

## Chapter 9 Notes – *Christian Societies Emerge in Europe, 600 – 1200*

**Chapter Thesis:** During the time of the strong influence of Christianity throughout Europe, cultural and political interests shifted towards the new civilizations of the Germans, the Irish, the Byzantines, and the Kievan Russians, all of which formed and characterized medieval Europe.

- Charlemagne was the first to be called emperor in over 300 years, as Rome had declined and a shift for Europe took place from the Mediterranean to the northwest
  - German and Christian tradition created a new civilization
  - Irish monks preaching the Bible in Latin replaced memories of Roman and Greek philosophy
  - Greek-speaking Byzantine empire continued in the east, carrying on Roman heritage
  - Formation of **Kievan Russia** accelerated by Christian influence and Byzantine culture
- I. *The Byzantine Empire, 600 - 1200:* With Christianity as the official state religion, the Byzantine emperors ruled under a tradition similar to the old Roman Empire, unlike many of the kingdoms which succeeded it. Through this, the emperor took on a stronger role of the leader of Christianity as well as the political commander.
- A. An Empire Beleaguered: Islam posing both a political and religious challenge to the Christian Byzantine empire, as well as enemies from both northern and southern borders and a conflict between church and state, caused disruptions in the Byzantine empire.
    - A single monarch with centralized power prevented the Byzantine Empire from fragmenting into many localized, autonomous communities
    - Later Byzantine emperors had enemies: Slavic and Turkic peoples from the north and Seljuk Turks in the south
    - Relationships between state and church worsened and resulted in the schism
  - B. Society and Urban Life: The Byzantine social atmosphere was changed over time, with barter replacing a money economy, the decline of wealth and population, and the downfall of traditional urban nobility classes.
    - Urban advances and imperial government protected Byzantine Empire from economic losses of western Europe, at least initially
    - Both of these regions suffered the bubonic plague
    - Urban elite population shrank, ranking of aristocrats of court and landowners increased

- C. Cultural Achievements: Many cultural achievements occurred as a result of the Byzantine Empire, including the “Hagia Sophia,” a massive monument from the reign of Justinian, as well as numerous paintings and musical accomplishments.
  - Hagia Sophia cathedral, architectural monument in Constantinople
  - Byzantine religious art and musical traditions
- II. *Early Medieval Europe, 600 -1000*: With the rise of kings and centralized leaders throughout western Europe, the political spectacle was changed and reflected filial traditions of the Germanic peoples rather than the edict of an emperor.
  - A. The Time of Insecurity: Muslim invasions from North Africa continued into the Visigoth kingdom of Spain and France until Charlemagne’s grandfather prevented their advance and led to the Carolingian Empire under the Charlemagne family. Meanwhile, the Vikings raided monasteries along the coast of England hundreds of times and became feared in France, Britain, and Spain.
  - B. A Self-Sufficient Economy: Economic reforms occurred alongside new political organization under the Germanic peoples, and territorial lords replaced their Roman predecessors. The primary centers of agriculture in this region became self-sufficient plots of land known as **manors**.
  - C. Early Medieval Society in the West: The new model of a self-sufficient economy because of manors resulted in the limitations on freedoms for individuals in medieval society. However, an emerging nobility class resulted in a strong interest in military pursuits and a land ownership system called feudalism, in which vassals were given land for their service.
- III. *The Western Church*: Similarly to the declaration of the Byzantine emperor as the patriarch of Constantinople, popes in Western Europe shaped the emerging church and Christian society. After the tenth century, the councils of the church became more international rather than restricted to Roman nobility. However, disagreements of morality remained within the church amongst the clergy with regards to polytheism, nepotism, and simony.
  - A. Politics and the Church: In 962, the first Holy Roman Emperor was appointed and was given political rule and legal jurisdiction. However, there were disagreements as to the exact nature and extent of the power of this Emperor. Historians refer to this as the **investiture controversy**.
  - B. Monasticism: Monasticism began in the eastern Roman Empire and began with devotion to prayer and seclusion, taking a decidedly Christian form beginning in Egypt. An important characteristic historically about monasteries were their preservation of philosophical and learned literature of the past, especially with Latin works. Greek works were mainly kept by the Byzantines and the Muslims to the east, where the language was more prevalent.
- IV. *Kievan Russia, 900 – 1200*: Orthodoxy took hold of Kievan Russia rather than Catholicism, which had a significant impact on both it and Europe’s history, and demonstrated the blurred lines between economics, politics, and religion in that region.
  - A. The Rise of the Kievan Empire: The land between the Caspian and Black Seas was first occupied by Germanic, Iranian, and west Slavic migrants. It began with

the early Khazar Kingdom on the Volga River which took advantage of Russia's natural resources. Christianity reached this area when a Vladimir I of Kiev converted to Orthodox Christianity.

- B. Society and Culture: In Kievan Russia, political power came from trade rather than holding land, and the manor system of western Europe never took hold. Rather, shifting agriculture was practiced in which forests were burned to provide nutrients to the ground to produce crops.
- V. *Western Europe Revives, 1000 – 1200*: Western Europe grew from its stagnant economic state of subsistence workers into one between 1000-1200, as new technologies and cities gave rise to larger populations and larger agricultural yields.
- A. The Role of Technology: Although it is archaeologically difficult to pinpoint the spread of technology across Europe during this economic revival, certain inventions of the time such as the **horse collar** and other agricultural innovations are known to have appeared during this time and possibly contributed to agricultural success.
  - B. Cities and the Rebirth of the Trade: Thanks to communes, which were groups of citizens who were grouped to defend their city, independent cities were able to spring up across western Europe and attract many workers and expand economic and trade diversity.
- VI. *The Crusades, 1095 – 1204*: Coinciding with this revival, the Crusades were a series of military campaigns led by the Christians against the Muslims during 1095 – 1204 in the eastern Mediterranean region.
- A. The Roots of the Crusades: Social and economic ideals of the time fueled the reforming leaders of the Latin church to back the Crusades, including an interest in reclaiming the Holy Land important to the Christian faith.
  - B. The Impact of the Crusades: The Christians adapted much from the Muslim culture they were exposed to during the Crusades, such as inventions such as paper and colored glass.