Western Civilizations
Their History & Their Culture

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Volume 1
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Chapter 7
Rome’s Three Heirs: The Byzantine, Islamic, and Early Medieval Worlds

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I. Introduction

A. The end of Late Antiquity

B. Byzantium – Greek
   1. Greek-speaking
   2. Combined Roman imperial and bureaucratic traditions with intense pursuit of Christian faith
I. Introduction (cont’d)

C. Islam – Arabic
   1. The Roman ideal of expansion and cultural and religious assimilation
   2. Hellenistic philosophical and scientific interests
   3. Persian literary and artistic culture

C. Western Europe – Latin
   1. Latin – Speaking
   2. Germanic, Celtic, and Latin cultural influences
   3. Roman ideals of empire
II. The Byzantine Empire

A. A successor to the Roman state
B. Justinian and Heraclius
C. Threats and challenges
   1. The Persians
      a. Theft of the relic of the original cross
      b. Heraclius routs the Persians (627)
   2. Islam
      a. By 650, Arabs took back most of the Byzantine territory that was formerly Persian
      b. Jerusalem in the hands of the Muslims
      c. Constantinople threatened (677)
      d. Pope Leo the Isaurian – defeats Arabs on land and at sea (717)
   3. Seljuk Turks
      a. Battle of Manzikert (1071)
      b. The fall of Byzantine civilization (1453)
FIGURE 7.1 Byzantine Soldiers Clashing with Arab Soldiers
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

C. Sources of stability (cont’d)
   4. Why did Constantinople survive?
   5. Internal political history the story of violence and palace revolts
   6. Efficient bureaucratic practices
      a. Education
      b. Religion
      c. Economic activity
      d. Entertainment
      e. The army and the navy
      f. Sound economic base
      g. Role of Constantinople as trade emporium
      h. Stable gold and silver coinage
      i. Agriculture
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

D. Byzantine religion
   1. Religious orthodoxy
   2. Emperors involved in intense religious debates
   3. The Iconoclastic Controversy
      a. The Iconoclasts prohibited the veneration of icons – “graven images”
      b. Others argued that icons served as “windows” through which a glimpse of heaven might be granted
      c. Political and financial considerations
      d. The monasteries rallied behind the cause of images
      e. Resolved in the 9th century – a return to the veneration of icons
FIGURE 7.2 King Roger II of Sicily (1095–1154)
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

D. Byzantine religion (cont’d)

3. The Iconoclastic Controversy (cont’d)

   f. Consequences

      i. Much religious art destroyed as a result of the Controversy

      ii. Opened a serious breach between East and West

      iii. Led to renewed emphasis on Orthodox faith as key to political unity

      iv. Fear of heresy inhibited speculation
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

E. Byzantine Culture
1. Preserved ancient Greek heritage
2. The role of Homer: a model, textbook and guide to morality
3. Greek thought
   a. Revered Plato and Thucydides
   b. Aristotle regarded with less interest
   c. Neglected Greek scientific and mathematical tradition
   d. Preservation rather than innovation the hallmark of Byzantine classicism
4. Education extended to both men and women
   a. Princess Anna Comnena (1083-1148)
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

E. Byzantine Culture (cont’d)

1. Art and architecture
   a. Church of Santa Sophia (Holy Wisdom)
      i. Symbol for the inward and spiritual character of Christianity
      ii. Exterior was plain, interior filled with mosaics, gold leaf, marble columns
      iii. Architectural uniqueness
FIGURE 7.3  Santa Sophia
II. The Byzantine Empire (cont’d)

F. Byzantium and the Western Christian World
   1. Tense relations between East and West
   2. Growing religious tensions
   3. Sack of Constantinople by crusading armies (1204)
   4. Legacy to the West
      a. Bulwark against Islam
      b. Preserved an independent and Christian West
      c. Preservation of classical literature
      d. Art and architecture
III. The Growth of Islam

A. The rise of Islam

1. Born in the desert of Arabia

2. Mecca and the Kabah (pilgrimage shrine)
   a. Quraish tribe – controlled the Kabah and the economic life of Mecca

3. Muhammad (c. 570-632)
   a. Early life
      i. Born at Mecca (Quraish family)
      ii. Orphaned early
      iii. Married the widow of a rich trader

   b. Religious experience (610)
      i. There is no god but Allah
      ii. Becomes an uncompromising monotheist
      iii. “Called” to be the “Prophet”
FIGURE 7.5 The Kabah
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

A. The rise of Islam (cont’d)

3. Muhammad (c. 570-632) (cont’d)
   a. Ignored by the Quraish of Mecca
   b. Leaves Mecca for Yathrib (Medina) – the Hijrah/Hegira (622)
      i. Organizes a religious community
      ii. Raids on Quraish caravans
   c. Enters Mecca (630)
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

B. The Religious teachings of Islam
   1. Islam means “submission”
   2. Allah – the Creator God Almighty
   3. Muhammad as the last and greatest prophet
   4. Men and women must surrender themselves to Allah
   5. Practical steps for salvation and the Qur'an
   6. Islam, Christianity and Judaism
      a. Jesus was a prophet but was not the son of God
      b. Strict monotheism
      c. Old and New Testament as divinely inspired
      d. Islam as a way of life – no sacraments or clergy
FIGURE 7.6 Exterior and Interior of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

C. The Islamic Conquests
   1. Muhammad's death
   2. Succeeded by his father-in-law, Abu-Bakr
      a. The caliph (“deputy of the Prophet”)
      b. Military campaign against those who followed Muhammad but would not follow Abu-Bakr
   3. Umar
      a. Syria, Antioch, Damascus and Jerusalem fall (636)
      b. Egypt falls (646)
      c. Persia subdued (651)
      d. Visigothic Spain (711)
   4. Explanations
      a. Search for territory and booty
      b. Weakness of their neighbors
      c. Did not demand conversions
      d. Muslims preferred to old rulers
MAP 7.1 The Expansion of Islam to 750
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

D. The Shiite-Sunni schism

1. The Shiites
   a. Caliph Uthman replaces Umar (644)
      i. A weak ruler
      ii. Belonged to the wealthy Umayyad family
      iii. Murdered in 656
   b. Opponents rally around Ali
      i. Family ties to the Prophet
      ii. Murdered and Uthman’s party emerged triumphant
   c. Minority religious party
   d. Insisted that only descendants of Ali and Fatimah (his wife) could rule the Muslim community (the umma)
   e. Did not accept binding religious customs (sunna)
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

D. The Shiite-Sunni schism (cont’d)
   2. The Sunnis
      a. Accepted religious customs as binding
   2. Shiite-Sunni schism continues in the present day
III. The Growth of Islam (cont’d)

E. Umayyads and Abbasids

1. Westward-looking Umayyads
   a. Capital at Damascus
   b. A Byzantine successor state?
   c. Goal was to conquer Constantinople

2. Eastward-looking Abbasids
   a. Rule stressed Persian elements rather than Byzantine
   b. New capital at Baghdad
   c. The Arabian Nights
   d. Harun al-Rashid (786-809)

3. After 750, Umayyad dynasty rules only in Spain

4. Poor relations between Umayyads and Abbasids
   a. Competed with one another in literature and culture
   b. Library at Cordoba had 400,000 volumes
FIGURE 7.7  Exterior and Interior of the Great Umayyad Mosque at Damascus
IV. The Changing Islamic World

A. Power declined (9th and 10th centuries)
   1. Problems
      a. Impoverishment of economic base
      b. Tax revenues declined
      c. Unable to support civil service or mercenary army
   2. Major developments
      a. Growth of regionalism
      b. Religious division between Sunnis and Shiites, and between Shiites
      c. Egypt conquered by Shiite Fatimids (969)
   3. Umayyad Spain succumbs to Christian pressure by the 9th and 10th centuries
   4. Christian conquest of Spain complete by the mid-13th century
   5. Internal ethnic tensions grew more divisive
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

B. Muslim society and culture, 900-1250
   1. Cosmopolitan and dynamic society
   2. Geographic and social mobility
   3. At Baghdad and Cordoba, careers were open to those with talent
   4. Treatment of women
      a. Preserving male “honor”
      b. The Qur’an allowed a man four wives
      c. The harem
   5. Learned men
      a. Ulama – learned men who studied religion and religious law
      b. Sufis – religious mystics, stressed contemplation and ecstasy
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

C. Muslim Philosophy, Science and Medicine

1. The Greek philosophical tradition
2. Arabic translations
3. Reconciling Aristotelianism and Neo-platonism
4. Reconciling Greek thought with Islamic theology
5. Avicenna (980-1037)
6. Al-Farabi (d. 950) and Al-Ghazzali (1058-1111)
   a. Difficulties in reconciling Aristotle, Neo-platonism and Muslim theology
7. Averroës (1126-1198) – “the Commentator”
   a. Turns his back on the mysticism of Avicenna and al-Ghazzali
   b. Subordinated theology to philosophy
FIGURE 7.9 Aristotle Teaching Arab Astronomers, Early Thirteenth-Century Manuscript
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

C. Muslim Philosophy, Science and Medicine (cont’d)

8. Science
   a. Astrology as “applied science”
   b. Astronomy

8. Medicine
   a. Avicenna's Canon of Medicine
   b. Learned value of cauterization
   c. Diagnosed cancer of the stomach
   d. Organized and built hospitals

8. Optics

9. Alchemy and chemistry

10. Developed decimal arithmetic based on place values
FIGURE 7.10  Bloodletting Scene Painted on a Ceramic Bowl, Thirteenth-Century Iraq
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

D. Literature and Art

1. Umar Khayyam, the *Rubiyat* (c.1050-c.1123)
2. Uninhibited lyric poetry
3. Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), Misheh Torah
4. Art
   a. Highly eclectic
   b. Byzantine and Persian influence
   c. Architectural elements – dome, column and arch
   d. General prejudice against portraying human form in art
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

E. Trade and industry
   1. Major trade routes
   2. Masters of the caravan routes
   3. Sea routes lost to the West (10th and 11th centuries)
   4. Important industries
      a. Baghdad: glassware, jewelry, pottery, silks
      b. Morocco and Spain: leather-working
      c. Toledo: swords
   5. Paper – brought about a revolution in record-keeping
FIGURE 7.11 Arabic Calligraphy
IV. The Changing Islamic World (cont’d)

F. The impact of early Islamic civilization on Europe
   1. Economics
   2. Technology
   3. New vocabulary: traffic, alcohol, muslin, orange, lemon, sugar, musk
   4. Greek philosophical and scientific knowledge
   5. Preservation and interpretation of the works of Aristotle
V. Western Christian Civilization in the Early Middle Ages

A. A transitional period

B. Gregory of Tours (538-c.594)

C. New attitudes
   1. A break with the Roman past
   2. Rather than continuation, a reconstruction

D. Economic disintegration and political instability
   1. Causes
      a. Justinian's effort to reconquer the West
      b. Excessive Byzantine taxation of agricultural lands
      c. Islamic piracy
V. Western Christian Civilization in the Early Middle Ages (cont’d)

D. Economic disintegration and political instability (cont’d)

2. Western Europe
   a. Urban life declined
   b. Land passed out of cultivation
   c. Too costly to maintain slaves
   d. Coinage system broke down
   e. Two-tier economy
      i. Gold and silver among the wealthy
      ii. The peasantry relied on barter

2. Political instability
   a. Incessant wars between kings and lords
   b. Inability to regulate royal succession
   c. Rivalries
FIGURE 7.13 Treasures from the Seventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Burial Mound at Sutton Hoo, Essex
V. Western Christian Civilization in the Early Middle Ages (cont’d)

E. Merovingian Gaul
1. Survival of late Roman local administration
2. Growth of monasteries
3. Massive distribution of wealth
4. Cultivating the rich, heavy soils of Northern France
5. Population growth

E. Monasticism and Conversion
1. Rapid increase in new monastic houses (esp. 7th century)
2. Royal ties with monasteries
3. Located in rural areas – Christianizing the countryside
4. Women and the monastic life
5. Conversion and missionary activity
   a. Pope Gregory I (c.540-604)
   b. Roman Christianity brought to southeastern England
FIGURE 7.14  Book Cover
V. Western Christian Civilization in the Early Middle Ages (cont’d)

G. The reign of Pope Gregory I
   1. Worked to prevent a breach with Constantinople
   2. Necessity of penance
   3. The concept of purgatory
   4. The “Gregorian chant”
   5. Asserted his authority over all Western bishops
   6. Encouraged the Benedictine rule in all monasteries
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians

A. Pepin of Heristal and the “mayors of the palace” (d.714)

B. Charles “the hammer” Martel (c.688-741)
   1. The second founder (after Clovis) of the Frankish state
   2. The Battle of Tours (733/734)
   3. Developed alliances with English Benedictines in central Germany

C. Pepin “the short” (c.715-768)
   1. Coronation
   2. Integration of the Frankish monarchy into the papal-Benedictine orbit
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

D. The Reign of Charlemagne (742-814, r. 768-814)
   1. United the Frankish Kingdom through armed expeditions
      a. Italy, Germany, and central Europe
      b. Forcing conversion to Christianity
   2. Counts and local administration
      a. The *comites* (“followers”)
      b. Administration of justice
      c. Raising armies
      d. Courts, tolls, and taxation
      e. New coinage system
   3. New capital city at Aachen
MAP 7.2 The Empire of Charlemagne, 814
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

E. Christianity and kingship

1. Leading a unified Christian society
2. Kingship regarded as a divine office created by God to protect the Church
3. Religious reforms
   a. Appointed and deposed bishops
   b. Changed liturgy of Frankish Church
   c. Reformed rules of worship
   d. Prohibited pagan observances
   e. The peasant tithe
4. Spiritual responsibilities of kingship: the protector of the papacy
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

F. The Carolingian Renaissance
   1. The patron of poetry and learning
   2. The court as an intellectual center
   3. Classical learning
   4. Alcuin of York (c.735-804)
      a. Correcting and copying texts
      b. Carolingian miniscule

F. Charlemagne and the revival of the Western Roman Empire
   1. Charlemagne's coronation (Christmas Day, 800)

F. The collapse of the Carolingian empire
   1. Louis the Pious (d.843) – the empire disintegrates
   2. Charles the Bald, Louis the German, and Lothair
   3. Civil wars
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

I. The Vikings

1. Established trading settlements in the North Sea, the Baltic and Russia
2. In the 790s, Vikings began to attack coastal ports of northern Europe
   a. Initially the desire was for profit alone
   b. Large organized armies invade in mid-ninth century
3. Viking settlements in Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland
4. Ruled principalities in Scotland, Ireland, Normandy and Russia
5. The Battle of Hastings (1066)
6. The Vikings were not the only source of disorder
   a. Civil wars
   b. Muslim and Hungarian attacks
   c. Local political rivalries
7. Viking invasions helped tighten the cultural and political links that kept Europe together
FIGURE 7.18  A Hoard of Viking Silver, c. 905
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

J. The legacy of the Carolingians
   1. The European political entity
   2. England becomes unified
      a. Alfred the Great (871-899)
      b. Reorganized the army, codified laws
      c. Cultural regeneration patterned on the Carolingian example
   3. The Saxon kings of Germany
      a. The Carolingian example
      b. Royal power based on conquest rather than trade and administration
      c. Otto I defeats Hungarians using Charlemagne's lance (955)
      d. Strengthening control of the church
FIGURE 7.19  The Crown of the Tenth-Century Holy Roman Emperors
VI. The Rise of the Carolingians (cont’d)

J. The legacy of the Carolingians (cont’d)
   4. Catalunya
      a. Counts descended from Carolingian appointees continue to administer laws
   4. The growth of towns and cities
   5. Italian prosperity
   6. From Carolingians to Capetians
VII. Conclusion

A. Western Europe and the East
B. Urbanization
C. Expanding borders
D. Europe a society mobilized for war
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