

DAY 2-2. THE WORLD FROM 500 CE TO 1000 CE

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lecture notes are always ONLINE

Course Description: <http://web.mit.edu/chrissu/Public/junction/course.pdf>
July 7 (yesterday's): <http://web.mit.edu/chrissu/Public/junction/july7.pdf>

ALL lecture notes from now on will follow the same format (ie. today's is <http://web.mit.edu/chrissu/Public/junction/july8.pdf>)

Textbook Correspondence

Today's material corresponds to Chapters **13-17** in the textbook.

2. SUMMARY

If we say that the foundation of civilization and culture were established during the classical society period across the BCE/CE gap, then the postclassical period (500-1000 CE) further enhanced and defined the existing ideals. The Roman Empire finally collapsed due to internal conflicts and external invaders, and the Byzantine Empire rose up in the east, forming a bridge between Europe and Asia. Under the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties, China became wealthy through trade and conquest, leaving behind monuments and written works. Islam became a driving force in not only its native homeland, but also in India, where Hinduism and Islam sought to coexist. Western Europe, in comparison, was relatively decentralized and governed by many nobility groups, who all rallied and attempted to exert control over their neighbors. It is fair to say that the technologically-advanced Eastern Hemisphere preserved the cultural sophistication of the Romans and the Greeks and advanced their own culture while Western Europe struggled to develop an identity during this era.

3. QUESTION OF THE DAY

What role did religion play in the cultures of the post-classical society? For example: how had religion shaped the role of 1) the government, 2) the clergy, and 3) the

Date: July 8, 2008.

laymen in society? Please consider these pairings: Byzantium/Christianity (Orthodox), Caliphates/Islam, China/Buddhism+Confucianism, India/Hinduism+Buddhism, Western Europe/Christianity (Roman Catholic).

4. MATERIAL

4.1. Byzantium. -Exerted control from fifth century to the thirteenth century CE in Eastern Europe/Anatolia (Turkey).

- Constantine ("founder"), began tradition of having "divine favor" to rule. Emperor sought to control both church and state (caesaropapism)

- Justinian (greatest Byzantine ruler) - Hagia Sophia, Justinian's Code, reconquered all of Roman Empire land, but cannot hold on after death

- Byzantine legacies: silk production, Constantinople (bridge between Europe and Asia), banks (loans), urban development

- Influenced spread of Christianity, church intertwined with state, beginnings of monasticism (multifunctional - provides services)

- Great Schism (1054 CE) - establishment of Eastern Orthodox

- Byzantine Empire ultimately fell due to foreign pressures (European, Muslim invaders) - fell when Turks conquered Constantinople 1453 CE.

4.2. Islamic Caliphates. -Organized to lead people after Muhammad's death, split of Sunni/Shia over who is the "real" leader after Muhammad

- Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE) - religious toleration, jizya = tax if don't convert

- Abbasid Caliphate (750 - 1258 CE) - flourish of Islamic culture

- Legacies: prosperity through trade (land, sea), banks (checks, banking system)

4.3. China. -Sui Dynasty (589-618 CE) - Grand Canal (connected north/south - east/west - 1240 miles!)

- Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) - Tang Taizong (prosperity, good transportation/communication, distribution of land, bureaucracy through examination), Korea/Vietnam became tribute nations

- Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE) - too many bureaucrats = high taxes, conservative scholars in gov't = neglected to maintain security in borders, eventually split into two dynasties (north-south towards the end)

- Legacies: better rice = more people, more people = more services, more services = wealth and prosperity, porcelain (export!), gunpowder, printing (dissimilation of religion/culture), banks (checks, banking system), paper money

- Buddhism and Daoism flowed into each other (wuwei = nirvana, dao = dharma)

- Chan Buddhism (spread to Japan) - sound of one hand clapping

-Neo-Confucianism - mesh of Confucianism and Buddhism (Confucianism for moral standards, Buddhist for reason/logic)

-Korea (Chinese court = Korean court, Chinese characters/philosophy), Vietnam (Confucian examination system, Chinese characters)

4.4. **Japan.** -Nara Japan (710-794 CE) - Chinese influence in government, religion

-Heian Japan (794-1185 CE) - Chinese language dominated, aristocrats controlled (began tradition of emperor as figureheads)

-Tale of Genji (Lady Murasaki) - encouraged growth of Japanese language

-Kamakura/Muromachi Japan (1185-1573 CE) - localized government, rise of the samurai, precursor to strong centralized government (Tokugawa Japan after 16th century)

4.5. **India.** -Sultanate of Delhi (1260-1526 CE) - promoted Islam, but didn't have much extensive control, local governments held power (Northern India - Southern India filled with small kingdoms and feuds)

-Temples performed social work (like monasteries)

-Trade is HUGE. India stood between networks of China << - >> Africa, Arabia << - >> China, wealth = specialized production (cotton/carpets, stone carving, iron production)

-India influenced other kingdoms in SE Asia through trade (legacies: Hinduism, spread of Sanskrit)

-Islam later arrived in SE Asia also through trade (Indonesia now biggest Islamic nation)

4.6. **Western Europe.** -Many small states until Franks (481-843 CE)

-Clovis (founder of Carolingians, 481-511 CE), converted to Christianity = spread the religion around

-Charlemagne (grandson of Clovis, 768-814 CE), ruled from Bavaria (Hungary to Pyrennes, Rome to Denmark), first centralized rule, relied on unreliable counts = Charlemagne travelled a lot, crowned emperor in 800 CE.

-Muslim/Norse invasions destroyed Carolingian kingdom, Charlemagne's grandson divided up Europe

-Serfs powered manors, which served as agricultural units.

-Following Great Schism, Western Christianity = Roman Catholic, Gregory I = capable administrator of Rome, converted England

-Monasticism - St. Benedict (Rule - for monasteries), St. Scholastica (Rule - for nuns)

5. AFTERTHOUGHTS

1. Why do you think government figures seek to ally themselves with religion/clergy?

2. Great cities (ie. Constantinople, Venice, Cairo, Canton (Guangzhou), Calicut) emerged during this period, due to a combination of reasons including an influx of trade, population growth, and general prosperity. Although cities inevitably brought along benefits for the rulers and the inhabitants, urban life also presented some problems. In your opinion, what are the changes that rural inhabitants need to make before moving to a city, and what are the benefits/problems of urban life in this era? (remember, urban life was still a novelty - this was the first period of time in which cities reached a level of population that rivals today's cities)

3. Why is centralized rule possible in the Islamic Caliphates, India, and China, but not in Japan and Western Europe? (there's probably isn't a "concrete" reason, but what factors contribute to this difference?)

6. READING FOR NEXT DAY

-Barron's Ch. 8-9 (but finish Ch. 1-5 if you haven't yet)

- "Sources from the Past" in text. (esp: Constantinople (p. 329), Islam (p. 350), Caliph (p. 357), Chinese Trade (p. 390), Clovis (p. 438)).