Unit 1 The European and Mediterranean world

Introduction to the European and Mediterranean world

The period between about 650 CE and 1750 CE marks the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the modern world. Across Europe it was a time of great change. New societies and civilisations grew out of the ruins of ancient civilisations. Different ideas developed and ways of thinking about the world were challenged. Towards the end of the period, a range of new inventions developed along with new ideas about art, politics, literature, religion and science.

In this chapter you will learn how different beliefs and religions, social structures, laws, and governments influenced societies across the European and Mediterranean world



Can we cut a line or two here?



1 Where and when did civilisations in the European and Mediterranean world develop?

1 What were the key features of societies in the European and Mediterranean world?

the height of the medieval period in Europe.

Source 1 One of the most important changes across the European and Mediterranean world was the spread of religions. In Europe, Christianity was a central part of life. This enormous stained glass window in the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was built at

Unit 2 The European and Mediterranean World

This unit offers a choice of three topics:

- The Vikings
- Medieval Europe
- The Ottoman Empire (obook only)
- You must choose AT LEAST ONE of these topics for study.

8.1 The where and when of the European and Mediterranean world



In this unit you will be learning about different civilisations and events that took place across the European and Mediterranean world. To help you get a better understanding of these civilisations and events, it helps to look briefly at some common factors that influenced each civilisation and think about how their development was linked.

The world map (Source 1) shows the location and size of the civilisations you will be learning about in this unit, including:

- the Viking homelands in a region of northern Europe known as Scandinavia
- the continent of Europe during the medieval period
- the territories of the Ottoman Empire when it was at its greatest size.
- the areas of the world that were affected by the spread of a deadly plague known as the Black Death during the 14th century. The Black Death spread across the world and devastated populations in Asia, Africa and Europe. In Europe alone, it killed 25 million people (about one third of the total population).

The dates for each civilisation are shown in the timeline (Source 2). Note that all of these civilisations did not exist at the same time. Often, as power changed hands, one civilisation broke down and another was formed in its place on the same lands.

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: KEY CIVILISATIONS



Source 1 This satellite image of Earth shows the location and size of key civilisations across the European and Mediterranean world when they were at their peak.

8A Where and when did civilisations in the European and Mediterranean world develop?

Source 2 This timeline shows the rise and fall of civilisations across the European and Mediterranean world.

Check your learning 8.1

Remember and understand

- 1 Look carefully at Source 1 and complete the following tasks:
 - **a** Where did the Vikings originate from?
 - **b** Rank the three civilisations in the European world in order of geographic size.
 - **c** The Ottoman Empire extended well beyond the borders of Europe. Describe the area it covered.
- 2 What was the Black Death and how were civilisations in the European and Mediterranean world affected by it?

Source: Oxford University Press

8.2 The birth of the modern world in Europe

The civilisations and events you will be learning about this year took place over a period of time starting around 590 CE and ending in 1700 CE. Before this time, much of Europe and the Mediterranean region was controlled by the Roman Empire. Over time, however, Rome's power declined until the Roman Empire in Europe finally collapsed in around 476 CE. Empires can collapse for many reasons, including wars, natural disasters, invasions, disease, food shortages, government corruption and poor leadership. The collapse of the Roman Empire was the result of a combination of these reasons.

The fall of the Roman Empire left room for different tribal groups to expand their territories and move into Europe. These groups were looking for new regions to settle and riches to plunder. The Romans called these people barbarians – a term used to describe anyone living outside the Roman Empire who was 'uncivilised'. Some of these tribes were the Vandals, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Vikings, the Franks, and the Angles and Saxons. Other groups, such as the Huns, migrated from further east in Asia, and Arab tribes migrated from the Middle East. Source 1 shows the movement of many different tribal groups across Europe (and parts of Africa and Asia) during the 4th and 5th centuries. It also provides some brief information about each of them. This movement had a huge impact on the ways in which new societies formed and developed there.

In order to gain new territories, these tribal groups often fought with one another. Without the Roman army to keep the peace and enforce the laws, societies across Europe started to break down. Raids were common and people had to find new ways to protect themselves and their property.

Although some new societies and civilisations were founded peacefully by local tribes, most others started through bloody battles by foreign tribes expanding their territory by force. All over Europe, people were on the move and new societies were being established. This moment marked the start of the modern world in Europe.

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: KEY TRIBAL GROUPS

LEGEND Vandals Franks Ostrogoths Angles and Vandals Saxons Visiaoths Huns Vikings Arab tribes plundered the city of Rome. Ostrogoths Gothic kingdom of Italy. ATLANTIC OCEAN Visigoths Black Sea The Visigoths were one of the most important of the Germanic peoples, separating from the Ostrogoths in the 4th century. They raided Roman territories repeatedly and founded kingdoms in Gaul (modernday France) and Spain. Mediterranean Sea Vikinas

Source 1 This satellite image shows the approximate movements of tribal groups across Europe and the Mediterranean (including parts of Africa and Asia) during the 4th and 5th centuries CE.

Check your learning 8.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Who were the Angles and the Saxons? Where did they originally come from?
- 2 What is the name of the tribal group that established the most powerful Christian kingdom in medieval Europe?
- 3 Which modern-day country did the Visigoths establish kingdoms in? What was the name of this region at that time?

The Vandals were a Germanic tribe who originated in eastern parts of Europe and moved at the beginning of the 5th century. They maintained a kingdom in North Africa from 429 until 534. In 455, they attacked and

The Ostrogoths moved from a region north of the Black Sea into Italy after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the late 5th century. Under the leadership of their king, Theodoric the Great, they established the

The Vikings were tribes of seafaring people from a region in the north of Europe (now known as Scandinavia). They raided, traded, explored and settled regions across Europe and Asia from the late 6th century.

4 What is a barbarian?

Apply and analyse

5 What effect did the fall of the Roman Empire have on people living in Europe and the Mediterranean? Describe the changes in your own words.

Franks

The Franks were Germanic tribes that invaded the Roman Empire in Europe during the 5th century. Dominating parts of modern-day France, Belgium and western Germany, the Franks established the most powerful Christian kingdom of early medieval Europe.

Angles and Saxons

The Angles and Saxons were tribal peoples from northern Germany who invaded and settled in Britain early in the 5th century. They were recruited by the Romans and paid in land to help defend Britain (then a Roman colony) against attacks by local tribes.

Huns

The Huns swept down from the Mongolian steppes of central Asia in the 4th and 5th centuries. They were skilled archers and horseriders, fierce in battle. The Huns weakened the Roman Empire in Europe and ended the Gupta Empire of India in 550.

Arab tribes

Arabs included a number of tribes who moved from a region in today's Middle East known as Arabia. They moved into Egypt and parts of northern Africa from around 642, conquering cities and spreading the religion of Islam

Source: Oxford University Press

8.3 Key features of societies across the European and Mediterranean world

In this unit, you will study ONE of the following topics:

- The Vikings
- Medieval Europe
- The Ottoman Empire.

Before beginning a detailed study into your chosen civilisation, it helps to look briefly at some of the key factors that influenced all of the societies across the European and Mediterranean world. In particular, it is useful to look at the types of belief systems and religions that were important to each one, as well as the systems of government, laws and social structures that influenced their development.

Belief systems and religions

Belief systems and religions were the foundations on which all societies across Europe and the Mediterranean were built. These belief systems influenced almost every aspect of life. The clothes people wore, the foods they ate, the songs they sang and their understanding of the world were all influenced by their beliefs.

The spread of Christianity

Christianity is a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Living according to the word of God ensured that a person's soul would go to heaven, whereas a life of sin would lead to an eternity in hell.

For ordinary people living in Europe, the collapse of the Roman Empire meant they no longer had the protection of Rome's army against barbarian attacks. Christianity offered people hope during this difficult time. Christian missionaries travelled great distances



Source 1 Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

to convert others, including Germanic tribes (such as the Vandals, the Franks and the Visigoths) as well as the Vikings. The Roman Catholic Church came to dominate most societies in Europe. Its teachings strongly influenced how people lived their lives.



Source 2 The Qur'an is the most sacred text in Islam. It is regarded as the word of Allah as told to the Prophet Muhammad. Its teachings have influenced many key aspects of Muslim societies, including the Ottoman Empire.

The spread of Islam

Islam is a religion based on a belief in one God (known to followers as Allah). Believers of Islam are known as Muslims. Muslims believe that Allah created the universe and that humans must submit to his will. Islam was founded in the early 600s in the Middle East by the Prophet Muhammad (who was Allah's messenger on Earth). Muhammad was a religious leader who was visited by Allah. When he died in 632, the Arabian Peninsula was already an Islamic region. The spiritual leaders who followed Muhammad continued to spread his teachings across a growing Islamic Empire.

The Islamic Empire eventually included most of Asia Minor, northern Africa and Spain. Islamic missionaries and traders spread the Islamic faith further east into India and Indonesia.

Source 3 shows the regions across Europe, Asia Minor and Africa that were Christian or Muslim lands at the start of the 11th century.



THE EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LANDS AROUND 11TH CENTURY CE

Source 3

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 4 An artist's impression of the chief Viking god, Odin (left), feasting with the spirits of Viking war heroes in Valhalla

The Vikings

Although the Vikings eventually became Christians, their traditional belief system was very different to Christianity. Instead of worshipping one god, the Vikings originally worshipped many different gods and goddesses. Many of the Viking gods were responsible for different areas of daily life. There were gods that watched over the successful harvest of crops and others that looked after love, health, family and fertility. Others were relied on for success in battle and wars. For example, the king of the Viking gods, Odin, was the god of magic, poetry and war.

The traditional stories that Vikings told about gods, giants and monsters are known as Viking mythology (or sometimes Norse mythology). Many of these stories tell of the creation of the world and were recorded in a collection of stories known as the Viking sagas.

Viking mythology influenced many aspects of their society. For example, when a warrior was killed in battle he was believed to go to Valhalla - a grand hall in the Viking equivalent of heaven – where dead heroes feasted at long tables.

Unlike Christians across medieval Europe, the Vikings did not really have a positive or negative view of death and the afterlife. Many believed that the dead travelled to a place called Helheim, which lay underground. Here their spirits continued to live in a kind of eternal sleep. Important and wealthy Vikings were often cremated (burned) and then buried in longships with items to accompany them into the afterlife, such as horses, clothing, weapons.



Source 5 Christianity was central to the lives of people all across Europe during medieval times. It influenced what they wore, what they ate and their understanding of the world. Because very few people at the time could read, important stories and lessons from the Bible were told through stained glass windows in churches and cathedrals

Medieval Europe

During the medieval period in western Europe, a branch of Christianity known as Catholicism was the only recognised religion. The Catholic Church, led by the Pope in Rome, played a central role in the lives of all people – from the richest to the poorest. It was not uncommon for people to pray up to five times a day, and everyone attended mass on Sunday to praise God.

Churches, cathedrals, monasteries and nunneries were built across different regions of Europe and played an important role in the community. They provided education, health care and spiritual guidance and support. Since most people could not read, their understanding of the world was shaped by the teachings of the Church.

Support for the Church was so strong that in 1096, at the request of the Pope, tens of thousands of people from across Europe volunteered to fight a series of religious wars known as the Crusades. The Crusades were fought between Christians and Muslims to gain control of key religious sites in a region known as the Holy Land. These wars went on to influence many aspects of modern European societies.

The Ottoman Empire

About 300 years after the end of the Viking age, group of independent tribal communities joined forces and create an empire. The Ottoman Empire, as it became known, was to last for a period of 400 years from 1300 to 1700. The empire began in Anatolia, now part of modern-day Turkey.

Across the Ottoman Empire, the religion of Islam had significant influence on the lives of its followers. Muslims believe in one god, Allah, and his prophet Muhammad who brought Allah's message to the people. Muhammad's teachings were collected after his death and published in a book called the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an, Muslims across the Ottoman Empire were forbidden from drinking alcohol, were expected to fast (go without food) from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan, were expected to give a portion of their wealth to the poor, were to perform ritual prayers five times a day. It was forbidden to gamble or eat certain foods (such as pork). On holy days, Muslims were expected to gather at the mosque to worship Allah.



Governments, laws and social structures

- Governments, laws and social structures were important in societies across the European and Mediterranean world. These laws and systems helped to create order, define the roles and responsibilities
- of citizens, and set out systems for reward and punishment. Over time, laws and teachings evolved
- and became more complex. In some societies, these laws were passed on by word of mouth, while in others they were written down. Often the line between religious beliefs and laws and government was not clearly defined. Governments and laws were not only influenced by religious beliefs and customs, but also influenced them.

- Source 6 The Sultan Ahmed Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque) in Istanbul, Turkey. This mosque was built during the Ottoman Empire. It is evidence of the importance of Islam
- to Ottoman society and remains one of the most important religious sites in Turkey today.

The Vikings

In the early history of the Vikings, their society was made up of a number of independent tribal communities, led by a chieftain or king whose role was to protect people. Like many societies across medieval Europe, Viking tribal communities were organised according to a social hierarchy. Within each tribal community there were three social classes - jarls (noblemen), karls (farmers, merchants and craftsmen) and thralls (slaves, prisoners and criminals). In order to rule effectively, the chieftain or king depended on support from the jarls. Viking society was ruled over by local assemblies (similar to parliaments) known as things.

Each thing met once a year to make new laws or change old laws, resolve disputes, and schedule marriages and divorces. Until the 12th century, Viking laws were not written down; instead they were recited by a law speaker at each thing so that all could hear. Unlike societies in medieval Europe, all Vikings were subject to the law – even the king.



Source 7 An artist's impression of a Viking thing being held in Iceland

Medieval Europe

During the medieval period in Europe, society was organised according to a system known as feudalism. Feudalism began in Europe around 900 and spread across Europe over the next 150 years. Under feudalism, society was organised according to a strict hierarchy (social structure). The king was the most important member of society. He owned all of the land in his kingdom and was believed to rule with the authority of God.

In order to run his kingdom effectively, a king granted land to the nobles directly below him, for which they provided him with military support and loyalty. These nobles, in turn, provided land to the **knights** below them for protection. These knights then provided land to the peasants below them to live on in return for taxes in the form of money or crops. Source 2 on page XX shows how the system of feudalism worked.

The Catholic Church also had its own land and charged taxes (known as tithes) to peasant farmers who worked the land. The Church controlled about a third of the land across Europe and had its own courts and laws.



Source 8 Societies across Europe during the medieval period were organised according to a system known as feudalism. The king was the most powerful member of society and stood at the top of the feudal hierarchy. At the bottom were peasants. This painting from the late 15th century shows peasants working the land outside a castle.

The Ottoman Empire

Ottoman society was complex. At its largest, the Ottoman Empire expanded to cover dozens of provinces across Asia, Europe and northern Africa. At the absolute top of the Ottoman political system stood the sultan. The sultan could appoint or dismiss any official at his pleasure. Every law and political decision came from him.

The sultan was both supreme military commander and the religious leader, responsible only to God. Under the sultan was a complex and strictly defined group of officials and councils that carried out the administration and day-to-day running of the empire.

Within the enormous territory of the Ottoman Empire lived many different groups of people, each with their own customs, beliefs and history – such as Christians and Jews. The empire was Islamic but promoted religious tolerance. To hold the empire together, the Ottomans developed unique social and political systems. The millet system, for example, enabled non-Muslim communities within the empire to govern themselves, collect their own taxes, own property and have their own courts to deal with small matters. Women had fewer rights than men.

Nevertheless, they exerted strong influence over Source 9 At the absolute top of the Ottoman political their families, and at various times the women of the system was the sultan. Every decree or law came from him. This portrait shows Mehmed II (also known as Mehmed the sultan's harems had considerable political influence. Conqueror). He is most famous for capturing Constantinople Slavery was also an important feature of Ottoman in 1453, when he was only 21 years old. He renamed the city society - one in five people in Istanbul were slaves. Istanbul and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Check your learning 8.3

Remember and understand

- 1 What was the title given to the supreme ruler of the Ottoman Empire?
- 2 What is the name of the most sacred text in Islam?
- 3 What was the dominant religion across the Europe at the start of the 11th century?
- 4 Describe how Christianity and the Catholic Church influenced the lives of people living in medieval Europe.

Apply and analyse

5 The fall of the Roman Empire changed the European and Mediterranean world forever. Name three consequences of this event for people living across Europe.

8B What were the key features of societies in the European and Mediterranean world?



6	In your own words, describe how Viking societie
	were organised.

7 Why were stained glass windows important for most Christians in medieval Europe? What was their purpose?

Evaluate and create

8 Using information provided (and some of your own research from the Internet), draw a simple diagram with labels that shows how the system of feudalism worked.