

# WHAP Review

## Unit 2

600 - 1450 C.E.





## 600 C.E.–1450

1. Questions of periodization
  - A. Nature and causes of changes in the world history framework leading up to 600 C.E. – 1450 as a period
  - B. Emergence of new empires and political systems
  - C. Continuities and breaks within the period (e.g., the impact of the Mongols on international contacts and on specific societies)
2. The Islamic world
  - . The rise and role of Dar al-Islam as a unifying cultural and economic force in Eurasia and Africa
    - A. Islamic political structures, notably the caliphate
    - B. Arts, sciences, and technologies
3. Interregional networks and contacts
  - . Development and shifts in interregional trade, technology, and cultural exchange
    - A. Trans-Saharan trade
    - B. Indian Ocean trade
    - C. Silk routes
    - D. Missionary outreach of major religions
    - E. Contacts between major religions, e.g., Islam and Buddhism, Christianity and Islam
    - F. Impact of the Mongol empires
4. China's internal and external expansion
  - . The importance of the Tang and Song economic revolutions and the initiatives of the early Ming dynasty
    - A. Chinese influence on surrounding areas and its limits
5. Developments in Europe
  - . Restructuring of European economic, social, and political institutions
    - A. The division of Christendom into eastern and western Christian cultures
6. Social, cultural, economic, and political patterns in the Amerindian world
  - . Maya, Aztec, Inca
7. Demographic and environmental changes
  - . Impact of nomadic migrations on Afro-Eurasia and the Americas (e.g., Aztecs, Mongols, Turks, Vikings, and Arabs)
    - A. Migration of agricultural peoples (e.g., Bantu migrations, European peoples to east/central Europe)
    - B. Consequences of plague pandemics in the fourteenth century
    - C. Growth and role of cities
8. Diverse interpretations
  - . What are the issues involved in using cultural areas rather than states as units of analysis?
    - A. What are the sources of change: nomadic migrations versus urban growth?
    - B. Was there a world economic network in this period?
    - C. Were there common patterns in the new opportunities available to and constraints placed on elite women in this period?

### **Major Comparisons and Snapshots**

- Japanese and European feudalism
- Developments in political and social institutions in both eastern and western Europe
- Compare the role and function of cities in major societies
- Compare Islam and Christianity
- Gender systems and changes, such as the impact of Islam
- Aztec Empire and Inca Empire
- Compare European and sub-Saharan African contacts with the Islamic world

### **Examples of What You Need to Know**

- Arab caliphate, but not the transition from Umayyad to 'Abbasid
- Mamluks, but not Almohads
- Feudalism, but not specific feudal monarchs such as Richard I
- Manorialism, but not the three-field system
- Crusading movement and its impact, but not specific crusades
- Viking exploration, expansion, and impact, but not individual explorers
- Mongol expansion and its impact, but not details of specific khanates
- Papacy, but not particular popes
- Indian Ocean trading patterns, but not Gujarati merchants

## APWH Must Know Dates & People:

### 600-1450

#### **622 - Rise of Islam**

730 Printing invented in China

732 - Battle of Tours (end of Muslim move to France)

900- Decline of classical Maya

1054 - Schism of Greek and Latin Christian Churches divides Christianity permanently into two geographical and denominational halves.

1066 - Norman Conquest of England

1071 - Seljuk defeat of Byzantines (Battle of Manzikert)

1095 - 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade

#### **1206 Genghis Khan begins his conquest of Asia.**

1215 Magna Carta signed by King John at Runnymede: beginning of constitutional rule.

1258 - Mongols sack Baghdad

1271-1295 - Marco Polo travels

1300s - Rise of Ottomans

1324 - Mansa Musa's pilgrimage

1325-1349 - travels of Ibn Battuta

1347-1348 - Bubonic plague in Europe

1433 - end of Zheng He's voyages

1438 - Rise of the Inca

St. Thomas Aquinas	600-1450	He is the most famous scholastic theologian trying to reconcile the teaching of Christianity with the scientific and philosophical ideas of Aristotle, which had recently been reintroduced to western Europe through contacts with Byzantines and Muslims.
Ibn Battuta	600-1450	He was a Muslim jurist from Morocco, but is known for his writings of his extensive travels across the Dar-al-Islam.
Mansa Musa	600-1450	He was perhaps the wealthiest king in the world when he ruled the West African kingdom of Mali at its height, embracing Islam in his empire and showering gifts along the route as he made the hajj to Mecca with an entourage of thousands.
Urban II	600-1450	As Pope, he launched the crusades calling on Christian warriors to seize the holy land which had fallen to the Muslims and promising salvation to all those who died for cause.
Osman Bey	600-1450	As the chief of a nomadic band of Turks attempting to create an army of ghazi, or religious warriors, he founded the dynasty that would later establish the Ottoman Empire centered in Anatolia.
Hongwu	600-1450	This Buddhism monk ironically led the military forces that expelled Mongol rule from China and he became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty cleansing China of all Mongol influences and reinstating traditional Confucian values.
Zheng He	600-1450	This Chinese admiral led expeditions 100 times the size of Columbus's voyage as he extensively explored the Indian Ocean for the Ming Dynasty which mysteriously ended the expeditions which were seen as a threat to Confucian values.

Tamerlane	600-1450	This Turkish nomadic conqueror built an empire across Central Asia after the fall of the Mongols leaving a Muslim Turkish legacy that was reflected in the three Muslim empires that replaced it—the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid empires.
Abu al-Abbas	600-1450	He led a rebellion against the Umayyad dynasty in Persia and founded the Abbasid Dynasty, which would oversee the spread of Islam across three continents before being overthrown by the Mongols some five hundred years later.
Otto I of Saxony	600-1450	As the Carolingian empire crumbled, this German lord imposed his authority on much of Germany and began the Holy Roman Empire after being crowned emperor by the pope.
Chinggis Khan	600-1450	He unified the Mongols replacing tribal loyalty with a centralized rule that spread over the largest land empire the world has ever known though it split among his sons and grandsons into four khanates after his death.
Muhammad	600-1450	This Arabian merchant founded a new religion based on Judeo-Christian principles and the belief in one god, Allah, who would bring a final judgment on the world rewarding all the righteous, leading to his exile from Mecca to Medina from where he gathered a following for his triumphant return.

## UNIT II: 600 - 1450 C.E.

This second era is much shorter than the previous one, but during the years between 600 and 1450 C.E. many earlier trends continued to be reinforced, while some very important new patterns emerged that shaped all subsequent times.

### QUESTIONS OF PERIODIZATION

Change over time occurs for many reasons, but three phenomena that tend to cause it are:

- Mass migrations - Whenever a significant number of people leave one area and migrate to another, change occurs for both the land that they left as well as their destination
- Imperial conquests - If an empire (or later a country) deliberately conquers territory outside its borders, significant changes tend to follow for both the attackers and the attacked.
- Cross-cultural trade and exchange - Widespread contact among various areas of the world brings not only new goods but new ideas and customs to all areas involved.

During the classical era (about 1000 BCE to 600 CE), all of these phenomena occurred, as we saw in Unit I. With the fall of the three major classical civilizations, the stage was set for new trends that defined 600-1450 CE as another period with different migrations and conquests, and more developed trade patterns than before. Some major events and developments that characterized this era were:

- Older belief systems, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, came to become more important than political organizations in defining many areas of the world. Large religions covered huge areas of land, even though localized smaller religions remained in place.
- Two nomadic groups - the Bedouins and the Mongols - had a huge impact on the course of history during this era.
- A new religion - Islam - began in the 7th century and spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, Northern Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia.
- Whereas Europe was not a major civilization area before 600 CE, by 1450 it was connected to major trade routes, and some of its kingdoms were beginning to assert world power.

- Major empires developed in both South America (the Inca) and Mesoamerica (the Maya and Aztec.)
- China grew to have hegemony over many other areas of Asia and became one of the largest and most prosperous empires of the time.
- Long distance trade continued to develop along previous routes, but the amount and complexity of trade and contact increased significantly.

This unit will investigate these major shifts and continuities by addressing several broad topics:

- The Islamic World - Islam began in the Arabian peninsula in the 7th century CE, impacting political and economic structures, and shaping the development of arts, sciences and technology.
- Interregional networks and contacts - Shifts in and expansion of trade and cultural exchange increase the power of China, connected Europe to other areas, and helped to spread the major religions. The Mongols first disrupted, then promoted, long-distance trade throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- China's internal and external expansion - During the Tang and Song Dynasties, China experienced an economic revolution and expanded its influence on surrounding areas. This era also saw China taken over by a powerful nomadic group (the Mongols), and then returned to Han Chinese under the Ming Dynasty.
- Developments in Europe - European kingdoms grew from nomadic tribes that invaded the Roman Empire in the 5th century C.E. During this era, feudalism developed, and Christianity divided in two - the Catholic Church in the west and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the east. In both cases, the Church grew to have a great deal of political and economic power.
- Social, cultural, economic patterns in the Amerindian world - Major civilizations emerged, building on the base of smaller, less powerful groups from the previous era. The Maya, Aztec, and Inca all came to control large amounts of territory and many other native groups.
- Demographic and environmental changes - Urbanization continued, and major cities emerged in many parts of the world. Nomadic migrations during the era included the Aztecs, Mongols, Turks, Vikings, and Arabs. Long distance trade promoted the spread of disease, including the plague pandemics in the early fourteenth century.

## **THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

Islam - the religion with the second largest number of supporters in the world today - started in the sparsely populated Arabian Peninsula among the Bedouins, a nomadic group that controlled trade routes across the desert. In the early 7th century, a few trade towns, such as Mecca and Medina, were centers for camel caravans that were a link in the long distance trade network that stretched from the Mediterranean to eastern China. Mecca was also the destination for religious pilgrims who traveled there to visit shrines to countless gods and spirits. In the center of the city was a simple house of worship called the Ka'aba, which contained among its many idols the Black Stone, believed to have been placed there by Abraham, the founder of Judaism. Jews and Christians inhabited the city, and they mixed with the majority who were polytheistic.

## **THE FOUNDING OF ISLAM**

Islam was founded in Mecca by Muhammad, a trader and business manager for his wife, Khadijah, a wealthy businesswoman. Muhammad was interested in religion, and when he was about 40 he began visiting caves outside the city to find quiet places to meditate. According to Muslim belief, one night while he was meditating Muhammad heard the voice of the angel Gabriel, who told him that he was a messenger of God. Muhammad became convinced that he was the last of the prophets, and that the one true god, Allah, was speaking to him through Gabriel. He came back into the city to begin spreading the new religion, and he insisted that all other gods were false. His followers came to be called Muslims, or people who have submitted to the will of Allah. Muhammad's ministry became controversial, partly because city leaders feared that Mecca would lose its position as a pilgrimage center if people accepted Muhammad's monotheism. In 622 C.E. he was forced to leave Mecca for fear of his life, and this famous flight to the city of Yathrib became known as the Hijrah, the official founding date for the new religion. In Yathrib he converted many to Islam, and he renamed the city

"Medina," or "city of the Prophet." He called the community the umma, a term that came to refer to the entire population of Muslim believers.

As Islam spread, Muhammad continued to draw the ire of Mecca's leadership, and he became an astute military leader in the hostilities that followed. In 630, the Prophet and 10,000 of his followers captured Mecca and destroyed the idols in the Ka'aba. He proclaimed the structure as the holy structure of Allah, and the Black Stone came to symbolize the replacement of polytheism by the faith in one god.

## **ISLAMIC BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

The Five Pillars of faith are five duties at the heart of the religion. These practices represent a Muslim's submission to the will of God.

- Faith - When a person converts to Islam, he or she recites the Declaration of Faith, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." This phrase is repeated over and over in Muslim daily life.
- Prayer - Muslims must face the city of Mecca and pray five times a day. The prayer often takes place in mosques (Islamic holy houses), but Muslims may stop to pray anywhere. In cities and towns that are primarily Muslim, a muezzin calls people to prayer from a minaret tower for all to hear.
- Alms - All Muslims are expected to give money for the poor through a special religious tax called alms. Muhammad taught the responsibility to support the less fortunate.
- Fasting - During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunup to sundown. Only a simple meal is eaten at the end of the day that reminds Muslims that faith is more important than food and water.
- Pilgrimage - Muslims are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. This event, called the hajj, takes place once a year, and people arrive from all over the world in all kinds of conveyances to worship at the Ka'aba and several other holy sites nearby. All pilgrims wear an identical white garment to show their equality before Allah.

The single most important source of religious authority for Muslims is the Qur'an, the holy book believed to be the actual words of Allah. According to Islam, Allah expressed his will through the Angel Gabriel, who revealed it to Muhammad. After Muhammad's death these revelations were collected into a book, the Qur'an. Muhammad's life came to be seen as the best model for proper living, called the Sunna. Using the Qur'an and the Sunna for guidance, early followers developed a body of law known as shari'a, which regulated the family life, moral conduct, and business and community life of Muslims. Shari'a still is an important force in many Muslim countries today even if they have separate bodies of official national laws. In the early days of Islam, shari'a brought a sense of unity to all Muslims.

## **THE SPREAD OF ISLAM**

Muhammad died in 632 CE, only ten years after the hijrah, but by that time, Islam had spread over much of the Arabian Peninsula. Since Muhammad's life represented the "seal of the prophets" (he was the last one), anyone that followed had to be a very different sort. The government set up was called a caliphate, ruled by a caliph (a title that means "successor" or "deputy") selected by the leaders of the umma. The first caliph was Abu-Bakr, one of Muhammad's close friends. He was followed by three successive caliphs who all had known the Prophet, and were "rightly guided" by the Qur'an and the memory of Muhammad. By the middle of the 8th century Muslim armies had conquered land from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indus River, and the caliphate stretched 6000 miles east to west.

Religious zeal certainly played an important role in the rapid spread of Islam during the 7th and 8th centuries C.E. However, several other factors help to explain the phenomenon:

- Well-disciplined armies - For the most part the Muslim commanders were able, war tactics were effective, and the armies were efficiently organized.

- Weakness of the Byzantine and Persian Empires - As the Islamic armies spread north, they were aided by the weakness of the empires they sought to conquer. Both the Byzantine and Persian Empires were weaker than they had been in previous times, and many of their subjects were willing to convert to the new religion.
- Treatment of conquered peoples - The Qur'an forbid forced conversions, so conquered people were allowed to retain their own religions. Muslims considered Christians and Jews to be superior to polytheistic people, not only because they were monotheistic, but also because they too adhered to a written religious code. As a result, Muslims called Christians and Jews "people of the book." Many conquered people chose to convert to Islam, not only because of its appeal, but because as Muslims they did not have to pay a poll tax.

## **THE SUNNI-SHI'A SPLIT**

The Arab tribes had fought with one another for centuries before the advent of Islam, and the religion failed to prevent serious splits from occurring in the caliphate. Each of the four caliphs was murdered by rivals, and the death of Muhammad's son-in-law Ali in 661 triggered a civil war. A family known as the Umayyads emerged to take control, but Ali's death sparked a fundamental division in the umma that has lasted over the centuries. The two main groups were:

- Sunni - In the interest of peace, most Muslims accepted the Umayyads' rule, believing that the caliph should continue to be selected by the leaders of the Muslim community. This group called themselves the Sunni, meaning "the followers of Muhammad's example."
- Shi'a - This group thought that the caliph should be a relative of the Prophet, and so they rejected the Umayyads' authority. "Shi'a" means "the party of Ali," and they sought revenge for Ali's death.

Even though the caliphate continued for many years, the split contributed to its decline as a political system. The caliphate combined political and religious authority into one huge empire, but it eventually split into many political parts. The areas that it conquered remained united by religion, but the tendency to fall apart politically has been a major feature of Muslim lands. Many other splits followed, including the formation of the Sufi, who reacted to the luxurious lives of the later caliphs by pursuing a life of poverty and devotion to a spiritual path. They shared many characteristics of other ascetics, such as Buddhist and Christian monks, with their emphasis on meditation and chanting.

## **THE CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN**

The patriarchal system characterized most early civilizations, and Arabia was no exception. However, women enjoyed rights not always given in other lands, such as inheriting property, divorcing husbands, and engaging in business ventures (like Muhammad's first wife, Khadijah.) The Qur'an emphasized equality of all people before Allah, and it outlawed female infanticide, and provided that dowries go directly to brides. However, for the most part, Islam reinforced male dominance. The Qur'an and the shari'a recognized descent through the male line, and strictly controlled the social and sexual lives of women to ensure the legitimacy of heirs. The Qur'an allowed men to follow Muhammad's example to take up to four wives, and women could have only one husband.

Muslims also adopted the long-standing custom of veiling women. Upper class women in Mesopotamia wore veils as early as the 13th century BCE, and the practice had spread to Persia and the eastern Mediterranean long before Muhammad lived. When Muslims conquered these lands, the custom remained intact, as well as the practice of women venturing outside the house only in the company of servants or chaperones.

## **ARTS, SCIENCES, AND TECHNOLOGIES**

Because Islam was always a missionary religion, learned officials known as ulama ( "people with religious knowledge") and qadis ("judges") helped to bridge cultural differences and spread Islamic values throughout the dar al-Islam, as Islamic lands came to be known. Formal educational institutions were established to help in this mission. By the 10th century CE, higher education schools known as madrasas had appeared, and by the 12th century they were well established. These institutions, often supported by the



wealthy, attracted scholars from all over, and so we see a flowering of arts, sciences, and new technologies in Islamic areas in the 12th through 15th centuries.

When Persia became a part of the caliphate, the conquerors adapted much of the rich cultural heritage of that land. Muslims became acquainted, then, with the literary, artistic, philosophical, and scientific traditions of others. Persian was the principle language of literature, poetry, history, and political theory, and the verse of the Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam is probably the most famous example. Although many of the stories of The Arabian Nights or The Thousand and One Nights were passed down orally from generation to generation, they were written down in Persian.

Islamic states in northern India also adapted mathematics from the people they conquered, using their Hindi numerals, which Europeans later called "Arabic numerals." The number system included a symbol for zero, a very important concept for basic calculations and multiplication. Muslims are generally credited with the development of mathematical thought, particularly algebra. Muslims also were interested in Greek philosophy, science, and medical writings. Some were especially involved in reconciling Plato's thoughts with the teachings of Islam. The greatest historian and geographer of the 14th century was Ibn Khaldun, a Moroccan who wrote a comprehensive history of the world. Another Islamic scholar, Nasir al-Din, studied and improved upon the cosmological model of Ptolemy, an ancient Greek astronomer. Nasir al-Din's model was almost certainly used by Nicholas Copernicus, a Polish monk and astronomer who is usually credited with developing the heliocentric model for the solar system.

## **INTERREGIONAL NETWORKS AND CONTACTS**

Contacts among societies in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia increased significantly between 600 and 1450 CE, and Africa and Europe became much more important links in the long-distance trade networks. Both the Indian Ocean Trade and the Silk Road were disrupted by major migrations during this period, but both recovered and eventually thrived. Europeans were first brought into the trade loop through cities like Venice and Genoa on the Mediterranean, and the Trans-Saharan trade became more vigorous as major civilizations developed south of the Sahara.

Two major sea-trading routes - those of the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean - linked the newly created Muslim Empire together, and Arabic sailors came to dominate the trade. Muslims also were active in the Silk Road trade to India and China. To encourage the flow of trade, Muslim money changers set up banks throughout the caliphate so that merchants could easily trade with those at far distances. Cities along the trade routes became cosmopolitan mixtures of many religions and customs.

## **AFRICAN SOCIETIES AND EMPIRES**

Until about 600 CE, most African societies based their economies on hunting and gathering or simple agriculture and herding. They centered their social and political organization around the family, and none had a centralized government. Beginning around 640, Islam spread into the northern part of the continent, bringing with it the unifying forces of religious practices and law, the shari'a. As Islam spread, many African rulers converted to the new religion, and centralized states began to form. The primary agents of trade, the Berbers of the Sahara, became Muslims, although they retained their identities and tribal loyalties. As a result, Islam mixed with native cultures to create a synthesis that took different forms in different places in northern Africa. This gradual, nonviolent spread of Islam was very conducive to trade, especially since people south of the Sahara had gold.

Between 600 and 1450 CE, two major empires emerged in West Africa, just south of the Sahara Desert:

- Ghana - By the 700s, a farming people called the Soninke had formed an empire that they called Ghana ("war chief") that was growing rich from taxing the goods that traders carried through their territory. Their most important asset was gold from the Niger River area that they traded for salt from the Sahara. The Arab and Berber traders also carried cloth, weapons, and manufactured goods from ports on the Mediterranean. Ghana's king had exclusive rights to the gold, and so controlled its supply to keep the price high. The king also commanded an impressive army, and so the empire thrived. Like the Africans along the Mediterranean, Ghana's rulers and elites converted to Islam, but most others retained their native religions.

- Mali - During the 11th century, the Almoravids, a Muslim group from northern Africa, conquered Ghana. By the 13th century, a new empire, called Mali, dominated West Africa. The empire began with Mande-speaking people south of Ghana, but it grew to be larger, more powerful, and richer than Ghana had been. Mali too based its wealth on gold. New deposits were found east of the Niger River, and African gold became a basic commodity in long distance trade. Mali's first great leader was Sundiata, whose life inspired an epic poem -The Legend of Sundiata - that was passed down from one generation to the next. He defeated kingdoms around Mali, and also proved to be an affective administrator. Perhaps even more famous was Mansu Musa, a 14th century ruler. He is best known for giving away so much gold as he traveled from Mali to Mecca for the hajj that he set off a major round of inflation, seriously affecting economies all along the long-distance trade routes. Mali's capital city, Timbuktu, became a world center of trade, education and sophistication.
- The Swahili city-states - The people who lived in trade cities along the eastern coast of Africa provided a very important link for long-distance trade. The cities were not united politically, but they were well developed, with a great deal of cultural diversity and sophisticated architecture. The people were known collectively as the Swahili, based on the language that they spoke - a combination of Bantu and Arabic. Most were Muslims, and the sailors were renown for their ability to maneuver their small boats through the Indian Ocean to India and other areas of the Middle East via the Red Sea and back again.

### **THE CHRISTIAN CRUSADES (LATE 11TH THROUGH 13TH CENTURIES C.E.)**

Pope Urban II called for the Christian Crusades in 1095 with the urgent message that knights from western Europe must defend the Christian Middle East, especially the Holy Lands of the eastern Mediterranean, from Turkish Muslim invasions. The Eastern Orthodox Byzantine emperor called on Urban for help when Muslims were right outside Constantinople. What resulted over the next two centuries was not the recovery of the Middle East for Christianity, but many other unintended outcomes. By the late 13th century, the Crusades ended, with no permanent gains made for Christians. Indeed, Constantinople eventually was destined to be taken by Muslims in 1453 and renamed Istanbul.

Instead of bringing the victory that the knights sought, the Crusades had the ultimate consequence of bringing Europeans squarely into the major world trade circuits. The societies of the Middle East were much richer than European kingdoms were, and the knights encountered much more sophisticated cultures there. They brought home all kinds of trading goods from many parts of the world and stimulated a demand in Europe for foreign products, such as silk, spices, and gold. Two Italian cities - Venice and Genoa - took advantage of their geographic location to arrange for water transportation for knights across the Mediterranean to the Holy Lands. On the return voyages, they carried goods back to European markets, and both cities became quite wealthy from the trade. This wealth eventually became the basis for great cultural change in Europe, and by 1450, European kingdoms were poised for the eventual control of long-distance trade that they eventually gained during the 1450-1750 era.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONGOLS**

The Mongol invasions and conquests of the 13th century are arguably among the most influential set of events in world history. This nomadic group from Central Asia swept south and east, just as the Huns had done several centuries before. They conquered China, India, the Middle East, and the budding kingdom of Russia. If not for the fateful death of the Great Khan Ogadai, they might well have conquered Europe as well. As it is, the Mongols established and ruled the largest empire ever assembled in all of world history. Although their attacks at first disrupted the major trade routes, their rule eventually brought the Pax Mongolica, or a peace often compared to the Pax Romana established in ancient times across the Roman Empire.

### **THE RISE OF THE MONGOLS**

The Mongols originated in the Central Asian steppes, or dry grasslands. They were pastoralists, organized loosely into kinship groups called clans. Their movement almost certainly began as they sought new pastures for their herds, as had so many of their predecessors. Many historians believe that a severe drought caused the initial movement, and that the Mongol's superior ability as horsemen sustained their successes.

Around 1200 CE, a Mongol khan (clan leader) named Temujin unified the clans under his leadership. His acceptance of the title Genghis Khan, or "universal leader" tells us something of his ambitions for his empire. Over the next 21 years, he led the Mongols in conquering much of Asia. Although he didn't conquer China in his lifetime, he cleared the way for its eventual defeat by Mongol forces. His sons and grandsons continued the conquests until the empire eventually reached its impressive size. Genghis Khan is usually seen as one of the most talented military leaders in world history. He organized his warriors by the Chinese model into armies of 10,000, which were grouped into 1,000 man brigades, 100-man companies, and 10-man platoons. He ensured that all generals were either kinsmen or trusted friends, and they remained amazingly loyal to him. He used surprise tactics, like fake retreats and false leads, and developed sophisticated catapults and gunpowder charges. The Mongols were finally stopped in Eurasia by the death of Ogodai, the son of Genghis Khan, who had become the Great Khan centered in Mongolia when his father died. At his death, all leaders from the empire went to the Mongol capital to select a replacement, and by the time this was accomplished, the invasion of Europe had lost its momentum. The Mongols were also contained in Islamic lands by the Mamluk armies of Egypt, who had been enslaved by the Abbasid Caliphate. These forces matched the Mongols in horsemanship and military skills, and defeated them in battle in 1260 before the Mongols could reach the Dardanelle strait. The Mongol leader Hulegu decided not to press for further expansion.

## THE MONGOL ORGANIZATION

The Mongol invasions disrupted all major trade routes, but Genghis Khan's sons and grandsons organized the vast empire in such a way that the routes soon recovered. They formed four Khanates, or political organizations each ruled by a different relative, with the ruler of the original empire in Central Asia designated as the "Great Khan," or the one that followed in the steps of Genghis. Once the Mongols defeated an area, generally by brutal tactics, they were generally content to extract tribute (payments) from them, and often allowed conquered people to keep many of their customs. The Mongol khans were spread great distances apart, and they soon lost contact with one another. Most of them adopted many customs, even the religions, of the people they ruled. For example, the Il-khan that conquered the last caliphate in the Middle East eventually converted to Islam and was a great admirer of the sophisticated culture and advanced technologies of his subjects. So the Mongol Empire eventually split apart, and the Mongols themselves became assimilated into the cultures that they had "conquered."

## TWO TRAVELLERS

Much of our knowledge of the world in the 13th and 14th century comes from two travelers, Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, who widened knowledge of other cultures through their writings about their journeys.

- **Marco Polo** - In the late 13th century, Marco Polo left his home in Venice, and eventually traveled for many years in China. He was accompanied by his father and uncle, who were merchants anxious to stimulate trade between Venice along the trade routes east. Polo met the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan (Genghis Khan's grandson), who was interested in his travel stories and convinced him to stay as an envoy to represent him in different parts of China. He served the khan for 17 years before returning home, where he was captured by Genoans at war with Venice. While in prison, he entertained his cellmates with stories about China. One prisoner compiled the stories into a book that became wildly popular in Europe, even though many did not believe that Polo's stories were true. Europeans could not believe that the fabulous places that Polo described could ever exist.
- **Ibn Battuta** - This famous traveler and prolific writer of the 14th century spent many years of his life visiting many places within Islamic Empires. He was a Moroccan legal scholar who left his home for the first time to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. After his hajj was completed, he traveled through Mesopotamia and Persia, then sailed down the Red Sea and down the east African coast as far south as Kilwa. He later traveled to India, the Black Sea, Spain, Mali, and the great trading cities of Central Asia. He wrote about all of the places he traveled and compiled a detailed journal that has given historians a

great deal of information about those places and their customs during the 14th century. A devout Muslim who generally expected fine hospitality, Ibn Battutu seldom kept his opinions to himself, and he commented freely on his approval or disapproval of the things that he saw.

Although few people traveled as much as Marco Polo and Ibn Battutu did, the large empires of the Mongols and other nomadic peoples provided a political foundation for the extensive cross-cultural interaction of the era.

## **CHINA'S HEGEMONY**

Hegemony occurs when a civilization extends its political, economic, social, and cultural influence over others. For example, we may refer to the hegemony of the United States in the early 21st century, or the conflicting hegemony of the United States and Russia during the Cold War Era. In the time period between 600 and 1450 CE, it was impossible for one empire to dominate the entire globe, largely because distance and communication were so difficult. Both the Islamic caliphates and the Mongol Empire fell at least partly because their land space was too large to control effectively. So the best any empire could do was to establish regional hegemony. During this time period, China was the richest and most powerful of all, and extended its reach over most of Asia.

## **THE "GOLDEN ERA" OF THE TANG AND SONG**

During the period after the fall of the Han Dynasty in the 3rd century C.E., China went into a time of chaos, following the established pattern of dynastic cycles. During the short-lived Sui Dynasty (589-618 C.E.), China began to restore centralized imperial rule. A great accomplishment was the building of the Grand Canal, one of the world's largest waterworks projects before the modern era. The canal was a series of manmade waterways that connected the major rivers and made it possible for China to increase the amount and variety of internal trade. When completed it was almost 1240 miles long, with roads running parallel to the canal on either side.

## **STRENGTHS OF THE TANG**

In 618 a rebel leader seized China's capital, Xi'an, and proclaimed himself the emperor of the Tang Dynasty, an empire destined to last for almost three hundred years (till 907). Under the Tangs China regained strength and emerged as a powerful and prosperous society. Three major accomplishments of the Tang account for their long-lasting power:

- A strong transportation and communications system - The Grand Canal contributed to this accomplishment, but the Tang rulers also built and maintained an advanced road system, with inns, postal stations, and stables to service travelers along the way. People traveled both on foot and by horse, and the emperor used the roads to send messages by courier in order to keep in contact with his large empire.
- The equal-field system - The emperor had the power to allocate agricultural land to individuals and families, and the equal-field system was meant to ensure that land distribution was fair and equitable. Part of the emperor's motivation was to control the amount of land that went to powerful families, a problem that had caused strong challenges to the emperor's mandate during the Han Dynasty. The system worked until the 9th century, when influential families again came to accumulate much of the land.
- A merit-based bureaucracy - This system was well developed during the Han Dynasty, but the Tang made good use of it by recruiting government officials who were well educated, loyal, and efficient. Although powerful families used their resources to place relatives in government positions, most bureaucrats won their posts because of intellectual ability.

Tang China extended its hegemony by extracting tribute (gifts and money) from neighboring realms and people. China was often called "the Middle Kingdom," because its people saw their civilization at the center of all that paid it honor. The empire itself was far larger than any before it, following along the river valleys from Vietnam

to the south and Manchuria to the north, and extending into parts of Tibet. In 668, the Tang overran Korea, and established a vassal kingdom called Silla.

## **RELIGIOUS ISSUES**

Long before the Tang Dynasty was founded, Buddhism had made its way into China along the trade routes. By the pre-Tang era, Buddhist monasteries had so grown in influence that they held huge tracts of land and exerted political influence. Many rulers of the pre-Tang era, particularly those from nomadic origins, were devout Buddhists. Many variations of Buddhism existed, with Mahayana Buddhism prevailing, a major branch of the religion that allowed a great deal of variance of Buddha's original teachings. Empress Wu (690-705) was one of Buddhism's strongest supporters, contributing large sums of money to the monasteries and commissioning many Buddhist paintings and sculptures. By the mid-9th century, more than 50,000 monasteries existed in China.

Confucian and Daoist supporters took note of Buddhism's growing influence, and they soon came to challenge it. Part of the conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism was that in many ways they were opposite beliefs, even though they both condoned "right" behavior and thought. Confucianism emphasized duties owed to one's society, and placed its highest value on order, hierarchy, and obedience of superiors. Buddhism, on the other hand, encouraged its supporters to withdraw from society, and concentrate on personal meditation. Finally in the 9th century, Confucian scholar-bureaucrats conspired to convince the emperors to take lands away from the monasteries through the equal-field system. Under emperor Wuzong, thousands of monasteries were burned, and many monks and nuns were forced to abandon them and return to civilian life. Not only was Buddhism weakened by these actions, but the Tang Dynasty lost overall power as well. However, Confucianism emerged as the central ideology of Chinese civilization and survived as such until the early 20th century.

## **THE FOUNDING OF THE SONG DYNASTY**

During the 8th century, warlords began to challenge the Tang rulers, and even though the dynasty survived until 907 C.E., the political divisions encouraged nomadic groups to invade the fringes of the empire. Worsening economic conditions led to a succession of revolts in the 9th century, and for a few years China fell into chaos again. However, recovery came relatively quickly, and a military commander emerged in 960 to reunite China, beginning the Song Dynasty. The Song emperors did not emphasize the military as much as they did civil administration, industry, education, and the arts. As a result, the Song never established hegemony over as large an area as the Tang had, and political disunity was a constant threat as long as they held power. However, the Song presided over a "golden era" of Chinese civilization characterized by prosperity, sophistication, and creativity.

The Song vastly expanded the bureaucracy based on merit by sponsoring more candidates with more opportunities to learn Confucian philosophy, and by accepting more candidates for bureaucratic posts than the Sui and Tang.

## **PROBLEMS UNDER THE SONG**

The Song created a more centralized government than ever before, but two problems plagued the empire and eventually brought about its fall:

- **Finances** - The expansion of the bureaucracy meant that government expenses skyrocketed. The government reacted by raising taxes, but peasants rose in two major rebellions in protest. Despite these warnings, bureaucrats refused to give up their powerful positions.
- **Military** - China had always needed a good military, partly because of constant threats of invasion by numerous nomadic groups. The Song military was led by scholar bureaucrats with little knowledge or real interest in directing armies. The Jurchens, a northern nomadic group with a strong military, conquered other nomads around them, overran northern China, and eventually capturing the Song capital. The Song were left with only the southern part of their empire that was eventually conquered by the Mongols in 1279 C.E.

## **ECONOMIC REVOLUTIONS OF THE TANG AND SONG DYNASTIES**

Even though the Song military weakness eventually led to the dynasty's demise, it is notable for economic revolutions that led to Chinese hegemony during the era. China's economic growth in turn had implications for many other societies through the trade that it generated along the long-distance routes. The changes actually began during the Tang Dynasty and became even more significant during Song rule. Some characteristics of these economic revolutions are:

- Increasing agricultural production - Before this era, Chinese agriculture had been based on the production of wheat and barley raised in the north. The Tang conquest of southern China and Vietnam added a whole new capability for agriculture; the cultivation of rice. In Vietnam they made use of a new strain of fast-ripening rice that allowed the production of two crops per year. Agricultural techniques improved as well, with the use of the heavy iron plow in the north and water buffaloes in the south. The Tang also organized extensive irrigation systems, so that agricultural production was able to move outward from the rivers.
- Increasing population - China's population about 600 C.E. was about 45 million, but by 1200 (the Song Dynasty) it had risen to about 115 million. This growth occurred partly because of the agricultural revolution, but also because distribution of food improved with better transportation systems, such as the Grand Canal and the network of roads throughout the empire.
- Urbanization - The agricultural revolution also meant that established cities grew and new ones were created. With its population of perhaps 2,000,000, the Tang capital of Xi'an was probably the largest city in the world. The Song capital of Hangzhou was smaller, with about 1,000,000 residents, but it too was a cosmopolitan city with large markets, public theatres, restaurants, and craft shops. Many other Chinese cities had populations of more than 100,000. Because rice production was so successful and Silk Road and Indian Ocean trade was vigorous, other farmers could concentrate on specialty fruits and vegetables that were for sale in urban markets.
- Technological innovations - During Tang times craftsmen discovered techniques for producing porcelain that was lighter, thinner, more useful, and much more beautiful. Chinese porcelain was highly valued and traded to many other areas of the world, and came to be known broadly as chinaware. The Chinese also developed superior methods for producing iron and steel, and between the 9th and 12th centuries, iron production increased tenfold. The Tang and Song are best known for the new technologies they invented, such as gunpowder, movable type printing, and seafaring aids, such as the magnetic compass. Gunpowder was first used in bamboo flame throwers, and by the 11th century inventors had constructed crude bombs.
- Financial inventions - Because trade was so strong and copper became scarce, Chinese merchants developed paper money as an alternative to coins. Letters of credit called "flying cash" allowed merchants to deposit money in one location and have it available in another. The Chinese also used checks which allowed drawing funds deposited with bankers.

## **NEO-CONFUCIANISM**

The conflict between Buddhism and Confucianism during the late Tang Dynasty eased under the Songs, partly because of the development of Neo-Confucianism. Classical Confucians were concerned with practical issues of politics and morality, and their main goal was an ordered social and political structure. Neo-Confucians also became familiar with Buddhist beliefs, such as the nature of the soul and the individual's spiritual relationships. They came to refer to *li*, a concept that defined a spiritual presence similar to the universal spirit of both Hinduism and Buddhism. This new form of Confucianism was an important development because it reconciled Confucianism with Buddhism, and because it influenced philosophical thought in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan in all subsequent eras.

## **PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL STRUCTURES**

As wealth and agricultural productivity increase, the patriarchal social structure of Chinese society also tightened. With family fortunes to preserve, elites insured the purity of their lines by further confining women to the home. The custom of foot binding became very popular among these families. Foot binding involved

tightly wrapping young girls' feet so that natural growth was seriously impaired. The result was a tiny malformed foot with the toes curled under and the bones breaking in the process. The women generally could not walk except with canes. Peasants and middle class women did not bind their feet because it was impractical, but for elite women, the practice - like wearing veils in Islamic lands - indicated their subservience to their male guardians.

## **KUBLAI KHAN, THE YUAN DYNASTY, AND THE EARLY MING (1279-1450 C.E.)**

The Mongols began to breach the Great Wall under Genghis Khan, but the southern Song was not conquered until his grandson, Kublai Khan captured the capital and set up a new capital in Beijing, which he called Khanbaluk, or "city of the Khan." This was the city that Marco Polo described to the world as the finest and richest in all the world. Under Kublai Khan, China was unified, and its borders grew significantly.

Although Mongols replaced the top bureaucrats, many lower Confucian officials remained in place, and the Khan clearly respected Chinese customs and innovations. However, whereas the Song had emphasized cultural and organizational values, the Mongols were most adept in military affairs and conquest. Also, even though trade flourished during the Tang and Song era, merchants had a much lower status than scholars did. Kublai Khan and his successors put a great deal of effort into conquering more territory in Asia, and they elevated the status of merchants, actions deeply resented by the Confucian bureaucrats.

As borders expanded once again, the Yuan emperors experienced the old problem of empire; too few military to protect too many borders. The Mongols increased tributes and established "tax farming," (a practice that gave middlemen the responsibility of collecting taxes), which led to corruption. The gap between the urban rich and the rural poor also grew, and a devastating plague spread through the population. All of these problems inspired conspiracy among the Confucian scholars, who led a revolt, toppled the Mongols, and established the Ming Empire.

The leader of the Ming revolt, Zhu Yuan Zhang, located the capital in Nanjing and made great efforts to reject the culture of the Mongols by closing off trade relations with Central Asia and the Middle East, and reasserting Confucian ideology. Thus the Ming set off a yo-yo effect of sorts in China that had been seen before, but became accentuated in the centuries that followed. China, a great civilization that was vitally connected to trade routes, shut herself off and turned to internal strengths. During this era, it was still possible because of great distances to other empires. China could choose to be left alone, and no one could do much about it, even if it limited long-distance trade profits. However, in subsequent eras this tendency to isolate itself would strip China of her hegemony and eventually lead to worldwide humiliation.

## **KOREA AND JAPAN**

During the 7th century Tang armies conquered much of Korea, resulting in the Korean Silla Dynasty's king recognizing the Tang emperor as his overlord. Tang forces withdrew from the peninsula, and even though Korea paid tribute to China, the Silla rulers were allowed to have a greatly deal of autonomy. Significantly, though, the tributary relationship developed in a great deal of Chinese influence diffusing to Korea. The Silla built a new capital modeled on the Tang capital, Confucian schools were founded, and Buddhism sparked a great deal of popular interest. However, unlike China, Korea never developed a bureaucracy based on merit. On the other hand, Chinese armies never invaded Japan, and even Kublai Khan's great forces could not overcome the treacherous straits that lie between Korea and Japan. The straits had isolated Japan since its beginnings, and its many islands and mountainous terrain led to separations among people who lived there. As a result, small states dominated by aristocratic clans developed, with agricultural communities developing wherever they were possible. Some Chinese influence, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Chinese writing characters diffused to Japan, but it remained unique in many ways. Two examples are:

- Shintoism -This native religion venerated ancestors, but also had a host of nature spirits and deities. Confucianism and Buddhism did not replace Shintoism, and it remained as an important religion in Japan.
- Separation of imperial power from real political power - Even though a Japanese emperor did emerge to rule the various clans, he served as a ceremonial figurehead and symbol of authority. The family that

really ran things from 794 to 1188 were the Fujiwaras - who had military might that allowed them to manipulate the emperor. An important divergence from Chinese influence occurred during the late 11th century when the Minamoto clan seized power and installed their leader as the shogun, a military leader who ruled in place of the emperor.

The Japanese developed a system of feudalism, a political and economic system less developed than those of centralized empires, but more powerful than a purely local government. Feudalism was accompanied by a set of political values that emphasized mutual ties, obligations, and loyalties. The Japanese elites - who came to be known as daimyos - found military talent in the samurai, professional warriors who swore loyalty to them. Samurais lived by a warrior's code - the bushido - that required them to commit suicide (seppuku) by disembowelment if they failed their masters.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE (500-1450 C.E.)

Until the 5th century most of the European continent was part of the Roman Empire. However, as the push from the Hun migrations from Central Europe caused other groups to move west as well, the Roman armies began to have problems in guarding their borders. As other weaknesses appeared that threatened the empire, Germanic groups such as the Goths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals began to take over, with Rome falling to the invasions in 476 C.E. Without the structure of the empire, the groups settled into areas of Europe and retained their own ways of life. The era from about 500 to 1000 C.E. is sometimes referred to as the "Dark Ages" in European history, partly because many aspects of the Roman civilization were lost, such as written language, advanced architectural and building techniques, complex government, and access to long-distance trade. For the most part, these early people of Europe could not read or write, and lived much as their nomadic ancestors had. In their isolation, they slowly cleared the forested areas for farming, but their greatest need was for protection. Dangers lay not only from animals in the forests, but also from other people that had settled in nearby areas. However, the need for protection grew to be most important when the Vikings from Scandinavia invaded many areas of Europe in the 8th and 9th centuries, followed by the Magyars, who came from the east in the late 9th century. In response, Europeans established feudalism, with many features similar to Japanese feudalism, but also with many differences.

European feudal institutions revolved around political and military relationships. The lord, a large landholder, provided his vassals with fiefs, or landholdings, in return for service. The most important service was military support, so these knights spent a great deal of time learning and practicing military techniques and horsemanship, as well as maintaining their fiefs. Vassals also supervised public works projects, and the administration of justice. The feudal political order developed into a complicated network of lord-vassal relationships, with lords having overlords, and overlords owing allegiance to kings. On these foundations early kingdoms, such as England and France, were built, but in other areas, such as modern-day Germany, the feudal organization remained highly decentralized.

### COMPARATIVE FEUDALISM - JAPAN AND EUROPE

	JAPAN	EUROPE
<b>Similarities</b>	System was grounded in political values that embraced all participants.	
	The idea of mutual ties and obligations was strong, with rituals and institutions that expressed them.	
	Feudalism was highly militaristic, with values such as physical courage, personal or family alliances, loyalty, ritualized combat, and contempt for nonwarriors.	



<b>Differences</b>	Feudalistic ties relied on group and individual loyalties.	Feudalistic ties were sealed by negotiated contracts, with explicit assurances of the advantages of the arrangement.
	Legacy was a group consciousness in which collective decision-making teams were eventually linked to the state.	Legacy was the reliance on parliamentary institutions in which participants could discuss and defend legal interests against the central monarch.

## **THE DIVISION OF CHRISTENDOM**

The Roman Empire was divided into two parts during the 4th century C.E. when imperial power shifted eastward from Rome to Byzantium. The emperor Constantine moved to the new center, and renamed the city Constantinople. As Christianity spread, it developed religious centers in both Rome and Constantinople, and as the two areas grew more politically independent, Christian practices and beliefs also split in different directions. Even though the church remained officially tied for many years after Rome fell in 476, in effect two different churches developed: the Eastern Orthodox Church in the east and the Roman Catholic Church in the west. The schism became official in 1054, when the Roman Pope and the Patriarch in Constantinople agreed that their religious differences could not be reconciled.

## **THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE**

While the west was falling to the Germanic invasions in the 4th and 5th centuries C.E., the eastern empire remained intact, partly because it withstood fewer attacks. This Byzantine Empire survived for almost a millennium after the western empire collapsed. For a time, it was a powerful Christian Empire, but it came under pressure from Islamic Turkish people by the 11th century, and finally fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Caesaropapism

As the first Christian Emperor of Rome, Constantine claimed to have divine favor for his rule. He defined Christian practices and intervened in theological disputes. This policy came to be known as "caesaropapism", whereby the emperor ruled as both secular lord and religious leader. This tendency to exalt Byzantine emperors as absolute rulers of both state and church was reinforced by the appearance of Justinian in the 6th century. He was an energetic, capable ruler with an energetic, capable wife called Theodora, a very religious Christian. Although they never resolved the many religious disputes that disrupted the empire, Justinian had many noteworthy accomplishments:

- The building of the Hagia Sophia, a magnificent domed church that still stands today as a Muslim mosque
- Extension of the political boundaries of the empire to regain most of the western territories again, only to be lost by later emperors
- The development of the Justinian Code, a law code that systemized Roman law going back to the Republic and continuing through the empire
- Of the accomplishments listed, the Justinian Code is the emperor's most enduring legacy, since it became the basis of law in western Europe and eventually the United States.

## **The Decline of the Empire**

Even Justinian could not revive the classical Roman Empire, and within 100 years of his death, large parts of the Byzantine Empire fell to Arab invaders. It thrived for a while as a smaller, more manageable entity, but by the late 11th century, the Seljuk Turks threatened Constantinople so that the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church called on Pope Urban II for help in defending the capital by Christian Crusaders.

## **THE CHURCH IN THE WEST**

While political and economic decentralization characterized western Europe between 500 and 1000 C.E., the Catholic Church emerged as a unifying institution with great religious, political, and economic power. The time period is sometimes referred to as the "Age of Faith" because the church was so central to life in Europe.

The power of the church was promoted by an unlikely Germanic group known as the Franks. They controlled much of what is now France by the 5th century C.E. when their leader Clovis led his forces on a campaign that wiped out the remains of Roman authority a few years after Rome's fall in 476. Clovis converted to Christianity, under some pressure from his wife, and from then, the Franks' conquests were done in the name of Jesus. One of his descendants, Charlemagne, ruled a kingdom that spread across a huge part of Europe, including both modern day France and Germany. Charlemagne was able to rescue the Roman Pope from captivity, and the Pope returned the favor by crowning Charlemagne as the new "Holy Roman Emperor," uniting church and state. Still, the Pope was the one controlling the crown, and the ceremony took place in Rome.

The Catholic Church established its influence in several ways:

- Development of a church hierarchy - The Pope in Rome came to be the head of the church, with cardinals that reported to him. Under the cardinals were archbishops, who governed bishops that were spread all over Europe. Individual priests lived in villages and towns and were supervised by the bishops.
- Establishment of wandering ministries - Not only did the church have priests attached to almost every village, but it also had wandering priests who represented its influence. Two orders were the Franciscans, known for their vows of poverty and ability to relate to peasants, and the Dominicans, a more scholarly order who ministered more to educational needs.
- The establishment of monasteries- Monasteries also spread all over Europe. These retreats from civilization were inhabited by monks who devoted their lives to study, worship, and hard work. Convents for nuns also were established, and both monasteries and convents served many vital functions:

1) Refuge for those in trouble - The monasteries and convents were seen as safe havens that represented the protection that the church offered to people.

2) Communication to the central church hierarchy - Abbots headed monasteries, and they served as another means of keeping church officials in touch with what was going on.

3) Centers of scholarship, education, and libraries - Monks very often were the only people in Europe that could read and write, and they spent large amounts of time copying ancient manuscripts that otherwise might have been lost in the various invasions. Some monasteries eventually formed the first European universities that began their library collections with books the monks had copied.

## **THE MANORIAL SYSTEM**

Feudalism generally defined the military and political relationships among kings, nobles, and knights, but manorialism describes the economic and political ties between landlords and their peasants. Most people were serfs, who farmed self-sufficient agricultural estates called manors. The manorial system had originated in the late Roman Empire as it helped people take care of basic economic needs as the empire weakened. Farming was difficult, although made easier by the introduction of the moldboard plow that allowed deeper turning of the soil.

Serfs had to give their lord part of their crops in return for grazing their animals on his land and milling their grain. They also did repairs to his castle and worked his land. They were not slaves, but few other options were open to them. The lord's castle and army in turn provided protection for the villages, and few dared to live outside the confines of the manor.

## **THE LATE MIDDLE AGES - 1000- 1450 C.E.**

The entire era in Europe between 500 and 1450 is also known as the "Middle Ages," a time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the revival of "civilization" starting with the European Renaissance in the early 15th century. Starting around 1000, Europe showed signs of revitalizing, largely because of the results of the

Christian Crusades that put Europeans in touch with more sophisticated cultures to the east through the long-distance trade routes.

Before about 1300 Europe was populated by serfs, or peasants tied to lands owned by nobility, living in rural areas relatively isolated from others. No large cities existed yet, like the metropolises in China, the Middle East, and northern Africa. Many demographic changes took place that radically altered life in Europe:

- The Agricultural Revolution - Largely through contacts with others, Europeans learned and adapted agricultural techniques and inventions that greatly increased their crop production. They perfected the three-field system, in which they rotated crops, allowing a field to remain fallow every third year. They also used iron plows much better suited to the heavy soils of northern and western Europe. Watermills, horses, and horse harnesses (all in use in other areas of the world) contributed to farming efficiency.
- Population increases - With the increase in crop production came population growth, with more hands available to expand agriculture.
- Revival of trade - This revival started in Venice and Genoa, Italian cities that profited from trade during the Crusades. However, the growing population sparked demand for more products so that trade intensified town to town, and a new trade area in present-day northern France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.
- Growth of towns/new towns - The growing trade, crop production, and population stimulated villages to become towns, and the towns became centers for craftsmen, merchants, and specialized laborers.
- Commercial Revolution - Once European towns connected to the long-distance trade routes, they learned to use financial innovations developed elsewhere, like banks and bills of exchange
- Guilds - Craftsmen formed guilds, or trade associations for their particular craft. These organizations came to be quite powerful, passing laws, levying taxes, and challenging powerful merchants. The guilds set standards for goods, regulated labor, and supervised apprentices as they learned the trade.

## **EARLY RUSSIA**

For centuries before this era Indo-European people called the Slavs had lived in eastern Europe, very much in the paths of the east to west migrations that scattered them over the years. The Russians were one of these Slavic peoples who intermarried with the Viking invaders and began to organize a large state by the 10th century. The most important early city was Kiev, located in the present-day Ukraine, which built up regular trade and contacts with Constantinople. They adopted the Eastern Orthodox religion, and established the Russian Orthodox Church. The princes of Kiev established firm control over the church, and they made use of the Byzantine legal codes put together by Justinian.

Russia, like the rest of Europe, was built on feudalistic ties, and over time the Kievan princes became less powerful than those that ruled Muscovy (Moscow), a province northeast of Kiev. When the Mongols invaded in the 13th century, the Muscovites cast their lot with the inevitable victors, serving the Mongols as collectors of tribute. The Mongols bestowed many favors, and Moscow grew in influence. Once Mongol power weakened, the princes saw their opportunity to rebel, and they seized the territory, calling their leader the "tsar," a derivative of the word "Caesar."

## **THE AMERINDIAN WORLD**

Prior to 1492, the western and eastern hemispheres had very little contact with one another. Even though Christopher Columbus was certainly not the first to go from one hemisphere to the other, his voyage does represent the beginning of sustained contacts, a trend that was a major turning point in world history. However, during the period between 600 and 1450 C.E., large empires emerged in the Americas, just as they did in Europe, Africa, and Asia. One group - the Maya - adapted to the jungles of Central America and the Yucatan Peninsula. The two largest organized relatively late in the era: the Aztecs of Mesoamerica, and the Inca of South America.

## THE MAYA

The Maya civilization flourished between 300 and 900 C.E., occupying present day southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. Early on, they were probably dominated by the mysterious people of Teotihuacan, a large city with several impressive temples that controlled central Mexico for many years. They developed agricultural techniques that allowed them to successfully raise crops in the tropics. At first they practiced slash and burn methods, but they learned to build terraces next to the numerous rivers designed to catch the rich alluvial soil. Their agriculturally based civilization thrived, and they eventually built more than eighty large ceremonial centers, as well as many smaller settlements.

## THE AZTECS

Civilizations had long existed in what is now central Mexico before the appearance of the Aztecs. The Olmecs were there by 800 B.C.E., and many groups followed. During the 10th century a powerful group called the Toltecs established a capital at Tula, about 50 kilometers from modern Mexico City. The Toltecs came to control much of the area around them, but their civilization fell into decay by the end of the 12th century, just about the time that a new group, the Mexica, began to grow. They eventually became known as the Aztecs, a name meaning "the place of the seven legendary caves," or the place of their origins. The Aztecs migrated into the area and settled in an unusual place: an island in the middle of a swampland of Lake Texococo, a site that the Spanish would later build as Mexico City. There they established the great city of Tenochtitlan, and they expanded their empire by conquering nearby people and extracting tribute from them. By the middle of the 15th century, they dominated a huge area that extended almost coast to coast.

## THE INCA

The Inca civilization developed during the 14th and 15th century on the base of older civilizations, such as the Chavin, Moche and Chimu. By the late 15th century, their empire stretched for almost 2500 miles along the Andes Mountain range from present-day Ecuador to Chile. Their capital was Cuzco, high in the mountains in Peru, and the city was connected to all parts of the empire by a complex system of roads and bridges. The term "Inca" was at first a title for the ruler of Cuzco, but it eventually referred to all people that spoke the native language, Quechua. Like the Chavin before them, the Inca lived on the narrow, dry seacoast to the west of the mountains and in the jungles to the east, but they centered their civilization in the mountain valleys of the Andes. Unlike the people of Mesoamerica, the South Americans made use of domesticated animals. Llamas and alpacas served the highlanders not only as pack animals on the roads, but they also provided wool, hides, and dung for fuel.

## COMPARATIVE AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS

PATTERNS	MAYA	AZTEC	INCA
<b>Social</b>	Priests had highest social status; warriors also highly valued  War captives often became slaves (and sacrifices); mysterious demise of civilization about 900 C.E.	Rigidly hierarchical society, with a strong military elite who received land grants and tribute from commoners; large gap between rich and poor  Priests also elite; learned complex calendars, presided over all important religious rituals  Skilled craftsmen, merchants middle status  Large number of slaves, mainly	Rigidly hierarchical society, with the Inca and his family having status of gods  Main classes: rulers, aristocrats, priests, and peasants  Military and administrative elite for large army and bureaucracy  Small merchant class and fewer skilled craftsmen than Aztec; trade controlled by the government

		<p>household servants</p> <p>Patriarchal society, but women received high honor for bearing warrior sons; women who died in childbirth equally honored to men who died in battle</p>	<p>Carefully selected virgin women served the Inca and his family</p>
<b>Cultural</b>	<p>Religion central to civilization; cities were ceremonial centers with great temples; practiced human sacrifice to their many gods; Tikal main city with population of about 40,000; jaguar an important symbol</p> <p>Two elaborate calendars used for agriculture and for religious rituals</p> <p>Flexible and sophisticated writing that used both symbols and pictures</p> <p>Inherited Olmec ballgame, with losers executed and sacrificed</p>	<p>Religion central to civilization; cities were ceremonial centers with great temples decorated with gold; practiced human sacrifice to their many gods</p> <p>Principal gods ; Tezcatlipoca ("the Smoking Mirror") and Quetzalcoatl ("the Feathered Serpent")</p> <p>Tenochtitlan ; major city of 200,000 + large suburbs Inherited Olmec ballgame, with losers executed and sacrificed</p> <p>Elaborate calendar, writing system</p>	<p>Religion important, with Inti, the sun god, the major deity; Impressive temples, palaces, public buildings; used skillfully cut giant</p> <p>stones with no mortar decorated with gold</p> <p>Quechua native language, but no writing; use of a counting device, the quipu to keep elaborate records</p> <p>Elaborate road system, with two roads (one on the coast and one in the mountains) running the entire length of the empire</p> <p>Rich textiles, jewelry, and pottery made by general population</p>
<b>Economic</b>	<p>Agricultural based; built platforms to catch alluvial soil; main crop maize, but also cacao bean (source of chocolate) and cotton; no domesticated animals for work</p>	<p>Agricultural base; designed "floating gardens" of trapped soil to raise crops in swampy areas; raised maize, beans, squashes, tomatoes, peppers, and chiles; no domesticated animals for work</p> <p>Exacted extensive amount of tribute from conquered people; established significant trade with others in western hemisphere, including luxury goods such as jade, emeralds, jaguar skins, and sea shells</p>	<p>Agricultural and pastoral base; designed terraces in mountain valleys to raise crops; variety of crops, depending on elevation, included potatoes, maize, beans, peppers, chiles, coca leaves (stimulant), guinea pigs</p> <p>Large professional army</p> <p>Peasants owed compulsory labor to the state; women gave tribute through textiles, pottery, and jewelry</p>

<b>Political</b>	Organized into city-states with no central government for the civilization; city of Chichen Itza dominated some other states; frequent fighting among city states; defeated ones became human sacrifices	Ruled by a central monarch in Tenochtitlan that did not have absolute power; council of powerful aristocrats made many decisions, including who the new ruler would be; winning wars and elaborate rituals increased legitimacy of rule  No elaborate bureaucracy	Highly powerful centralized government, with the Inca (the ruler) believed to be a god; Inca theoretically owned all land; elaborate bureaucracy kept in touch with subjects; used quipu to keep extensive records  Elaborate road system reinforced the Inca's power
------------------	--	---	---

## DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The era from 600 to 1450 C.E. was a time when civilization spread geographically, covering many more parts of the world than previously. However, it was also a time of great migrations of people that had wide impacts on the people in settled areas. Arabs, Vikings, Turks, and Mongols, all moved from one part of the globe to another, instigating change wherever they went.

- **Arabs** - The most significant effect of the Arab movement from the Arabian Peninsula was the spread of Islam. Arabs invaded, settled, and eventually ruled, the Middle East, northern Africa, and southern Europe. Although the political structure of the caliphate did not survive, Islam held the areas together culturally as it mixed with native customs and religions. Despite the political disunity and the splits between Sunni and Shi'a, the Islamic World emerged as an entire cultural area during this era.
- **Vikings** - The Vikings swept into many parts of Europe - from Normandy, to Mediterranean areas to Russia - during the 8th and 9th centuries, looting and destroying communities, churches, and monasteries. Some settled and intermarried with natives, forming new groups such as the Normans and the Rus (Russians). However, a very important consequence of their invasions was the development of feudalism in Europe. The attacks convinced Europeans that protection was vital, and so they organized into a network of lords and vassals, that eventually built kingdoms with great armies ready to fight.
- **Turks** - The Turkish people were originally Indo-Europeans who migrated into the Middle East during various times of the era. The Seljuk Turks invaded the Byzantine Empire, sparking another great migration from Europe to the Middle East - the Crusaders. Seljuk Turks were indirectly responsible, then, for Europe's growing interest and involvement in long-distance trade. By the end of the era the Ottoman Turks were on the rise. They captured Constantinople and many other parts of Europe, and they gained control of trade on the Mediterranean. Turks even invaded India, forming the Delhi Sultanate, and introduced Islam to India with such force that the consequences reverberated through the rest of Indian history.
- **Mongols** - The Mongol conquests have been depicted as assaults by savage and barbarian people who brought nothing but death and destruction to the areas they attacked. Whereas no one can deny the brutality of the Mongols, their conquests had a much more varied impact on world history than has been acknowledged by many historians in the past. At the peak of their power, the Pax Mongolica meant that once-hostile people lived together in peace in areas where most religions were tolerated. From the Il-Khan in the Middle East to the Yuan Dynasty in China, Mongol rulers established order, and most importantly, provided the stage for intensified international contact. Protected by Mongol might, the trade routes carried new foods, inventions, and ideas from one civilization to the others, with nomadic people acting as intermediaries.
- **Bantu-speaking people** - Another important source of cultural diffusion during this era was the Bantu Migration, which took place in Africa. Bantu-speaking people originally lived in an area south of the Sahara, but probably because the desert was spreading southward they began to migrate to better land. They spread south and east into many parts of Africa, and their language became a basis for the formation of many later languages. The Bantu Migration is generally believed to be a major source for

Africanity, or a set of cultural characteristics (including language) that are commonly shared on the continent. Examples include music, the use of masks, and scarification (permanent beauty etchings on the skin).

## **CULTURAL DIFFUSION AND THE 14TH CENTURY PLAGUES**

Cross-cultural exchanges had deadly consequences for many parts of the eastern hemisphere during the 14th century. As Eurasians traveled over long distances, they not only exchanged goods and ideas, but they unwittingly helped disease to spread as well. Since people who have had no previous exposure to a disease react to it much more seriously than those that have, the consequences were profound. The bubonic plague erupted in epidemics throughout most of Asia, Europe, and north Africa. Even though it abated in subsequent centuries, it broke out sporadically from place to place well into the seventeenth century.

The plague probably originated in southwestern China, where it had been incubating for centuries, but once long-distance trade began, it spread rapidly during the 14th century. The pathogen was spread by fleas that infested rats and eventually humans. Mongol military campaigns helped the plague spread throughout China, and merchants and travelers spread it to the west. By the 1340s it had spread to Black Sea ports and to Italian cities on the Mediterranean. From there, the plague spread rapidly throughout Europe as far as the British Isles. Europeans referred to the plague as the Black Death because its victims developed black or purple swellings caused by buboes, internal hemorrhages that gave the plague its name. Once the plague hit a community, typically 60-70 percent of the population died, and in some cases, no one survived. Important results of the plague (other than individual death) are:

- Decline in population - In China decreasing population caused by the plague contributed to the decline of the Yuan Dynasty and lent support to the overthrow of Mongol control there. Europe's population dropped by about 25% during the 14th century. In Egypt population levels did not recover to pre-plague days probably until the 19th century.
- Labor shortages - The plague was no respecter of social class, and the affected areas lost craftsmen, artisans, merchants, religious officials, farmers, bureaucrats and rulers. In many areas farms fell into ruin, towns deteriorated, and trade almost came to a standstill. Labor shortages turned into social unrest, and rebellions popped up in many areas.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES**

The era from 600 to 1450 C.E. was not a period of massive environmental change. The most significant changes occurred because of population growth. The structures of civilization spread across sub-Saharan Africa, northern Europe, and Japan. As civilizations spread, agriculture claimed additional land, with some deforestation (especially in Europe) taking place. However, soil depletion around the Mediterranean was not nearly as great as it was during Ancient Roman times. The most severe effects were probably felt in central America, where population density increased significantly. Small civilizations and nomadic groups that were easy on the environment were replaced by ever larger empires that claimed rain forest and other natural habitats. The process of urbanization continued during this era, and cities grew larger and more numerous. As Islam spread, administrative centers appeared in the Middle East, and many grew into cities that attracted people to live under the protection they afforded. China especially during this era became urbanized, with the Tang and Song emperors building roads that connected cities to one another. Trade from the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean circuits enriched these cities, and great differences in status were accorded those that lived in urban vs. rural areas. Great cities grew up in the Americas, and towns in Europe grew to be the cities of Paris and London. However, agriculture still remained as the primary occupation of people in civilizations around the world, so that large numbers still lived in rural areas.

## **IMPORTANT ISSUES: 600-1450 C.E.**

During this era several major religions spread across large areas, creating cultural regions that unified based on their belief systems. As historians, we may speak of "Islamic lands" or "Christendom" or "Confucian Asia," and these terms are handy for comparisons. They may be used effectively to point out commonalities as well as differences. However, cultural areas are imperfect as units of analysis. Some problems include:

- **Imperfect boundaries between areas** - If you are comparing political units with definite boundaries, the geographic differences are clear. However, in using cultural labels, how do you categorize areas of mixed influence? For example, parts of the Middle East during this era had significant numbers of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, with a mixture of customs from all three religions. Southeast Asia, a crossroads area for trade, had virtually every religion imaginable.
- **Wide differences within the culture zones** - The areas are so broad that the categories often blur important cultural differences within. For example, Christendom's two parts were very different, and Christianity was interpreted in many ways. Muslims in Mali had only limited commonalities with Muslims in Central Asia.

Still, political boundaries do not provide perfect units to measure either. Boundaries often cut through cultural areas and represent artificial categories for analysis.

Change over time during this era was more characterized by modification, rather than innovation, with the notable exception of the Tang and Song economic revolutions. Nomadic groups during this time period probably reached their peak of influence on the course of world history. Whereas change emanated from both nomadic groups and civilized areas, the effects of the great migrations of the Arabs, Vikings, Turks, and Mongols during this era have been unmatched to the present day. However, little change occurred in other areas, such as gender and social class structures. Patriarchal families continued to be the norm, and social class distinctions that we saw in the river valley and classical civilizations tended to be drawn along the same lines: peasants v. aristocrats and rural v. urban. Elite women seem to have suffered the most, with ties to the home reinforced through practices such as veiling and footbinding. Although in these cases differences were accentuated, gender roles went through no basic structural changes. Long distance trade grew significantly, but it continued to follow the old routes established in the previous era. The western hemisphere still was not drawn into regular contact and communication. However, by 1450 the previously inconsequential Europeans were on the cusp of changing all of that, as worldwide trade began to develop in the 1450-1750 era.