

I EUROPE'S EARLY MIDDLE AGES

CHAPTER OUTCOMES

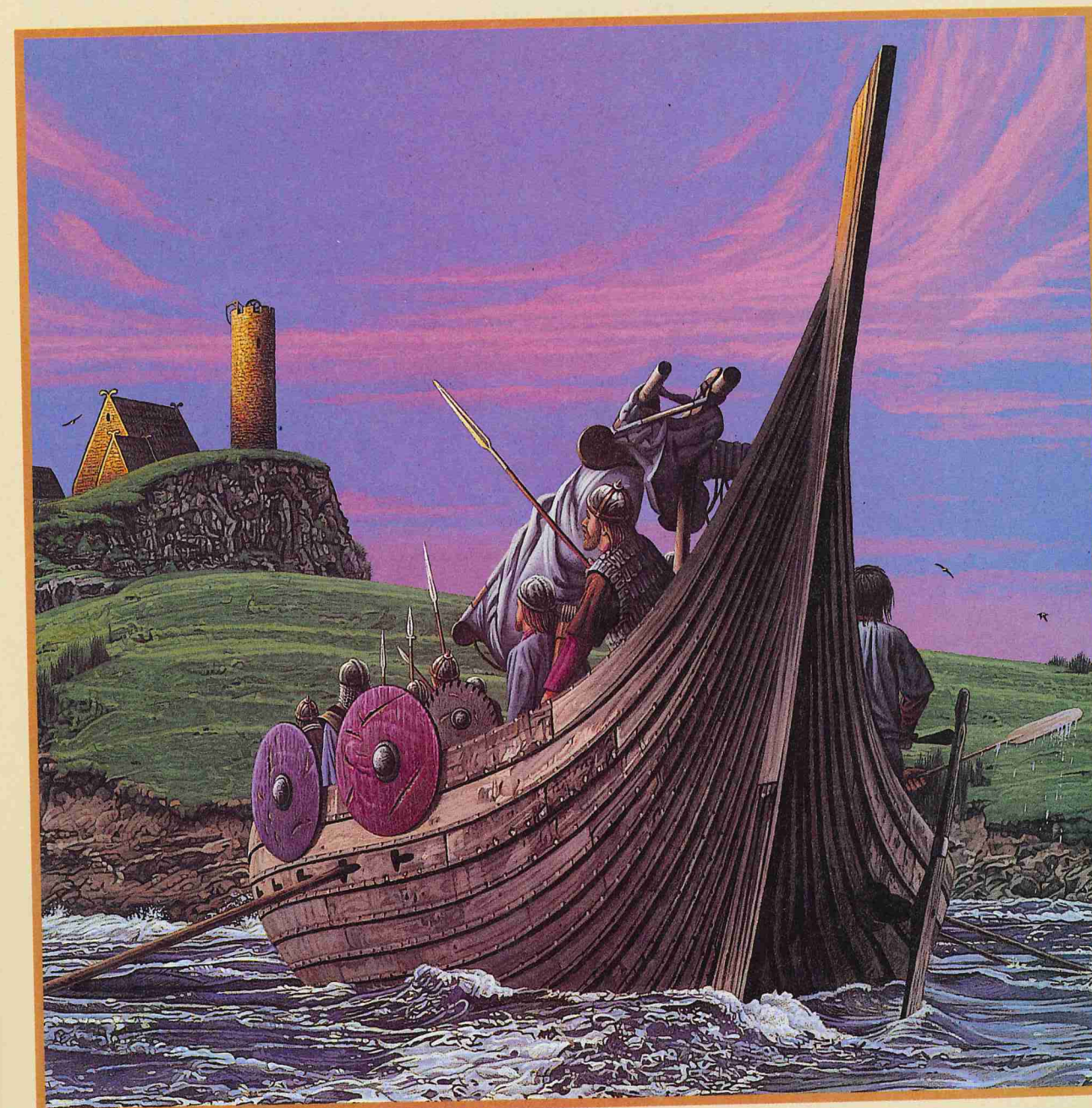
In this chapter you will focus on the struggle between civilization and chaos that took place in Europe during the early Middle Ages. By the end of the chapter, you will

- describe the environmental factors that encouraged the emergence of Mediterranean civilizations
- explain how the Roman Empire succeeded, how it collapsed, and the consequences
- demonstrate an understanding of the origins and beliefs of the Jewish, Islamic, and Christian religions
- explain how Anglo-Saxon story tellers and Irish monks both preserved a cultural legacy
- analyze the impact of population and resources on Viking society
- assess the effects of conflict between Vikings and other Europeans
- make a bar graph



The Viking Raid

The following fictional story is based on events that really happened. Similar events were recorded by people who were either present when they happened or were told about them by reliable sources. As you read this story, write down any questions the story raises for you, and try to answer them after reading Chapter 1.



At dawn, the Viking ship approaches the monastery unheard and unseen.

Pippin threw himself into the clump of tall ferns, pressing his body against the ground. He was still bleeding from a deep gash behind one ear, and he feared that the trail of blood he was leaving would make it easy for his pursuers to track him. He could hear the hoarse voices coming closer. If he could just lie quietly, he thought, perhaps he could avoid death. As he lay hugging the ground, Pippin's thoughts drifted back to the events of the past few hours.

.....

The Vikings had struck the **monastery** first thing in the morning, just as the monks were filing out of chapel. No

one had seen the long dragon ship as it made its way silently down the wide river, or the raiding party as it stole through the monastery's orchards and gardens.

Pippin, a **novice**, watched in horror from behind the treasury door as the monks were slaughtered in the courtyard. The first victim was beheaded with one blow from the Viking chieftain's battle-axe. Others were run through by long spears or cut down by swords. Within minutes the massacre was over—all the monks were dead—and the looting began.

First the Vikings stripped gold vessels and embroidered cloths from the altar of the

chapel and ripped the jewel-encrusted covers off the books in the library. Then, blazing torches in hand, they began to set fires. Before long the whole monastery was in flames.

The only item Pippin had time to save was the jewelled box in the treasury. The box contained the monastery's most prized possession: a finger bone from St. Sergius. **Pilgrims** came from all over the kingdom to be blessed with this **relic** and to pray to St. Sergius.

As Pippin crept out of the monastery grounds clutching the relic, he surprised a group of Vikings drinking wine from an oak cask behind the dining hall. He stared at them, too frightened to move. The men



Pippin loses the jewelled box containing the monastery's holy relic.



Pippin and Gisla are held captive in the bow of the Viking ship.

had rough beards and wore helmets of iron and leather. Their hands and faces were splattered with the blood of the murdered monks and blackened by smoke. They laughed aloud when they saw the young monk, and one threw a spear at Pippin as he turned to flee, catching him a **glancing** blow behind the ear.

.....

Now, hiding in the ferns with his face pressed to the ground, Pippin prayed to God for deliverance. Finally he felt sure the Vikings had gone and slowly raised his head. Pippin found himself looking directly into the hard blue eyes of the Viking chieftain. The man patted the battle-axe lying across his knee and laughed. As he rose to his feet, Pippin saw Vikings all around. One of them swung a club at Pippin's head while another ripped the

jewelled box out of his hand.

When Pippin came to, he was bound hand and foot, lying in the bow of the Viking ship. The Vikings were rowing furiously back to the mouth of the river, where the river emptied into the North Sea. From there the Vikings would raise the ship's sail and head for their home in Denmark.

Pippin groaned. The leather thongs bit into his wrists and ankles, and his head ached. A man wearing a helmet that hid most of his face laughed when he saw Pippin was awake.

"You should be happy, little priest," he said, speaking Frankish with a thick accent. "You will be my **thrall**. My name is Guthrum Bloodaxe. Now say your prayers and thank your god you are still alive."

Pippin, too stunned to pray, let his tears roll freely down his face. Everyone he loved was

gone; the life he had known for most of his fourteen years was completely ruined. This small group of thirty Vikings had killed dozens of monks, burned the monastery to the ground, and destroyed countless works of art. The precious books alone had taken years to copy out by hand. Pippin could only assume the Vikings had ravaged the nearby village as well. He wondered, was this a punishment sent by God for the sins of the people?

Then Pippin noticed he was not alone. Beside him on the wooden boards of the hull was a girl about his own age. She had been beaten and her shirt was bloody. Her arms and legs were bound with leather thongs. She stared at him with reddened eyes.

"See how fast they row," she said. Her voice was low and bitter but held a hint of hope.

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"See how fast they row," she said. Her voice was low and bitter but held a hint of hope.

"Now the hunters have become the hunted."

"What do you mean?" asked Pippin.

"They know the soldiers have been warned and are coming after us. Our people will try to cut the Northmen off at the dam the king built near the river's mouth. The Northmen will have to land there and push their boat past the dam. But if they can get back into the water before the soldiers arrive, we'll never see our people again."

Pippin examined the girl's face. "I know you. You're Gisla, from the village, aren't you? How do you know all this?"

"My father serves in the king's army," Gisla replied. "When the Vikings came to the village this morning, my

brother managed to escape. He must have raised the alarm."

Sooner than Gisla had hoped, the Viking ship reached the dam, a wall of sharpened wooden stakes built across the river at its narrowest point. By building these structures on several rivers, the emperor Charlemagne intended to discourage Viking raiders, whose savage attacks had been growing more numerous. No settlement near the sea was safe.

The Vikings brought their ship to the river bank, where they hauled the vessel onto a platform of tree trunks they had cut down the night before. Pippin and Gisla were left in the ship while the men pushed it along the ground using the logs as rollers. The Vikings heaved their ship forward with

a ferocious sense of purpose.

All at once, Pippin and Gisla heard the drumming of horses' hooves, and then a sound like hammers pounding on iron. As they huddled on the floor of the ship, they heard warlike cries and shrill screams of agony. The exhausted Vikings fought bravely but were overwhelmed by the well-organized and much larger band of Franks. The battle continued until the last Viking was dead.

Soon after, Pippin and Gisla found themselves standing in a clearing freed of their bonds and surrounded by Frankish soldiers. An older man with a thick, grey mustache and a weather-beaten face walked his horse towards them. A soldier motioned with his spear for them to kneel.



A Frankish war party attacks the fleeing invaders.

"Bow down," he commanded, "to Charles, Emperor of the Romans and King of the Franks!"

Charlemagne ordered the bodies of the Vikings to be taken to the river mouth, where they were hung from trees, in plain view of the sea, as a warning to other pirates. That night, the army camped farther down the coast. They built a bonfire on the seashore and held a feast to celebrate their victory over the raiding Northmen. Everyone seemed happy except Charlemagne himself, who walked up and down the shore staring out to sea.

Gisla and Pippin sat with Gisla's father, one of Charlemagne's commanders.

"What does the king look for in the dark sea?" Pippin asked.

"The king is an old man now," Gisla's father replied. "He has won many battles and was crowned emperor by the pope himself. But he worries about the future and what it will bring. Until now he has

been able to hold the Northmen in check. But who will stop the Northmen after death has stopped the king?"

monastery: a self-contained community for people, such as monks or nuns, who have taken religious vows

novice: a person training to become a nun or monk

pilgrim: a person who travels to a holy place for religious reasons

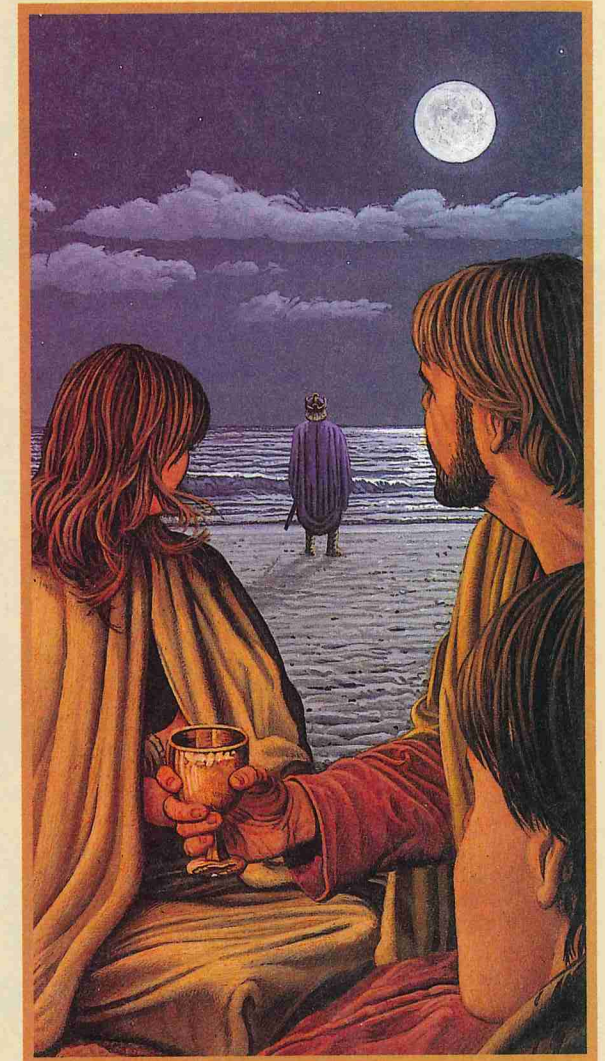
relic: an item associated with a saint; thought to have great powers

glancing: indirect, not solid

thrall: the Viking word for "slave"

pope: the head of the Catholic Church

technology: anything made by humans to extend our abilities



Charlemagne walks the beach, wondering what dangers the future will bring.

ACTIVITIES

1. List three reasons why Vikings would want to attack a monastery.
2. **Technology** consists of anything we make to extend our abilities. Examples include the fork, the wheelbarrow, and computer software. A defensive technology is something we make to protect ourselves. What technologies did the Franks use to defend themselves against the Vikings? Were these defences effective? Explain.
3. **a)** Do you sympathize with one character in particular in the story of the Viking raid? Which one? Why?
b) Because this story is written from Pippin's point of view, our sympathies tend to lie with him. Write a point-form version of this story from Guthrum Bloodaxe's point of view. Do you still sympathize with the same characters? Why or why not?
4. Do you know someone who has experienced armed conflict? Perhaps that person—maybe you, a family member, or another student—would share the story with the rest of the class. Where did the events take place? How has violence affected this person's life?

TIME LINE

- 150 BCE GREECE FALLS TO ROME
- 70 CE ROME DESTROYS JERUSALEM
- 313 ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE LEGALIZES CHRISTIANITY
- 410 THE GOTH SACK ROME
- 476 A GERMANIC RULER REPLACES LAST ROMAN EMPEROR
- 481 CLOVIS BECOMES RULER OF THE FRANKS
- 711 MUSLIMS CONQUER SPAIN
- 732 CHARLES MARTEL HALTS A MUSLIM INVASION OF EUROPE IN FRANCE
- 793 FIRST VIKING RAIDS ON ENGLAND
- 800 POPE LEO III CROWNS CHARLEMAGNE
- 855 THE VIKING LEADER RAGNAR ATTACKS PARIS
- 912 THE VIKING LEADER ROLLO SETTLES IN NORMANDY
- 1070 END OF THE VIKING AGE



Who would believe that Rome, built upon the conquest of the whole world, would fall to the ground? That the mother herself would become the tomb of her peoples!

—SAINT JEROME



Saint Jerome was a Roman citizen and Christian leader who translated the Bible into Latin. He saw Rome sacked in 410 c.e. by Alaric and the Goths. Like many people of the time, he could hardly believe that the “whole world”—the world he knew—was gone forever. What event could disturb you in the same way?

INTRODUCTION

Despite Europe’s relatively small size, the people of this region have had an enormous impact on world culture. Much of what we see around us today—the world’s art, architecture, literature, forms of government, and even the way many of us think—has been strongly affected by the **legacy** of western Europe. For example, many modern sports arenas use domes and look like the Colosseum, a stadium built by the Romans.

Europe was shaped not just by the Greeks and Romans in ancient times, however. During the early Middle Ages, the Germanic peoples had much more influence. Their gradual conversion to Christianity, for example, utterly changed medieval European society. Three of these peoples—the Franks, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Vikings—as well as the Celtic people of Ireland, each made a unique contribution to the development of western European civilization.

legacy: knowledge and culture passed down from one generation or civilization to another

THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

The history of western European civilization began thousands of years ago on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean environment had everything necessary to sustain large numbers of people: fertile soil, plenty of rainfall and sunshine, and a climate that was moderate, neither too hot nor too cold. This meant that plants had a long growing season and that a surplus of food could be produced. The population grew rapidly and towns formed.

The Mediterranean Sea itself formed a transportation route that encouraged people to travel widely to trade and to learn from each other. Ideas from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe spread easily. All civilizations flourish and grow stronger through fresh ideas.

The two most important early European civilizations were those of Greece and Rome. The Greeks eagerly studied **philosophy**, which is usually

defined as the pursuit of ideas. They also made great advances in art, architecture, drama, literature, medicine, and science. In the fourth century B.C.E., Alexander the Great conquered many lands and spread Greek culture as far east as India.

The Greek Empire weakened and fell to the Romans about 150 B.C.E. Because they admired the accomplishments of the Greeks, the Romans borrowed Greek attitudes and learning and made them their own. They gathered thinkers and builders from Asia, eastern Europe, and the Middle East. In addition, they became superb organizers, developing such systems as aqueducts to deliver running water, road networks, and military organizations. The **Roman Legions** were so powerful that the Roman Empire at its peak controlled most of Europe, southeast Asia, and northern Africa. For more than six centuries, the Mediterranean world and the Roman Empire were really one and the same.

philosophy: the search for ideas, wisdom, knowledge

B.C.E.: before the common era

Roman Legions: Roman armed forces

DID YOU KNOW?

The roots of European civilization go deep. Herodotus, for example, a famous Greek historian, repeatedly indicates Greece’s debt to ancient Egypt.

Figure 1-1 The shaded area in this map shows the extent of the Roman Empire about 150 C.E. How would the extensive network of roads have helped the empire stay united? What would have been involved in designing this system of roads? Think about materials, organizational techniques, labour, and time.



C.E.: of the common era

architecture: the art and science of designing buildings

Latin: the language of the Romans. During the Middle Ages, Latin served as a common language for educated people throughout Europe.

gladiator: a fighter who battled at public shows; most were slaves

THE ROMANS

Under the Romans, western European culture flourished like never before. The Romans admired the achievements of the ancient Greeks, so they copied and developed Greek arts and **architecture**. They also built great

cities decorated with works of art, magnificent gardens, arenas, public baths, and theatres. The Romans were a highly literate people. Roman scholars and poets wrote thousands of books, and great libraries were filled with ancient works from Greece and Egypt. **Latin** provided a common language for the whole empire.

The Romans developed a code of laws for all the peoples they ruled. Some Canadian laws and rules of justice are based on these Roman laws. For example, all Roman citizens had the right to a fair trial and to rescue

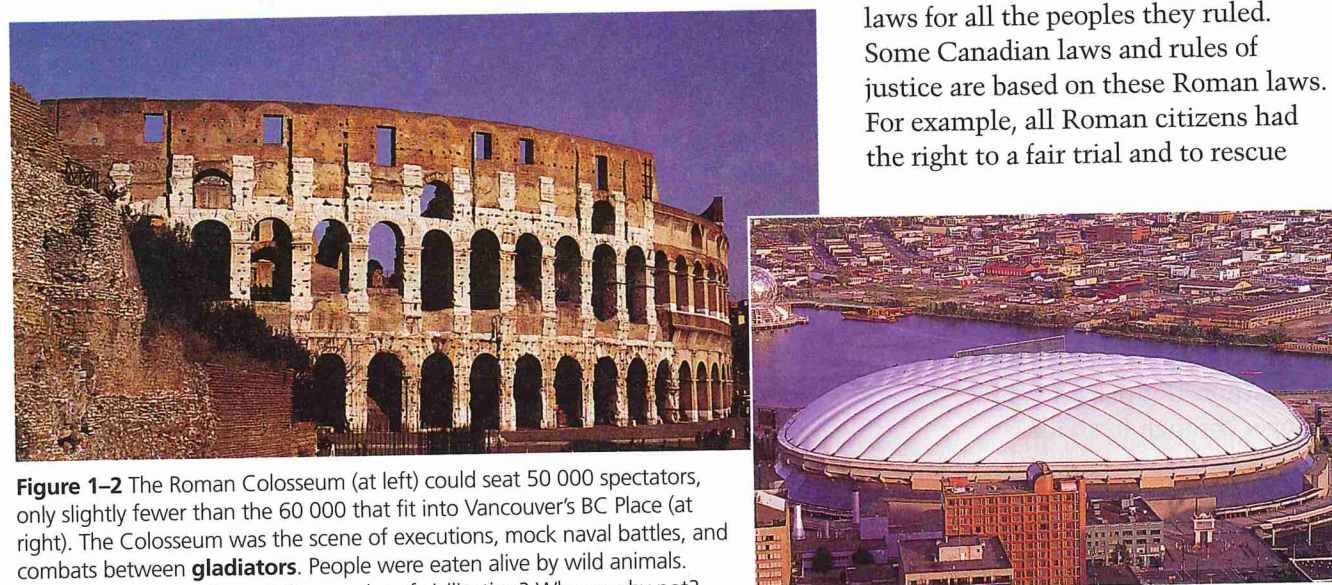


Figure 1-2 The Roman Colosseum (at left) could seat 50 000 spectators, only slightly fewer than the 60 000 that fit into Vancouver's BC Place (at right). The Colosseum was the scene of executions, mock naval battles, and combats between **gladiators**. People were eaten alive by wild animals. Were these "entertainments" examples of civilization? Why or why not?

from poverty. Within the borders of the empire, Roman law protected all peoples from war and from violent outlaws on land and pirates at sea. The *Pax Romana*, or Roman peace, encouraged trade and the exchange of ideas. Of course, a price was paid: Rome demanded taxes, slaves, and submission from all the lands it controlled. Further, not everyone benefited under Roman law. Women, non-Romans, and slaves were all denied the rights of Roman citizenship.

The Fall of Rome

In the year 410 C.E., the Mediterranean world was shocked by news that the city of Rome, the centre of European civilization, had been conquered by the Goths, a **Germanic** people. The impossible had happened. The Roman Empire, which had once stretched from Iran to Scotland and from Upper Egypt to the North Sea, had collapsed. Only the Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital in Constantinople, remained strong.

Historians often disagree about why Rome fell. Some believe that all civilizations have a life span and that they eventually grow old and die, almost like living things.

After the Fall

Though the accomplishments of Greek and Roman civilizations were great, they were to be lost for centuries after the fall of Rome. Only through the foresight and determination of individuals did Roman culture survive in isolated monasteries and distant lands. Ages later, Greek and Roman art, architecture, drama, literature, sports, mythology, philosophy, laws, and systems of government would all be reborn in various forms to inspire and enrich modern civilizations. But first, Europe experienced a period the Romans would have called "barbarous."

For centuries Rome had been in contact with Germanic peoples to the north and east. These peoples were known to the Greeks and Romans as

DID YOU KNOW?

At one time, years in European history were classified into two eras: B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (*anno Domini*, Latin for "in the year of the Lord"). Today B.C. is replaced by B.C.E. (before the common era), and A.D. is replaced by C.E. (of the common era). Why do you think historians started using the modern terms?

Germanic people: one of the European peoples that spoke a Germanic language; for example, the Teutones, Visigoths, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Franks, and Ostrogoths

Why Did Rome Fall?

The death of an empire is usually caused by a combination of internal forces (those coming from inside) and external forces (those coming from outside). Historians think that the following forces contributed to Rome's fall. Classify each as an internal or external force.

- ◆ Small businesses suffered when Romans began using slaves to supply goods and services.
- ◆ Romans spent more money than they should have on entertainment and expensive luxuries.
- ◆ Contagious diseases, brought to Rome by soldiers in the Roman Legions, killed thousands.
- ◆ After the Roman republic ended in 30 B.C.E., Rome was ruled by emperors rather than a government that respected individual freedom.
- ◆ Because the empire was so large and contained such a wide variety of terrain, the empire became impossible to defend.
- ◆ New religions weakened the will of the Roman people to defend their empire, because many chose their new religion over Rome.
- ◆ The empire grew weak because of repeated attacks by the Germanic peoples.



Barbarian: originally, a non-Roman person. "Barbarian" later came to mean "uncultured person," an insult.

Barbarians, meaning "people who speak an unfamiliar language." In other words, a Barbarian was anyone not Greek or Roman. As the Western Roman Empire collapsed and the Roman Legions withdrew to Rome, Germanic peoples moved into Roman provinces such as Gaul (France), Britain, and Spain. These peoples—Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Goths, Vandals, Lombards, and Franks—were attracted to the riches of the Roman Empire. They pushed out the original populations of Celtic peoples and other native peoples and lived by their own laws, customs, and religions.

Civilization in western Europe began to wither away. Roads fell into disrepair; travel became dangerous; cities decayed and were deserted.

Soon few people could read or write except monks in isolated monasteries. Western Europe slipped into an age of chaos and savagery, torn by violence and ignorance. A kind of gang warfare prevailed.

The glory of Rome became a memory, and, strangely, a dream for the future. Local rulers tried again and again to rekindle the fire of civilization, the fire that they themselves had helped put out. This time of turmoil lasted from approximately 476 C.E., when the last Roman emperor lost his power, to 800. In that year, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans, and the slow crawl back to organized, widespread civilization began.

ACTIVITIES

1. Create a brochure for the Mediterranean region in 150 C.E. that describes its climate and physical features and tells why many people live there. By consulting an encyclopedia or atlas, find out the average summer and winter temperatures and rainfall in the region. What features of the region support farming? And trade? Illustrate your brochure with drawings, cartoons, or charts. If possible, create your brochure using desktop publishing software.
2. Compare the map of the Roman Empire (Figure 1–1) with a modern map of the same area. What modern countries and major cities exist within the former boundaries of the Roman Empire?
3. Give three reasons why Rome succeeded as a civilization.
4. The Roman city of Pompeii was buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 C.E. The painting shown on page 8 was discovered during archaeological digs at the site. Look carefully at the picture. What do you think these two people were like? Why do we value ancient works of art?
5. Describe Rome's legacy to future generations, giving at least five examples.
6. Assume you are the editor of your community newspaper. In the previous issue, you asked readers to write in with suggestions for events that could be held at the local sports stadium, which needs to make money or it will close.
 - a) You receive a letter that calls for a revival of the "entertainments" ancient Romans watched in the Roman Colosseum. Write a one-page response to this letter explaining why you agree or disagree. In your arguments, you could refer to Canadian laws, what you feel would be the response of most members of your community, and your own personal beliefs.
 - b) The following week, you receive a letter that proposes weekly boxing and wrestling matches in the cash-strapped stadium. How do you respond?
7. Identify four possible symptoms of a declining civilization. The Roman Empire was not the only civilization to rise, flourish, and then decline. Identify a present-day civilization that shows symptoms of decline.
8. Describe what happened to Europe after Rome fell.

RELIGION: A FORCE OF CHANGE

Religion was crucial in reshaping Europe after the fall of Rome. Religions influence the values and behaviour of individual people and society as a whole. The Romans, like the Germanic peoples, had believed in many gods. Each god had specific powers and responsibilities. Roman religion was a fantastic mix of Greek gods, Roman gods, and emperors who had become gods. To a certain degree, the Romans had allowed conquered peoples to practise their own religions as long as they paid their taxes and did not rebel against Roman rule.

After the fall of Rome, a few religions grew beyond anyone's expectations. Throughout the Middle Ages, most of the people of North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe believed in Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. These three religions are closely related. Christianity grew out of Judaism, and Islam confirmed the message of both. Christians, Jews, and Muslims all believe in only one god.

Christianity, through the Roman Catholic Church, had the greatest effect on the people of western Europe. The Church was important politically because it supported various monarchs,

and important socially because it had such a strong influence on people's values. Finally the wars and persecutions that were carried out in the name of religion caused death and suffering and affected the history of the whole Mediterranean world.

JUDAISM

Judaism took shape in Israel over 3000 years ago, and is still a vital religion today. Central to the Jewish faith is a conviction that the Jewish people have a special relationship with God as His chosen people. To protect this relationship, Jews keep



Judaism: the religion of the Jews

Qur'ân: the holy book of Islam; *qur'ân*, in Arabic, means "reading"

DID YOU KNOW?

The Jewish holy book, the Torah, is part of the Christian Bible and is mentioned in the holy book of Islam, the Qur'ân.

Figure 1–3 This section of a triumphal arch in Rome records the destruction of the Jewish Temple by Roman soldiers. The soldiers take away booty. How did the sculptor indicate that the soldiers were sacking a Jewish building?

The Jewish Covenant

In this passage from the book of Exodus, God explains the close relationship that will exist between God and the Jewish people. The relationship is to be protected by a covenant, a kind of contract between God and the people. What do the Jewish people have to do to keep their end of the bargain?

The Lord called to [Moses] from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the House of Jacob and declare to the Children of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possessions above all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

—Exodus 19



to persecute: to attack or harass someone for a specific reason, for example, race, religion, or politics

creed: the official belief of a religion

God's laws. These include the Ten Commandments, which Jews believe God gave to Moses as part of the Torah, the most important of the Jewish Holy Books.

The Torah has existed for many centuries. Over time, Jewish teachers and prophets have added comments and interpretations that form the Talmud, a guide for life and belief.

On several occasions in Roman times, the whole Jewish population was forced to move to distant lands far from their homes. In Jewish

tradition, the final scattering of the Jewish people from Palestine was known as the Diaspora, or scattering. The Diaspora caused active Jewish communities to develop in most of the major

cities of the Mediterranean world. Often **persecuted**, even in their new communities, Jews held on to their traditions and their belief in their covenant with God.

ISLAM

Islam, which comes from the Arabic word for "submission," began in the seventh century. This religion is based on the Qur'an, which Muslims (believers of Islam) know as the word of God revealed to the Prophet Mohammed. All Muslims try to follow the rules for worship and living that have been laid out in the Qur'an. Islam spread rapidly into Asia, Africa, and finally Europe, when the Muslims conquered Spain in 711. Today a major population of Muslims live in the Balkan region of Eastern Europe. (For more information on Islam, see Chapters 4 and 10.)

Figure 1-4 These Canadian Muslims pray facing Mecca, just as their ancestors did over 1400 years ago.



HOW TO...

Manage Your Time

Have you ever left a research assignment till the last minute, only to find that the reference book you simply *must* have has been signed out of the library? Or has it happened that, despite your good intentions, you don't have time to polish a report and add illustrations?

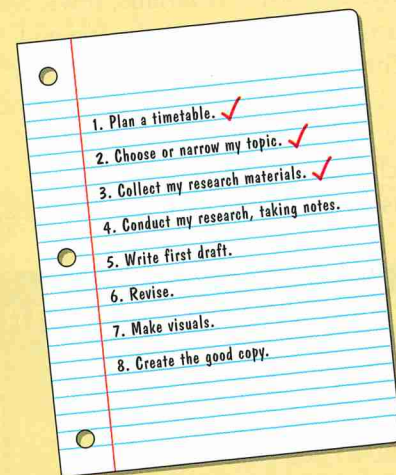
If you really want to get things done on time, make a plan and follow it. For example, let's assume you've been assigned the following research assignment:

1. Visit your school or local library to research the history of the Jewish people. Include a list of things Jews have done

to maintain their sense of community and identity. (You may wish to interview a Jewish friend or family member.)

As for any research assignment, draw up a list of the steps you need to take.

Making a timetable is the key to getting your project done on time. Make a chart with a box for every date from now to the due date. Then jot in any times you cannot work on the assignment because of classes, extra-curricular activities, a job, volunteer work, homework, or other assignments. Now decide how much time you need for each step listed above and



block off time for each on your timetable. Be sure to leave time for illustrations, graphs, a table of contents, and so on. Always be generous with your time. Research tasks almost always take longer than we expect.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity was founded in Palestine by the **apostles** of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments were to love God with your whole being and to love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus and his apostles were Jews who felt that their religious leaders paid too much attention to the letter rather than the spirit of the Jewish Law. To the Jewish authorities of the time, much of what Jesus taught seemed to go against their traditions and the Law. At the same time, the Romans were very nervous about anyone who might lead an uprising against them. They killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross, which was the method of execution reserved for common criminals.

The followers of Jesus believed that Jesus died and was raised from the dead so that all people could share in eternal life. The story of Jesus is told in the **Gospels** of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. In the beginning, Christianity was an extension of Judaism. Jesus' disciples,

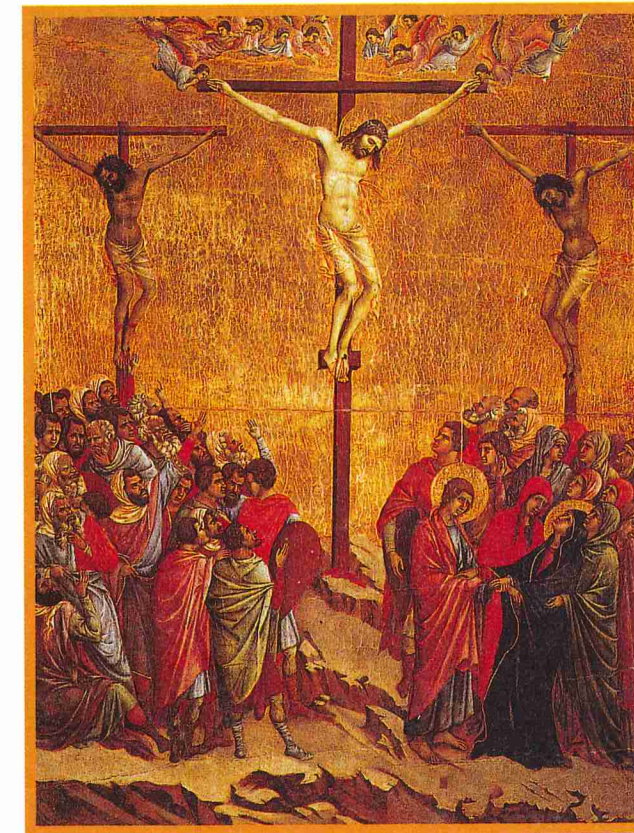


Figure 1-5 The death of Jesus Christ has inspired artists throughout the ages. This is a painting from the late Middle Ages by the Italian artist Duccio di Buoninsegna. What aspects of the Crucifixion did Duccio emphasize? Why?

all of whom were Jews, believed that he was the Jewish Messiah: the Son of God and the Saviour of the Jewish people.

The new religion spread quickly, following the trade routes of the Roman Empire. The man most

apostles: the first twelve disciples, or followers, of Jesus

gospels: the first four books of the New Testament of the Christian Bible

Blessed Are...

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his disciples what human qualities God especially loved. These teachings are called the Beatitudes and are very important to Christians. Summarize the main message of the passage given here.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the pure in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

—Matthew 5:2-11



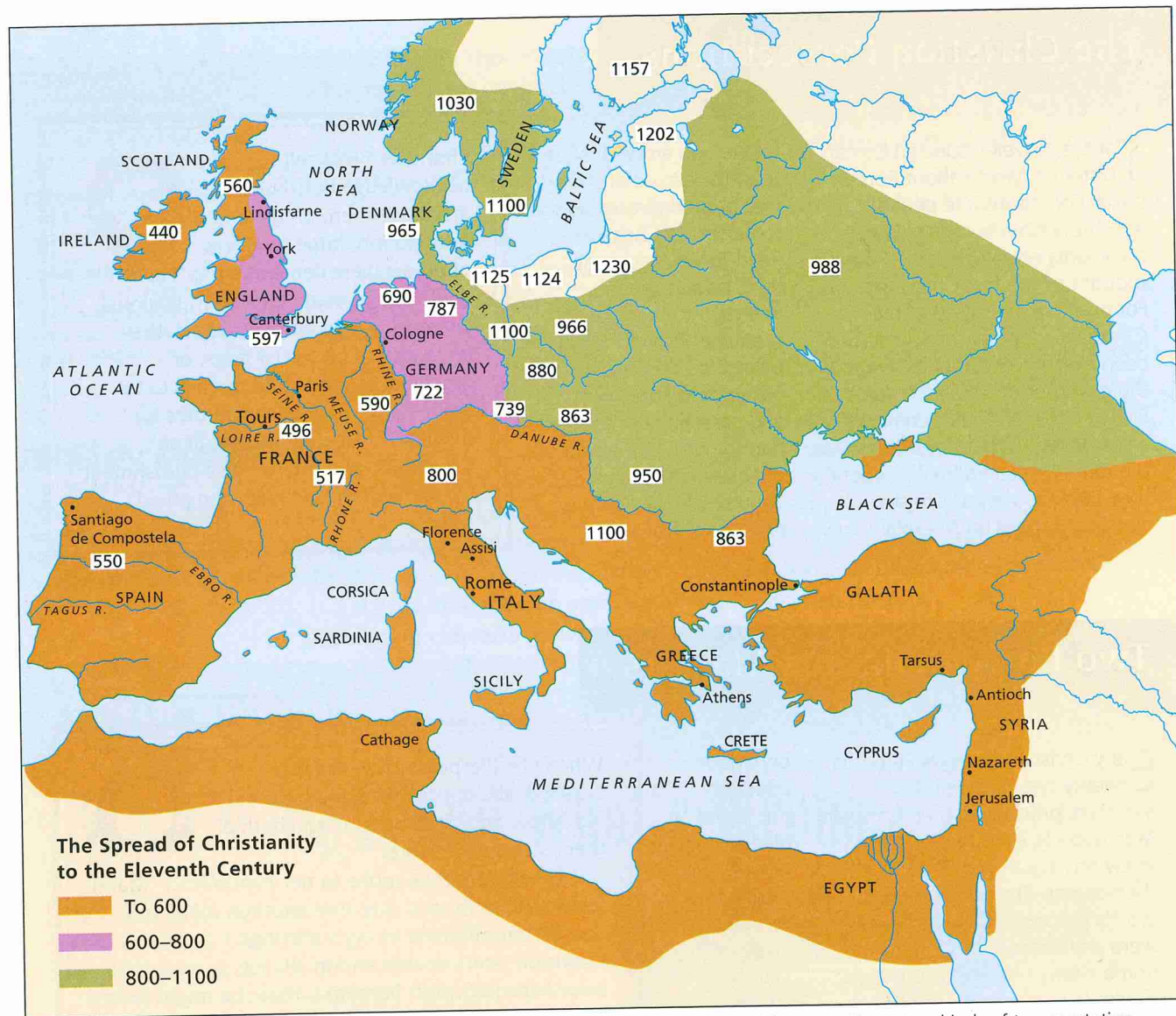


Figure 1-6 This map shows how Christianity spread across Europe during the early Middle Ages. Name two kinds of transportation routes used by the early missionaries. Examine the dates on the map to explain why many of the missionaries who converted the peoples of Germany and France came from the British Isles. Then compare this map to the one on page 120 showing the spread of Islam.

THE BYZANTINES AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

Constantine the Great (280-337), the first Christian Roman Emperor, decided to make Byzantium his capital. After he refortified the city with protective walls and buildings, the city became known as Constantinople. (Today it is known as Istanbul.) On the Bosphorus Sea between the Black Sea

and the Mediterranean, Constantinople lay right between Europe and Asia, and eventually became a major centre for trade. After the western Roman Empire collapsed, the Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople as its centre, became the last stronghold of Christianity. With its great walls and a mighty navy, the city withstood the attacks of Muslim invading armies for centuries.

Until the tenth century, Christianity in the Byzantine Empire continued to develop, eventually becoming Orthodox Christianity,

which is quite different from the Catholicism of western Europe. For one thing, Orthodox Christians do not recognize the authority of the Catholic pope, except as a respected leader of Christianity. Instead, Orthodox Christians turn to the Patriarch of the Eastern Church for guidance.

Justinian and Theodora

The Byzantine emperors were usually very religious and had important church duties to perform. After Constantine himself, two of the most important Byzantine rulers were Justinian I and Theodora, who ruled together from 527 to 565. Born a commoner, Justinian became one of the most capable leaders in the history of Europe. He had a brilliant mind and was passionately interested not just in politics but also in art, literature, religion, music, and the sciences.

Justinian collected all the written laws of the Roman Empire into a **legal code** now known as the Justinian Code. This code eventually became the basis for the law in every western European country except England. For example, Napoleon used Justinian's work as the basis for the Civil Code for France, which in turn greatly influenced the Civil Code for Quebec.

Theodora, like Justinian, came from humble origins. Her father had been a bear trainer in the Byzantine circus. For this and other reasons, her enemies ridiculed and criticized her. As a ruler, though, Theodora was just as effective and powerful as Justinian. For example, she brought in reforms that gave women the right to keep any



Figure 1-7 The Byzantine Empire under Justinian and Theodora, about 550 C.E. How does the outline for this empire differ from that of the Roman Empire in Figure 1-1.

legal code: a collection of written laws

property they inherited. The resolute and resourceful Theodora coped well in emergencies, as well. For example, when an attempt was made to overthrow Justinian, Theodora stopped him from fleeing, and organized the defence of the throne.

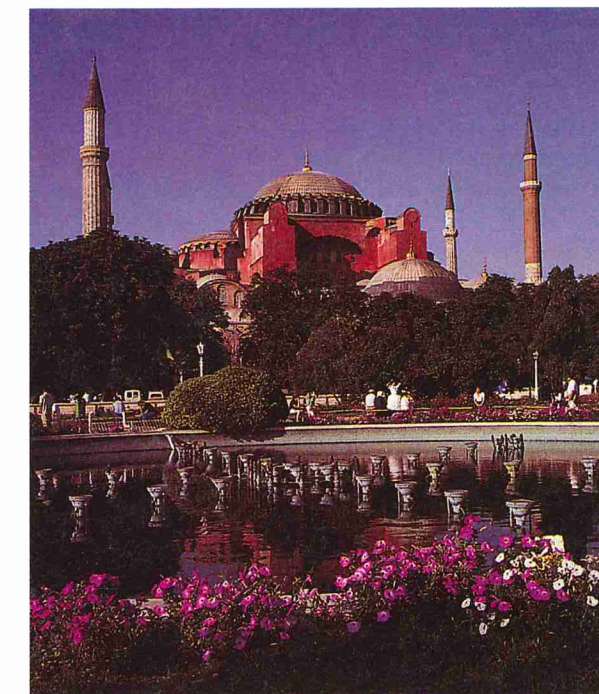


Figure 1-8 The church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) was built in Constantinople during Justinian's reign. The building was converted to a mosque (an Islamic place of worship) in the fifteenth century and is now a museum. Suggest two reasons why Justinian would want to build such an impressive church.

Figure 1–9 This mosaic, showing the Empress Theodora and her court, is one of the finest works of art to survive from the Byzantine period. Identify two ways that the artist made Theodora and her companions look royal.



mosaic: a picture made with many pieces of stone or glass fixed in place

ACTIVITIES

1. What was the most important difference between Judaism and the religions of the ancient Greeks and Romans?
2. a) What was the Diaspora? What effect did it have on the pattern of Jewish settlement in Europe?
b) Over the centuries many Jews have had to leave their homes because of persecution. Where did this happen in World War Two? Why did this modern migration happen?
3. Compare the Jewish Covenant with the Islamic Covenant on page 116.
4. In pairs, create a comparison chart with the headings Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. On the side of your chart, write the headings Origin, Basic Beliefs, Important People and Leaders, Turning Points, and Other. Fill in the chart with information from this chapter and The Foundations of Islam on pages 116–19. (For help in making a comparison chart, see the feature on page 59.)
5. Explain how and why Christianity emerged as a major European religion.
6. Review the Biblical quotation on page 15.
a) What level of society do you think would be most drawn to this message? How could this have contributed to the spread of Christianity?
7. Write a comment about a missionary from three different points of view:
a) the pope
b) someone who has recently converted to Christianity
c) someone who does not want to convert
8. Why did Constantinople become the “last stronghold” for Christianity?
9. Explain what made Justinian and Theodora great rulers.
10. Examine the mosaic of the Empress Theodora. What do her clothing and her bearing say about her? Christ preached poverty. How do you think Theodora would justify her extravagant costume?
11. Research Orthodox Christianity, using a CD-ROM and other electronic information sources if possible. What factors make it different from Roman Catholicism? In what regions did it spread? How many people are Orthodox Christians today?

THE FRANKS

As the Roman Legions withdrew from western Europe, various Germanic peoples moved into the territory, fought wars, and established settlements. One of these groups, the Franks, conquered much of the Roman province of Gaul (now France) in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Although they were farmers, they also loved making war. Most free men went about armed, often with a special kind of throwing axe called a *francisca*. Both men and women were fond of jewellery, and both genders wore their hair long. Their name for themselves—“Frank”—meant free. “Franchise,” the English word for the right to vote, comes from this Frankish word.

THE MEROVINGIANS

The Merovingian royal family ruled the Franks for almost three hundred years. The most successful ruler in the family, Clovis I, reigned from 481 to 511 C.E. He founded the country of France and made Paris its capital.

After the death of Clovis, the kingdom was divided among his children, who were not very capable leaders. Before long, this royal family became famous for its treachery and murderous infighting. Kings and queens often committed murders with their own hands, and many were killed by members of their own family. For the next two centuries, the Merovingian royal family was weakened by this constant infighting, and the kingdom fell into chaos.

DID YOU KNOW?

In many parts of Asia, Europeans are still called Franks. For example, the Thai call Europeans “Farang.”

VIEWPOINTS IN CONFLICT

Here we have two descriptions of the Franks. In one, Tacitus, a Roman historian of the first century, offers his opinion of the Germanic peoples, which included the Franks. Compare this with the other statement, in which the Franks describe themselves. In what ways do these statements agree? How do they differ? How does each reflect the speaker’s point of view?

The materials ... come through war and foray. You will not so readily persuade them [the Germanic peoples] to plow the land or await the year’s crop as to challenge the foe and earn wounds. Besides it seems [to them] limp and slack to gain with the sweating of your brow what you can win with blood.

—Tacitus

[We are a] glorious people, wise in council, noble in body, radiant in health, excelling in beauty, daring, quick, hardened.... This is the people that shook the cruel yoke of the Romans from its neck.

—Preface to the Frank Legal Code

THE LAWS OF THE FRANKS

As a Germanic people, the Franks had their own legal code, which differed greatly from Roman law. When these laws were written down and collected, they were called the Salic Code, after the Salian Franks, who had settled in France.

The Salic Code placed a monetary value on every piece of property and on every person. If property was stolen or a person injured or killed, a fine called **wergild** had to be paid to the owner of the property or the victim's family. In the case of murder, the family could refuse to accept the fine, and instead could demand the guilty person's death. If a relation of the victim took revenge by killing the murderer, the law did not hold him or her responsible.

wergild: man-money, that is, a person's value in money

arson: intentionally setting fire to property

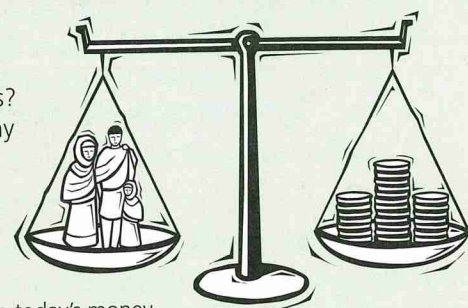
betrothal: a promise to marry



Figure 1-10 Finely decorated jewellery such as this was often placed in the coffins of Merovingian nobles. Consequently, grave robbing was a common offence. Why do you think the Merovingians placed jewellery in their graves?

Crime and Punishment in the Salic Code

Some of the laws in the Salic Code seem strange to us today, but they made sense to the Franks. For instance, cutting a child's hair was a serious offence because the Franks believed that a person's strength could be measured by the length of his or her hair. Grave robbing was a common problem among the Franks because of the jewellery they placed in the caskets of wealthy people. After analyzing the data carefully, make three conclusions about Frank society. Note that the Franks fined people more for killing a boy than for killing a girl. Why did they do this? Do Canadian laws make similar distinctions? Why or why not?



Note: *Solidi* were gold coins worth \$50–\$100 in today's money.

Crime	Punishment
Theft of a slave:	120–150 lashes
Arson:	slavery in the mines, banishment, or death
Theft:	fine, torture, or death

Crime	Fines
Breaking a betrothal :	65 gold solidi
Touching a woman's hand:	15 gold solidi
Cutting the hair of a free boy or girl:	45 gold solidi
Grave robbing:	200 gold solidi

A Person's Value by Law (Wergild)	
Fines for killing a free woman of childbearing age:	600 gold solidi
pregnant woman:	700 gold solidi
boy under twelve:	600 gold solidi
girl under twelve:	200 gold solidi

Using Primary Sources

CATALOGUE CARD

What is it? An excerpt from the ten-volume *History of the Franks*

Who wrote it? Gregory of Tours, a Frankish bishop and historian

When? Late sixth century

Why? To record the history of his people

Before the great **plague** ravaged Auvergne [a region in France], **prodigies** terrified the people of that region in the same way. On a number of occasions, three or four shining lights appeared round the sun. Once on the first day of October, the sun was in eclipse, so that less than a quarter of it continued to shine.... Then a star, which some call a comet, appeared over the region for a whole year, with a tail like a sword, and the whole sky seemed to burn and many other **portents** were seen.



Much of what we know about the Franks and their rulers, the Merovingians, comes from a book called the *History of the Franks* by Gregory of Tours, a mild-mannered person who was shocked by the bloodthirsty deeds of the Merovingian rulers.

The *History of the Franks* is what historians call a "primary source." In other words, this document provides a first-hand account of historical events by a person who actually participated in them or was able to interview eyewitnesses. An account of Roberta Bondar's flight in space written by Bondar herself during the flight would be a good primary source to have. Documents such as charters, chronicles, historical paintings, and records of births and deaths are also considered primary sources. A "secondary source" is an account put together long after the events it describes. When historians research a particular period, they prefer to work with primary sources.

Even though Gregory's book is a primary source, modern historians have to interpret what Gregory

wrote to decide how much of what he wrote actually occurred and how much was the result of superstition or wishful thinking.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. The above extract tells us several things. First, Gregory was superstitious. Second, a disease killed many people in Auvergne. What did Gregory see that would interest an astronomer studying historical astronomical events?
2. Gregory called these astronomical events "portents," or omens. Do you think he was right? Explain.
3. Think of three modern-day beliefs that people a thousand years from now might think were silly or superstitions.

EVERYDAY LIFE AMONG THE FRANKS

By reading Gregory's *History of the Franks*, we also learn about the everyday life of the Frankish people, and we find that some things never change. The Franks had **social classes**: some people were very rich and some were incredibly poor. The majority of people at this time (around 60 percent)

were serfs, or peasants, people who worked the land on their lord's manor, or estate. Although they were considered free and not slaves, serfs were not allowed to move away from the manor. Because they were farmers, the serfs were at the mercy of the weather. Storms or drought could cause great hardship. The lords and rulers could steal serfs' crops at any time. Further, as Gregory of Tours complained, merchants often tried to profit from the misfortunes of ordinary people by raising prices when food was scarce.

plague: a contagious disease that is out of control and kills many people

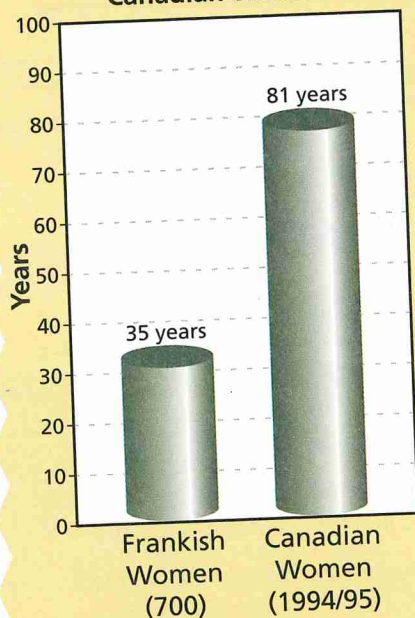
prodigies, portents: omens, occurrences that predict future events

social class: the group that one belongs to in a society. Class can be determined by money, role in society, or one's parentage.

Make a Bar Graph

Sometimes we need help in grasping the significance of statistics. Graphs help us by providing a "picture" of the information. For example, a bar graph comparing the life expectancies of Frankish and Canadian women helps us see the extraordinary difference:

Life Expectancy for Frankish and Canadian Women



Statistics: The Franks in 700 and Canadians in 1994/95

	The Franks	Canadians
Infant mortality rate	45%	0.6%
Population under twelve years	22%	16%
Population under twenty-five years	60%	34%
Average life expectancy for men	45 years	75 years
Average life expectancy for women	35 years	81 years
Age of marriage (for women)	12 years	30 years
Size of average family	2.9 persons	3.0 persons
Average height for men	165 cm*	180 cm*
Average height for women	150 cm*	165 cm*

* Estimated



Every bar graph has two axes. The horizontal axis shows the categories (for example, year, city, gender), while the vertical axis shows the values (for example,

degrees of temperature or distance in kilometres). The bars, always of equal width, show the value for each category by their height.

NOW YOU DO IT

- a) Following these instructions, make a bar graph comparing the life expectancies of Frankish and Canadian men.

 - ◆ Draw and label two axes.
 - ◆ Add categories on the horizontal axis and a scale on the vertical axis. To help choose your scale, look at the largest value you will show.
 - ◆ Draw and shade one bar for each category, using the statistics in the table above.
 - ◆ Give your bar graph a title.
 - b) Why do you think life expectancy for men and women in Frankish times was so much lower than life expectancies today? Why do you think Frankish women died so much earlier than men?
2. Now make a similar pair of graphs comparing the heights of Frankish and Canadian women and Frankish and Canadian men. Speculate on why Franks were shorter than Canadians are today.

CHARLEMAGNE

Charlemagne came to power in western Europe in 768 C.E. His father, Pepin the Short, had made himself king by throwing out the last of the Merovingian rulers, who had come to be known as the "do-nothing" kings. The pope agreed to recognize Pepin as king because Pepin's father, Charles Martel, had defeated a Muslim army that had threatened to conquer Europe in 732.

Unlike many of the Germanic rulers who had come before him, Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, was very interested in rebuilding civilization, and he had the intelligence and power to do so. Through his military successes he expanded the old Merovingian Empire in every direction. At the height of his power, on Christmas day in 800, he was crowned Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III. The **Carolingian Empire** gave

much of western Europe a brief rest from the wars that had torn it apart since the fall of Rome.

Charlemagne governed his empire from his palace at Aachen in what is now Germany. Although he allowed local governments much freedom, he also sent out agents, called *missi dominici* (the lord's messengers), to make sure that people were treated properly. He created a single code of laws for the whole empire. Unlike those who came before him, Charlemagne tried to make things better for the serfs and tradespeople.

We learn from Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard, that Charlemagne could also be hardhearted and merciless. After a long war with the Saxons in northwest Germany, Charlemagne defeated them and insisted that they convert to Christianity. When the Saxon leaders refused, Charlemagne ordered his soldiers to kill about 4000 Saxons in a single day.

Carolingian Empire:
Charlemagne's empire, from about 770 to 814

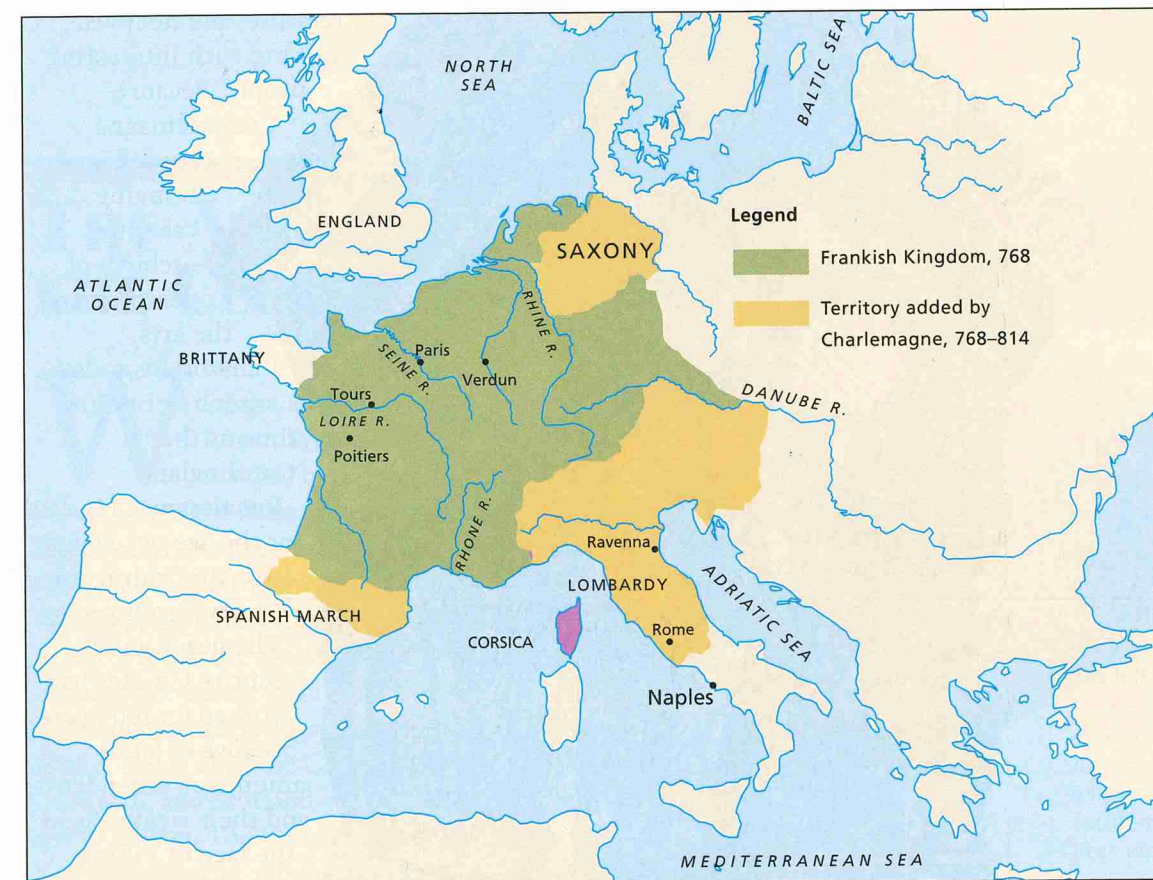


Figure 1-11
This map shows the extent of Charlemagne's kingdom. Check in an atlas to discover what modern countries lie in this region. Which mountain ranges formed natural borders?

Describing Charlemagne

Einhard, Charlemagne's secretary, wrote a biography of Charlemagne, the first biography of a medieval person who was not a saint or otherwise connected with the Roman Catholic Church. Are there any indications of exaggeration in the account at right?

Charles [Charlemagne] was large and strong, and of lofty stature, though not disproportionately tall.... In accordance with the national custom, he took frequent exercise on horseback and in the chase, accomplishments in which scarcely any people in the world can equal the Franks. He enjoyed the exhalations from natural warm springs, and often practised swimming, in which he was such an adept that none could surpass him; and hence it was that he built his palace at Aachen, and lived there constantly during his later years until his death.



DID YOU KNOW?

Charlemagne learned to read, though he never quite succeeded in teaching himself to write. He kept a writing slate under his pillow and practised his letters before going to sleep but finally gave up, saying he was too old.

Charlemagne's Renaissance

Improving education throughout the empire was a special concern of Charlemagne. He established new schools in monasteries and

encouraged the learning of the Latin classics. Charles insisted that his sons and daughters be educated.

Charles was an energetic and thoughtful ruler. He took a keen interest in reviving the practice of architecture and had many stone churches and palaces built in

France and Germany. He was interested in science and literature, and he loved talking with interesting people. Because

Charlemagne succeeded in bringing about a rebirth of learning and the arts,

historians today often refer to his time as the Carolingian

Renaissance. He died at the age of seventy-two, after ruling for forty-seven years. The peace and security Charles had worked for fell apart because of feuds among his descendants, and their weakness in the face of Viking invasions.

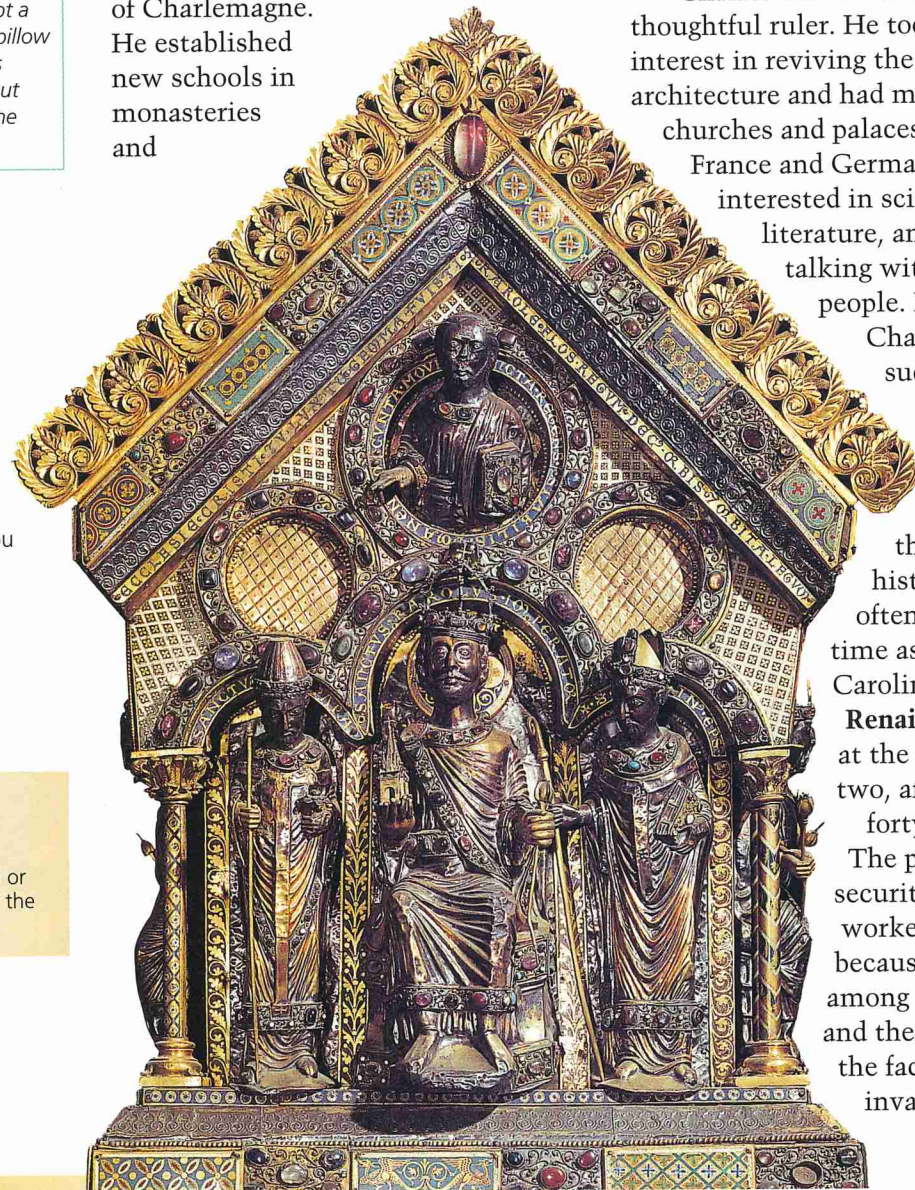


Figure 1-12 A carving from the outside of Charlemagne's coffin, showing Charlemagne dressed in bishop's clothing and seated between two saints. What impression do you think Charlemagne wanted to leave?

the chase: the hunt
exhalations: vapours
renaissance: a rebirth or revival, especially of the arts

ACTIVITIES

- Who were the Franks? What did they think of themselves? Write a description of Canadians to go in the Canadian Constitution. You may wish to consider ethnic origins, culture, and commonly held principles, ideals, and goals. Compare your description of the Canadian people with the Franks' description of themselves.
- Calculate the worth of the fines listed on page 22. Under Canadian law, murder, arson, and theft would all be punished with a prison term. How did the Franks punish people guilty of these crimes? Why do you think the Franks never punished with prison terms?
 - What punishments did the Franks use that Canadians do not use? How can you account for these differences?
 - Under Canadian law, breaking an engagement or touching a person's hand *usually* would not be considered a serious crime. How did the Franks punish these actions? How can you account for these differences?
- Describe the role played by the serf in Frankish society. Identify three threats to a serf's wellbeing.
- Look at the statistics on page 24.
 - At what age did young Frankish women get married? Identify three effects an early marriage might have on a girl's life. Consider her relationship with her parents, the age at which she would begin bearing children, and her relationship with a much older husband.
 - The infant mortality rate shows that almost half of all Frankish babies died in infancy. What might account for this?
 - Make up three questions of your own about this chart. With a partner, speculate on answers for each question.
- In a small group, discuss if Charlemagne deserves the title "the Great." Give evidence to support your view.
- As one of Charlemagne's advisors, you have been asked to advertise for people to help rebuild civilization at Charles's capital at Aachen. Prepare an advertisement for Charles's approval. Your advertisement should demonstrate your knowledge of the world of the Franks.

THE ANGLO-SAXONS AND THE CELTS

While the Franks settled in France after the fall of Rome, Britain was invaded by a different group. When the Roman soldiers left Britain in the fifth century, warriors from the area now known as Germany—the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes—moved in, driving out the native Celtic peoples. Soon large numbers of these Germanic invaders began to settle in Britain and pushed the Celts into Wales, Cornwall, and Scotland, and across the sea to Ireland. The Celts had once been a powerful people, inhabiting much of

Europe, from Spain all the way to southern Russia. Now, in Britain, the Celtic language and culture disappeared from the seven kingdoms (see page 29) established by the invaders, who became known as the Anglo-Saxons, or English.

Celtic peoples: (pronounced Keltic), a western European culture. The Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Cornish, and Bretons are all Celts.



Figure 1-13 The craftsperson who made this piece of jewellery inscribed (or carved) on the work, in Anglo-Saxon, the words, "Alfred had me made." Originally, the ornament probably held a stick of ivory or wood for pointing at a manuscript when reading. For what else could this ornament have been used?

epic: a long poem telling about heroic deeds and events

prosperous: thriving

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Although they thought of themselves as warriors, the Anglo-Saxons, like the Franks, were farmers. They lived in small villages, and men and women shared the hard work of agriculture between them. Some trade and business took place, but even the largest towns, such as London, would seem very small by today's standards. Like other Germanic peoples, the Anglo-Saxons had skilled metal workers. Many examples of their highly elaborate sculpture and

jewellery have survived. The Anglo-Saxons were also great storytellers who created wonderful **epics**, such as *Beowulf*.

Beginning in the ninth century, Anglo-Saxon England, like Carolingian France, suffered from devastating Viking raids. Alfred the Great, an early ruler of Anglo-Saxon England, lost many battles with the Vikings before he learned how to beat them. At his death, Alfred left western and southern England united and **prosperous**. England as a whole, however, would suffer from a deadly combination of weak kings and Viking invaders until the time of William the Conqueror.

Beowulf and the Monster Grendel

The Anglo-Saxon, Old English poem *Beowulf* is an ancient epic that would have been told around the fire on long winter evenings. It tells the story of a Swedish hero's battles with three monsters: a troll named Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a fire-breathing dragon guarding a golden treasure. Beowulf slays all three monsters but dies himself after being burned and bitten by the dragon. This story helps us understand the fear in which many people lived in the early Middle Ages: fear of wild animals (which still populated Europe), fear of enemies, and fear of the unknown.

Only one copy of the poem has survived from the Middle Ages. The segment shown at the top right describes the dark night when the monster Grendel and Beowulf engage in battle. The Old English words are given above, along with a translation. Can you pick out the Old English words that resemble modern English?

OLD ENGLISH AND TRANSLATION

Tha com of more under misthleothum
Then came off [the] moor under mist-hills

Grendel gongan, Goddes yrre baer;
Grendel going, God's ire [he] bore;

mynte se manscatha manna cynnes
thought the evildoer of mankind

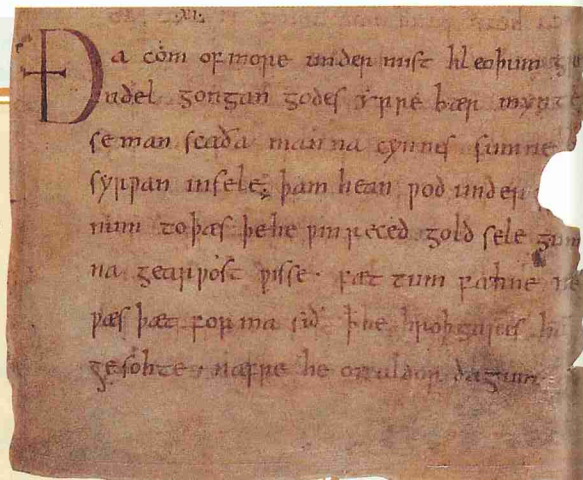
sumne besyrwan in sele tham hean.
some to entrap in that high hall.

Wod under wolcnum to thaes the he winreced,
Went under clouds until he [the] wine-building,

goldsele gumena, gearwost wisse
gold-hall best, clearly saw

faettum fahne. Ne waes thaet forma sith
with gold plates decorated. Nor was that [the] first time

thaet he Hrothgares ham gesohte.
that he Hrothgar's home had sought.



HOW WE MIGHT TELL THIS STORY

The evil monster Grendel came out of the misty wild lands with evil on his mind. Under stormy skies, the monster saw a beautiful golden palace. The evildoer planned to attack the hall and capture some people. It was not the first time he had attacked Hrothgar's home.

Using a Translation as a Primary Source

CATALOGUE CARD

What is it? Two translations of one line from the ancient poem *Beowulf*

Who translated it? Two scholars of Old English

When? Twentieth century

Why? To allow more people to understand the poem

Then his heart laughed;
evil monster, he thought he would take
the life from each body, eat them all
before day came.



And his heart laughed, he relished the sight,
Intended to tear the life from those bodies
By morning.



In the feature on page 28, you saw the monster Grendel make his way to Hrothgar's Hall, which he intends to attack. Here are two **translations** of the line describing the thoughts going through Grendel's mind after he breaks into the hall and sees a room full of sleeping warriors.

For each translation, decide if the monster intends to eat the warriors or not. How can two

translations of the same line disagree on such an important point?

It is true that translators sometimes make mistakes. More often they disagree about what particular words or phrases mean. Sometimes they are writing for different audiences. Next time you read a primary source document in translation, keep in mind that a translation is never as accurate as the original.



Figure 1-14 England in the time of Alfred the Great. The Anglo-Saxons drove the Celtic peoples into Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall and divided England into seven kingdoms. Pick these out. Why do you think Alfred allowed the Vikings to live in the Danelaw?

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF THE IRISH

The Celts, who had settled on the western and northern edge of the British Isles, had practised a form of nature worship called Druidism for many centuries. They fought in bloody battles, kept slaves, and made human sacrifices. All this changed in the fifth century, when St. Patrick, who became the patron saint of Ireland, brought to the Irish both Christianity and a healthy respect for learning. Because Ireland had few cities, large monastic communities sprang up in the countryside and along the coasts. These monasteries became centres for learning not just for Irish monks but also for scholars from the rest of Europe who were fleeing from the Germanic invasions.

translation: writing changed from one language into another

Until the time of Charlemagne's renaissance, Ireland was the greatest centre of learning in Europe.

Irish monks played a critical role in training missionaries and in spreading Christianity. They travelled through Scotland, England, and then Europe, spreading knowledge and Christianity. They carried their books hooked to their belts, just as their warrior ancestors had once carried the heads of their fallen enemies.

The Irish monks also played an important role in preserving the

cultural legacy of ancient Ireland, Greece, and Rome. Monasteries functioned as something like book factories. In the age before the printing press, every new book had to be carefully copied out by hand on sheets of dried sheepskin called "parchment." The Irish monks did not limit their copying efforts to religious works such as the Bible. They also copied out many of the Latin and Greek classics and ancient Celtic stories that might otherwise have been lost forever.

credit: trust

figment: a made-up story

A Monk's Aside

At the end of a copy of the Book of Leinster, a collection of ancient Irish tales that must have taken months to copy, the copyist added in Latin his own opinion of the material. Because of their respect for literature, Irish monks copied out books of all sorts, even those of which they disapproved.

I who have copied down this story, or more accurately fantasy, do not **credit** the details of the story, or fantasy. Some things in it are devilish lies, and some are poetical **figments**; some seem possible and others not; some are for the enjoyment of idiots.



ACTIVITIES

1. Describe the relocations of the Celtic peoples starting from their origins in Europe. What caused these massive migrations?
2. Describe Anglo-Saxon England.
3. a) Who was Alfred the Great and what was his greatest accomplishment?
b) Alfred the Great is supposed to have hidden in the marshes and disguised himself as a minstrel to spy on the Viking leaders. Draw your own cartoon strip of Alfred the Great disguised as a minstrel in the Viking camp. What kind of information could he have gathered?
4. How did Anglo-Saxon storytellers help preserve their culture even though they could not read or write?
5. The Anglo-Saxons were fond of making poetic two-word combinations they called "kennings" to describe people or objects. Sometimes, for instance, they would call soldiers "slaughter-wolves." Beowulf's name, "Bee-wolf," was a kenning for Bear. Make up your own kennings to describe these objects and people: the sky, a pencil, a sword, a shoe, a car, a teacher, an actor, and an airplane. Share your kennings in groups.
6. Describe the factors that contributed to Ireland's role in providing a safe haven from Vikings and in preserving ancient knowledge. Consider location, population distribution, and religious influences.
7. a) What did the monk who copied out the Book of Leinster think about the material he was copying? Why do you think he completed his task?
b) A historian documenting a particular event will try to collect and preserve sources that represent all points of view. How are this monk's efforts similar to the historian's efforts?

THE VIKINGS

On Easter Sunday in the year 855, a Viking force attacked and plundered Paris, far from the sea, striking a blow at the very heart of Charlemagne's old empire. France was not the only target. The Vikings were everywhere. Their war parties devastated whole regions in the Low Countries (modern Netherlands and Belgium), Ireland, and England. They roamed into the Mediterranean Sea, they attacked Spain and Italy, and they sailed down the great rivers of Russia all the way to Constantinople.

The Vikings came from the north looking for plunder and glory. They travelled in swift longships that allowed them to strike without warning and disappear quickly before

local rulers could raise a force to oppose them. Their raiding forces ranged from the crew of a single ship to large fleets of a hundred ships or more. The peace of mind Europeans had gained under Charlemagne's rule was shattered.



Figure 1-15 Almost 25 metres long, 5 metres wide, and 2 metres deep, this typical ninth-century Viking ship could carry a crew of thirty-two and sail into water just over a metre deep. In 1893, a small crew sailed a replica of a Viking ship across the Atlantic Ocean.

Of Lightning and Dragons

An entry in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 793 records the Vikings' destruction of the great monastery at Lindisfarne off the coast of northeastern England. Would this account serve to calm people or to make them more fearful of the Vikings? How do you think reputation assisted the Vikings? Compare this passage with the one from Gregory of Tours's *History of the Franks* on page 23. What is similar about the two excerpts?

In this year terrible portents appeared... exceptional flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine followed soon upon these signs, and a little after on the Ides of [June] the harrying of the heathen miserably destroyed God's church in Lindisfarne by rapine and slaughter.



THE VIKING REPUTATION

The Vikings were mercilessly destructive. Especially in their early raids, before they began to settle in lands such as England and France, their common practice was to kill or enslave every man, woman, and child they found. The Vikings were so savagely cruel in their attacks that many people thought they had been sent by God to punish the world for its wickedness. To understand the fear people felt, imagine that the coastal communities in British Columbia were regularly invaded by forces that burned everything in sight



Figure 1-16 By looking at the places the Vikings usually attacked, why do you think it was so difficult to stop these raids? What geographical feature allowed the Vikings to move inland on their raids?

and killed everyone they found. Would you feel safe living in places such as Mission or Powell River? What might you, with your community, do to protect yourselves in that situation?

Some monarchs and church leaders were so terrified that they paid the Vikings to leave their lands. In England, the Vikings took payments called *Danegeld* from rulers such as Ethelred the Unready. Over the course of a few years, French monarchs paid the Vikings almost 300 kilograms of gold and 15 000 kilograms of silver. All these payments came from taxes collected from the common people. Only a few rulers, such as Charlemagne and Alfred the Great, could fight the Vikings effectively, but even they weren't able to stop the raids completely.

EVERYDAY LIFE AMONG THE VIKINGS

It is important to remember that most of our information on the Vikings comes from the people they attacked and plundered. For this reason, many of us tend to have a somewhat slanted view of their lives. Whatever the Vikings did to the Anglo-Saxons in England was probably not much different from what the Anglo-Saxons had done to the Celts many years earlier.

Viking life was not all wars and raiding parties. Most Vikings were farmers and fishers living in small villages close to the sea. They came from the region we now call Scandinavia—the modern countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. They probably began their raids because the farmland available in Scandinavia could not support the growing



Figure 1-17 The Vikings made their houses of turf, stone, or clay or dung plastered onto woven sticks. The long, low houses frequently sheltered more than one family. Attached to the houses were buildings for slaves and a barn for the animals. Some farms also had saunas. Toilets were outside, often near the well.

population. People lived at the ends of **fjords** and wherever else they could find fertile land. Viking farms tended to be small, only a few hectares in size.

Men and women shared the work in Viking society, although some jobs, such as weaving, were always done by women. Free Viking women had many rights under the law. They could own property, they could divorce their spouses, and they could sue in court. Gunnhild, the “mother of kings,” was a legendary leader. Freydis Eriksdottir, the sister of Leif the Lucky, led an expedition to Newfoundland early in the eleventh century.

Life was not good for everyone in Viking society. Viking landowners almost always owned slaves, called *thralls*, who did much of the heavy work on the farms. Most thralls had either been taken captive on Viking raids or been sold into slavery because they could not pay debts or fines. Thralls had no legal rights in Viking society, and could be killed by their masters at any time. The children of

thralls automatically became slaves.

Despite their reputation as ruthless “barbarians,” the Vikings had a rich culture. They were highly skilled woodworkers and smiths, and many artworks have survived, especially from the grave sites of wealthy and powerful leaders. Viking art shows gods such as Odin, Thor, and Freya, as well as scenes from everyday life.

The keepers of Viking history and legend were called **skalds**. These poets needed to have excellent memories and be good singers. They carried whole histories in their heads, and could recite, word for word, stories that might take several days to tell. This was an important skill for a society in which most people could not read or write.

Viking Law and Government

The Vikings were great lawmakers, and they designed many laws to

fjord: a long, narrow, salt-water bay with high cliffs along its sides

skald: a Scandinavian poet who recited poems at formal gatherings

DID YOU KNOW?

Like many Canadians, the Vikings ate a varied diet of vegetables, meat, fish, bread, and porridge. Unlike Canadians, they considered beer to be a drink for everyone, even small children.

DID YOU KNOW?

The practice of using juries in the courtroom comes from the Vikings. Also, the next time (or the first time) you take a sauna, remember that you are enjoying one of the more pleasant contributions the Vikings made to later civilizations.

LINK-UP

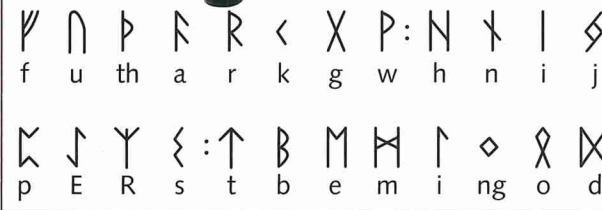
The Value of Writing

Some civilizations have maintained an oral tradition to remember their history, but most have developed some form of writing. Writing has many advantages over oral histories, the main one being that a written document, if cared for properly, can last forever. For example, a case known as the "Franks Casket," shown at right, still survives, though it was made about a thousand years ago. The letters carved into it are **runes**, the letters of the Viking alphabet used mainly by Vikings but also by other Germanic peoples. Many Vikings

thought the runes had magical powers. Which runic letters are similar to letters in the Roman alphabet, which we use? What connection can you see between the shapes of the runic letters and the fact that the Vikings did not write with pens and paper but rather carved their letters into stone and wood?



runes: letters based on those in the Roman alphabet



LINK-UP

North America's First European Visitors

The Vikings were an incredibly adventurous people. They sailed their ships far and wide, even across the Atlantic Ocean. Newfoundland's L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Park is the site of the earliest Viking settlement in North America. In this recent photograph, you can see sod huts reproduced to look like the ones Vikings erected here about a thousand years ago.

Who had already been in North America long before the Vikings came?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Evidence proves that Vikings reached North America centuries before other Europeans. Why do you think Christopher Columbus was long considered the first European to reach the Americas?

protect people and their property. Usually these laws were not written down. Instead, people called Law Speakers memorized the law and recited it as needed. The Vikings usually fined criminals, but some dangerous offenders were punished more harshly. The most dreaded penalty was to be declared an outlaw, which meant that the person was to be treated under the law "as if he were dead." Anyone could kill an outlaw on sight and then be entitled to some of his or her property.

people of Norway and Denmark became Christian. By the middle of the eleventh century, dragon ships filled with warriors were no longer seen in the rivers and seas of western Europe. The Viking Age was over forever.

Thing: a parliament where free adults could give their opinions on important matters. Viking kings were not crowned; instead, they were lifted up standing on shields, at the Thing.

THE END OF THE VIKING AGE

The Viking age ended in the eleventh century. Gradually European monarchs grew stronger and learned how to deal with their northern enemies. English monarchs gave half of England, the Danelaw, to Viking lords who then protected their new lands from other Vikings. The king of France gave the Viking Rollo the province of Normandy to rule and protect (Normandy means "land of the Northmen"). Viking settlements in North America and Greenland were destroyed or disappeared. The

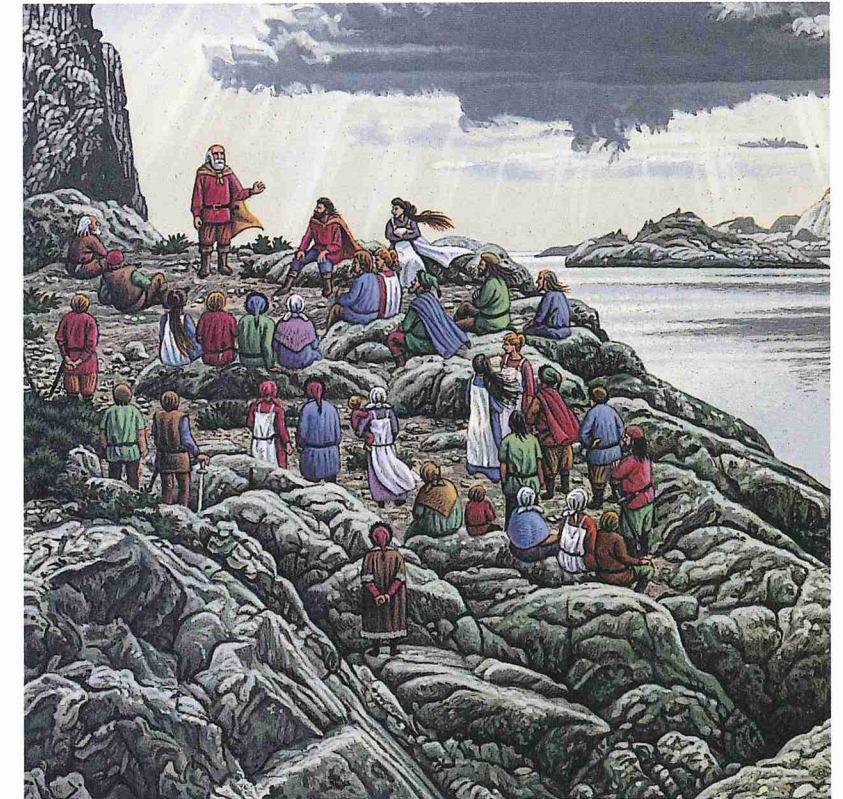


Figure 1-18 Free Vikings met regularly in a kind of parliament called a **Thing**. Here they made decisions on law, government, and their leaders. The Thing of Iceland is now one of the oldest parliaments in northern Europe.

ACTIVITIES

1. How did the level of population and availability of resources in Scandinavia encourage the Viking strategy of ransacking Europe?
2. Study the pictures of Viking ships on pages 3 and 31. Make four observations about Viking ships. Analyze these ships as a technology. For what purpose were they particularly suited? Why?
3. Who were the skalds? What part did skalds play in maintaining Viking culture? In a small group, brainstorm what or who serves the various purposes of the skalds in Canadian society.
4. Why do you think being declared an outlaw was the most dreaded penalty in Viking society? Consider how this declaration would affect your status in regard to the law, your community, and your identity.
5. Examine the excerpt on page 31 about the destruction of the church at Lindisfarne. Whose view does this represent? What might be the Viking view of this event? Pretend you are one of the Vikings who participated in the raid on Lindisfarne. Write a brief account of the raid in the form of a speech you will give to your friends in Denmark.