swift after the invention of the horse collar to yoke teams of horses. Riding horses became easier, too, when the use of stirrups spread from Central Asia to Europe about the seventh century. Stirrups distributed the rider’s weight more evenly over the horse’s back, saving the horse discomfort and back injury while helping the rider to be more secure.

The manor produced everything that people living on it required, limiting the need for trade or contact with outsiders. Many serfs spent their entire life on a single manor, unaware of what was happening in the rest of Europe. A serf might not see more than 100 different people in an entire lifetime.

The languages that almost everyone understood—Latin and German—evolved as areas developed their own dialects, or regional ways of speaking. Over time, the Latin dialects developed into new vernacular languages, such as French, Italian, and Spanish. Latin remained the formal language used by clergy, scholars, and lawyers, while the vernacular languages were used by common people. Literary works developed in these new languages as well.

Comparing Social Classes in Europe and Asia Social classes were hierarchical in both Western Europe and Asia. While some similarities existed between the feudal system of Western Europe and the caste system of South Asia during the Postclassical Era, European feudalism allowed for more social mobility. While the practice of serfdom became hereditary in some areas, it was never as restrictive as was the position of untouchables in the Hindu caste system. In addition, knights could receive additional feasts for services rendered to their lords, and sultans, who served the knights, could rise to knighthood through deeds of valor. Moreover, the Church offered priests opportunities for upward mobility.

In Tang China (618–907), the emperor ruled a strong central government supported by an efficient bureaucracy. Although there was a class of aristocrats, there were few large estates as land ownership was more widespread than in Europe, Merchants were not as frowned upon as they were in Western Europe, as profit-making was not despised to the extent that it was in the Catholic Church. A scholar-gentry class also developed under the Tangs.

Organized religions in both Western Europe and South Asia provided some opportunities for women through convert life in the Christian areas and Jainist or Buddhist religious communities in South Asia. Women in Tang China were better off now than they were later under the Song Dynasty (960–1279) when foot-binding came into fashion.

Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages

In 1054, the Christian Church experienced a division, often called the Great Schism, and split into two branches: the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox. The Roman Catholic Church continued to dominate Western Europe until the Reformation in the sixteenth century, while the Orthodox Church was strong farther east, into Russia. (See page 134 for more on the Great Schism.)

The Roman Catholic Church was extremely influential during the Middle Ages. Indeed, it was the only authority that covered much of Europe. Many factors helped the Church keep its influence. First, few people knew how to read or write. Most Church staff, however, were literate. If common people needed something written or read, they asked a Church official to do it. Most monasteries had a small church and a priest on the grounds.

Education and Art The Church established the first universities in Europe. Because the Church led in the area of education, most of the great thinkers of the Middle Ages were Church leaders. All artists worked for the Church. The insides of Church buildings were decorated quite beautifully with paintings, statues, and stained-glass windows. Most artwork focused on religious themes as it was one way to educate the illiterate serf and peasant class.

Church and State The Church held great power in the feudal system. If a lord displeased the Church, the Church could pressure the lord in various ways. For example, it might cancel religious services for his serfs. This distressed the serfs, who would demand that the lord to do what the Church wanted.

Organized similarly to the Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church had an extensive hierarchy of regional bishops, who owed allegiance to the pope, the supreme bishop in Rome. The bishops selected and supervised local priests. Missionaries spread Christianity through Europe, providing a common identity even as regional monarchies and vernacular languages developed.

To consolidate power, a Roman document called the Donation of Constantine from the eighth century provided the Church with “evidence” that the pope should assume political as well as spiritual authority. The Donation of Constantine was later discovered to be forged. Nevertheless, the influence and power of the papacy increased as exemplified by the pope. An example of the papal authority was his ability to inspire members of the aristocracy of Europe to embark on the Crusades, beginning in 1095, discussed later in the chapter.

Rival Popes After the Great Schism in 1054, the authority of the papacy in the West seemed assured. However, that influence waned when French pope Clement V was elected. He refused to relocate to Rome and established instead the papacy in France from 1309 to 1377. This period of nearly 70 years is sometimes referred to as the Babylonian Captivity, a reference to the Jewish exile in the sixth century B.C.E. During this period, a second candidate for pope and then a third arose for the head of the Church—all at the same time.

Monasticism Although clergy withdrew to monasteries to meditate and pray, they remained part of the economics of Western Europe. The monasteries had the same economic functions of agriculture and protection as other monasteries. Although they took vows of poverty and supported charities in their communities, the clergy also wielded considerable political influence, and some monasteries became quite wealthy. Wealth and political power led to corruption. The Cluniac Reforms, originating from the monastery at Cluny, France, in the eleventh century, attempted to reform the Church from within. Eventually, corruption, as well as theological disagreements, drove reformers such as John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Martin Luther to part ways with the Catholic Church. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing this period in Church history with the Reformation. See page 278.)
Political Trends in the Later Middle Ages

Stronger monarchies that developed in the later Middle Ages displayed two common characteristics that increased the power of the monarchy at the expense of feudal lords: a growing bureaucracy to carry out the monarch's decisions and an organized army that was controlled by the monarch. In many instances, the desire of people for representation and the desire of monarchs for strong absolutist government conflicted. Sometimes the desire for power also created tension between monarchs and the pope.

Capetian France When the Carolingian Dynasty split into three sections in 987, the western Frankish nobles chose Hugh Capet as their king. The area was called Gaul by the Romans and had been part of Charles the Bald's empire. By the time Hugh Capet became king, it was called the "Kingdom of the French." In spite of his title, however, Capet held little real power. It would be left to later kings, such as Philip II (ruled 1180-1223), to develop the first real bureaucracy.

Not until Philip IV (ruled 1285-1314) did the first Estates General—a body to advise the king that included representatives from each of the three legal classes, or estates, in France: the clergy, nobility, and commoners—meet. Although the French kings consulted this Estates-General when necessary, they did not exact regular taxes from the upper two estates, the clergy and nobility. Consequently, the Estates-General had little power. The clergy and nobility felt little responsibility to protect a government that they were not financing, a problem that only continued to increase in France up to the eve of the French Revolution of 1789.

Holy Roman Empire The German king Otto I was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 962, hearkening back to Charlemagne's designation as Emperor of the Romans. Otto's successors survived the power struggle with the papacy over the lay investiture controversy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The dispute was over whether a secular leader, rather than the pope, could invest bishops with the symbols of office. It was finally resolved in the Concordat of Worms of 1122, when the Church achieved autonomy from secular authorities. The Holy Roman Empire remained vibrant until it was virtually destroyed during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), from which it never recovered. The Empire came to an end with Napoleon's invasion in 1806.

Norman England The Normans were descendants of Vikings who settled in the northwest corner of France, a region known as Normandy. In 1066, a monarch of Normandy known as William the Conqueror invaded England and ruled kingdoms on both sides of the English Channel. He presided over a tightly organized feudal system, using royal sheriffs as his administrative officials. William also standardized law codes issued by his royal court.

In time, objections to the power of William and his successors Norman monarchs were responsible for limits on that power in England. First, the Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1215 under pressure from leading nobles, required the king to observe certain rights, such as the right to a jury trial before a noble could be sentenced to prison. Also, the nobles won the right to be consulted on the issue of scutage (a form of tax placed on a knight who wanted to "buy out" military service). Finally, the first English Parliament was formed in 1265. These developments increased the rights of the English nobility, but not of the general population.

In the first full parliamentary meeting in 1265, the House of Lords represented the nobles and Church hierarchy, while the House of Commons was made up of elected representatives of wealthy townspeople. Eventually the power of these two legislative bodies in England became stronger than that of similar bodies on the European continent. The course of English feudalism led to modern democracy for the individual. By contrast, Japanese feudalism developed on a similar course, but it emphasized rights of the domain rather than protection of the individual through checks on those in authority.

In the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), the tables were turned between the rival monarchies: this time England invaded France. Although the English retained only the port of Calais in France as a result of the war, a strong sense of unity evolved in both countries during the period. Another result of the war was the spreading use of gunpowder, invented by the Chinese and brought to the Middle East by Mongols, gunpowder was in use in Europe by the fourteenth century. The Mongols also popularized the use of horses in Europe.

In addition to conquering England, the Normans in the eleventh century also conquered Sicily, taking control of that Mediterranean island from Muslims. In the same century, other Christian forces began taking control of Spain from Muslim rulers. This reconquista or reconquest was finally completed in 1492.

High Middle Ages

By the year 1000, the growth of new states and Europeans' increasing interest in foreign goods were leading Western Europe toward a more expansive and progressive period. Both the new states and greater trade were brought about in part by the Christian Crusades and the weakening of feudalism at the local level. Social and political changes would produce a new form of monarchy, and a spirit of Renaissance or rebirth, both of which would shape three key areas: commerce, class relations, and gender roles. European lords and knights retreated from actually fighting each other in battles in favor of more tournaments, organized competitions that included jougs, combat between knights using blunt weapons, which also became social occasions.

Christian Crusades

Just as Europeans fought to drive Muslims out of Europe, they also sought to reclaim control of the Holy Land, the region of Palestine in the Middle East that contains sites of spiritual significance to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. European Christians had enjoyed access to these lands for centuries, even after they came under the control of Muslims. This access was reduced, however, when the Seljuk Turks took control of the region around 1071.
Social and economic trends of the eleventh century added to the pressure among Europeans to invade the Middle East. Rules of primogeniture, in which the eldest brother in a family inherited the entire estate, left a generation of younger sons with little access to wealth and land. The landed nobles saw a military campaign as a way to divert the ambitions of these restless nobles as well as unemployed peasants, who often pillaged the lands of neighboring lords. Furthermore, merchants began to desire unchecked access to trade routes through the Middle East. The combination of these religious, social, and economic pressures resulted in a series of European military campaigns between 1095 and the 1200s in the Middle East known as the Crusades.

Politics shaped the manner in which the Crusades were conducted. Tensions between popes and emperors and between different rulers strengthened the intention of the Church to take control. The Church could also use its spiritual authority to recruit believers. Sinners were promised heaven and, of more immediate concern, relief from their required acts of atonement and penance, if they would join the Crusade. Support also came for the Eastern branch of Christianity as well. Alarmed by news of the persecution and massacre of Christian pilgrims by Seljuk Turks, the Orthodox patriarch at Constantinople appealed to Pope Urban II to help retake the Holy Land from Islamic control.

The First Crusade Of the four major Crusades, only the first was a clear victory for the forces of Christendom. They conquered Jerusalem in July 1099. However, when Muslim forces under Saladin regained control of Jerusalem in 1187. (Test Prep: Create a timeline tracing the spread of Islam up through the Crusades. See pages 147 and 152.)

The Fourth Crusade During the fourth and last major Crusade (1202-1204), Venice, a wealthy city-state in northern Italy, had a contract to transport Crusaders to the Middle East, which they referred to as the Levant. However, Venice was not paid all of what was due, so the Venetians persuaded the Crusader cabinet to sack Zara, an Italian city, and then Constantinople, a major trade competitor of Venice. The Fourth Crusade never made it to the Holy Land. Eventually, Islamic forces prevailed in the Levant.

Effects of Crusades Knowledge of the world beyond Western Europe increased as Crusaders encountered both the Byzantine and Islamic cultures. The encounter also increased demand in Europe for new and rare items from the East. In opening up to global trade, however, Western Europeans also opened themselves to disease. The plague, referred to as the Black Death, was introduced to Europe by way of trading routes. A major epidemic broke out between 1347 and 1351. Additional outbreaks occurred over the succeeding decades. As many as 25 million people in Europe may have died from the plague. With drastically reduced populations, economic activity declined in Europe. In particular, a shortage of workers from the land had lasting effects on the feudal system.

The Crusades posed a temporary answer to some of the growing challenges to the Church from reformers and monarchs. The pope's call for military conquest of the Holy Land brought fighting forces of Western Europe together under the Christian banner and stopped squabbling among local rulers. For the longer term, exposure to new ideas from Byzantium and the Muslim world would contribute to the Renaissance and the subsequent rise of secularism.

Economic and Social Change

The Crusades were just part of the changes occurring in Europe. Other forces were also causing an increase in trade and knowledge.

Commerce Local economic self-sufficiency in Europe gradually gave way to an interest in goods from other European areas and from far-flung ports. The Crusades helped pave the way, as lords and their armies brought back fabrics and spices from the East. Despite the invasions of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottoman Turks, the Silk Road trade routes remained in operation, as did sea routes across the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. China was still eager for Europe's gold and silver, and Europe was growing more eager than ever for silk, tea, and rhubarb. Global trade increased. Although Europeans had not yet found a route around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, they had been making overland trips across Europe for many centuries.

In the late thirteenth century Marco Polo, an Italian native from Venice, visited the court of Kublai Khan. Polo's captivating descriptions of the customs of the people he met intrigued Europeans. For example, he wrote a history of the Mongols in which he described their practice of multiple marriages and of drinking mare's milk. Curiosity about Asia skyrocketed, stimulating interest in cartography, or mapmaking.

Social Change Growth in commerce caused the development of a small bourgeoisie, a middle class, also known as burghers. The social pyramid of Western Europe thus evolved to have clergy and nobility at the top, large numbers of urban poor and serfs at the bottom, and a growing middle class of shopkeepers, merchants, craftsmen, and small landholders in the middle. The early beginnings of a middle class took shape as Europe joined the Byzantine Empire and Muslim nations in long-distance exchanges of money and goods. Social structures became more fluid, with new emphasis on economics rather than on purely Christian ideals or on military defense and conquest.

Changes in Agriculture Population growth in the Middle Ages after the tenth century resulted from decreases in Viking raids and improvements in agricultural methods for producing food. This agricultural surplus encouraged the growth of towns and of markets that could operate more frequently than just on holidays. The need for more labor on the farms, particularly after the fourteenth-century plagues, gave serfs more bargaining power with lords. Urban growth was hampered after about 1300 by a five-century cooling of the climate known as the Little Ice Age. Lower temperatures reduced agricultural productivity, so people had less to trade and cities grew more slowly.

Hanseatic League In the thirteenth century, cities in northern Germany and in Scandinavia formed a commercial alliance called the Hanseatic League. Controlling trade in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, member cities of the league, such as Lubeck, Hamburg, and Riga, were able to drive out pirates.
and monopolize trade in goods such as timber, grain, leather, and salted fish. League ships would leave the Baltic and North Seas and round the Atlantic Coast of Western Europe, proceeding to the ports of the Mediterranean, where they might pick up valuable goods from Arab caravans. The league lasted until the mid-seventeenth century, when national governments became strong enough to protect their merchants.

**Guilds** Associations of craftsmen or merchants, guilds originated in the towns. Each occupation was separately organized into its own guild. These organizations regulated rules for apprenticeships, helped families of injured or killed workers, and exercised some degree of quality control. Since economic influence was centered in the guilds, they could apply pressure against a local lord or monarch. The centralized states of the High Middle Ages were not yet ready to take on the regulatory and social functions exercised by such groups, so the guilds retained much of their power until early modern times.

**Urban Life** Dirty and unsanitary, the streets of medieval towns were dangerous for passersby as slop pits were dumped from windows and the resulting raw sewage on the ground spawned rats and fleas. Fire was an ever-present threat since buildings were constructed mostly of wood in the upper stories. Overcrowding was a severe problem because buildings huddled within defensive walls had no room to expand. In most of Western Europe, roughly 5 percent of the population lived in towns, but in the Italian peninsula and the Low Countries in the thirteenth century, the number was around 20 percent.

Towns that could afford it had an outstanding feature—a cathedral in the new Gothic style, which replaced a style common since the mid-eleventh century known as Romanesque. Rectangular in shape with stone vaulted ceilings, Romanesque cathedrals rested upon massive pillars and walls, and windows were few and narrow. These traits created a dark and forbidding appearance. Beginning in the middle of the twelfth century, the new Gothic cathedrals were lighter and airier, featuring architectural details such as arches, spires, stained-glass windows, gargoyles, which were exaggerated carvings of human or animal heads designed to serve as water spouts; and flying buttresses, in which the buttresses, or supports, were extended outward from the wall to a stone foundation, rather than running alongside the wall.

**Gender Roles** Women found their rights eroding as a wave of patriarchal thinking and writing accompanied the movement from an agricultural society to a more urban one. Men thought that less education was necessary for women, even though women often managed manor accounts. However, Christine de Pisan of Venice strongly challenged the idea that women could not be literate. She herself wrote prose and poetry in praise of women's accomplishments, including The Book of the City of Ladies. Women in religious orders had more opportunities to demonstrate their administrative skills than most other women of the time. Some women were allowed to become guild members and artisans, although not all had property rights. Women in Islamic societies tended to enjoy higher levels of equality, particularly in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia.

**Learning** Scholarship in the medieval period was almost entirely in the hands of the Church and its clergy. For example, medical advances were almost unknown in Western Europe, since Church authorities believed that sin was the cause of illness. In their minds there was little need to look for other answers.

Nevertheless, had it not been for scribes in the monasteries, few manuscripts would have been saved and much more classical literature would have been lost in the days before the revival of learning in the Renaissance. Aristotle's writings were the foundation for most of the learning of the period, along with Saint Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin, called the Vulgate Bible, created in the late Roman Empire period.

**Scholasticism** Like Peter Abelard, author of the quotation that opened the chapter, Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century tried to reconcile Aristotelian knowledge with Christian faith, a system of study called Scholasticism. He argued that faith was not endangered by logical thinking. Aquinas's view would open the way for the secularism and Christian humanism of the Renaissance, as well as for the later Enlightenment ideas of progress, reason, and natural law.

**Religious Orders** Various groups of monks and nuns, usually living in vowed communities, known as religious orders of the Catholic Church, advanced Europe's progress, both by keeping learning alive and by promoting practical advice, such as better agricultural methods. Orders such as Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Knights Templar followed their own regulations while combining clerical, missionary, and secular duties.

After their founding during the Crusades, the Knights Templar combined the functions of knights and monks. They not only fought to reclaim the Holy Land from the Muslims but also cared for the sick and injured. To the north, the Teutonic Knights fought pagan Slavs near the Baltic Sea and introduced Christian missions and churches there.

**Universities** Often sharing books when attending lectures, students at the University of Paris in the twelfth century could study liberal arts or theology. In response to disputes between students and townspeople, universities set up colleges, boardinghouses for scholars, which were sometimes divided according to students' nationality or discipline. The university granted students licenses to teach after they completed years of study and passed an examination.

Cambridge and Oxford universities were founded in England in the twelfth century, preceded in Europe only by a university in Italy at Salerno, the Salerno Medical School, founded in the ninth century. Teaching at Salerno was based on knowledge handed down from the time of Hippocrates, Greek physician Galen (129–217 C.E.), who lived in the area that is now Turkey, and on medical information available from ongoing learning in the Arab world. Although Galen was a skilled surgeon for his time and advanced in the study of anatomy, anatomy in that period was almost wholly based on a study of animals rather than humans.

**Comparing European and Abassid Universities** Both Western European universities and the cultural centers of the Abbasids with their capital in Baghdad were interested in recording and preserving classical works from Greece and
Rome. In the case of the Abbasid culture, this classical knowledge was combined with new developments coming from India, as well as from other parts of the Islamic world. The Western universities used Latin as the language of pedagogy and focused on liberal arts such as rhetoric, in addition to theological studies. Arabic and Persian were the languages of the Abbasids; their new ideas in math and science used a number system originally from India but later called “Arabic” numbers. Arabic became the language of science for this time period.

As noted above, medical advances were slow to arrive in Western Europe. By contrast, the best hospitals in the world were in the Arabic-speaking world. One reason for the difference may be due to religious sanctions. The Muslims did not only practice and conduct research with human cadavers; in Europe the church prohibited operating on cadavers.

A Persian, Avicenna (980–1037), is probably the best-known scholar of the time and is sometimes called “the father of modern medicine.” He wrote *Canon of Medicine*, which for 600 years served as a reference book for medical students and doctors. Manuscripts of this work have survived in both Latin and Arabic translations.

The advances of the Southwest and East Asian civilizations were ahead of those in medieval Europe, although Western Europe was quick to catch up after its slower start. Absorbing new goods and ideas would lead Europeans to vast exploration and expansion in the coming centuries, using Asian technology such as paper and agricultural tools. Muslims believed that Europeans were backward and even dirty. Europeans believed Muslims were pagan infidels; some considered them inhuman. As Western Europeans became more open to new ideas and more unified political units looked toward protection and expansion of their own trade, conflict seemed inevitable.

**Renaissance**

The expansion of trade, as well as the growth of an agricultural surplus in Western Europe, led to a revival of interest in learning and the arts. In addition, a growing middle class with access to money was able to patronize craftspeople and teachers. The Renaissance was characterized by a revival of interest in classical Greek and Roman literature, art, civic virtue, culture. Scholars recovered and studied decaying manuscripts and wrote secular literature. Part of the Renaissance was *humanism*, the focus on individuals rather than God. Humanists focused on education and reform. For example, handbooks of behavior flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as people began to consider not only their place in heaven but also their place in the world. Cultural changes in the Renaissance, such as the increased use of vernacular language, propelled the rise of powerful monarchies, the centralization of government, and the birth of nationalism. (Test Prep: List some of the elements of classical Greece and Rome revived by the Renaissance. See pages 56 and 79.)

**Southern Renaissance**

In the city-states of Italy and in Spain, the focus of the Renaissance was still clearly under Church domination and patronage. For example, the writer Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) used a religious framework for *The Divine Comedy*, which features hell, purgatory, and heaven. Nevertheless, the inquiring spirit of the Renaissance is apparent in Dante’s reverence for pagan writers, fearlessness in his criticism of corrupt Church officials, and, most important, his use of the Italian vernacular rather than Latin.

The Renaissance papal court was the patron of famous artists of the Renaissance, and many of the most important sculptures and paintings have religious subjects. As the Renaissance in the south continued until the sixteenth century, a close connection with the Church remained, even as secular thought grew.

**Northern Renaissance**

By 1400, the Renaissance spirit was established in northern Europe as well, where there was great emphasis on piety among lay people, those who were not members of the clergy. At the same time, there was an increasing interest in understanding the physical world. Geoffrey Chaucer, writing in *The Canterbury Tales* in the late 1300s, portrayed a microcosm of middle-class occupations in England, including several Church positions. His social satire of monks who loved hunting and overly sentimental nuns provided an example of humanism in that Chaucer focused on worldly secular life while still acknowledging the importance of the Church and occupations connected with it. Like Dante a century earlier, Chaucer chose a vernacular, Middle English, for this work, although many of his other writings were in Latin.

**LEADING CITIES DURING THE RENAISSANCE IN EUROPE**