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CHAPTER TEN

The Worlds of European Christendom

Connected and Divided

500–1300

"We embraced each other once, then again and again. We were like brothers meeting after a long separation."[1] That is how the Eastern Orthodox patriarch Athenagoras described his historic meeting with Roman Catholic Pope Paul VI in early 1964 near the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the very site where Jesus had spent the night before his arrest. Not for more than 500 years had the heads of these two ancient branches of Christianity personally met. Now they held each other and exchanged gifts, including a representation of two of Christ's disciples embracing. Then they lifted mutual decrees of excommunication that representatives of their respective churches had imposed almost a thousand years earlier. It was a small step in a still very incomplete process of overcoming this deep rift within Christianity, which had been in the making for well over a millennium. How had the world of Christendom come to be so sharply divided, religiously, politically, and in terms of the larger historical trajectories of its eastern and western halves?

DURING THE POSTCLASSICAL ERA, CHRISTIANITY PROVIDED a measure of cultural commonality for the diverse societies of western Eurasia, much as Chinese civilization and Buddhism did for East Asia. By 1300, almost all of these societies—from Spain and England in the west to Russia in the east—had embraced in some form the teachings of the Jewish carpenter called Jesus, but the world of European Christendom was deeply divided in a way that the Chinese world was not. Its eastern half, known as the Byzantine

Charlemagne: This fifteenth-century manuscript painting depicts Charlemagne, King of the Franks, who was crowned Emperor by the pope in 800 C.E. His reign illustrates the close and sometimes conflicted relationship of political and religious authorities in postclassical Europe. It also represents the futile desire of many in Western Europe to revive the old Roman Empire, even as a substantially new civilization was taking shape in the aftermath of the Roman collapse several centuries earlier. (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK/The Bridgeman Art Library)

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Empire or Byzantium, encompassed much of the eastern Mediterranean basin while continuing the traditions of the Roman Empire, though on a smaller scale, until its conquest by the Muslim Ottoman Empire in 1453. Centered on the magnificent city of Constantinople, Byzantium gradually evolved a distinctive civilization, all the while claiming to be Roman and seeking to preserve the heritage of the classical Mediterranean. With a particular form of Christianity known as Eastern Orthodoxy, the Byzantine Empire housed one of the major third-wave civilizations.

In Western or Latin Christendom, encompassing what we now know as Western Europe, political and religious leaders also tried to maintain links to the classical world, as illustrated by the spread of Christianity, the use of Latin in elite circles, and various efforts to revive or imitate the Roman Empire. The setting, however, was far different. In the West, the Roman imperial order had largely vanished by 500 C.E., accompanied by the weakening of many features of Roman civilization. Roads fell into disrepair, cities decayed, and long-distance trade shriveled. What replaced the old Roman order was a highly localized society — fragmented, decentralized, and competitive — in sharp contrast to the unified state of Byzantium. Like Byzantium, the Latin West ultimately became thoroughly Christian, but it was a gradual process lasting centuries, and its Roman Catholic Church, increasingly centered on the pope, had an independence from political authorities that the Eastern Orthodox Church did not. Moreover, the western church in particular and its society in general were far more rural than Byzantium and certainly had nothing to compare to the splendor of Constantinople. However, slowly at first and then with increasing speed after 1000, Western Europe emerged as an especially dynamic, expansive, and innovative third-wave civilization, combining elements of its classical past with the culture of Germanic and Celtic peoples to produce a distinctive hybrid, or blended, civilization.

Europe eventually became the global center of Christianity, but that destiny was far from clear in 500 C.E. At that time, only about one-third of the world's Christians lived in Europe, while the rest found their homes in various parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.[2] There they often followed alternate forms of Christianity, such as Nestorianism, which was regarded as heretical in Europe for its distinctive understanding of the nature of Christ. In Egypt, India, and Persia, remnants of these earlier and larger Christian communities have survived as tolerated minorities into the present. By contrast, in early Armenia and Ethiopia (Axum), Christianity became the faith of the majority and has continued to express the national identity of peoples long cut off from contact with other Christian societies. (See Document 7.3, pp. 310–12 for the coming of Christianity to Axum in East Africa.) Finally, the early Christian communities of North Africa, Nubia, Central Asia, and western China largely vanished as these regions subsequently embraced alternative religious traditions, such as Islam, Buddhism, or Confucianism. (See Document 10.6, pp. 462–64, on the brief flourishing of Nestorian Christianity in China.) In this chapter, however, the historical spotlight falls on those regions that became the center of the Christian world — Byzantium and Western Europe.

Eastern Christendom: Building on the Roman Past

Unlike most empires, Byzantium has no clear starting point. Its own leaders, as well as its neighbors and enemies, viewed it as simply a continuation of the Roman Empire. Some historians date its beginning to 330 C.E., when the Roman emperor Constantine, who became a Christian during his reign, established a new capital, Constantinople, on the site of an ancient Greek city called Byzantium. At the end of that century, the Roman Empire was formally divided into eastern and western halves, thus launching a division of Christendom that has lasted into the twenty-first century. Although the western Roman Empire collapsed during the fifth century, the eastern half persisted for another thousand years. Housing the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Anatolia, the eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) was far wealthier, more urbanized, and more cosmopolitan than its western counterpart; it possessed a much more defensible capital in the heavily walled city of Constantinople; and it had a shorter frontier to guard. Byzantium also enjoyed access to the Black Sea and command of the eastern Mediterranean. With a stronger army, navy, and merchant marine as well as clever diplomacy, its leaders were able to deflect the Germanic and Hun invaders who had overwhelmed the western Roman Empire.

Much that was late Roman—its roads, taxation system, military structures, centralized administration, imperial court, laws, Christian church—persisted in the east for many centuries. Like Tang dynasty China seeking to restore the glory of the Han era, Byzantium consciously sought to preserve the legacy of classical civilization and the Roman Empire. Constantinople was to be a "New Rome," and Byzantines referred to themselves as "Romans." Fearing contamination by "barbarian" customs, emperors forbade the residents of Constantinople from wearing boots, trousers, clothing made from animal skins, and long hairstyles, all of which were associated with

■ **Continuity and Change**
In what respects did Byzantium continue the patterns of the classical Roman Empire? In what ways did it diverge from those patterns?

Snapshot **Key Moments in Byzantine History**

Founding of Constantinople	330
Final division of Roman Empire into eastern and western halves	ca. 395
Reign of Justinian; attempted reconquest of western empire	527–565
Loss of Syria/Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa to Arab forces	7th century
Iconoclastic controversy	726–843
Conversion of Vladimir, prince of Kiev, to Christianity	988
Mutual excommunication of pope and patriarch	1054
Crusaders sack Constantinople	1204
Ottomans seize Constantinople; end of Byzantine Empire	1453

Germanic peoples, and insisted instead on Roman-style robes and sandals. But much changed as well over the centuries, marking the Byzantine Empire as the home of a distinctive civilization.

The Byzantine State

Perhaps the most obvious change was one of scale, as the Byzantine Empire never approximated the size of its Roman predecessor (see Map 10.1). The western Roman Empire was permanently lost to Byzantium, despite Emperor Justinian's (reigned 527–565) impressive but short-lived attempt to reconquer the Mediterranean basin. The rapid Arab/Islamic expansion in the seventh century resulted in the loss of Syria/Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa. Nonetheless, until roughly 1200, a more compact Byzantine Empire remained a major force in the eastern Mediterranean, controlling Greece, much of the Balkans (southeastern Europe), and Anatolia. A reformed administrative system gave appointed generals civil authority in the empire's

Map 10.1   The Byzantine Empire
The Byzantine Empire reached its greatest extent under Emperor Justinian in the mid-sixth century C.E. It subsequently lost considerable territory to various Christian European powers as well as to Muslim Arab and Turkic invaders.

provinces and allowed them to raise armies from the landowning peasants of the region. From that territorial base, the empire's naval and merchant vessels were active in both the Mediterranean and Black seas.

In its heyday, the Byzantine state was an impressive creation. Political authority remained tightly centralized in Constantinople, where the emperor claimed to govern all creation as God's worldly representative, styling himself the "peer of the Apostles" and the "sole ruler of the world." The imperial court tried to imitate the awesome grandeur of what they thought was God's heavenly court, but in fact it resembled ancient Persian imperial splendor. Aristocrats trained in classical Greek rhetoric and literature took jobs in the administration in order to participate in court ceremonies that maintained their elite status. Parades of these silk-clad administrators added splendor to the imperial court, which also included mechanical lions that roared, birds that sang, and an immense throne that quickly elevated the emperor high above his presumably awestruck visitors. Nonetheless, this centralized state touched only lightly on the lives of most people, as it focused primarily on collecting taxes, maintaining order, and suppressing revolts. "Personal freedom in the provinces was constrained more by neighbors and rival households," concluded one historian, "than by the imperial government."[3]

After 1085, Byzantine territory shrank, owing to incursions by aggressive Western European powers, by Catholic Crusaders, and later by Turkic Muslim invaders. The end came in 1453 when the Turkic Ottoman Empire, then known as the "sword of Islam," finally took Constantinople. One eyewitness to the event wrote a moving lament to his fallen city:

> And the entire city was to be seen in the tents of the [Turkish] camp, the city deserted, lying lifeless, naked, soundless, without either form or beauty. O city, head of all cities, center of the four corners of the world, pride of the Romans, civilizer of the barbarians.... Where is your beauty, O paradise...? Where are the bodies of the Apostle of my Lord...? Where are the relics of the saints, those of the martyrs? Where are the remains of Constantine the Great and the other emperors?... Oh, what a loss![4]

The Byzantine Church and Christian Divergence

Intimately tied to the state was the Church, a relationship that became known as caesaropapism. Unlike Western Europe, where the Roman Catholic Church maintained some degree of independence from political authorities, in Byzantium the emperor assumed something of the role of both "caesar," as head of state, and the pope, as head of the Church. Thus he appointed the patriarch, or leader, of the Orthodox Church; sometimes made decisions about doctrine; called church councils into session; and generally treated the Church as a government department. "The [Empire] and the church have a great unity and community," declared a twelfth-century patriarch. "Indeed they cannot be separated."[5] A dense network of bishops and priests brought the message of the Church to every corner of the empire, while numerous

■ **Comparison**
How did Eastern Orthodox Christianity differ from Roman Catholicism?

monasteries accommodated holy men, whose piety, self-denial, and good works made them highly influential among both elite and ordinary people.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity had a pervasive influence on every aspect of Byzantine life. It legitimated the supreme and absolute rule of the emperor, for he was a God-anointed ruler, a reflection of the glory of God on earth. It also provided a cultural identity for the empire's subjects. Even more than being "Roman," they were orthodox, or "right-thinking," Christians for whom the empire and the Church were equally essential to achieving eternal salvation. Constantinople was filled with churches and the relics of numerous saints. And the churches were filled with icons—religious paintings of Jesus, Mary, and the other saints—some of them artistic masterpieces, that many believed conveyed the divine presence to believers. (For more on icons, see Visual Sources: Reading Byzantine Icons, pp. 466–71.) Complex theological issues about the Trinity and especially about the relationship of God and Jesus engaged the attention of ordinary people. One fourth-century bishop complained: "I wish to know the price of bread; one answers 'The Father is greater than the Son.' I inquire whether my bath is ready; one answers 'The Son has been made out of nothing.'"[6] Partisans of competing chariot-racing teams, known as the Greens and the Blues, vigorously debated theological issues as well as the merits of their favorite drivers.

St. Mark's Basilica
Consecrated in 1094, this ornate cathedral, although located in Venice, Italy, is a classic example of Byzantine architecture. Such churches represented perhaps the greatest achievement of Byzantine art and were certainly the most monumental expressions of Byzantine culture. (Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

In its early centuries and beyond, the Christian movement was rent by theological controversy and political division. Followers of Arius, an Egyptian priest, held that Jesus had been created by God the Father rather than living eternally with Him. Nestorius, the fifth-century bishop of Constantinople, argued that Mary had given birth only to the human Jesus, who then became the "temple" of God. This view, defined as heretical in the western Christian world, predominated in a separate Persian church, which spread its views to India, China, and Arabia.

But the most lasting and deepest division within the Christian world occurred as Eastern Orthodoxy came to define itself against an emerging Latin Christianity centered on papal Rome. Both had derived, of course, from the growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire and therefore had much in common—the teachings of Jesus; the Bible; the sacraments; a church hierarchy of patriarchs, bishops, and priests; a missionary impulse; and intolerance toward other

religions. Despite these shared features, any sense of a single widespread Christian community was increasingly replaced by an awareness of difference, competition, and outright hostility that even a common fear of Islam could not overcome. In part, this growing religious divergence reflected the political separation and rivalry between the Byzantine Empire and the emerging kingdoms of Western Europe. As the growth of Islam in the seventh century (described more fully in Chapter 11) submerged earlier centers of Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa, Constantinople and Rome alone remained as alternative hubs of the Church. But they were now in different states that competed with each other for territory and for the right to claim the legacy of imperial Rome.

Beyond such political differences were those of language and culture. Although Latin remained the language of the Church and of elite communication in the West, it was abandoned in the Byzantine Empire in favor of Greek, which remained the basis for Byzantine education. More than in the West, Byzantine thinkers sought to formulate Christian doctrine in terms of Greek philosophical concepts.

Differences in theology and church practice likewise widened the gulf between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, despite agreement on fundamental doctrines. Disagreements about the nature of the Trinity, the source of the Holy Spirit, original sin, and the relative importance of faith and reason gave rise to much controversy. So too for a time did the Byzantine efforts to prohibit the use of icons, popular paintings of saints and biblical scenes, usually painted on small wooden panels. (See Visual Sources: Reading Byzantine Icons, pp. 466–71.) Other more modest differences also occasioned mutual misunderstanding and disdain. Priests in the West shaved and, after 1050 or so, were supposed to remain celibate, while those in Byzantium allowed their beards to grow long and were permitted to marry. Orthodox ritual called for using bread leavened with yeast in the Communion, but Catholics used unleavened bread. Far more significant was the question of authority. Eastern Orthodox leaders sharply rejected the growing claims of Roman popes to be the sole and final authority for all Christians everywhere.

The rift in the world of Christendom grew gradually from the seventh century on, punctuated by various efforts to bridge the mounting divide between the western and eastern branches of the Church. A sign of this continuing deterioration occurred in 1054 when representatives of both churches mutually excommunicated each other, declaring in effect that those in the opposing tradition were not true Christians. The Crusades, launched in 1095 by the Catholic pope against the forces of Islam, made things worse. Western Crusaders, passing through the Byzantine Empire on their way to the Middle East, engaged in frequent conflict with local people and thus deepened the distrust between them. From the western viewpoint, Orthodox practices were "blasphemous, even heretical." One western observer of the Second Crusade noted that the Greeks "were judged not to be Christians and the Franks [French] considered killing them a matter of no importance."[7] During the Fourth Crusade in 1204, western forces seized and looted Constantinople and ruled Byzantium for the next half century. Their brutality only confirmed Byzantine views of their Roman Catholic despoilers as nothing more than barbarians. According

to one Byzantine account, "they sacked the sacred places and trampled on divine things . . . they tore children from their mothers . . . and they defiled virgins in the holy chapels, fearing neither God's anger nor man's vengeance."[8] After this, the rupture in the world of Christendom proved irreparable.

Byzantium and the World

■ Connection

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

Beyond its tense relationship with Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, located astride Europe and Asia, also interacted intensively with its other neighbors. On a political and military level, Byzantium continued the long-term Roman struggle with the Persian Empire. That persisting conflict weakened both of them and was one factor in the remarkable success of Arab armies as they poured out of Arabia in the seventh century. Although Persia quickly became part of the Islamic world, Byzantium held out, even as it lost considerable territory to the Arabs. A Byzantine military innovation, known as "Greek fire"—a potent and flammable combination of oil, sulfur, and lime that was launched from bronze tubes—helped to hold off the Arabs. It operated something like a flamethrower and subsequently passed into Arab and Chinese arsenals as well. Byzantium's ability to defend its core regions delayed for many centuries the Islamic advance into southeastern Europe, which finally occurred at the hands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Economically, the Byzantine Empire was a central player in the long-distance trade of Eurasia, with commercial links to Western Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Islamic world, and China. Its gold coin, the bezant, was a widely used currency in the Mediterranean basin for more than 500 years, and wearing such coins as pendants was a high-status symbol in the less developed kingdoms of Western Europe.[9] The luxurious products of Byzantine craftspeople—jewelry, gemstones, silver and gold work, linen and woolen textiles, purple dyes—were much in demand. Its silk industry, based on Chinese technology, supplied much of the Mediterranean basin with this precious fabric.

The cultural influence of Byzantium was likewise significant. Preserving much of ancient Greek learning, the Byzantine Empire transmitted this classical heritage to the Islamic world as well as to the Christian West. In both places, it had an immensely stimulating impact among scientists, philosophers, theologians, and other intellectuals. Some saw it as an aid to faith and to an understanding of the world, while others feared it as impious and distracting. (See the section "Reason and Faith" later in this chapter.)

Byzantine religious culture also spread widely among Slavic-speaking peoples in the Balkans and Russia. As lands to the south and the east were overtaken by Islam, Byzantium looked to the north. By the early eleventh century, steady military pressure had brought many of the Balkan Slavic peoples, especially the Bulgars, under Byzantine control. Christianity and literacy accompanied this Byzantine offensive. Already in the ninth century, two Byzantine missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, had

developed an alphabet, based on Greek letters, with which Slavic languages could be written. This Cyrillic script made it possible to translate the Bible and other religious literature into these languages and greatly aided the process of conversion.

The Conversion of Russia

The most significant expansion of Orthodox Christianity occurred among the Slavic peoples of what is now Ukraine and western Russia. In this culturally diverse region, which also included Finnic and Baltic peoples as well as Viking traders, a modest state known as Kievan Rus—named after the most prominent city, Kiev—emerged in the ninth century C.E. Like many of the new third-wave civilizations, the development of Rus was stimulated by trade, in this case along the Dnieper River, linking Scandinavia and Byzantium. Loosely led by various princes, especially the prince of Kiev, Rus was a society of slaves and freemen, privileged people and commoners, dominant men and subordinate women. This stratification marked it as a third-wave civilization in the making (see Map 10.3 on page 439).

> ■ **Connection**
> How did links to Byzantium transform the new civilization of Kievan Rus?

Religion reflected the region's cultural diversity, with the gods and practices of many peoples much in evidence. Ancestral spirits, household deities, and various gods related to the forces of nature were in evidence with Perun, the god of thunder, perhaps the most prominent. Small numbers of Christians, Muslims, and Jews were likewise part of the mix. Then, in the late tenth century, a decisive turning point occurred. The growing interaction of Rus with the larger world prompted Prince Vladimir of Kiev to affiliate with one of the major religions of the area. He was searching for a faith that would unify the diverse peoples of his region, while linking Rus into wider networks of communication and exchange. According to ancient chronicles, he actively considered Judaism, Islam, Roman Catholicism, and Greek Orthodoxy before finally deciding on the religion of Byzantium. He rejected Islam, the chronicles tell us, because it prohibited alcoholic drink and "drinking is the joy of the Russes." The splendor of Constantinople's Orthodox churches apparently captured the imagination of Rus's envoys, for there, they reported, "[W]e knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth."[10] Political and commercial considerations no doubt also played a role in Vladimir's decision, and he acquired a sister of the Byzantine emperor as his bride, along with numerous Byzantine priests and advisers. Whatever the precise process, it was a freely made decision. Eastern Orthodox Christianity thus came to Rus without the pressure of foreign military defeat or occupation. Eventually, it took deep root among the Russian people.

It was a fateful choice with long-term implications for Russian history, for it brought this fledgling civilization firmly into the world of Orthodox Christianity, separating it from both the realm of Islam and the Roman Catholic West. Like many new civilizations, Rus borrowed extensively from its older and more sophisticated neighbor. Among these borrowings were Byzantine architectural styles, the Cyrillic alphabet, the extensive use of icons, a monastic tradition stressing prayer and service, and political ideals of imperial control of the Church, all of which became part of a

transformed Rus. Orthodoxy also provided a more unified identity for this emerging civilization and religious legitimacy for its rulers. Centuries later, when Byzantium had fallen to the Turks, a few Russian church leaders proclaimed the doctrine of a "third Rome." The original Rome had betrayed the faith, and the second Rome, Constantinople, had succumbed to Muslim infidels. Moscow was now the third Rome, the final protector and defender of Orthodox Christianity. Though not widely proclaimed in Russia itself, such a notion reflected the "Russification" of Eastern Orthodoxy and its growing role as an element of Russian national identity. It was also a reminder of the enduring legacy of a thousand years of Byzantine history, long after the empire itself had vanished.

Western Christendom: Rebuilding in the Wake of Roman Collapse

The western half of the Christian world followed a rather different path than that of the Byzantine Empire. For much of the postclassical millennium, it was distinctly on the margins of world history, partly because of its geographic location at the far western end of the Eurasian landmass. Thus it was far removed from the growing routes of world trade—by sea in the Indian Ocean and by land across the Silk Roads to China and the Sand Roads to West Africa. Not until the Eastern and Western hemispheres were joined after 1500 did Western Europe occupy a geo-graphically central position in the global network. Internally, Europe's geography made political unity difficult. It was a region in which population centers were divided by mountain ranges and dense forests as well as by five major peninsulas

Snapshot   **Key Moments in the Evolution of Western Civilization**

End of the western Roman Empire	476
Papacy of Gregory I	590–604
Muslim conquest of Spain	711
Charlemagne crowned as emperor	800
Otto I crowned as Holy Roman Emperor	962
Viking colony in Newfoundland	1000
Investiture conflict	1059–1152
Crusades begin	1095
Translations of Greek and Arab works available in Europe	12th–13th centuries
Thomas Aquinas	1225–1274
Marco Polo visits China	1271–1295

and two large islands (Britain and Ireland). However, its extensive coastlines and interior river systems facilitated exchange within Europe, while a moderate climate, plentiful rainfall, and fertile soils enabled a productive agriculture that could support a growing population.

Political Life in Western Europe, 500–1000

In the early centuries of the postclassical era, history must have seemed more significant than geography, for the Roman Empire, long a fixture of the western Mediterranean region, had collapsed. The traditional date marking the fall of Rome is 476, when the German general Odoacer overthrew the last Roman emperor in the West. In itself not very important, this event has come to symbolize a major turning point in the West, for much that had characterized Roman civilization also weakened, declined, or disappeared in the several centuries before and after 476. Any semblance of large-scale centralized rule vanished. Disease and warfare reduced Western Europe's population by more than 25 percent. Land under cultivation contracted, while forests, marshland, and wasteland expanded. Urban life too diminished sharply, as Europe reverted to a largely rural existence. Rome at its height was a city of 1 million people, but by the tenth century it numbered perhaps 10,000. Public buildings crumbled from lack of care. Outside Italy, long-distance trade dried up as Roman roads deteriorated, and money exchange gave way to barter in many places. Literacy lost ground as well. Germanic peoples, whom the Romans had viewed as barbarians—Goths, Visigoths, Franks, Lombards, Angles, Saxons—now emerged as the dominant peoples of Western Europe. In the process, Europe's center of gravity moved away from the Mediterranean toward the north and west.

■ **Comparison**
How did the historical development of the European West differ from that of Byzantium in the postclassical era?

Yet much that was classical or Roman persisted, even as a new order emerged in Europe. On the political front, a series of regional kingdoms—led by Visigoths in Spain, Franks in France, Lombards in Italy, and Angles and Saxons in England—arose to replace Roman authority, but many of these Germanic peoples, originally organized in small kinship-based tribes with strong warrior values, had already been substantially Romanized. Contact with the Roman Empire in the first several centuries C.E. had generated more distinct ethnic identities among them, militarized their societies, and gave greater prominence to Woden, their god of war. As Germanic peoples migrated into or invaded Roman lands, many were deeply influenced by Roman culture, especially if they served in the Roman army. On the funeral monument of one such person was the telling inscription: "I am a Frank by nationality, but a Roman soldier under arms."[11]

■ **Change**
What replaced the Roman order in Western Europe?

The prestige of things Roman remained high, even after the empire itself had collapsed. Now as leaders of their own kingdoms, the Germanic rulers actively embraced written Roman law, using fines and penalties to provide order and justice in their new states in place of feuds and vendettas. One Visigoth ruler named Athaulf (reigned 410–415), who had married a Roman noblewoman, gave voice to the continuing attraction of Roman culture and its empire.

At first I wanted to erase the Roman name and convert all Roman territory into a Gothic empire. . . . But long experience has taught me that . . . without law a state is not a state. Therefore I have more prudently chosen the different glory of reviving the Roman name with Gothic vigour, and I hope to be acknowledged by posterity as the initiator of a Roman restoration.[12]

Several of the larger, though relatively short-lived, Germanic kingdoms also had aspirations to re-create something of the unity of the Roman Empire. Charlemagne (reigned 768–814), ruler of the Carolingian Empire, occupying what is now France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and parts of Germany and Italy, erected an embryonic imperial bureaucracy, standardized weights and measures, and began to act like an imperial ruler (see Document 10.3, pp. 458–60). On Christmas Day of the year 800, he was crowned as a new Roman emperor by the pope, although his realm splintered shortly after his death (see Map 10.2). Later Otto I of Saxony (reigned 936–973) gathered much of Germany under his control, saw himself as renewing Roman rule, and was likewise invested with the title of emperor by the pope. Otto's realm, subsequently known as the Holy Roman Empire, was largely limited to Germany and soon proved little more than a collection of quarreling principalities. Though unsuccessful in reviving anything approaching Roman imperial authority, these efforts testify to the continuing appeal of the classical world, even as a new political system of rival kingdoms blended Roman and Germanic elements.

Map 10.2 Western Europe in the Ninth Century Charlemagne's Carolingian Empire brought a temporary unity to parts of Western Europe, but it was subsequently divided among his three sons, who waged war on one another.

The Carolingian Empire in the Ninth Century C.E.
- Kingdom of Charles the Bald
- Kingdom of Louis the German
- Kingdom of Lothar
- Charlemagne's territory

Society and the Church, 500–1000

Within these new kingdoms, a highly fragmented and decentralized society widely known as feudalism emerged with great local variation. In thousands of independent, self-sufficient, and largely isolated landed estates or manors, power—political, economic, and social—was exercised by a warrior elite of landowning lords. In the constant competition of these centuries, lesser lords and knights swore allegiance to greater lords or kings and thus became their vassals, frequently receiving lands and plunder in return for military service.

Such reciprocal ties between superior and subordinate were also apparent at the bottom of the social hierarchy, as Roman-style slavery gradually gave way to serfdom. Unlike slaves, serfs were not the personal property of their masters, could not be arbitrarily thrown off their land, and were allowed to live in families. However, they were bound to their masters' estates as peasant laborers and owed various payments and services to the lord of the manor. One family on a manor near Paris in the ninth century owed four silver coins, wine, wood, three hens, and fifteen eggs per year. Women generally were required to weave cloth and make clothing for the lord, while men labored in the lord's fields. In return, the serf family received a small farm and such protection as the lord could provide. In a violent and insecure world adjusting to the absence of Roman authority, the only security available to many individuals or families lay in these communities, where the ties to kin, manor, and lord constituted the primary human loyalties. It was a world apart from the stability of life in imperial Rome or its continuation in Byzantium.

Also filling the vacuum left by the collapse of empire was the Church, later known as Roman Catholic, yet another link to the now defunct Roman world. Its hierarchical organization of popes, bishops, priests, and monasteries was modeled on that of the Roman Empire and took over some of its political, administrative, educational, and welfare functions. Latin continued as the language of the Church even as it gave way to various vernacular languages in common speech. In fact literacy in the classical languages of Greek and Latin remained the hallmark of educated people in the West well into the twentieth century.

Like the Buddhist establishment in China, the Church subsequently became extremely wealthy, with reformers often accusing it of forgetting its central spiritual mission. It also provided a springboard for the conversion of Europe's many "pagan" peoples. Numerous missionaries, commissioned by the pope, monasteries, or already converted rulers, fanned out across Europe, generally pursuing a "top-down" strategy. Frequently it worked, as local kings and warlords found status and legitimacy in association with a literate and "civilized" religion that still bore something of the grandeur of Rome. With "the wealth and protection of the powerful," ordinary people followed their rulers into the fold of the Church.[13] This process was similar to Buddhism's appeal for the nomadic rulers of northern and western China following the collapse of the Han dynasty. Christianity, like Buddhism, also bore the promise of superior supernatural powers, and its spread was frequently associated with reported miracles of healing, rainfall, fertility, and victory in battle.

But it was not an easy sell. Outright coercion was sometimes part of the process, as Document 10.3 (pp. 458–60) clearly shows. More often, however, softer methods prevailed. The Church proved willing to accommodate a considerable range of earlier cultural practices, absorbing them into an emerging Christian tradition. For example, amulets and charms to ward off evil became medals with the image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary, traditionally sacred wells and springs became the sites of churches, and festivals honoring ancient gods became Christian holy days. December 25 was selected as the birthday of Jesus, for it was associated with the

winter solstice, the coming of more light, and the birth or rebirth of various deities in pre-Christian European traditions. By 1100, most of Europe had embraced Christianity. Even so, priests and bishops had to warn their congregations against the worship of rivers, trees, and mountains, and for many people, ancient gods, monsters, trolls, and spirits still inhabited the land. The spreading Christian faith, like the new political framework of European civilization, was a blend of many elements. (For more on the rooting of Christianity in Western Europe, see Documents 10.1–10.5, pp. 455–61.)

Church authorities and the nobles/warriors who exercised political influence reinforced each other. Rulers provided protection for the papacy and strong encouragement for the faith. In return, the Church offered religious legitimacy for the powerful and the prosperous. "It is the will of the Creator," declared the teaching of the Church, "that the higher shall always rule over the lower. Each individual and class should stay in its place [and] perform its tasks."[14] But Church and nobility competed as well as cooperated, for they were rival centers of power in post-Roman Europe. Particularly controversial was the right to appoint bishops and the pope himself; this issue, known as the investiture conflict, was especially prominent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Was the right to make appointments the responsibility of the Church alone, or did kings and emperors also have a role? In the compromise that ended the conflict, the Church won the right to appoint its own officials, while secular rulers retained an informal and symbolic role in the process.

Accelerating Change in the West, 1000–1300

The pace of change in this emerging civilization picked up considerably in the several centuries after 1000. For the preceding 300 years, Europe had been subject to repeated invasions from every direction. Muslim armies had conquered Spain and threatened the rest of Europe. Magyar (Hungarian) invasions from the east and Viking incursions from the north likewise disrupted and threatened post-Roman Europe (see Map 10.3). But by the year 1000, these invasions had been checked and the invaders absorbed into settled society. The greater security and stability that came with relative peace arguably opened the way to an accelerating tempo of change. The climate also seemed to cooperate. A generally warming trend after 750 reached its peak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, enhancing agricultural production.

■ **Change**
In what ways was European civilization changing after 1000?

Whatever may have launched this new phase of European civilization, commonly called the High Middle Ages (1000–1300), the signs of expansion and growth were widely evident. The population of Europe grew from perhaps 35 million in 1000 to about 80 million in 1340. With more people, many new lands were opened for cultivation in a process paralleling that of China's expansion to the south at the same time. Great lords, bishops, and religious orders organized new villages on what had recently been forest or wasteland. Marshes were drained; land was reclaimed from the sea in the Netherlands; everywhere trees were felled. By 1300, the forest cover of Europe had been reduced to about 20 percent of the land area. "I believe

Map 10.3   Europe in the High Middle Ages
By the eleventh century, the national monarchies—of France, Spain, England, Poland, and Germany—that would organize European political life had begun to take shape. The earlier external attacks on Europe from Vikings, Magyars, and Muslims had largely ceased, although it was clear that European civilization was developing in the shadow of the Islamic world.

that the forest . . . covers the land to no purpose," declared a German abbot, "and hold this to be an unbearable harm."[15]

The increased production associated with this agricultural expansion stimulated a considerable growth in long-distance trade, much of which had dried up in the aftermath of the Roman collapse. One center of commercial activity lay in Northern

Europe from England to the Baltic coast and involved the exchange of wood, bees-wax, furs, rye, wheat, salt, cloth, and wine. The other major trading network centered on northern Italian towns such as Florence, Genoa, and Venice. Their trading part-ners were the more established civilizations of Islam and Byzantium, and the pri-mary objects of trade included the silks, drugs, precious stones, and spices from Asia. At great trading fairs, particularly those in the Champagne area of France near Paris, merchants from Northern and Southern Europe met to exchange the products of their respective areas, such as northern woolens for Mediterranean spices. Thus the self-sufficient communities of earlier centuries increasingly forged commercial bonds among themselves and with more distant peoples.

The population of towns and cities likewise grew on the sites of older Roman towns, at trading crossroads and fortifications, and around cathedrals all over Europe. Some had only a few hundred people, but others became much larger. In the early 1300s, London had about 40,000 people, Paris had approximately 80,000, and Venice by the end of the fourteenth century could boast perhaps 150,000. To keep these figures in perspective, Constantinople housed some 400,000 people in 1000, Córdoba in Muslim Spain about 500,000, the Song dynasty capital of Hangzhou more than 1 million in the thirteenth century, and the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán perhaps 200,000 by 1500. Nonetheless, urbanization was proceeding apace in Europe. These towns gave rise to and attracted new groups of people, particularly merchants, bankers, artisans, and university-trained professionals such as lawyers, doctors, and scholars. Many of these groups, including university professors and students, orga-nized themselves into guilds (associations of people pursuing the same line of work) in order to regulate their respective professions. In doing so, they introduced a new and more productive division of labor into European society.

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, economic growth and urban-ization offered European women substantial new opportunities. Women were active in a number of urban professions, such as weaving, brewing, milling grain, mid-wifery, small-scale retailing, laundering, spinning, and prostitution. In twelfth-century Paris, for example, a list of 100 occupations identified 86 as involving women work-ers, of which 6 were exclusively female. In England, women worked as silk weavers, hatmakers, tailors, brewers, and leather processors and were entitled to train female apprentices in some of these trades. In Frankfurt, about one-third of the crafts and trades were entirely female, another 40 percent were dominated by men, and the rest were open to both. Widows of great merchants sometimes continued their hus-bands' businesses, and one of them, Rose Burford, lent a large sum of money to the king of England to finance a war against Scotland in 1318.

By the fifteenth century, such opportunities were declining. Most women's guilds were gone, and women were restricted or banned from many others. Even brothels were run by men. Technological progress may have been one reason for this change. Water- and animal-powered grain mills replaced the hand-grinding previ-ously undertaken by women, and larger looms making heavier cloth replaced the

European Women at Work
This manuscript painting from the Middle Ages shows women and men cooperating in the baking of bread, long a staple of European diets. (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

lighter looms that women had worked. Men increasingly took over these profes-sions and trained their sons as apprentices, making it more difficult for women to remain active in these fields.

If urban work roles were diminishing for women, religious life provided other possibilities. As in Buddhist lands, substantial numbers of women, particularly from aristocratic families, were attracted to the secluded life of poverty, chastity, and obedience within a nunnery for the relative freedom from male control that it offered. Here was one of the few places where some women could exercise authority and obtain a measure of education. Operating outside of monastic life, the Beguines were groups of laywomen, often from poorer families in Northern Europe, who lived together, practiced celibacy, and devoted themselves to weav-ing and to working with the sick, the old, and the poor. Another religious role was that of anchoress, a woman who withdrew to a locked cell, usually attached to a church, where she devoted herself to prayer and fasting. Some of them gained reputations for great holiness and were much sought after for spiritual guidance. For a few women—the nun Hildegard of Bingen and the anchoress Julian of Norwich, for example—religious life brought considerable public prominence and spiritual influence.

A further sign of accelerating change in the West lay in the growth of territo-rial states with more effective institutions of government commanding the loyalty, or at least the obedience, of their subjects. Since the disintegration of the Roman Empire, Europeans' loyalties had focused on the family, the manor, or the religious community, but seldom on the state. Great lords may have been recognized as kings, but their authority was extremely limited and was exercised through a complex and decentralized network of feudal relationships with earls, counts, barons, and knights, who often felt little obligation to do the king's bidding. But in the eleventh through

the thirteenth century, the nominal monarchs of Europe gradually and painfully began to consolidate their authority, and the outlines of French, English, Spanish, Scandinavian, and other states began to appear, each with its own distinct language and culture (see Map 10.3). Royal courts and embryonic bureaucracies were established, and groups of professional administrators appeared. Territorial kingdoms were not universal, however. In Italy, city-states flourished as urban areas grew wealthy and powerful, whereas the Germans remained loyal to a large number of small principalities within the Holy Roman Empire.

Europe Outward Bound: The Crusading Tradition

■ Change
What was the impact of the Crusades in world history?

Accompanying the growth of European civilization after 1000 were efforts to engage more actively with both near and more distant neighbors. This "medieval expansion" of Western Christendom took place as the Byzantine world was contracting under pressure from the West, from Arab invasion, and later from Turkish conquest. The western half of Christendom was on the rise, while the eastern part was in decline. It was a sharp reversal of their earlier trajectories.

Expansion, of course, has been characteristic of virtually every civilization and has taken a variety of forms—territorial conquest, empire building, settlement of new lands, vigorous trading initiatives, and missionary activity. European civilization was no exception. As population mounted, settlers cleared new land, much of it on the eastern fringes of Europe. The Vikings of Scandinavia, having raided much of Europe, set off on a maritime transatlantic venture around 1000 that briefly established a colony in Newfoundland in North America, and more durably in Greenland and Iceland. As Western economies grew, merchants, travelers, diplomats, and missionaries brought European society into more intensive contact with more distant peoples and with Eurasian commercial networks. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Europeans had direct, though limited, contact with India, China, and Mongolia. Europe clearly was outward bound.

Nothing more dramatically revealed European expansiveness and the religious passions that informed it than the Crusades, a series of "holy wars" that captured the imagination of Western Christendom for more than four centuries, beginning in 1095. In European thinking and practice, the Crusades were wars undertaken at God's command and authorized by the pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth. They required participants to swear a vow and in return offered an indulgence, which removed the penalties for any confessed sins, as well as various material benefits, such as immunity from lawsuits and a moratorium on the repayment of debts. Any number of political, economic, and social motives underlay the Crusades, but at their core they were religious wars. Within Europe, the amazing support for the Crusades reflected an understanding of them "as providing security against mortal enemies threatening the spiritual health of all Christendom and all Christians."[16] Crusading drew upon both Christian piety and the warrior values of the elite, with little sense of contradiction between these impulses.

The most famous Crusades were those aimed at wresting Jerusalem and the holy places associated with the life of Jesus from Islamic control and returning them to Christendom (see Map 10.4). Beginning in 1095, wave after wave of Crusaders from all walks of life and many countries flocked to the eastern Mediterranean, where they temporarily carved out four small Christian states, the last of which was recaptured by Muslim forces in 1291. Led or supported by an assortment of kings, popes, bishops, monks, lords, nobles, and merchants, the Crusades demonstrated a growing European capacity for organization, finance, transportation, and recruitment, made all the more impressive by the absence of any centralized direction for the project. They also demonstrated considerable cruelty. The seizure of Jerusalem in 1099 was accompanied by the slaughter of many Muslims and Jews as the Crusaders made their way, according to perhaps exaggerated reports, through streets littered with corpses and ankle deep in blood to the tomb of Christ.

Map 10.4   The Crusades
Western Europe's crusading tradition reflected the expansive energy and religious impulses of an emerging civilization. It was directed against Muslims in the Middle East, Sicily, and Spain as well as the Eastern Orthodox Christians of the Byzantine Empire. The Crusades also involved attacks on Jewish communities, probably the first organized mass pogroms against Jews in Europe's history.
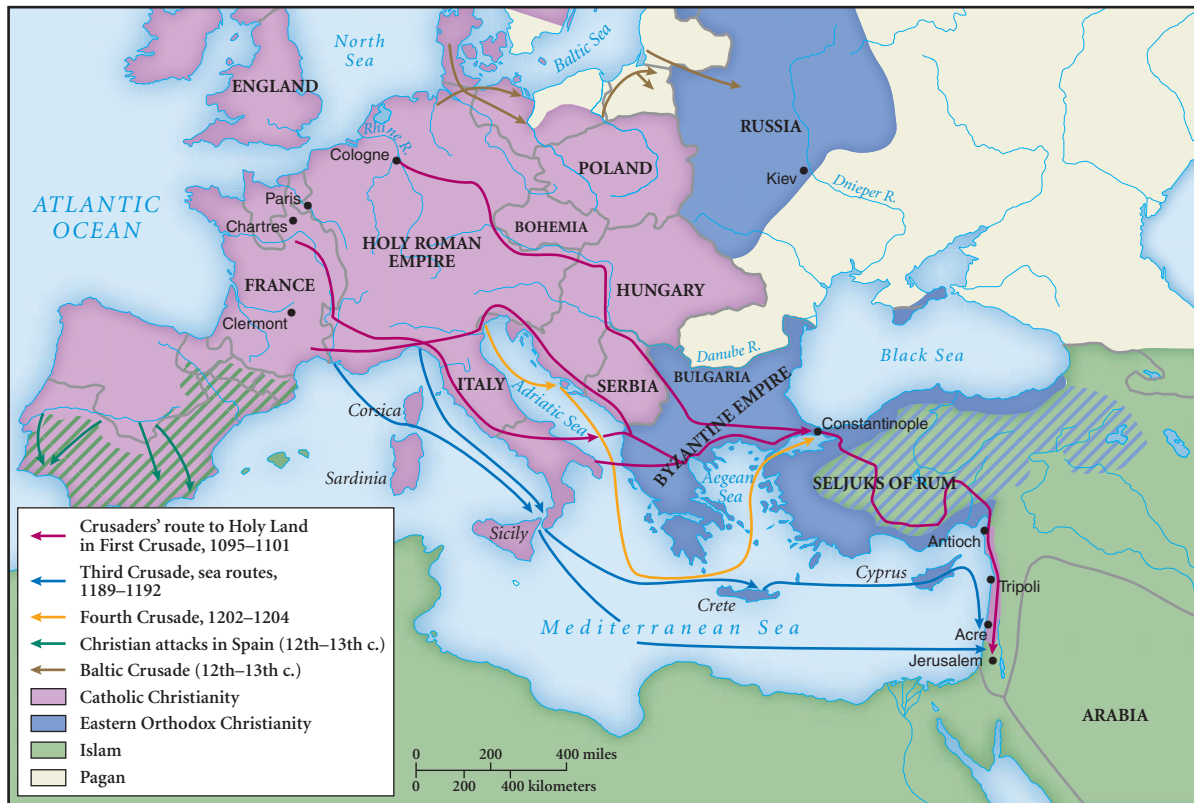
Christians and Muslims
This fourteenth-century painting illustrates the Christian seizure of Jerusalem during the First Crusade in 1099. The crowned figure in the center is Godefroi de Bouillon, a French knight and nobleman who played a prominent role in the attack and was briefly known as the king of Jerusalem. (Snark/Art Resource, NY)

Crusading was not limited to targets in the Islamic Middle East, however. Those Christians who waged war for centuries to reclaim the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim hands were likewise declared "crusaders," with a similar set of spiritual and material benefits. So too were Scandinavian and German warriors who took part in wars to conquer, settle, and convert lands along the Baltic Sea. The Byzantine Empire and Russia, both of which followed Eastern Orthodox Christianity, were also on the receiving end of Western crusading, as were Christian heretics and various enemies of the pope in Europe itself. Crusading, in short, was a pervasive feature of European expansion, which persisted as Europeans began their oceanic voyages in the fifteenth century and beyond.

Surprisingly perhaps, the Crusades had little lasting impact, either politically or religiously, in the Middle East. European power was not sufficiently strong or long-lasting to induce much conversion, and the small European footholds there had come under Muslim control by 1300. The penetration of Turkic-speaking peoples from Central Asia and the devastating Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century were far more significant in Islamic history than were the temporary incursions of European Christians. In fact, Muslims largely forgot about the Crusades until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when their memory was revived in the context of a growing struggle against European imperialism.

In Europe, however, interaction with the Islamic world had very significant long-term consequences. Spain, Sicily, and the Baltic region were brought permanently into the world of Western Christendom, while a declining Byzantium was further weakened by the Crusader sacking of Constantinople in 1204 and left even more vulnerable to Turkish conquest. In Europe itself, popes strengthened their position, at least for a time, in their continuing struggles with secular authorities. Tens of thousands of Europeans came into personal contact with the Islamic world, from which they picked up a taste for the many luxury goods available there, stimulating a demand for Asian goods. They also learned techniques for producing sugar on large plantations using slave labor, a process that had incalculable consequences in later centuries as Europeans transferred the plantation system to the Americas. Muslim scholarship, together with the Greek learning that it incorporated, also flowed into Europe, largely through Spain and Sicily.

If the cross-cultural contacts born of crusading opened channels of trade, technology transfer, and intellectual exchange, they also hardened cultural barriers between peoples. The rift between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism deepened further and remains to this day a fundamental divide in the Christian world. Christian anti-Semitism was both expressed and exacerbated as Crusaders on their way to Jerusalem found time to massacre Jews in a number of European cities. European empire building, especially in the Americas, continued the crusading notion that "God wills it." And more recently, over the past two centuries, as the world of the Christian West and that of Islam collided, both sides found many occasions in which images of the Crusades, however distorted, proved politically or ideologically useful.[17]

The West in Comparative Perspective

At one level, the making of Western civilization in the postclassical era was unremarkable. Civilizations had risen, fallen, renewed themselves, and evolved at many times and in many places. The European case has received extraordinary scrutiny, not so much because of its special significance at the time, but because of its later role as a globally dominant region. Historians have sometimes sought to account for Western Europe's global influence after 1500 in terms of some unique feature of its earlier history. However we might explain Europe's later rise to prominence on the world stage, its development in the several centuries after 1000 made only modest ripples beyond its own region. In some respects, Europe was surely distinctive, but it was not yet a major player in the global arena. Comparisons, particularly with China, help to place European developments in a world history context.

Catching Up

As the civilization of the West evolved, it was clearly less developed in comparison to Byzantium, China, India, and the Islamic world. European cities were smaller, its political authorities weaker, its economy less commercialized, its technology inferior to the more established civilizations. Muslim observers who encountered Europeans saw them as barbarians. An Arab geographer of the tenth century commented as follows: "Their bodies are large, their manners harsh, their understanding dull, and their tongues heavy. . . . Those of them who are farthest to the north are the most subject to stupidity, grossness and brutishness."[18] Muslim travelers over the next several centuries saw more to be praised in West African kingdoms, where Islam was practiced and gold was plentiful.

Furthermore, thoughtful Europeans who directly encountered other peoples often acknowledged their own comparative backwardness. "In our time," wrote a twelfth-century European scholar, "it is in Toledo [a Spanish city long under Muslim rule] that the teaching of the Arabs . . . is offered to the crowds. I hastened there to

listen to the teaching of the wisest philosophers of this world."[19] The Italian traveler Marco Polo in the thirteenth century proclaimed Hangzhou in China "the finest and noblest [city] in the world." In the sixteenth century, Spanish invaders of Mexico were stunned at the size and wealth of the Aztec capital, especially its huge market, claiming that "we had never seen such a thing before."[20]

■ **Change**

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

Curious about the rest of the world, Europeans proved quite willing to engage with and borrow from the more advanced civilizations to the east. Growing European economies, especially in the northwest, reconnected with the Eurasian trading system, with which they had lost contact after the fall of Rome. Now European elites eagerly sought spices, silks, porcelain, sugar, and much else that was available on the world market. Despite their belief in Christianity as the "one true religion," Europeans embraced scientific treatises and business practices from the Arabs, philosophical and artistic ideas from the pagan Greeks, and mathematical concepts from India. It was China, however, that was the most significant source of European borrowing, although often indirectly. From that East Asian civilization, Europeans learned about the compass, papermaking, gunpowder, nautical technology, iron casting, a public postal service, and more. When the road to China opened in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, many Europeans, including the merchant-traveler Marco Polo, were more than willing to make the long and difficult journey, returning with amazing tales of splendor and abundance far beyond what was available in Europe. When Europeans took to the oceans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were seeking out the sources of African and Asian wealth. Thus the accelerating growth of European civilization was accompanied by its reintegration into the larger Afro-Eurasian networks of exchange and communication.

In this willingness to borrow, Europe resembled several other third-wave civilizations of the time. Japan, for example, took much from China; West Africa drew heavily on Islamic civilization; and Russia actively imitated Byzantium. All of them were then developing civilizations, in a position similar to the developing countries of the third world in the twentieth century. The whole process was then rather less deliberate and self-conscious than it became in the last century.

Technological borrowing required adaptation to the unique conditions of Europe and was accompanied by considerable independent invention as well. Together these processes generated a significant tradition of technological innovation that allowed Europe by 1500 to catch up with, and in some areas perhaps to surpass, China and the Islamic world. That achievement bears comparison with the economic revolution of Tang and Song dynasty China, although Europe began at a lower level and depended more on borrowing than did its Chinese counterpart (see Chapter 9). But in the several centuries surrounding 1000 at both ends of Eurasia, major processes of technological innovation were under way.

In Europe, technological breakthroughs first became apparent in agriculture as Europeans adapted to the very different environmental conditions north of the Alps in the several centuries following 500 C.E. They developed a heavy wheeled plow that could handle the dense soils of Northern Europe far better than the light or

"scratch" plow used in Mediterranean agriculture. To pull the plow, Europeans began to rely increasingly on horses rather than oxen and to use iron horseshoes and a more efficient collar, which probably originated in China or Central Asia and could support much heavier loads. In addition, Europeans developed a new three-field system of crop rotation, which allowed considerably more land to be planted at any one time. These were the technological foundations for a more productive agriculture that could support the growing population of European civilization, and especially its urban centers, far more securely than before.

Beyond agriculture, Europeans began to tap nonanimal sources of energy in a major way, particularly after 1000. A new type of windmill, very different from an earlier Persian version, was widely used in Europe by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The water-driven mill was even more important. The Romans had used such mills largely to grind grain, but their development was limited, given that few streams flowed all year and many slaves were available to do the work. By the ninth century, however, water mills were rapidly becoming more evident in Europe. In the early fourteenth century, a concentration of sixty-eight mills dotted a one-mile stretch of the Seine River near Paris. In addition to grinding grain, these mills provided power for sieving flour, tanning hides, making beer, sawing wood, manufacturing iron, and making paper. Devices such as cranks, flywheels, camshafts, and complex gearing

European Technology
Europeans' fascination with technology and their religious motivation for investigating the world are apparent in this thirteenth-century portrayal of God as a divine engineer, laying out the world with a huge compass. (Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

mechanisms, when combined with water or wind power, enabled Europeans of the High Middle Ages to revolutionize production in a number of industries and to break with the ancient tradition of depending almost wholly on animal or human muscle as sources of energy. So intense was the interest of European artisans and engineers in tapping mechanical sources of energy that a number of them experimented with perpetual-motion machines, an idea borrowed from Indian philosophers.

Technological borrowing also was evident in the arts of war. Gunpowder was invented in China, but Europeans were probably the first to use it in cannons, in the early fourteenth century, and by 1500 they had the most advanced arsenals in the world. In 1517, one Chinese official, upon first encountering European ships and weapons, remarked with surprise, "The westerns are extremely dangerous because of their artillery. No weapon ever made since memorable antiquity is superior to their cannon."[21] Advances in shipbuilding and navigational techniques—including the magnetic compass and sternpost rudder from China and adaptations of the Mediterranean or Arab lateen sail, which enabled

vessels to sail against the wind—provided the foundation for European mastery of the seas.

Europe's passion for technology was reflected in its culture and ideas as well as in its machines. About 1260, the English scholar and Franciscan friar Roger Bacon wrote of the possibilities he foresaw, and in doing so, he expressed the confident spirit of the age:

> Machines of navigation can be constructed, without rowers . . . which are borne under the guidance of one man at a greater speed than if they were full of men. Also a chariot can be constructed, that will move with incalculable speed without any draught animal. . . . Also flying machines may be constructed so that a man may sit in the midst of the machine turning a certain instrument by means of which wings artificially constructed would beat the air after the manner of a bird flying . . . and there are countless other things that can be constructed.[22]

Pluralism in Politics

■ **Comparison**

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

Unlike the large centralized states of Byzantium, the Islamic world, and China, post-Roman European civilization never regained the unity it had under Roman rule. Rather, political life gradually crystallized into a system of competing states (France, Spain, England, Sweden, Prussia, the Netherlands, and Poland, among others) that has persisted into the twenty-first century and that the European Union still confronts. Geographic barriers, ethnic and linguistic diversity, and the shifting balances of power among its many states prevented the emergence of a single European empire, despite periodic efforts to re-create something resembling the still-remembered unity of the Roman Empire.

This multicentered political system shaped the emerging civilization of the West in many ways. It gave rise to frequent wars, enhanced the role and status of military men, and drove the "gunpowder revolution." Thus European society and values were militarized far more than in China, which gave greater prominence to scholars and bureaucrats. Intense interstate rivalry, combined with a willingness to borrow, also stimulated European technological development. By 1500, Europeans had gone a long way toward catching up with their more advanced Asian counterparts in agriculture, industry, war, and sailing.

But endemic warfare did not halt European economic growth. Capital, labor, and goods found their way around political barriers, while the common assumptions of Christian culture and the use of Latin and later French by the literate elite fostered communication across political borders. Europe's multistate system thus provided enough competition to be stimulating but also sufficient order and unity to allow economic endeavors to prosper.

The states within this emerging European civilization also differed from those to the east. Their rulers generally were weaker and had to contend with competing sources of power. Unlike the Orthodox Church in Byzantium, with its practice

of caesaropapism, the Roman Catholic Church in the West maintained a degree of independence from state authority that served to check the power of kings and lords. European vassals had certain rights in return for loyalty to their lords and kings. By the thirteenth century, this meant that high-ranking nobles, acting through formal councils, had the right to advise their rulers and to approve new taxes.

This three-way struggle for power among kings, warrior aristocrats, and church leaders, all of them from the nobility, enabled urban-based merchants in Europe to achieve an unusual independence from political authority. Many cities, where wealthy merchants exercised local power, won the right to make and enforce their own laws and appoint their own officials. Some of them—Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Milan, for example—became almost completely independent city-states. In the case of other cities, kings granted charters that allowed them to have their own courts, laws, and governments, while paying their own kind of taxes to the king instead of feudal dues. Powerful, independent cities were a distinctive feature of European life after 1100 or so. By contrast, Chinese cities, which were far larger than those of Europe, were simply part of the empire and enjoyed few special privileges. Although commerce was far more extensive in China than in an emerging European civilization, the powerful Chinese state favored the landowners over merchants, monopolized the salt and iron industries, and actively controlled and limited merchant activity far more than the new and weaker royal authorities of Europe were able to do.

The relative weakness of Europe's rulers allowed urban merchants more leeway and, according to some historians, paved the way to a more thorough development of capitalism in later centuries. It also led to the development of representative institutions or parliaments through which the views and interests of these contending forces could be expressed and accommodated. Intended to strengthen royal authority by consulting with major social groups, these embryonic parliaments did not represent the "people" or the "nation" but instead embodied the three great "estates of the realm"—the clergy (the first estate), the landowning nobility (the second estate), and urban merchants (the third estate).

Reason and Faith

A further feature of this emerging European civilization was a distinctive intellectual tension between the claims of human reason and those of faith. Christianity, of course, had developed in a classical world suffused with Greek rationalism. Some early Christian thinkers sought to maintain a clear separation between the new religion and the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" asked Tertullian (150–225 C.E.), an early church leader from North Africa. More common, however, was the notion that Greek philosophy could serve as a "handmaiden" to faith, more fully disclosing the truths of Christianity. In the reduced circumstances of Western Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire,

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

European University Life in the Middle Ages
This fourteenth-century manuscript painting shows a classroom scene from the University of Bologna in Italy. Note the sleeping and disruptive students. Some things apparently never change. (Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY)

the Church had little direct access to the writings of the Greeks, although some Latin translations and commentaries provided a continuing link to the world of classical thought.

But intellectual life in Europe changed dramatically in the several centuries after 1000, amid a rising population, a quickening commercial life, emerging towns and cities, and the Church's growing independence from royal or noble authorities. Moreover, the West was developing a legal system that guaranteed a measure of independence for a variety of institutions—towns and cities, guilds, professional associations, and especially universities. An outgrowth of earlier cathedral schools, these European universities—in Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, Salamanca—became "zones of intellectual autonomy" in which scholars could pursue their studies with some freedom from the dictates of religious or political authorities, although that freedom was never complete and was frequently contested.[23]

This was the setting in which European Christian thinkers, a small group of literate churchmen, began to emphasize, quite self-consciously, the ability of human reason to penetrate divine mysteries and to grasp the operation of the natural order. An early indication of this new emphasis occurred in the late eleventh century when students in a monastic school in France asked their teacher, Anselm, to provide them a proof for the existence of God based solely on reason, without using the Bible or other sources of divine revelation.

The new interest in rational thought was applied first and foremost to theology, the "queen of the sciences" to European thinkers. Here was an effort to provide a rational foundation for faith, not to replace faith or to rebel against it. Logic, philosophy, and rationality would operate in service to Christ. Of course, some people opposed this new emphasis on human reason. Bernard of Clairvaux, a twelfth-century French abbot, declared, "Faith believes. It does not dispute."[24] His contemporary and intellectual opponent, the French scholar William of Conches, lashed out: "You poor fools. God can make a cow out of a tree, but has he ever done so? Therefore show some reason why a thing is so or cease to hold that it is so."[25]

European intellectuals also applied their newly discovered confidence in human reason to law, medicine, and the world of nature, exploring optics, magnetism, astronomy, and alchemy. Slowly and never completely, the scientific study of nature, known as "natural philosophy," began to separate itself from theology. In European univer-

sities, natural philosophy was studied in the faculty of arts, which was separate from the faculty of theology, although many scholars contributed to both fields.

This mounting enthusiasm for rational inquiry stimulated European scholars to seek out original Greek texts, particularly those of Aristotle. They found them in the Greek-speaking world of Byzantium and in the Arab world, where they had long ago been translated into Arabic. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an explosion of translations from Greek and Arabic into Latin gave European scholars direct access to the works of ancient Greeks and to the remarkable results of Arab scholarship in astronomy, optics, medicine, pharmacology, and more. Much of this Arab science was now translated into Latin and provided a boost to Europe's changing intellectual life, centered in the new universities. One of these translators, Adelard of Bath (1080–1142), remarked that he had learned, "under the guidance of reason from Arabic teachers," not to trust established authority.[26]

It was the works of the prolific Aristotle, with his logical approach and "scientific temperament," that made the deepest impression. His writings became the basis for university education and largely dominated the thought of Western Europe in the five centuries after 1200. In the work of the thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle's ideas were thoroughly integrated into a logical and systematic presentation of Christian doctrine. In this growing emphasis on human rationality, at least partially separate from divine revelation, lay one of the foundations of the later Scientific Revolution and the secularization of European intellectual life.

Surprisingly, nothing comparable occurred in the Byzantine Empire, where knowledge of the Greek language was widespread and access to Greek texts was easy. Although Byzantine scholars kept the classical tradition alive, their primary interest lay in the humanities (literature, philosophy, history) and theology rather than in the natural sciences or medicine. Furthermore, both state and church had serious reservations about classical Greek learning. In 529, the emperor Justinian closed Plato's Academy in Athens, claiming that it was an outpost of paganism. Its scholars dispersed into lands that soon became Islamic, carrying Greek learning into the Islamic world. Church authorities as well were suspicious of classical Greek thought, sometimes persecuting scholars who were too enamored with the ancients. Even those who did study the Greek writers did so in a conservative spirit, concerned to preserve and transmit the classical heritage rather than using it as a springboard for creating new knowledge. "The great men of the past," declared the fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar and statesman Theodore Metochites, "have said everything so perfectly that they have left nothing for us to say."[27]

In the Islamic world, classical Greek thought was embraced "with far more enthusiasm and creativity" than in Byzantium.[28] A massive translation project in the ninth and tenth centuries made Aristotle and many other Greek writers available in Arabic. That work contributed to a flowering of Arab scholarship, especially in the sciences and natural philosophy, between roughly 800 and 1200 (see Chapter 11), but it also stimulated a debate about faith and reason among Muslim thinkers, many

of whom greatly admired Greek philosophical, scientific, and medical texts. As in the Christian world, the issue was whether secular Greek thought was an aid or a threat to the faith. Western European church authorities after the thirteenth century had come to regard natural philosophy as a wholly legitimate enterprise and had thoroughly incorporated Aristotle into university education, but learned opinion in the Islamic world swung the other way. Though never completely disappearing from Islamic scholarship, the ideas of Plato and Aristotle receded after the thirteenth century in favor of teachings that drew more directly from the Quran or from mystical experience. Nor was natural philosophy a central concern of Islamic higher education as it was in the West. The integration of political and religious life in the Islamic world, as in Byzantium, contrasted with their separation in the West, where there was more space for the independent pursuit of scientific subjects.

Reflections: Remembering and Forgetting: Continuity and Surprise in the Worlds of Christendom

Many of the characteristic features of Christendom, which emerged during the era of third-wave civilizations, have had a long life, extending well into the modern era. The crusading element of European expansion was prominent among the motives of Spanish and Portuguese explorers. Europe's grudging freedom for merchant activity and its eagerness to borrow foreign technology arguably contributed to the growth of capitalism and industrialization in later centuries. The endemic military conflicts of European states, unable to recover the unity of the Roman Empire, found terrible expression in the world wars of the twentieth century. The controversy about reason and faith resonates still, at least in the United States, in debates about the authority of the Bible in secular and scientific matters. The rift between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism remains one of the major divides in the Christian world. Modern universities and the separation of religious and political authority likewise have their origins in the European Middle Ages. Such a perspective, linking the past with what came later, represents one of the great contributions that the study of history makes to human understanding.

Yet that very strength of historical study can be misleading, particularly if it suggests a kind of inevitability, in which the past determines the future. Some historians have argued, looking backward from the present, that Europe's industrial transformation and global domination in the nineteenth century grew inexorably out of its unique character as a changing civilization after 1000. This kind of thinking, however, misses the great surprise of Europe's more recent historical trajectory, and it minimizes the way people at the time understood their world.

Surely in 1000, few people would have predicted the startling reversal of roles between the Eastern and Western wings of Christendom, which the next several cen-

turies witnessed. At that time, the many small, rural, unsophisticated, and endlessly quarreling warrior-based societies of Western Europe would hardly have borne comparison with the powerful Byzantine Empire and its magnificent capital of Constantinople. Even in 1500, when Europe had begun to catch up with China and the Islamic world in various ways, there was little to predict its remarkable transformation over the next several centuries and the dramatic change in the global balance of power that this transformation produced. To recapture the unexpectedness of the historical process and to allow ourselves to be surprised, it may be useful on occasion to forget the future and to see the world as contemporaries viewed it.

Second Thoughts

What's the Significance?

Byzantine Empire	Kievan Rus	Crusades
Constantinople	Prince Vladimir of Kiev	European cities
Justinian	Charlemagne	system of competing
caesaropapism	Holy Roman Empire	states
Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic Church	Aristotle and classical
Christianity	Western Christendom	Greek learning
icons		

To assess your mastery of the material in this chapter, visit the **Student Center** at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer.

Big Picture Questions

1. How did the histories of the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe differ during the era of third-wave civilizations?
2. What accounts for the different historical trajectories of these two expressions of Christendom?
3. How did Byzantium and Western Europe interact with each other and with the larger world of the postclassical era?
4. Was the civilization of the Latin West distinctive and unique, or was it broadly comparable to other third-wave civilizations?
5. How does the history of the Christian world in the postclassical era compare with that of Tang and Song dynasty China?

Next Steps: For Further Study

Renate Bridenthal et al., eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (1998). A series of essays that reflects recent scholarship on women.

Edward Grant, *Science and Religion from Aristotle to Copernicus* (2004). Demonstrates the impact of Greek philosophy and science in Europe, with comparisons to Byzantium and the Islamic world.

For Web sites and additional documents related to this chapter, see **Make History** at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer.

Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Middle Ages: An Illustrated History* (1999). A brief and beautifully
     illustrated introduction to the Middle Ages in European history.

Rowena Loverance, *Byzantium* (2004). A lavishly illustrated history of the Byzantine Empire,
     drawing on the rich collection of artifacts in the British Museum.

Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy Wars and the Crusades* (2005). A very well-
     written, up-to-date history of the Crusades designed for nonspecialists.

Mark Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium, 600–1025* (1996). An engaging account of Byzantium at
     its height, with an emphasis on its external connections.

"Middle Ages," http://www.learner.org/exhibits/middleages. An interactive Web site with text and
     images relating to life in Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Documents

Considering the Evidence:
The Making of Christian Europe . . .
and a Chinese Counterpoint

⊔

Like Buddhism, Christianity became a universal religion, taking root well beyond its place of origin. During the classical era, this new faith, born in a Jewish context in Roman Palestine, spread throughout the Roman Empire, where it received state support during the fourth century C.E. In the centuries that followed the collapse of the western Roman Empire, Christianity also took hold among the peoples of Western Europe in what are now England, France, Germany, and Scandinavia. While we often think about this region as solidly Christian, Western Europe in the period between 500 and 1000 C.E. was very much on the frontier of an expanding Christian world. During those centuries, a number of emerging monarchs of post-Roman Europe found the Christian faith and the Church useful in consolidating their new and fragile states by linking them to the legacy of the Roman Empire. Although the religion of Jesus ultimately became widely accepted, the making of Christian Europe was a prolonged and tentative process, filled with setbacks, resistance, and struggles among variant versions of the faith as well as growing acceptance and cultural compromise. An interesting counterpoint to the story of Christianity in Western Europe lies in its spread to China at about the same time. There, however, it did not take root in any permanent fashion, although it briefly generated a fascinating expression of the Christian faith.

Document 10.1

The Conversion of Clovis

Among the Germanic peoples of post-Roman Western Europe, none were of greater significance than the Franks, occupying the region of present-day France (see Map 10.1, p. 428). By the early sixth century, a more or less unified Frankish kingdom had emerged under the leadership of Clovis (reigned 485–511), whose Merovingian dynasty ruled the area until 751. Clovis's conversion to Christianity was described about a century later by a well-known bishop and writer, Gregory of Tours (538–594). It was an important step in the triumph

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of Christianity over Frankish "paganism." It also marked the victory of what would later become Roman Catholicism, based on the idea of the Trinity, over a rival form of the Christian faith, known as Arianism, which held that Jesus was a created divine being subordinate to God the Father.

■ According to Gregory, what led to the conversion of Clovis?

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

■ Notice how Gregory modeled his picture of Clovis on that of Constantine, the famous Roman emperor whose conversion to Christianity in the fourth century gave official legitimacy and state support to the faith (see Chapter 5). What message did Gregory seek to convey in making this implied comparison?

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

<div align="center">

GREGORY OF TOURS

History of the Franks

Late Sixth Century

</div>

[Clovis] had a first-born son by queen Clotilda, and as his wife wished to consecrate him in baptism, she tried unceasingly to persuade her husband, saying: "The gods you worship are nothing, and they will be unable to help themselves or any one else. For they are graven out of stone or wood or some metal. . . . They are endowed rather with the magic arts than with the power of the divine name. But he [God] ought rather to be worshipped who created by his word heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is out of a state of nothingness . . . [and] by whose hand mankind was created. . . ."

But though the queen said this, the spirit of the king was by no means moved to belief, and he said: "It was at the command of our gods that all things were created and came forth, and it is plain that your God has no power and, what is more, he is proven

not to belong to the family of the gods." Meantime the faithful queen made her son ready for baptism; she gave command to adorn the church with hangings and curtains, in order that he who could not moved by persuasion might be urged to belief by this mystery. The boy, whom they named Ingomer, died after being baptized, still wearing the white garments in which he became regenerate. At this the king was violently angry, and reproached the queen harshly, saying: "If the boy had been dedicated in the name of my gods he would certainly have lived; but as it is, since he was baptized in the name of your God, he could not live at all." To this the queen said: "I give thanks to the omnipotent God, creator of all, who has judged me not wholly unworthy, that he should deign to take to his kingdom one born from my womb. My soul is not stricken with grief for his sake, because I know that, summoned from this world as he was in his baptismal garments, he will be fed by the vision of God. . . ."

The queen did not cease to urge him to recognize the true God and cease worshipping idols. But he could not be influenced in any way to this belief,

until at last a war arose with the Alamanni,° in which he was driven by necessity to confess what before he had of his free will denied. It came about that as the two armies were fighting fiercely, there was much slaughter, and Clovis's army began to be in danger of destruction. He saw it and raised his eyes to heaven, and with remorse in his heart he burst into tears and cried: "Jesus Christ, whom Clotilda asserts to be the son of the living God…, I beseech the glory of thy aid, with the vow that if thou wilt grant me victory over these enemies…, I will believe in thee and be baptized in thy name. For I have invoked my own gods but, as I find, they have withdrawn from aiding me; and therefore I believe that

°**Alamanni:** a Germanic people.

they possess no power, since they do not help those who obey them…." And when he said thus, the Alamanni turned their backs, and began to disperse in flight. And when they saw that their king was killed, they submitted to the dominion of Clovis, saying: "Let not the people perish further, we pray; we are yours now." And he stopped the fighting, and after encouraging his men, retired in peace and told the queen how he had had merit to win the victory by calling on the name of Christ. This happened in the fifteenth year of his reign….

And so the king confessed all-powerful God in the Trinity, and was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and was anointed with the holy ointment with the sign of the cross of Christ. And of his army more than 3,000 were baptized.

Document 10.2

Advice on Dealing with "Pagans"

In their dealings with the "pagan," or non-Christian, peoples and kings of Western Europe, church authorities such as missionaries, bishops, and the pope himself sometimes advocated compromise with existing cultural traditions rather than overt hostility to them. Here Pope Gregory (reigned 590–604) urges the bishop of England to adopt a strategy of accommodation with the prevailing religious practices of the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the island. It was contained in a famous work about the early Christian history of England, composed by a Benedictine monk known as The Venerable Bede and completed about 731.

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

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

- What implication might Gregory's policies have for the beliefs and practices of English converts?

Pope Gregory

Advice to the English Church

601

[T]he temples of the idols in that nation [England] ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed.

And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account, as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they may build themselves huts of the boughs of trees, about those churches which have been turned to that use from temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the Devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the Giver of all things for their sustenance; to the end that, while some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to efface everything at once from their obdurate minds; because he who endeavors to ascend to the highest place, rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps.

Thus the Lord made Himself known to the people of Israel in Egypt; and yet He allowed them the use of the sacrifices which they were wont to offer to the Devil, in his own worship; so as to command them in his sacrifice to kill beasts, to the end that, changing their hearts, they might lay aside one part of the sacrifice, while they retained another; that while they offered the same beasts which they were wont to offer, they should offer them to God, and not to idols; and thus they would no longer be the same sacrifices.

Source: The Venerable Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, edited by Ernest Rhys (London: J. M. Dent and Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1910), 52–53.

Document 10.3

Charlemagne and the Saxons

The policies of peaceful conversion and accommodation described in Document 10.2 did not prevail everywhere, as Charlemagne's dealings with the Saxons reveals. During late eighth and early ninth centuries C.E., Charlemagne (reigned 768–814) was the powerful king of the Franks. He turned his Frankish kingdom into a Christian empire that briefly incorporated much of continental Europe, and he was crowned as a renewed Roman emperor by the pope. In the course of almost constant wars of expansion, Charlemagne struggled for over thirty years (772–804) to subdue the Saxons, a "pagan" Germanic people who inhabited a region on the northeastern frontier of Charlemagne's growing empire (see Map 10.2, p. 436). The document known as the *Capitulary on Saxony* outlines a series of laws, regulations, and punish-

ments (known collectively as a capitulary) regarding religious practice of the Saxons. This document reveals both the coercive policies of Charlemagne and the vigorous resistance of the Saxons to their forcible incorporation into his Christian domain.

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

- How did Charlemagne seek to counteract that resistance?

- What does this document suggest about Charlemagne's views of his duties as ruler?

CHARLEMAGNE

Capitulary on Saxony

785

1. It was pleasing to all that the churches of Christ, which are now being built in Saxony and consecrated to God, should not have less, but greater and more illustrious honor, than the fanes° of the idols had had. . . .

3. If any one shall have entered a church by violence and shall have carried off anything in it by force or theft, or shall have burned the church itself, let him be punished by death.

4. If any one, out of contempt for Christianity, shall have despised the holy Lenten fast and shall have eaten flesh, let him be punished by death. But, nevertheless, let it be taken into consideration by a priest, lest perchance any one from necessity has been led to eat flesh.

5. If any one shall have killed a bishop or priest or deacon, let him likewise be punished capitally.

6. If any one deceived by the devil shall have believed, after the manner of the pagans, that any man or woman is a witch and eats men, and on this account shall have burned the person, or shall have given the person's flesh to others to eat, or shall have

°**fanes:** temples.

Source: D. C. Munro, trans., *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. 6, no. 5, *Selections from the Laws of Charles the Great* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1900), 2–4.

eaten it himself, let him be punished by a capital sentence.

7. If any one, in accordance with pagan rites, shall have caused the body of a dead man to be burned and shall have reduced his bones to ashes, let him be punished capitally. . . .

9. If any one shall have sacrificed a man to the devil, and after the manner of the pagans shall have presented him as a victim to the demons, let him be punished by death.

10. If any one shall have formed a conspiracy with the pagans against the Christians, or shall have wished to join with them in opposition to the Christians, let him be punished by death; and whoever shall have consented to this same fraudulently against the king and the Christian people, let him be punished by death. . . .

17. Likewise, in accordance with the mandate of God, we command that all shall give a tithe of their property and labor to the churches and priests;

18. That on the Lord's day no meetings and public judicial assemblages shall be held, unless perchance in a case of great necessity or when war compels it, but all shall go to the church to hear the word of God, and shall be free for prayers or good works. Likewise, also, on the especial festivals they shall devote themselves to God and to the services of the church, and shall refrain from secular assemblies.

19. Likewise,…all infants shall be baptized within a year.…

21. If any one shall have made a vow at springs or trees or groves, or shall have made any offerings after the manner of the heathen and shall have par-taken of a repast in honor of the demons, if he shall be a noble, [he must pay a fine of] 60 solidi,° if a freeman 30, if a litus° 15.

———————————
°**solidi:** gold coins.

°**litus:** neither a slave nor a free person.

Documents 10.4 and 10.5

The Persistence of Tradition

Conversion to Christianity in Western Europe was neither easy nor simple. Peoples thought to have been solidly converted to the new faith continued to engage in earlier practices. Others blended older traditions with Christian rit-uals. The two documents that follow illustrate both patterns. Document 10.4 describes the encounter between Saint Boniface (672–754), a leading mission-ary to the Germans, and the Hessians during the eighth century. It was written by one of Boniface's devoted followers, Willibald, who subsequently composed a biography of the missionary. Document 10.5 comes from a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript known as the *Leechbook*, a medical text that describes cures for various problems caused by "elves and nightgoers."

■ What practices of the Hessians conflicted with Boniface's understanding of Christianity? How did he confront the persistence of these practices?

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

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

WILLIBALD

Life of Boniface

ca. 760 C.E.

Now many of the Hessians who at that time had acknowledged the Catholic faith were con-firmed by the grace of the Holy Spirit and received

the laying-on of hands. But others, not yet strong in the spirit, refused to accept the pure teachings of the church in their entirety. Moreover, some contin-ued secretly, others openly, to offer sacrifices to trees and springs, to inspect the entrails of victims; some practiced divination, legerdemain, and incantations; some turned their attention to auguries, auspices, and other sacrificial rites; while others, of a more

reasonable character, forsook all the profane practices of the [heathens] and committed none of these crimes.

With the counsel and advice of the latter persons, Boniface in their presence attempted to cut down . . . a certain oak of extraordinary size, called in the old tongue of the pagans the Oak of Jupiter. Taking his courage in his hands (for a great crowd of pagans stood by watching and bitterly cursing in their hearts the enemy of the gods), he cut the first notch. But when he had made a superficial cut, suddenly, the oak's vast bulk, shaken by a mighty blast of wind from above crashed to the ground shivering its topmost branches into fragments in its fall. As if by the express will of God (for the brethren present had done nothing to cause it) the oak burst asunder into four parts, each part having a trunk of equal length.

At the sight of this extraordinary spectacle the heathens who had been cursing ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord. Thereupon the holy bishop took counsel with the brethren, built an oratory° from the timber of the oak and dedicated it to Saint Peter the Apostle. He then set out on a journey to Thuringia. . . . Arrived there, he addressed the elders and the chiefs of the people, calling on them to put aside their blind ignorance and to return to the Christian religion that they had formerly embraced.

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°**oratory:** a place of prayer.

The Leechbook
Tenth Century

Work a salve against elfkind and nightgoers, . . . and the people with whom the Devil has intercourse. Take eowohumelan, wormwood, bishopwort, lupin, ashthroat, henbane, harewort, haransprecel, heathberry plants, cropleek, garlic, hedgerife grains, githrife, fennel. Put these herbs into one cup, set under the altar, sing over them nine masses; boil in butter and in sheep's grease, add much holy salt, strain through a cloth; throw the herbs in running water. If any evil temptation, or an elf or nightgoers, happen to a man, smear his forehead with this salve, and put on his eyes, and where his body is sore, and cense him [with incense], and sign [the cross] often. His condition will soon be better.

. . . Against elf disease . . . Take bishopwort, fennel, lupin, the lower part of *ælfthone*, and lichen from the holy sign of Christ [cross], and incense; a handful of each. Bind all the herbs in a cloth, dip in hallowed font water thrice. Let three masses be sung over it, one "Omnibus sanctis [For all the saints]," a second "Contra tribulationem [Against tribulation]," a third "Pro infirmis [For the sick]." Put then coals in a coal pan, and lay the herbs on it. Smoke the man with the herbs before . . . [9 A.M.] and at night; and sing a litany, the Creed [Nicene], and the Pater noster [Our Father]; and write on him Christ's mark on each limb. And take a little handful of the same kind of herbs, similarly sanctified, and boil in milk; drip holy water in it thrice. And let him sip it before his meal. It will soon be well with him.

Against the Devil and against madness, . . . a strong drink. Put in ale hassock, lupin roots, fennel, ontre, betony, hind heolothe, marche, rue, wormwood, nepeta (catmint), helenium, *ælfthone*, wolfs comb. Sing twelve masses over the drink; and let him drink. It will soon be well with him.

A drink against the Devil's temptations: thefanthorn, cropleek, lupin, ontre, bishopwort, fennel, hassock, betony. Sanctify these herbs; put into ale holy water. And let the drink be there in where the sick man is. And continually before he drinks sing thrice over the drink, . . . "God, in your name make me whole (save me)."

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Source: Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 159–67.

Document 10.6

The Jesus Sutras in China

In 635 C.E. the Tang dynasty emperor Taizon welcomed a Persian Christian monk named Alopen and some two dozen of his associates to the Chinese capital of Chang'an (now Xian, see Map 5.1, p. 213). The Chinese court at this time was unusually open to a variety of foreign cultural traditions, including Buddhism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism in addition to Christianity. The version of Christianity that Alopen brought to China was known as Nestorianism (see p. 426). Regarded as heretics in the West and much persecuted, Nestorians had found refuge in Persia and from there introduced the faith into India, Mongolia, and China.

In sharp contrast to its success in Europe, Christianity did not establish a widespread or lasting presence in China. Isolation from the Persian heartland of Nestorian Christianity, opposition from Buddhists, and state persecution of all foreign religions in the ninth century reduced the Nestorian presence to near extinction. But for several centuries, under more favorable political conditions, a number of small Christian communities had flourished, generating a remarkable set of writings known as the "Jesus sutras." (A sutra is a Buddhist religious text.)

Some were carved on large stone slabs, while others were written on scrolls discovered early in the twentieth century in the caves of Dunhuang in northwestern China. What has fascinated scholars about these writings is the extent to which they cast the Christian message in distinctively Chinese terms, making use particularly of Buddhist and Daoist concepts long familiar in China. For example, at the top of a large stone tablet known as the Nestorian Monument is a Christian cross arising out of a white cloud (a characteristic Daoist symbol) and a lotus flower (an enduring Buddhist image). The written texts themselves, which refer to Christianity as the "Religion of Light from the West" or the "Luminous Religion," describe its arrival in China and outline its message within the framework of Chinese culture.

- What was the role of the emperor in establishing Christianity in China? How does this compare with the religious role of European monarchs such as Clovis or Charlemagne in Europe?

- How do the sutras depict the life, death, and teachings of Jesus?

- In what ways are Daoist or Buddhist concepts used to express the Christian message? (See pp. 195–97 and 199–201.)

- How does this Persian/Chinese version of Christianity differ from that of Catholic Europe?

The Jesus Sutras

635–1005

On the Coming of Christianity to China

The Emperor Taizong was a champion of culture. He created prosperity and encouraged illustrious sages to bestow their wisdom on the people....

In...638 C.E.,...the Emperor issued a proclamation saying:

"There is no single name for the Way.

Sages do not come in a single form.

These Teachings embrace everyone and can be adopted in any land.

A Sage of great virtue, Aleben, has brought these scriptures...and offered them to us in the Capital.

We have studied these scriptures and found them otherwordly, profound and full of mystery....

These teachings will save all creatures and benefit mankind, and it is only proper that they be practiced throughout the world."

Following the Emperor's orders, the Greater Qin Monastery was built....Twenty-one ordained monks of the Luminous Religion were allowed to live there....

Imperial officers were ordered to paint a portrait of the Emperor on the wall of the monastery....This auspicious symbol of the imperial presence added brilliance and bestowed favor upon the religion....

The Luminous Religion spread throughout all ten provinces, the Empire prospered and peace prevailed. Temples were built in 100 cities and countless families received the blessings of the Luminous Religion.

On the Story of Jesus

The Lord of Heaven sent the Cool Wind to a girl named Mo Yen. It entered her womb and at that moment she conceived....

Source: Martin Palmer, *The Jesus Sutras* (New York: Random House, 2001), 62–65, 68–69, 80–83, 90, 91, 103, 106, 107, 115–19.

Mo Yen became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Jesus, whose father is the Cool Wind....

When Jesus Messiah was born, the world saw clear signs in heaven and earth. A new star that could be seen everywhere appeared in heaven above....

From the time the Messiah was 12 until he was 32 years old, he sought out people with bad karma and directed them to turn around and create good karma by following a wholesome path. After the Messiah had gathered 12 disciples, he concerned himself with the suffering of others. Those who had died were made to live. The blind were made to see. The deformed were healed and the sick were cured. The possessed were freed of their demons and the crippled were made to walk. People with all kinds of illnesses drew near to the Messiah to touch his ragged robe and be healed....

The scribes who drank liquor and ate meat and served other gods brought false testimony against him. They waited for an opportunity to kill him. But many people had come to have faith in his teaching and so the scribes could not kill the Messiah. Eventually these people, whose karma was unwholesome, formed a conspiracy against him....

When the Messiah was 32 years old, his enemies came before the Great King Pilate and accused him by saying, The Messiah has committed a capital offense. The Great King should condemn him....

For the sake of all living beings and to show us that a human life is as frail as a candle flame, the Messiah gave his body to these people of unwholesome karma. For the sake of the living in this world, he gave up his life....

On the Four Laws of Dharma

The first law is no desire. Your heart seeks one thing after another, creating a multitude of problems. You must not allow them to flare up.... Desire can sap wholesome energy from the four limbs and the body's openings, turning it into unwholesome

activity. This cuts us off from the roots of Peace and Joy. That is why you must practice the law of no desire.

The second law is no action. Doing things for mundane reasons is not part of your true being. You have to cast aside vain endeavors and avoid shallow experiences. Otherwise you are deceiving yourself. . . . We live our lives veering this way and that: We do things for the sake of progress and material gain, neglecting what is truly important and losing sight of the Way. That is why you must distance yourself from the material world and practice the law of no action.

The third law is no virtue. Don't try to find pleasure by making a name for yourself through good deeds. Practice instead universal loving kindness that is directed toward everyone. Never seek praise for what you do. . . . But do it without acclaim. This is the law of no virtue.

The fourth law is no truth. Don't be concerned with facts, forget about right and wrong, sinking or rising, winning or losing. Be like a mirror. . . . It reflects everything as it is, without judging. Those who have awakened to the Way, who have attained the mind of Peace and Joy, who can see all karmic conditions and who share their enlightenment with others, reflect the world like a mirror, leaving no trace of themselves.

On God, Humankind and the Sutras

Heaven and earth are the creation of the One God. The power and will of God pass like the wind over everything. His is not a body of flesh, but a divine consciousness, completely unseen to human eyes. . . .

People can live only by dwelling in the living breath of God. Only in this way can they be at peace and realize their aspirations. From sunrise to sunset, they dwell in the living breath of God; every sight and thought is part of that breath. God provides a place for them filled with clarity and bliss and stillness. All the Buddhas are moved by this wind, which blows everywhere in the world. God resides permanently in this still, blissful place; no karma is done without God. . . .

Do what you have to do here on earth and your actions will determine your place in the next world. We are not born to live forever in the world, but are here to plant wholesome seeds that will produce good fruit in the world beyond this one. Everyone who seeks the other world will attain it if they plant good seeds before departing. . . .

Anyone who crosses the ocean must have a boat before taking on the wind and waves. But a broken boat won't reach the far shore. It is the Sutras of the Luminous Religion that enable us to cross the sea of birth and death to the other shore, a land fragrant with the treasured aroma of Peace and Joy.

Using the Evidence:
The Making of Christian Europe . . .
and a Chinese Counterpoint

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

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

3. **Making comparisons:** How did the spread of Christianity to China differ from its introduction to Western Europe? How might you describe and explain the very different outcomes of those two processes?

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

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

Visual Sources

Considering the Evidence:
Reading Byzantine Icons

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Within the world of Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the icon—a Greek word meaning image, likeness, or picture—came to have a prominent role in both public worship and private devotion. Since Christianity had emerged in a Roman world filled with images—statues of the emperor, busts of ancestors and famous authors, frescoes, and murals—it is hardly surprising that Christians felt a need to represent their faith in some concrete fashion. Icons fulfilled that need.

The creation of icons took off in earnest as Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century C.E. Usually painted by monks, icons depicted Jesus, the Virgin Mary, saints, scenes from biblical stories, church feasts, and more. To Byzantine believers, such images were "windows on heaven," an aid to worship that conveyed the very presence of God, bestowing divine grace on the world. They were also frequently associated with miracles, and on occasion people scraped paint off an icon, mixing it with water to produce a "holy medicine" that could remedy a variety of ailments. Icons also served a teaching function for a largely illiterate audience. As Pope Gregory II in the eighth century explained:

> What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the igno-
> rant who look at it; in a picture even the unlearned may see what
> example they should follow; in a picture they who know no letters
> may yet read. Hence, for Barbarians especially a picture takes the place
> of a book.[29]

Icons were deliberately created—or "written"—as flat, two-dimensional images, lacking the perspective of depth. This nonrepresentational, nonrealistic portrayal of human figures was intended to suggest another world and to evoke the mysteries of faith that believers would encounter as they knelt before the image, crossed themselves, and kissed it. The images themselves were full of religious symbolism. The posture of the body, the position of the hand, and the fold of the clothing were all rich with meaning: a saint touching his hand to his cheek conveyed sorrow; a halo surrounding the head of a human figure reflected divinity or sacredness. Likewise, colors were

symbolic: red stood for either love or the blood of martyrs; blue suggested faith, humility, or heaven; and purple indicated royalty. Those who painted icons were bound by strict traditions derived from the distant past. Lacking what we might consider "artistic freedom," they sought to faithfully replicate earlier models.

In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike, the artistic representation of God occasioned heated debates. After all, the Ten Commandments declared, "You shall not make for yourselves a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above." Almost since the beginning of Christian art, an undercurrent of opposition had criticized efforts to represent the divine in artistic form. Between 726 and 843, Byzantine emperors took the offensive against the use of icons in worship, arguing that they too easily became "idols," distracting believers from the adoration of God himself. Some scholars suggest that this effort, known as iconoclasm (icon breaking), also reflected a concern of religious and political authorities in Byzantium about the growing power of monks, who both created icons and ardently supported their use in worship. It may also have owed something to a desire to avoid offending a rapidly expanding Islamic world, which itself largely prohibited the representation of the human form.[30] Icons were collected from both homes and churches and burned in public square. Thousands of monks fled, and active supporters of icon use were subject to severe punishment. Some critics accused the emperor of sympathy with Islam. But by 843 this controversy was resolved in favor of icon use, an event still commemorated every year in Orthodox churches as the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Thereafter, the creation and use of icons flourished in the Byzantine Empire and subsequently in Russia, where Eastern Christianity began to take root in the late tenth century.

The three icons reproduced here provide an opportunity for you to "read" these visual sources and to imagine what religious meaning they may have conveyed to the faithful of Byzantine Christianity.

Visual Source 10.1, among the oldest icons in existence, dates from the sixth century and survived the destruction of icons during the century of iconoclasm. In contrast to many images of the suffering Jesus on the cross, this icon belongs to a tradition of icon painting that depicts Jesus as Christ Pantokrator. *Pantokrator* derives from a Greek term translated as "Almighty," "Ruler of All," or "Sustainer of the World." Wearing a dark purple robe and surrounded by a halo of light, Jesus holds a copy of the gospels in his left hand. Notice that Jesus' right hand is raised in blessing with the three fingers together representing the trinity and the two remaining fingers symbolizing the dual nature of Christ, both human and divine. Many observers have suggested that this important theological statement of Christ's divine and human nature is also conveyed in the asymmetrical character of the image.

Visual Source 10.1 Christ Pantokrator
(Ancient Art & Architecture Collection)

- What differences can you notice in the two sides of Christ's face? (Pay attention to the eyebrows, the irises and pupils, the hair, the mustache, and the cheeks. Notice also the difference in color between the face and the hands.)

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

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

- Which features of this image suggest Christ's humanity and which might portray his divinity?

Icons frequently portrayed important stories from the Bible, none of which was more significant than that of the nativity. Visual Source 10.2, from fifteenth-century Russia, graphically depicts the story of Jesus' birth for the faithful. The central person in the image is not Jesus but his mother, Mary, who in Orthodox theology was known as the God-bearer.

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

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

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

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

Visual Source 10.2 The Nativity (Private Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library)

Visual Source 10.3 Ladder of Divine Ascent (Roger Wood/Corbis)

Visual Source 10.3 is a twelfth-century Byzantine painting intended to illustrate an instructional book for monks, written in the sixth century by Saint John Climacus. Both the book and the icon are known as the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Written by an ascetic monk with a reputation for great piety and wisdom, the book advised monks to renounce the world with its many temptations and vices and to ascend step by step toward union with God in heaven. The icon served as a visual illustration of that process. The monks are climbing the ladder of the spiritual journey toward God but are beset by winged demons representing various sins—lust, anger, and pride, for example—which are described in Climacus's book. Some have fallen off the ladder into the mouth of a dragon, which represents hell.

■   How does this icon portray the spiritual journey?

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

■   What message might beginning monks have taken from this image?

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

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

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

4. **Comparing religious art cross-culturally:** How might you compare these icons to the Buddha images in Chapter 5? Consider their purposes, their religious content, and their modes of artistic representation.