

1 Germanic Kingdoms Unite Under Charlemagne

- TERMS & NAMES**
- Middle Ages
 - Franks
 - monastery
 - secular
 - Carolingian Dynasty
 - Charlemagne

MAIN IDEA

Many Germanic kingdoms that succeeded the Roman Empire were reunited under Charlemagne's empire.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Charlemagne spread Christian civilization through northern Europe, where it had a permanent impact.

SETTING THE STAGE The gradual decline of the Roman Empire ushered in an era of European history called the **Middle Ages**, or the medieval period. It spanned from around 500 to 1500. During these centuries, new institutions slowly emerged to replace those of the fallen Roman Empire. Unified civilizations flourished in China and Southwest Asia. Medieval Europe, though, remained fragmented.

Invasions Trigger Changes in Western Europe

By the end of the fifth century, invaders from many different Germanic groups overran the western half of the Roman Empire. Repeated invasions and constant warfare sparked new trends. A series of changes altered government, economy, and culture:

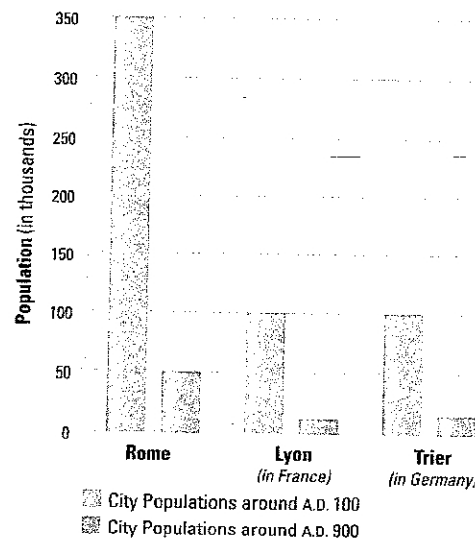
- **Disruption of Trade** Merchants faced invasions from both land and sea. Their businesses collapsed. The breakdown of trade destroyed Europe's cities as economic centers. Money became scarce.
- **Downfall of Cities** With the fall of the Roman Empire, cities were abandoned as centers of administration.
- **Population Shifts** As Roman centers of trade and government collapsed, nobles retreated to the rural areas. Roman cities were left without strong leadership. Other city dwellers also fled to the countryside, where they grew their own food. The population of western Europe became mostly rural.

The Decline of Learning The Germanic invaders who stormed Rome could not read or write. Among Roman subjects themselves, the level of learning sank sharply as more and more families left for rural areas. Few people except priests and other church officials were literate.

Knowledge of Greek, long important in Roman culture, was almost lost. Few people could read Greek works of literature, science, and philosophy. The Germanic tribes, though, had a rich oral tradition of songs and legends. However, they had no written language.

Loss of a Common Language As German-speaking peoples mixed with the Roman population, Latin began to change. It was no longer understood from region to region. Different dialects developed as new words and phrases became part of everyday speech. By the 800s, French, Spanish, and other Roman-based languages had evolved from Latin. The development of various languages mirrored the continued breakup of a once unified empire.

Population of Three Roman Cities



SKILLBUILDER:

Interpreting Graphs

1. How much did Rome's population decrease from around A.D. 100 to 900?
2. What does the bar graph suggest about trends that occurred after the fall of the Roman Empire?

Germanic Kingdoms Emerge

In the years of upheaval between 400 and 600, small Germanic kingdoms replaced Roman provinces. The borders of those kingdoms changed constantly with the fortunes of war. The Church was an institution that survived the fall of the Roman Empire. During this time of political chaos, the Church provided order and security.

The Concept of Government Changes Along with shifting boundaries, the entire concept of government changed. Loyalty to public government and written law had unified Roman society. Family ties and personal loyalty, rather than citizenship in a public state, bound Germanic society together. Unlike the Romans, Germanic peoples lived in small communities. These were governed by unwritten rules and traditions.

Every Germanic chief led a band of warriors who had pledged their loyalty to him. In peacetime, these followers lived in their lord's hall. He gave them food, weapons, and treasure. In battle, warriors fought to the death at their lord's side. They considered it a disgrace to outlive him.

Germanic warriors willingly died for a leader they respected. Yet they felt no obligation to obey a king they didn't even know. Nor would they obey an official sent to collect taxes or administer justice in the name of an emperor they had never met. The Germanic stress on personal ties made it impossible to establish orderly government for large territories.

In the Roman province of Gaul, a Germanic people called the **Franks** held power. Their leader, Clovis (KLOH-vih), would eventually bring Christianity to this region.

The Franks Under Clovis Clovis's wife, Clothilde, urged him to convert to her faith. She believed in a traditional form of Christianity. In 496 Clovis led his warriors into

battle against another Germanic army. Fearing defeat, Clovis appealed to the Christian God. "For I have called on my gods," he prayed, "but I find they are far from my aid . . . Now I call on Thee. I long to believe in Thee. Only, please deliver me from my enemies." The tide of the battle shifted and the Franks triumphed. Afterward, Clovis and 3,000 of his warriors asked a bishop to baptize them.

The Church in Rome welcomed Clovis's conversion and supported his military campaigns against other Germanic peoples. By 511, Clovis had united the Franks into one kingdom. The strategic alliance between Clovis's Frankish kingdom and the Church marked the beginning of a special partnership between two powerful forces.



This ivory carving shows Clovis's conversion to Christianity in 496. A bishop baptizes him as his wife, Clothilde, looks on.

Germanic Peoples Adopt Christianity

Politics played a key role in spreading Christianity. By 600, the Church, with the help of Frankish rulers, had converted many Germanic peoples. These new converts had settled in Rome's former lands.

Missionaries also succeeded in spreading Christianity. These religious travelers often risked their lives to advance their beliefs. During the fourth and fifth centuries, they worked among the Germanic and Celtic groups that bordered the Roman Empire. In southern Europe, the fear of coastal attacks by Muslims also spurred many people to become Christians.

Monasteries and Convents To adapt to rural conditions, the Church built religious communities called **monasteries**. There Christian men called monks gave up all their

Background

...gave unmarried women opportunities for earning that were unavailable to women on the outside

THROUGH HISTORY

Making

...What role did monasteries play during the time of

private possessions. Monks became servants of God. Nuns, women who also followed this religious way of life, lived in convents.

Around 520, Benedict, an Italian monk, began writing a book describing a strict yet practical set of rules for monasteries. Benedict's sister, Scholastica (skuh-LAS-tik-uh), headed a convent. There she adapted the same rules for women. These guidelines became a model for many other religious communities in western Europe. Monks and nuns devoted their lives to prayer and good works.

Monasteries also became Europe's best-educated communities. Monks opened schools, maintained libraries, and copied books. In 731, Venerable Bede, an English monk, wrote a history of England. Scholars still consider it the best historical work of the early Middle Ages. In the 600s and 700s, monks made beautiful copies of religious writings, decorated with ornate letters and brilliant pictures. The monks' illuminated manuscripts preserved at least part of Rome's intellectual heritage.

Gregory I Expands Papal Power In 590, Gregory I, also called Gregory the Great, became pope. As head of the Church in Rome, Gregory broadened the authority of the papacy, or pope's office, beyond its spiritual role. Under Gregory, the papacy also became a **secular**, or worldly, power involved in politics. The pope's palace was the center of Roman government. Gregory used Church revenues to raise armies, repair roads, and help the poor. He also negotiated peace treaties with invaders such as the Lombards. Gregory had begun to act as the mayor of Rome. Yet his influence extended beyond the city's boundaries.

According to Gregory, the entire region from Italy to England, from Spain to western Germany, fell under his responsibility. Gregory strengthened the vision of Christendom. It was a spiritual kingdom that fanned out from Rome to the most distant churches. This idea of a churchly kingdom, ruled by a pope, would become a central theme of the Middle Ages. Meanwhile, secular rulers set their sights on expanding their own political kingdoms.

A European Empire Evolves

After the Roman Empire dissolved, small kingdoms sprang up all over Europe. For example, England splintered into seven tiny kingdoms. Some of them were no larger than the state of Connecticut. The Franks controlled the largest and strongest of Europe's kingdoms in an area that was formerly the Roman province of Gaul. The Franks' first Christian king, Clovis, laid down the foundations for this kingdom.

By the time Clovis died in 511, he had extended his rule over most of what is now France. Clovis greatly strengthened the Merovingian (MEHR-uh-VIHN-jee-uhn) Dynasty, which was named after his legendary ancestor.

Clovis's Descendants By 700, an official known as the *major domo*, or mayor of the palace, had become the most powerful person in the kingdom. Officially, the mayor of the palace had charge of the royal household and estates. Unofficially, he commanded armies and made policy. In effect, the mayor of the palace ruled the kingdom.

In 719, a mayor of the palace named Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer) held more power than the king. Charles Martel extended the Franks' reign to the north, south, and east. He also defeated a Muslim raiding party from Spain at the Battle of Tours in 732. The outcome of this battle held great significance for Christian Europeans. If the Muslims had won, western Europe might have become a part of

HISTORY MAKERS



Benedict
480?–543

At 15, Benedict left school and hiked up to the Sabine Hills, where he lived in a cave as a hermit. After learning about Benedict's deep religious conviction, a group of other monks persuaded Benedict to lead their monastery. Benedict declared:

We must prepare our hearts and bodies for combat under holy obedience to the divine commandments. . . . We are therefore going to establish a school in which one may learn the service of the Lord.

In his book describing the rules for monastic life, Benedict emphasized a balance between work and study. Such guidelines turned monasteries into centers of order, stability, and learning.

800 Pope Leo III crowns Charlemagne (below) emperor.

732 Charles Martel defeats the Muslims at the Battle of Tours.

751 Pepin the Short becomes the first king ever anointed by the pope.

771 Charlemagne becomes the sole king of the Franks and continues his conquest of Europe.



the Muslim Empire. Charles Martel's victory at the Battle of Tours halted the Muslim invasion. This conquest made him a Christian hero.

At his death, Charles Martel passed on his power to his son, Pepin the Short. Pepin wanted to become king. He shrewdly cooperated with the pope. On behalf of the Church, Pepin agreed to fight the Lombards. They were invading central Italy and threatening Rome. In exchange, the pope anointed Pepin "king by the grace of God." Thus began the reign of Frankish rulers called the **Carolingian** (KAR-uh-LIHN-juhn) **Dynasty**. It lasted from 751 to 987.

Charlemagne Extends Frankish Rule Pepin the Short died in 768. He left a greatly strengthened Frankish kingdom to his two sons, Carloman and Charles. After Carloman's death in 771, Charles, known as **Charlemagne** (SHAHR-luh-MAYN), or Charles the Great, quickly seized control of the entire kingdom.

Charlemagne was an imposing figure. He stood six feet four inches tall. His admiring secretary, a monk named Einhard, described Charlemagne's achievements:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

[Charlemagne] was the most potent prince with the greatest skill and success in different countries during the forty-seven years of his reign. Great and powerful as was the realm of Franks, Karl [Charlemagne] received from his father Pippin, he nevertheless so splendidly enlarged it . . . that he almost doubled it.

EINHARD, from *Life of Charlemagne*

Charlemagne Takes Center Stage

Charlemagne built an empire greater than any known since ancient Rome. Each summer Charlemagne led his armies against the enemies that surrounded his kingdom. He fought the Muslims in Spain and tribes from other Germanic kingdoms. Charlemagne conquered new lands to both the south and the east. Through these conquests, Charlemagne spread Christianity. He reunited western Europe for the first time since the Roman Empire. By 800, the Carolingian empire exceeded the Byzantine Empire. It included two-thirds of Italy, all of present-day France, a small part of Spain, and all of German Saxony. Charlemagne had become the most powerful king in western Europe.

In 800, Charlemagne traveled to Rome to crush an unruly mob that had attacked the pope. In gratitude, Pope Leo III crowned him emperor. The coronation was historic. A pope had claimed the political right to confer the title "Roman Emperor" on a European king. This event signaled the joining of Germanic power, the Church, and the heritage of the Roman Empire.

Charlemagne's Government Charlemagne strengthened his royal power by limiting the authority of the nobles. To govern his empire, Charlemagne sent out royal agents. They made sure that the powerful landholders, called counts, governed their counties justly. Charlemagne also regularly visited every part of his kingdom. He

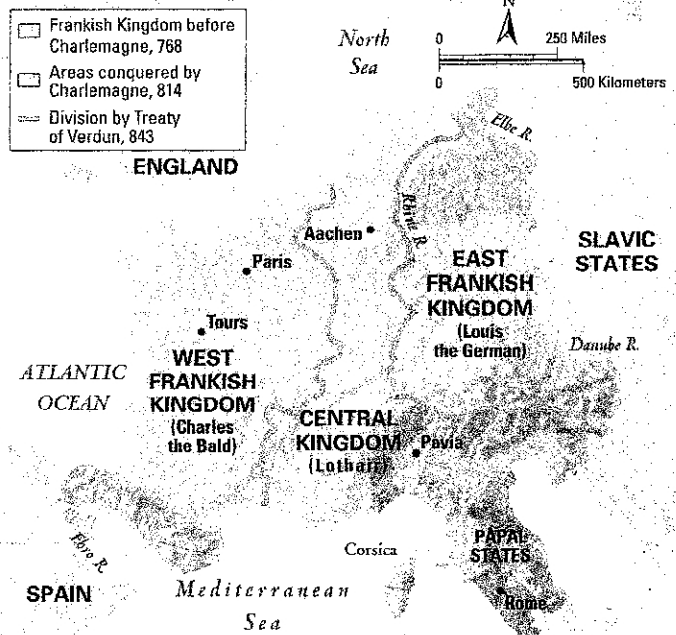
Background

After his successful military campaigns in Italy, Pepin gave the pope the lands around Rome that were called the Papal States.

843 Treaty of Verdun divides Charlemagne's empire among his three grandsons.

813 Louis the Pious inherits the throne from Charlemagne.

Charlemagne's Empire, 768–843



judged cases, settled disputes, and rewarded faithful followers. He also kept a close watch on the management of his huge estates. They were the source of Carolingian wealth and power.

Cultural Revival One of Charlemagne's greatest accomplishments was his encouragement of learning. Charlemagne surrounded himself with English, German, Italian, and Spanish scholars. For his many sons and daughters and other children at the court, Charlemagne opened a palace school. He ordered monasteries to open schools that trained future monks and priests. Monasteries expanded their libraries. Monks labored to make handwritten copies of Latin books.

Charlemagne's Heirs Are Weak Rulers A year before Charlemagne died in 814, he crowned his only surviving son, Louis the Pious, as emperor. Louis was a devoutly religious man. He might have fared better as a monk. Louis proved an ineffective ruler.

Louis left three sons: Lothair (loh-THAIR), Charles the Bald, and Louis the German. Louis's sons fought one another for the empire. The civil war ended in 843 when the brothers signed the Treaty of Verdun. This pact divided Charlemagne's empire into three kingdoms. After the treaty, Carolingian kings lost power. As central authority broke down, the lack of strong rulers led to a new system of governing and landholding.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- Region** By 814, what was the extent of Charlemagne's empire (north to south, east to west)?
- Region** Based on the map, why did the Treaty of Verdun signal the decline of Charlemagne's empire?

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Evaluating What were Charlemagne's most notable achievements?

Section 1 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Middle Ages
- Franks
- monastery
- secular
- Carolingian Dynasty
- Charlemagne

2. TAKING NOTES

Create a chart like the one below to summarize how each person listed helped spread Christianity.

	Method of Spreading Christianity
Clovis	
Benedict	
Gregory I	
Charles Martel	
Charlemagne	

Which of these people do you think was the most influential in spreading Christianity? Why?

3. SYNTHESIZING

After the fall of the Roman Empire, learning declined. How was this trend offset during the early Middle Ages?

THINK ABOUT

- the establishment of monasteries
- Charlemagne's accomplishments

4. ANALYZING THEMES

Empire Building Why do you think Charlemagne succeeded in building such a vast empire?

THINK ABOUT

- Charlemagne's personality
- his military leadership
- his religious beliefs
- his relationship with the Church