired the birth of the Italian Renaissance. The Medici family was connected to most other elite families of the time through marriages of convenience, partnerships, or employment, so the family had a central position in the social network. Several families had systematic access to the rest of the elite families only through the Medici, perhaps similar to banking relationships.

The Medici Bank was one of the most prosperous and most respected institutions in Europe. There are some estimates that the Medici family were the wealthiest family in Europe for a time. From this base, they acquired political power initially in Florence and later in wider Italy and Europe. A notable contribution to the profession of accounting was the improvement of the general ledger system through the development of the double-entry bookkeeping system for tracking credits and debits. The Medici family were among the earliest businesses to use the system.

Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici was the first of the Medici political dynasty, and had tremendous political power in Florence. Despite his influence, his power was not absolute; Florence's legislative councils at times resisted his proposals, something that would not have been tolerated by the Visconti of Milan, for instance. Throughout his life he was always *primus inter pares*, or first among equals. His power over Florence stemmed from his wealth, which he used to control votes. As Florence was proud of its "democracy," Medici pretended to have little political ambition, and did not often hold public office. Aeneas Sylvius, Bishop of Siena and later Pope Pius II, said of him, "Political questions are settled in [Cosimo's] house. The man he chooses holds office... He it is who decides peace and war... He is king in all but name."



**Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici:** Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, the found of the House of Medici, by Jacopo Pontormo; the laurel branch (il Broncone) was a symbol used also by his heirs.

# The Church During the Italian Renaissance

The new Humanist ideals of the Renaissance, although more secular in many aspects, developed against a Christian backdrop, and the church patronized many works of Renaissance art.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze the church's role in Italy at the time of the Renaissance

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Renaissance began in times of religious turmoil, especially surrounding the papacy, which culminated in the Western Schism, in which three men simultaneously claimed to be the true pope.
- The new engagement with Greek Christian works during the Renaissance, and particularly the return to the original Greek of the New Testament promoted by Humanists Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus, helped pave the way for the Protestant Reformation.
- In addition to being the head of the church, the

pope became one of Italy's most important secular rulers, and pontiffs such as Julius II often waged campaigns to protect and expand their temporal domains.

- The Counter-Reformation was a period of Catholic resurgence initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation.

### *Key Terms*

- **neo-Platonism:** A tradition of philosophy that arose in the 3rd century CE, based on the philosophy of Plato, which involved describing the derivation of the whole of reality from a single principle, “the One.” Plotinus is traditionally identified as the founder of this school.
- **Western Schism:** A split within the Roman Catholic Church that lasted from 1378 to 1417, when three men simultaneously claimed to be the true pope.
- **Counter-Reformation:** A period of Catholic resurgence initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation.

## The Church in the Late Middle Ages

The Renaissance began in times of religious turmoil. The late Middle Ages was a period of political intrigue surrounding the papacy, culminating in the Western Schism, in which three men

simultaneously claimed to be the true pope. While the schism was resolved by the Council of Constance (1414), a resulting reform movement known as Conciliarism sought to limit the power of the pope. Although the papacy eventually emerged supreme in ecclesiastical matters by the Fifth Council of the Lateran (1511), it was dogged by continued accusations of corruption, most famously in the person of Pope Alexander VI, who was accused variously of simony, nepotism, and fathering four children.



**Pope Alexander VI:** Alexander VI, a Borgia pope infamous for his corruption.



Churchmen such as Erasmus and Luther proposed reform to the church, often based on Humanist textual criticism of the New Testament. In October 1517 Luther published the *Ninety-five Theses*, challenging papal authority and criticizing its perceived corruption, particularly with regard to instances of sold indulgences. The *Ninety-five Theses* led to the Reformation, a break with the Roman Catholic Church that previously claimed hegemony in Western Europe. Humanism and the Renaissance therefore played a direct role in sparking the Reformation, as well as in many other contemporaneous religious debates and conflicts.

Pope Paul III came to the papal throne (1534–1549) after the sack of Rome in 1527, with uncertainties prevalent in the Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation. Nicolaus Copernicus dedicated *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) to Paul III, who became the grandfather of Alessandro Farnese (cardinal), who had paintings by Titian, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as well as an important collection of drawings, and who commissioned the masterpiece of Giulio Clovio, arguably the last major illuminated manuscript, the Farnese Hours.

## The Church and the Renaissance

The city of Rome, the papacy, and the Papal States were all affected by the Renaissance. On the one hand, it was a time of great artistic patronage and architectural magnificence, when the church pardoned and even sponsored such artists as Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Bramante, Raphael, Fra Angelico, Donatello, and da Vinci. On the other hand, wealthy Italian families often secured episcopal offices, including the papacy, for their own members, some of whom were known for immorality.

In the revival of neo-Platonism and other ancient philosophies, Renaissance Humanists did not reject Christianity; quite to the contrary, many of the Renaissance's greatest works were devoted to

it, and the church patronized many works of Renaissance art. The new ideals of Humanism, although more secular in some aspects, developed against a Christian backdrop, especially in the Northern Renaissance. In turn, the Renaissance had a profound effect on contemporary theology, particularly in the way people perceived the relationship between man and God.



**Michelangelo's Pietà in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City:** Michelangelo's Pietà exemplifies the character of Renaissance art, combining the classical aesthetic of Greek art with religious imagery, in this case Mother Mary holding the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.

In addition to being the head of the church, the pope became one of Italy's most important secular rulers, and pontiffs such as Julius

II often waged campaigns to protect and expand their temporal domains. Furthermore, the popes, in a spirit of refined competition with other Italian lords, spent lavishly both on private luxuries and public works, repairing or building churches, bridges, and a magnificent system of aqueducts in Rome that still function today.

From 1505 to 1626, St. Peter's Basilica, perhaps the most recognized Christian church, was built on the site of the old Constantinian basilica in Rome. This was a time of increased contact with Greek culture, opening up new avenues of learning, especially in the fields of philosophy, poetry, classics, rhetoric, and political science, fostering a spirit of Humanism—all of which would influence the church.

## Counter-Reformation

The Counter-Reformation, also called the Catholic Reformation or the Catholic Revival, was the period of Catholic resurgence initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation, beginning with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648). The Counter-Reformation was a comprehensive effort composed of four major elements—ecclesiastical or structural reconfigurations, new religious orders (such as the Jesuits), spiritual movements, and political reform.

Such reforms included the foundation of seminaries for the proper training of priests in the spiritual life and the theological traditions of the church, the reform of religious life by returning orders to their spiritual foundations, and new spiritual movements focusing on the devotional life and a personal relationship with Christ, including the Spanish mystics and the French school of spirituality. It also involved political activities that included the Roman Inquisition. One primary emphasis of the Counter-Reformation was a mission to reach parts of the world that had been colonized as predominantly Catholic, and also try to reconvert

areas, such as Sweden and England, that were at one time Catholic but had been Protestantized during the Reformation.

# 8I. Reading: Humanist Thought

## Petrarch

Petrarch is often called the “Father of Humanism,” both for his discovery of important classical texts and his personal commitment to the way of life found in ancient literature and philosophy.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain Petrarch's contributions to the Renaissance

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Petrarch is traditionally called the “Father of Humanism,” both for his influential philosophical attitudes, found in his numerous personal letters, and his discovery and compilation of classical texts.
- Petrarch was born in the Tuscan city of Arezzo in

1304, and spent his early childhood near Florence, but his family moved to Avignon to follow Pope Clement V, who moved there in 1309 to begin the Avignon Papacy.

- He traveled widely in Europe and, during his travels, collected crumbling Latin manuscripts, whose discovery, especially Cicero's letters, helped spark the Renaissance.
- A highly introspective man, he shaped the nascent Humanist movement a great deal because many of the internal conflicts and musings expressed in his writings were seized upon by Renaissance Humanist philosophers and argued continually for the next 200 years.

### *Key Terms*

- **Dark Ages:** An imprecise term of historical periodization that was once used to refer to the Middle Ages but is latterly most commonly used in relation to the early medieval period, i.e., the centuries following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire; the term was coined by Petrarch.
- **Humanism:** The study of classical antiquity, at first in Italy and then spreading across Western Europe in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries.
- **Avignon Papacy:** The period from 1309 to 1377, during which seven successive popes resided in Avignon, France.

## Overview

Francesco Petrarca (July 20, 1304–July 19, 1374), commonly anglicized as Petrarch, was an Italian scholar and poet in Renaissance Italy, and one of the earliest Humanists. Petrarch's rediscovery of Cicero's letters is often credited for initiating the 14th-century Renaissance. Petrarch is often considered the founder of Humanism. Petrarch's sonnets were admired and imitated throughout Europe during the Renaissance and became a model for lyrical poetry. In the 16th century, Pietro Bembo created the model for the modern Italian language based on Petrarch's works.

Petrarch was born in the Tuscan city of Arezzo in 1304. Petrarch spent his early childhood in the village of Incisa, near Florence. He spent much of his early life at Avignon and nearby Carpentras, where his family moved to follow Pope Clement V, who moved there in 1309 to begin the Avignon Papacy. Petrarch studied law at the University of Montpellier (1316–1320) and the University of Bologna (1320–23); because his father was in the profession of law he insisted that Petrarch and his brother study law also. Petrarch, however, was primarily interested in writing and Latin literature, and considered these seven years wasted.

He traveled widely in Europe, served as an ambassador, and has been called “the first tourist” because he traveled just for pleasure. During his travels, he collected crumbling Latin manuscripts and was a prime mover in the recovery of knowledge from writers of Rome and Greece. He encouraged and advised Leontius Pilatus's translation of Homer from a manuscript purchased by Boccaccio, although he was severely critical of the result. In 1345 he personally discovered a collection of Cicero's letters not previously known to have existed, the collection *ad Atticum*.

Disdaining what he believed to be the ignorance of the centuries preceding the era in which he lived, Petrarch is credited or charged with creating the concept of a historical “Dark Ages.”





**Francesco Petrarca:** Statue of Petrarch on the Uffizi Palace, in Florence.

## Father of Humanism

Petrarch is traditionally called the “Father of Humanism,” and considered by many to more generally be the “Father of the Renaissance.” This honorific is so given both for his influential philosophical attitudes, found in his numerous personal letters, and his discovery and compilation of classical texts.

In his work *Secretum meum* he points out that secular achievements did not necessarily preclude an authentic relationship with God. Petrarch argued instead that God had given humans their vast intellectual and creative potential to be used to their fullest. He inspired Humanist philosophy, which led to the intellectual flowering of the Renaissance. He believed in the immense moral and practical value of the study of ancient history and literature—that is, the study of human thought and action. Petrarch was a devout Catholic and did not see a conflict between realizing humanity’s potential and having religious faith.

A highly introspective man, he shaped the nascent Humanist movement a great deal, because many of the internal conflicts and musings expressed in his writings were seized upon by Renaissance Humanist philosophers and argued continually for the next 200 years. For example, Petrarch struggled with the proper relation between the active and contemplative life, and tended to emphasize the importance of solitude and study. In a clear disagreement with Dante, in 1346 Petrarch argued in his *De vita solitaria* that Pope Celestine V’s refusal of the papacy in 1294 was a virtuous example of solitary life. Later, the politician and thinker Leonardo Bruni argued for the active life, or “civic humanism.” As a result, a number of political, military, and religious leaders during the Renaissance were inculcated with the notion that their pursuit of personal fulfillment

should be grounded in classical example and philosophical contemplation.

## Humanism

Humanism was an intellectual movement embraced by scholars, writers, and civic leaders in 14th century Italy.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Assess how Humanism gave rise to the art of the Renaissance

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Humanists reacted against the utilitarian approach to education, seeking to create a citizenry who were able to speak and write with eloquence and thus able to engage the civic life of their communities.
- The movement was largely founded on the ideals of Italian scholar and poet Francesco Petrarca, which were often centered around humanity's potential for

achievement.

- While Humanism initially began as a predominantly literary movement, its influence quickly pervaded the general culture of the time, reintroducing classical Greek and Roman art forms and leading to the Renaissance.
- Donatello became renowned as the greatest sculptor of the Early Renaissance, known especially for his Humanist, and unusually erotic, statue of David.
- While medieval society viewed artists as servants and craftspeople, Renaissance artists were trained intellectuals, and their art reflected this newfound point of view.
- In humanist painting, the treatment of the elements of perspective and depiction of light became of particular concern.

### *Key Terms*

- **High Renaissance:** The period in art history denoting the apogee of the visual arts in the Italian Renaissance. The High Renaissance period is traditionally thought to have begun in the 1490s—with Leonardo's fresco of *The Last Supper* in Milan and the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence—and to have ended in 1527, with the Sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V.

## Overview

Humanism, also known as Renaissance Humanism, was an intellectual movement embraced by scholars, writers, and civic leaders in 14th- and early-15th-century Italy. The movement developed in response to the medieval scholastic conventions in education at the time, which emphasized practical, pre-professional, and scientific studies engaged in solely for job preparation, and typically by men alone. Humanists reacted against this utilitarian approach, seeking to create a citizenry who were able to speak and write with eloquence and thus able to engage the civic life of their communities. This was to be accomplished through the study of the “*studia humanitatis*,” known today as the humanities: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy. Humanism introduced a program to revive the cultural—and particularly the literary—legacy and moral philosophy of classical antiquity. The movement was largely founded on the ideals of Italian scholar and poet Francesco Petrarca, which were often centered around humanity’s potential for achievement.

While Humanism initially began as a predominantly literary movement, its influence quickly pervaded the general culture of the time, re-introducing classical Greek and Roman art forms and contributing to the development of the Renaissance. Humanists considered the ancient world to be the pinnacle of human achievement, and thought its accomplishments should serve as the model for contemporary Europe. There were important centers of Humanism in Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino.

Humanism was an optimistic philosophy that saw man as a rational and sentient being, with the ability to decide and think for himself. It saw man as inherently good by nature, which was in tension with the Christian view of man as the original sinner needing redemption. It provoked fresh insight into the nature of

reality, questioning beyond God and spirituality, and provided knowledge about history beyond Christian history.

## Humanist Art

Renaissance Humanists saw no conflict between their study of the Ancients and Christianity. The lack of perceived conflict allowed Early Renaissance artists to combine classical forms, classical themes, and Christian theology freely. Early Renaissance sculpture is a great vehicle to explore the emerging Renaissance style. The leading artists of this medium were Donatello, Filippo Brunelleschi, and Lorenzo Ghiberti. Donatello became renowned as the greatest sculptor of the Early Renaissance, known especially for his classical, and unusually erotic, statue of David, which became one of the icons of the Florentine republic.



**Donatello's David:** Donatello's David is regarded as an iconic Humanist work of art.

Humanism affected the artistic community and how artists were perceived. While medieval society viewed artists as servants and craftspeople, Renaissance artists were trained intellectuals, and their art reflected this newfound point of view. Patronage of the arts became an important activity, and commissions included secular subject matter as well as religious. Important patrons, such as Cosimo de' Medici, emerged and contributed largely to the expanding artistic production of the time.

In painting, the treatment of the elements of perspective and light became of particular concern. Paolo Uccello, for example, who is best known for “The Battle of San Romano,” was obsessed by his interest in perspective, and would stay up all night in his study trying to grasp the exact vanishing point. He used perspective in order to create a feeling of depth in his paintings. In addition, the use of oil paint had its beginnings in the early part of the 16th century, and its use continued to be explored extensively throughout the High Renaissance.



**“The Battle of San Romano” by Paolo Uccello:** Italian Humanist paintings were largely concerned with the depiction of perspective and light.

## Origins

Some of the first Humanists were great collectors of antique manuscripts, including Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Coluccio Salutati, and Poggio Bracciolini. Of the three, Petrarch was dubbed the “Father of Humanism” because of his devotion to Greek and Roman scrolls. Many worked for the organized church and were in holy orders (like Petrarch), while others were lawyers and chancellors of Italian cities (such as Petrarch’s disciple Salutati, the Chancellor of Florence) and thus had access to book-copying workshops.

In Italy, the Humanist educational program won rapid acceptance and, by the mid-15th century, many of the upper classes had received Humanist educations, possibly in addition to traditional scholastic ones. Some of the highest officials of the church were Humanists with the resources to amass important libraries. Such was Cardinal Basilios Bessarion, a convert to the Latin church from Greek Orthodoxy, who was considered for the papacy and was one of the most learned scholars of his time.

Following the Crusader sacking of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the migration of Byzantine Greek scholars and émigrés, who had greater familiarity with ancient languages and works, furthered the revival of Greek and Roman literature and science.

## Education and Humanism

Humanism played a major role in education during the Renaissance, with the goal of cultivating the moral and intellectual character of citizens.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Define Humanism and its goals as a movement in education

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Humanists of the Renaissance created schools to teach their ideas and wrote books all about education.
- One of the most profound and important schools was established and created by Vittorino da Feltre in 1423 in Mantua to provide the children of the ruler of Mantua with a Humanist education.
- Humanists sought to create a citizenry able to speak and write with eloquence and clarity, thus capable of engaging in the civic life of their communities and persuading others to virtuous and prudent actions.
- Humanist schools combined Christianity and classical texts to produce a model of education for all of Europe.

## *Key Terms*

- **Humanism:** A cultural and intellectual movement in 14th–16th century Europe characterized by attention to Classical culture and a promotion of vernacular texts, notably during the Renaissance.
- **Vittorino da Feltre:** An Italian humanist and teacher who started an important humanist school in Mantua.
- **Liberal arts:** Those areas of learning that require and cultivate general intellectual ability rather than technical skills; the humanities.
- **Cicero:** A Roman philosopher, politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, consul, and constitutionalist who lived from 106–43 BCE.

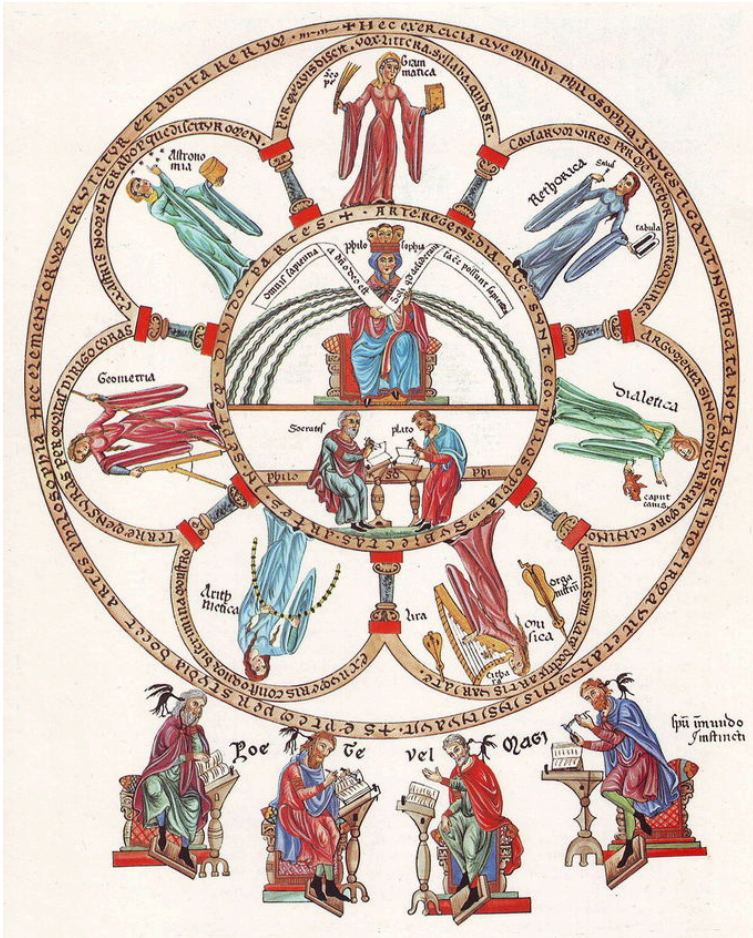
## Overview

During the Renaissance, Humanism played a major role in education. Humanists —proponents or practitioners of Humanism during the Renaissance—believed that human beings could be dramatically changed by education. The Humanists of the Renaissance created schools to teach their ideas and wrote books all about education. Humanists sought to create a citizenry able to speak and write with eloquence and clarity, thus capable of engaging in the civic life of their communities and persuading others to virtuous and prudent actions. This was to be accomplished

through the study of the humanities: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy.

The Humanists believed that it was important to transcend to the afterlife with a perfect mind and body, which could be attained with education. The purpose of Humanism was to create a universal man whose person combined intellectual and physical excellence and who was capable of functioning honorably in virtually any situation. This ideology was referred to as the *uomo universale*, an ancient Greco-Roman ideal. Education during the Renaissance was mainly composed of ancient literature and history, as it was thought that the classics provided moral instruction and an intensive understanding of human behavior.

The educational curriculum of Humanism spread throughout Europe during the 16th century and became the educational foundation for the schooling of European elites, the functionaries of political administration, the clergy of the various legally recognized churches, and the learned professionals of law and medicine.



Philosophia et septem artes liberales

A painting symbolizing the liberal arts, depicting individuals representing the seven areas of liberal arts study, all circling around Plato and Socrates.

## Humanist Schools

One of the most important Humanist schools was established by Vittorino da Feltre in 1423. The school was in Mantua, which is a small Italian state. The ruler of Mantua had always wanted to provide a Humanist education for his children, and the school was a way to help him.

Most of Feltre's ideas were based on those of previous classical authors, such as Cicero and Quintilian. The main foundation of the school was liberal studies. Liberal arts were viewed as the key to freedom, which allowed humans to achieve their goals and reach their full potential. Liberal studies included philosophy, history, rhetoric, letters, mathematics, poetry, music, and astronomy. Based on the Greek idea of a "sound mind," the school in Mantua offered physical education as well. This included archery, dance, hunting, and swimming.

The children that attended the schools were generally from upper-class families, though some seats were reserved for poor but talented students. Females were not usually allowed to attend, but were encouraged to know history, learn dance, and appreciate poetry. Some important females that were educated during the Renaissance were Isotta Nogarola, Cassandra Fedele of Venice, and Laura Cereta.

Overall, Humanist education was thought at the time to be an important factor in the preparation of life. Its main goal was to improve the lives of citizens and help their communities. Humanist schools combined Christianity and the classics to produce a model of education for all of Europe.



**Laura Cereta:** Laura Cereta (1469–1499) was a Renaissance Humanist and feminist. Most of her writing was in the form of letters to other intellectuals.

# 82. Reading: Art in the Renaissance

## The Italian Renaissance

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

The art of the Italian Renaissance was influential throughout Europe for centuries.

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Florence school of painting became the dominant style during the Renaissance. Renaissance artworks depicted more secular subject matter than previous artistic movements.
- Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Rafael are among the best known painters of the High Renaissance.
- The High Renaissance was followed by the Mannerist movement, known for elongated figures.

## *Key Terms*

- **fresco:** A type of wall painting in which color pigments are mixed with water and applied to wet plaster. As the plaster and pigments dry, they fuse together and the painting becomes a part of the wall itself.
- **Mannerism:** A style of art developed at the end of the High Renaissance, characterized by the deliberate distortion and exaggeration of perspective, especially the elongation of figures.

The Renaissance began during the 14th century and remained the dominate style in Italy, and in much of Europe, until the 16th century. The term “renaissance” was developed during the 19th century in order to describe this period of time and its accompanying artistic style. However, people who were living during the Renaissance did see themselves as different from their Medieval predecessors. Through a variety of texts that survive, we know that people living during the Renaissance saw themselves as different largely because they were deliberately trying to imitate the Ancients in art and architecture.

## Florence and the Renaissance

When you hear the term “Renaissance” and picture a style of art, you are probably picturing the Renaissance style that was developed in Florence, which became the dominate style of art during the



Renaissance. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Italy was divided into a number of different city states. Each city state had its own government, culture, economy, and artistic style. There were many different styles of art and architecture that were developed in Italy during the Renaissance. Siena, which was a political ally of France, for example, retained a Gothic element to its art for much of the Renaissance.

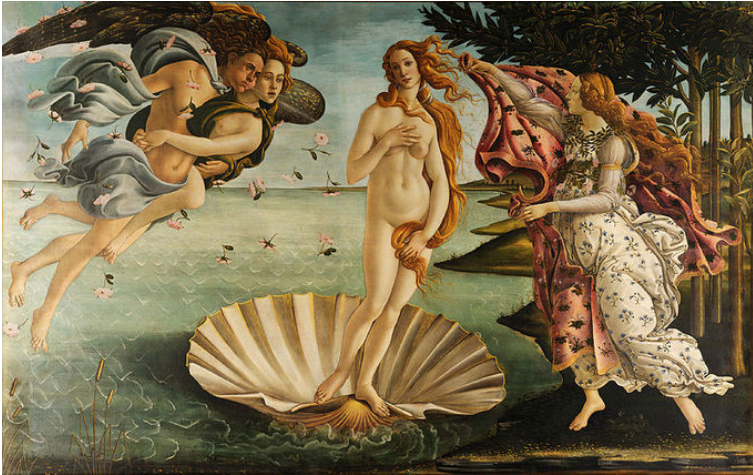
Certain conditions aided the development of the Renaissance style in Florence during this time period. In the 15th century, Florence became a major mercantile center. The production of cloth drove their economy and a merchant class emerged. Humanism, which had developed during the 14th century, remained an important intellectual movement that impacted art production as well.

## Early Renaissance

During the Early Renaissance, artists began to reject the Byzantine style of religious painting and strove to create realism in their depiction of the human form and space. This aim toward realism began with Cimabue and Giotto, and reached its peak in the art of the “Perfect” artists, such as Andrea Mantegna and Paolo Uccello, who created works that employed one point perspective and played with perspective for their educated, art knowledgeable viewer.

During the Early Renaissance we also see important developments in subject matter, in addition to style. While religion was an important element in the daily life of people living during the Renaissance, and remained a driving factor behind artistic production, we also see a new avenue open to painting—mythological subject matter. Many scholars point to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* as the very first panel painting of a mythological scene. While the tradition itself likely arose from cassone painting, which typically featured scenes from mythology

and romantic texts, the development of mythological panel painting would open a world for artistic patronage, production, and themes.



**Birth of Venus:** Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* was among the most important works of the early Renaissance.

## High Renaissance

The period known as the High Renaissance represents the culmination of the goals of the Early Renaissance, namely the realistic representation of figures in space rendered with credible motion and in an appropriately decorous style. The most well known artists from this phase are Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, and Michelangelo. Their paintings and frescoes are among the most widely known works of art in the world. Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, Raphael's *The School of Athens* and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Ceiling paintings are the masterpieces of this period and embody the elements of the High Renaissance.



**Marriage of the Virgin, by Raphael:** The painting depicts a marriage ceremony between Mary and Joseph.

# Mannerism

High Renaissance painting evolved into Mannerism in Florence. Mannerist artists, who consciously rebelled against the principles of High Renaissance, tended to represent elongated figures in illogical spaces. Modern scholarship has recognized the capacity of Mannerist art to convey strong, often religious, emotion where the High Renaissance failed to do so. Some of the main artists of this period are Pontormo, Bronzino, Rosso Fiorentino, Parmigianino and Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano.

## Art and Patronage

The Medici family used their vast fortune to control the Florentine political system and sponsor a series of artistic accomplishments.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss the relationship between art, patronage, and politics during the Renaissance

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Although the Renaissance was underway before the Medici family came to power in Florence, their patronage and political support of the arts helped catalyze the Renaissance into a fully fledged cultural movement.
- The Medici wealth and influence initially derived from the textile trade guided by the guild of the Arte della Lana; through financial superiority, the Medici dominated their city's government.
- Medici patronage was responsible for the majority of Florentine art during their reign, as artists generally only made their works when they received commissions in advance.
- Although none of the Medici themselves were scientists, the family is well known to have been the patrons of the famous Galileo Galilei, who tutored multiple generations of Medici children.

### *Key Terms*

- **Lorenzo de' Medici:** An Italian statesman and de facto ruler of the Florentine Republic, who was one of the most powerful and enthusiastic patrons of the Renaissance.

- **patronage:** The support, encouragement, privilege, or financial aid that an organization or individual bestows on another, especially in the arts.

## Overview

It has long been a matter of debate why the Renaissance began in Florence, and not elsewhere in Italy. Scholars have noted several features unique to Florentine cultural life that may have caused such a cultural movement. Many have emphasized the role played by the Medici, a banking family and later ducal ruling house, in patronizing and stimulating the arts. Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492) was the catalyst for an enormous amount of arts patronage, encouraging his countrymen to commission works from the leading artists of Florence, including Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, and Michelangelo Buonarroti. Works by Neri di Bicci, Botticelli, da Vinci, and Filippino Lippi had been commissioned additionally by the convent di San Donato agli Scopeti of the Augustinians order in Florence.

## The Medici House Patronage

The House of Medici was an Italian banking family, political dynasty, and later royal house that first began to gather prominence under Cosimo de' Medici in the Republic of Florence during the first half of the 15th century. Their wealth and influence initially derived from the textile trade guided by the guild of the Arte della Lana. Like other signore families, they dominated their city's government, they

were able to bring Florence under their family's power, and they created an environment where art and Humanism could flourish. They, along with other families of Italy, such as the Visconti and Sforza of Milan, the Este of Ferrara, and the Gonzaga of Mantua, fostered and inspired the birth of the Italian Renaissance.

The biggest accomplishments of the Medici were in the sponsorship of art and architecture, mainly early and High Renaissance art and architecture. The Medici were responsible for the majority of Florentine art during their reign. Their money was significant because during this period, artists generally only made their works when they received commissions in advance. Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, the first patron of the arts in the family, aided Masaccio and commissioned Brunelleschi for the reconstruction of the Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence, in 1419. Cosimo the Elder's notable artistic associates were Donatello and Fra Angelico. The most significant addition to the list over the years was Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), who produced work for a number of Medici, beginning with Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was said to be extremely fond of the young Michelangelo, inviting him to study the family collection of antique sculpture. Lorenzo also served as patron of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) for seven years. Indeed, Lorenzo was an artist in his own right, and an author of poetry and song; his support of the arts and letters is seen as a high point in Medici patronage.





**The Medici House:** Medici family members placed allegorically in the entourage of a king from the *Three Wise Men in the Tuscan countryside* in a Benozzo Gozzoli fresco, c. 1459.

In architecture, the Medici are responsible for some notable features of Florence, including the Uffizi Gallery, the Boboli Gardens, the Belvedere, the Medici Chapel, and the Palazzo Medici. Later, in Rome, the Medici Popes continued in the family tradition by patronizing artists in Rome. Pope Leo X would chiefly commission works from Raphael. Pope Clement VII commissioned Michelangelo to paint the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel just before the pontiff's death in 1534. Eleanor of Toledo, princess of Spain and wife of Cosimo I the Great, purchased the Pitti Palace from Buonaccorso Pitti in 1550. Cosimo in turn patronized Vasari, who erected the Uffizi Gallery in 1560 and founded the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno ("Academy of the Arts of Drawing") in 1563. Marie de' Medici, widow of Henry IV of France and mother of Louis XIII, is the subject of a commissioned cycle of paintings known as the



Marie de' Medici cycle, painted for the Luxembourg Palace by court painter Peter Paul Rubens in 1622–1623.

Although none of the Medici themselves were scientists, the family is well known to have been the patrons of the famous Galileo Galilei, who tutored multiple generations of Medici children and was an important figurehead for his patron's quest for power. Galileo's patronage was eventually abandoned by Ferdinando II when the Inquisition accused Galileo of heresy. However, the Medici family did afford the scientist a safe haven for many years. Galileo named the four largest moons of Jupiter after four Medici children he tutored, although the names Galileo used are not the names currently used.

## Leonardo da Vinci

While Leonardo da Vinci is admired as a scientist, an academic, and an inventor, he is most famous for his achievements as the painter of several Renaissance masterpieces.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the works of Leonardo da Vinci that demonstrate his most innovative techniques as an artist

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Among the qualities that make da Vinci's work unique are the innovative techniques that he used in laying on the paint, his detailed knowledge of anatomy, his innovative use of the human form in figurative composition, and his use of sfumato.
- Among the most famous works created by da Vinci is the small portrait titled the *Mona Lisa*, known for the elusive smile on the woman's face, brought about by the fact that da Vinci subtly shadowed the corners of the mouth and eyes so that the exact nature of the smile cannot be determined.
- Despite his famous paintings, da Vinci was not a prolific painter; he was a prolific draftsman, keeping journals full of small sketches and detailed drawings recording all manner of things that interested him.

### *Key Terms*

- **sfumato:** In painting, the application of subtle layers of translucent paint so that there is no visible transition between colors, tones, and often objects.

While Leonardo da Vinci is greatly admired as a scientist, an academic, and an inventor, he is most famous for his achievements

as the painter of several Renaissance masterpieces. His paintings were groundbreaking for a variety of reasons and his works have been imitated by students and discussed at great length by connoisseurs and critics.

Among the qualities that make da Vinci's work unique are the innovative techniques that he used in laying on the paint, his detailed knowledge of anatomy, his use of the human form in figurative composition, and his use of sfumato. All of these qualities are present in his most celebrated works, the *Mona Lisa*, *The Last Supper*, and the *Virgin of the Rocks*.



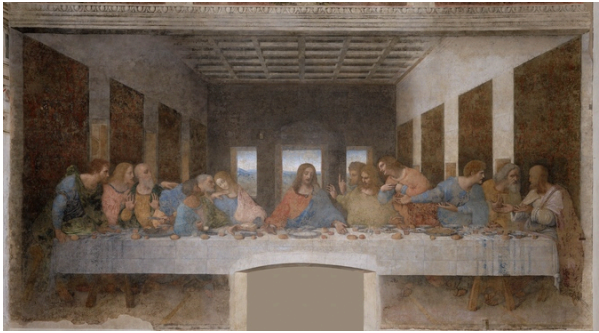
**The Virgin of the Rocks, Leonardo da Vinci, 1483–1486:** This painting shows the Madonna and Child Jesus with the infant John the Baptist and an angel, in a rocky setting.

# The Last Supper

Da Vinci's most celebrated painting of the 1490s is *The Last Supper*, which was painted for the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan. The painting depicts the last meal shared by Jesus and the 12 Apostles where he announces that one of the them will betray him. When finished, the painting was acclaimed as a masterpiece of design. This work demonstrates something that da Vinci did very well: taking a very traditional subject matter, such as the Last Supper, and completely re-inventing it.

Prior to this moment in art history, every representation of the Last Supper followed the same visual tradition: Jesus and the Apostles seated at a table. Judas is placed on the opposite side of the table of everyone else and is effortlessly identified by the viewer. When da Vinci painted *The Last Supper* he placed Judas on the same side of the table as Christ and the Apostles, who are shown reacting to Jesus as he announces that one of them will betray him. They are depicted as alarmed, upset, and trying to determine who will commit the act. The viewer also has to determine which figure is Judas, who will betray Christ. By depicting the scene in this manner, da Vinci has infused psychology into the work.

Unfortunately, this masterpiece of the Renaissance began to deteriorate immediately after da Vinci finished painting, due largely to the painting technique that he had chosen. Instead of using the technique of fresco, da Vinci had used tempera over a ground that was mainly gesso in an attempt to bring the subtle effects of oil paint to fresco. His new technique was not successful, and resulted in a surface that was subject to mold and flaking.



**The Last Supper:** Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, although much deteriorated, demonstrates the painter's mastery of the human form in figurative composition.

## Mona Lisa

Among the works created by da Vinci in the 16th century is the small portrait known as the *Mona Lisa*, or *La Gioconda*, “the laughing one.” In the present era it is arguably the most famous painting in the world. Its fame rests, in particular, on the elusive smile on the woman’s face—its mysterious quality brought about perhaps by the fact that the artist has subtly shadowed the corners of the mouth and eyes so that the exact nature of the smile cannot be determined.

The shadowy quality for which the work is renowned came to be called *sfumato*, the application of subtle layers of translucent paint so that there is no visible transition between colors, tones, and often objects. Other characteristics found in this work are the unadorned dress, in which the eyes and hands have no competition from other details; the dramatic landscape background, in which the world seems to be in a state of flux; the subdued coloring; and the extremely smooth nature of the painterly technique, employing oils, but applied much like tempera and blended on the surface so that the brushstrokes are indistinguishable. And again, da Vinci is innovating upon a type of painting here. Portraits were very

common in the Renaissance. However, portraits of women were always in profile, which was seen as proper and modest. Here, da Vinci present a portrait of a woman who not only faces the viewer but follows them with her eyes.



**Mona Lisa:** In the *Mona Lisa*, da Vinci incorporates his sfumato technique to create a shadowy quality.



## Virgin and Child with St. Anne

In the painting *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, da Vinci's composition again picks up the theme of figures in a landscape. What makes this painting unusual is that there are two obliquely set figures superimposed. Mary is seated on the knee of her mother, St. Anne. She leans forward to restrain the Christ Child as he plays roughly with a lamb, the sign of his own impending sacrifice. This painting influenced many contemporaries, including Michelangelo, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto. The trends in its composition were adopted in particular by the Venetian painters Tintoretto and Veronese.



**Virgin and Child with Saint Anne:** *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (c. 1510) by Leonardo da Vinci, Louvre Museum.

# Michelangelo

Michelangelo was a 16th century Florentine artist renowned for his masterpieces in sculpture, painting, and architectural design.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Discuss Michelangelo's achievements in sculpture, painting, and architecture

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Michelangelo created his colossal marble statue, the David, out of a single block of marble, which established his prominence as a sculptor of extraordinary technical skill and strength of symbolic imagination.
- In painting, Michelangelo is renowned for the ceiling and *The Last Judgement* of the Sistine Chapel, where he depicted a complex scheme representing Creation, the Downfall of Man, the Salvation of Man, and the Genealogy of Christ.
- Michelangelo's chief contribution to Saint Peter's

Basilica was the use of a Greek Cross form and an external masonry of massive proportions, with every corner filled in by a stairwell or small vestry. The effect is a continuous wall-surface that appears fractured or folded at different angles.

### *Key Terms*

- **contrapposto:** The standing position of a human figure where most of the weight is placed on one foot, and the other leg is relaxed. The effect of contrapposto in art makes figures look very naturalistic.
- **Sistine Chapel:** The best-known chapel in the Apostolic Palace.

Michelangelo was a 16th century Florentine artist renowned for his masterpieces in sculpture, painting, and architectural design. His most well known works are the *David*, the *Last Judgment*, and the *Basilica of Saint Peter's* in the Vatican.

### *Sculpture: David*

In 1504, Michelangelo was commissioned to create a colossal marble statue portraying David as a symbol of Florentine freedom. The subsequent masterpiece, *David*, established the artist's prominence as a sculptor of extraordinary technical skill and strength of symbolic imagination. *David* was created out of a single marble block, and stands larger than life, as it was originally intended to

adorn the Florence Cathedral. The work differs from previous representations in that the Biblical hero is not depicted with the head of the slain Goliath, as he is in Donatello's and Verrocchio's statues; both had represented the hero standing victorious over the head of Goliath. No earlier Florentine artist had omitted the giant altogether. Instead of appearing victorious over a foe, David's face looks tense and ready for combat. The tendons in his neck stand out tautly, his brow is furrowed, and his eyes seem to focus intently on something in the distance. Veins bulge out of his lowered right hand, but his body is in a relaxed *contrapposto* pose, and he carries his sling casually thrown over his left shoulder. In the Renaissance, *contrapposto* poses were thought of as a distinctive feature of antique sculpture.



**The David by Michelangelo, 1504:** Michelangelo's David stands in contrapposto pose.

The sculpture was intended to be placed on the exterior of the Duomo, and has become one of the most recognized works of Renaissance sculpture.

## Painting: *The Last Judgement*

In painting, Michelangelo is renowned for his work in the Sistine Chapel. He was originally commissioned to paint tromp-l'oeil coffers after the original ceiling developed a crack. Michelangelo lobbied for a different and more complex scheme, representing Creation, the Downfall of Man, the Promise of Salvation through the prophets, and the Genealogy of Christ. The work is part of a larger scheme of decoration within the chapel that represents much of the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

The composition eventually contained over 300 figures, and had at its center nine episodes from the Book of Genesis, divided into three groups: God's Creation of the Earth, God's Creation of Humankind, and their fall from God's grace, and lastly, the state of Humanity as represented by Noah and his family. Twelve men and women who prophesied the coming of the Jesus are painted on the pendentives supporting the ceiling. Among the most famous paintings on the ceiling are The Creation of Adam, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Great Flood, the Prophet Isaiah and the Cumaean Sibyl. The ancestors of Christ are painted around the windows.

The fresco of *The Last Judgment* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel was commissioned by Pope Clement VII, and Michelangelo labored on the project from 1536–1541. The work is located on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, which is not a traditional placement for the subject. Typically, last judgement scenes were placed on the exit wall of churches as a way to remind the viewer of eternal punishments as they left worship. *The Last Judgment* is a depiction

of the second coming of Christ and the apocalypse; where the souls of humanity rise and are assigned to their various fates, as judged by Christ, surrounded by the Saints. In contrast to the earlier figures Michelangelo painted on the ceiling, the figures in *The Last Judgement* are heavily muscled and are in much more artificial poses, demonstrating how this work is in the Mannerist style.

In this work Michelangelo has rejected the orderly depiction of the last judgement as established by Medieval tradition in favor of a swirling scene of chaos as each soul is judged. When the painting was revealed it was heavily criticized for its inclusion of classical imagery as well as for the amount of nude figures in somewhat suggestive poses. The ill reception that the work received may be tied to the Counter Reformation and the Council of Trent, which lead to a preference for more conservative religious art devoid of classical references. Although a number of figures were made more modest with the addition of drapery, the changes were not made until after the death of Michelangelo, demonstrating the respect and admiration that was afforded to him during his lifetime.





**The Last Judgement:** The fresco of The Last Judgment on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel was commissioned by Pope Clement VII. Michelangelo worked on the project from 1534–1541.

## Architecture: St. Peter's Basilica

Finally, although other architects were involved, Michelangelo is given credit for designing St. Peter's Basilica. Michelangelo's chief contribution was the use of a symmetrical plan of a Greek Cross

form and an external masonry of massive proportions, with every corner filled in by a stairwell or small vestry. The effect is of a continuous wall surface that is folded or fractured at different angles, lacking the right angles that usually define change of direction at the corners of a building. This exterior is surrounded by a giant order of Corinthian pilasters all set at slightly different angles to each other, in keeping with the ever-changing angles of the wall's surface. Above them the huge cornice ripples in a continuous band, giving the appearance of keeping the whole building in a state of compression.



**St. Peter's Basilica:** *Michelangelo designed the dome of St. Peter's Basilica on or before 1564, although it was unfinished when he died.*

## Mannerism

Mannerist artists began to reject the harmony and ideal proportions

of the Renaissance in favor of irrational settings, artificial colors, unclear subject matters, and elongated forms.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the Mannerist style, how it differs from the Renaissance, and reasons why it emerged.

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Mannerism came after the High Renaissance and before the Baroque.
- The artists who came a generation after Raphael and Michelangelo had a dilemma. They could not surpass the great works that had already been created by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. This is when we start to see Mannerism emerge.
- Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557) represents the shift from the Renaissance to the Mannerist style.

## *Key Terms*

- **Mannerism:** Style of art in Europe from c. 1520–1600. Mannerism came after the High Renaissance and before the Baroque. Not every artist painting during this period is considered a Mannerist artist.

Mannerism is the name given to a style of art in Europe from c. 1520–1600. Mannerism came after the High Renaissance and before the Baroque. Not every artist painting during this period is considered a Mannerist artist, however, and there is much debate among scholars over whether Mannerism should be considered a separate movement from the High Renaissance, or a stylistic phase of the High Renaissance. Mannerism will be treated as a separate art movement here as there are many differences between the High Renaissance and the Mannerist styles.

## Style

What makes a work of art Mannerist? First we must understand the ideals and goals of the Renaissance. During the Renaissance artists were engaging with classical antiquity in a new way. In addition, they developed theories on perspective, and in all ways strived to create works of art that were perfect, harmonious, and showed ideal depictions of the natural world. Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo are considered the artists who reached the greatest achievements in art during the Renaissance.

The Renaissance stressed harmony and beauty and no one could create more beautiful works than the great three artists listed above. The artists who came a generation after had a dilemma; they could not surpass the great works that had already been created by da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. This is when we start to see Mannerism emerge. Younger artists trying to do something new and different began to reject harmony and ideal proportions in favor of irrational settings, artificial colors, unclear subject matters, and elongated forms.

## Jacopo da Pontormo

Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557) represents the shift from the Renaissance to the Mannerist style. Take for example his *Deposition from the Cross*, an altarpiece that was painted for a chapel in the Church of Santa Felicita, Florence. The figures of Mary and Jesus appear to be a direct reference to Michelangelo's *Pieta*. Although the work is called a “Deposition,” there is no cross. Scholars also refer to this work as the “Entombment” but there is no tomb. This lack of clarity on subject matter is a hallmark of Mannerist painting. In addition, the setting is irrational, almost as if it is not in this world, and the colors are far from naturalistic. This work could not have been produced by a Renaissance artist. The Mannerist movement stresses different goals and this work of art by Pontormo demonstrates this new, and different style.





**Pontormo, *Deposition from the Cross*, 1525-1528, Church of Santa Felicità, Florence:** This work of art by Pontormo demonstrates the hallmarks of the

*Mannerist style: unclear subject matter, irrational setting, and artificial colors.*

## 83. Reading: Literature in the Renaissance



# The Rise of the Vernacular

Renaissance literature refers to European literature that was influenced by the intellectual and cultural tendencies of the Renaissance.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the influence of the different people, styles, and ideas that influenced Renaissance literature

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- In the 13th century, Italian authors began writing in their native vernacular language rather than in Latin, French, or Provençal. The earliest Renaissance literature appeared in 14th century Italy; Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli are notable examples of Italian Renaissance writers.
- From Italy the influence of the Renaissance spread across Europe; the scholarly writings of Erasmus and the plays of Shakespeare can be considered Renaissance in character.

- Renaissance literature is characterized by the adoption of a Humanist philosophy and the recovery of the classical literature of Antiquity, and benefited from the spread of printing in the latter part of the 15th century.

### *Key Terms*

- **Spenserian stanza:** Fixed verse form invented by Edmund Spenser for his epic poem “The Faerie Queene.” Each stanza contains nine lines in total; the rhyme scheme of these lines is “ababbcbcc.”
- **vernacular:** The native language or native dialect of a specific population, especially as distinguished from a literary, national, or standard variety of the language.
- **anthropocentric:** Believing human beings to be the central or most significant species on the planet, or the assessing reality through an exclusively human perspective.

## Overview

The 13th century Italian literary revolution helped set the stage for the Renaissance. Prior to the Renaissance, the Italian language was not the literary language in Italy. It was only in the 13th century that Italian authors began writing in their native vernacular language rather than in Latin, French, or Provençal. The 1250s saw a major

change in Italian poetry as the Dolce Stil Novo (Sweet New Style, which emphasized Platonic rather than courtly love) came into its own, pioneered by poets like Guittone d'Arezzo and Guido Guinizelli. Especially in poetry, major changes in Italian literature had been taking place decades before the Renaissance truly began.

With the printing of books initiated in Venice by Aldus Manutius, an increasing number of works began to be published in the Italian language, in addition to the flood of Latin and Greek texts that constituted the mainstream of the Italian Renaissance. The source for these works expanded beyond works of theology and towards the pre-Christian eras of Imperial Rome and Ancient Greece. This is not to say that no religious works were published in this period; Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* reflects a distinctly medieval world view. Christianity remained a major influence for artists and authors, with the classics coming into their own as a second primary influence.

At Florence the most celebrated Humanists wrote also in the vulgar tongue, and commented on Dante and Petrarch and defended them from their enemies. Leone Battista Alberti, the learned Greek and Latin scholar, wrote in the vernacular, and Vespasiano da Bisticci, while he was constantly absorbed in Greek and Latin manuscripts, wrote the *Vite di uomini illustri*, valuable for their historical contents and rivaling the best works of the 14th century in their candor and simplicity.

## Renaissance Literature

The earliest Renaissance literature appeared in 14th century Italy; Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli are notable examples of Italian Renaissance writers. From Italy the influence of the Renaissance spread at different rates to other countries, and continued to spread throughout Europe through the 17th century. The English Renaissance and the Renaissance in Scotland date from the late 15th

century to the early 17th century. In northern Europe the scholarly writings of Erasmus, the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Edmund Spenser, and the writings of Sir Philip Sidney may be considered Renaissance in character.

The literature of the Renaissance was written within the general movement of the Renaissance that arose in 13th century Italy and continued until the 16th century while being diffused into the western world. It is characterized by the adoption of a Humanist philosophy and the recovery of the classical literature of Antiquity and benefited from the spread of printing in the latter part of the 15th century. For the writers of the Renaissance, Greco-Roman inspiration was shown both in the themes of their writing and in the literary forms they used. The world was considered from an anthropocentric perspective. Platonic ideas were revived and put to the service of Christianity. The search for pleasures of the senses and a critical and rational spirit completed the ideological panorama of the period. New literary genres such as the essay and new metrical forms such as the sonnet and Spenserian stanza made their appearance.

The creation of the printing press (using movable type) by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1450s encouraged authors to write in their local vernacular rather than in Greek or Latin classical languages, widening the reading audience and promoting the spread of Renaissance ideas.

The impact of the Renaissance varied across the continent; countries that were predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant experienced the Renaissance differently. Areas where the Orthodox Church was culturally dominant, as well as those areas of Europe under Islamic rule, were more or less outside its influence. The period focused on self-actualization and one's ability to accept what is going on in one's life.





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**Renaissance Man (“Blister in the Sun” by the Violent Femmes):**  
Quick overview of some of the prominent men of the Renaissance.

## Renaissance Writers

The 13th and 14th century Italian literary revolution helped set the stage for the Renaissance.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify the key contributions made by Dante, Boccaccio, and Bruni

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The ideas characterizing the Renaissance had their origin in late 13th century Florence, in particular in the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Petrarch (1304–1374).
- The literature and poetry of the Renaissance was largely influenced by the developing science and philosophy.
- The Humanist Francesco Petrarch, a key figure in the renewed sense of scholarship, was also an accomplished poet, publishing several important works of poetry in Italian as well as Latin.
- Petrarch's disciple, Giovanni Boccaccio, became a major author in his own right, whose major work, *The Decameron*, was a source of inspiration and plots for many English authors in the Renaissance.
- A generation before Petrarch and Boccaccio, Dante Alighieri set the stage for Renaissance literature with his *Divine Comedy*, widely considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature.
- Leonardo Bruni was an Italian humanist, historian, and statesman, often recognized as the first modern historian.

## Key Terms

- **humanist:** One who studies classical antiquity and the intellectual adoption of its philosophies, centered on the important role of humans in the universe.
- **metaphysics:** A branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world that encompasses it.

## Overview

Many argue that the ideas characterizing the Renaissance had their origin in late 13th century Florence, in particular in the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Petrarch (1304–1374). Italian prose of the 13th century was as abundant and varied as its poetry. In the year 1282 a period of new literature began. With the school of Lapo Gianni, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, and Dante Alighieri, lyric poetry became exclusively Tuscan. The whole novelty and poetic power of this school consisted in, according to Dante, *Quando Amore spira, noto, ed a quel nido Ch'ei detta dentro, vo significando*—that is, in a power of expressing the feelings of the soul in the way in which love inspires them, in an appropriate and graceful manner, fitting form to matter, and by art fusing one with the other. Love is a divine gift that redeems man in the eyes of God, and the poet's mistress is the angel sent from heaven to show the way to salvation.

The literature and poetry of the Renaissance was largely influenced by the developing science and philosophy. The Humanist

Francesco Petrarch, a key figure in the renewed sense of scholarship, was also an accomplished poet, publishing several important works of poetry. He wrote poetry in Latin, notably the Punic War epic *Africa*, but is today remembered for his works in the Italian vernacular, especially the *Canzoniere*, a collection of love sonnets dedicated to his unrequited love, Laura. He was the foremost writer of sonnets in Italian, and translations of his work into English by Thomas Wyatt established the sonnet form in England, where it was employed by William Shakespeare and countless other poets.

## Giovanni Boccaccio

Petrarch's disciple, Giovanni Boccaccio, became a major author in his own right. His major work was *The Decameron*, a collection of 100 stories told by ten storytellers who have fled to the outskirts of Florence to escape the black plague over ten nights. *The Decameron* in particular and Boccaccio's work in general were a major source of inspiration and plots for many English authors in the Renaissance, including Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare. The various tales of love in *The Decameron* range from the erotic to the tragic. Tales of wit, practical jokes, and life lessons contribute to the mosaic. In addition to its literary value and widespread influence, it provides a document of life at the time. Written in the vernacular of the Florentine language, it is considered a masterpiece of classical early Italian prose.

Boccaccio wrote his imaginative literature mostly in the Italian vernacular, as well as other works in Latin, and is particularly noted for his realistic dialogue that differed from that of his contemporaries, medieval writers who usually followed formulaic models for character and plot.

Discussions between Boccaccio and Petrarch were instrumental in Boccaccio writing the *Genealogia deorum gentilium*; the first



edition was completed in 1360 and it remained one of the key reference works on classical mythology for over 400 years. It served as an extended defense for the studies of ancient literature and thought. Despite the Pagan beliefs at the core of the *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Boccaccio believed that much could be learned from antiquity. Thus, he challenged the arguments of clerical intellectuals who wanted to limit access to classical sources to prevent any moral harm to Christian readers. The revival of classical antiquity became a foundation of the Renaissance, and his defense of the importance of ancient literature was an essential requirement for its development.



The Decameron

A depiction of Giovanni Boccaccio and Florentines who have fled from the plague, the frame story for *The Decameron*.

## Dante Alighieri

A generation before Petrarch and Boccaccio, Dante Alighieri set the stage for Renaissance literature. His *Divine Comedy*, originally called *Comedia* and later christened *Divina* by Boccaccio, is widely considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature.

In the late Middle Ages, the overwhelming majority of poetry was written in Latin, and therefore was accessible only to affluent and educated audiences. In *De vulgari eloquentia* (On Eloquence in the Vernacular), however, Dante defended use of the vernacular in literature. He himself would even write in the Tuscan dialect for works such as *The New Life* (1295) and the aforementioned *Divine Comedy*; this choice, though highly unorthodox, set a hugely important precedent that later Italian writers such as Petrarch and Boccaccio would follow. As a result, Dante played an instrumental role in establishing the national language of Italy. Dante's significance also extends past his home country; his depictions of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven have provided inspiration for a large body of Western art, and are cited as an influence on the works of John Milton, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Lord Alfred Tennyson, among many others.

Dante, like most Florentines of his day, was embroiled in the Guelph-Ghibelline conflict. He fought in the Battle of Campaldino (June 11, 1289) with the Florentine Guelphs against the Arezzo Ghibellines. After defeating the Ghibellines, the Guelphs divided into two factions: the White Guelphs—Dante's party, led by Vieri dei Cerchi—and the Black Guelphs, led by Corso Donati. Although the split was along family lines at first, ideological differences arose based on opposing views of the papal role in Florentine affairs,

with the Blacks supporting the pope and the Whites wanting more freedom from Rome. Dante was accused of corruption and financial wrongdoing by the Black Guelphs for the time that he was serving as city prior (Florence's highest position) for two months in 1300. He was condemned to perpetual exile; if he returned to Florence without paying a fine, he could be burned at the stake.

At some point during his exile he conceived of the *Divine Comedy*, but the date is uncertain. The work is much more assured and on a larger scale than anything he had produced in Florence; it is likely he would have undertaken such a work only after he realized his political ambitions, which had been central to him up to his banishment, had been halted for some time, possibly forever. Mixing religion and private concerns in his writings, he invoked the worst anger of God against his city and suggested several particular targets that were also his personal enemies.



**Portrait of Dante:** Dante Alighieri was a major Italian poet of the Late Middle Ages who influenced and set the precedent for Renaissance literature.

# Leonardo Bruni

Leonardo Bruni (c. 1370–March 9, 1444) was an Italian Humanist, historian, and statesman, often recognized as the most important Humanist historian of the early Renaissance. He has been called the first modern historian. He was the earliest person to write using the three-period view of history: Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Modern. The dates Bruni used to define the periods are not exactly what modern historians use today, but he laid the conceptual groundwork for a tripartite division of history.

Bruni's most notable work is *Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII* (History of the Florentine People, 12 Books), which has been called the first modern history book. While it probably was not Bruni's intention to secularize history, the three period view of history is unquestionably secular, and for that Bruni has been called the first modern historian. The foundation of Bruni's conception can be found with Petrarch, who distinguished the classical period from later cultural decline, or *tenebrae* (literally "darkness"). Bruni argued that Italy had revived in recent centuries and could therefore be described as entering a new age.

One of Bruni's most famous works is *New Cicero*, a biography of the Roman statesman Cicero. He was also the author of biographies in Italian of Dante and Petrarch. It was Bruni who used the phrase "studia humanitatis," meaning the study of human endeavors, as distinct from those of theology and metaphysics, which is where the term "humanists" comes from.

As a Humanist Bruni was essential in translating into Latin many works of Greek philosophy and history, such as those by Aristotle and Procopius. Bruni's translations of Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as the pseudo-Aristotelean *Economics*, were widely distributed in manuscript and in print.

# Christine de Pizan

Christine de Pizan was an Italian-French late medieval author who wrote about the positive contributions of women to European history and court life.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Discuss the significance of Christine de Pizan's work

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Christine de Pizan was an Italian-French late medieval author, primarily a court writer, who wrote commissioned works for aristocratic families and addressed literary debates of the era.
- Her work is characterized by a prominent and positive depiction of women who encouraged ethical and judicious conduct in courtly life.
- Much of the impetus for her writing came from her need to earn a living to support her mother, a niece, and her two surviving children after being widowed at the age of 25.

- Christine's participation in a literary debate about Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose* allowed her to move beyond the courtly circles, and ultimately to establish her status as a writer concerned with the position of women in society.

### *Key Terms*

- **feminism:** A range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social rights for women that are equal to those of men.
- **chivalry:** A code of conduct associated with the medieval institution of knighthood, which later developed into social and moral virtues more generally.
- **alchemist:** A person who practices the philosophical and proto-scientific tradition aimed to purify, mature, and perfect certain objects, such as the transmutation of "base metals" (e.g., lead) into "noble" ones (particularly gold) and the creation of an elixir of immortality.

## Overview

Christine de Pizan (1364–1430) was an Italian-French late medieval author. She served as a court writer for several dukes (Louis of

Orleans, Philip the Bold of Burgundy, and John the Fearless of Burgundy) and the French royal court during the reign of Charles VI. She wrote both poetry and prose works such as biographies and books containing practical advice for women. She completed forty-one works during her thirty-year career from 1399 to 1429. She married in 1380 at the age of fifteen, and was widowed ten years later. Much of the impetus for her writing came from her need to earn a living to support her mother, a niece, and her two surviving children. She spent most of her childhood and all of her adult life in Paris and then the abbey at Poissy, and wrote entirely in her adopted language, Middle French.

In recent decades, Christine de Pizan's work has been returned to prominence by the efforts of scholars such as Charity Cannon Willard, Earl Jeffrey Richards, and Simone de Beauvoir. Certain scholars have argued that she should be seen as an early feminist who efficiently used language to convey that women could play an important role within society.





**Christine de Pizan:** A painting of Christine de Pizan, considered by some scholars to be a proto-feminist, lecturing four men.

## Life

Christine de Pizan was born in 1364 in Venice, Italy. Following her birth, her father, Thomas de Pizan, accepted an appointment to the court of Charles V of France, as the king's astrologer, alchemist, and physician. In this atmosphere, Christine was able to pursue her intellectual interests. She successfully educated herself by immersing herself in languages, in the rediscovered classics and

Humanism of the early Renaissance, and in Charles V's royal archive, which housed a vast number of manuscripts. But she did not assert her intellectual abilities, or establish her authority as a writer, until she was widowed at the age of 25.

In order to support herself and her family, Christine turned to writing. By 1393, she was writing love ballads, which caught the attention of wealthy patrons within the court. These patrons were intrigued by the novelty of a female writer and had her compose texts about their romantic exploits. Her output during this period was prolific. Between 1393 and 1412 she composed over 300 ballads, and many more shorter poems.

Christine's participation in a literary debate, in 1401–1402, allowed her to move beyond the courtly circles, and ultimately to establish her status as a writer concerned with the position of women in society. During these years, she involved herself in a renowned literary controversy, the “Querelle du Roman de la Rose.” She helped to instigate this debate by beginning to question the literary merits of Jean de Meun's *The Romance of the Rose*. Written in the 13th century, *The Romance of the Rose* satirizes the conventions of courtly love while critically depicting women as nothing more than seducers. Christine specifically objected to the use of vulgar terms in Jean de Meun's allegorical poem. She argued that these terms denigrated the proper and natural function of sexuality, and that such language was inappropriate for female characters such as Madam Reason. According to her, noble women did not use such language. Her critique primarily stemmed from her belief that Jean de Meun was purposely slandering women through the debated text.

The debate itself was extensive, and at its end the principal issue was no longer Jean de Meun's literary capabilities; it had shifted to the unjust slander of women within literary texts. This dispute helped to establish Christine's reputation as a female intellectual who could assert herself effectively and defend her claims in the male-dominated literary realm. She continued to counter abusive literary treatments of women.

## Writing

Christine produced a large amount of vernacular works in both prose and verse. Her works include political treatises, mirrors for princes, epistles, and poetry.

Her early courtly poetry is marked by her knowledge of aristocratic custom and fashion of the day, particularly involving women and the practice of chivalry. Her early and later allegorical and didactic treatises reflect both autobiographical information about her life and views and also her own individualized and Humanist approach to the scholastic learned tradition of mythology, legend, and history she inherited from clerical scholars, and to the genres and courtly or scholastic subjects of contemporary French and Italian poets she admired. Supported and encouraged by important royal French and English patrons, she influenced 15th century English poetry.

By 1405, Christine had completed her most famous literary works, *The Book of the City of Ladies* and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*. The first of these shows the importance of women's past contributions to society, and the second strives to teach women of all estates how to cultivate useful qualities. In *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, she highlights the persuasive effect of women's speech and actions in everyday life. In this particular text, Christine argues that women must recognize and promote their ability to make peace between people. This ability will allow women to mediate between husband and subjects. She also argues that slanderous speech erodes one's honor and threatens the sisterly bond among women. Christine then argues that "skill in discourse should be a part of every woman's moral repertoire." She believed that a woman's influence is realized when her speech accords value to chastity, virtue, and restraint. She argued that rhetoric is a powerful tool that women could employ to settle differences and to assert themselves. Additionally, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* provides glimpses into women's lives in 1400, from the great

lady in the castle down to the merchant's wife, the servant, and the peasant. She offers advice to governesses, widows, and even prostitutes.



**Picture from *The Book of the City of Ladies*:** *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* is a manual of education by medieval Italian-French author Christine de Pizan.

## Machiavelli

Renaissance philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli sought to describe political life as it really was rather than its philosophical ideal, as infamously portrayed in his text *The Prince*.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Analyze Machiavelli's impact during his own lifetime and in the modern day

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Niccolò Machiavelli was an Italian Renaissance historian, politician, diplomat, philosopher, Humanist, and writer, often called the founder of modern political science.
- His writings were innovative because of his emphasis on practical and pragmatic strategies over philosophical ideals, exemplified by such phrases as “He who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation.”
- His most famous text, *The Prince*, has been profoundly influential, from the time of his life up to the present day, both on politicians and philosophers.
- *The Prince* describes strategies to be an effective statesman and infamously includes justifications for treachery and violence to retain power.

## Key Terms

- **republicanism:** An ideology of being a citizen in a state in which power resides in elected individuals representing the citizen body.
- **realpolitik:** Politics or diplomacy based primarily on considerations of given circumstances and factors, rather than explicit ideological notions or moral and ethical premises.
- **Machiavellian:** Cunning and scheming in statecraft or in general conduct.

## Overview

Niccolò Machiavelli (May 3, 1469–June 21, 1527) was an Italian Renaissance historian, politician, diplomat, philosopher, Humanist, and writer. He has often been called the founder of modern political science. He was for many years a senior official in the Florentine Republic, with responsibilities in diplomatic and military affairs. He also wrote comedies, carnival songs, and poetry. His personal correspondence is renowned in the Italian language. He was secretary to the Second Chancery of the Republic of Florence from 1498 to 1512, when the Medici were out of power. He wrote his most renowned work, *The Prince* (*Il Principe*) in 1513.

“Machiavellianism” is a widely used negative term to characterize unscrupulous politicians of the sort Machiavelli described most famously in *The Prince*. Machiavelli described immoral behavior, such as dishonesty and killing innocents, as being normal and

effective in politics. He even seemed to endorse it in some situations. The book itself gained notoriety when some readers claimed that the author was teaching evil, and providing “evil recommendations to tyrants to help them maintain their power.” The term “Machiavellian” is often associated with political deceit, deviousness, and *realpolitik*. On the other hand, many commentators, such as Baruch Spinoza, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Denis Diderot, have argued that Machiavelli was actually a republican, even when writing *The Prince*, and his writings were an inspiration to Enlightenment proponents of modern democratic political philosophy.



**Portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli:** Machiavelli is a political philosopher infamous for his justification of violence in his treatise *The Prince*.

## *The Prince*

Machiavelli's best-known book, *The Prince*, contains several maxims concerning politics. Instead of the more traditional target audience



of a hereditary prince, it concentrates on the possibility of a “new prince.” To retain power, the hereditary prince must carefully balance the interests of a variety of institutions to which the people are accustomed. By contrast, a new prince has the more difficult task in ruling; he must first stabilize his newfound power in order to build an enduring political structure. Machiavelli suggests that the social benefits of stability and security can be achieved in the face of moral corruption. Machiavelli believed that a leader had to understand public and private morality as two different things in order to rule well. As a result, a ruler must be concerned not only with reputation, but also must be positively willing to act immorally at the right times.

As a political theorist, Machiavelli emphasized the occasional need for the methodical exercise of brute force or deceit, including extermination of entire noble families to head off any chance of a challenge to the prince's authority. He asserted that violence may be necessary for the successful stabilization of power and introduction of new legal institutions. Further, he believed that force may be used to eliminate political rivals, to coerce resistant populations, and to purge the community of other men of strong enough character to rule, who will inevitably attempt to replace the ruler. Machiavelli has become infamous for such political advice, ensuring that he would be remembered in history through the adjective “Machiavellian.”

*The Prince* is sometimes claimed to be one of the first works of modern philosophy, especially modern political philosophy, in which the effective truth is taken to be more important than any abstract ideal. It was also in direct conflict with the dominant Catholic and scholastic doctrines of the time concerning politics and ethics. In contrast to Plato and Aristotle, Machiavelli insisted that an imaginary ideal society is not a model by which a prince should orient himself.

## Influence

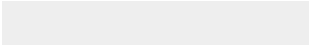
Machiavelli's ideas had a profound impact on political leaders throughout the modern west, helped by the new technology of the printing press. During the first generations after Machiavelli, his main influence was in non-Republican governments. One historian noted that *The Prince* was spoken of highly by Thomas Cromwell in England and had influenced Henry VIII in his turn towards Protestantism and in his tactics, for example during the Pilgrimage of Grace. A copy was also possessed by the Catholic king and emperor Charles V. In France, after an initially mixed reaction, Machiavelli came to be associated with Catherine de' Medici and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. As one historian reports, in the 16th century, Catholic writers "associated Machiavelli with the Protestants, whereas Protestant authors saw him as Italian and Catholic." In fact, he was apparently influencing both Catholic and Protestant kings.

Modern materialist philosophy developed in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, starting in the generations after Machiavelli. This philosophy tended to be republican, more in the original spirit of Machiavellianism, but as with the Catholic authors, Machiavelli's realism and encouragement of using innovation to try to control one's own fortune were more accepted than his emphasis upon war and politics. Not only were innovative economics and politics results, but also modern science, leading some commentators to say that the 18th century Enlightenment involved a "humanitarian" moderating of Machiavellianism.

Although Jean-Jacques Rousseau is associated with very different political ideas, it is important to view Machiavelli's work from different points of view rather than just the traditional notion. For example, Rousseau viewed Machiavelli's work as a satirical piece in which Machiavelli exposes the faults of one-man rule rather than exalting amorality.

Scholars have argued that Machiavelli was a major indirect and

direct influence upon the political thinking of the Founding Fathers of the United States due to his overwhelming favoritism of republicanism and the republic type of government. Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson followed Machiavelli's republicanism when they opposed what they saw as the emerging aristocracy that they feared Alexander Hamilton was creating with the Federalist Party. Hamilton learned from Machiavelli about the importance of foreign policy for domestic policy, but may have broken from him regarding how rapacious a republic needed to be in order to survive.



# 84. Assignments

## Week 14

### Assignment

#### **Weekly Quiz**

Points: 20

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.

PART XVI

WEEK 15: NORTHERN  
RENAISSANCE AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
ABSOLUTISM



# 85. Introduction

## Week 15

### Introduction

Printer in 1568

The Northern Renaissance was the Renaissance that occurred in Europe north of the Alps. Before 1497, Italian Renaissance humanism had little influence outside Italy. From the late 15th century, its ideas spread around Europe. This influenced the German Renaissance, French Renaissance, English Renaissance, Renaissance in the Low Countries, Polish Renaissance and other national and localized movements, each with different characteristics and strengths.

map

## 86. Reading: The Northern Renaissance



# Erasmus

Erasmus of Rotterdam was a renowned Humanist scholar and theologian who wrote several important texts criticizing the superstition and formalism of the church while upholding its core spiritual values.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe Erasmus and his connection to the Renaissance

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Erasmus was a Dutch Renaissance Humanist, Catholic priest, social critic, teacher, and theologian known as the “Prince of the Humanists” for his influential scholarship and writings.
- Erasmus lived against the backdrop of the growing European religious Reformation, but while he was critical of the abuses within the Catholic church and called for reform, he kept his distance from Luther and continued to recognize the authority of the pope.
- In *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, Erasmus

outlines the views of the normal Christian life and critiques formalism—going through the motions of tradition without understanding their basis in the teachings of Christ.

- One of Erasmus's best-known works is *In Praise of Folly*, a satirical attack on superstitions and other traditions of European society in general and the western church in particular.

### *Key Terms*

- **ecclesiastic:** The theological study of the Christian church.
- **satirical:** Characteristic of a genre of literature in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, groups, or society itself into improvement.

## Overview

Erasmus of Rotterdam, or simply Erasmus, was a Dutch Renaissance Humanist, Catholic priest, social critic, teacher, and theologian.

Erasmus was a classical scholar and wrote in a pure Latin style. Among Humanists he enjoyed the name “Prince of the Humanists,” and has been called “the crowning glory of the Christian Humanists.” Using Humanist techniques for working on texts, he prepared important new Latin and Greek editions of the New Testament,

which raised questions that would be influential in the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. He also wrote *On Free Will*, *The Praise of Folly*, *Handbook of a Christian Knight*, *On Civility in Children*, *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style*, *Julius Exclusus*, and many other works.

Erasmus lived against the backdrop of the growing European religious Reformation, but while he was critical of the abuses within the Catholic church and called for reform, he kept his distance from Luther and Melancthon and continued to recognize the authority of the pope, emphasizing a middle path with a deep respect for traditional faith, piety, and grace, rejecting Luther's emphasis on faith alone. Erasmus remained a member of the Roman Catholic church all his life, staying committed to reforming the church and its clerics' abuses from within. He also held to the Catholic doctrine of free will, which some Reformers rejected in favor of the doctrine of predestination. His middle road ("Via Media") approach disappointed and even angered scholars in both camps.

## Approach to Scholarship

Erasmus preferred to live the life of an independent scholar and made a conscious effort to avoid any actions or formal ties that might inhibit his freedom of intellect and literary expression. Throughout his life, he was offered many positions of honor and profit throughout the academic world but declined them all, preferring the uncertain but sufficient rewards of independent literary activity.

His residence at Leuven, where he lectured at the university, exposed Erasmus to much criticism from those ascetics, academics, and clerics hostile to the principles of literary and religious reform and the loose norms of the Renaissance adherents to which he was devoting his life.

He tried to free the methods of scholarship from the rigidity

and formalism of medieval traditions, but he was not satisfied with this. His revolt against certain forms of Christian monasticism and scholasticism was not based on doubts about the truth of doctrine, nor from hostility to the organization of the church itself, nor from rejection of celibacy or monastic lifestyles. He saw himself as a preacher of righteousness by an appeal to reason, applied frankly and without fear of the magisterium. He always intended to remain faithful to Catholic doctrine, and therefore was convinced he could frankly criticize virtually everyone and everything. Aloof from entangling obligations, Erasmus was the center of the literary movement of his time, corresponding with more than 500 men in the worlds of politics and thought.

## Writings

Erasmus wrote both on ecclesiastic subjects and those of general human interest. By the 1530s, the writings of Erasmus accounted for ten to twenty percent of all book sales in Europe.

His serious writings begin early, with the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*—the *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* (1503). In this short work, Erasmus outlines the views of the normal Christian life, which he was to spend the rest of his days elaborating. The chief evil of the day, he says, is formalism—going through the motions of tradition without understanding their basis in the teachings of Christ. Forms can teach the soul how to worship God, or they may hide or quench the spirit. In his examination of the dangers of formalism, Erasmus discusses monasticism, saint worship, war, the spirit of class, and the foibles of “society.”

One of Erasmus's best-known works is *In Praise of Folly*, a satirical attack on superstitions and other traditions of European society in general and the western church in particular, written in 1509. *In Praise of Folly* starts off with Folly praising herself, after the manner of the Greek satirist Lucian, whose work Erasmus and Sir Thomas

More had recently translated into Latin, a piece of virtuoso foolery; it then takes a darker tone in a series of orations, as Folly praises self-deception and madness and moves to a satirical examination of pious but superstitious abuses of Catholic doctrine and corrupt practices in parts of the Roman Catholic church—to which Erasmus was ever faithful—and the folly of pedants. Erasmus had recently returned disappointed from Rome, where he had turned down offers of advancement in the curia, and Folly increasingly takes on Erasmus's own chastising voice. The essay ends with a straightforward statement of Christian ideals.



Erasmus: Erasmus in 1523 as depicted by Hans Holbein the Younger. The Greek and Latin words on the book translate to “The Herculean Labours of Erasmus of Rotterdam.”

# The Printing Revolution

The invention of the printing press by Gutenberg led to the spread of mass communication across Europe in only a few decades.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Synthesize the impacts of the printing press on distribution of ideas and mass communication

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- In 1436 Johannes Gutenberg began work on the invention of a new printing press that allowed precise molding of new type blocks from a uniform template and allowed for the creation of high-quality printed books.
- Gutenberg is also credited with the introduction of an oil-based ink that was more durable than the previously used water-based inks. He tested colored inks in his Gutenberg Bible.
- The printing press was a factor in the establishment of a community of scientists who could

easily communicate their discoveries through widely disseminated scholarly journals, helping to bring on the scientific revolution.

- Because the printing process ensured that the same information fell on the same pages, page numbering, tables of contents, and indices became common.
- The arrival of mechanical movable type printing introduced the era of mass communication, which permanently altered the structure of society. The relatively unrestricted circulation of information and revolutionary ideas transcended borders.

### *Key Terms*

- **Johannes Gutenberg:** (c. 1395–1468) A German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher who introduced printing to Europe. His invention of mechanical movable type printing started the Printing Revolution and is widely regarded as the most important event of the modern period.
- **Gutenberg Bible:** The first major book printed in the West using movable type. It marked the start of the age of the printed book in the West and is widely praised for its high aesthetic and artistic qualities.



## Overview

The printing press was invented in the Holy Roman Empire by the German Johannes Gutenberg around 1440, based on existing screw presses. Gutenberg, a goldsmith by profession, developed a complete printing system that perfected the printing process through all of its stages by adapting existing technologies to printing purposes, as well as making groundbreaking inventions of his own. His newly devised hand mould made possible for the first time the precise and rapid creation of metal movable type in large quantities, a key element in the profitability of the whole printing enterprise.

The printing press spread within several decades to over 200 cities in a dozen European countries. By 1500, printing presses in operation throughout Western Europe had already produced more than 20 million volumes. In the 16th century, with presses spreading further afield, their output rose tenfold to an estimated 150 to 200 million copies. The operation of a press became so synonymous with the enterprise of printing that it lent its name to an entire new branch of media, the press.

## Johannes Gutenberg

Johannes Gutenberg's work on the printing press began in approximately 1436 when he partnered with Andreas Dritzehn—a man he had previously instructed in gem-cutting—and Andreas Heilmann, owner of a paper mill. However, it was not until a 1439 lawsuit against Gutenberg that an official record exists; witnesses' testimony discussed Gutenberg's types, an inventory of metals (including lead), and his type molds.



**Early wooden printing press, depicted in 1568:** Such presses could produce up to 240 impressions per hour. At the left in the foreground, a “puller” removes a printed sheet from the press. The “beater” to his right is inking the form. In the background, compositors are setting type.

Having previously worked as a professional goldsmith, Gutenberg made skillful use of the knowledge of metals he had learned as a craftsman. He was the first to make type from an alloy of lead,

tin, and antimony, which was critical for yielding durable type that produced high-quality printed books and proved to be much better-suited for printing than all other known materials. To create these lead types, Gutenberg used what is considered one of his most ingenious inventions, a special matrix enabling the quick and precise molding of new type blocks from a uniform template. His type case is estimated to have contained around 290 separate letter boxes, most of which were required for special characters, ligatures, punctuation marks, etc.

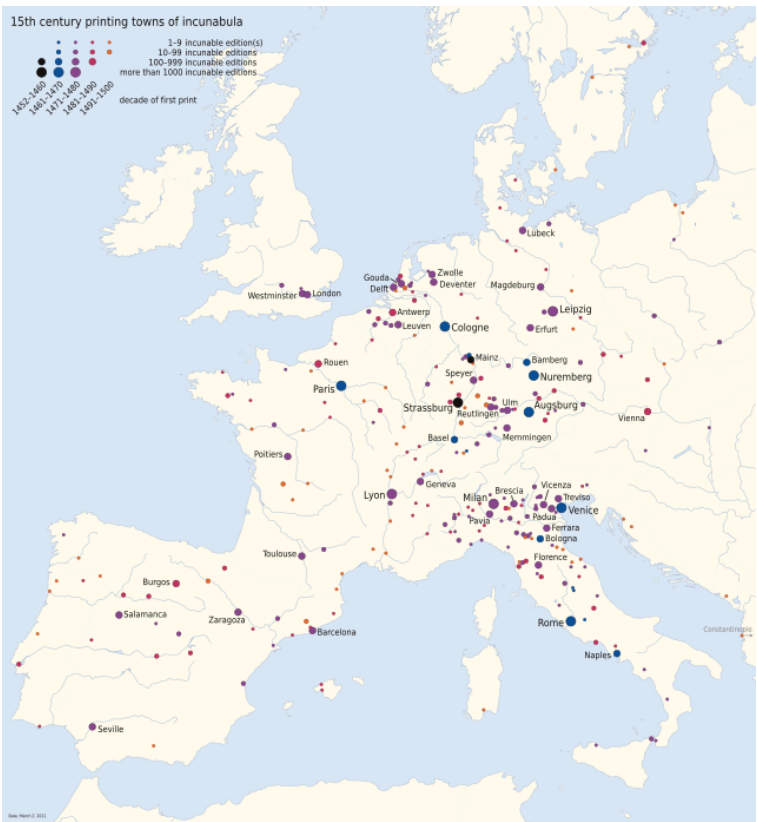
## Mass Communication

In Renaissance Europe, the arrival of mechanical movable type printing introduced the era of mass communication, which permanently altered the structure of society. The relatively unrestricted circulation of information and (revolutionary) ideas transcended borders, captured the masses in the Reformation, and threatened the power of political and religious authorities; the sharp increase in literacy broke the monopoly of the literate elite on education and learning and bolstered the emerging middle class. Across Europe, the increasing cultural self-awareness of its peoples led to the rise of proto-nationalism, accelerated by the flowering of the European vernacular languages to the detriment of Latin's status as *lingua franca*.

As early as 1480 there were printers active in 110 different places in Germany, Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, England, Bohemia, and Poland. From that time on, it is assumed that “the printed book was in universal use in Europe.” By 1500, the printing presses in operation throughout Western Europe had already produced more than 20 million copies. In the following century, their output rose tenfold to an estimated 150 to 200 million copies.

The vast printing capacities meant that individual authors could

now become true bestsellers; at least 750,000 copies of Erasmus’s works were sold during his lifetime alone (1469–1536). In the period from 1518 to 1524, the publication of books in Germany alone skyrocketed sevenfold; between 1518 and 1520, Luther’s tracts were distributed in 300,000 printed copies.



**Spread of printing in the 15th century from Mainz, Germany:** Printing places showing the spread of incunabula printing in the 15th century. Two hundred seventy-one locations are known; the largest of them are designated by name. The term “incunabula” referred to printed materials and came to denote the printed books themselves in the late 17th century.

## Effect on Scholarship and Literacy

The printing press was also a factor in the establishment of a community of scientists who could easily communicate their discoveries through widely disseminated scholarly journals, helping to bring on the scientific revolution. Because of the printing press, authorship became more meaningful and profitable. It was suddenly important who had said or written what, and what the precise formulation and time of composition was. This allowed the exact citing of references, producing the rule, “one author, one work (title), one piece of information.” Before, the author was less important, since a copy of Aristotle made in Paris would not be exactly identical to one made in Bologna. For many works prior to the printing press, the name of the author has been entirely lost.

Because the printing process ensured that the same information fell on the same pages, page numbering, tables of contents, and indices became common, though they previously had not been unknown. The process of reading also changed, gradually moving over several centuries from oral readings to silent, private reading. The wider availability of printed materials also led to a drastic rise in the adult literacy rate throughout Europe.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online*

*here: <https://library.achievingthedream.org/pimawesternciv1/?p=117>*

**Printing on a Gutenberg press:** A demonstration of how to print on a Gutenberg printing press.

# Flemish Painting in the Northern Renaissance

The Flemish School refers to artists who were active in Flanders during the 15th and 16th centuries.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Compare the artistic advances seen in the works of Robert Campin, Jan van Eyck, and Rogier van der Weyden

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The three most prominent painters during this period, Jan van Eyck, Robert Campin, and Rogier van der Weyden, were known for making significant advances in illusionism, or the realistic and precise representation of people, space, and objects.
- The preferred subject matter of the Flemish School was typically religious in nature, and the majority of the work was presented as panels, usually in the form of diptychs or polyptychs.
- While the Italian Renaissance was based on rediscoveries of classical Greece and Rome, the

Flemish school drew influence from the region's Gothic past.

- Van Eyck is known for signing and dating his work “ALS IK KAN” (“AS I CAN”).
- Robert Campin has been identified with the signature “Master of Flemalle.”
- Because the Flemish masters used a workshop system, they were able to mass produce high-end panels for sale and export throughout Europe.

### *Key Terms*

- **illusionism:** The realistic and precise representation of people, space, and objects.
- **tempera:** A type of painting where color pigments are mixed with a binder, usually egg. Tempera can also refer to the finished work of art itself.
- **triptych:** A picture or series of pictures painted on three tablets connected by hinges.
- **polyptych:** A work consisting of multiple painted or carved panels joined together, often with hinges.

## The Flemish School

The Flemish School, which has also been called the Northern Renaissance, the Flemish Primitive School, and Early Netherlandish, refers to artists who were active in Flanders during the 15th and 16th centuries, especially in the cities of Bruges and Ghent. The three

most prominent painters during this period—Jan van Eyck, Robert Campin, and Rogier van der Weyden—were known for making significant advances in illusionism, or the realistic and precise representation of people, space, and objects. The preferred subject matter of the Flemish School was typically religious in nature, but small portraits were common as well. The majority of this work was presented as either panels, single altarpieces, or more complex altarpieces, which were usually in the form of diptychs or polyptychs.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Low Countries became a political and artistic center focused around the cities of Bruges and Ghent. Because Flemish masters employed a workshop system, wherein craftsmen helped to complete their art, they were able to mass produce high-end panels for sale throughout Europe. The Flemish School emerged almost concurrently with the Italian Renaissance. However, while the Italian Renaissance was based on the rediscoveries of classical Greek and Roman culture, the Flemish school drew influence from the area's Gothic past. These artists also experimented with oil paint earlier than their Italian Renaissance peers.

## Robert Campin

Robert Campin, considered the first master of the Flemish School, has been identified with the signature “*Master of Flemalle*,” which appears on numerous works of art. Campin is known for producing highly realistic works, for making great use of perspective and shading, and for being one of the first artists to work with oil paint instead of tempera. One of his best known works, the *Merode Altarpiece*, is a triptych that depicts an Annunciation Scene. The Archangel Gabriel approaches Mary as she is reading in a room that is recognized as a typical middle class Flanders home. The work is



highly realistic, and the objects throughout the painting conveyed recognizable, religious meaning to viewers at the time.



**The Merode Altarpiece attributed to Robert Campin:** The Merode Altarpiece is a triptych that features the Archangel Gabriel approaching Mary, who is reading in a well-decorated, typical middle class Flanders home.

## Jan Van Eyck

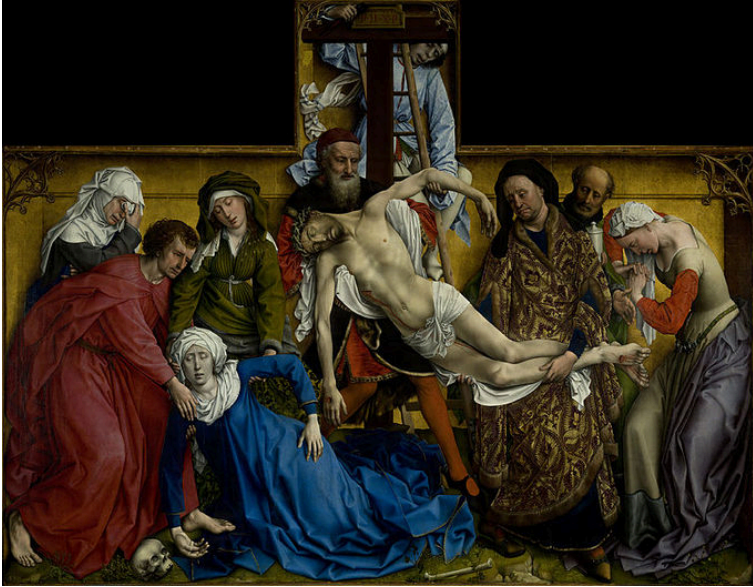
Jan van Eyck, a contemporary of Campin, is widely considered to be one of the most significant Northern European painters of the 15th century. He is known for signing and dating his work “ALS IK KAN” (“AS I CAN”). Signatures were not particularly customary during this time, but helped to secure his lasting reputation. Active in Bruges, and very popular within his own lifetime, van Eyck’s work was highly innovative and technical. It exhibited a masterful manipulation of oil paint and a high degree of realism. While van Eyck completed many famous paintings, perhaps his most famous is the *Ghent Altarpiece*, a commissioned polyptych from around 1432.



**The Ghent Altarpiece by Jan van Eyck:** *The Ghent Altarpiece, a commissioned polyptych from around 1432, is perhaps van Eyck's most famous work.*

## Rogier van der Weyden

Rogier van der Weyden is the last of the three most renowned Early Flemish painters. An apprentice under Robert Campin, van der Weyden exhibited many stylistic similarities, including the use of realism. Highly successful in his lifetime, his surviving works are mainly religious triptychs, altarpieces, and commissioned portraits. By the end of the 15th century, van der Weyden surpassed even van Eyck in popularity. Van der Weyden's most well-known painting is *The Descent From the Cross*, circa 1435.



**The Descent from the Cross by Rogier van der Weyden:** Van der Weyden's most well-known painting is *The Descent From the Cross*, circa 1435.

# 87. Reading: Nation-States and Sovereignty

## Introduction to Nation-States

Although the definition, origins, and early history of nation-states are disputed, “nation-state” remains one of the central categories of the modern world.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Define a nation-state

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The concept of a nation-state is notoriously difficult to define. A working and imprecise definition is: a type of state that conjoins the political entity of a state to the cultural entity of a nation, from which it aims to derive its political legitimacy to rule and

potentially its status as a sovereign state.

- The origins and early history of nation-states are disputed. Two major theoretical questions have been debated. First, “Which came first, the nation or the nation-state?” Second, “Is nation-state a modern or an ancient idea?” Scholars continue to debate a number of possible hypotheses.
- Most commonly, the idea of a nation-state was and is associated with the rise of the modern system of states, often called the “Westphalian system” in reference to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648).
- Nation-states have their own characteristics that today may be taken-for-granted factors shaping a modern state, but that all developed in contrast to pre-national states.
- The most obvious impact of the nation-state is the creation of a uniform national culture through state policy. Its most demonstrative examples are national systems of compulsory primary education that usually popularize a common language and historical narratives.

### *Key Terms*

- **Westphalian system:** A global system based on the principle of international law that each state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the exclusion of all external powers, on the principle of non-interference in another country’s domestic affairs, and that each state (no matter how large or

small) is equal in international law. The doctrine is named after the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War.

- **constitutive theory of statehood:** A theory that defines a state as a person in international law if, and only if, it is recognized as sovereign by other states. This theory of recognition was developed in the 19th century. Under it, a state was sovereign if another sovereign state recognized it as such.
- **declarative theory of statehood:** A theory that defines a state as a person in international law if it meets the following criteria: 1) a defined territory; 2) a permanent population; 3) a government; and 4) a capacity to enter into relations with other states. According to it, an entity's statehood is independent of its recognition by other states.

## Nation-State: Challenges of Definition

The concept of a nation-state is notoriously difficult to define. Anthony Smith, one of the most influential scholars of nation-states and nationalism, argued that a state is a nation-state only if and when a single ethnic and cultural population inhabits the boundaries of a state, and the boundaries of that state are coextensive with the boundaries of that ethnic and cultural population. This is a very narrow definition that presumes the existence of the "one nation, one state" model. Consequently, less than 10% of states in the world meet its criteria. The most obvious deviation from this largely ideal model is the presence of minorities, especially ethnic minorities, which ethnic

and cultural nationalists exclude from the majority nation. The most illustrative historical examples of groups that have been specifically singled out as outsiders are the Roma and Jews in Europe. In legal terms, many nation-states today accept specific minorities as being part of the nation, which generally implies that members of minorities are citizens of a given nation-state and enjoy the same rights and liberties as members of the majority nation. However, nationalists and, consequently, symbolic narratives of the origins and history of nation-states often continue to exclude minorities from the nation-state and the nation.

According to a wider working definition, a nation-state is a type of state that conjoins the political entity of a state to the cultural entity of a nation, from which it aims to derive its political legitimacy to rule and potentially its status as a sovereign state if one accepts the declarative theory of statehood as opposed to the constitutive theory. A state is specifically a political and geopolitical entity, while a nation is a cultural and ethnic one. The term “nation-state” implies that the two coincide, in that a state has chosen to adopt and endorse a specific cultural group as associated with it. The concept of a nation-state can be compared and contrasted with that of the multinational state, city-state, empire, confederation, and other state formations with which it may overlap. The key distinction is the identification of a people with a polity in the nation-state.

## Origins

The origins and early history of nation-states are disputed. Two major theoretical questions have been debated. First, “Which came first, the nation or the nation-state?” Second, “Is nation-state a modern or an ancient idea?” Some scholars have advanced the hypothesis that the nation-state was an inadvertent byproduct of 15th century intellectual discoveries in political economy, capitalism, mercantilism, political geography, and

geography combined together with cartography and advances in map-making technologies. For others, the nation existed first, then nationalist movements arose for sovereignty, and the nation-state was created to meet that demand. Some “modernization theories” of nationalism see it as a product of government policies to unify and modernize an already existing state. Most theories see the nation-state as a modern European phenomenon, facilitated by developments such as state-mandated education, mass literacy, and mass media (including print). However, others look for the roots of nation-states in ancient times.

Most commonly, the idea of a nation-state was and is associated with the rise of the modern system of states, often called the “Westphalian system” in reference to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). The balance of power that characterized that system depended on its effectiveness upon clearly defined, centrally controlled, independent entities, whether empires or nation-states, that recognized each other’s sovereignty and territory. The Westphalian system did not create the nation-state, but the nation-state meets the criteria for its component states.





European boundaries set by the Congress of Vienna, 1815

This map of Europe, outlining borders in 1815, demonstrates that still at the beginning of the 19th century, Europe was divided mostly into empires, kingdoms, and confederations. Hardly any of the entities on the map would meet the criteria of the nation-state.

## Characteristics

Nation-states have their own characteristics that today may be taken-for-granted factors shaping a modern state, but that all developed in contrast to pre-national states. Their territory is considered semi-sacred and nontransferable. Nation-states use the state as an instrument of national unity, in economic, social, and cultural life. Nation-states typically have a more centralized and

uniform public administration than their imperial predecessors because they are smaller and less diverse. After the 19th-century triumph of the nation-state in Europe, regional identity was usually subordinate to national identity. In many cases, the regional administration was also subordinate to central (national) government. This process has been partially reversed from the 1970s onward, with the introduction of various forms of regional autonomy in formerly centralized states (e.g., France).

The most obvious impact of the nation-state, as compared to its non-national predecessors, is the creation of a uniform national culture through state policy. The model of the nation-state implies that its population constitutes a nation, united by a common descent, a common language, and many forms of shared culture. When the implied unity was absent, the nation-state often tried to create it. The creation of national systems of compulsory primary education is usually linked with the popularization of nationalist narratives. Even today, primary and secondary schools around the world often teach a mythologized version of national history.



*Bacon's standard map of Europe, 1923*

While some European nation-states emerged throughout the 19th century, the end of World War I meant the end of empires on the continent. They all broke down into a number of smaller states. However, not until the tragedy of World War II and the post-war shifts of borders and population resettlement did many European states become more ethnically and culturally homogeneous and thus closer to the ideal nation-state.

## The Peace of Westphalia and Sovereignty

Although the Peace of Westphalia did not end war in Europe, it established the precedent of peace reached by diplomatic congress and a new system of political order in Europe based upon the concept of co-existing sovereign states.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain the significance of the Peace of Westphalia on European politics and diplomacy.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Peace of Westphalia was a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster. The treaties ended the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War.
- The Thirty Years' War was a series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it developed into a conflict involving most of the great powers.
- The Eighty Years' War, or Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648), was a revolt of the Seventeen Provinces against the political and religious hegemony of Philip II of Spain, the sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands.
- According to the Peace of Westphalia, all parties would recognize the Peace of Augsburg of 1555; Christians of non-dominant denominations were guaranteed the right to practice their faith; and the exclusive sovereignty of each party over its lands, people, and agents abroad was recognized. Multiple territorial adjustments were also decided.
- The Peace of Westphalia established the precedent of peace reached by diplomatic congress and a new system of political order in Europe based upon the concept of co-existing sovereign states. The

Westphalian principle of the recognition of another state's sovereignty and right to decide its own fate rests at the foundations of international law today.

- The European colonization of Asia and Africa in the 19th century and two global wars in the 20th century dramatically undermined the principles established in Westphalia.

### *Key Terms*

- **The Thirty Years' War:** A series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it gradually developed into a more general conflict involving most of the great powers.
- **The Peace of Westphalia:** A series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster. The treaties ended the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) between Spain and the Dutch Republic, with Spain formally recognizing the independence of the Dutch Republic.
- **Westphalian sovereignty:** The principle of international law that each nation-state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the exclusion of all external powers, on the principle of non-interference in another country's domestic affairs, and that each state (no matter how large or

small) is equal in international law. The doctrine is named after the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648.

- **Peace of Augsburg of 1555:** A treaty between Charles V and the forces of the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance of Lutheran princes, on September 25, 1555, at the imperial city of Augsburg, in present-day Bavaria, Germany. It officially ended the religious struggle between the two groups and made the legal division of Christendom permanent within the Holy Roman Empire.
- **cuius regio, eius religio:** A Latin phrase that literally means “Whose realm, his religion,” meaning that the religion of the ruler was to dictate the religion of those ruled. At the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 the rulers of the German-speaking states and Charles V, the emperor, agreed to accept this principle.
- **The Eighty Years’ War:** A revolt, known also as the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648), of the Seventeen Provinces against the political and religious hegemony of Philip II of Spain, the sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands.

## Introduction

The Peace of Westphalia was a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster. The treaties ended the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years’ War (1568–1648) between Spain and the Dutch Republic, with Spain

formally recognizing the independence of the Dutch Republic. The peace negotiations involved a total of 109 delegations representing European powers. The treaties did not restore peace throughout Europe, but they did create a basis for national self-determination.

## Background: Wars in Europe

Two destructive wars were the major triggers behind signing the eventual Peace of Westphalia:

the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic.

The Thirty Years' War was a series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it gradually developed into a more general conflict involving most of the great powers. The war began when the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II, tried to impose religious uniformity on his domains, forcing Roman Catholicism on its peoples. The northern Protestant states, angered by the violation of their rights to choose granted in the Peace of Augsburg, banded together to form the Protestant Union. These events caused widespread fears throughout northern and Central Europe, and triggered the Protestant Bohemians living in the dominion of Habsburg Austria to revolt against their nominal ruler, Ferdinand II. They ousted the Habsburgs and instead elected Frederick V, Elector of Palatinate, as their monarch. Frederick took the offer without the support of the union. The southern states, mainly Roman Catholic, were angered by this. Led by Bavaria, these states formed the Catholic League to expel Frederick in support of the emperor.

The war became less about religion and more of a continuation of the France–Habsburg rivalry for European political preeminence. Sweden, a major military power in the day, intervened in 1630 under the great general Gustavus Adolphus and started the full-scale great

war on the continent. Spain, wishing to finally crush the Dutch rebels in the Netherlands and the Dutch Republic, intervened under the pretext of helping their dynastic Habsburg ally, Austria. No longer able to tolerate the encirclement of two major Habsburg powers on its borders, Catholic France entered the coalition on the side of the Protestants to counter the Habsburgs.

The Thirty Years' War devastated entire regions, with famine and disease significantly decreasing the populations of the German and Italian states, the Crown of Bohemia, and the Southern Netherlands. The war altered the previous political order of European powers. The rise of Bourbon France, the curtailing of Habsburg ambition, and the ascendancy of Sweden as a great power created a new balance of power on the continent, with France emerging from the war strengthened and increasingly dominant in the latter part of the 17th century.

The Eighty Years' War or Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648) was a revolt of the Seventeen Provinces against the political and religious hegemony of Philip II of Spain, the sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands. After the initial stages, Philip II deployed his armies and regained control over most of the rebelling provinces. However, under the leadership of the exiled William the Silent, the northern provinces continued their resistance. They were eventually able to oust the Habsburg armies, and in 1581 they established the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. The war continued in other areas, although the heartland of the republic was no longer threatened. After a twelve-year truce, hostilities broke out again around 1619, which coincided with the Thirty Years' War.

## The Peace of Westphalia

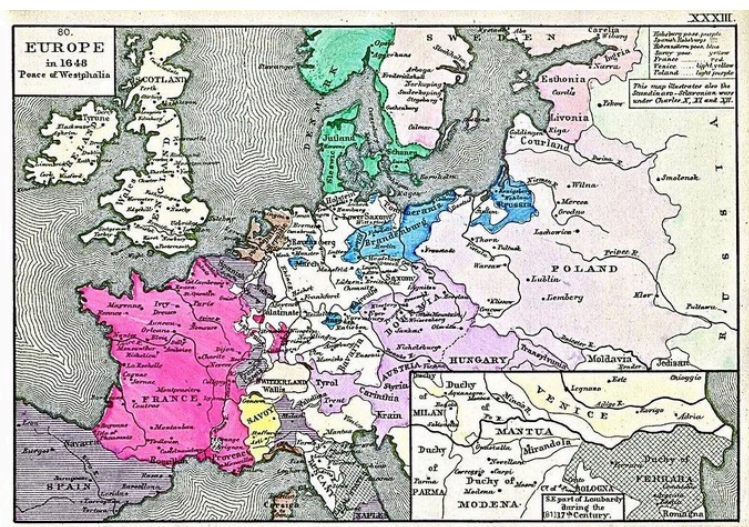
Since Lutheran Sweden preferred Osnabrück as a conference



venue, its peace negotiations with the Holy Roman Empire, including the allies of both sides, took place in Osnabrück. The empire and its opponent France, including the allies of each, as well as the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and its opponent Spain (and their respective allies), negotiated in Münster. The peace negotiations had no exact beginning and ending, because the participating total of 109 delegations never met in a plenary session, but arrived between 1643 and 1646 and left between 1647 and 1649.

According to the Peace of Westphalia, all parties would recognize the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, in which each prince would have the right to determine the religion of his own state (the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*). Christians living in principalities where their denomination was *not* the established church were guaranteed the right to practice their faith in public during allotted hours and in private at their will. The delegates also recognized the exclusive sovereignty of each party over its lands, people, and agents abroad, and responsibility for the warlike acts of any of its citizens or agents.

Multiple territorial adjustments were also decided. Among the most important ones was the recognition of the independence of Switzerland from the Holy Roman Empire and the expansion of the territories of France, Sweden, and Brandenburg-Prussia (later Prussia). The independence of the city of Bremen was clarified. Also, barriers to trade and commerce erected during the war were abolished, and “a degree” of free navigation was guaranteed on the Rhine.



**Historical map of Europe after the Peace of Westphalia:** From “An Historical Atlas Containing a Chronological Series of One Hundred and Four Maps, at Successive Periods, from the Dawn of History to the Present Day” by Robert H. Lobberton, 1884.

The map shows the possessions of the two branches of the house of Habsburg [purple]; the possessions of the house of Hohenzollern (union of Prussia with Brandenburg) [blue]; the Swedish empire on both shores of the Baltic and in northern Germany; the Danish monarchy, Denmark, Norway, and Scania; the British isles, with the battlefields of the civil wars; France, with the battlefields of the civil wars [red]; Germany with the battlefields of the Thirty Years’ War; the republic of Poland at its greatest extent; the western boundary of Russia.

## Legacy

The Peace of Westphalia established the precedent of peace

reached by diplomatic congress and a new system of political order in Europe based upon the concept of co-existing sovereign states. Inter-state aggression was to be held in check by a balance of power. A norm was established against interference in another state's domestic affairs, known as the principle of Westphalian sovereignty. This principle of international law presumes that each state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the exclusion of all external powers, on the principle of non-interference in another country's domestic affairs, and that each state (no matter how large or small) is equal in international law.

As European influence spread across the globe, these Westphalian principles, especially the concept of sovereign states, became central to international law and to the prevailing world order. However, the European colonization of Asia and Africa in the 19th century and two global wars in the 20th century dramatically undermined the principles established in Westphalia.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, power was seen as unipolar with the United States in absolute control, though nuclear proliferation and the rise of Japan, the European Union, the Middle East, China, and a resurgent Russia have begun to recreate a multipolar political environment. Instead of a traditional balance of power, inter-state aggression may now be checked by the preponderance of power, a sharp contrast to the Westphalian principle.



*The Ratification of the Treaty of Münster, 15 May 1648 (1648) by Gerard ter Borch.*

Two cities, Osnabrück and Münster, were chosen to host the peace talks based on religious divisions between the participating delegations.

# 88. Reading: Spain and Catholicism

## The Reconquista

The Reconquista is a period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula dominated by almost constant warfare between Muslims and Christians and followed by the Spanish Inquisition.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how the Reconquista led to Spain's increasing commitment to Catholicism

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- The Reconquista is a period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, spanning approximately 770 years, between the initial Umayyad conquest of Hispania in the 710s and the fall of the Emirate of Granada, the

last Islamic state on the peninsula, to expanding Christian kingdoms in 1492.

- By 718 the Muslims were in control of nearly the whole Iberian Peninsula. The advance into Western Europe was only stopped in what is now north-central France by the West Germanic Franks at the Battle of Tours in 732.
- The Kingdom of Asturias became the main base for Christian resistance to Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula for several centuries. Medieval Spain was the scene of almost constant warfare between Muslims and Christians.
- By 1250, nearly all of Iberia was back under Christian rule, with the exception of the Muslim kingdom of Granada—the only independent Muslim realm in Spain that would last until 1492.
- Around 1480, Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile (known as the Catholic Monarchs) established what would be known as the Spanish Inquisition. It was intended to maintain Catholic orthodoxy in their kingdoms.
- In the aftermath of the Reconquista and the Inquisition, Catholicism dominated the politics, social relations, and culture of Spain, shaping Spain as a state and the Spanish as a nation.

### *Key Terms*

- **the Catholic Monarchs:** The joint title used in history for Queen Isabella I of Castile and King

Ferdinand II of Aragon. They were both from the House of Trastámara and were second cousins, both descended from John I of Castile; on marriage they were given a papal dispensation to deal with consanguinity by Sixtus IV. They established the Spanish Inquisition around 1480.

- **Kingdom of Asturias:** A kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula founded in 718 by the nobleman Pelagius of Asturias. In 718 or 722, Pelagius defeated an Umayyad patrol at the Battle of Covadonga, in what is usually regarded as the beginning of the Reconquista. It transitioned to the Kingdom of León in 924 and became the main base for Christian resistance to Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula for several centuries.
- **Visigothic Kingdom:** A kingdom that occupied what is now southwestern France and the Iberian Peninsula from the 5th century to the 8th century. One of the Germanic successor states to the Western Roman Empire, the kingdom maintained independence from the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire. During its existence, Catholicism coalesced in Spain.
- **Battle of Covadonga:** The first victory by a Christian military force in Iberia following the Islamic conquest of Visigothic Hispania in 711–718. It was fought most likely in 722. The battle was followed by the creation of an independent Christian principality in the mountains of Asturias that became a bastion of Christian resistance to the expansion of Muslim rule. It was from there that the return of Christian rule to the entire Iberian peninsula began.

- **Alhambra Decree:** An edict issued on March 31, 1492, by the joint Catholic Monarchs of Spain (Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon) ordering the expulsion of practicing Jews from the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon and its territories and possessions by July 31 of that year.
- **Arianism:** A Christian belief that asserts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was created by God the Father at a point in time, is distinct from the Father, and is therefore subordinate to the Father. Arian teachings were first attributed to Arius (c. 250–336 CE), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt. They gained popularity in the Iberian Peninsula before Catholicism became the predominant religion of the region.

## Background

The Reconquista (“reconquest”) is a period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, spanning approximately 770 years, between the initial Umayyad conquest of Hispania in the 710s and the fall of the Emirate of Granada, the last Islamic state on the peninsula, to expanding Christian kingdoms in 1492. Historians traditionally mark the beginning of the Reconquista with the Battle of Covadonga (most likely in 722), and its end is associated with Portuguese and Spanish colonization of the Americas.

The Arab Islamic conquest had dominated most of North Africa by 710 CE. In 711 an Islamic Berber raiding party, led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, was sent to Iberia to intervene in a civil war in the Visigothic Kingdom. Tariq’s army crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and won a



decisive victory in the summer of 711 when the Visigothic King Roderic was defeated and killed at the Battle of Guadalete. Tariq's commander, Musa, quickly crossed with Arab reinforcements, and by 718 the Muslims were in control of nearly the whole Iberian Peninsula. The advance into Western Europe was only stopped in what is now north-central France by the West Germanic Franks at the Battle of Tours in 732.

A decisive victory for the Christians took place at Covadonga, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, in the summer of 722. In a minor battle known as the Battle of Covadonga, a Muslim force sent to put down the Christian rebels in the northern mountains was defeated by Pelagius of Asturias, who established the monarchy of the Christian Kingdom of Asturias. In 739, a rebellion in Galicia, assisted by the Asturians, drove out Muslim forces, and it joined the Asturian kingdom. The Kingdom of Asturias became the main base for Christian resistance to Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula for several centuries.

## Warfare between Muslims and Christians

Muslim interest in the peninsula returned in force around when Al-Mansur sacked Barcelona in 985. Under his son, other Christian cities were subjected to numerous raids. After his son's death, the caliphate plunged into a civil war and splintered into the so-called "Taifa Kingdoms." Medieval Spain was the scene of almost constant warfare between Muslims and Christians. The Almohads, who had taken control of the Almoravids' Maghribi and al-Andalus territories by 1147, surpassed the Almoravides in fundamentalist Islamic outlook, and they treated the non-believer *dhimmis* harshly. Faced with the choice of death, conversion, or emigration, many Jews and Christians left.

The Taifa kingdoms lost ground to the Christian realms in the north. After the loss of Toledo in 1085, the Muslim rulers reluctantly

invited the Almoravides, who invaded Al-Andalus from North Africa and established an empire. In the 12th century the Almoravid empire broke up again, only to be taken over by the invasion of the Almohads, who were defeated by an alliance of the Christian kingdoms in the decisive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. By 1250, nearly all of Iberia was back under Christian rule, with the exception of the Muslim kingdom of Granada—the only independent Muslim realm in Spain that would last until 1492.



Francisco Pradilla Ortiz, *The Capitulation of Granada* (1882)

*The Capitulation of Granada* shows Muhammad XII confronting Ferdinand and Isabella.

Despite the decline in Muslim-controlled kingdoms, it is important to note the lasting effects exerted on the peninsula by Muslims in technology, culture, and society.

# Spanish Inquisition

Around 1480, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, known as the Catholic Monarchs, established what would be known as the Spanish Inquisition. It was intended to maintain Catholic orthodoxy in their kingdoms and to replace the Medieval Inquisition, which was under Papal control. It covered Spain and all the Spanish colonies and territories, which included the Canary Islands, the Spanish Netherlands, the Kingdom of Naples, and all Spanish possessions in North, Central, and South America.

People who converted to Catholicism were not subject to expulsion, but between 1480 and 1492 hundreds of those who had converted (*conversos* and *moriscos*) were accused of secretly practicing their original religion (crypto-Judaism or crypto-Islam) and arrested, imprisoned, interrogated under torture, and in some cases burned to death, in both Castile and Aragon. In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella ordered segregation of communities to create closed quarters that became what were later called “ghettos.” They also furthered economic pressures upon Jews and other non-Christians by increasing taxes and social restrictions. In 1492 the monarchs issued a decree of expulsion of Jews, known formally as the Alhambra Decree, which gave Jews in Spain four months to either convert to Catholicism or leave Spain. Tens of thousands of Jews emigrated to other lands such as Portugal, North Africa, the Low Countries, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire. Later in 1492, Ferdinand issued a letter addressed to the Jews who had left Castile and Aragon, inviting them back to Spain if they had become Christians. The Inquisition was not definitively abolished until 1834, during the reign of Isabella II, after a period of declining influence in the preceding century.

Most of the descendants of the Muslims who submitted to conversion to Christianity rather than exile during the early periods of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition, the Moriscos, were later expelled from Spain after serious social upheaval, when the

Inquisition was at its height. The expulsions were carried out more severely in eastern Spain (Valencia and Aragon) due to local animosity towards Muslims and Moriscos perceived as economic rivals; local workers saw them as cheap labor undermining their bargaining position with the landlords. Those that the Spanish Inquisition found to be secretly practicing Islam or Judaism were executed, imprisoned, or expelled. Nevertheless, all those deemed to be “New Christians” were perpetually suspected of various crimes against the Spanish state, including continued practice of Islam or Judaism.



*The Inquisition Tribunal as illustrated by Francisco de Goya (1808/1812)*

## Catholicism

Although the period of rule by the Visigothic Kingdom (c. 5th–8th centuries) saw the brief spread of Arianism, Catholic religion coalesced in Spain at the time. The Councils of Toledo debated creed and liturgy in orthodox Catholicism, and the Council of Lerida in 546 constrained the clergy and extended the power of law over

them under the blessings of Rome. In 587, the Visigothic king at Toledo, Reccared, converted to Catholicism and launched a movement in Spain to unify the various religious doctrines that existed in the land. This put an end to dissension on the question of Arianism. The period of Reconquista and the Spanish Inquisition that followed turned Catholicism into the dominant religion of Spain, which has shaped the development of the Spanish state and national identity.

## The Spanish Habsburgs

Under the rule of the Habsburg dynasty, Spain became the first modern global empire and the most influential state in Europe, only to be reduced to a second-rank power by the time the last Spanish Habsburg died in 1700.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain why the Spanish Habsburgs grew increasingly feeble as a family

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Spain was ruled by the major branch of the Habsburg dynasty over the 16th and 17th centuries. In this period, it dominated Europe politically and militarily, but experienced a gradual decline of influence in the second half of the 17th century under the later Habsburg kings.
- When Spain's first Habsburg ruler, Charles I, became king of Spain in 1516, Spain became central to the dynastic struggles of Europe. Under Charles I, Spain colonized big parts of the Americas and established itself as the first modern global empire.
- Under Philip II, the Spanish empire included territories on every continent then known to Europeans. During his reign, Spain reached the height of its influence and power.
- Under Philip III, a ten-year truce with the Dutch was overshadowed in 1618 by Spain's involvement in the European-wide Thirty Years' War. Additionally, paying for the budget deficits by the mass minting of currency caused an enormous economic crisis.
- Under Philip IV, much of the policy was conducted by the minister Gaspar de Guzmán. Portugal was lost to the crown for good; in Italy and most of Catalonia, French forces were expelled and Catalonia's independence was suppressed.
- Charles' II

mental and physical disabilities, caused most likely by the generations of inbreeding among the Spanish Habsburgs, enabled power games on the court and meant that Spain was essentially left leaderless and gradually reduced to a second-rank power.

### *Key Terms*

- **consanguinity:** The property of being from the same kinship as another person. In that aspect, consanguinity is the quality of being descended from the same ancestor as another person. The laws of many jurisdictions set out degrees of consanguinity in relation to prohibited sexual relations and marriage parties.
- **Spanish Armada:** A Spanish fleet of 130 ships that sailed from A Coruña in August 1588 with the purpose of escorting an army from Flanders to invade England. The strategic aim was to overthrow Queen Elizabeth I of England and the Tudor establishment of Protestantism in England.
- **Spanish Golden Age:** A period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. It does not imply precise dates and is usually considered to have lasted longer than an actual century.

## Spain under the Habsburgs

Spain was ruled by the major branch of the Habsburg dynasty over the 16th and 17th centuries. In this period, “Spain” or “the Spains” covered the entire peninsula, politically a confederacy comprising several nominally independent kingdoms in personal union: Aragon, Castile, León, Navarre and, from 1580, Portugal. At the time, the term “*Monarchia Catholica*” (Catholic Monarchy) remained in use for the monarchy under the Spanish Habsburgs. However, Spain as a unified state came into being by right only after the death of Charles II in 1700, the last ruler of Spain of the Habsburg dynasty.

Under the Habsburgs, Spain dominated Europe politically and militarily, but experienced a gradual decline of influence in the second half of the 17th century under the later Habsburg kings. The Habsburg years were also a Spanish Golden Age of cultural efflorescence.

## The Global Power

When Spain’s first Habsburg ruler, Charles I, became king of Spain in 1516, Spain became central to the dynastic struggles of Europe. After becoming king of Spain, Charles also became Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, and because of his widely scattered domains was not often in Spain. As he approached the end of his life he made provision for the division of the Habsburg inheritance into two parts. On the one hand was Spain, its possessions in Europe, North Africa, the Americas, and the Netherlands. On the other hand there was the Holy Roman Empire. This was to create enormous difficulties for his son Philip II of Spain.

The Aztec and Inca Empires were conquered during Charles’s reign, from 1519 to 1521 and 1540 to 1558, respectively. Spanish settlements were established in the New World: Mexico City, the



most important colonial city established in 1524 to be the primary center of administration in the New World; Florida, colonized in the 1560s; Buenos Aires, established in 1536; and New Granada (modern Colombia), colonized in the 1530s. The Spanish Empire abroad became the source of Spanish wealth and power in Europe. But as precious metal shipments rapidly expanded late in the century this contributed to the general inflation that was affecting the whole of Europe. Instead of fueling the Spanish economy, American silver made the country increasingly dependent on foreign sources of raw materials and manufactured goods.

Philip II became king on Charles I's abdication in 1556. During his reign, there were several separate state bankruptcies, which were partly the cause for the declaration of independence that created the Dutch Republic in 1581. A devout Catholic, Philip organized a huge naval expedition against Protestant England in 1588, known usually as the Spanish Armada, which was unsuccessful, mostly due to storms and grave logistical problems. Despite these problems, the growing inflow of New World silver from the mid-16th century, the justified military reputation of the Spanish infantry, and even the quick recovery of the navy from its Armada disaster made Spain the leading European power, a novel situation of which its citizens were only just becoming aware. The Iberian Union with Portugal in 1580 not only unified the peninsula, but added that country's worldwide resources to the Spanish crown.



zweyen General Tafeln vnd in der neuen Tafel die allein Europam begreiffet. Doch wann man ansehen will vnd dazzu rechnen die groffen Landſchaften die gegen Mitternacht ſich ſolte wol die breite Europæ vbertreffen die länge. Wie aber Ptolemæus Europam beſchrieben hat iſt ſein länge größer dann die breite. Das iſt ein mal gewiß daß Europæ iſt ein trefflich fruchtbar vnd wol erbaue

Europa Regina, associated with a Habsburg-dominated Europe under Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Habsburg (Charles I of Spain)

Map of Europe as a queen, printed by Sebastian Munster in Basel in 1570. Europe is shown standing upright with the Iberian Peninsula forming her crowned head.

## The Gradual Decline

However, economic and administrative problems multiplied in Castile, and the weakness of the native economy became evident in the following century. Rising inflation, financially draining wars in Europe, the ongoing aftermath of the expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Spain, and Spain's growing dependency on the gold and silver imports combined to cause several bankruptcies that caused an economic crisis in the country, especially in heavily burdened Castile.

Faced with wars against England, France, and the Netherlands, the Spanish government found that neither the New World silver nor steadily increasing taxes were enough to cover their expenses, and went bankrupt again in 1596. Furthermore, the great plague of 1596–1602 killed 600,000 to 700,000 people, or about 10% of the population. Altogether more than 1,250,000 deaths resulted from the extreme incidence of plague in 17th century Spain. Economically, the plague destroyed the labor force, and created a psychological blow to an already problematic Spain.

Philip II died in 1598, and was succeeded by his son Philip III. In his reign (1598–1621) a ten-year truce with the Dutch was overshadowed in 1618 by Spain's involvement in the European-wide Thirty Years' War. Philip III had no interest in politics or government, preferring to engage in lavish court festivities, religious indulgences, and the theater. His government resorted to a tactic that had been resolutely resisted by Philip II, paying for the budget deficits by the mass minting of increasingly worthless vellones (the currency), causing inflation. In 1607, the government faced another bankruptcy.

Philip III was succeeded in 1621 by his son Philip IV of Spain (reigned 1621–1665). Much of the policy was conducted by the minister Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares. In 1640, with the war in Central Europe having no clear winner except the French, both Portugal and Catalonia rebelled. Portugal was lost to the crown for good; in Italy and most of Catalonia, French forces were expelled and Catalonia's independence was suppressed.

Charles II (1665–1700), the last of the Habsburgs in Spain, was three years old when his father, Philip IV, died in 1665. The Council of Castile appointed Philip's second wife and Charles's mother, Mariana of Austria, regent for the minor king. As regent, Mariana managed the country's affairs through a series of favorites ("validos"), whose merits usually amounted to no more than meeting her fancy. Spain was essentially left leaderless and was gradually being reduced to a second-rank power.

## Inbreeding

The Spanish branch of the Habsburg royal family was noted for extreme consanguinity. Well aware that they owed their power to fortunate marriages, they married between themselves to protect their gains. Charles's father and his mother, Mariana, were actually uncle and niece. Charles was physically and mentally disabled and infertile, possibly in consequence of this massive inbreeding. Due to the deaths of his half brothers, he was the last member of the male Spanish Habsburg line. He did not learn to speak until the age of four nor to walk until the age of eight, and was treated as virtually an infant until he was ten years old. His jaw was so badly deformed (an extreme example of the so-called Habsburg jaw) that he could barely speak or chew. Fearing the frail child would be overtaxed, his caretakers did not force Charles to attend school.

The Habsburg dynasty became extinct in Spain with Charles II's death in 1700, and the War of the Spanish Succession ensued, in

which the other European powers tried to assume power over the Spanish monarchy. The control of Spain was allowed to pass to the Bourbon dynasty.

## Philip II and the Spanish Armada

Extreme commitment to championing Catholicism against both Protestantism and Islam shaped both the domestic and foreign policies of Philip II, who was the most powerful European monarch in an era of religious conflict.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe Philip II's convictions and how he attempted to carry them out

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- During the reign of Philip II, Spain reached the height of its influence and power, and remained firmly Roman Catholic. Philip saw himself as a

champion of Catholicism, both against the Muslim Ottoman Empire and the Protestants.

- As the Spanish Empire was not a single monarchy with one legal system but a federation of separate realms, Philip often found his authority overruled by local assemblies, and his word less effective than that of local lords.
- When Philip's health began failing, he worked from his quarters in the Palace-Monastery-Pantheon of El Escorial, which he built with Juan Batista de Toledo and which was another expression of Philip's commitments to protect Catholics against the raising influence of Protestantism across Europe.
- Philip's foreign policies were determined by a combination of Catholic fervor and dynastic objectives. He considered himself the chief defender of Catholic Europe, both against the Ottoman Turks and against the forces of the Protestant Reformation.
- Wars with Dutch Provinces, England, France, and the Ottoman Empire all had the undermining religious aspects of protecting Catholicism in increasingly Protestant Europe or protecting Christianity against Islam.
- Because Philip II was the most powerful European monarch in an era of war and religious conflict, evaluating both his reign and the man himself has become a controversial historical subject.

## *Key Terms*

- **Catholic League:** A major participant in the French Wars of Religion, formed by Henry I, Duke of Guise, in 1576. It intended the eradication of Protestants—also known as Calvinists or Huguenots—out of Catholic France during the Protestant Reformation, as well as the replacement of King Henry III. Pope Sixtus V, Philip II of Spain, and the Jesuits were all supporters of this Catholic party.
- **Spanish Armada:** A Spanish fleet of 130 ships that sailed from A Coruña in August 1588 with the purpose of escorting an army from Flanders to invade England. The strategic aim was to overthrow Queen Elizabeth I of England and the Tudor establishment of Protestantism in England.
- **Eighty Years' War:** A revolt, known also as the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648), of the Seventeen Provinces against the political and religious hegemony of Philip II of Spain, the sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands.
- **Morisco:** A term used to refer to former Muslims who converted, or were coerced into converting, to Christianity after Spain outlawed the open practice of Islam by its Mudejar population in the early 16th century. The group was subject to systematic expulsions from Spain's various kingdoms between 1609 and 1614, the most severe of which occurred in the eastern Kingdom of Valencia.
- **jure uxoris:** A Latin term that means “by right of

(his) wife.” It is most commonly used to refer to a title of nobility held by a man because his wife holds it *suo jure* (“in her own right”). Similarly, the husband of an heiress could become the legal possessor of her lands *jure uxoris*, “by right of [his] wife.” *Jure uxoris* monarchs are not to be confused with kings consort, who were merely consorts of their wives, not co-rulers.

## Philip II of Spain

The son of Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire and his wife, Infanta Isabella of Portugal, Philip II of Spain was born in 1527. Known in Spain as “Philip the Prudent,” his empire included territories on every continent then known to Europeans, including his namesake the Philippine Islands. During his reign, Spain reached the height of its influence and power, and remained firmly Roman Catholic. Philip saw himself as a champion of Catholicism, both against the Muslim Ottoman Empire and the Protestants. He was the king of Spain from 1556 to 1598.

Philip was married four times and had children with three of his wives. All the marriages had important political implications, as they connected Philip, and thus Spain, with powerful European courts. Philip’s first wife was his first cousin Maria Manuela, Princess of Portugal. She was a daughter of Philip’s maternal uncle, John III of Portugal, and paternal aunt, Catherine of Austria. Philip’s second wife was his first cousin once removed Queen Mary I of England. By this marriage, Philip became *jure uxoris* king of England and Ireland, although the couple was apart more than together as they ruled their respective countries. The marriage produced no children



and Mary died in 1558, ending Philip's reign in England and Ireland. Philip's third wife was Elisabeth of Valois, the eldest daughter of Henry II of France and Catherine de' Medici. Philip's fourth and final wife was his niece Anna of Austria.

## Domestic Affairs

The Spanish Empire was not a single monarchy with one legal system but a federation of separate realms, each jealously guarding its own rights against those of the House of Habsburg. In practice, Philip often found his authority overruled by local assemblies and his word less effective than that of local lords. He also grappled with the problem of the large Morisco population in Spain, who were forcibly converted to Christianity by his predecessors. In 1569, the Morisco Revolt broke out in the southern province of Granada in defiance of attempts to suppress Moorish customs, and Philip ordered the expulsion of the Moriscos from Granada and their dispersal to other provinces.

Despite its immense dominions, Spain was a country with a sparse population that yielded a limited income to the crown (in contrast to France, for example, which was much more heavily populated). Philip faced major difficulties in raising taxes, the collection of which was largely farmed out to local lords. He was able to finance his military campaigns only by taxing and exploiting the local resources of his empire. The flow of income from the New World proved vital to his militant foreign policy, but nonetheless his exchequer faced bankruptcy several times.

During Philip's reign there were five separate state bankruptcies.

Whereas his father had been forced to an itinerant rule as a medieval king, Philip ruled at a critical turning point toward modernity in European history. He mainly directed state affairs, even when not at court. Indeed, when his health began failing he worked from his quarters in the Palace-Monastery-Pantheon of El

Escorial he had built. El Escorial was another expression of Philip's commitment to protect Catholics against the rising influence of Protestantism across Europe. He engaged the Spanish architect Juan Bautista de Toledo to be his collaborator. Together they designed El Escorial as a monument to Spain's role as a center of the Christian world.



*Turismo Madrid Consorcio Turístico, Madrid, Spain*

A distant view of the Royal Seat of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. In 1984, UNESCO declared The Royal Seat of San Lorenzo of El Escorial a World Heritage Site. It is a popular tourist attraction—more than 500,000 visitors come to El Escorial every year.

## Foreign Affairs

Philip's foreign policies were determined by a combination of Catholic fervor and dynastic objectives. He considered himself the

chief defender of Catholic Europe, both against the Ottoman Turks and against the forces of the Protestant Reformation. He never relented from his fight against what he saw as heresy, defending the Catholic faith and limiting freedom of worship within his territories. These territories included his patrimony in the Netherlands, where Protestantism had taken deep root. Following the Revolt of the Netherlands in 1568, Philip waged a campaign against Dutch secession. The plans to consolidate control of the Netherlands led to unrest, which gradually led to the Calvinist leadership of the revolt and the Eighty Years' War. This conflict consumed much Spanish expenditure during the later 16th century.

Philip's commitment to restoring Catholicism in the Protestant regions of Europe resulted also in the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604). This was an intermittent conflict between the kingdoms of Spain and England that was never formally declared. The war was punctuated by widely separated battles. In 1588, the English defeated Philip's Spanish Armada, thwarting his planned invasion of the country to reinstate Catholicism. But the war continued for the next sixteen years, in a complex series of struggles that included France, Ireland, and the main battle zone, the Low Countries.

Two further Spanish armadas were sent in 1596 and 1597, but were frustrated in their objectives mainly because of adverse weather and poor planning. The war would not end until all the leading protagonists, including Philip, had died.

Philip financed the Catholic League during the French Wars of Religion (primarily fought between French Catholics and French Protestants, known as Huguenots). He directly intervened in the final phases of the wars (1589–1598). His interventions in the fighting—sending the Duke of Parma to end Henry IV's siege of Paris in 1590—and the siege of Rouen in 1592 contributed to saving the French Catholic Leagues's cause against a Protestant monarchy. In 1593, Henry agreed to convert to Catholicism. Weary of war, most French Catholics switched to his side against the hardline core of the Catholic League, who were portrayed by Henry's propagandists

as puppets of a foreign monarch, Philip. By the end of 1594 certain league members were still working against Henry across the country, but all relied on the support of Spain. In 1595, therefore, Henry officially declared war on Spain, to show Catholics that Philip was using religion as a cover for an attack on the French state and Protestants that he had not become a puppet of Spain through his conversion, while hoping to take the war to Spain and make territorial gain.

The war was only drawn to an official close with the Peace of Vervins in May 1598; Spanish forces and subsidies were withdrawn. Meanwhile, Henry issued the Edict of Nantes, which offered a high degree of religious toleration for French Protestants. The military interventions in France thus ended in an ironic fashion for Philip: they had failed to oust Henry from the throne or suppress Protestantism in France and yet they had played a decisive part in helping the French Catholic cause gain the conversion of Henry, ensuring that Catholicism would remain France's official and majority faith—matters of paramount importance for the devoutly Catholic Spanish king.

Earlier, after several setbacks in his reign and especially that of his father, Philip had achieved a decisive victory against the Turks at the Lepanto in 1571, with the allied fleet of the Holy League, which he had put under the command of his illegitimate brother, John of Austria. He also successfully secured his succession to the throne of Portugal.



*Portrait of King Philip II of Spain, in Gold-Embroidered Costume with Order of the Golden Fleece, by Titian (around 1554)*

Philip was described by the Venetian ambassador Paolo Fagolo in 1563 as “slight of stature and round-faced, with pale blue eyes, somewhat prominent lip, and pink skin, but his overall appearance is very attractive.”

## Legacy

Because Philip II was the most powerful European monarch in an

era of war and religious conflict, evaluating both his reign and the man himself has become a controversial historical subject. Even in countries that remained Catholic, primarily France and the Italian states, fear and envy of Spanish success and domination created a wide receptiveness for the worst possible descriptions of Philip II. Although some efforts have been made to separate legend from reality, that task has been proven extremely difficult, since many prejudices are rooted in the cultural heritage of European countries. Spanish-speaking historians tend to assess his political and military achievements, sometimes deliberately avoiding issues such as the king's lukewarm attitude (or even support) toward Catholic fanaticism. English-speaking historians tend to show Philip II as a fanatical, despotic, criminal, imperialist monster, minimizing his military victories.

## The Siglo de Oro

The Spanish Golden Age (Spanish: Siglo de Oro) was a period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify some works of art from the Spanish Siglo de Oro

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- The Spanish Golden Age (Spanish: Siglo de Oro, “Golden Century”) was a period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. *El Siglo de Oro* does not imply precise dates and is usually considered to have lasted longer than an actual century.
- Spanish art of the era contained a strong mark of mysticism and religion that was encouraged by the counter-reformation and the patronage of Spain’s strongly Catholic monarchs and aristocracy. Spanish rule of Naples was important for making connections between Italian and Spanish art.
- The most influential Spanish painters of the era include El Greco, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.
- The same period produced some of the most important works of Spanish architecture. These include the Palace of Charles V, El Escorial, the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, Granada Cathedral, and the Cathedral of Valladolid.
- Spanish literature of the period flourished, producing the first European novel, *Don Quixote*, and revolutionizing Spanish drama and thus theater.
- Music of the era revolved largely around religious

forms and themes.

### *Key Terms*

- **Mannerism:** A style in European art that emerged in the later years of the Italian High Renaissance, around 1520, lasting until about 1580 in Italy, when the Baroque style began to replace it. Northern Mannerism continued into the early 17th century. Where High Renaissance art emphasized proportion, balance, and ideal beauty, it exaggerated such qualities, often resulting in compositions that are asymmetrical or unnaturally elegant.
- **Herrerian:** An architectural style developed in Spain during the last third of the 16th century, under the reign of Philip II (1556–1598), and continued in force in the 17th century, but transformed by the Baroque current of the time. It corresponds to the third and final stage of Spanish Renaissance architecture.
- **The Spanish Golden Age:** (Spanish: Siglo de Oro, “Golden Century”) A period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. It does not imply precise dates and is usually considered to have lasted longer than an actual century.



## Siglo de Oro

The Spanish Golden Age (Spanish: Siglo de Oro, “Golden Century”) was a period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain, coinciding with the political rise and decline of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. *El Siglo de Oro* does not imply precise dates and is usually considered to have lasted longer than an actual century. It began no earlier than 1492, with the end of the Reconquista, the sea voyages of Christopher Columbus to the New World, and the publication of Antonio de Nebrija’s *Grammar of the Castilian Language*. Politically, it ended no later than 1659, with the Treaty of the Pyrenees, ratified between France and Habsburg Spain. The last great writer of the period, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, died in 1681, and his death is usually considered the end of *El Siglo de Oro* in the arts and literature.

## Painting

The Italian holdings and relationships made by Queen Isabella’s husband, and later Spain’s sole monarch, Ferdinand of Aragon, launched a steady traffic of intellectuals across the Mediterranean between Valencia, Seville, and Florence. Luis de Morales, one of the leading exponents of Spanish mannerist painting, retained a distinctly Spanish style in his work, reminiscent of medieval art. Spanish art, particularly that of Morales, contained a strong mark of mysticism and religion that was encouraged by the counter-reformation and the patronage of Spain’s strongly Catholic monarchs and aristocracy. Spanish rule of Naples was important for making connections between Italian and Spanish art, with many Spanish administrators bringing Italian works back to Spain.

Some of the greatest artists of the era:

- Known for his great impact in bringing the Italian Renaissance to Spain, El Greco (“The Greek”) was influential in creating a style based on impressions and emotion, featuring elongated fingers and vibrant color and brushwork. His paintings of the city of Toledo became models for a new European tradition in landscapes, and influenced the work of later Dutch masters.
- Diego Velázquez is widely regarded as one of Spain’s most important and influential artists. His portraits of the king and other prominent figures demonstrated a belief in artistic realism and a style comparable to many of the Dutch masters. Velázquez’s most famous painting is the celebrated *Las Meninas*, in which the artist included himself as one of the subjects.
- The religious element in Spanish art grew in importance with the counter-reformation. The austere, ascetic, and severe work of Francisco de Zurbarán exemplified this thread. The mysticism of Zurbarán’s work—influenced by Saint Theresa of Avila—became a hallmark of Spanish art in later generations.
- Bartolomé Esteban Murillo’s works were influenced by realism. His more important works evolved towards the polished style that suited the bourgeois and aristocratic tastes of the time, demonstrated especially in his Roman Catholic religious works.



*Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez (1656), [Galería online](#), Museo del Prado.

The painting's complex and enigmatic composition raises questions about reality and illusion and creates an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. Because of these complexities, *Las Meninas* has been one of the most widely analyzed works in Western painting.

# Architecture

The same period produced some of the most important works of Spanish architecture. These include:

- The Palace of Charles V located on the top of the hill of the Assabica, inside the Nasrid fortification of the Alhambra. The project was given to Pedro Machuca, who built a palace corresponding stylistically to Mannerism, a mode still in its infancy in Italy.
- El Escorial: a historical residence of the king of Spain. It is one of the Spanish royal sites and functions as a monastery, royal palace, museum, and school. Located in the town of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, it comprises two architectural complexes of great historical and cultural significance: El Real Monasterio de El Escorial itself and La Granjilla de La Fresneda, a royal hunting lodge and monastic retreat. During the 16th and 17th centuries, they were places in which the temporal power of the Spanish monarchy *and* the ecclesiastical predominance of the Roman Catholic religion in Spain found a common architectural manifestation. Philip II engaged the Spanish architect Juan Bautista de Toledo to be his collaborator in the design of El Escorial.
- The Plaza Mayor in Madrid: A central plaza in Madrid, Spain. Juan de Herrera was the architect who designed the first project in 1581 to remodel the old Plaza del Arrabal, but construction didn't start until 1617, during Philip III 's reign. Nevertheless, the Plaza Mayor as we know it today is the work of the architect Juan de Villanueva, who was entrusted with its reconstruction in 1790 after a spate of big fires.
- Granada Cathedral: Foundations for the church were laid by the architect Egas starting from 1518 to 1523 atop the site of the city's main mosque. By 1529, Egas was replaced by Diego de Siloé, who labored for nearly four decades on the structure.

- The Cathedral of Valladolid: Like all the buildings of the late Spanish Renaissance built by Herrera and his followers, it is known for its purist and sober decoration, its style being the typical Spanish *clasicismo*, also called “Herrerian.”

## Literature

The Spanish Golden Age was also a time of great flourishing in poetry, prose, and drama. Regarded by many as one of the finest literary works in any language, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes was the first novel published in Europe. It gave Cervantes a stature in the Spanish-speaking world comparable to his contemporary William Shakespeare in English. *Don Quixote* resembled both the medieval, chivalric romances of an earlier time and the novels of the early modern world. It has endured to the present day as a landmark in world literary history, and it was an immediate international hit in its own time.

EL INGENIOSO  
HIDALGO DON QUI-  
XOTE DE LA MANCHA,

*Compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes  
Saavedra.*

DIRIGIDO AL DVQUE DE BEIAR,  
Marques de Gibrleon, Conde de Benalcazar, y Baña-  
res, Vizconde de la Puebla de Alcozer, Señor de  
las villas de Capilla, Curiel, y  
Burguillos.

Año,



1605.

CON PRIVILEGIO,  
EN MADRID Por Iuan de la Cuesta.

Vendese en casa de Francisco de Robles, librero del Rey nro señor.

Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605), original title page

*Don Quixote*, the first European novel, has endured to the present day as a landmark in world literary history, and it was an immediate international hit in its own time.

A contemporary of Cervantes, Lope de Vega consolidated the essential genres and structures that would characterize the Spanish commercial drama, also known as the “Comedia,” throughout the 17th century. While Lope de Vega wrote prose and poetry as well, he is best remembered for his plays, particularly those grounded in Spanish history. In bringing morality, comedy, drama, and popular wit together, Lope de Vega is also often compared to his English contemporary Shakespeare. Some have argued that as a social critic, Lope de Vega, like Cervantes, attacked many of the ancient institutions of his country—aristocracy, chivalry, and rigid morality, among others. The other great dramatist of the 17th century was Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681). His most famous work is *Life Is a Dream* (1635). Born when the Spanish Golden Age theater was being defined by Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca developed it further, and his work is regarded as the culmination of the Spanish Baroque theater. As such, he remains one of Spain’s foremost dramatists and one of the finest playwrights of world literature. Other well-known playwrights of the period include Tirso de Molina, Agustín Moreto, Juan Pérez de Montalbán, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Guillén de Castro, and Antonio Mira de Amescua.

This period also produced some of the most important Spanish works of poetry. The introduction and influence of Italian Renaissance verse is apparent perhaps most vividly in the works of Garcilaso de la Vega, and illustrate a profound influence on later poets. Mystical literature in Spanish reached its summit with the works of San Juan de la Cruz and Teresa of Ávila. Baroque poetry was dominated by the contrasting styles of Francisco de Quevedo and Luis de Góngora; both had a lasting influence on subsequent writers, and even on the Spanish language itself.

## Music

Tomás Luis de Victoria, a Spanish composer of the 16th century, mainly of choral music, is widely regarded as one of the greatest Spanish classical composers. Like Zurbarán, Victoria mixed the technical qualities of Italian art with the religion and culture of his native Spain. Francisco Guerrero's music was both sacred and secular, unlike that of de Victoria and Morales, the two other Spanish 16th-century composers of the first rank. He wrote numerous secular songs and instrumental pieces, in addition to masses, motets, and Passions. De Victoria's work was also complemented by Alonso Lobo, whose work stressed the austere, minimalist nature of religious music.



# 89. Reading: England and Parliamentary Monarchy

## Elizabeth I and English Patriotism

The reign of Elizabeth I was marked by the restoration of the Protestant Church of England and competition with a powerful Spain, both of which fueled a sense of modern English national identity.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Identify some of the highlights from Queen Elizabeth I's reign

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from 1558 until her death in 1603. She succeeded her Roman Catholic half-sister, Mary to

the throne. Elizabeth never married nor had children and thus was the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty.

- Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain contributed to the complex relations between England and Spain that after Mary's death dominated Elizabeth's reign in the realm of international relations.
- Elizabeth's efforts led to the Religious Settlement, a legal process by which the Protestant Church of England was restored and the queen took the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England.
- Elizabeth's foreign policy was largely defensive. While she managed to establish diplomatic relations with some of the most powerful contemporary empires and supported Protestant struggles across Europe, her greatest foreign policy challenge was Catholic Spain and its Armada, over which England eventually triumphed.
- Establishing the Roanoke Colony and chartering the East India Company during Elizabeth's reign was an onset of what would turn into the powerful British Empire.
- The Elizabethan age inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph over the Spanish.

### *Key Terms*

- **Anglo-Spanish War:** An intermittent conflict (1585–1604) between the kingdoms of Spain and England that was never formally declared. The war

was punctuated by widely separated battles, and began with England's military expedition in 1585 to the Netherlands in support of the resistance of the States General to Spanish Habsburg rule.

- **French Catholic League:** A major participant in the French Wars of Religion, formed by Henry I, Duke of Guise, in 1576. It intended the eradication of Protestants—also known as Calvinists or Huguenots—out of Catholic France during the Protestant Reformation, as well as the replacement of King Henry III. Pope Sixtus V, Philip II of Spain, and the Jesuits were all supporters of this Catholic party.
- **Religious Settlement:** A legal process by which the Protestant Church of England was restored. It was made during the reign of Elizabeth I in response to the religious divisions in England. Described as “The Revolution of 1559,” it was set out in two acts of the Parliament of England. The Act of Supremacy of 1558 re-established the Church of England's independence from Rome, while the Act of Uniformity of 1559 outlined what form the English Church should take.
- **Spanish Armada:** A Spanish fleet of 130 ships that sailed from A Coruña in August 1588 with the purpose of escorting an army from Flanders to invade England. The strategic aim was to overthrow Queen Elizabeth I of England and the Tudor establishment of Protestantism in England.
- **Roanoke Colony:** A colony established on Roanoke Island, in what is today's Dare County, North Carolina, United States. It was a late 16th-century attempt by Queen Elizabeth I to establish a permanent English

settlement. The colony was founded by Sir Walter Raleigh. The colonists disappeared during the Anglo-Spanish War, three years after the last shipment of supplies from England.

## Elizabeth I of England

Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from 1558 until her death in 1603. She was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, his second wife, who was executed two and a half years after Elizabeth's birth. Anne's marriage to Henry VIII was annulled and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. In 1558, Elizabeth succeeded her Roman Catholic half-sister, Mary. She never married nor had children and thus was the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty.



**The "Darnley Portrait" of Elizabeth I of England, National Portrait Gallery (c. 1575)**

The portrait was named after a previous owner. Probably painted

from life, it is the source of the face pattern called “The Mask of Youth,” which would be used for authorized portraits of Elizabeth for decades to come. Recent research has shown the colors have faded. The oranges and browns would have been crimson red in Elizabeth’s time.

## Mary I and Philip II of Spain

In 1554, Queen Mary of England married Philip, who only two years later began to rule Spain as Philip II. Under the terms of the Act for the Marriage, Philip was to enjoy Mary I’s titles and honors for as long as their marriage should last, and was to co-reign with his wife. Although Elizabeth initially demonstrated solidarity with her sister, the two were sharply divided along religious lines. Mary, a devout Catholic, was determined to crush the Protestant faith, in which Elizabeth had been educated. After Mary married Philip, who saw the protection of Catholicism in Europe as his life’s mission, Mary’s popularity ebbed away, and many looked to Elizabeth as a focus for their opposition to Mary’s religious policies. In 1555, Elizabeth was recalled to court to attend the final stages of Mary’s apparent pregnancy. When it became clear that Mary was not pregnant, no one believed any longer that she could have a child. Elizabeth’s succession seemed assured.

King Philip acknowledged the new political reality and cultivated his sister-in-law. She was a better ally than the chief alternative, Mary, Queen of Scots, who had grown up in France and was betrothed to the Dauphin of France. When his wife fell ill in 1558, Philip consulted with Elizabeth. By October 1558, Elizabeth was making plans for her government. On November 6, Mary recognized Elizabeth as her heir. On November 17, Mary died and Elizabeth succeeded to the throne.

## Religious Settlement

In terms of religious matters, Elizabeth was pragmatic. She and her advisers recognized the threat of a Catholic crusade against England. Elizabeth therefore sought a Protestant solution that would not offend Catholics too greatly while addressing the desires of English Protestants, but she would not tolerate the more radical Puritans, who were pushing for far-reaching reforms. As a result, the parliament of 1559 started to legislate for a church based on the Protestant settlement of Edward VI, with the monarch as its head, but with many Catholic elements. Eventually, Elizabeth was forced to accept the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England rather than the more contentious title of Supreme Head, which many thought unacceptable for a woman to bear. The new Act of Supremacy became law in 1559. All public officials were to swear an oath of loyalty to the monarch as the supreme governor or risk disqualification from office. The heresy laws were repealed to avoid a repeat of the persecution of dissenters practiced by Mary. At the same time, a new Act of Uniformity was passed, which made attendance at church and the use of an adapted version of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer compulsory, though penalties for those who failed to conform were not extreme.

## Foreign Policy

Elizabeth's foreign policy was largely defensive. The exception was the English occupation of Le Havre from October 1562 to June 1563, which ended in failure when Elizabeth's Huguenot (Protestant) allies joined with the Catholics to retake the port. After the occupation and loss of Le Havre, Elizabeth avoided military expeditions on the continent until 1585, when she sent an English army to aid the Protestant Dutch rebels against Philip II. In December 1584,

an alliance between Philip II and the French Catholic League undermined the ability of Henry III of France to counter Spanish domination of the Netherlands. It also extended Spanish influence along the channel coast of France, where the Catholic League was strong, and exposed England to invasion. The siege of Antwerp in the summer of 1585 by the Duke of Parma necessitated some reaction on the part of the English and the Dutch. The outcome was the Treaty of Nonsuch of August 1585, in which Elizabeth promised military support to the Dutch. The treaty marked the beginning of the Anglo-Spanish War, which lasted until the Treaty of London in 1604.

After Mary's death, Philip II of Spain had no wish to sever his ties with England, and sent a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth, but was denied. For many years, Philip maintained peace with England and even defended Elizabeth from the pope's threat of excommunication. This was a measure taken to preserve a European balance of power. Ultimately, Elizabeth allied England with the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands (which at the time fought for independence from Spain). Further, English ships began a policy of piracy against Spanish trade and threatened to plunder the great Spanish treasure ships coming from the new world. However, the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587 ended Philip's hopes of placing a Catholic on the English throne. He turned instead to more direct plans to invade England, with vague plans to return the country to Catholicism. In 1588 he sent a fleet, the Spanish Armada, across the English Channel. The Spanish were forced into a retreat, and the overwhelming majority of the Armada was destroyed by the harsh weather.

Elizabeth also continued to maintain the diplomatic relations with the Tsardom of Russia originally established by her deceased brother. During her rule, trade and diplomatic relations developed between England and the Barbary states as well. England established a trading relationship with Morocco in opposition to Spain, selling armor, ammunition, timber, and metal in exchange for



Moroccan sugar, in spite of a papal ban. Diplomatic relations were also established with the Ottoman Empire with the chartering of the Levant Company and the dispatch of the first English ambassador to the Porte, William Harborne, in 1578.

## The Onset of the British Empire

After the travels of Christopher Columbus electrified all of western Europe, England joined in the colonization of the New World. In 1562, Elizabeth sent privateers Hawkins and Drake to seize booty from Spanish and Portuguese ships off the coast of West Africa. Spain was well established in the Americas, while Portugal, in union with Spain from 1580, had an ambitious global empire in Africa, Asia, and South America; France was exploring North America. England was stimulated to create its own colonies, with an emphasis on the West Indies rather than in North America. From 1577 to 1580, Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the globe. Combined with his daring raids against the Spanish and his great victory over them at Cadiz in 1587, he became a famous hero, but England did not follow up on his claims. In 1583, Humphrey Gilbert sailed to Newfoundland, taking possession of the harbor of St. John's together with all land within two hundred leagues to the north and south of it. In 1584, the queen granted Sir Walter Raleigh a charter for the colonization of Virginia; it was named in her honor. Raleigh sent others to found the Roanoke Colony (it remains a mystery why the settlers there all disappeared). In 1600, the queen chartered the East India Company. It established trading posts that in later centuries evolved into British India, on the coasts of what is now India and Bangladesh. Larger-scale colonization began shortly after Elizabeth's death.

## Nationalism

Elizabeth established an English church that helped shape a national identity and remains in place today. Though she followed a largely defensive foreign policy, her reign raised England's status abroad. Under Elizabeth, the nation gained a new self-confidence and sense of sovereignty, as Christendom fragmented. She was the first Tudor to recognize that a monarch ruled by popular consent. She therefore always worked with parliament and advisers she could trust to tell her the truth—a style of government that her Stuart successors failed to follow. The symbol of Britannia was first used in 1572, and often thereafter, to mark the Elizabethan age as a renaissance that inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph over the Spanish.



*Britannia depicted on a half penny of 1936*

Britannia was the Greek and Roman term for the geographical region of Great Britain that was inhabited by the Britons and is the name given to the female personification of the island. It was

during the reign of Elizabeth I that “Britannia” came to be viewed as a personification of Britain.

## The First Stuarts and Catholicism

Believing that their power was God-given right, James I and his son and successor, Charles I of England, reigned England in the atmosphere of repeated escalating conflicts with the English Parliament.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Describe the tensions between the Stuart kings and Parliament over religion

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- James I and his son and successor, Charles I of England, reigned England in the atmosphere of repeated escalating conflicts with the English Parliament.
- James I believed that he owed his superior

authority to God-given right, while Parliament believed the king ruled by contract (an unwritten one, yet fully binding) and that its own rights were equal to those of the king.

- A failed assassination attempt in 1605 against King James I of England and VI of Scotland by a group of provincial English Catholics led by Robert Catesby fueled anti-Catholic sentiments in England. By the 1620s, events on the continent had stirred up anti-Catholic feeling to a new pitch, and James was forced to declare war on Catholic Spain.
- Charles I, married to a Catholic and reluctant to collaborate with or listen to Parliament, reigned in the atmosphere of constant, escalating conflicts with a consistently anti-Catholic Parliament.
- After an eleven-year period of ruling without Parliament, the Long Parliament assembled in 1640 and quickly began proceedings to impeach the king's leading counselors for high treason.
- The escalating conflict between the king and the Parliament resulted in what is known as the English Civil War (1642–1651). A series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians (“Roundheads”) and Royalists (“Cavaliers”) ended in, among other things, the prosecution of Charles I.

### *Key Terms*

- **English Civil War:** A series of armed conflicts and political machinations between English

Parliamentarians (“Roundheads”) and Royalists (“Cavaliers”) over, principally, the manner of its government. The first (1642–1646) and second (1648–1649) wars pitted the supporters of Charles I against the supporters of the Long Parliament, while the third (1649–1651) saw fighting between supporters of King Charles II and supporters of the Rump Parliament.

- **eleven years’ tyranny:** The period from 1629 to 1640, when King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland ruled without recourse to Parliament. The king was entitled to do this under the Royal Prerogative. His actions caused discontent among the ruling classes, but the effects were more popular with the common people.
- **Gunpowder Plot:** A failed assassination attempt in 1605 against King James I of England and VI of Scotland by a group of provincial English Catholics led by Robert Catesby. The plan was to blow up the House of Lords during the State Opening of England’s Parliament on November 5, 1605, as the prelude to a popular revolt in the Midlands during which James’s nine-year-old daughter, Princess Elizabeth, was to be installed as the Catholic head of state.
- **Thirty Years’ War:** A series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it gradually developed into a more general conflict involving most of the great powers.
- **Long Parliament:** An English Parliament that lasted from 1640 until 1660. It followed the fiasco of the

Short Parliament, which had been held for three weeks during the spring of 1640, and which in its turn had followed a parliamentary absence of eleven years.

## Background: Reformation in England in Scotland

The separation of the Church of England (or Anglican Church) from Rome under Henry VIII brought England alongside a broad Reformation movement, but the English Reformation differed from its European counterparts. Based on Henry VIII's desire for an annulment of his marriage, it was at the outset more of a political affair than a theological dispute. The break with Rome was effected by a series of acts of Parliament, but Catholic Mary I restored papal jurisdiction in 1553. However, Mary's successor, Elizabeth I, restored the Church of England and reasserted the royal supremacy in 1559. After she died without an heir, James VI, her cousin and King of Scots, succeeded to the throne of England as James I in 1603, thus uniting Scotland and England under one monarch (the Union of the Crowns). He was the first of the Stuart dynasty to rule Scotland and England. He and his son and successor, Charles I of England, reigned England in the atmosphere of repeated escalating conflicts with the English Parliament.

## James I and the English Parliament

James developed his political philosophy of the relationship between monarch and parliament in Scotland, and never reconciled himself to the independent stance of the English Parliament and its

unwillingness to bow readily to his policies.

The crucial source of concern was that the king and Parliament adhered to two mutually exclusive views about the nature of their relationship. James I believed that he owed his superior authority to God-given right, while Parliament believed the king ruled by contract (an unwritten one, yet fully binding) and that its own rights were equal to those of the king.

On the eve of the state opening of the parliamentary session on November 5, 1605, a soldier called Guy Fawkes was discovered in the cellars of the parliament buildings guarding about twenty barrels of gunpowder with which he intended to blow up Parliament House the following day. A Catholic conspiracy led by a disaffected gentleman called Robert Catesby, the Gunpowder Plot, as it quickly became known, had in fact been discovered in advance of Fawkes's arrest and deliberately allowed to mature in order to catch the culprits red-handed and the plotters unawares.

By the 1620s, events on the continent had stirred up anti-Catholic feeling to a new pitch. A conflict had broken out between the Catholic Holy Roman Empire and the Protestant Bohemians, who had deposed the emperor as their king and elected James's son-in-law, Frederick V, Elector Palatine, in his place, triggering the Thirty Years' War. James reluctantly summoned Parliament as the only means to raise the funds necessary to assist his daughter Elizabeth and Frederick, who had been ousted from Prague by Emperor Ferdinand II in 1620. The Commons on the one hand granted subsidies inadequate to finance serious military operations in aid of Frederick, and on the other called for a war directly against Spain. In November 1621, led by Sir Edward Coke, they framed a petition asking not only for a war with Spain but also for Prince Charles to marry a Protestant, and for enforcement of the anti-Catholic laws. James flatly told them not to interfere in matters of royal prerogative and dissolved Parliament.

The failed attempt to marry Prince Charles with the Catholic Spanish Infanta Maria (known as the Spanish match), which both the Parliament and the public strongly opposed, was followed by



even stronger anti-Catholic sentiment in the Commons that was finally echoed in court. The outcome of the Parliament of 1624 was ambiguous; James still refused to declare war, but Charles believed the Commons had committed themselves to financing a war against Spain, a stance which was to contribute to his problems with Parliament in his own reign.



**James I of England, Portrait attributed to John de Critz, c. 1605**

King of Scotland as James VI from 1567 and King of England and Ireland as James I from the union of the Scottish and English crowns in 1603 until his death.

## Charles I and the English Parliament

With the failure of the Spanish match, Charles married French princess Henrietta Maria. Many members of the Commons were opposed to the king's marriage to a Roman Catholic. Although he told Parliament that he would not relax religious restrictions, Charles promised to do exactly that in a secret marriage treaty with Louis XIII of France. Moreover, the treaty placed under French command an English naval force that would be used to suppress the Protestant Huguenots at La Rochelle. Charles was crowned in 1626 at Westminster Abbey without his wife at his side because she refused to participate in a Protestant religious ceremony.

Domestic quarrels between Charles and Henrietta Maria were souring the early years of their marriage. Despite Charles's agreement to provide the French with English ships, in 1627 he launched an attack on the French coast to defend the Huguenots at La Rochelle. The action, led by Buckingham (James and Charles' close collaborator; hated by Parliament), was ultimately unsuccessful. After Buckingham was assassinated in 1628, Charles's relationship with his Catholic wife dramatically improved.

Although the death of Buckingham effectively ended the war with Spain and eliminated his leadership as an issue, it did not end the conflicts between Charles and Parliament. In January 1629, Charles opened the second session of the English Parliament. Members of the House of Commons began to voice opposition to Charles's policies. Many MPs viewed the imposition of taxes as a breach of the Petition of Right. When Charles ordered a parliamentary adjournment on March 2, members held the Speaker down in his chair so that the ending of the session could be delayed long enough

for various resolutions, including Anti-Catholic and tax-regulating laws. The provocation was too much for Charles, who dissolved Parliament. Shortly after the prorogation, without the means in the foreseeable future to raise funds from Parliament for a European war, Charles made peace with France and Spain. The following eleven years, during which Charles ruled England without a Parliament, are referred to as the “personal rule” or the “eleven years’ tyranny.”

The Long Parliament, which assembled in the aftermath of the personal rule, started in 1640 and quickly began proceedings to impeach the king’s leading counselors for high treason. To prevent the king from dissolving it at will, Parliament passed the Triennial Act, which required Parliament to be summoned at least once every three years, and permitted the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and twelve peers to summon Parliament if the king failed to do so.



**Charles I of England, portrait from the studio of Anthony van Dyck, 1636. Studio version of much copied original in the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.** After his succession, Charles quarreled with the Parliament of England, which sought to curb his royal prerogative. Charles believed in the divine right of kings and thought he could govern according to his own conscience. Many of his subjects opposed his policies, in particular the levying of taxes without parliamentary consent, and perceived his actions as those of a tyrannical absolute monarch.

## The English Civil War

The escalating conflict between the king and Parliament resulted in what is known as the English Civil War (1642–1651). It was a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians (“Roundheads”) and Royalists (“Cavaliers”) over, principally, the manner of its government. The first (1642–1646) and second (1648–1649) wars pitted the supporters of Charles against the supporters of the Long Parliament, while the third (1649–1651) saw fighting between supporters of King Charles II and supporters of the Rump Parliament. The war ended with the Parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651.

The overall outcome of the war was threefold: the trial and execution of Charles I; the exile of his son, Charles II; and the replacement of English monarchy with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–1653), and then the Protectorate (1653–1659) under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule. The monopoly of the Church of England on Christian worship in England ended with the victors consolidating the established Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Constitutionally, the wars established the precedent that an English monarch cannot govern without Parliament's consent, although the idea of Parliament as the ruling power of England was legally established as part of the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

# Charles I and the Power to Tax

Charles I's attempt to impose taxes not authorized by Parliament contributed to the ongoing conflict between the king and Parliament and eventually resulted in the passing of the 1628 Petition of Right.

## *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze why the power to determine taxation was so important

## *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

### *Key Points*

- Charles I of England continued his father's policy and decided to support Christian IV of Denmark and Frederick V, Elector Palatine, during the Thirty Years' War, which caused major tensions with a Parliament that refused to finance the war.
- After the Commons continued to refuse to provide money and began investigating the Duke of Buckingham, Charles I dissolved Parliament. By 1627, with England still at war, Charles decided to raise

“forced loans,” or taxes not authorized by Parliament.

- To cope with the ongoing war situation, Charles had introduced martial law, which, as then understood, was not a form of substantive law, but instead a suspension of the rule of law.
- Charles decided that the only way to prosecute the war was to again ask Parliament for money, and Parliament assembled in 1628. As a result, a series of parliamentary declarations establishing a series of personal liberties known as the *Resolutions* were prepared after tense debates.
- In the end, a suggestion to pass the Resolutions as a petition of right won. A committee produced a petition covering discretionary imprisonment, non-Parliamentary taxation, martial law, and forced billeting.
- The 1628 Petition of Right marks the founding of the United Kingdom’s modern constitutional monarchy.

### *Key Terms*

- **habeas corpus:** In medieval Latin it means literally “You may have the body,” a recourse in law whereby a person can report an unlawful detention or imprisonment before a court, usually through a prison official.
- **Tonnage and Poundage:** Certain duties and taxes first levied in Edward II’s reign on every tun (cask) of imported wine, which came mostly from Spain and



Portugal, and on every pound weight of merchandise exported or imported. Traditionally it was granted by Parliament to the king for life until the reign of Charles I.

- **Thirty Years' War:** A series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it gradually developed into a more general conflict involving most of the great powers.
- **Petition of Right:** A major English constitutional document that sets out specific liberties of the subjects that the king is prohibited from infringing. Passed in 1628, it contains restrictions on non-Parliamentary taxation, forced billeting of soldiers, imprisonment without cause, and the use of martial law.

## Charles I of England and the English Parliament

In 1625, King James I of England died and was succeeded by his son, who became Charles I. Along with the throne, Charles inherited the Thirty Years' War, in which Christian IV of Denmark and Frederick V, Elector Palatine, who was married to Charles's sister Elizabeth, were attempting to take back their hereditary lands and titles from the Habsburg Monarchy. James had caused significant financial problems with his attempts to support Christian and Frederick, and it was expected that Charles would be more amenable to prosecuting the war responsibly. After he summoned a new Parliament to meet in April 1625, it became clear that he was not.

He demanded over £700,000 to assist in prosecuting the war. The House of Commons refused and instead passed two bills granting him only £112,000. In addition, rather than renewing the customs due from Tonnage and Poundage for the entire life of the monarch, which was traditional, the Commons only voted them in for one year. Because of this, the House of Lords rejected the bill, leaving Charles without any money to provide to the war effort.

After the Commons continued to refuse to provide money and began investigating the Duke of Buckingham, Charles's favorite, Charles dissolved Parliament. By 1627, with England still at war, Charles decided to raise "forced loans," or taxes not authorized by Parliament. Anyone who refused to pay would be imprisoned without trial, and if they resisted, would be sent before the Privy Council. Although the judiciary initially refused to endorse these loans, they succumbed to pressure. While Charles continued to demand the loans, more and more wealthy landowners refused to pay, reducing the income from the loans and necessitating a new Parliament being called in 1627.

## Martial Law

To cope with the ongoing war situation, Charles had introduced martial law to large swathes of the country, and in 1627 to the entire nation. Crucially, martial law as then understood was not a form of substantive law, but instead a suspension of the rule of law. It was the replacement of normal statutes with a law based on the whims of the local military commander. However, Charles decided that the only way to prosecute the war was to again ask Parliament for money, and Parliament assembled in 1628. As a result, a series of Parliamentary declarations known as the *Resolutions* were prepared after tense debates. They held that imprisonment was illegal, except under law; *habeas corpus* should be granted to anyone, whether they are imprisoned by the king or the Privy Council; defendants

could not be remanded in custody until the crime they were charged with was shown; and non-Parliamentary taxation such as the forced loans was illegal (the first three later became the foundations of the Habeas Corpus Act 1679). The *Resolutions* were unanimously accepted by the Commons in April, but they met a mixed reception at the House of Lords, and Charles refused to accept them.

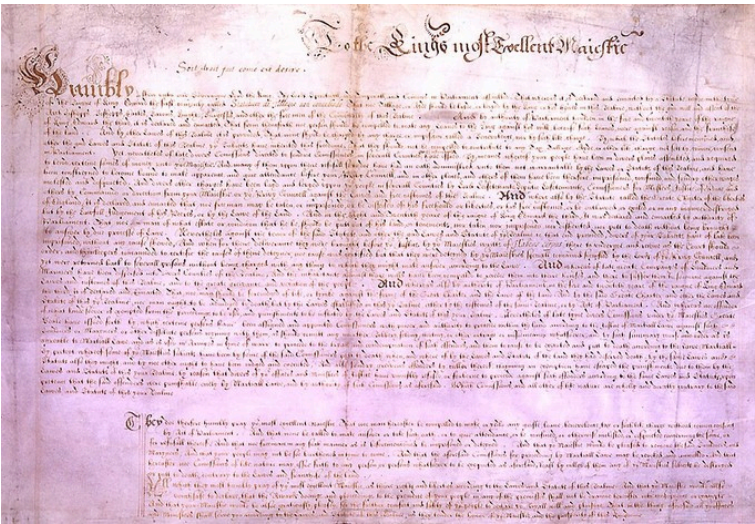
## The Petition of Right

The conflict between the king and Parliament escalated. A number of possible alternatives to the *Resolutions* were debated, but finally Sir Edward Coke made a speech suggesting that the Commons join with the House of Lords and pass their four resolutions as a petition of right (although he was not the first to do so). The idea of a petition of right was an established element of Parliamentary procedure, and in addition, had not been expressly prohibited by Charles. A committee produced a petition containing the same elements as the *Resolutions*, covering discretionary imprisonment, non-Parliamentary taxation, martial law, and forced billeting.

The Commons accepted the recommendations on May 8, and after a long debate that attempted to accommodate the hostile king, the House of Lords unanimously voted to join with the Commons on the Petition of Right, while passing their own resolution, assuring the king of their loyalty.

Following the acceptance of the Petition by the House of Lords, Charles sent a message to the Commons “forbidding them to meddle with affairs of state,” which produced a furious debate. On June 7, Charles capitulated and accepted the Petition. After setting out a list of individual grievances and statutes that had been broken, the 1628 Petition of Right declares that Englishmen have various “rights and liberties,” and provides that no person should be forced

to provide a gift, loan, or tax without an Act of Parliament, that no free individual should be imprisoned or detained unless a cause has been shown, and that soldiers or members of the Royal Navy should not be billeted in private houses without the free consent of the owner. It also restricts the use of martial law except in war or direct rebellion and prohibited the formation of commissions.



The Petition of Right, 1628, Parliament of England

The Petition of Right, a major English constitutional document that sets out specific liberties of the subject that the king is prohibited from infringing. Drafted by a committee headed by Sir Edward Coke, it was passed and ratified in 1628.

Significance

Some historians have argued that the passage of the Petition of

Right marks the founding of the United Kingdom's modern constitutional monarchy. The Petition of Right also marked a substantial cooperative work between individual parliamentarians and between the Commons and Lords, something that had previously been lacking and that in the end led to the formation of political parties. Within what is now the Commonwealth of Nations, the Petition was also heavily influential. It remains in force in both New Zealand and Australia, as well as the United Kingdom itself. The Petition also profoundly influenced the rights contained by the Constitution of the United States.

## Cromwell and the Roundheads

The escalating conflict between Charles I of England and the English Parliament resulted in the English Civil War, in the aftermath of which monarchy disappeared for over a decade and Oliver Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Explain how Cromwell rose to power.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Charles I's belief, inherited from his father, that the power of the crown is God-given and that the king does not have to respect the position of the English Parliament, shaped his reign and led to a political crisis that in the end would cost him his own life.
- After the 1628 Parliament drew up the Petition of Right, Charles I avoided calling a Parliament for the next decade, a period known as the "personal rule" or the "eleven years' tyranny." During this period, Charles's lack of money determined policies.
- Charles finally bowed to pressure and summoned another English Parliament in November 1640. Known as the Long Parliament, it passed laws that strengthened the position of and protected Parliament.
- Charles and his supporters continued to resent Parliament's demands, while Parliamentarians continued to suspect Charles of wanting to impose episcopalianism and unfettered royal rule by military force. After Ireland first descended into chaos, cities and towns declared their sympathies for one faction or the other.
- The English Civil War (1642–1651) pitted the supporters of King Charles I and later his son and successor, Charles II, against the supporters of

Parliament. Its outcome was threefold: the trial and execution of Charles I, the exile of Charles II, and the replacement of English monarchy with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–53), and then the Protectorate (1653–59) under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule.

- In 1653, Cromwell was invited by his fellow leaders to rule as Lord Protector of England (which included Wales at the time), Scotland, and Ireland. As a ruler, he executed an aggressive and effective foreign policy.

### *Key Terms*

- **Cavaliers:** A name first used by Roundheads as a term of abuse for the wealthier male Royalist supporters of King Charles I and his son Charles II of England during the English Civil War, the Interregnum, and the Restoration (1642–c. 1679). It was later adopted by the Royalists themselves.
- **Rump Parliament:** The English Parliament after Colonel Thomas Pride purged the Long Parliament on December 6, 1648, of those members hostile to the Grandees' intention to try King Charles I for high treason.
- **eleven years' tyranny:** The period from 1629 to 1640, when King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland ruled without recourse to Parliament. The King was entitled to do this under the Royal Prerogative. His actions caused discontent among the

ruling classes, but the effects were more popular with the common people.

- **Long Parliament:** An English Parliament that lasted from 1640 until 1660. It followed the fiasco of the Short Parliament, which had been held for three weeks during the spring of 1640, and which in its turn had followed eleven years of parliamentary absence.
- **Roundheads:** The name given to the supporters of the Parliament of England during the English Civil War. Also known as Parliamentarians, they fought against Charles I of England and his supporters, the Cavaliers or Royalists, who claimed rule by absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings. Their goal was to give the Parliament supreme control over executive administration.
- **New Model Army:** An army formed in 1645 by the Parliamentarians in the English Civil War and disbanded in 1660 after the Restoration. It differed from other armies in the series of civil wars referred to as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms in that it was intended as an army liable for service anywhere in the country (including in Scotland and Ireland) rather than being tied to a single area or garrison. Its soldiers became full-time professionals rather than part-time militia.
- **Petition of Right:** A major English constitutional document that sets out specific liberties of the subjects that the king is prohibited from infringing. Passed in 1628, it contains restrictions on non-Parliamentary taxation, forced billeting of soldiers, imprisonment without cause, and the use of martial



law.

- **tonnage and poundage:** Certain duties and taxes first levied in Edward II's reign on every tun (cask) of imported wine, which came mostly from Spain and Portugal, and on every pound weight of merchandise exported or imported. Traditionally it was granted by Parliament to the king for life until the reign of Charles I.
- **Thirty Years' War:** A series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. Initially a war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, it gradually developed into a more general conflict involving most of the great powers.

## Background: The Stuarts and the English Parliament

Elizabeth I's death in 1603 resulted in the accession of her first cousin twice-removed King James VI of Scotland to the English throne as James I of England, creating the first personal union of the Scottish and English kingdoms. As King of Scots, James had become accustomed to Scotland's weak parliamentary tradition, and the new King of England was genuinely affronted by the constraints the English Parliament attempted to place on him. Despite tensions between the King and Parliament, James's peaceful disposition contributed to relative peace in both England and Scotland. However, his son and successor, Charles I of England, did not share his father's personality, and engaged in even more tense conflicts with Parliament. Charles's belief, inherited from his father, that the

power of the crown is God-given and that the king does not have to respect the position of the English Parliament, shaped his reign and led to a political crisis that in the end would cost him his own life.

Having dissolved Parliament in 1627 after it did not meet the king's requirements and threatened his political allies, but unable to raise money without it, Charles assembled a new one in 1628. The new Parliament drew up the Petition of Right, and Charles accepted it as a concession in order to obtain his subsidy. The Petition did not grant him the right of tonnage and poundage, which Charles had been collecting without parliamentary authorization since 1625. Charles I avoided calling a Parliament for the next decade, a period known as the "personal rule" or the "eleven years' tyranny." During this period, Charles's lack of money determined policies. First and foremost, to avoid Parliament, the king needed to avoid war. Charles made peace with France and Spain, effectively ending England's involvement in the Thirty Years' War.

Charles finally bowed to pressure and summoned another English Parliament in November 1640. Known as the Long Parliament, it proved even more hostile to Charles than its predecessor, and passed a law that stated that a new Parliament should convene at least once every three years—without the king's summons, if necessary. Other laws passed by the Parliament made it illegal for the king to impose taxes without parliamentary consent and later gave Parliament control over the king's ministers. Finally, the Parliament passed a law forbidding the king to dissolve it without its consent, even if the three years were up.

Charles and his supporters continued to resent Parliament's demands, while Parliamentarians continued to suspect Charles of wanting to impose episcopalianism and unfettered royal rule by military force. Within months, the Irish Catholics, fearing a resurgence of Protestant power, struck first, and all of Ireland soon descended into chaos. In early January 1642, accompanied by 400 soldiers, Charles attempted to arrest five members of the House of Commons on a charge of treason, but failed to do so. A few days after this failure, fearing for the safety of his family and retinue,

Charles left the London area for the north of the country. Further negotiations by frequent correspondence between the king and the Long Parliament proved fruitless. As the summer progressed, cities and towns declared their sympathies for one faction or the other.

## The English Civil War

What followed is known as the English Civil War (1642–1651), which developed into a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians (“Roundheads”) and Royalists (“Cavaliers”). The first (1642–1646) and second (1648–1649) wars pitted the supporters of King Charles I against the supporters of the Long Parliament, while the third (1649–1651) saw fighting between supporters of King Charles II (Charles I’s son) and supporters of the Rump Parliament. The war ended with the Parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651.

The overall outcome of the war was threefold: the trial and execution of Charles I, the exile of Charles II, and the replacement of English monarchy with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–1653), and then the Protectorate (1653–1659) under Oliver Cromwell’s personal rule. The monopoly of the Church of England on Christian worship in England ended with the victors consolidating the established Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Constitutionally, the wars established the precedent that an English monarch cannot govern without Parliament’s consent, although the idea of Parliament as the ruling power of England was legally established as part of the Glorious Revolution in 1688.



**Battle of Naseby, artist unknown:** The victory of the Parliamentary New Model Army over the Royalist Army at the Battle of Naseby on June 14, 1645, marked the decisive turning point in the English Civil War.

## Oliver Cromwell's Rise

Oliver Cromwell was relatively obscure for the first forty years of his life. He was an intensely religious man (an Independent Puritan) who entered the English Civil War on the side of the “Roundheads,” or Parliamentarians. Nicknamed “Old Ironsides,” he was quickly promoted from leading a single cavalry troop to being one of the principal commanders of the New Model Army, playing an important role in the defeat of the royalist forces. Cromwell was one of the signatories of King Charles I's death warrant in 1649, and he dominated the short-lived Commonwealth of England as a member of the Rump Parliament (1649–1653). He was selected to take command of the English campaign in Ireland in 1649–1650. His

forces defeated the Confederate and Royalist coalition in Ireland and occupied the country, bringing an end to the Irish Confederate Wars. During this period, a series of Penal Laws were passed against Roman Catholics (a significant minority in England and Scotland but the vast majority in Ireland), and a substantial amount of their land was confiscated. Cromwell also led a campaign against the Scottish army between 1650 and 1651.

In April 1653, he dismissed the Rump Parliament by force, setting up a short-lived nominated assembly known as Barebone's Parliament, before being invited by his fellow leaders to rule as Lord Protector of England (which included Wales at the time), Scotland, and Ireland from December 1653. As a ruler, he executed an aggressive and effective foreign policy. He died from natural causes in 1658 and the Royalists returned to power in 1660, and they had his corpse dug up, hung in chains, and beheaded.



**Oliver Cromwell by Samuel Cooper (died 1672), the National Portrait Gallery, London**

Cromwell is one of the most controversial figures in the history of the British Isles, considered a regicidal dictator, a military dictator, and a hero of liberty. However, his measures against Catholics in Scotland and Ireland have been characterized as genocidal or near-genocidal, and in Ireland his record is harshly criticized.

# The English Protectorate

Despite the revolutionary nature of the government during the Protectorate, Cromwell's regime was marked by an aggressive foreign policy, no drastic reforms at home, and difficult relations with Parliament, which in the end made it increasingly similar to monarchy.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the English Protectorate, along with its successes and failures

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- In 1653 Oliver Cromwell was declared Lord Protector of a united Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland under the terms of the Instrument of Government, inaugurating the period now usually known as the Protectorate.
- Cromwell had two key objectives as Lord Protector: “healing and settling” the nation after the chaos of the civil wars and the regicide, and spiritual and

moral reform. While his domestic policies presumed no radical reforms and many focused on protecting public morality through religion, Cromwell followed an aggressive foreign policy.

- Cromwell's over-reliance on the military reopened the wounds of the 1640s and deepened antipathies to the regime.
- Being aware of the contribution the Jewish community made to the economic success of Holland, then England's leading commercial rival, Cromwell encouraged Jews to return to England, 350 years after their banishment by Edward I.
- After Cromwell's death in 1658, his son Richard succeeded as Lord Protector but was unable to manage the Parliament and control the army. In 1660, monarchy was restored.
- Cromwell is one of the most controversial figures in the history of the British Isles, considered a regicidal dictator or a military dictator by some and a hero of liberty by others. His measures against Catholics in Scotland and Ireland, however, have been characterized as genocidal or near-genocidal.

### *Key Terms*

- **Barebone's Parliament:** Also known as the Little Parliament, the Nominated Assembly, and the Parliament of Saints, was the last attempt of the English Commonwealth (1653) to find a stable political form before the installation of Oliver Cromwell as



Lord Protector. It was an assembly nominated entirely by Oliver Cromwell and the Army's Council of Officers.

- **Interregnum:** The period between the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649, and the arrival of his son Charles II in London on May 29, 1660, which marked the start of the Restoration. During the Interregnum England was under various forms of republican government as the Commonwealth of England.
- **Rump Parliament:** The English Parliament after Colonel Thomas Pride purged the Long Parliament on December 6, 1648, of those members hostile to the Grandees' intention to try King Charles I for high treason.
- **Third English Civil War:** The last of the English Civil Wars (1649–1651), which were a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians and Royalists. As the Royal army was mostly Scottish, and as the invasion was not accompanied by any major rising or support in England, the war can also be viewed as primarily an Anglo-Scottish War rather than a continuation of the English Civil War.
- **Instrument of Government:** A constitution of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Drafted by Major-General John Lambert in 1653, it was the first sovereign codified and written constitution in England.

## The Commonwealth of England

The Commonwealth was the period when England, later along with Ireland and Scotland, was ruled as a republic following the end of the Second English Civil War and the trial and execution of Charles I (1649). The republic's existence was declared by the Rump Parliament on May 19, 1649. Power in the early Commonwealth was vested primarily in the Parliament and a Council of State. During this period, fighting continued, particularly in Ireland and Scotland, between the parliamentary forces and those opposed to them, as part of what is now referred to as the Third English Civil War.

In 1653, after the forcible dissolution of the Rump Parliament, Oliver Cromwell was declared Lord Protector of a united Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland under the terms of the Instrument of Government, inaugurating the period now usually known as the Protectorate. The term “Commonwealth” is sometimes used for the whole of 1649 to 1660—a period referred to by monarchists as the Interregnum—although for other historians, the use of the term is limited to the years prior to Cromwell's formal assumption of power in 1653.



*Coat of arms of the Commonwealth of England from 1653 to 1659 during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*

## The Protectorate

The Protectorate was the period during the Commonwealth when England (which at that time included Wales), Ireland, and Scotland were governed by a Lord Protector. The Protectorate began in 1653 when, following the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and then Barebone's Parliament, Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth under the terms of the Instrument of Government.

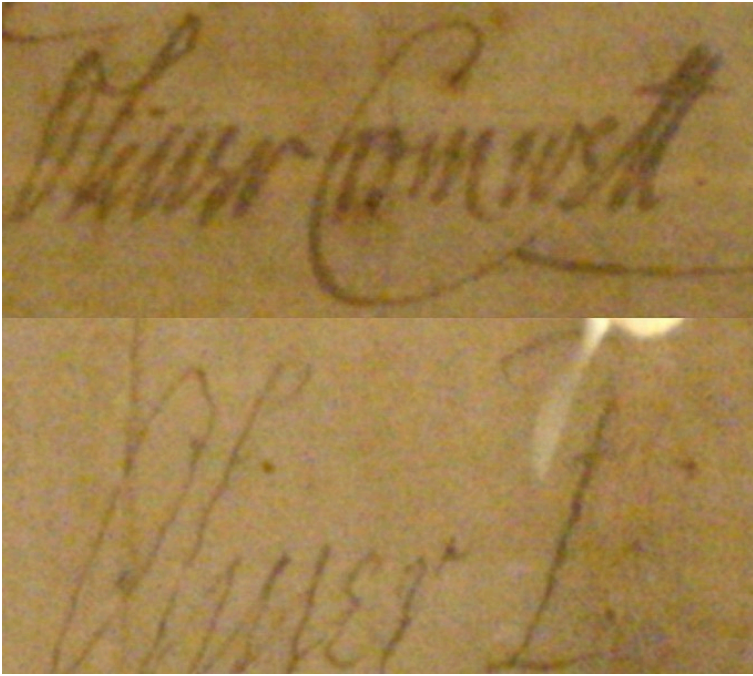
Cromwell had two key objectives as Lord Protector. The first was “healing and settling” the nation after the chaos of the civil wars and the regicide. The social priorities did not, despite the revolutionary nature of the government, include any meaningful attempt to reform the social order. He was also careful in the way he approached overseas colonies. England’s American colonies in this period consisted of the New England Confederation, the Providence Plantations, the Virginia Colony, and the Maryland Colony. Cromwell soon secured the submission of these, but largely left them to their own affairs. His second objective was spiritual and moral reform. As a very religious man (Independent Puritan), he aimed to restore liberty of conscience and promote both outward and inward godliness throughout England. The latter translated into rigid religious laws (e.g., compulsory church attendance).

The first Protectorate parliament met in September 1654, and after some initial gestures approving appointments previously made by Cromwell, began to work on a moderate program of constitutional reform. Rather than opposing Parliament’s bill, Cromwell dissolved them in January 1655. After a royalist uprising led by Sir John Penruddock, Cromwell divided England into military districts ruled by Army Major-Generals who answered only to him. The fifteen major generals and deputy major generals—called “godly governors”—were central not only to national security, but also to Cromwell’s moral crusade. However, the major-generals lasted less than a year. Cromwell’s failure to support his men, by sacrificing them to his opponents, caused their demise. Their activities between November 1655 and September 1656 had, nonetheless, reopened the wounds of the 1640s and deepened antipathies to the regime.

During this period Cromwell also faced challenges in foreign policy. The First Anglo-Dutch War, which had broken out in 1652, against the Dutch Republic, was eventually won in 1654. Having negotiated peace with the Dutch, Cromwell proceeded to engage the Spanish in warfare. This involved secret preparations for an attack on the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and resulted in

the invasion of Jamaica, which then became an English colony. The Lord Protector also became aware of the contribution the Jewish community made to the economic success of Holland, then England's leading commercial rival. This led to his encouraging Jews to return to England, 350 years after their banishment by Edward I, in the hope that they would help speed up the recovery of the country after the disruption of the English Civil War.

In 1657, Oliver Cromwell rejected the offer of the Crown presented to him by Parliament and was ceremonially re-installed as Lord Protector, this time with greater powers than had previously been granted him under this title. Most notably, however, the office of Lord Protector was still not to become hereditary, though Cromwell was now able to nominate his own successor. Cromwell's new rights and powers were laid out in the Humble Petition and Advice, a legislative instrument that replaced the Instrument of Government. Despite failing to restore the Crown, this new constitution did set up many of the vestiges of the ancient constitution, including a house of life peers (in place of the House of Lords). In the Humble Petition it was called the "Other House," as the Commons could not agree on a suitable name. Furthermore, Oliver Cromwell increasingly took on more of the trappings of monarchy.



**Cromwell's signature:** Cromwell's signature before becoming Lord Protector in 1653, and afterwards. "Oliver P," stands for Oliver Protector, similar in style to English monarchs who signed their names as, for example, "Elizabeth R," standing for Elizabeth Regina.

## After Cromwell's Death

Cromwell died of natural causes in 1658, and his son Richard succeeded as Lord Protector. Richard sought to expand the basis for the Protectorate beyond the army to civilians. He summoned a Parliament in 1659. However, the republicans assessed his father's rule as "a period of tyranny and economic depression" and attacked the increasingly monarchy-like character of the Protectorate. Richard was unable to manage the Parliament and control the army. In May, a Committee of Safety was formed on the authority of

the Rump Parliament, displacing the Protector's Council of State, and was in turn replaced by a new Council of State. A year later monarchy was restored.

Cromwell is one of the most controversial figures in the history of the British Isles, considered a regicidal dictator or a military dictator by some and a hero of liberty by others. His measures against Catholics in Scotland and Ireland have been characterized as genocidal or near-genocidal, and in Ireland his record is harshly criticized. Following the Irish Rebellion of 1641, most of Ireland came under the control of the Irish Catholic Confederation. In early 1649, the Confederates allied with the English Royalists, who had been defeated by the Parliamentarians in the English Civil War. By May 1652, Cromwell's Parliamentary army had defeated the Confederate and Royalist coalition in Ireland and occupied the country—bringing an end to the Irish Confederate Wars (or Eleven Years' War). However, guerrilla warfare continued for another year. Cromwell passed a series of Penal Laws against Roman Catholics (the vast majority of the population) and confiscated large amounts of their land. The extent to which Cromwell, who was in direct command for the first year of the campaign, was responsible for brutal atrocities in Ireland is debated to this day.

## Restoration of the Stuarts

Over a decade after Charles I's 1649 execution and Charles II's 1651 escape to mainland Europe, the Stuarts were restored to the English throne by Royalists in the aftermath of the slow fall of the Protectorate.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluate why the Stuarts were brought back and restored to the English throne

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Key Points*

- Richard Cromwell was Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland after Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658, but he lacked his father's authority. He proved unable to manage the Parliament and control the army and was removed from his office after several months.
- In the aftermath of Richard's removal, power struggles ensued, with George Monck emerging as a key figure in the restoration of monarchy and bringing Charles II back to England.
- On April 4, 1660, Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda, in which he made several promises in relation to the reclamation of the crown of England. Charles entered London on May 29 and was crowned in 1661.
- The Cavalier Parliament convened for the first time in May 1661, and it would endure for over seventeen



years. Like its predecessor, it was overwhelmingly Royalist. It is also known as the Pensionary Parliament for the many pensions it granted to adherents of the king.

- Many Royalist exiles returned and were rewarded. The Indemnity and Oblivion Act, which became law in August 1660, pardoned all past treason against the Crown, but specifically excluded those involved in the trial and execution of Charles I.

### *Key Terms*

- **Declaration of Breda:** A proclamation by Charles II of England in which he promised a general pardon for crimes committed during the English Civil War and the Interregnum for all those who recognized Charles as the lawful king; the retention by the current owners of property purchased during the same period; religious toleration; and the payment of pay arrears to members of the army and the recommission of the army into service under the crown. The first three pledges were all subject to amendment by acts of parliament.
- **Rump Parliament:** The English Parliament after Colonel Thomas Pride purged the Long Parliament on December 6, 1648, of those members hostile to the Grandees' intention to try King Charles I for high treason.
- **Indemnity and Oblivion Act:** A 1660 act of the Parliament of England that was a general pardon for

everyone who had committed crimes during the English Civil War and Interregnum, with the exception of certain crimes such as murder, piracy, buggery, rape, and witchcraft, and people named in the act, such as those involved in the regicide of Charles I.

- **Convention Parliament:** A parliament in English history which, owing to an abeyance of the Crown, assembled without formal summons by the sovereign. Its 1660 assembly followed the Long Parliament that had finally voted for its own dissolution in March of that year. Elected as a “free parliament,” i.e., with no oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth or to the monarchy, it was predominantly Royalist in its membership.
- **Pride’s Purge of 1648:** An event that took place in December 1648, during the Second English Civil War, when troops of the New Model Army under the command of Colonel Thomas Pride forcibly removed from the Long Parliament all those who were not supporters of the Grandees in the New Model Army and the Independents. It is arguably the only military coup d’état in English history.
- **Long Parliament:** An English Parliament that lasted from 1640 until 1660. It followed the fiasco of the Short Parliament, which had been held for three weeks during the spring of 1640, and which in its turn had followed an eleven-year parliamentary absence.
- **Committee of Safety:** A committee established by the Parliamentarians in July 1642. It was the first of a number of successive committees set up to oversee the English Civil War against King Charles I and the

Interregnum. Its last installment was set up in 1659, just before the Restoration, in response to the Rump Parliament, which the day before tried to place the commander of the army Charles Fleetwood as chief of a military council under the authority of the speaker.

## Richard Cromwell and the Protectorate

Richard Cromwell (1626–1712) was Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland after Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658. Richard lacked his father's authority. He attempted to mediate between the army and civil society and allowed a Parliament that contained a large number of disaffected Presbyterians and Royalists. His main weakness was that he did not have the confidence of the army. He summoned a Parliament in 1659, but the republicans assessed Oliver's rule to be "a period of tyranny and economic depression" and attacked the increasingly monarchy-like nature of the Protectorate. Richard proved unable to manage the Parliament and control the army. On May 7, a Committee of Safety was formed on the authority of the Rump Parliament, displacing the Protector's Council of State, and was in turn replaced by a new Council of State on May 19.

BY HIS  
**HIGHNES COUNCIL**  
 I N  
**SCOTLAND,**  
 For the GOVERNMENT thereof,



HEREAS it hath pleased the most wise GOD in his Providence, to take out of this world the most Serene and Renowned OLIVER late LORD PROTECTOR of this Commonwealth; And his said highnesse, having in his life-time, according to the Humble Petition and Advice, Declared and appointed the most Noble and Illustrious the LORD RICHARD, eldest son of his said late highnesse, to succeed him in the Government of these Nations: We therefore of his highnesse Council in Scotland, by direction of the Privy Council in England, do now hereby with one full voice and consent of tongue and heart, publish and declare the said Noble and Illustrious LORD RICHARD, to be rightfully PROTECTOR of this Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Dominions and Territories thereto belonging, to whom we do acknowledge all Fidelity, and constant Obedience according to Law and the said Humble Petition and Advice, With all humble and hearty affection; Beseeching the LORD, by whom Princes rule, to bless him with long life, and these Nations with peace and happinesse under his Government.

And the said Council do hereby command the Sheriffs of the respective Shires, with all possible speed, to cause these Presents to be published in all the Market-Towns (except Burghs Royal) in their Sheriffdoms respectively; And do likewise command the Provost and Baylies of the respective Burghs Royal in Scotland, with all possible speed, to cause these Presents to be proclaimed in their respective Burghs, with all the Solemnity that is requisite upon such an occasion. And the said Sheriffs, Provosts and Baylies, are hereby required to make respective Returns of their Diligence herein to the Council with all expedition.

Given at Edinburgh the Ninth day of September, 1658.

*George Monck, Samuel Disbrowe, Edward Rodes,  
 John Suintoune, Nathaniel Whetham.*

GOD save His Highnesse RICHARD LORD PROTECTOR.

E D I N B U R G H,

Printed by Christopher Higgins, in Harts Close, over against the Trone Church,  
 Anno Domini, 1658.

Proclamation announcing the death of Oliver Cromwell and the succession of Richard Cromwell as Lord Protector. Printed in Scotland, 1658. Courtesy of the General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1660, Richard Cromwell left for France and later traveled around Europe, visiting various European courts. In 1680 or 1681, he returned to England and lodged with the merchant Thomas

Pengelly in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, living off the income from his estate in Hursley. He died in 1712 at the age of 85.

## Power Struggles

Charles Fleetwood was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety and of the Council of State, and one of the seven commissioners for the army. On June 9, 1659, he was nominated lord-general (commander-in-chief) of the army. However, his leadership was undermined in Parliament. A royalist uprising was planned for August 1, 1659, and although it never happened, Sir George Booth gained control of Cheshire. Booth held Cheshire until the end of August, when he was defeated by General John Lambert. On October 26, a Committee of Safety was appointed, of which Fleetwood and Lambert were members. Lambert was appointed major-general of all the forces in England and Scotland, with Fleetwood being general. The Committee of Safety sent Lambert with a large force to meet George Monck, who was in command of the English forces in Scotland, and either negotiate with him or force him to come to terms.

It was into this atmosphere that Monck, the governor of Scotland under the Cromwells, marched south with his army from Scotland. Lambert's army began to desert him, and he returned to London almost alone, though he marched unopposed. The Presbyterian members, excluded in Pride's Purge of 1648, were recalled, and on December 24 the army restored the Long Parliament. Fleetwood was deprived of his command and ordered to appear before Parliament to answer for his conduct. In March 1660, Lambert was sent to the Tower of London, from which he escaped a month later. He tried to rekindle the civil war in favor of the Commonwealth, but he was recaptured by Colonel Richard Ingoldsby, a participant in the regicide of Charles I, who hoped to win a pardon by handing

Lambert over to the new regime. Lambert was incarcerated and died in custody in 1684; Ingoldsby was, indeed, pardoned.

## Restoration of Charles II

On April 4, 1660, Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda, in which he made several promises in relation to the reclamation of the crown of England. Monck organized the Convention Parliament; on May 8, it proclaimed that King Charles II had been the lawful monarch since the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649. Charles entered London on May 29, his birthday. To celebrate his Majesty's Return to his Parliament, May 29 was made a public holiday, popularly known as Oak Apple Day. He was crowned at Westminster Abbey on April 23, 1661. The Cavalier Parliament convened for the first time in May 1661, and it would endure for over seventeen years. Like its predecessor, it was overwhelmingly Royalist. It is also known as the Pensionary Parliament for the many pensions it granted to adherents of the king.

Many Royalist exiles returned and were rewarded. The Indemnity and Oblivion Act, which became law in August 1660, pardoned all past treason against the crown, but specifically excluded those involved in the trial and execution of Charles I. Thirty-one of the fifty-nine commissioners (judges) who had signed the death warrant in 1649 were living. In the ensuing trials, twelve were condemned to death. In October 1660, ten were publicly hanged, drawn, and quartered. Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, Judge Thomas Pride, and Judge John Bradshaw were posthumously attainted for high treason. In January 1661, the corpses of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were exhumed and hanged in chains at Tyburn.



**Charles II of England by Peter Lely, 1675, Collection of Euston Hall, Suffolk**

King Charles II, the first monarch to rule after the English Restoration.

## The Glorious Revolution

The Glorious Revolution was the overthrow of King James II of England by a union of English Parliamentarians with the Dutch stadtholder William of Orange and his wife Mary that resulted in the eventual regulation of the respective powers of Parliament and the Crown in England.

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

Analyze the significant changes the Glorious Revolution made to English government

### *KEY TAKEAWAYS*

#### *Key Points*

- James II ascended the throne upon the death of his brother, Charles II, in 1685. During his short reign, he became directly involved in the political battles between Catholicism and Protestantism and between



the Divine Right of Kings and the political rights of the Parliament of England.

- James's greatest political problem was his Catholicism, which left him alienated from both parties in England. Amidst continuous tensions between the king and Parliament, matters came to a head in June 1688, when James had a son, James. Until then, the throne would have passed to his daughter Mary, a Protestant.
- Mary and her husband, William Henry of Orange, both Protestants, appeared as potential rulers who could lead an anti-James revolution and replace the Catholic king. It is still a matter of controversy whether the initiative for the conspiracy to take over the throne was taken by the English or by William and his wife.
- On June 30, 1688, a group of seven Protestant nobles invited the Prince of Orange to come to England with an army. By September, it became clear that William would invade England. William arrived on November 5.
- In December, James fled the country, and in 1689 William and Mary were appointed monarchs.
- In order to regulate the relationship between the monarch and Parliament, the Bill of Rights was passed in 1689. It lays down limits on the powers of the monarch and sets out the rights of Parliament, including the requirement for regular parliaments, free elections, and freedom of speech in Parliament.

## *Key Terms*

- **Test Act:** A series of English penal laws that served as a religious test for public office and imposed various civil disabilities on Roman Catholics and Nonconformists. The principle was that none but people taking communion in the established Church of England were eligible for public employment.
- **Penal Laws:** A specific series of laws that sought to uphold the establishment of the Church of England against Protestant Nonconformists and Catholicism by imposing various forfeitures, civil penalties, and civil disabilities upon these dissenters. They were repealed in the 19th century during the process of Catholic Emancipation.
- **Divine Right of Kings:** A political and religious doctrine of royal and political legitimacy. It asserts that a monarch is subject to no earthly authority, and derives the right to rule directly from the will of God. The king is thus not subject to the will of his people, the aristocracy, or any other estate of the realm, including the Catholic Church.
- **Declaration of Indulgence:** A pair of proclamations made by James II of England and VII of Scotland in 1687. It granted broad religious freedom in England by suspending penal laws enforcing conformity to the Church of England and allowing persons to worship in their homes or chapels as they saw fit, and it ended the requirement of affirming religious oaths before gaining employment in government office.

- **stadtholder:** In the Low Countries, a medieval function that during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries developed into a rare type of de facto hereditary head of state of the thus crowned republic of the Netherlands. Additionally, this position was tasked with maintaining peace and provincial order in the early Dutch Republic.

## James II of England

James II of England (VII of Scotland) was the second surviving son of Charles I; he ascended the throne upon the death of his brother, Charles II, in 1685. During his short reign, James became directly involved in the political battles between Catholicism and Protestantism and between the Divine Right of Kings and the political rights of the Parliament of England. James's greatest political problem was his Catholicism, which left him alienated from both parties in England. However, the facts that he had no son and his daughters were Protestants were a "saving grace." James's attempt to relax the Penal Laws alienated Tories, his natural supporters, because they viewed this as tantamount to disestablishment of the Church of England. Abandoning the Tories, James looked to form a "King's party" as a counterweight to the Anglican Tories, so in 1687 he supported the policy of religious toleration and issued the Declaration of Indulgence. By allying himself with the Catholics, Dissenters, and Nonconformists, James hoped to build a coalition that would advance Catholic emancipation. Matters came to a head in June 1688, when the king had a son, James. Until then, the throne would have passed to his

daughter Mary, a Protestant. The prospect of a Catholic dynasty in the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland was now likely.



***James II King of England and VII King of Scots, King of Ireland and Duke of Normandy, painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, 1683***

## Conspiracy: William and Mary

Mary and her husband, her cousin William Henry of Orange, were

both Protestants and grandchildren of Charles I of England. William was also stadtholder of the main provinces of the Dutch Republic. He had already acquired the reputation of being the main champion of the Protestant cause against Catholicism and French absolutism. In the developing English crisis, he saw an opportunity to prevent an Anglo-French alliance and bring England to the anti-French side by carrying out a military intervention directed against James. This suited the desires of several English politicians who intended to depose James. It is still a matter of controversy whether the initiative for the conspiracy was taken by the English or by the stadtholder and his wife.

## Invasion

On June 30, 1688, a group of seven Protestant nobles invited the Prince of Orange to come to England with an army. By September, it became clear that William would invade England. William arrived on November 5. James refused a French offer to send an expeditionary force, fearing that it would cost him domestic support. He tried to bring the Tories to his side by making concessions, but failed because he still refused to endorse the Test Act. His forward forces had gathered at Salisbury, and James went to join them on November 19 with his main force, having a total strength of about 19,000. Amid anti-Catholic rioting in London, it rapidly became apparent that the troops were not eager to fight, and the loyalty of many of James's commanders was doubtful.

Meanwhile, on November 18, Plymouth had surrendered to William, and on November 21, William began to advance. In December, William's forces met with the king's commissioners to negotiate. James offered free elections and a general amnesty for the rebels. In reality, by that point he was simply playing for time, having already decided to flee the country. James was received in

France by his cousin and ally, Louis XIV, who offered him a palace and a pension.

## The Bill of Rights

The status of William and Mary in England was unclear while James, though now in France, still had many supporters in the country. In order to avoid James's return to the throne, and facing opposition in Parliament, William let it be known that he was happy for Mary to be queen in name and for preference in the succession given to Princess Anne's (Mary's sister) children over any of William's. Anne declared that she would temporarily waive her right to the crown should Mary die before William, and Mary refused to be made queen without William as king. The Lords accepted the words "abdication" and "vacancy" and Lord Winchester's motion to appoint William and Mary monarchs. The decision was made in light of a great fear that the situation might deteriorate into a civil war. Although their succession to the English throne was relatively peaceful, much blood would be shed before William's authority was accepted in Ireland and Scotland.



**Detail of William and Mary as portrayed on the ceiling of the Painted Hall of the Greenwich Hospital. Painting: Sir James Thornhill; Photo: James Brittain.**

William and Mary were co-regents over the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Parliament offered William and Mary a co-regency, at the couple's behest. After Mary died in 1694, William

ruled alone until his death in 1702. William and Mary were childless and were ultimately succeeded by Mary's younger sister, Anne.

The proposal to draw up a statement of rights and liberties and James's invasion of them was first made in January in the Commons, but what would become the Bill of Rights did not pass until December 1689. The Bill was a restatement in statutory form of The Declaration of Rights presented by the Convention Parliament to William and Mary in February 1689, inviting them to become joint sovereigns of England. The Bill of Rights lay down limits on the powers of the monarch and set out the rights of Parliament, including the requirement for regular parliaments, free elections, and freedom of speech in Parliament. It set out certain rights of individuals, including the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment, and reestablished the liberty of Protestants to have arms for their defense within the rule of law. Furthermore, the Bill of Rights described and condemned several misdeeds of James II of England. These ideas reflected those of the political thinker John Locke, and they quickly became popular in England. It also set out—or, in the view of its drafters, restated—certain constitutional requirements of the Crown to seek the consent of the people, as represented in Parliament.

## Significance

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 is considered by some as one of the most important events in the long evolution of the respective powers of Parliament and the Crown in England. The passage of the Bill of Rights stamped out once and for all any possibility of a Catholic monarchy and ended moves towards absolute monarchy in the British kingdoms by circumscribing the monarch's powers. These powers were greatly restricted. He or she could no longer suspend laws, levy taxes, make royal appointments, or maintain a standing army during peacetime without Parliament's



permission. Since 1689, government under a system of constitutional monarchy in England, and later the United Kingdom, has been uninterrupted. Also since then, Parliament's power has steadily increased while the Crown's has steadily declined.

# 90. Primary Source Reading

## 7: Margery Kempe, Explorer

### Primary Source Reading: Margery Kempe, Explorer

King's Lynn East gate drawing

Margery Kempe was born in the town of Lynn (modern King's Lynn) in England about 1373. Lynn was a port city whose merchants traded with Germany, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia. Her father was John Burnham, who served five terms as the mayor of Lynn and once as its delegate to the English Parliament. Kempe married John Kempe when she was about 20 years old, and gave birth to fourteen children over the next twenty years. For years, she lived an ordinary bourgeois life, and even operated her own brewing business, but she began to have visions of Jesus Christ during a period of post-partum depression after the birth of her first child. She continued to have visions throughout her life, and after her brewing business failed, she began to reexamine her faith in its entirety. At the age of forty, she decided to devote her life to Christ, so she became chaste, wore only white clothing, and set off on a spiritual pilgrimage across Europe to the Holy Land. She also became known for crying violently when she had her visions, which evidently angered many of the people who met her. Although her religious beliefs were fairly orthodox, she was physically threatened and often accused of heresy. In her old age, Margery dictated a spiritual biography to one of her sons. It was recopied and expanded by a traveling priest into the manuscript that formed the basis for the modern version of her story. The resulting work is one of the oldest biographies in the English language, and it remained lost for centuries until the manuscript was rediscovered

*in 1934 in the library of Colonel Butler-Bowdon of Pleasington Old Hall (Lancashire, England) by Hope Emily Allen (a noted scholar of the mystic Robert Rolle).*

[Margery and Her Husband Reach a Settlement]

It befell upon a Friday on Midsummer Even in right hot weather, as this creature was coming from York-ward bearing a bottle with beer in her hand and her husband a cake in his bosom, he asked his wife this question: "Margery, if there came a man with a sword and would smite off my head unless that I should commune kindly with you as I have done before, say me truth of your conscience – for ye say ye will not lie – whether would ye suffer my head to be smit off or else suffer me to meddle with you again as I did sometime?" "Alas, sir," She said, "why move ye this matter and have we been chaste this eight weeks?" "For I will wit the truth of your heart." And the she said with great sorrow, "Forsooth, I had liefer see you be slain than we should turn again to our uncleanness." And he said again, "Ye are no good wife."

And then she asked her husband what was the cause that he had not meddled with eight weeks before, sithen she lay with him every night in his bed. And he said he was so made afeared when he would 'a touched her that he durst no more do. "Now, good sir, amend you and ask God mercy, for I told you near three year sithen that ye should be slain suddenly, and now is this the third year, and yet I hope I shall have my desire. Good sir, I pray you grant me that I shall ask, and I shall pray for you that ye shall be saved through the mercy of our Lord Jesu Christ, and ye shall have more meed in Heaven than if ye wore a hair or a habergeon. I pray you; suffer me to make a vow of chastity in what bishop's hand that God will." "Nay," he said, "that will I not grant you, for now I may use you without deadly sin and then might I not so." The she said again, "If it be the will of the Holy Ghost to fulfill that I have said, I pray God ye might consent thereto; and if it be not the will of the Holy Ghost, I pray God ye never consent thereto."

Then they went forth to-Bridlington-ward in right hot weather, the foresaid creature having great sorrow and great dread for her

chastity. And as they came by a cross, her husband set him down under the cross, cleping his wife unto him and saying these words unto her, "Margery, grant me my desire, and I shall grant you your desire. My first desire is that we shall lie still together in one bed as we have done before; the second that ye shall pay my debts ere ye go to Jerusalem; and the third that ye shall eat and drink with me on the Friday as ye were wont to do." "Nay sir," she said, "to break the Friday I will never grant you while I live." "Well," he said, "then shall I meddle with you again."

She prayed him that he would give her leave to make her prayers, and he granted it goodly. Then she knelt down beside a cross in the field and prayed in this manner with great abundance of tears, "Lord God, thou knowest all thing; thou knowest what sorrow I have had to be chaste in my body to thee all this three year, and now might I have my will and I dare not for love of thee. For if I would break that manner of fasting which thou commandest me to keep on the Friday without meat or drink, I should now have my desire. But, blessed Lord, thou knowest I will not contrary to thy will, and mickle now is my sorrow unless that I find comfort in thee. Now, blessed Jesu, make thy will known to me unworthy that I may follow thereafter and fulfil it with all my might." And then our Lord Jesu Christ with great sweetness spoke to this creature, commanding her to go again to her husband and pray him to grant her that she desired, "And he shall have that he desireth. For, my dearworthy daughter, this was the cause that I bade thee fast for thou shouldest the sooner obtain and get thy desire, and now it is granted thee. I will no longer thou fast, therefore I bid thee in the name of Jesu eat and drink as thy husband doth."

Then this creature thanked our Lord Jesu Christ of his grace and his goodness, sithen rose up and went to her husband saying unto him, "Sir, if it like you, ye shall grant me my desire and ye shall have your desire. Granteth me that ye shall not come in my bed, and I grant you to quit your debts ere I go to Jerusalem. And maketh my body free to God so that ye never make no challenging in me to ask no debt of matrimony after this day while ye live, and I shall eat and

drink on the Friday at your bidding.” Then said her husband again to her, “As free may your body be to God as it hath been to me.” This creature thanked God greatly, enjoying that she had her desire, praying her husband that they should say three Pater Noster in the worship of the Trinity for the great grace that he had granted them. And so they did, kneeling under a cross, and sithen they ate and drank together in great gladness of spirit. This was on a Friday on Midsummer Even.

**Notes:**

- **liefer** – rather
- **sithen** – since
- **meed** – reward
- **hair/habergeon** – Hair shirt/mail shirt
- **cleping** – calling
- **mickle** – much

[Pilgrimage to Jerusalem]

\*\*\* And so they went forth into the Holy Land till they might see Jerusalem. And when this creature saw Jerusalem, riding on an ass, she thanked God with all her heart, praying him for his mercy that like as he had brought her to see this earthly city Jerusalem, he would grant her grace to see the blissful city Jerusalem above, the city of Heaven. Our Lord Jesu Christ, answering to her thought, granted her to have her desire. Then for joy that she had and the sweetness that she felt in the dalliance of our Lord, she was in point to ‘a fallen off her ass, for she might not bear the sweetness and grace that God wrought in her soul. The twain pilgrims of Dutchmen went to her and kept her from falling, of which the one was a priest. And he put spices in her mouth to comfort her, weening she had been sick. And so they helped her forth to Jerusalem. And when she came there, she said, “Sirs, I pray you be not displeased though I weep sore in this holy place where our Lord Jesu Christ was quick and dead.”

Then they went to the Temple in Jerusalem, and they were let

in that one day at evensong time and they abide there till the next day at evensong time. Then the friars lifted up a cross and led the pilgrims about from one place to another where our Lord had suffered his pains and his passions, every man and woman bearing a wax candle in their hand. And the friars always as they went about told them what our Lord suffered in every place. And the foresaid creature wept and sobbed so plentifully as though she had seen our Lord with her bodily eye suffering his Passion at that time. Before her in her soul she saw him verily by contemplation, and that caused her to have compassion. And when they came up onto the Mount of Calvary she fell down that she might not stand nor kneel but wallowed and wrested with her body, spreading her arms abroad, and cried with a loud voice as though her heart should 'a burst asunder, for in the city of her soul she saw verily and freshly how our Lord was crucified. Before her face she heard and saw in her ghostly sight the mourning of our Lady, of St. John and of Mary Magdalene, and of many other that loved our Lord. And she had so great compassion and so great pain to see our Lord's pain that she might not keep herself from crying and roaring though she should 'a been dead therefore.

And this was the first cry that ever she cried in any contemplation. And this manner of crying endured many years after this time for aught that any man might do, and therefore suffered she much despite and much reproof. The crying was so loud and so wonderful that it made people astoned unless that they had heard it before or else that they knew the cause of the crying. And she had them so oftentimes that they made her right weak in her bodily mights, and namely if she heard of our Lord's Passion. And sometime when she saw the Crucifix, or if she saw a man had a wound or a beast, whether it were, or if a man beat a child before her or smote a horse or another beast with a whip, if she might see it or hear it, her thought she saw our Lord be beaten or wounded like as she saw in the man or in the beast, as well in the field as in the town, and by herself alone as well as among the people. First when she had her cryings at Jerusalem, she had them oftentimes, and in Rome

also. And when she came home into England, first at her coming home it came but seldom as it were once in a month, sithen once in the week, afterward quotidianly, and once she had fourteen on one day, and another day she had seven, and so as God would visit her, sometime in the church, sometime in the street, sometime in the chamber, sometime in the field when God would send them, for she knew never time nor hour when they should come. And they came never without passing great sweetness of devotion and high contemplation. And as soon as she perceived that she should cry, she would keep it in as much as she might that people should not 'a heard it for noying of them. For some said it was a wicked spirit vexed her; some said it was a sickness; some said she had drunken too much wine; some banned her; some wished she had been in the haven; some would she had been in the sea in a bottomless boat; and so each man as him thought. Other ghostly men loved her and favored her the more. Some great clerks said our Lady cried never so, nor no saint in Heaven, but they knew full little what she felt, nor they would not believe but that she might 'a abstained her from crying if she had wished.

**Notes:**

- **dalliance** – conversation
- **quick** – living
- **quotidianly** – daily
- **noying** – annoying
- **banned** – cursed
- **ghostly** – spiritual

# 91. Assignments

## Week 15

### Assignments

#### Weekly Quiz

Points: 20

#### Primary Source Readings Synopsis

Points: 20

How to write a primary source synopsis

- Begin by reading the complete assignment from start to finish—do not attempt to summarize as you go, you will miss the main point and write too much. Give yourself time to read, think over and digest the material.
- Briefly introduce each author at the beginning of the paragraph devoted to their work. Example – “Dante Alighieri was a Medieval Italian poet and politician who wrote in the vernacular. He is most famous for his conception of the afterlife in his ‘Divine Comedy’, a selection from which I will summarize now.”
- Every reading has a beginning, middle and end. Make sure your synopsis includes these parts.
- Let the author guide you. If most of the original document is devoted to a single topic then it must be important. Your summary should reflect this emphasis.
- It is acceptable to analyze. “The author used strongly descriptive terms to reveal the miseries of the Industrial Revolution and advocate for a Communist economic system.”



- It is not acceptable to editorialize. “The author is super biased against capitalists and thinks Communism is actually workable, even though history has proven otherwise.”
- Don’t worry about the details. Since this summary is concise, eliminate the less important topics.
- Include a few sentences at the conclusion of your assignment comparing the stance of each writer.
- Edit. After you have finished your synopsis, set it aside for a few hours or a complete day. Return and reread. Have you left your reader with a complete understanding of the theme and major points of the writer? Have you summarized the position of the piece fairly? Have you left out any significant ideas?

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.



PART XVII

# WEEK 16: PRESENTATIONS



# 92. Assignment

## Week 16: Presentations

The Seven Prince Electors electing Henry VII - art from the 1300s

### Assignment

#### **Group Presentation**

Points: 100

#### **Prepare for The Final Exam Next Week**

Points: 100

Check the due dates carefully. All work is due at 11:55 P.M. on the due date. Due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor who will inform the students via the Announcements on the course Homepage.