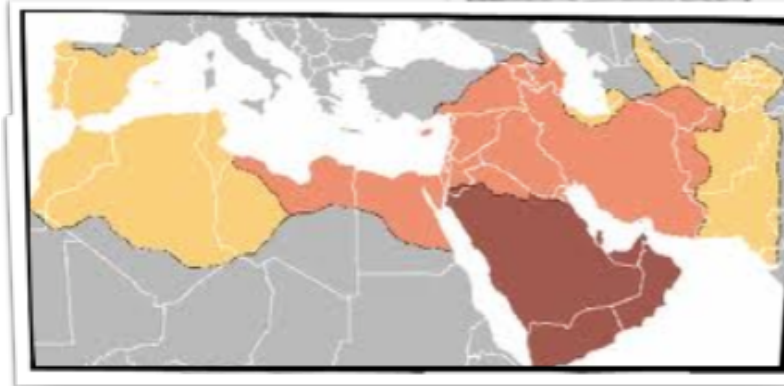


Middle East - Part 1: Birth of Islam

In the Middle East, there was a balance of power between the Byzantine Empire in the West and the Persian Empire in the East. The two sides waged a series of wars over hundreds of years, exhausting each side financially.

In 622 AD, there arose in the Deserts of Arabia a new religion: Islam. Its leader was Muhammed, who claimed to be the last prophet of Allah (God). He claimed to have the corrections to the messages of Moses (Jews) and Jesus (Christians).

Aside from starting a new faith, Muhammed also started a new empire. By Muhammed's death in 632, he unified and conquered large territories in Arabia. By 732, the Islamic Empire had rapidly expanded to include Jerusalem, Egypt, N. Africa, Spain and parts of France. The Islamic Empire was the largest empire on earth, and was rapidly expanding the religion through trade in Africa and Asia. Eventually, it fragmented into Caliphates (or nations). Divisions also occurred over disagreements about who should take over after Muhammed and about how his teachings should be interpreted. The Sunni believed in a liberal or looser interpretation while the Shia believed in a more strict interpretation.



Europe & Middle East - Part 2: High Middle Ages (900-1299AD)

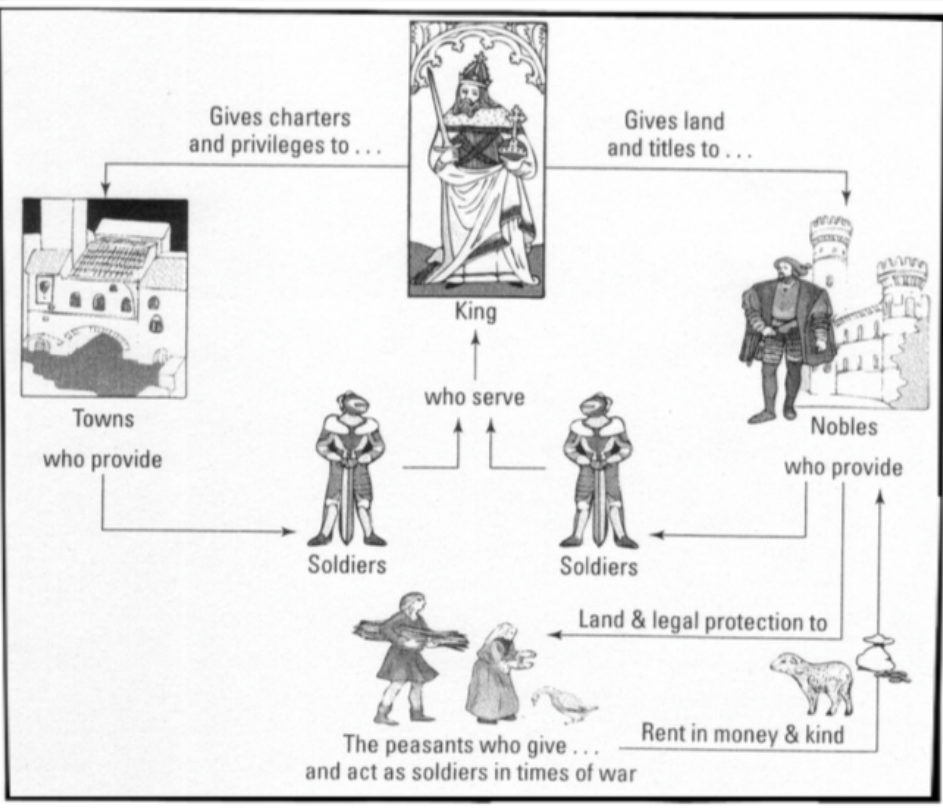
Muslim Threat

When the Islamic Empire conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantine's it sent a shock wave through the Christian world. First, this upstart group of Arabs had crushed the "the Protectors of Christianity's" armies and had taken half its empire. Second, the home of Jesus was now in non-Christian hands. Third, Muslims now controlled Christian land in Spain. These attacks energized, terrified and unified many fragmented elements within the Roman Catholic community throughout Europe. Nothing unifies people like a common enemy

Viking Threat

Along with the fear of Muslims invading from Spain, was a new threat: The Vikings from the North (Norway & Sweden). The Vikings were similar to the Huns: all they wanted to do was sail, kill and get rich. The churches and small villages were easy targets for the Vikings as they sailed throughout England, France, northern

Germany, and into Russia. Eventually, the Kings found protection in building tall city walls kept the Vikings away. This began the age of Castles. The Vikings eventually conquered and settled down on the British Islands and started settlements in Russia.



Feudalism

All of the raiding and pillaging led to the development of Feudalism. Feudalism is a series of relationships to meet people's needs and provide order. The King would give manors, or large pieces of land, to the rich Nobles in exchange for protection. The Nobles would gift fiefdoms, or small pieces of land, to Knights. The Knights were the trained soldiers who would give their loyalty and service in exchange for the fief. The peasants would work the fief/manor in exchange for some food and protection in case of an attack. This system provided order and stability within Europe.

As the dust settled around 1000 AD, there were the kingdoms of England, France, and the City States in Italy and the Holy Roman Empire (this will eventually become Germany).

Agricultural Revolution #2 & Towns

The new found stability led to two advancements: the second agricultural revolution and the birth of towns. Around 1000 AD, there was an important agricultural discovery called the three field system. This entailed dividing the land into three fields and rotating three crops through three fields. This kept the soil from getting exhausted and kept it fertile. This, along with important advancements in tools, helped Europeans get significantly more food per acre and avoid creating a famine.

Soon, towns began to emerge in Europe. The Feudal System had made it safer to travel again and the nobles were looking for ways to maximize profits from their land. The second agricultural revolution provided the food needed to support larger populations again. Towns were a way to create a place for craftsmen to work, for merchants to sell goods and for nobles to make money. Slowly but surely, more towns began to appear, increasing wealth and the spread of ideas.



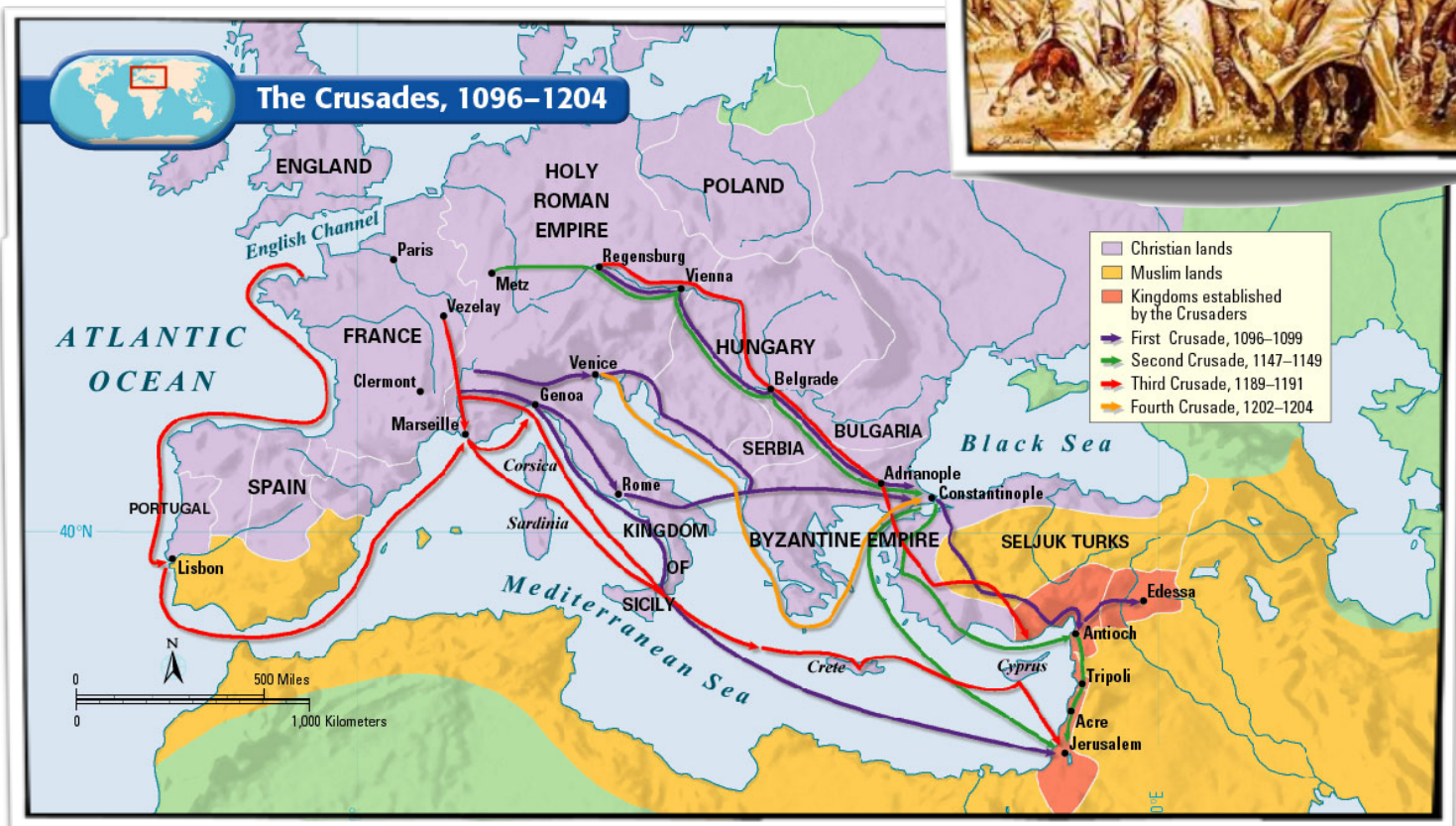
Islamic Golden Age & Turkish Trouble. While the Europeans were fighting themselves and the Vikings, Islam experienced a “Golden Age.” From 900-1200 AD, Islamic cities were the centers of education and culture, with the greatest accomplishments in the world taking place in Baghdad. The Muslims had accumulated all the important writings from Europe, India, and China and had translated them into Arabic. This wealth of knowledge allowed the Muslims to make huge advancements in science, math and the arts (and invented coffee).

Like the Europeans, being unified in faith did not guarantee peace. The Turks were a Muslim group of horse riding nomadic warriors from the Steppe (same place as the Huns). The Turks used their horse riding ability to quickly capture Central Asia and the Middle East, all the way to the gates of Constantinople. The Turks were less friendly than their Muslim brothers and treated foreigners and those of other faiths cruelly. Word of this cruelty quickly spread.

Crusades

With the threat of the Turks, the Byzantine Empire called upon their Christian brothers in Europe for help. In 1095, Pope Urban II eagerly accepted, promoting the young Christian kingdoms to embark on a crusade, or holy war, to help Constantinople and reclaim the Holy Land of Jerusalem from the Muslims. This was the homeland of Jesus and it was also believed to be the center of the world. Many knights and kings went on the Crusades for faith, adventure, financial gain, and after life security (believing killing Muslims = forgiveness of sins & get into heaven).

There were nine crusades over a two hundred year span that ultimately did not reclaim Jerusalem. However, it did reconnect Western Europe with the wealth and knowledge of the East, which sparked trade and learning. It killed a lot of Knights and Nobles, freeing peasants to be able to migrate to towns. It also cemented bad relations between Christians and Muslims that still exist to this day



ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Read & Update the Content Matrix
- 2) Fill out this chart with the the strengths/positives and weaknesses/negatives of each region.

Region	Strengths	Weaknesses
Europe		
Middle East		

- 3) Create an impact chart. As you read you are to evaluate each area on the level of impact the people in that region had on the world culturally, militarily, and economically.
 - Rate each area as to how impactful you believe them to be at the at 300 CE (■) and at 1300 CE (▲).
 - Draw arrows to show whether they grew or shrunk in impact and influence.
 - If there is change, ask yourself “What caused them to grow or shrink or stagnate in their influence?” and make note of it on your chart.

How to rate each region:

- Local: Mainly Hunter/Gatherers and Small Villages; people barely impacting those outside of their small circles.
- Regional: Kingdoms, Small Empires.
- Continental: Large empire(s) that span across/impact/consume most of the continent.
- Inter-Continental: Massive empire(s) that span across/impact/consume multiple continents.
- Global: Massive empire(s) that span across/impact/consume most of the world.

Examples

