The Byzantine Empire (340-1453) | Time Period: 600-1450
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Originated as the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Capital at Constantinople. Very centralized state. Constantine (Reigned 313-337). Caesaropapism-Was a secular ruler but also played an active role in ecclesiastical affairs. Justinian (Reigned 527-565) Justinian’s Code was the most thorough law system during that time. Sacked during the fourth crusade (1202-1204). The loss of Anatolia sealed its fate. Byzantium influenced Russia greatly. Eastern Orthodox Church. Cyrillic Alphabet.

The Islamic World

The Realm of Islam Mohammad (570-632) Leader of the Islamic religion. Was Allah’s prophet. Middle East United. Islam became more popular and united a once nomadic land of tribal unities. The Islamic Empire was ruled by a caliph who was head of state, military commander, chief judge, and religious leader. The Islamic Empire was a theocracy, a government ruled by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. This government was known as a caliphate. Cultural center at Baghdad. Preserved the western culture which helped bring Europe out of the Middle Ages. Created a hemispheric trading zone.

Tang Dynasty (618-907)

Foundation of Tenochtitlan (1345)

Effects of Tenochtitlan and the Aztec Empire. Cultivated many plants which were later in the Columbian Exchange. Maize and fowl. Chinampa system of agriculture (dredged rich fertile mud from the bottom of the lake and used it for farming). Natural defense.

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

Marco Polo’s Travels. His father and uncle were some of the first European merchants to visit China. Visited China from (1260-1269). Returned to China in 1271 with Marco Polo. Stayed 17 years. Kubilai took a liking towards Marco. Allowed him to be a merchant and had him go on many diplomatic missions.

Charlemagne (Reigned 768-814)

Temporarily reestablished centralized rule in Western Europe. Barely literate, but very smart. Spoke Latin and some Greek. The Carolingian empire was largely his personal accomplishment. Established a capitol at Aachen. Spent a lot of his time traveling throughout the empire to maintain authority. Named emperor in 800. Didn’t know of the pope’s plan. Didn’t want to strain the relationship with the Byzantines.

The Great Schism (1054)

In 1054 the pope and the patriarch excommunicated each other. People from West and East Europe didn’t like each other. The Byzantines thought they should rule Western Europe. Charlemagne receiving the crown challenged Byzantium's authority.

Iconoclasm- “the breaking of icons”-The Roman Catholics produced icons while the Byzantines didn’t. The religious figures fought about their powers and rights. There were also minor differences. Leavened vs. unleavened bread. Beards vs. shaved beards.

The Crusades (1095-1270)

It means holy war. Pope Urban II started the crusades in 1095. Wanted to recapture Palestine and Jerusalem from the Muslims. Jerusalem fell in 1099 to the crusaders. The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) went astray and the crusaders sacked Constantinople. Established a Roman Catholic government until 1261. The Byzantines never recovered. There were a total of eight Crusades.

The Mongol Empires (1206-1368)

Chinggis Khan. Born as Temüjin. United the Mongol tribes. After his death, the empire was split into four pieces. Kubilai Kahn. Was the most talented of Chinggis Khan’s descendants. Tried to improve cultural matters and the welfare of his subjects. Like other nomadic tribes, they relied on outstanding equestrian skills. They ravaged the lands that they conquered so there would be no resistance. No central government. Effects of the Mongol Empire: United most of Asia, the Middle East and parts of Europe. Resettlement of specialized craftsmen and literate people. Linked the societies of the Eurasian land mass which increased trade.

Marco Polo (1253-1324)

Marco Polo’s Travels. His father and uncle were some of the first European merchants to visit China. Visited China from (1260-1269). Returned to China in 1271 with Marco Polo. Stayed 17 years. Kubilai took a liking towards Marco. Allowed him to be a merchant and had him go on many diplomatic missions.

Marco was captured and imprisoned. A fellow prisoner wrote the stories down. These stories spread rapidly through Europe. The travels increased European participation in eastern hemisphere. Deeply influenced European readers.

Foundation of Tenochtitlan (1345)

Built by the Mexica (also know as the Aztecs). Ruled about 21 million people. Triple alliance with Texcoco and Tlacopan. Main objective was to extract tribute from subjects. Rigid hierarchal with public honors and rewards going to military elites. 200,000 people lived in Tenochtitlan. Built on an island that had several advantages including: Plentiful supplies of fish, frogs, and water fowl. Chinampa system of agriculture (dredged rich fertile mud from the bottom of the lake and used it for farming). Natural defense. Effects of Tenochtitlan and the Aztec Empire. Cultivated many plants which were later in the Columbian Exchange. Maize and potatoes caused much population growth. Mexico City was later built on top of Tenochtitlan.
Japanese and European Feudalism

Japanese Feudalism - Started with the Shogun and his Provincial lords below him. Samurai were the warrior that protected those they were under. More decentralized and usually more fighting among the Provincial lords.

European Feudalism - Started with the King and his Lords and Vassals below him. Knights were the warriors that protected their masters and European feudalism was more centralized and there was usually less fighting among the followers of the king and the king usually had his own army.

Both - Japanese and European feudalism were both instituted to protect those that needed protecting but for different reasons. Also, in both societies, there was a fighting force that specialized in fighting and protecting their masters or lords, these being the samurai and the knights. Lastly, under the main leader were smaller figures that were each given a small amount of power. Both societies were kept decentralized so that they couldn't overtake the king or shogun.

Gender Systems and Changes

From the 600's to the 1450's, there were dramatic changes in gender systems and changes were made in several societies that are worth mentioning. First, Islam started out around the 600's and went from deep respect for women to near slavery, by making them wear veils and not socializing with men other than family. Also, in Christian societies such as those mainly in Western Europe, women fairly compared to those in later Islamic societies. For the most part they were given more opportunities but weren't granted complete independence nor were they "enslaved", and little changed except for minor grants of women rights. Lastly, were that women in the Americas were treated as near equals to the men, though they each had different responsibilities. In the Aztec empire, it was said that if a woman died in childbirth, she was given honor comparable to a male warrior.

Essay Questions

What were the differences between Japanese and European feudalism?
What were the differences between the roles of women in Islamic and European societies?
How does the meaning of Islam relate to the beginnings of it?
Why were most of the societies of 600-1450 C.E. patriarchal?
What were the differences between the Christian and Islamic views of Jesus?