Ch. 7 - Rome’s Three Heirs

Justinian (527-565): Byzantine Emperor-

- Overthrew Theordoric’s Ostrogoth kingdom, which had been established originally w/ Constantinople’s support

- Briefly reunited much of the old empire of Rome

- Corpus Juris Civilis – “The body of Civil Law” – a compilation of imperial statutes, laws, and legal writings – a legacy of Roman Law compiled by order of Justinian (the Code, AKA “Justinian’s Code” was a part of it)
The Corpus: 2 Significant Political Legacies-

1. **Supported Dictatorship** -

   - Granted unlimited power to the emperor- “What pleases the Prince has the force of law”

   - Cited as a justification for Absolutism by early modern rulers

2. **Supported Constitutionalism** -

   - Held that a ruler’s power is delegated by the people & can be justifiably taken away if abused

   - Held that the state is a corporate body, not the private property of the ruler (set our modern concept of gov’t)
Justinian
The Mediterranean World under Justinian, 527–565
Justinian’s Impact:

- His ambitions strained the empire, imperiled the east

- Troops recalled to protect the East, left Rome exposed

- The Lombards invaded the North of Italy, Rome stuck in a buffer zone, the Byzantines controlled the South

- This tripartite division of the Italian peninsula is still evident in the culture and politics of Italy today
Heir #1 - The Byzantine Empire:
- Name derived from the ancient port of Byzantium, where Constantine relocated to build Constantinople
- They always considered themselves Romans
- Faced and repelled extreme pressures from Persians and Arabs
- Reconquered most of Asia Minor, ruled it for 100’s of years
- **Power concentrated** in the imperial court, wielded effectively by capable rulers – resilient bureaucracy withstood upheaval
- **Highly educated officials** – oversight of key religious, economic, political, social institutions
- Well-managed economy – balanced imports & exports, stable coinage, protected home industry, several major trade cities
**Byzantine Orthodoxy:**

- **Orthodox Christianity** is to Byzantines, as *Mos Maiorum* is to Romans

- OC was the cultural glue which bound Byzantines – they were intensely focused on & united by religious doctrine

**The Iconoclasm, 717-787:**

- Christians had long expressed devotion to Christ through the making and veneration of images (paintings, statues, mosaics, etc)

- Iconodules viewed images as *aids* of worship, not *objects* of worship – they were the mainstream Christians

- Emperor Leo III, who repelled Islamic invasions, was an Iconoclast

Why?
Theory - Leo III’s reasons for Iconoclasm:

- **Idolatry** was Islam’s major criticism of Christianity, Leo’s iconoclasm blunted the Muslim furor

- **Monasticism** – Leo wanted to check the growing power of monasteries in the Orthodox Church - monasteries produced much of the icons and books in dispute

- Leo’s successors confiscated much of the wealth of the monasteries during the conflict – iconic issue was the justification
Result of the Iconoclasm Conflict:

- Fans of icons won, but:
  - Much Byzantine art was destroyed by imperial edict
  - A rift developed w/ the Roman patriarch, known as “papa” (pope) due to his claim of succession from Saint Peter

- Byzantine Identity -
  - Increasingly rigid & exclusive – Armenian & Syrian orthodox groups marginalized
  - Dissenting viewpoints squashed by ruling elite, stunting innovative thinking, which later became a trademark of the ascendant west
Christianity and Islam – Similarities and Differences:

**Similarities:**
- Day of Judgment coming – and soon
- Heavenly reward for following God, damnation for rejection of God
- Both aspire to unite the world in a shared faith – the duty to convert others – competition to convert is inevitable

**Differences:**
- Muhammad’s Qu’ran dictated directly to scribes, Christian gospels written a generation or 2 after Christ’s crucifixion
- Faced opposing forces of Religious & secular authority, early Muslims bound both together (caliph was theocracy)
- Qu’ran written in verse, Bible in prose
Muhammad and Islam:

- Arabs – people of the forbidding desert climate of Arabia – Romans and Persians never sought to conquer it
  - Mobility, ingenuity, pioneering spirit – they became guides, and guardians of trade connecting Africa and Asia
  - Polytheists, acknowledged one god above the others (Allah)

- Mecca – caravan crossroad town, site of the Kaaba, a shrine housing a sacred black stone worshipped by Arab tribes

- Muhammad – A member of the tribe that controlled Mecca, had a religious revelation

- The Hijrah – Muhammad’s flight to Medina to escape tribesmen who viewed his revelations as a threat to the influence of the Kaaba. Marked the beginning of the Muslim calendar
Arab Conquests:

- Abu-Bakr & Umar – 2nd & 3rd leaders – subdued most Arab tribes to their authority

- Took territory from Byzantines in Syria, Israel

- Conquered all of Persia by 651, All of North Africa & Spain by 711

- Motive – land & treasure, just like the empires before them

- Did not force conversion on conquered people, collected fewer taxes than Byzantines & Persians

- Viewed by many as liberators, their faith spread as a result
Shi’ite - Sunni Split:

- Umar, 3rd ruler died – some wanted Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, to succeed him
- Most supported Uthman, of the Umayyad clan
- Ali was murdered, his supporters rejected the Umayyads

- Shi’ia – Arabic for “faction” – held that only descendants of Ali and Fatimah (Muhammad’s daughter) could rule over Muslims

- Sunna – religious practices developed under first 2 caliphs after Muhammad – Umayyad’s & their followers observed them, hence The Sunnis, Shi’iites rejected them

- Umayyads failed to capture Constantinople, employed many Roman/Byz. Methods of governance
The Expansion of Islam to 750
Abbasids:

- Rival Muslim dynasty, pushed Umayyads to Spain w/ help of Persians

- Ruled more like the Persians, capital moved to Baghdad

- Cold relations existed w/ rival caliphate of Umayyads:
  - Distance between them dissuaded open war
  - Vied for prestige through literary and cultural patronage
    - *1001 Arabian Nights* – written in court of Baghdad

    - Library at Cordoba, Spain – Umayyad center of learning
Women in Islam:

- Qu’ran allowed any Muslim male up to 4 wives
- Intense competition emerged due to scarcity of potential wives
- Wives & daughters were viewed as prized assets, safeguarded by isolating them from public life

_Haram_ – “forbidden place” – segregated part of the house where women were housed

- A separate world, marked by competition for precedence, rivalry for advancement of their children
The Merovingians:

- A dynasty of rulers from the tribe of Franks (480’s – 700’s CE)

- **Clovis** (481-511)- Warrior-King of Franks – converted to Christianity his grandfather Merovech gave the dynasty its name

- The name “Clovis” morphed into “Louis” – the name of 18 future kings of France

- They maintained many Roman governing institutions

- Made alliances w/ monasteries which added to their wealth, stability, and base of knowledge
Monasticism:

- Began in Roman territories, but later flourished in British Isles and Ireland, which escaped the destruction on the mainland.

- Monasticism made its way from the Isles back to the continent.

- Monasteries were self-sufficient collectives that mastered agriculture, and preserved the knowledge of Rome.

- Ties forged between monks and tribal leaders benefitted both.

- Many tribal groups converted due to ties, then benefitted from the monastic trove of knowledge.

- Tribes often freed monasteries from control of local bishops, making them powerful entities – they spread Christianity as a result.
Pope Gregory I (the Great):

- Dynamic leader who took advantage of waning Byzantine power in the west – asserted authority of Roman popes

- Established papal power & developed relationships with kings – created role of intermediary between Christian masses and anointed king

- Saw Franks as powerful ally against Byzantine & Muslim rivals

- Charles Martel – Frankish leader who repelled Muslim invasion, Assisted with conversion efforts to assert control

- Boniface – crowned Pepin, son of Charles Martel, king of the Franks- Established principle that kingship was an office that could be occupied by anyone, & replaced if ineffective or tyrannical
Charlemagne: The Carolingian Dynasty

- Pepin’s son Charles “The Great” – AKA Charlemagne
- United Franks by attacking a common external enemy
- Annexed Lombard territory, conquered northern Italy – shared spoils of war with loyal subjects
- Forcibly converted conquered peoples to Christianity – set a precedent for doing so that became commonplace in West. society
- Established a network of court officials to govern, & a team of messengers to deliver edicts and report back on activities
- New coinage system (Pounds, shillings, pennies) – lasted until the 1970’s
Charlemagne and Christianity:

- Viewed himself as the leader & defender of Christiandom

- Saw no distinction between religion and politics

- Appointed & deposed bishops

- Declared basic changes in Christian beliefs and ceremonies

- Viewed pope as spiritual leader, but oversaw and approved papal elections

- Protected pope from enemies
- **Carolingian court** – designed to be an intellectual center of learning

  - Charlemagne hired scholars to teach Latin, produce poetry, translate and copy the Bible
  - Future Euro courts modeled after it

- **Crowning of Charlemagne**:

  - Beginning of the “Holy Roman Empire”- would last until 1800’s
  - Popes believed it gave them superiority over its rulers – they would argue about it for centuries

  - A slap in the face to Byzantines, who still viewed themselves as heirs to Augustus – they also resented his friendship w/ the Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid (see Crusades)
Carolíngian collapse:

- Charlemagne’s grandson divided the empire among his 3 sons (840)
  - Charles the Bald got Western Francia (core of modern France)
  - Louis the German got Eastern Francia (core of Germany)
  - Lothair got south Germany and North Italy, & title of emperor
  - Lothair’s line died out, East & West Franks fought to get it
  - Lotharingia, AKA Alsace-Lorraine – territory at center of dispute – France and Germany fought over it for the next 1200 years
The Empire of Charlemagne in 814
The Viking Invasions:

- Scandinavian traders who engaged in raids throughout Europe
- Raids sometimes morphed into large-scale invasion and settlements
- Established settlements in the British Isles, France (Normandy = “Norsemen Land”)
- A Viking group called The Rus’ founded a kingdom that would become Russia
- Conversion to Christianity and assimilation with colonized people eventually reduced the scale of attacks
- Many monasteries destroyed along w/ the books and artifacts they tried to maintain
- **Alfred the Great** (871-899) – Successfully united the Anglo-Saxons against the Vikings – conflict unified the people
Patterns of Viking Activity and Settlement, c. 800–1100
Disintegration of the Islamic World

- Abbasid collapse:
  - Ecological crisis in Tigris-Euphrates basin
  - Massive revolt of African slaves in the basin
  - Political corruption of provincial rulers
  - Massive, expensive building projects depleted revenues

- Sharpening Sunni-Shi’ite rift led to conflict - toleration for Jews and Christians did not extend to differences w/in Islam itself
Conclusion – Rome’s 3 Heirs

- All 3 societies emulated Rome in specific ways

- Each developed new and distinct cultural elements

- Each interacted with the others, developed mutual dependencies, and sometimes fought each other

- A variety of crises in the 9th & 10th centuries led to gradual decline in the Byzantine & Islamic worlds

- Western Europeans emerged w/ a common identity, loosely centered around the Roman Church

- Western Europe developed a militarized society mobilized for war, positioning it for eventual conquest