

UNIT FOUR

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD OR MIDDLE AGES

Introduction

This unit deals with the “Middle Ages” in Europe and the Far East, the Byzantine Empire, the Rise and Expansion of Islam, including the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the Medieval society and the beginning of early capitalist relation, and the development of early capitalism. The Middle Ages is the period which came after the ancient world and before the early modern world.

Marking strict date as to when the European Middle Ages began seems difficult. This is not surprising, because economic and social changes were gradual. Change in political conditions was quicker, and as regards political change it may be reasonable to say the beginning of the Middle Ages correspond with the fall of the Roman Empire in the west. It is difficult to say when the European Middle Ages ended either, because change from medieval conditions was also gradual. However, the period of a little more than 1000 years from about 450 to about 1500 would certainly include the Middle Ages.

Objectives

After completing of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the origin and development of feudalism;
- analyze the effects of trade in the medieval society;
- discuss the causes and results of the crusades;
- explain the features of early capitalist developments.

Terms to Know

- Analogy	- Gargoyles	- Quadrivium
- Black Death	- Gothic	- Romanesque
- Consensus	- Guild	- Samurai
- Caliphate	- Hadith	- Shiite
- Chivalry	- Homage	- Shogun
- Coloni	- Imamate	- Sunnite
- Corvee	- Janissaries	- Taika Reform
- Demesne	- Kharijites	- Timars
- Daimyo	- Mahdi	- Trivium
- Fief	- Manor	- Vassal

4.1. Europe During the Middle Ages

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

Who were the Germanic peoples?

Mention the aspects of the west Roman Empire civilization which survived and were passed on to medieval and modern Europe.

How did the Christian Church become the main civilizing force of the early Middle Ages in Western Europe?

Invasions and the Age of Feudalism

The Germanic peoples came from Scandinavia in northern Europe and began moving into central Europe earlier. By the third century AD, they occupied the northern and north eastern boundaries of the Roman Empire. Some Germans adopted the civilization of the Roman neighbors. They traded with Roman merchants, learned to farm the land and accepted Christianity as their religion. But most Germans were organized in a tribal ways of life that the Romans called them barbarians. They lived in tribes, each governed by a chief.

In the fifth century AD, the Germanic tribes began invading Roman territory. By then the Roman Empire had lost much of its great power, and its armies could not defend the long frontier. The Visigoths invaded Spain about 416 AD. The Angles, Jutes and Saxons began to settle in Britain about 450. The Franks established a kingdom in Gaul (now France) in the 480's. The Ostrogoths invaded Italy at about the same time.

The barbarian invasions divided the huge Roman Empire into many kingdoms. They were loyal only to their chiefs or families and each tribe kept its own laws and customs. As a result, the strong central and local government of the Roman Empire disappeared. The barbarian invasions also destroyed the European trade that the Romans had established. Most peoples who lived in the towns went to the country side and became peasants. Some towns were completely abandoned and gradually disappeared. Ancient literature, architect, painting, and sculpture were almost forgotten.

Most of people were forced to make their living from farming activities. By the ninth century, most of western Europe was divided into large estates of land called **manors**. A few wealthy land owners, called landlords or lords, ruled the manors, but most of the people were poor peasants who worked the land. Each village on a manor produced nearly everything needed by its people. This system of obtaining a living from the land was called **manorialism**.

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church was the main civilizing force of the early Middle Ages. It provided leadership for the people and saved western Europe from complete ignorance. Missionaries traveled great distances to spread Christianity. They introduced Roman ideas of government and justice into the people they called the barbarians.

The popes, bishops and other Church leaders took over many functions of government after the Roman emperors lost

power. The Church collected taxes and maintained law and order. Church buildings served as hospitals for the sick, and as inns for travelers.

Two Church institutions, the **cathedral** and the **monastery** became centers of learning in the early middle ages. Cathedrals were the churches of bishops. Monasteries were communities of monks, people who gave up worldly life to God's service. The monks of some monasteries and the clergy of the cathedrals helped continue the readings and writing of Latin. The Latin alphabet continued to be the alphabet of most European languages except Greek and most Slav languages in Russia and the Balkans. The Latin language also continued to be a living language in many parts of Europe. It was the language of the Roman Catholic Church. It was a teaching language in medieval universities. Modern languages like Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Rumanian developed from Latin. Many words of Latin origin are also found in the English language.

The Roman Catholic Church also became the largest landholder in western Europe during the Middle Ages. Rulers and many feudal lords gave **fiefs** to the Church in return for services performed by the clergy. Most bishops and other high-ranking clergymen were noble-men who devoted their lives to the church. They ruled large fief, and lived much like other noblemen.

4.2. The Byzantine Empire

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

What was the main reason for the long survival of the East Roman Empire?

When did the Byzantine Empire reach at the height of its expansion?

The West Roman Empire collapsed in 476 A.D. While the East Roman Empire continued to survive for another one thousand years after that. The East Roman Empire survived, because geographically, it was not so open to barbarian attack

as the west, except in the Balkans. It was also richer, had more population and had more towns and cities with defensive walls than the west.

The East Roman Empire is also called the Byzantine Empire or Byzantium. The word Byzantine comes from Byzantium, the Greek name for a city on the strait of Bosphorus. In 330 A.D, the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium (later Istanbul). The city was renamed Constantinople after him. The Roman Empire was divided into two parts: the West Roman Empire and the East Roman Empire in 395AD.

The emperor was the absolute ruler and sole law maker of the Byzantine Empire. The government controlled almost every aspect of life and it also had much influence over church officials. The people paid heavy taxes to support the government.

The Byzantine Empire reached its greatest size under Emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565 A.D). Under his leadership Italy, part of Spain and the old Roman province of "Africa" in the west (now Tunisia) were conquered. The empire had already included Asia Minor (now Turkey), the Balkan peninsula, Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

The Byzantines organized many laws of the ancient Romans. This collection of laws became known as the *Justinian code* and ever since has been the basis of the legal systems of many countries. Justinian also built Hagia Sophia (St.Sophia), the empire's largest and most splendid Christian church in Constantinople.

The majority of Byzantines were poor farmers who raised grapes, olives and wheat or herded sheep. Merchants and craft workers practiced their trade in the towns and large cities. The Byzantines imported silk, spices and luxury goods from China.

The Byzantines preserved ancient Greek literature and philosophy as well as Roman governmental and legal tradition. Christianity, Greek culture and Roman customs flourished in the

empire, which thus served as a link between ancient and modern European civilization. Christianity became the official state religion. It had a strong influence on the Byzantine art, music and architecture. Byzantine missionaries spread Christianity through out the empire and converted the Russians and other Slavic peoples to Orthodox Christianity. They also translated the Church services and Bible from Greek into the old Slavonic language, besides inventing an alphabet (later called Cyrillic)for the old Slav language. This Cyrillic alphabet is used in Russia and much of the Balkans today.

A division between the Western Catholic Church and the Eastern (Greek and Russian) Orthodox Churches took place in the eleventh century. One of the reason for this division was the dispute over the authority in the Church. The Eastern Orthodox Church did not accept that the Pope of Rome had jurisdiction over the East as well as the west or the right to decide by himself matters of Christian doctrine (belief).

After Justinian's death in 565, barbarians attacked the Byzantine Empire on all fronts. The Empire was strongly threatened by the invasions of the Persians. However, Heraclius (r. 610 -642) temporarily stopped its collapse by defeating the Persians.

The Byzantine Empire began to collapse during the eleventh century. By 1071, the Normans had taken southern Italy. That same year, in Asia Minor, the Seljuk Turks defeated Byzantine army at the Battle of Manzikert. With this defeat began the decline of Byzantine control over Asia Minor. Emperor Alexius Comnenus, who came to power in 1081, asked the Christians of western Europe to help defend the empire against the Turks. The Turks had invaded the Holy Land in addition to Byzantine Empire. The military expeditions of the Christians against the invaders of the Holy Land became known as the Crusades. As well shall see later on, during the First crusade, from 1096 to 1099, crusaders regained the coastal

regions of the Holy Land. But in the long run they did not save the empire. By the late fifteenth century, Constantinople and part of Greece were all that remained of the empire. Finally, the Byzantine Empire ended in 1453, when Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople. The last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI died while defending the city.

4.3. The Rise and Expansion of Islam

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

Why did the Quraysh oppose to the teaching of the Prophet Mohammed?
Mention the different Islamic sects.

Islam and the Muslim Empire

Islam is the name given to the religion preached by the Prophet Mohammed in the seventh century A.D. Mohammed was an Arab who was born in Mecca about 570. Mohammed preached that there is only one God (Allah) and that he, Mohammed, was God's messenger. Those who believe in the one God and accept Mohammed as His messenger are called **Muslims**. Muslim is an Arabic word that means one who submits (to God). Islam is an Arabic word for submission.

Mohammed began his teachings in Mecca about 610 and gathered around him a small community of followers. Soon the Quraysh Arabs and the wealthy merchants in Mecca considered his teachings a threat to their privileges. There was also the fear that Mecca, as the center of traditional religion, might lose its importance because of the new message. The annual pilgrimage to the **Ka'ba**, a **holy shrine** in Mecca, visited by thousands of Arabs from the whole peninsula, had been a source of considerable income for the Meccan merchants. So he and his followers were persecuted and several attempts were made to kill him.

As the persecutions intensified, Mohammed and his followers fled to the town of Yathrib, later renamed Madinat al-

Nabi (the city of the Prophet) or Medina. This event, known as **Hijra**, took place in 622, the first year of the Islamic calendar.

The inhabitants of Medina who invited Mohammed to their town came to be known as the **Ansar** (the Helpers). The Meccan emigrants were known as the **Muhajirun** (those who undertook the Hijra, or Emigrants). These two groups formed together the Sahaba (the companions of the Prophet). From 622 until he died in 632, Mohammed strengthened and governed the Muslim community (umma);? successfully resisted the attacks of his Meccan enemies and their allies; and established his authority over much of Arabia through both diplomacy and war.



Muslim power spread east and west until the Caliphate reached from India to the Atlantic. (1) How far into Europe did the Moslems penetrate? (2) What was left of the Byzantine Empire about this time? (3) In what cities did the Moslems establish important centers of learning?

They were more concerned with pleasures than with the affairs of government. When such rulers were weak or lazy, they frequently left the work of government to their viziers (vii-zeerz'), or chief ministers. It was possible for a vizier to become so powerful that he could appoint or dismiss high officials and have a member of his own family succeed him in office. In some cases the palace guards made a ruler virtually a prisoner and took over control of the government.

Turks later dominated the Moslem world. Conditions like these finally led to the downfall of the Caliphates of Cordoba, Egypt, and Baghdad. After about 600 people from central Asia, the Seljuks (sel-jook') Turks, became the most powerful force in the Moslem world. The Seljuks had accepted the religion of Mohammed and excelled as fighters. They took their way into the city of Baghdad

and took over the power of the Caliph, though he remained the religious leader of his people. The authority of government, however, passed into the hands of the Turkish chief, better known as the Sultan. In the 1300's still another people from central Asia, the Ottoman (ah'tuh-mun) Turks, became the leaders of the Moslem world. You will learn more about the Ottoman Turks in later chapters.

In brief, the leadership of the Moslem Empire shifted from the Arabs to the Turks in later centuries. But it was under the early successors of Mohammed that Moslem civilization actually took form. The Arabs not only developed their own way of life, but achieved a high level of art and learning. To what they learned from subject peoples the Arabs added ideas of their own. Arabic civilization spread through the Moslem world and influenced peoples beyond its borders.

Map 4.1 Muslim power spread east and west until the Caliphate expanded from India to the Atlantic

Between the eighth and ninth centuries, Muslim scholars codified whole Islamic law into a coherent system and eventually, there emerged four legal schools **Hanafi**, **Maliki**, **Shafi'i** and **Hanbali**. While they agree on the **Quran** and **Hadith** as sources of the **Shari'a**, they give priority to one or the other two sources of law, that is, **analogy** and **consensus**.

The Hanafi school is dominant in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, central Asia and northern India/Pakistan. The Maliki schools has followers in North Africa, Muslim Spain and the western and central Sudan. The **Shafi madhhab** (law school) is found along the Indian Ocean shores, from Southern Arabia and East Africa to Indonesia. The Hanbali, formerly dominant in Syria and Iraq, is now restricted to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In Ethiopia, the Shafi'i and Hanafi schools of Islamic law are dominant.

Before his death, the Prophet indicated that governing the community should be based on **Shura** (consultation). After his death, his immediate successors were elected and designated as **caliphs**. The first four caliphs were Abu Bakr (632-34), Umar (634-44), Uthman (644-56) and Ali (656-61), all of whom belonged to the Qurysh tribe and were related to Mohammed by marriage. Moreover, Ali was the Prophet's cousin.

When the third caliph, Uthman was murdered by a group of Muslims who had revolted because they were offended by some of his policies, Ali was elected caliph in Medina. His election was not, however, accepted by some of the Companions, particularly Muawiya, governor of Syria. This resulted in a civil war between

the followers of Ali and those of Muawiya. Ali agreed to the formation of an arbitration committee of two members, one representing him and the other Muawiya. But many of Ali's followers rejected that solution and abandoned him. They came to be known as **Kharijites**. They also revolted against the caliphs and the central governments of the **Umayyad** and **Abbasid** dynasties in Iraq, Arabia and Iran in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Although the Kharijites split into many factions, they shared some common features.

- (i) They asserted that anyone guilty of a serious sin was an unbeliever and apostate, and should therefore be put to death.
- (ii) With regard to the Imamate (or Caliphate), the Kharijites insisted that anyone, even a black slave, could be elected as the head of the community if he had the necessary qualifications: **piety, integrity and religious knowledge**.

Though the Kharijites formed a more puritanical and democratic sect, they were not supported by the majority of Muslims because of their intolerance towards other Muslims. Therefore, they remained minorities in the eastern lands of the Caliphate. In the Maghrib (northwest Africa), some of the Kharijite sects had considerable following followers among the Berbers who were dissatisfied with the oppressive Umayyad regime.

In the seventh century, the Muslim world had already been divided into two major sects. These were the **Shiites** and the **Sunnites**.

Those Muslims who supported the cause of Ali believed that the Caliphate (they preferred to call Imamate) should go to the family of the Prophet represented by Ali and his descendants. Ali was married to Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed. They were known as Shi'at Ali (the party of Ali) or the Shiites. The Shiites rejected the consensus of the

community and replaced it with the doctrine that there was in every age an infallible Imam to whom along God entrusted the guidance of mankind. The first Imam was Ali. The Imams are considered to be divinely appointed rulers and teachers of the faithful, and to possess super human qualities. For this reason they are the only ones who have the right to lead the Muslim community.

Shi'ism (the doctrine of the Shiites) soon split into many sects. The most important is the group known as the **Twelvers**, which recognizes the twelfth descendant of Ali called Mohammed al-Mahdi, who disappeared in 880. The strong hold of this sect today is Iran. Significant groups are also found in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and India. Those Shiites who recognized the seventh Iman, Ismail, became known as the **Seveners** or **Ismailis**.

From the struggle among the Muslims orthodoxy emerged victorious in the form of Sunnism or Sunni Islam, so called because its followers supported the Sunna, that is, the way of the Prophet. Today, Sunnis or Sunnites comprise 90% of the world's total Muslim population. The major doctrinal differences between Sunni and Shiite Islam are these: the sources of the Sunnite law are the Quran, the Hadith, the consensus of the community and analog. The four bases of the Shiite law are the Quran, the Hadith of the Prophet and of the Imams, the consensus of the Imams, and reason. Although the Shiites perform pilgrimage to Mecca, they prefer to visit the tombs of Ali and his son Hussien, in the towns of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq. One concept of Shiite origin, the belief in the coming of the Mahdi, penetrated Sunni Islam. The Mahdi (the rightly-guided one) is seen as the Expected Deliverer who restores justice. Through the centuries Mahdis appeared in various Muslim countries from time to time.

Muslim Arabs began their expansion outside Arabia under the first four caliphs. Muslim Arabs, motivated by economic and

political objectives won a series of victories over the armies of the two great powers of the period: the Byzantine and the Persian empires. The campaign against the Byzantines in Syria took place between 634 and 636. The conquest of Persia took longer. The Battle of Qadisiyya in 637 opened the fertile low lands of Iraq. From their military bases of Basra and Kufa, the Muslim armies penetrated the Iranian highlands. The last great battle at Nihawand (642) ended the Persian Empire. By 650, they stood on the borders of India, in northern Iraq and in Armenia. Egypt was conquered between 639 and 642.

The rapid success of the Muslims was due to the financial and military exhaustion of Byzantine and Persian empires as a result of long wars. Moreover, the Byzantines were hated by their subjects because of the oppressive taxation. The Christian population in the fertile province of Iran were opposed to the Persian ruling class who followed a different religion. The Persian empire had also been weakened by dynastic wars before the Arab conquest.

The Umayyad Caliphs, who ruled from 661 to 750, led the Muslim Arabs to new victories. The Caliphate was founded by Muawiya after Ali was murdered in the civil war between the two. Muawiya was a member of the aristocratic Mekan family of Umayyah, from which the Caliphate took its name. The Umayyads established their capital at Damascus in 661. They fought the Turkish tribes in central Asia, sent an expedition into Sindh in India and reached the borders of China. They captured Sicily and completed the conquest of North Africa. The Umayyads then invaded Spain in 711.

Within one hundred years after the death of the Prophet, the Muslim Arab Empire came to include an enormous territory that became the center of Islamic world. At this time, the Arabs formed a ruling class. The many conquered peoples embraced Islam. Although the Muslim conquerors exhibited a large measure of religious tolerance all non-Muslims had to pay a

special tax to be free muslim army service. But many worked as officers and tax collectors in the civil administration and as doctors and tutors at the court. The contradiction between the politically and economically privileged minority and the unprivileged majority led to a crisis that ended up with the fall of the Umayyad and the establishment of another dynasty called Abbasids.

The Abbasids became victorious as a result of the support they got from all the dissatisfied elements, mostly non-Arabs. The Abbasid revolution brought the Umayyad state to an end and inaugurated the Islamic Empire in 762, shifting, the political center from Damascus to Baghdad in Iraq. Although the Arabs lost their privileged status, Arabic continued to be the language of the state, literature and science.

About 820, the authority of the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad is so extensive that it was felt throughout the Islamic Empire. But by 920, the power of his successor had so diminished that it was hardly felt even in the capital city. By 1258, the city itself lay in ruins. With its fall, Arab domination was lost forever and the history of the Caliphate closed.

There were internal and external factors for the downfall of the Caliphate. The internal factors were more important than the external ones. The method of administration was not conducive to stability and continuity. The conquered peoples were exploited and over-taxed. This led to rebellions and civil wars. There were sharp divisions between Arabs and non-Arabs and also among Persians, Turks and Berbers. Among the Arabs themselves, there were long tribal conflicts. There were also religious conflicts among the followers of the various Islamic sects. All these resulted in the break up of the Abbasid Empire and the rise of a number of independent dynasties in different parts of the empire: Persia, Egypt, Tunisia, the Maghrib and Spain.

The external factor which contributed to the downfall of the Caliphate was the Mongol invasion. In 1253, Hulagu, the grandson of Chingiz, Khan left Mongolia in central Asia at the head of a huge army. He sent a message to the last Abbasid Caliph demanding surrender. In January, 1258, the troops of Hulagu launched an attack against Baghdad. In February, they entered the city. The Caliph with his officials rushed to offer an unconditional surrender, but they were all put to death. Baghdad was plundered and burnt to the ground by the forces of Hulagu. This marked the end of the Caliphate.

The Ottoman Turkish Empire

The Turks were a nomadic, pastoralist people in central Asia. They were pagan but converted to Sunni Islam in the 10th century and became firm, strong Muslims. Their leaders commanded Turkish troops for the Abbasid Arab Caliphate. When the Caliphate broke up into different Muslim states, a number of these states had Turkish rulers, who used Turkish soldiers. In 1071, a Turkish **Sultan**, Alp Arslan, defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Manzikert in eastern Asia Minor. After this battle, Turks moved into Asia Minor in large numbers making its population largely Turkish, though there were still also Greek, Kurds and Armenians. The battle of Manzikert was a great disaster for the Byzantine Empire and made it much weaker, because it lost most of Asia Minor as a source of military manpower and taxes. However, the Turkish tradition of nomadism made Turkish states rather simple in structure and not permanent. For a strong, permanent state, the majority of Turks had to settle as agriculturalists and the state had to develop a regular, effective administration. This happened under the Turkish Ottoman dynasty and **Sultanate**. The term Ottoman comes from Osman, also called Othman, the founder and first **Sultan** (ruler) of the empire.

The Ottoman Sultanate began in northwest Asia Minor in 1280 and extended its territory by conquest over most of Asia Minor. Ottoman forces moved into the Balkans and conquered most of this area in the late middle ages. In 1453, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II Fatih, the Conqueror (r. 1451-1481), took Constantinople, renamed Istanbul, and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire continued to expand its territory. Later additions to the Ottoman territory were Iraq, Syria, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Cyprus, Crete and much of what are now the southern Ukraine and Poland, and most of Hungary. The Ottoman Empire reached the height of its power under Sultan Suleiman I “ the **Magnificent**”, (r.

1520-1566). The Ottoman Empire was the greatest Muslim state in the world.

The Ottoman state machinery was fairly simple but effective. The Sultan was an absolute autocrat “the shadow (representative) of God on earth”. His power was only limited by need to make his policies and decisions agree with the Sharia (the Muslim law), as interpreted by the Muslim “**clergy**”, the **Ulema**. However, because the Sultan appointed the leaders of the Ulema, its interpretations were usually what the Sultan wanted. Under the Sultan was a chief minister called the **Grand Vizier**, who sometimes commanded the army as well. When, after Suleiman I, the sultans became less capable, it was strong, competent Grand Viziers and their officials who held the Empire together.

The army was large and efficient. The core of the regular, professional Ottoman army was the infantry of the **Janissaries**. They were recruited from the regular tribute of Christian children taken from the Balkans, who were brought up as Muslims and trained as soldiers. The Janissaries were respected and feared by the enemies of the Ottomans for their skill, discipline, courage and fanaticism. The traditional Turkish warrior was a horseman using a bow, but at the end of the middle ages, the Ottoman government created an efficient Janissary infantry using **matchlock muskets** and the Ottoman army also used **canon**. The cavalry of the Ottoman army was the **Sipahi** Turkish cavalry. Turkish leaders and their men were given land in Asia Minor and Europe called **timars**. From the resources of these timar lands, they provided themselves with horses and weapons. Timars became hereditary. The Ottoman timars were much like the medieval European fiefs and there was in fact a military feudalism in the Ottoman Empire quite similar to medieval Western Europe.

The aggressive, expansive Ottoman Empire with its powerful, well-disciplined army and good navy also, was a

dangerous enemy to European states, which were divided and often at war with each other. European armies were also not, until after the middle ages, as well disciplined as the Ottoman army. Ottoman campaigns attacked Vienna on the age of Western Europe in 1529 and again in 1683 but failed to take the city. In the Mediterranean, Ottoman navies pushed Ottoman power to the west but failed to take the island of Malta in 1565. In the end, Ottoman economic and military decline from the seventeenth century onwards removed the Ottoman danger from Europe. European states (especially Austria, then Russia) began to push forward aggressively against the Ottoman Empire.

Muslim Legacy

The Islamic civilization which flourished from 800 to 1200 was not specifically Muslim. But Islam provided it with a general framework and a universal language. However, Arabic grammar, law and theology are some aspects of the civilization with definitely Muslim character.

The culture of medieval Islam was multi-racial. Arabs, Jews, Persians, Turks, Berbers and Spaniards all contributed to its development. Although the Islamic civilization borrowed freely from the Greeks, Persians and Hindus, it was also creative and original. For a period of 400 years, great advances were made in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, botany, chemistry, medicine, history and geography in the world of Islam.

Many western writers once believed that the Arab conquests stifled artistic, literary and scientific creativity in the Middle East. However, many of the works of Plato, Aristotle and other Greek thinkers and later transmitted them to the West not only by the Arabs and the Muslims but also by non-Arabs and followers of other religions. The Arab conquests brought Muslims into direct contact with the philosophical ideas of the **Hellenistic** world. Hellenistic philosophy flourished in several Middle Eastern schools, including the academy of Alexandria in

Egypt and the great medical school of Jundi- Shapur. The writings of Aristotle, translated by Syrian Christians, inspired Muslim thinkers such as al- Kindi (d. 873), Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (d. 1037) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 1198).

Al-Kindi, called the “Philosopher of the Arabs,” rated the search for truth above all other intellectual activities, exalted **logic** and mathematics, and wrote and edited many works on science, psychology, medicine and music. Ibn Sina combined philosophy with medicine. His scientific writings included a medical encyclopedia which was translated into Latin and remained a standard textbook for European medical students until the 17th century. Ibn Rushd is best known for his works on the philosophy of Aristotle and on Muslim theologians.

Muslim mathematicians made important advances in algebra, plane and spherical **trigonometry**, and the geometry of planes, spheres, cones and cylinders. Our so-called ‘Arabic numerals’ were probably a Hindu invention, but the Arabs transmitted them to Europe. Muslims used the decimal fraction at least two centuries before Europeans knew about them. They applied their mathematical knowledge to business accounting (banks were established in Baghdad and other cities as early as the 9th century), land surveying, astronomical calculations and mechanical devices.

In medicine Muslims built on the work of the ancient Greeks. Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873) developed the science of **optics**. Physicians in early Islamic society studied both botany and chemistry in order to discover curative drugs and also antidotes to various poisons. It was al-Razi (865-925), a Persian, who first distinguished smallpox from measles.

Muslims, like other peoples, thought that the heavenly bodies affected the lives of people, cities and states; and so, many of the caliphs kept court astrologers as advisers. Muslims also used **astrolabes** (devices for measuring the height of stars) and built primitive versions of the **telescope**. One astronomer is

said to have erected a **planetarium** that reproduced not only the movements of the stars but also peals of thunder and lightning. Muslim scientists knew that the earth was round and that it revolved around the sun, long before Copernicus or Galileo.

Descriptive geography was a favorite subjects. Thanks to the Arab conquests and the expansion of trade throughout the eastern hemisphere, Muslims liked to read books describing distant places and their inhabitants, especially if they were potential trading partners or converts to Islam. Much of what we know about sub-Saharan Africa from the 9th to the 13th centuries comes from the writings of Arab travelers and geographers. History was a major discipline, too. Nearly every Muslim scientist had to write about the previous development of his specialty. Rulers demanded **chroniclers** either to publicize their own accomplishments, or to learn from their predecessors' successes and failures. The scholars could never have developed the **Shari'a** without first having read the biographies of Muhammad and his Companions. Muslims also liked to read accounts of the early caliphs and conquests for amusement as well as instruction. Muslim historians were the first to try to structure history by looking for patterns in the rise and fall of dynasties, peoples and civilizations. For example, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) linked the rise of states with the existence of a strong group feeling between the leaders and their supporters.

Prose works were written to guide Muslims in the performance of worship, instruct princes in the art of governing, refute the claims of rival political and theological movements, or teach any of the many aspects of living. Animal fables criticized despotic rulers, ambitious court officials, and greedy merchants.

Muslims did not neglect the visual arts. Some of the best proportioned and most lavishly decorated buildings ever erected were the great mosques in the big cities. Some have not survived; others still stand. Muslim architects also devoted some

of their time and talents to designing palaces, schools and other buildings. While painting and sculpture were rare until modern times, early Muslim artists illustrated manuscripts with abstract designs and beautiful pictures of animals and plants. Calligraphy was also an important art form, used for walls of public buildings as well as manuscripts.

4.4. Medieval Society

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

What was the system of medieval Europe which refer to the relationship between the lords and their vassals?

Feudalism What was the aim of the crusaders?

Medieval Europe was **feudal** in its rural economy. In this meaning, feudalism describes relations of peasants dominated by lords. These conditions developed over a long period of time and began even in the last period of the Roman Empire. In its rural economy, Europe was beginning to enter the middle ages as early as the fourth century. In the late Roman Empire we can see the existence of dependent peasants called **coloni**. They were not slaves but they owed labour services to their land lords and could not leave their land lord's land. These coloni were very similar to the **serfs** of the middle ages.

In the early middle ages coloni simply became what were called serfs. In large areas of Europe, the feudal rural economy operated as follows. A lord had a **manor** or several manors. On a manor lived peasants, many of them serfs. They cultivated the land. The serfs belonged to the lord and they could not leave the manor with out his permission. The lord kept part of the land of the manor under his own direct control. This land, called the **demesne**, was cultivated for the lord by unpaid, compulsory **corvee labour** of his serfs. The produce of this land went to the lord for his own household consumption, or to sell. The peasants

also paid feudal **dues**, in kind like cheese, eggs, cloth, honey, etc or in money, to the lord. The peasants were allowed to cultivate some of the land of the manor to support them selves and their families. A lord also had jurisdiction (legal authority) over his serfs. In his manor court, the lord or his agent heard cases and could impose **money fines** as punishments. This right was very profitable for the lord. Great lords had the right to decide major criminal cases in their courts and hang criminals for crimes like murder.

In much of central and Eastern Europe **serfdom** started later than in Western Europe but it became more common and harsher at the end of the middle ages, and lasted longer. In Russia serfdom was only abolished in 1861.

Serfdom and corvee were imposed on peasants at the bottom of society. There was also military feudalism at the top of society in relation between lords and their vassals. In the early middle ages, cavalry became increasingly important in war. Kings and great lords needed men who were experienced in fighting on horseback wearing armour and carrying a shield, spear (lance) and sword. These men were called **knights**. A large, strong, trained horse to carry a knight was expensive. The knight's armour and weapons were also expensive. In the early middle ages when money was not very abundant but land was plentiful, the easiest way for a king or great lord to get knights was to give a knight land. The land provided the material resources for knight, to equip themselves with horses, armour and weapons. In any case knights would get land if they agreed to serve a king or great lord.

Therefore under military feudalism, a lord gave land in the form of manor or manors to a knight in return for military service to the land. The land consisting of a manor or manors is called a **fief**. The knight who received the fief became a **vassal** of the lord by the act called **homage**. In an act of homage, done in front of witnesses, the vassal put his hands in between the

hands of his lord and swore an oath to serve his lord loyally and faithfully. After the homage, the vassal received the land from the lord. His duty was mainly to fight for his lord and always remain loyal to his lord. The vassal also had to make himself available at his lord's court and give advice to his lord whenever it was needed.

Manorialism

Manorialism was the economic system of Europe from the end of the West Roman Empire to 1200's. The name comes from **manerium**, the Latin word for manor, meaning a large estate controlled by a lord and worked by peasants. Manors covered most of Europe during the middle ages. They supplied food, clothing, shelter and nearly everything else needed by the lords and peasants.

Most manors were made up of the lord's land and small plots of land held by the peasants. They lived in the manor house, which was usually surrounded by a garden, an **orchard** and farm buildings. The peasants' huts were clustered nearby. Most manors also included a church, a mill for grinding grain into flour and a press for making wine.

The peasants depended on the lord for protection from enemies, for justice and for what little government there was. The peasants farmed both the lord's land and their own. They were bound to the soil. This means that they were part of the property, and they remained on the land if a new lord acquired it. Unlike slaves, they could not be sold apart from the land. Peasant, rarely traveled far from the manor. European peasants were known as serfs.

The manorial system began to decline when trade and towns revived. The revival brought back an economic system based on payment with money. Manorialism ended first in Western Europe. It remained as late as the nineteenth century in some parts of central and Eastern Europe.

The Rise of Trade and Towns

During the eleventh century, the manorial system declined in Western Europe with the revival of trade and towns. As the demand for goods increased, trade began to revive. Towns appeared along the main trade routes. Most early towns developed near a fortified **castle**, church or monastery where merchants could stop for protection. The location of natural resources was another reason for the growth of towns.

Many people moved to towns in search of jobs. Peasants left the manors to seek a new life. As towns grew in size, the variety of occupations carried on by the inhabitants increased. To the trading centers, the woolen centers and the fishing centers came weavers, shoemakers, bakers, butchers, carpenters, tailors and other craftsman. These craftsmen produced goods for merchants to sell to the towns people. Some peasants farmed the land outside the towns and supplied the towns people with food. Medieval towns, which arose mainly because of the growth of trade, encouraged craftsmanship and trading activities.

Medieval Culture

Art

Towns life encouraged greater interest in art and learning. The gathering together of large number of people, the increase in trade and travel, and the freedom and security offered by cities and towns encouraged art and learning. Two noteworthy achievements were the building of cathedrals and the growth of universities.

Until the twelfth century, most of the cathedrals erected in Western Europe followed the design used by the Romans in the early Christian Churches. This style of church architecture was called **Romanesque**. Romanesque cathedrals had massive walls, strong columns and rounded arches.

But later in time, a new style of architecture developed. This new style of architecture, with its high towers and walls, pointed arches and leaning arches (called flying butt resses) is called **Gothic** architecture.

Artists of many kinds lavished their skill on the cathedrals. Expert wood workers carved panels on altars and pews. Sculptors cut from stone statues of saints and martyrs, and chiseled the stone devils and dragons called **gargoyles**. Those craftsmen who worked in stained glass created real beauty. Most cathedrals are more than 700 years old.



Fig 4.2 Rising from a little island in the Seine River, the great Gothic Cathedral of Notre Dame has dominated the center of Paris for more than 700 years.

Education

The Christian Church played an important part in shaping European formal education during the Middle Ages, which lasted from the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D 400's to the 1500's.

Christian parents were expected to know the laws and beliefs of Christianity and to teach them to their children. Religious authorities controlled most of formal education. Some youngsters were educated by their local priests or in the bishop's household. Others were taught in monastery or cathedral schools.

In the monastery and cathedral schools, students studied such subjects as church music, theology and Latin, the official language of the Western Church. They were also taught subjects similar to those taught in ancient Greece and Rome. These subjects were divided into two groups, which together were known as **the seven liberal arts**. The first group, called **the trivium**, consisted of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The second group, called the **quadrivium**, consisted of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and harmonics.

Many young people who did not receive formal schooling became apprentices to skilled masters and learned a trade. Young men learned the arts and values of **chivalry**, which prepared them for military or government careers.

The first modern universities developed in Europe during the 1100's. The universities did not originate as places or groups of buildings. They began instead as collections of scholars organized into corporations with certain privileges and responsibilities. In fact, the word **university** comes from the Latin *universitas*, the term for corporation or guild in the Middle Ages. The university of Paris, which became the largest and most famous university in Europe during the thirteenth century, served as a model for the majority of northern European universities. Most of these universities in northern Europe developed from teachers' guilds at cathedral schools. The guilds charged a fee to train students and to grant degrees. They were run by corporations of teachers.

The Crusades

Crusades were Christian military expeditions organized mainly to recapture Palestine during the Middle Ages. Palestine, also called the Holy Land, was important to Christians because it was the region where Jesus Christ had lived.

During the eleventh century, fierce Seljuk Turks from central Asia invaded the Near East and conquered Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria. The Turks crushed the Byzantines at the

Battle of Manzikert in Asia Minor in 1071. The Turks had become Muslims. But unlike Muslim Arabs, they made it difficult for Christian pilgrims to reach the holy place.

In 1095, Byzantine Emperor Alexius comnenus asked Urban II, Pope of the Roman Catholic Church for assistance in fighting the Turks. Urban agreed to help. In 1095, at the Council of Clermont, France, Urban called for a crusade. He gave a **stirring sermon**, urging European Christians to stop fighting among themselves and recapture the Holy Land from the Muslims. He promised the crusaders both spiritual and material rewards for their deeds. The crowd enthusiastically responded with shouts of "God wills it!" An intense desire to fight for Christianity **gripped** Western Europe, and thousands of people joined the cause.

The crusaders, who came from Western Europe, organized eight major expeditions between 1096 and 1270. Kings, nobles and thousands of knights, peasants and towns people took part in the crusades. They had two stated goals: (1) to gain permanent control of the Holy Land and (2) to protect the Byzantine Empire. Not all the crusaders however, joined the expeditions for religious reasons. The French knights wanted more land. Italian merchants intended to involve and then, if possible, to control the trade of Middle Eastern Ports. Many priests and monks wanted valuable religious relics. Large numbers of poor people joined the expeditions simply to escape the hardships of their lives.



Map 4.2 This map traces the routes traveled by soldiers of the first three Crusades

The crusades were originally called armed pilgrimages. The word **crusade** comes from the Latin word **crux**, meaning cross. Members of the many expeditions sewed the symbol of the cross of Christ on their clothing. "To take up the cross" means to become a crusader.

The First Crusade (1096-1099)

Following Pope Urban II's call for a crusade, an enthusiastic preacher known as Peter the Hermit and a knight called Walter the Penniless led a group that rushed ahead of the official expedition. One group of the crusade army was the untrained, undisciplined and less equipped peasant force.

The main armies sent by Pope Urban II consisted chiefly of well-trained French and Norman knights. Byzantine forces also joined the crusaders. In 1097, the crusaders defeated the Muslims near Nicea, in northwest Turkey. One part of the crusaders marched toward Jerusalem and recovered the Holy City after six weeks of fighting in 1099. After this bloody battle and final victory, most of the crusaders returned home.

The Second Crusade (1147-1149)

In 1144, the Turks conquered the County of Edessa, one of the four Christian states in the conquered land by the crusaders. The threat to the other Christian states brought about the Second Crusade. King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany led the armies of the Second Crusade. However, there were disagreements between their armies, and the Muslim forces defeated them before they reached Edessa.

The Third Crusade (1189-1192)

The Muslims continued to attack the Christians in the Holy Land. In 1187, Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt and Syria, united

Muslims and easily defeated a Christian army at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, and triumphantly entered Jerusalem.

The loss of Jerusalem led to the Third Crusade. The leading European Generals of the Third Crusade included the German Emperor Frederick I (called Barbarossa), King Richard I (the Lion-Hearted) of England and King Philip II (Augustus) of France.

Frederick drowned in 1190 on his way to the Holy Land. Quarrels among Richard, Philip and other leaders limited the success of the crusaders. Philip returned home to plot against Richard. Richard attempted to recapture Jerusalem, but failed. Before Richard left for home, however, he negotiated a treaty with Saladin and consequently, the Muslims allowed Christian **pilgrims** enter Jerusalem.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204)

This crusade resulted from the failure of the Third Crusade to recapture Jerusalem. However, the crusaders became involved in affairs of Byzantine Empire and never reached their original goal.

The Children's Crusade (1212)

This Crusade was one of the strangest and most tragic in the history of the Crusades. Thousands of boys and girls from about 10 to 18 years old became convinced that they could recover Jerusalem. They believed god would deliver the Holy City to them because they were poor and faithful. Children from France formed one part of the group, and children from Germany the other. They expected God to part the waters of the Mediterranean Sea so that they could cross safely to Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, no one cared to interfere and advise the children against the reckless project before they undertook it. Consequently, none of the children reached the Holy Land. Many starved or froze to death during the long march south to the Mediterranean. When the expected miracle did not occur,

the youngsters, who survived the terrible journey to the sea, returned home in shame. Others got aboard ships going to the East and either were drowned in storms at sea or sold into slavery by the Muslims.

The Fifth Crusade (1217-1221)

In this Crusade the Christians captured the town of Damietta in Egypt. But other efforts failed, and the crusades soon gave up Damietta in exchange for a truce.

Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)

This Crusade was led by Emperor Frederick II of the Holy Roman Empire. He negotiated a peace treaty with the Sultan in which the Sultan gave Jerusalem to the Christians.

The Muslims seized Jerusalem again in 1244. This resulted in the **Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)**, led by Louis IX of France who revived the idea of winning the Holy Land by attacking cities in Egypt. But Louis and his army were defeated and captured by the Muslims. The Muslims freed the King in exchange for huge ransom. Louis remained in the Holy Land for four years, and in 1270, he led the **Eighth Crusade** against the Muslims. Louis died soon afterward, however, when a plague broke out in his army.

Meanwhile, in the East, the Muslims continued to gain Christian territory. Europeans lost interest in the Holy Land and rather turned their attention westward to the Atlantic Ocean. In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed to the New World. Europeans looked toward America. They left the Holy Land to the Muslims.

Results of the Crusades

The crusaders failed to accomplish their main goals. They recaptured the Holy Land for a time but could not establish lasting control over the area. In spite of this, the crusaders stimulated economic growth by bringing increased trade between cities that bordered the Mediterranean Sea. Western Europeans also learned how to build better ships and make more accurate maps from their experience in the crusades. They began to use magnetic compasses to tell directions. These achievements contributed to the expansion of early capitalist relations in the Early Modern World.

4.5. The Middle Ages in the Far East

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

1. Who were the foreign rulers of India who established their capital at Delhi?
2. What was the name of the dynasty that reunified China first?

India

From about 300 to 500, India had a period of greatness. Art and architecture flourished, great literature was produced and science advanced. Trade grew to such an extent that Indian goods, especially dyes and spices were to be found in market places as far apart as Egypt and China.

By about 500, however, this second period of peace and prosperity in India came to an end with new external attacks. The first attack came from the white Huns, a people related to the Huns under Attila who had attacked the Roman Empire. Then other bands of raiders came down from the mountain passes in the northwest. By about 700, these raids had grown into full-scale invasions. Arabs and Persians and savage tribesmen from central Asia pushed into northern India. Among the latter were Turks and Mongols. These invading groups

fought not only against the people of India but also among themselves. Under these conditions progress slowed down and strong, lasting, government for India became impossible.

The Turkish invaders who ruled India for several centuries made their capital at Delhi in north-central India, but extended their authority far to the south. In time the power of the Turks was threatened by Mongol attacks. Particularly destructive was the great raid of the Mongol leader Tamerlane. Tamerlane swept into India in 1398 and stayed in it for a year. Within this short-lived stay he sacked Delhi and caused a greater loss of life and property than any other conqueror. The Turkish rulers never fully recovered from their defeat at Tamerlane's hands. Soon after 1500, the Turks were overthrown by a new Mongol invasion which set up the Mogul (Persian for Mongol) Empire in India.

Religion exercised strong influence on Indian culture. In this regard, most early Indian art and learning reveals a strong interest in religion. Even though Buddhism ceased to be an important religion in India after 800, it left a deep impression on Indian thought and learning. Still another religious influence on Indian art and learning came from invaders between 700 and 1500. Most of these peoples were the followers of Islam. Hinduism and Islam continued to exist side by side. The followers of neither religion could accept the faith of the other.

When the Muslim peoples invaded India, they destroyed much of old India's sculpture and architecture, but brought new architectural ideas of their own. The Taj Mahal, a graceful, stately tomb erected in the 1600's, is an outstanding example.

China

The Sui dynasty (581-618) reunified China after almost 400 years of division. By 605, the Grand Canal linked the Yangtze Valley with northern China. The canal made the grain and other products of the south more easily available to support the political and military needs of the north.

The Tang dynasty replaced the Sui in 618 and ruled China for nearly 300 years. The Tang period was an age of prosperity and great cultural accomplishments. Tang capital, Chang'an (now xian), was the largest city in the World. It attracted diplomats, traders, poets and scholars from all over Asia and the Mediterranean area. Some of China's greatest poets, including Li Bo and Du Fu, wrote during the Tang period. Buddhism remained an enormous cultural influence, but followers adapted it to Chinese ways. But in the ninth century, a revival of Confucianism began.

The gradual decline of Tang power began by a rebellion in 755. Another great rebellion further weakened the Tang empire from 875 to 884, which finally ended in 907. Five dynasties struggled for succession until the Song dynasty reunified China in 960. The Song dynasty introduced two major changes inside China. First, the Song rulers firmly established a system of civil service examination that had began during the Tang period. They thus completed the shift of social and political power from aristocratic families to officials selected on the basis of talent. The second significant change was the development of Neo-Confucianism. The Song dynasty established Neo-Confucianism as the official state philosophy.

During the Song period, rice production had increased greatly. Chinese inventions during this period included gunpowder, the magnetic compass, and moveable type for printing. Art, philosophy and literature flourished. In the fine arts, the great Song achievements were hard-glazed porcelains and magnificent landscape paintings.

The Song dynasty suffered from frequent attacks by nomadic peoples from the north. In 1126, it lost northern China to invaders from Manchuria. The Song then moved their capital from Kaiteng to Hangzhou on the wealthy lower Yangtze Delta, and the dynasty became known as the Southern Song.

During the thirteenth century, Mongol warriors swept China from the north. The Mongol leader, Kublai Khan, established the Yuan dynasty. It controlled China from 1279 to 1368, the first time that all China had come under foreign rule. During the Yuan period, Marco Polo, a trader from Venice, traveled widely in China from 1275 to 1292, and returned home with glowing accounts of the highly civilized country he called Cathay.

The Mongols, ruled China harshly. During the mid-fourteenth century, rebellions drove the Mongols out of China and led to the establishment of the Ming dynasty.

The Ming dynasty ruled from 1368 to 1644, a period of stability and prosperity. Literature and art flourished again. In 1644, the Manchu people of Manchuria invaded China and established the Qing dynasty. The Manchu ruled China until 1912.

Japan

During the late fifth century, new ideas and technology began arriving in Japan from China. The Japanese borrowed the Chinese system of writing and adopted their advanced methods of calculating the calendar. Confucianism was introduced from China and began to spread across Japan. About 522, Buddhism came to the country from China and Korea.

Prince Shotoku (r. 593-622) encouraged the Japanese to adopt Chinese ideas. He tried to adopt the Chinese system of centralized imperial rule. In 645, Kotoku became emperor and began the Taika Reform, a program that introduced more features of the Chinese model of government. It also introduced a central system of taxation and a land distribution program.

In 858, the emperor and his court fell under the control of a powerful noble family called Fujiwaras. They gained power by intermarrying with the imperial family. The Fujiwara family ruled Japan for about 300 years.

During the eleventh century the great estates in the countryside became increasingly independent. The lords who controlled the estates were called the **daimyo**. The daimyo hired bands of warriors to protect their lands and the peasants who worked them. These warriors became known as **samurai**.

Two of the most powerful bands of samurai were headed by the Taira family and Minamoto family. These families fought for control of the imperial court in Kyoto, the former capital of Japan. In 1160, the Taira family seized power from the Fujiwara. But Taira control ended in 1185, when the family was defeated by the Minamoto clan. The Minamoto family, headed by Yoritomo, became the strongest family in the country. Yoritomo set up his military head quarters in Kama Kura.

Yoritomo claimed to be the protector of the emperor and ruled in his name. In 1192, the emperor gave Yoritomo the title **Shogun** (general). Yoritomo's military government became known as **shogunate**. Shogun rule lasted until 1867. Each Shogun, or his advisers, controlled Japan- but always in the name of the emperor.

In 1336, a samurai leader named Takauji Ashikaga gained control of Kyoto and established the shogunate in Kyoto. The Ashikaga family ruled Japan for almost 235 years. But the family's control was weak, and the last 100 years of Ashikaga rule was marked by constant warfare among local samurai bands.

The first Europeans to reach Japan in 1543, were the Portuguese sailors. In mid-sixteenth century, Catholic missionaries from Spain and Portugal arrived in Japan along with some traders. During the early seventeenth century, traders arrived from the Netherlands and England.

4.6. The Development of Early Capitalism in the Middle Ages

Questions for Discussion and Practical Work

1. Which of the following developments took place first in the growth of towns and cities?
 - a) Trade
 - b) Appearance of banks
 - c) City
 - d) Emergence of the bourgeoisie
2. Which one was an important development in technology during the Middle Ages?
 - a) Mechanical clocks
 - c) Better loom for

Capitalism Defined

The period c. 1000- c. 1500 can be called the **later Middle Ages**. In this period, Europe's economy expanded. There was some decline in the fourteenth century resulting from war and plague. From 1337 to 1453, England and France fought the Hundred Years War, which interrupted trade and exhausted the economies of both nations. In addition, the break down of feudalism and manorialism caused civil war throughout most of Europe. Peasants rebelled protesting oppression and exploitation. In towns, workers fought the rich merchants who kept them poor and powerless.

To add to the **miseries** of the people, the **Black Death** killed about a fourth of Europe's population between 1347 and 1352. The Black Death was an outbreak of **plague**, one of the worst epidemic diseases. Severe droughts and floods also brought death, diseases and famine.

Economic revival began sometime in the second half of the fifteenth century. Over the whole period c. 1000-c.1500, however, capitalist relations were developing and of course continued to develop even faster after c. 1500.

There are some most important characteristics of a capitalist economy and society which distinguish it from other systems. In capitalism land is an absolute private property, able to be bought and sold just like any other commodity; lending money at interest; a "market economy", in which goods of all

kinds are produced for sale are also another characteristic of the system labour is free in order to work for money wages with no slavery or serfdom. There is legal equality of all members of society with no special legal privileges for nobles or others a high status Business men are respected and profit making is strongly motivated in society. Accumulating money to use to make more money (investment) is encouraged rather than just spending on personal use alone. However, other characteristics of a capitalist society such as the legal equality of all citizens did not come in most of Europe until after the French Revolution of 1789.

Towns and Long Distance Trade

In the period between c. 1000 and c. 1300, towns and cities grew in size and number, and long distance and other trade expanded. Capitalist relations developed most quickly in urban centers and in connection with the long distance trade conducted by the merchants of these urban centers. Urban revival began around 1000 when there was some what more peace and stability and the whole European economy was expanding.

Towns and cities were quite small. The smallest towns had between 500-2000 inhabitants. Larger urban centers had between 2000-10,000 people, while great cities had between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants. It is not certain if a few great cities such as Venice and Paris reached 100,000 people.

Towns and cities had several, different economic activities. All provided a market for the sale of goods. The countryside sold food to the towns, the towns sold manufactured goods to the countryside. The merchants of bigger urban centers bought and sold goods over a wider area. They were engaged in long distance trade across state frontiers and even outside Europe to the Muslim lands of the Mediterranean. Towns and cities were also centers of manufactories, conducted in small craft workshops by hand methods. In the bigger urban centers merchants organized the manufacturing production and sold the

products in distant markets. The craft workers were dominated by these merchant capitalists and many of the craft workers were wage workers. Some towns and cities developed famous industrial specialties like the luxury woolen cloth of Flanders.

Towns and cities were also centers of administration by feudal lords and became centers of royal administration as the power of kings increased. Urban centers were also religious and cultural centers. Archbishops and bishops always conducted their church administration from a city. Some towns and cities had famous churches and monasteries and were centers of pilgrimage. When universities appeared, they were located in towns and cities. As the use of money increased again in Europe, banks appeared in some Italian cities. Some rich merchants turned from dealing in goods to dealing in money. They lent money at interest and through their agents all over Europe, they helped to finance trade. As towns and cities became richer, the bigger towns gained a right of self administration by their own officials. This right was gained by payment to a feudal lord or bishop or king and sometimes by hard struggle. The greatest cities like Venice in Italy, became completely independent city republics and in Germany important cities were "free cities" under only the German Emperor and were able to manage their own affairs with almost no outside control. Towns and cities followed their own rules and regulations. There was not serfdom in towns and cities. "City air is free air" was a German saying at the time. Towns and cities were mostly surrounded by walls for defense and for collecting taxes at the gates.

However, towns and cities were not democratic. Their administration was controlled by the richest citizens, usually merchants. Apparently, democracy had disappeared with ancient Greece and Rome. During the Middle Ages, the rich and powerful were expected to rule and the rest to obey them. The leading men in the towns and cities were the bourgeoisie. In the Middle Ages, the bourgeoisie were growing in number and

wealth, but they were not as rich or politically and socially important as the big nobles.

The richest merchants and the greatest cities engaged in long distance trade. Trade in expensive, luxury goods was the most profitable of all. Italian cities, above all Venice and Genoa, traded with eastern Mediterranean ports and brought back silk, spices and other valuable commodities from the Middle East and beyond the Middle East to Europe for sale.



Map 4.3 This map shows some of the important trade routes by which merchants traveled to towns and fairs.

Technology

The Middle Ages made important advances in technology. Although agricultural productivity remained low, a better plough helped to improve crop yields in northern Europe. Other important developments include: the **stirrup**, used with the whole foot inside it, coming into wide use around the tenth century; iron horse shoes which enabled horses to do more work on rough ground; the compass, whose use came from the Chinese and from them to the Arabs; a better loom for weaving; and big mechanical clocks in towns and cities from c.1330 on. The appearance and spread of clocks might indicate the growing

importance of time in urban centers and societies. Early clocks were in fact not very accurate.

The use of water and wind power to make products increased production. Although production was mostly by hand with simple hand-operated tools, some heavy work like grinding grain was done by water or wind power. The earliest guns in Europe date from the beginnings of the fourteenth century. Printing with moveable metal type was invented in Germany in the mid -fifteenth century. It helped to spread literacy and was the next great “knowledge revolution” after the invention of writing in the ancient world and the development of an alphabetic system by the Phoenicians.

Summary

Roman Empire in the west collapsed when Germanic peoples moved across its frontiers. These “barbarians” settled in the provinces of the West Roman Empire. The Roman government lost control of the provinces of the west, which came under the rule of Germanic kings. Finally, in 476, a German leader deposed the Roman Emperor in Italy and there was no longer a Roman Empire in the West. However, the Roman Empire passed on to Europe some important things, especially Latin language and literature and Roman Law.

The Roman Catholic Church was the major unifying institution after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. The Roman Catholic Church held an important place in the lives of people in Middle Ages. It was responsible for Christian religion, culture and education. The Pope, as head of the Church, wielded great power and influence all through the medieval period.

In the east, the Roman Empire continued and is usually called the Byzantine Empire. It lost much territory to the Arabs in the seventh century and more territory to the Turks from the eleventh century onwards. The Byzantine Empire fell to the

Ottoman Turks in 1453. The Turks established the Muslim Ottoman Empire. It was a very powerful state but later declined.

The history of the rise and expansion of Islam from the seventh century to the fall of Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 has been discussed. Prophet Mohammed had a significant role in the emergence of Islam and the rise of Islamic state. Islamic law, the evolution of the sects and the development of Islamic civilization must be given due attention.

Medieval Europe was feudal. Kings and great lords gave lands called fiefs to vassals in exchange for military service. Peasants on manors cultivated the land and were dependent, often as serfs on their manorial lords.

The feudal economy of medieval Europe gradually gave way to the newly emerging capitalist economic relation. Medieval art reflects the different sides of medieval life as well as religion. The monks who copied books by hand often illustrated them with little paintings of everyday life. Until the twelfth century, most of the cathedrals in western Europe followed the style of church architecture called Romanesque. In time, a new style of architecture called Gothic architecture spread through western Europe.

The crusades were a long series of military expeditions fought chiefly by Christians against Muslims. The major objectives of the crusades were to control the Holy land (Palestine) permanently and also to protect the Byzantine Empire from the Muslim Seljuk Turks. A total of eight crusades were organized by the crusaders between 1096 and 1270. However, the crusaders did not succeed in attaining their goals.

Beginning from 500, the period of greatness faded away in India because of new attacks. Arabs, Persians, Turks and Mongols invaded India at different times in the medieval period. As a result of these invasions, there was a very strong influence over the culture and religion of India.

Most of the history of China in the Middle Ages, is the story of powerful ruling families. China was governed most of the time by a series of dynasties which supplied its kings and emperors.

Under the central authority of powerful dynasties, China developed into a unified country.

For nearly 700 years (until 1868), Japan was really ruled by one shogun after another. From his own headquarters, which were separate from the imperial court, the shogun controlled both military and political affairs. The emperor ruled only in name. Much of Japans' history during those 700 years had to do with struggles between rivals for the most important office of shogun.

As the feudal economic relations deteriorated in Europe, capitalism emerged. The rise of towns and cities and the growth of long-distance trade were very important in this process. Technology made important progress too.

Review Questions

I. Choose the correct answer

1. The last Roman Emperor in the west was
 - a) Julius Ceasar
 - b) Augustus Ceasar
 - c) Romulus Augustus
 - d) Nero
2. Which of the following languages did not emerge from Latin
 - a) English
 - b) French
 - c) Italian
 - d) Spanish
3. As the clergy were to cathedrals so were monks to
 - a) monasteries
 - b) churches
 - c) arch bishops
 - d) bishops
4. The Byzantine Empire survived the crisis of a great Persian invasion during the reign of
 - a) Justinian
 - b) Heraclius
 - c) Alexius Comnenus
 - d) Constantine
5. The inhabitants of Medina who invited Mohammed to their town were known as
 - a) Umma
 - b) Sahaba
 - c) Ansar
 - d) Muhajirun

6. The main cause for the emergence of Islamic sects was
 a) economic dominance
 b) succession of Mohammed as a prophet
 c) religious doctrine
 d) succession of Mohammed as head of Islamic state
7. The strong hold of Shi'ism today is
 a) Egypt b) Iran c) Libya d) Pakistan
8. As fiefs were to medieval Europe, so were _____ to the Ottomans
 a) demesne b) coloni c) timars d) manors
9. Who was known as the "philosopher of the Arabs"?
 a) Al-Kindi b) Imam Ali c) Ibn Sina d) Ibn Rushid
10. Under military feudalism, the knight who received the fief became a vassal of the lord by the act called
 a) chivalry b) manorialism c) vassalage
 d) homage

II. Match items of column 'A' with their corresponding items 'B'

- | "A" | "B" |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Marco Polo | a) A battle place where the Turks defeated the Byzantines |
| 2. Romanesque | b) A Mongolian leader |
| 3. Manzikert | c) A style of medieval architecture |
| 4. Urban II | d) Head of Minamoto ruling family in Japan |
| 5. Tamer lane | e) Roman Catholic Pope at the time of the crusades |
| 6. Taj Mahal | f) Italian traveler who visited China in the Middle Ages |
| 7. Yoritomo | g) A stately tomb erected in India in the 17 th century |