

CHAPTER X OUTLINE

I. Opening Vignette

A. In 1964, the Eastern Orthodox patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI met and rescinded the mutual excommunication decrees imposed by their respective churches in 1054.

1. Christianity had provided common ground for postclassical societies in western Eurasia
2. But Christendom was deeply divided: Byzantine Empire and West
 - a. Byzantium continued Roman imperial traditions
 - b. West tried to maintain links to classical world
 - c. but Roman imperial order disintegrated in the West
3. Roman Catholic Church of the West established independence from political authorities; Eastern Orthodox Church did not
4. Western church was much more rural than Byzantium
5. Western Europe emerged, at an increasing pace after 1000, as a dynamic third-wave civilization
6. Western Europe was a hybrid civilization: classical, Germanic, Celtic
7. In 500 C.E., only about one-third of all Christians lived in Europe
 - a. many distinct forms of Christianity in other regions
 - b. many branches have survived throughout Afro-Eurasia; other branches were eliminated by spread of alternative religions

II. Eastern Christendom: Building on the Roman Past

A. The Byzantine Empire has no clear starting point.

1. Continuation of the Roman Empire
2. Some scholars date its beginning to 330 C.E., with foundation of Constantinople
3. Western empire collapsed in fifth century; eastern half survived another 1,000 years
4. Eastern empire contained ancient civilizations: Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Anatolia
5. Byzantine advantages over western empire
 - a. wealthier and more urbanized
 - b. more defensible capital (Constantinople)
 - c. shorter frontier
 - d. access to the Black Sea; command of eastern Mediterranean
 - e. stronger army, navy, and merchant marine
 - f. continuation of late Roman infrastructure
 - g. conscious effort to preserve Roman ways

B. The Byzantine State

1. The Byzantine Empire was much smaller than the Roman Empire
2. But it remained a major force in eastern Mediterranean until around 1200
3. Political authority was tightly centralized in Constantinople
 - a. emperor ruled as God's representative on earth
 - b. awesome grandeur of court (based on ancient Persian style)
 - c. was mostly concerned with tax collection and keeping order
4. Territory shrank after 1085, as western Europeans and Turks attacked



C. The Byzantine Church and Christian Divergence

1. The Church was closely tied to the state: *caesaropapism*
 - a. Byzantine emperor was head of both the state and the Church
 - b. emperor appointed patriarch, sometimes made doctrinal decisions, called church councils
2. Orthodox Christianity deeply influenced all of Byzantine life
 - a. legitimated imperial rule
 - b. provided cultural identity
 - c. pervasiveness of churches, icons
 - d. even common people engaged in theological disputes
3. Eastern Orthodoxy increasingly defined itself in opposition to Latin Christianity
 - a. Latin Christianity was centered on the pope, Rome
 - b. growing rift between the two parts of Christendom
 - c. sense of religious difference reflected East/West political difference
 - d. with rise of Islam, Constantinople and Rome remained as sole hubs of Christendom
 - e. important East/West cultural diff. (language, philosophy, theology, church practice)
 - f. schism in 1054, with mutual excommunication
 - g. Crusades (from 1095 on) worsened the situation
 - h. 4th Crusade, Westerners sacked Constantinople (1204) ruled Byz. for next 50yrs

D. Byzantium and the World

1. Byzantium had a foot in both Europe and Asia, interacted intensively with neighbors
2. Continuation of long Roman fight with Persian Empire
 - a. weakened both states, left them open to Islamic conquests
 - b. Persia was conquered by Islam; Byzantium lost territory
3. Byzantium was a central player in long-distance Eurasian trade
 - a. Byzantine gold coins (bezants) a major Mediterranean currency for over 500 years
 - b. Byzantine crafts (jewelry, textiles, purple dyes, silk) were in high demand
4. Important cultural influence of Byzantium
 - a. transmitted ancient Greek learning to Islamic world and West
 - b. transmission of Orthodox Christianity to Balkans and Russia

E. The Conversion of Russia

1. Most important conversion was that of Prince Vladimir of Kiev
2. Orthodoxy transformed state of Rus; became central to Russian identity
3. Moscow finally declared itself to be the “third Rome,” assuming role of protector of Christianity after fall of Constantinople

III. Western Christendom: Rebuilding in the Wake of Roman Collapse

A. Western Europe was on the margins of world history for most of the postclassical millennium.

1. It was far removed from the growing world trade routes
2. European geography made political unity difficult
3. Coastlines and river systems facilitated internal exchange
4. Moderate climate enabled population growth

B. Political Life in Western Europe, 500–1000

1. Traditional date for fall of Western Roman Empire is 476 C.E.



2. with Roman collapse:
 - a. large-scale centralized rule vanished
 - b. Europe's population fell by 25 percent because of war and disease
 - c. contraction of land under cultivation
 - d. great diminution of urban life
 - e. long-distance trade outside of Italy shriveled up
 - f. great decline in literacy
 - g. Germanic peoples emerged as the dominant peoples in West
 - h. shift in center of gravity from Mediterranean to north and west
3. Survival of much of classical and Roman heritage
 - a. Germanic peoples who established new kingdoms had been substantially Romanized
 - b. high prestige of things Roman
 - c. Germanic rulers adopted Roman-style written law
4. Several Germanic kingdoms tried to recreate Roman-style unity
 - a. Charlemagne (r. 768–814) acted “imperial”
 - b. revival of Roman Empire on Christmas Day 800 (coronation of Charlemagne); soon fragmented
 - c. another revival of Roman Empire with imperial coronation of Otto I of Saxony (r. 936–973)

C. Society and the Church, 500–1000

1. within these new kingdoms:
 - a. highly fragmented, decentralized society
 - b. great local variation
 - c. landowning warrior elite exercised power
2. Social hierarchies
 - a. lesser lords and knights became vassals of kings or great lords
 - b. serfdom displaced slavery
3. Catholic Church was a major element of stability
 - a. hierarchy modeled on that of the Roman Empire
 - b. became very rich
 - c. conversion of Europe's non-Christians
 - d. most of Europe was Christian (with pagan elements) by 1100
4. Church and ruling class usually reinforced each other
 - a. also an element of competition as rival centers of power
 - b. right to appoint bishops and the pope was controversial (the Investiture conflict)

D. Accelerating Change in the West: 1000–1300

1. A series of invasions in 700–1000 hindered European development
 - a. Muslims, Magyars, Vikings
 - b. largely ended by 1000
2. Weather improved with warming trend that started after 750
3. High Middle Ages: time of clear growth and expansion
 - a. European population in 1000 was about 35 million; about 80 million in 1340
 - b. opening of new land for cultivation
4. Growth of long-distance trade, from two major centers
 - a. northern Europe
 - b. northern Italian towns
 - c. great trading fairs (especially in Champagne area of France) enabled exchange between northern and southern merchants



5. European town and city populations rose
 - a. Venice by 1400 had around 150,000 people
 - b. still smaller than great cities elsewhere in the world
 - c. new specializations, organized into guilds
6. New opportunities for women
 - a. a number of urban professions were open to women
 - b. widows of great merchants could continue husbands' business
 - c. opportunities declined by the fifteenth century
 - d. religious life: nuns, Beguines, anchoresses (e.g., Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich)
7. Growth of territorial states with better-organized governments
 - a. kings consolidated their authority in eleventh–thirteenth centuries
 - b. appearance of professional administrators
 - c. some areas did not develop territorial kingdoms (Italian city-states, small German principalities)

E. Europe Outward Bound: The Crusading Tradition

1. Medieval expansion of Christendom after 1000
 - a. occurred at the same time that Byzantium declined
 - b. clearance of land, especially on eastern fringe of Europe
 - c. Scandinavian colonies in Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland
 - d. Europe had direct, though limited, contact with East and South Asia by thirteenth–fourteenth centuries
2. Crusade movement began in 1095
 - a. wars at God's command, authorized by the pope, for which participants received an indulgence (release from penalty for confessed sins)
 - b. amazingly popular; were religious wars at their core
3. Most famous Crusades aimed to regain Jerusalem and holy places
 - a. many waves of Crusaders to the Near East
 - b. creation of four small Christian states (last fell in 1291)
 - c. showed Europe's growing organizational ability
4. Iberian Peninsula Crusade
5. Baltic Crusade
6. Attacks on Byzantine Empire and Russia
7. Crusades had little lasting political or religious impact in the Middle East
8. Crusades had a significant impact on Europe
 - a. conquest of Spain, Sicily, Baltic region
 - b. Crusaders weakened Byzantium
 - c. popes strengthened their position for a time
 - d. tens of thousands of Europeans made contact with the Islamic world
 - e. hardened cultural barriers

IV. The West in Comparative Perspective

A. Catching Up

1. The hybrid civilization of Western Europe was less developed than Byzantium, China, India, or the Islamic world
 - a. Muslims regarded Europeans as barbarians
 - b. Europeans recognized their own backwardness



2. Europeans were happy to exchange with/borrow from more advanced civilizations to the east
 - a. European economies reconnected with the Eurasian trading system
 - b. Europeans welcomed scientific, philosophical, and mathematical concepts from Arabs, classical Greeks, and India
 - c. the most significant borrowing was from China
3. Europe was a developing civilization like others of the era
4. By 1500, Europe caught up with China and the Islamic world; surpassed them in some areas
5. 500–1300 was a period of great innovation
 - a. agriculture
 - b. new reliance on non-animal sources of energy
 - c. technological borrowing for warfare, with further development
 - d. Europe developed a passion for technology

B. Pluralism in Politics

1. Europe crystallized into a system of competing states
2. Political pluralism shaped Western European civilization
 - a. led to frequent wars and militarization
 - b. stimulated technological development
3. States still were able to communicate economically and intellectually
4. Rulers were generally weaker than those to the east
 - a. royal-noble-ecclesiastical power struggle allowed urban merchants to win great independence
 - b. perhaps paved the way for capitalism
 - c. development of representative institutions (parliaments)

C. Reason and Faith

1. Distinctive intellectual tension between faith and reason developed
2. Intellectual life flourished in the centuries after 1000
 - a. creation of universities from earlier cathedral schools
 - b. scholars had some intellectual freedom at universities
3. In the universities, some scholars began to emphasize the ability of human reason to understand divine mysteries
 - a. also applied reason to law, medicine, and world of nature
 - b. development of “natural philosophy” (scientific study of nature)
4. Search for classical Greek texts (especially Aristotle)
 - a. were found in Byzantium and the Arab world
 - b. twelfth–thirteenth centuries: access to ancient Greek and Arab scholarship
5. Deep impact of Aristotle
 - a. his writings were the basis of university education
 - b. dominated Western European thought between 1200 and 1700
6. No similar development occurred in the Byzantine Empire
 - a. focus of education was the humanities
 - b. suspicion of classical Greek thought
7. Islamic world had deep interaction with classical Greek thought
 - a. massive amount of translation in ninth–tenth centuries
 - b. encouraged a flowering of Arab scholarship between 800 and 1200
 - c. caused a debate among Muslim thinkers on faith and reason
 - d. Islamic world eventually turned against natural philosophy



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

A. Many features of medieval Christendom have extended into the modern era.

1. Crusading motivated Spanish and Portuguese explorers
2. Merchants' freedom helped lead to capitalism and industrialization
3. Endemic military conflict
4. Ongoing "faith and reason" controversy
5. Eastern Orthodox/Roman Catholic division of Christianity remains
6. Universities were a medieval creation

B. Beware of the notion that the course of medieval European civilization determined the future.

1. Some historians have argued that Europe's global domination in the nineteenth century grew from its unique character after 1000
2. In reality: Europe's recent development was a great surprise
3. Such a view minimizes the way people at the time understood their world

