

## Western Civilization: Antiquity to 1300

### What is Western Civilization?

For five thousand years a “Western Civilization” has been growing, changing, reflecting on itself, and sharing ideas with its neighbors. The “West” deserves to be studied because its tale is old and compelling, but demands to be studied because its story has been central to the development of the world in which we live. Western institutions, most notably representative democracy and commercial capitalism, have spread to every corner of the world. Some critics challenge Western religious, philosophical, political, and economic ideas at their core. Others have no quarrel with Western ideas, but regret that local cultures all over the globe are vanishing before a relentless Western expansion.

Through exploration, war, and commerce the “West” gradually imposed its influence on the whole globe such that the “West” has never been, and is not now, neatly confined to one area or people. Western Civilization has powerfully, although not always positively, affected everyone in the contemporary world.

The “West” is sometimes understood in terms of geography and sometimes in terms of culture. For many people, the “West” means Western Europe. The culture of Western Europe, however, was founded by ancient Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians; and their cultural ancestors were the Mesopotamians and Egyptians. The term “Europe” refers to a vast peninsula of the Eurasian continent with several distinct regions: southern Europe on the Mediterranean, the Alps of central Europe, the forested plains of northern Europe, and the treeless plains of Eastern Europe.

Before 7000 BCE, Europeans lived a traditional hunter-gatherer existence. Farming began in southeastern Europe around 7000 BCE when migrants from western Asia introduced the settled way of life of the Neolithic village. It was not until 2500 BCE that a majority of Europeans had adopted a settled, food-producing way of life.

### Mesopotamia and Egypt

Civilization is derived from the Latin word *civitas*, meaning “commonwealth” or “city” and the first civilizations emerged in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The Sumerians of Mesopotamia lived in small city-states and believed that the gods created and owned everything on Earth. The Sumerian monarchs claimed to be the earthly representative of the gods, which endowed them with the general responsibility for the welfare of the people. The Sumerian city-states were conquered and united under the Akkadians, who were later conquered by the Amorites. The Amorite capital was Babylon and the most famous Amorite king was Hammurabi (reigned 1792-1750 BCE). Hammurabi’s Code was a legal document that outlined class-based punishments and penalties and enshrined patriarchy. The Sumerians, Akkadians, and Amorites were polytheistic and their gods were anthropomorphic (human in form). Mesopotamian religion expressed pessimism about the human condition and people sought to appease the gods. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* tells of a pilgrimage from arrogant youth to wise maturity. The poem is a form of wisdom literature that some scholars believe influenced the Hebrew Bible, specifically the stories about the Garden of Eden and the Great Flood. The civilizations of Mesopotamia made advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and engineering.

Egypt was a distinct civilization from Mesopotamia that contained the wealthiest agriculture in the world. Egyptian religion was polytheistic and included the belief in the afterlife; and tended toward syncretism, the blending of mutually opposed beliefs and principles. Their view of the afterlife included ethical judgment that resulted in eternal life or final death based on one’s behavior. Lower and Upper Egypt were united into a single kingdom by Menes around 3100 BCE. Egyptian society was hierarchical, much like its monumental pyramids, with a divine monarch at the top. Under Thutmose III (reigned 1479-1425 BCE), Egypt conquered Nubia, Palestine, and Syria to become an empire.

The first Indo-European speakers to establish a civilization were the Hittites in Anatolia. The Hittites interacted militarily and commercially with Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Hebrews and Greeks later built on the achievements of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia.

## Hebrews and Greeks

As literature and as religious teaching, the Bible is the most important book in Western Civilization. The Hebrew Bible reached something close to its current form a century or two before the birth of Christ. It consists of three main sections: 1) the Torah, also known as the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, 2) the Prophets, historical books of the early and later prophets, and 3) the Writings, books of poetry, proverbs, and wisdom literature. The Hebrews were the first people to possess a single national history book. Their history was written and understood not as secular history but as sacred history, and they believed that history was the story of the working out of God's pact, or covenant, with the Hebrews. In other words, history was the story of the success or failure of the Hebrew people in carrying out God's commandments.

The Hebrew Bible explains the origins of the Hebrews with the journey of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Canaan (Palestine) after he formed a covenant with God. The descendants of Abraham lived in Canaan for centuries (20<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE) until a famine resulted in many of them migrating to Egypt where they became enslaved. The Hebrew Bible explains that Moses led them back to Canaan in what is called the Exodus (13<sup>th</sup> century BCE). The journey back to Canaan marked a second covenant between the god of Abraham and the entire Israelite people. The Israelites accepted God's laws (Ten Commandments) and in return for their obedience God would make them His chosen people. The Western tradition of civil disobedience owes much to the history of the courage of the Hebrew prophets articulated in the Hebrew Bible about resisting oppression.

The Assyrians conquered northern Israel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE and deported the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel to Mesopotamia. Those who remained in northern Israel mixed with Assyrian colonists and became known as Samaritans. The Babylonians conquered the Assyrians and southern Israel in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and deported the people of Judah to Babylon (the Babylonian Captivity). In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, after the Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire, the Jews were able to return to Palestine and re-establish their Temple in Jerusalem. They also began to write down their religious and historical traditions in what would become the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament. Despite the return to Judah in Palestine by a large number of Jews, many continued to live in Babylon and Egypt in distinct Jewish communities (Jewish Diaspora).

Europe's first civilization, Minoan, appeared in Greece, on the island of Crete, around 2000 BCE. From there, civilization spread to the Greek mainland. Minoan artwork gives the impression of peace, prosperity, and happiness. Mycenaean civilization on the Greek mainland conquered Crete around 1500 BCE and flourished through cultural exchanges with Crete, Egypt, and Anatolia from 1400 to 1200 BCE. Mycenaean civilization declined and from 1100 to 800 BCE Greece was relatively poor, illiterate, and unproductive. Gradually, a transition from herding to farming took place and Greece experienced population growth, increased trade, and colonization.

Greece was relatively egalitarian and the people of each community were called the *demoi* and they deliberated in the *polis*. Ancient Greece and its city-states contributed foundational ideas of Western Civilization in politics, philosophy, literature, art, and architecture. Hoplites (infantrymen) were amateur soldiers who were full-time farmers. The notion of the farmer-soldier, or citizen-soldier who fights when necessary, originated in ancient Greece. The *polis* came to denote not just a city, but the community as a whole, corresponding to a country or nation of family farms. A general economic and social equality existed within the *polis* and the ideal citizen was neither rich nor poor but of moderate means. The *polis* was generally 5,000 to 10,000 people in size, but large *poleis* such as Athens were 400,000.

Conflicts between the wealthy and the poor in Athens resulted in the Code of Draco, the first written constitution of Athens known for its harsh laws, in 621 BCE. Draco's constitution extended the franchise to more people, but many were still dissatisfied. Solon then led democratic reforms that enhanced political equality and improved the economy. The reforms of Solon, which improved the lives of the lower class, resulted in the growth of slavery in Athens. Solon's reforms were followed by a tyranny under Peisistratus that began in 560 BCE.

Sparta had a "mixed" government that combined monarchy, oligarchy, and popular government. By 550 BCE Sparta was the leader of an alliance system called the Peloponnesian League and was the dominant

land power in Greece until the Peloponnesian War that began in 431 BCE. Sparta exemplified community spirit and respect for law. Sparta possessed a limited form of equality in its popular assembly and contained an early notion of “citizen” as a free member of a political community with rights and duties.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Peisistratus, the ruler of Athens, sponsored a literary project to preserve the religious and historical traditions of Greece. Homer’s epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were recorded and standardized. Such heroic poetry consciously glorified and magnified the actions of its subjects. The Greeks were polytheistic and valued *arête*, or excellence, specifically in battle. Homer’s epic poems provide concrete examples of *arête* and depict human beings striving to adhere to a code of justice and hospitality.

### **Archaic Greek Thought**

In Miletus, a city in Ionia, during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, rationalism emerged. Rationalism was a movement away from anthropomorphic or divine explanations toward an abstract and mechanistic explanation of the universe. The Milesians did not invent mathematics and astronomy, but they approached these disciplines in a unique way and made significant advances in them. They were students of nature (*physis*) concerned with natural phenomena. They were called wise men (*sophio*) and lovers of wisdom (*philosophoi*). Thales of Miletus is credited with founding Greek geometry and astronomy. Thales created the first general theory about the nature of the universe by arguing that water was the primary substance from which all of nature was created. Anaximander of Miletus responded to Thales with an alternative theory. Thus, abstract and rational models of the universe began to be introduced and debated.

Philosophy spread to other Greek cities and Heraclitus argued that constant change and underlying coherence was the proper way to understand reality. His paradoxical explanation of reality, change and constancy, was summarized in the term *logos*, which means word, thought, or reason. Pythagoras, a mathematician, argued that the entire universe could be understood through number and proportion. He promoted mathematical observation and contemplation, or *theoria*. Parmenides distrusted the senses and argued that the changes observed by Heraclitus were illusions. He insisted that reality is eternal and unchanging, but that our senses mislead us. Parmenides introduced into Western thought the idea that a radical difference exists between the world of the senses and true reality.

The word democracy comes from the Greek word *demokratia*, which literally means “the power (*kratos*) of the people (*demos*).” Modern democracies are representative, but the city-states of ancient Greece practiced direct democracy. Modern democracies emphasize individual rights, but Athenian democracy placed the community above the individual. Nonetheless, Athens established political principles that are enshrined in democracy today: freedom, equality, citizenship without property qualifications, the right of citizens to hold public office, and the rule of law. Under the leadership of Pericles democracy became firmly entrenched as the government and way of life. Critics of Athenian democracy argue that it degenerated into mob rule after the death of Pericles and that its lack of a system of formal public education denied citizens equality of opportunity. Athenian democracy lacked universal human rights, gender equality, and the abolition of slavery.

In 499 BCE, Ionia revolted against Persia and was defeated after Athens abandoned the Ionian coalition. Later, Athens defeated an invading Persian force led by Darius in 490 BCE at Marathon. The Persians returned again led by Xerxes, but Sparta led a Greek coalition against Xerxes that removed the Persians from Ionia. The Greek unity after the Persian Wars (499 – 479 BCE) was followed by a rivalry between Athens and Sparta known as the Peloponnesian War (431 – 409 BCE). Sparta won the war, but was unable to lead a united Greece as Athens once had.

### **Classical Greek Thought**

The “Classical” age of Greece was between 480 and 322 BCE. Classical Greek culture focused on the public life of the community, the *polis*. Success in democratic politics required knowledge of oratory and public speaking. Teachers of rhetoric, known as Sophists, taught aspiring politicians the art of speaking persuasively. Their curriculum included: ethics, psychology, history, and anthropology. Critics of the

Sophists argued that they taught how to succeed rather than how to discover truth. Some claimed that they taught people how to make the weaker argument defeat the stronger by the use of clever rhetorical devices. Socrates was one of the harshest critics of the Sophists' approach to knowledge. Protagoras, a Sophist, famously said that "Man is the measure of all things", a phrase that is empowering for humanity, but also captures the view of Sophists that truth is relative and can be made by man. Socrates, a philosopher, insisted that most men are ignorant of the truth despite their persuasive arguments. He considered himself more intelligent than most men simply because he recognized his own ignorance. Socrates had been trained in the natural philosophy of Ionia, but changed the emphasis of philosophy from the natural world to human ethics and political theory. His style of philosophizing was to ask people difficult questions; hence, the "Socratic" method of inquiry.

One of Socrates' students, Plato, wrote dialogues that captured some of Socrates' teachings. Like Parmenides, Plato believed that our senses are misleading and that truth can only be discovered by training the mind to overcome common sense evidence. Plato is called an idealist (not because he is optimistic) because he believed that absolute truth existed and could only be understood as universal, ideal forms. The philosopher could recognize pure, ideal truths just like a mathematician. His dialogue the *Republic* argued that philosophers should rule society benevolently and unselfishly. One of Plato's students, Aristotle, was far less an idealist and focused on observation and classification of actually existing reality. Aristotle emphasized change as an integral aspect of reality. He argued that change is teleological (has a goal). He argued that the universe itself is teleological, that is has a purpose, and that the principle behind the changes taking place in the universe was the "unmoved mover" (supreme cause).

Herodotus and Thucydides are the founders of history writing in the West. They were the first to use rationalism as the method of researching and recording events. *The Histories* by Herodotus interprets the Persian Wars within a larger cyclical rise and fall of empires throughout time, while *The Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides utilized first-hand observations, detailed notes, and interviews. Thucydides argued that war destroys civilization and corrupts human nature. He believed that Periclean Athens was a high point in Greek civilization, but that prolonged warfare corrupted the morals of Athens and led to its decay. The Hellenic period (750 – 323 BCE) was coming to a close, and the Hellenistic period (323 – 30 BCE) was emerging.

### **Hellenistic Greek Thought**

The Hellenistic world was created by two conquerors: Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great. Philip conquered and united the Greek city-states, while Alexander conquered Egypt and Western Asia. Alexander would spread Greek culture throughout his empire. The capital of Egypt, Alexandria, was the most important place where Greek culture was spread and transformed in the Hellenistic period. A new institution, the Museum, was founded as a residence, study, and lecture hall for scholars, scientists, and poets. The Library was the largest repository of Greek writing in the world. Alexandria became the center of scientific advancements, while Athens remained influential in ethics and political philosophy. Euclid produced a systematic geometry, Archimedes calculated the approximate value of pi, and Aristarchus proposed the first heliocentric theory.

As the Greek city-state was replaced by Alexander's empire and then subsequent Hellenistic kingdoms, Hellenistic philosophy paid less and less attention to politics. Philosophy, as a distinct and separate discipline from science, became exclusively concerned with ethics, the discovery of the best way to live. Competing philosophical schools emerged: Cynicism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism. Diogenes (400 – 325 BCE), a Cynic, rejected all social conventions and believed that happiness could be achieved by satisfying natural desires in a simplistic manner. Zeno (335 – 263 BCE), a Stoic, believed that the best way to live was in pursuit of wisdom. Stoics emphasized the inner life, motivations for actions, and a cosmopolitan view towards law and morality. They preached an indifference to pain and promoted a life based on evidence perceived by the senses instead of the passions. Epicurus (341 – 270 BCE), like Zeno, was a materialist and empiricist, trusting the senses as the source of truth. He argued that the purpose of life was to avoid pain and pursue pleasure. Friendship and fraternity possessed inherent meaning and made life worthwhile. Epicureans pursued both intellectual and material pleasure, and many considered them immoral for failing to promote virtue. Skeptics considered the common sense approach of Stoics and

Epicureans to be unreliable. They preferred to suspend judgment on philosophical questions rather than accept someone's dogma that was based on mere opinion.

Hellenistic Judaism thrived and spread throughout the Mediterranean. Jewish literature became increasingly focused on resistance to foreign occupation and the role of a savior. Most Jews lived outside of Judea in Anatolia, Egypt, and Greece. By 100 BCE, the Hebrew Bible had been translated into Greek, known as the Septuagint.

## **Roman Republic**

The city of Rome was initially ruled by a monarchy that was advised by a council of elders called the senate. Most of the senators were patricians, members of the hereditary aristocracy. The rest of the people in Rome, the commoners, were plebeians. The patricians and plebeians met in an assembly to discuss laws, but final passage required the approval of the senate. Rome became a republic in 509 BCE when the monarchy was overthrown. The Roman Republic stood for liberty: both freedom *from* the arbitrary power of monarchy and freedom *to* participate in public affairs. The Republic was a commonwealth, meaning that it belonged to the Roman people; the people ruled the state. The Republic's government was divided into three branches: executive, deliberative, and legislative. The executive functioned as the judiciary, the senate deliberated, and popular assemblies legislated. The historian Polybius described the government as "mixed" because it combined monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. Critics of Polybius argue that the Republic was far less democratic and far more oligarchic.

The executive branch was made up of magistrates elected by the Roman people. The chief magistrates were the consuls, of which there were two. In times of emergency a single magistrate was given dictatorial power for six months. The deliberative branch, the senate, guided and advised the magistrates. There were 300 senators and they served for life. The legislative branch consisted of four popular assemblies.

Roman religion was initially animistic, but became increasingly anthropomorphic as contact with Greece increased. Roman polytheism was generally tolerant and inclusive. The state religion was led by a state clergy, the highest position being that of chief pontiff.

Rome gradually expanded its territory throughout the Italian peninsula and then conquered Carthage, the most powerful sea power in the Mediterranean that controlled most of North Africa, in the Punic Wars. After annexing Carthage, the Romans conquered Greece, Macedon, and Anatolia to the east and Gaul and Spain to the west. After three centuries of expansion and conquest the class conflicts within Rome became unmanageable. Furthermore, political leaders had become more individualistic and cynical in their outlook on society. The population had increased so much that a land crisis ensued wherein the lower class did not own enough property to qualify for military service. Proposals for the redistribution of land by Tiberius Gracchus were opposed by the wealthy and violence increasingly became part of politics. Those who supported agrarian reform were known as Gracchi and they were violently suppressed. The political community became sharply divided over those who desired redistribution of land to maintain stability (the populares) and those opposed to any redistribution of land (the optimates). The agrarian crisis became a military crisis since property qualifications existed for military service.

Gaius Marius (157 – 86 BCE), elected consul in 107 BCE, reformed the military by abolishing the property requirement for service. Marius gained the support of a new class of soldiers who made the military a career and he was elected consul six additional times despite its unconstitutionality. Marius won wars in North Africa and Gaul, and the result was that ordinary soldiers and citizens transferred their allegiance to him. Marius set a precedent that was then followed by another military leader named Lucius Sulla (138 – 78 BCE) who became a dictator unconstitutionally and then increased the power of the senate. Sulla confiscated land and gave it to his supporters and reformed the courts to favor the wealthy. Pompey (106 – 48 BCE), an optimas and a general like Sulla, repressed an agrarian revolt within Italy and conquered Palestine. Julius Caesar (100 – 44 BCE), a popularis and supporter of Marius, invaded Britain and Egypt. Both Pompey and Caesar lacked respect for the senate and the assemblies. Pompey and Caesar formed a political alliance with Marcus Crassus called the First Triumvirate in which the three leaders attempted to govern the empire themselves. Ultimately, civil war erupted between Pompey and Caesar, which resulted in

Caesar becoming dictator and attempting to replicate the prestige of Alexander the Great. In 44 BCE, Caesar was assassinated and civil war ensued between Marc Antony (Caesar's lieutenant) and Octavian (Caesar's adopted son). Octavian was victorious and ruled Rome as an emperor; the Roman Empire had been born.

Cicero, an optimas and defender of the senate, studied philosophy and oratory in Greece. He was crucial in making Latin a vessel for the heritage of Hellenistic philosophy. He is considered one of the greatest orators of the Republic and wrote several treatises on politics, ethics, and theology. Unlike the poet Lucretius, whose epic poem *On the Nature of Things* promoted the Epicurean withdrawal into contemplation, Cicero embraced the more activist philosophy of Stoicism. Cicero argued that all people share a spark of divinity and that people should treat each other generously. Stoicism would become an influential philosophy in the Roman Empire.

## **Roman Empire**

The Roman Empire was a Principate, or constitutional monarchy, during the "early" phase from 31 BCE to 192 CE. Octavian ruled as Augustus, and he and his successors brought a long period of peace and prosperity. Augustus rewarded veterans with land in new colonies and taxed the wealthy, as well. Within the city of Rome Augustus set up major public works projects to employ the poor and beautify the city. He promoted republican virtues through legislation that promoted marriage and childbearing. Augustus also established the first law school in Rome and granted professional jurists the right to interpret Roman law and legal opinions. Roman law influences the legal systems of the West today. The law governing Roman citizens was called "civil law" and its most basic distinction was that between free and slave. The Augustan Age was also an era of literary flourishing with the poets Virgil and Horace, and the historian Livy, being the most notable.

Augustus died in 14 CE and the Roman Empire was ruled by other emperors from his family, a dynasty referred to as the Julio-Claudians, until 68 CE. A series of dynasties followed: Flavians (69 – 96 CE), Nervo-Trajanic (96 – 138 CE), and Antonine (138 – 192 CE). Marcus Aurelius, an Antonine emperor, was a general and Stoic philosopher. The literary period after the death of Augustus is referred to as the "Silver Age" and notable figures include the writers Pliny, Seneca, and Plutarch, the historian Tacitus, and the poet Juvenal. Peace and stability eroded after the death of Marcus Aurelius as assassinations and civil war plagued future dynasties.

## **Birth of Christianity**

The history of Christianity begins with the life of Jesus, but the history of his life is poorly documented. The main source of information about Jesus is the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The earliest of these Gospels was Mark, which scholars estimate was written at least 20 years after Jesus' death. Jesus was a Jew who lived in Palestine and spoke Aramaic. His followers considered him the Messiah foretold in the Hebrew Bible who would redeem Israel. Judaism during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE was in a state of flux: the Essenes lived apart from society in pursuit of a new covenant with God, the Pharisees focused on the spiritual and material needs of the poor and interpreted Jewish law flexibly, and the Sadducees promoted the traditional rites of the Jerusalem Temple and defended the wealthy. Jesus, like the Pharisees, was critical of the Sadducees. Yet, he was neither a Pharisee nor an Essene. He focused on inward purity and helped marginalized groups. His teachings were articulated in the Sermon on the Mount, wherein he promoted generosity, forgiveness, the traditional Jewish Golden Rule, and the pursuit of righteousness instead of wealth. He said that prayer and charity should be conducted in private in order to emphasize purity of motive. The Sadducees were hostile to Jesus due to his criticism of them, while the Pharisees considered blasphemous his claim to be able to forgive sins. Neither group accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but he attracted large crowds and represented a challenge to both Jewish and Roman authority. He was executed by the Romans using the Roman method of crucifixion in 30 CE.

After his death, Jesus' disciples spread his teachings throughout Palestine and Syria during 30s and 40s CE. It was not clear at first that Nazarenes (followers of Jesus of Nazareth) would form a new religion separate from Judaism. Many Nazarenes found support amongst the Pharisees, but others such as Paul of Tarsus

promoted a break with Judaism. Paul was a Pharisee who retained his belief in Jewish ethics, but not in the rules of Jewish law. He believed and promoted the idea that Jesus' death and resurrection offered all of humanity the hope of redemption and salvation. Paul sought to convert Gentiles (non-Jews) to the belief in salvation through Christ and over the next century the division between traditional Judaism and "Christianity" widened. By 200 CE an orthodox Christianity had emerged as a primarily urban movement that emphasized charity and help for the needy. The Christians quickly became suspect in the eyes of the Romans because they, like the Jews, refused to make sacrifices to the emperor. They were generally tolerated as long as they did not proselytize or build churches.

### **Late Antiquity**

In 293 CE, the emperor Diocletian instituted the tetrarchy, a new form of imperial organization and administration that divided the Roman Empire into eastern and western halves, and included two co-rulers, with two successors. Diocletian was ruler of the eastern half in order to oversee military operations there, while Maximian was the ruler of the western half. Diocletian began to incorporate the barbarian populations of the empire into the military, and he also reformed the tax system, which fell most heavily on small farmers. Amid competing claims to the tetrarchy after unexpected deaths, Constantine became the ruler of the western half in 306 CE and moved his capital to the Greek city of Byzantium in the eastern half of the empire in order to reunite the west and the east. Constantine continued the reforms of Diocletian, which included further militarization of Roman society and increasing the size of government bureaucracy to administer the empire. Constantine ruled until 337 CE and a blended system of tetrarchy and heredity governed succession. Members of Constantine's family ruled until 363 CE, and thereafter a new "dynasty" began with Valentinian, whose family ruled until the 450s CE. While Diocletian was the last emperor to actively persecute the Christians, Constantine embraced Christianity in his attempt to unite the empire. In 313 CE, he issued the Edict of Milan, which made Christianity a legal religion within the empire.

### **Development of Christianity**

Throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, the formerly small and persecuted Christian community achieved majority status and built an effective organizational structure. The Roman population gradually underwent a process of Christianization with the emergence of the Catholic Church. The earliest Christian communities had three distinct types of officials whose responsibilities developed over time: bishops, priests, and deacons. An urban area would have many Christian groups, each with a leader called a priest, and by 200 CE the eldest priest became known as the bishop (overseer) who would unify the various groups. By 400 CE, the bishop of a large city was called the archbishop, and they had responsibility for a large territory called a diocese. Essentially, the administrative organization of the Catholic Church mirrored the administrative organization of the Roman government.

In 325 CE, Constantine summoned more than 300 bishops to the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical (all-world) council, to resolve doctrinal disputes such as Arianism and its critique of the Trinity. The Council of Nicaea condemned Arianism and by the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE the Nicene Creed became a basic statement of belief for all orthodox, Catholic Christians. The authority of the bishops of Rome had steadily increased throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, and the doctrine of apostolic succession, the active continuation and transmission of the ministry of Jesus' apostles to succeeding generations, was combined with the theory of Petrine Primacy, the idea that the successors to Peter were the leaders of the church as a whole, resulted in the eldest bishop of Rome becoming the Catholic leader, or Pope.

Doctrinal disputes emerged over Christology, the relationship between the divine and human natures in Jesus, and in 380 CE the Roman emperor Theodosius I attempted to impose religious uniformity by issuing a decree that all Christians should align their views with the bishops of Rome. While this increased the power of the bishops of Rome and brought church and state closer together, it was also the beginning of tensions between church and state because the Pope would later insist that his authority came from the theory of Petrine Primacy rather than the emperor. In other words, the church wanted to make it clear its authority was not granted to it by the state. The Christological debate over Monophysitism, whether or not Jesus had both a human and divine nature, continued into the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and the Council of Chalcedon was convened in 451 to resolve the doctrinal dispute. Theologians condemned Monophysitism and declared

that Jesus was had both human and divine natures. Pope Leo I attempted to solidify the papacy's doctrinal authority through the Council of Chalcedon, but the bishop of Constantinople and other eastern bishops refused to acknowledge his supremacy. By 600 CE, the bishops of Rome viewed themselves as the heads of a universal, catholic, church, but the tension between the western and eastern bishops would increase in later years ultimately producing a formal separation.

As the Catholic Church developed as an institution that exercised increasing spiritual, political and economic power, a distinct form of Christian living referred to as monasticism emerged. At the heart of monasticism were self-denial, solitude, and separation from the civic aspects of life. Monasticism emerged first in Egypt and there were two types: eremitic and cenobitic. The former is the life of the hermit living in isolation, while the latter is the life of the monk living in community. Cenobitic monasticism became the dominant form in the western half of the empire and Benedict's monastery in Monte Cassino south of Rome became the model. Both men (monks) and women (nuns) could live a monastic life in a monastery (men) or convent (women). For Christian monastics, they found meaning in life not by serving the state or the urban community, but by serving God and one another. They separated themselves from society and abandoned the social and political life. Spiritual wisdom and holiness was more important to them than secular learning and material wealth.

### **Barbarian Invasions**

The idea that the western half of the Roman Empire suffered from "barbarian invasions" can be quite misleading. The term barbarian simply means, like it did for the Greeks of antiquity, non-Roman. The barbarian peoples of Western Europe were not nomadic hunter-gatherers who swooped down to attack Italy, but were settled agriculturalists that the Romans had traded with, carried out diplomacy with, and recruited into their military. The barbarians were Germanic peoples who spoke a variety of Indo-European languages, which distinguishes them from the Celts and Slavs who also lived in Europe. The Germanic peoples included: Franks, Saxons, Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and others. In 376 CE, the Visigoths "invaded" the Roman Empire because they were fleeing the nomadic Huns of Central Asia who had invaded via the Black Sea. The Visigoths already had a military and diplomatic relationship with the Romans and they basically sought refuge within the empire. After one Roman emperor marched north to fight the "invaders" and was defeated, a second Roman emperor incorporated the Visigoths into the empire and promised them land in the Balkans. After years of tension with the Roman authorities the Visigoths attacked Rome in 410 CE in an attempt to obtain what they had been promised. The Roman authorities signed a new treaty with the Visigoths giving them land in Gaul in exchange for protecting the empire's borders. The Visigoths were the first Germanic kingdom to receive official recognition on Roman soil and the Visigoth's king, Theodoric I, served Rome loyally. Meanwhile, the Huns were still launching attacks on both western and eastern cities from the Balkans and their leader Attila invaded Gaul and threatened to march on Rome. The Visigoths and Romans, along with other Germanic peoples, repelled the Huns. Attila died in 454 CE and the threat vanished.

To defend the borders in Gaul, the Romans pulled their troops out of the British Isles in 410 CE, which led to the Anglo-Saxon invasion wherein Germanic peoples competed with Celts for control. After the defeat of the Huns, the Romans attempted to check the power of the Visigoths by forming an alliance with the Franks. They were led by Clovis and he defeated the Visigoths in 507 CE by driving them into Spain. Clovis was successful in increasing Frankish power because the Franks, unlike the Visigoths and other Germanic peoples who were Arians, practiced the Catholicism of the Romans. Clovis's family, the Merovingian dynasty, ruled what became the most powerful of the Germanic kingdoms. In 476 CE, a Germanic military leader within the Roman military, Odoacer, took political power in Rome and declared to Constantinople, the capital of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, that the western half no longer needed an emperor. It is this rather anti-climactic event that is referred to as the "fall" of the Roman Empire. The government at Constantinople sent an army of Ostrogoths to remove Odoacer, but even after his defeat Roman rule in the western half of the empire was never regained. Thus, the western half of the Roman Empire was ruled by a variety of Germanic kingdoms. Durable political institutions emerged with the Franks in Gaul, the Visigoths in Spain, and the Anglo-Saxons in Britain. Furthermore, these German kingdoms maintained religious and legal continuity with the Roman Empire by preserving Catholicism and Roman law.

As the western half of the Roman Empire was divided into separate Germanic kingdoms, the eastern half survived and its capital Constantinople became the “New Rome” in terms of intellectual activity, public building projects, and imperial ambition. Justinian, who ruled from 527 to 565 CE, was the most influential emperor in the east, and his legal reforms, issued as Justinian’s Code, are the most influential collection of legal writings in human history. The commission systematized all of the Roman Empire’s previous legislation, summarized over a thousand years of judicial decisions, and collected the writings of legal philosophers and classical Roman jurists. Justinian’s most famous monument is the church of Hagia Sophia, the largest Christian church ever built. He also unsuccessfully attempted to reunite the empire by invading North Africa, Italy, and Spain.

The east and west remained separated, and Christianity developed separately in each region, as well. The western Latin Church was Catholic, while the eastern Greek Church was Orthodox. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, Christians began to define and compile a canon of authoritative holy books. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, Jerome, a Church Father, was tasked by the pope with translating a new Latin Bible, called the Vulgate, based on the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament. The most influential Church Father, Augustine, was from North Africa. Augustine formulated the doctrine of “original sin” by arguing that the abuse of free will by Adam and Eve predisposed all humans to continual rebellion. Thus, Augustine repudiated the classical idea of humanity as good in itself and capable of self-improvement in this world. His most famous work is *The City of God*, written in response to the invasion of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 CE. Augustine presented a theological view of history, interpreting history as linear rather than cyclical, and as the working out of God’s plan for humanity. History, in this view, is the struggle between the City of God (those redeemed by Christ) and the City of Man (those who persist in sin).

### **Early Middle Ages**

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Spain, North Africa, and West Asia were conquered by Muslims and became part of the Muslim Empire. The eastern half of the Roman Empire continued to exist as the Byzantine Empire, located primarily in modern-day Turkey and Greece. When Justinian attempted to reunite the empire he defeated the Ostrogoths in Italy, which resulted in the Lombards establishing a kingdom that experienced conflicts with the papacy. The Catholic Church formed an alliance with the Franks who defeated the Lombards in 756 CE and donated territory to the papacy that became the Papal States, the remnants of which is now Vatican City. The Papal States included a large territory in central Italy that the papacy governed after Roman administration declined. The Catholic Church justified this temporal rule with the *Donation of Constantine*, a document supposedly given to the pope by Constantine when he left Rome for Constantinople, which gave the pope the authority to rule Rome (in fact, the document was a forgery made in the 8<sup>th</sup> century). Nonetheless, the Catholic Church remained an influential spiritual and political power both within Italy and throughout Western Europe.

In the British Isles, the native Celts and the Germanic Anglo-Saxons continued to compete for control after the Roman withdrawal. The Celts were still dominant in Ireland and they began to convert to Christianity as a result of Patrick’s missionary work. The papacy sent multiple missionaries to England and the Anglo-Saxons gradually converted, as well. In both Ireland and England, a unified church and the development of church administration contributed to eventual political unification and administration. Monastic life flourished in Ireland and England and connected the islands to the intellectual developments of the European continent. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, England was invaded by Vikings, which prompted the separate Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to unite under the leadership of Alfred of Wessex to reconquer England. Alfred was successful and he laid the foundations for a politically unified English state.

In Gaul the Franks continued to be ruled by the Merovingian dynasty until 751 CE when a rival family, the Carolingians, took power. The Carolingians had increased their influence and authority within the Frankish kingdom throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> century, most notably in 733 CE when Charles Martel led Frankish forces to halt the Arab invasion of Gaul. The most notable Carolingian king was Charlemagne, whose favorite book was Augustine’s *The City of God*. Charlemagne was crowned emperor in 800 CE on Christmas by Pope Leo III. Charlemagne had united what is today France, Germany, the Netherlands, and northern Italy, then known as the Carolingian Empire, or Christendom. The local government of the Carolingian Empire was

entrusted to about six hundred counts, wealthy landowners who possessed administrative, judicial, and military authority within a given territory. Under Charlemagne, major officials became vassals, those who pledge loyalty and service, to the king. Both secular (counts) and ecclesiastical (bishops) officials became vassals of the king.

Charlemagne viewed his empire as a “New Israel” and he promoted a revival of scholarly pursuit referred to as the Carolingian Renaissance, which was a return to the writings of the early Church Fathers from the reign of Constantine. Charlemagne required every cathedral and monastery to establish a school. An ambitious project of copying new manuscripts of earlier Christian texts allowed knowledge to spread throughout the empire, and the *Rule of St. Benedict* was imposed on all monasteries. While religious unity increasingly characterized Western Europe, the size and ethnic complexity of the Carolingian Empire led to its disintegration. In fact, historians consider the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties as a unifying exception to a regional history marked by diversity. The Treaty of Verdun in 843 divided Charlemagne’s empire into three realms. During this time, most people lived in rural areas and engaged in agricultural labor. Some resided on manors, but many were free and owned their own land. A manor was an estate owned by a wealthy landlord where poorer peasants lived in exchange for protection and land.

### **High Middle Ages**

Between 900 and 1300, Europe’s population began one of its longest periods of sustained growth. Agricultural production expanded, trade increased, and cities grew in number and size. People of every class and region were eating better and living longer, healthier lives. The combination of more land under cultivation and more yield per acre produced enormous gains in the food supply. The iron ploughshare was a vast improvement over the previously used Roman plow that had been more suitable to the thin soil of the Mediterranean. The two-field system of crop rotation was increasingly replaced by the three-field system. Transportation improved with the four-wheeled, horse-drawn wagon that enabled surplus produce to be taken to the growing urban centers. Agricultural specialization based on region further accelerated trade.

One urban phenomenon was the development of guilds. The main purpose of a guild was to regulate the standards of production, to fix the prices, and to control the membership in a specific trade. The guilds were also mutual assurance societies that provided help to its members in times of hardship. The question of a “just price,” the price at which goods should be bought and sold, was taken up by theologians, lawyers, and merchants. An influential Christian view, often dismissed as unrealistic, was that items should be sold for only the cost of the materials and the labor necessary to produce it. The commercial view, often criticized as immoral, was that a “fair price” was whatever the market could bear. The question of usury was also debated by theologians, lawyers, and merchants. Christians were hostile to usury and often prohibited it, while merchants and bankers found clever ways to get around the law. As the European economy expanded, the task of balancing the community’s general interest and the individual’s pursuit of profit became a central concern of social and economic thought.

Medieval “Germany” was ruled by a series of royal dynasties, the Saxons, Salians, and Staufers, but the monarchy lacked real power and most political authority existed in the individual duchies such as Saxony, Swabia, and Bavaria. Otto I, a Saxon monarch, was crowned emperor in 962 by the pope in Rome. Thus, the Holy Roman Empire was born. To increase his power, Otto took personal control of ecclesiastical appointments within the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. Church reformers who were attempting to improve the caliber of the clergy throughout Europe objected to Otto’s practice referred to as “lay investiture” because the monarch was a layman rather than a clergyman. Papal opposition to “lay investiture” increased under Pope Gregory VII as the “investiture controversy” continued. The real debate was over who held the primary responsibility for exercising authority in God’s name on earth, the pope or the emperor. The power struggle between the papacy in Rome and the emperor in Germany continued.

Medieval “Italy” was made up of increasingly independent communes (cities) ruled by local oligarchs or an elected podesta (city-manager). Italian politics was unique in that power and authority originated from the people (at least the wealthy) rather than from an emperor or king. The largest and most influential power within Italy was the Papal States.

Medieval France was ruled by the Capetian dynasty following the division of the Carolingian Empire. The Capetians ruled for more than three centuries, from the late 900s to the early 1300s. The Capetians gradually increased their authority and created a centralized administration.

Medieval England, after having been unified by Alfred to defeat the Vikings, went through a period of political instability that culminated in the Norman invasion in 1066 led by William of Normandy (France). William I ruled England until 1089 and was responsible for introducing feudalism to England. He reorganized the existing shires into fiefs, land held by a vassal who owed loyalty to the king. The expansion of royal courts and judicial writs under William's successors led to the emergence of a common law that applied to all people. Wealthy landlords, called barons, resisted the increasing power of the monarchy during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1215, King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, which limited the monarch's power by requiring him to respect the rights of feudal lords and to consult the barons on legislation. Thereafter, meetings between the king, royal advisers, and barons were referred to as "parliaments" and consultation between the king and the "people" was gradually built into the political system. The most durable and distinctive Celtic regions were Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. All three regions remained Celtic in culture, but suffered from numerous interventions, occupations, and annexations by England.

Medieval "Spain" was ruled by Muslims until the beginning of the Reconquista in the 11<sup>th</sup> century led by the kingdoms of Navarre, Aragon, and Castile. The warfare between Christians and Muslims would continue until the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Medieval Scandinavia experienced political centralization as stable monarchies emerged in Denmark and Norway in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and Sweden in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The people of Scandinavia also settled Greenland, Iceland, and portions of Russia. Christianity was introduced to Scandinavia in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and widespread conversion took place in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as Norway's monarch, Olaf, actively promoted the new faith.

Eastern Europe was populated by Slavs who had never been conquered by the Romans and had not been influenced by classical Roman and Greek culture. However, Christianity was introduced to the Slavic regions in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The most influential Slavic states included Moravia (Czech Republic), Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, and Kievan Rus (Ukraine, Russia). While the Slavic states converted to Christianity, their proximity to the Byzantine Empire resulted in some of them embracing Eastern Orthodox and others Roman Catholicism. The rapid state building and Christianization in Eastern Europe represents two examples of significant European development in the High Middle Ages.

### **The Crusades**

In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ability of the caliphs in Baghdad to control their vast Muslim Empire declined, and religious divisions between Sunni and Shiite intensified. In 1054, divisions between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches resulted in the western Pope and eastern Patriarch excommunicating each other, which resulted in the official schism within Christianity. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, with central authority in Baghdad weak, the Turks began to increase their power and authority within the Muslim Empire by attacking the Byzantine Empire in Anatolia. The Byzantines appealed to Pope Urban II for assistance in recruiting mercenaries from Western Europe. The Pope, wanting to heal the rift between the Catholic and Orthodox churches, and wanting to protect Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land, publically supported military assistance to the Byzantine Empire. Pope Urban II, however, was not interested in merely sending mercenaries to fight in Anatolia. He seized the conflict as an opportunity to increase the Papacy's authority over secular monarchs and called for regular soldiers to liberate the Holy Land in exchange for salvation.

In 1096, four large armies comprised mostly of French knights began marching to Anatolia where they quickly defeated a Turkish army. They then continued east into Syria and Palestine, conquering Jerusalem in 1099 after a bloody siege. The First Crusade had been a success and Western European armies continued to occupy Syria and Palestine. One of the European-occupied territories fell to a Muslim army in 1144, which prompted the Second Crusade. The German and French leaders fought more with each other than

against Muslims and the only significant achievement was the capture of Lisbon on the Iberian Peninsula, which laid the foundations for the kingdom of Portugal and continued the Reconquista. When Saladin recaptured Jerusalem in 1187 the Pope called for the Third Crusade, which was unsuccessful. The Pope called for a Fourth Crusade in 1198, and due to complicated financial and political issues, attacked the Byzantine capital of Constantinople instead of Jerusalem. By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Crusades came to an end, and as expected, they had devastated relations between Christian Europe and the Muslim Empire, and worsened relations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

### **Medieval Social Structure**

By the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries it was clear that society was divided into three broad groups: those who prayed (clergy), those who fought (nobility), and those who worked (peasants). Naturally, the clergy and the nobility (the elites) found this division to be natural and good.

Divisions existed within the clergy between monks and bishops, as the church hierarchy took on an increasingly aristocratic character. A new monastic order arose in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Cluniacs, that promoted the church's role to pray for the world rather than engage in it and that freedom from lay control was essential for churches to perform their spiritual tasks. Ascetic communities, going beyond the Cluniacs, were devoted to a life of poverty, self-denial, and seclusion during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Cistercians, critics of the Cluniacs, followed the *Rule of St. Benedict* literally. As prestigious as the monasteries were, the Pope was of the view that monks belonged in their monasteries and that bishops should lead society.

The nobility consisted of lords who owned large amounts of land, and their vassals who were professional soldiers, or knights. The nobility became associated with chivalry, a code of conduct for mounted soldiers that ranked military skill as the greatest virtue. Chivalry also valued loyalty, which was the glue that held feudal society together. Literature portrayed chivalry in a more romantic and heroic manner. Noble families practiced primogeniture, which reserved all land, castles, and titles to the first-born son for inheritance. This practice increased the number of clergymen and professional soldiers because only a small number of men became landowners.

The peasantry was a diverse group of workers who ranged from slaves to serfs to freemen. Slavery declined dramatically in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and a majority of peasants were serfs, individuals who were legally bound to certain land and lacked certain rights. Most serfs lived on manors, large landholdings owned by a lord. The lord would most likely be the vassal of a wealthier lord (political bond), while the serf owed labor services (corvees) and rent to the lord of their manor (economic bond). In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the economy expanded and trade increased, many peasants improved their standard of living. The agrarian village that emerged around the manor was a durable community where peasants cooperated in the operations of daily life. Peasants shared tools, performed corvee together, and celebrated religious festivals as a group.

Aside from the rural village and the tripartite social model, urbanization and the rise of urban workers became an exception to social hierarchy. Urban society was still hierarchical, but it was new and flexible. As wealthy nobles moved from their country manor to the town, they created employment opportunities for merchants, craftsmen, day laborers, and servants.

As the Byzantine Empire and Islamic Empire vacillated between persecution and toleration towards Jews, many of them migrated to Western Europe. Most Jews settled in towns and cities in order to worship together in community, but the High Middle Ages witnessed much anti-Semitism. As Western Europe's economy expanded, money lending became more common and the Jews became the target of Christian moralists who objected to the practice. As Christian monastic movements gained influence and prestige within society, the Jews became the target of Christian intolerance. Finally, as the Crusades produced resentment at "enemies" of Christianity, many Jewish communities within Europe were attacked by Crusaders on their way to the Holy Land.

## Medieval Social Movements

The first large-scale social movements in European history were religious. According to the Roman Catholic Church, unity of belief was crucial and the effort by the church to define theology drew sharp lines between orthodox and heretical views. Clergymen and laymen, who viewed themselves as reformers critical of church teachings or practices, became leaders of “heretical” movements. During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Waldensians and Albigensians criticized the clergy as rich and corrupt. Unlike other reformers who wanted to reform the Catholic Church from within, groups such as the Waldensians and Albigensians broke with the church and claimed to possess the “real” truth. Thus, the uniformity of Catholic belief was being challenged within Western Europe.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a new monastic movement arose, the mendicants. Francis of Assisi, the son of a rich Italian merchant, renounced his wealth and began wandering around Italy begging for food and preaching. Francis gained many followers and they became the Franciscans, a new monastic order whose members lived a simple life based on poverty, preaching, and service. The Franciscans, who professed obedience to the pope and received papal approval, established schools in many of Europe’s cities. Another monastic order, the Dominicans, also lived a life of poverty and preaching. They, like the Franciscans, established many schools throughout Europe.

The Beguines were communities of women who lived together, devoted themselves to charitable works, but did not take vows as nuns. They lived out the ideals of voluntary poverty and service to others. The Beguines were the first exclusively women’s movement in the history of Christianity.

## Medieval Intellectual Movements

Through the Reconquista, the Crusades, and migration of Byzantine scholars to Italian city-states, Western Europe slowly rediscovered its classical intellectual past. Islamic, Jewish, and Orthodox scholars all played a role in making the thought of Aristotle available to Latin Christian scholars in the West. Muslims such as Avicenna and Averroes, Jews such as Maimonides, and others attempted to adapt Aristotle’s writings to their faith traditions. The quest to reconcile reason and faith, which continues today, had begun.

Christian scholars began to employ Aristotelian logical argumentation to debate doctrinal disputes and formulate logical proofs for the existence of God. No longer was Christian scholarship simply producing commentaries on the Bible as the early Church Fathers had done. Formal logic was now being used to defend ideas that had previously been defended by appeals to faith alone. Anselm, the archbishop of Canterbury in England, and Peter Abelard, a French theologian and philosopher, were the two foundational thinkers for this new approach, referred to as Scholasticism, which turned into an academic movement that attempted to show that Christian theology is inherently rational, that faith and reason need not be contradictory. The greatest of the Scholastics was Thomas Aquinas, who produced a synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian doctrine that became influential within the Roman Catholic Church.

During the Scholastic Movement, increasing numbers of students came to study under prestigious scholars at cathedral and monastic schools, particularly in Paris, and the result was the creation of an entirely new institution, the university. The University of Paris was one of the earliest and most prestigious, and other universities were soon founded throughout Europe. The university arose because scholars organized, much like a guild, to regulate the details of their trade: education. Scholars wanted control over curriculum, instructional fees, and requirements for entry into and completion of specific programs. A bachelor’s degree consisted of the seven liberal arts: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory, grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the foundation of the degree being the last three (the trivium). A bachelor’s degree awarded a license to teach, while a master’s degree was required to teach at the university level. Some scholars went on to become doctors in theology, law, or medicine. Women were not accepted at the universities, either as students or as teachers.

The High Middle Ages experienced a literary transition away from Latin to vernacular (native) languages. Among the literature produced were heroic epics such as *Beowulf* (England) and *Song of Roland* (France), courtly love poems called “lays” by Marie de France and chivalrous “romances” based on the Celtic

legends of Arthur. Vernacular literature would continue to develop in the Late Middle Ages with writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer.

The architecture of the High Middle Ages is referred to as Romanesque and Gothic. Romanesque churches flourished in the Holy Roman Empire (Germany) during the 11<sup>th</sup> century and are characterized by greater internal height, large wall paintings (frescoes), and large-scale sculpture. Romanesque churches had massive walls, numerous colonnades, and often had a fortress-like appearance. Gothic architecture originated in France and the aim was to achieve a mysterious aura by capturing light in a specific manner through the use of stained glass windows. The use of stained glass windows was made possible by “point support” called buttresses. Gothic churches were characterized by verticality and translucency, and thrived during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries throughout Europe. The most famous example of Gothic architecture is Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

The Late Middle Ages (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) would be dominated by events such as the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy, the Great Schism within the Roman Catholic Church, the Hundred Years’ War between England and France, and spread of Black Death, or bubonic plague, and the beginning of the Italian Renaissance.