

History 8

for the
Australian
Curriculum

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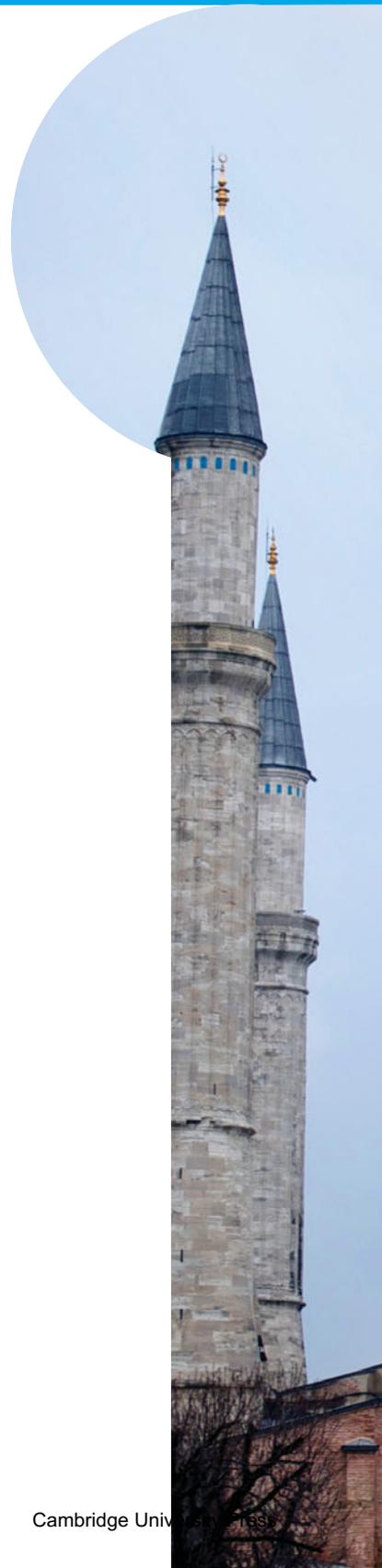
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Foreword



The new *Australian Curriculum: History* is an important and exciting chance for all of us to approach the subject differently. For the first time, students and teachers across the nation are working on the same topics and themes, placing their own local stories in national and global contexts. The curriculum makes us consider each Australian state within the wider history of the colonies and the nation, and indeed the whole of world history. It is designed to help students become educated citizens with a broad grasp of all major historical developments.

The team of authors assembled by Cambridge University Press to write *History for the Australian Curriculum* share a passionate sense of the possibilities of this curriculum. The authors are from around the country and bring to the series a wealth of expertise and depth of teaching experience from various levels of secondary and tertiary education. The excitement was palpable when we met as a team in January 2011 to discuss the textbooks, how they would be structured, and what features would make them the best possible resources for both students and teachers. The concise coverage of topics, rich excerpts from primary sources, first-person voices, creative activities, *Historical facts*, *Times gone by* vignettes, vivid illustrations, glossary definitions and many other features make this an outstanding series.

The historian R.H. Tawney commented eloquently that ‘there is truth in the paradox that all history is the history of the present; and for this reason each generation must write its history for itself. That of its predecessors may be true, but its truth may not be relevant. Different answers are required because different questions are asked. Standing at a new point on the road, it finds that new ranges in the landscape come into view.’ The questions asked, topics covered and stories told in *History for the Australian Curriculum* are different from those in earlier textbooks. In the twenty-first century, the history we must learn and research has moved on and requires new angles of analysis. Moreover, we, the students of history, are different.

Students and teachers across Australian schools come from a wider variety of backgrounds than was the case in earlier generations. We understand the importance of Aboriginal history, and we now expect to learn about the historical experiences of Australians’ families and ancestors who arrived here from various regions of the world. People who have made history include peasants and kings, ancient Egyptians and ancient Australians, women and men, and people from a wide range of cultures, traditions and linguistic backgrounds. The *Australian Curriculum: History* is innovative in its balance between world history and Australian history, and in its placing of Australian history in the context of Asian and Pacific histories, for example, as well as European, American and other histories.

In *History for the Australian Curriculum 8*, you will learn about the ancient to modern world and the historical change in diverse societies around the world including the end of the Roman world, the emergence of both Christianity and Islam, feudalism, trade routes, voyages of discovery, contacts and conflict. You will study the Vikings, Medieval Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Renaissance Italy, the Khmer Empire, Japan under the shoguns, Polynesian expansion around the Pacific, the Mongol Empire, the Black Death, and the Spanish conquest of the Americas.

We hope you will find fascinating information, provocative questions and useful resources for the *Australian Curriculum: History* in these pages. Good luck for your journey of historical study and research!

Angela Woollacott,
Series Editor

About the authors



Angela Woollacott is the Manning Clark Professor of History at the Australian National University and Vice President of the Australian Historical Association. Angela teaches in the fields of Australian history, British Empire history, transnational history, gender history and settler colonialism, and she serves on the boards of several national and international journals.



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Margaret Allen works at the University of Adelaide, and has been teaching and researching gender studies and history for 40 years. Margaret has published on nineteenth century Australian women writers and more recently has been researching links between India and Australia from c. 1880 to 1940. She has worked on many committees during her career, including those of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia and History South Australia.



Helen Butler has taught history and geography in Victorian and New South Wales state and private schools for over 30 years. She has also served as both a Head of History and Head of Humanities. Helen has a passion for imparting the skills of independent inquiry to her history students and instilling a love of the subject in them.



Christopher Cunneen is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University in Sydney. Christopher is the author of books and articles on Australian history and a former Deputy General Editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, for which he has written over 70 biographical entries.



Raymond Evans is an Adjunct Professor of History with the Griffith Centre for Cultural Research at Griffith University as well as a Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland. Raymond has been involved in the research and writing of Australian history since the 1960s. He has written and published widely on a range of topics concerning social and cultural history.



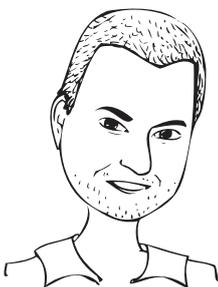
Jenny Gregory is Winthrop Professor of History, and Head of the School of Humanities at the University of Western Australia. Jenny has taught Australian history for many years. Her involvement in the development of the *Australian Curriculum: History* began when she was one of 12 invited participants at the Australian History Summit hosted by the then federal Minister for Education in 2006. She is now leading a group at the University of Western Australia developing professional learning courses for teachers and a Masters program to assist teachers in preparing for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.



Alison Mackinnon is Professor Emerita of History and Gender Studies at the University of South Australia and is a former teacher of history and English. Alison has written many books on issues of educational history and women's history, and on contemporary concerns about educational access. She is a former President of the South Australian History Council and of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society (ANZHES).



Judy McPherson is a teacher of humanities and has taught history and geography to students across Years 7 to 12 in several Victorian schools. Judy's experience includes head of faculty roles in the humanities as well as pastoral team leadership. She has made a significant contribution to curriculum development as a subject leader in the humanities and has been a contributing author to three geography textbooks. She is also a director of Ed Scape Pty Ltd, which provides a range of consultancy services in the field of program evaluation and school improvement.



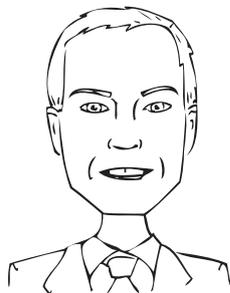
Richard Malone is the Head of Middle School at Caulfield Grammar School. Richard has previously been the Head of Teaching and Learning, and Head of Humanities. Along with these leadership roles, he has taught a wide range of history subjects from Years 7 to 12 over the past 16 years. His passion for seeing history taught in an engaging manner has led him to focus on the importance of differentiation as the most effective means to address the learning needs of students. He has written several textbooks for secondary students, including *Analysing Modern History* and *Analysing the Russian Revolution*, both published by Cambridge University Press.



James St. Julian studied archaeology and history at the University of Sydney and subsequently worked in Cambodia on the Greater Angkor Project for five seasons. James has taught the IB and HSC ancient and modern history curricula at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney for a number of years. He also runs an archaeology program, teaching students archaeological theory, method and practice. He is passionate about introducing students to the history and archaeology of South-East Asia.



Luis Siddall teaches history at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) and is an Honorary Associate of the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University. Luis received his PhD in Assyriology from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, where he taught (Old Babylonian) Akkadian language. His research interests are in the languages and history of the ancient Near East and Egypt. He has published articles in scholarly journals on Assyrian history, Biblical studies and the Amarna Letters. He is also a regular reviewer for the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*.



Robert Skinner is a highly experienced teacher of ancient and modern history. Robert has significant experience as an HSC examination marker, has been an adviser on the HSC Advice Line for students, run by the NSW Board of Studies, and is a former Head of History at two private schools in NSW.



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Historical skills toolkit

Source 0.1 *Moai* statues found at Easter Island

Introduction

History is full of interesting people, mysterious civilisations and wondrous cities. As a junior historian you will learn about history through identifying historical evidence, assessing primary and secondary sources, and recognising perspectives and interpretations. There is no easy way to become a good student, but there are good methods to achieve this aim. The historical skills toolkit will show you how to develop a range of skills that will improve your ability to read and interpret historical writings and sources, and help you to better understand history. The skills you develop in history will help in other areas of life. One of the fundamental skills used in the study of history is critical thinking, which is an important skill for life both inside and outside of the classroom.

Reading skills

Reading is one of the most pleasurable pastimes available. People often read books in their free time for relaxation and enjoyment, and even take books with them on holidays. However, there are different types of writing, and sometimes we need to use different and more developed skills to read more complex types of writing. For example, you may find a novel easier to read than a poem, or you may find reading a school textbook more difficult than a newspaper or a comic book. This is because different skills are required to understand these different types of writing. This section concentrates on two areas to improve your reading skills: the concept of change and continuity, and building an historical vocabulary.

Understanding change and continuity

A theme that you will meet consistently in history is change and continuity. As time progresses some civilisations change greatly and others less so. They may change politically (through conquest or revolution), economically (through new technology or trade) or culturally (through religious conversion, suffering conquest or new migration). When you study different pre-modern societies you should look for patterns of change and continuity. When reading history texts, a good method is to ask questions such as: How old is the society? When did the society invent or adopt a particular custom? How has the society changed over the course of time? These questions will highlight for you key areas where a society might have changed or retained its cultural, political or economic make-up over time.

Building a historical vocabulary

Historical vocabulary is the technical term used in history to convey particular ideas and meanings. Sometimes you will not have met these words before, and you should learn them as you encounter them. In this textbook, important points of historical vocabulary are highlighted, with a definition appearing in the margin.

One of the challenges the history of pre-modern societies presents is how to understand the habits and cultures of those societies that are very different from our own modern, Western cultures. We often use English-language terms to describe features of pre-modern societies whose cultures, ideas and customs were very different from our own, and the results can sometimes be confusing. For example, the English word 'king' is used to describe different types of leaders who ruled over different cultures, but the power of (and roles played by) these figures is often very different from those of the kings of Europe. Another example is the term 'feudalism'. This term has a different meaning when it is used to describe land tenure and the social structures of either Shogunate Japan or medieval Europe. For this reason, when you encounter historical vocabulary you need to check that you understand what the terminology means in its historical context.



Activity 0.1

Draw a timeline that incorporates the events listed in the timelines of the Angkor/Khmer Empire (see Chapter 6) and the Polynesian expansion across the Pacific (see Chapter 8). Make sure the events are sequenced in correct chronological order.



- 1 According to your timeline, which society changed more than the other?
- 2 Use your timeline to outline the patterns of change and continuity between the Angkor/Khmer Empire and Polynesian expansion.
- 3 Read the sections 'Charlemagne's greatest achievements: A new political system' in Chapter 3 and 'Growth of feudalism and intensive agriculture' in Chapter 7. Write a paragraph outlining how the term 'feudalism' is used differently in the study of medieval Europe and Japan under the Shoguns.

Visual literacy skills

Visual literacy is concerned with examining different types of graphic data – such as timelines, websites and images in the form of photos and paintings – and identifying primary and secondary sources. Historians spend a great deal of their time analysing information they gather from these types of sources; therefore, it is important to develop your visual literacy skills.

Analysing primary and secondary sources

Identifying the origin, purpose and features of sources

When you encounter a primary or secondary source you need to consider its origin (who), purpose (why) and its main features (how). When you do all this, you are analysing the source. Think about the following points when studying a source:

- **Origin.** A source originates in a particular (or 'historical') context; that is, the source is created by a person at a particular point in time in a specific location. All of these points can influence the way the source was created and the information it contains.
- **Purpose.** The purpose of the source is revealed by its meaning and why it was created. To identify the purpose of the source, ask questions like 'What is the main point the creator is making?' or 'Why did the author create the source?'
- **Features.** The features of a source – such as how well preserved it is, what it is made from and whether it is decorated – can tell us much about when it was made (and whether it is primary or secondary) and how reliable the information is.

Locating, selecting and using the information in a source

Sources rarely offer you information directly on the topic you are researching. For this reason you need to locate and select relevant information

from a source and use it appropriately. You should also compare it with other sources that relate to the topic to see if they say the same thing. When sources agree on a topic they are said to be in support of each other, but if they do not agree, then the historian has to recognise that the evidence is contradictory. Thus, historians make use of sources by:

inference the process of drawing conclusions from evidence that is probable but still uncertain

- observing the purpose of the source
- using **inference** to find information that is not obvious in the source
- organising the information located in the sources into useful sub-

categories of information, such as social structure, economy, religion and governance

- comparing and contrasting sources on the same topic; if there are other relevant sources, then it is important to compare and contrast all the sources to see what information can be cross-checked for reliability
- incorporating the information gathered from the sources into their historical studies.

Historians, therefore, identify and interpret the information in a source and then decide how to use it in their studies. Importantly, historians use sources to ensure that their theories and ideas are accurate. If the sources contradict their theories, then the historian will rethink and change their theory so that it is supported by the evidence.

Usefulness of a source

Historians judge the information they extract from a source in terms of its usefulness for studying a topic. Sources are useful when they offer an explanation about part of what you are investigating. Historians determine the usefulness of a source by asking the following questions:

- How accurate is the information provided by the source?
- Is the source **biased**?
- Does the source support or contradict other sources?
- What can the source tell us about the attitudes of the time?
- Is the source complete? If not, what information may be missing?

bias having a particular interest or view that limits one's ability to make a fair judgement

It is important to note that a source may be biased or inaccurate and still be useful because such sources can tell us something about the attitudes and **prejudices** (or the 'perspective') of the person who created it.

prejudice an unreasonable opinion formed without evidence

Fact versus opinion

A crucial step in developing your historical skills is recognising the difference between facts and opinions in sources. Facts are things that are known to be true and can be proven on the basis of evidence. Opinions, however, are ideas or judgments that are derived from evidence, but which are not conclusively proven to be true. A good indicator that a statement is an opinion is when you see words like 'might', 'could', 'believe' and 'think'. You will see both facts and opinions in nearly everything you read in history.



Activity 0.2

Consider the following statements and identify which are facts or opinions.

- 1 The *moai* were constructed on Easter Island (Rapa Nui).
- 2 The *moai* on Easter Island (Rapa Nui) represent gods.
- 3 Charlemagne was a great European king.
- 4 The Vikings attacked the Saxons at Stanford Bridge in 1066 CE.
- 5 Aztec sacrifice was probably the most brutal form of worship.

Identifying perspectives in sources

Perspective is a person's point of view from which they see and interpret the world around them. Where we live and what we do influence our perspectives, and as a result peoples from different times and places have different perspectives on events. Our perspectives can influence how we interpret the past, and so it is important that we are aware of the ways in which we form our points of view on historical events. We also need to be able to identify the perspective present in a

source. When you read a source you need to look for indicators of the author's perspective because this will determine how useful the source is and reveal their values and attitudes. Some useful questions you should ask are:

- Who created the source?
- When was the source created?
- For whom was the source created?
- What is the motive behind creating the source?

Activity 0.3

Read the speech by Pope Urban II below and analyse it in terms of its origin, purpose and features.

divine relating to a god or gods

knight a military servant of a king or other person of rank

Most beloved brethren: Urged by necessity, I, Urban, by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world, have come into these parts as an ambassador with a **divine** admonition to you, the servants of God ... Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do ... For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them ... On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and **knights**, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends ...

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested ... Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honour.

Source 0.2 Excerpt from Pope Urban II's speech in 1095 CE in Clermont, France (recorded by Fulcher of Chartres) in which he calls on the French people to go on a crusade against the Turks in the Holy Land

Compare and contrast the account of Sihab al-Din, a Muslim who wrote in the fourteenth century, with the speech of Pope Urban II and identify how the sources differ in their perspective. Give examples from the texts to support your view.

The Franks gathered to meet the sultan, and the battle of Hattin took place. With this very important battle Allah gave dominion over the coast and the holy city [Jerusalem] ... The two armies met and the fighting between them was very hard ... And Allah helped the Muslims to be victorious, they surrounded the Franks on all sides and destroyed them, killing and capturing them.

When the battle had come to an end the sultan sat down in a tent. The king of the Franks was brought in, and the sultan asked him to sit down at his side. The king was very hot and thirsty, and the sultan gave him snow-covered water to drink, and the king of the Franks gave some of it to the prince Reynald, lord of Kerak. But the sultan said to him; 'This damned man did not drink water with my permission, if it had been so he would be safe.'

The sultan then spoke to the prince and rebuked and scolded him for his breach of faith and his attempted attack against the two sacred famous cities. The sultan himself rose and with his own hand he cut the prince's neck. A violent fear seized the king of the Franks, but the sultan reassured him.

Source 0.3 Excerpt from Sihab al-Din's fourteenth century account of the Battle of Hattin



Writing skills

In the introduction to the section on reading skills, the point was made that there are different types of writing. In this section you will be introduced to some methods for composing good historical writing. In particular, we will focus on biographical and research writing.

Biographical writing

A popular type of historical writing is biography. Biographical writing requires you to assess an historical personality's life. The aim of this type of writing is to explain why the person was important in an historical period. In addition to using primary sources and facts, you will need to locate secondary sources and incorporate them into your work. The following steps will help you through the research process.

1 Preliminary work

The first step in any piece of writing is to identify what the question requires. Look for task words such as 'analyse' (identify key points and explain relationships between them and their implications), 'assess' or 'evaluate' (make a judgement), 'explain' and 'account for' (cause and effect), and plan your approach appropriately. It is a good idea to break the question down into parts. For example, if you were asked to 'Assess Saladin as a military leader', you would have to identify Saladin's activities and achievements as

a military leader and make each a sub-topic for your research.

Next, gather and organise your information. You will need to find primary and secondary sources to answer the question properly. Go to the library and search online to find primary sources, history books and articles. If you get stuck, be sure to ask your teacher or librarian for help finding material. You should be looking for facts, statistics, and primary and secondary sources on your topic. Once you have gathered enough information, you should organise your notes according to the structure of your response.

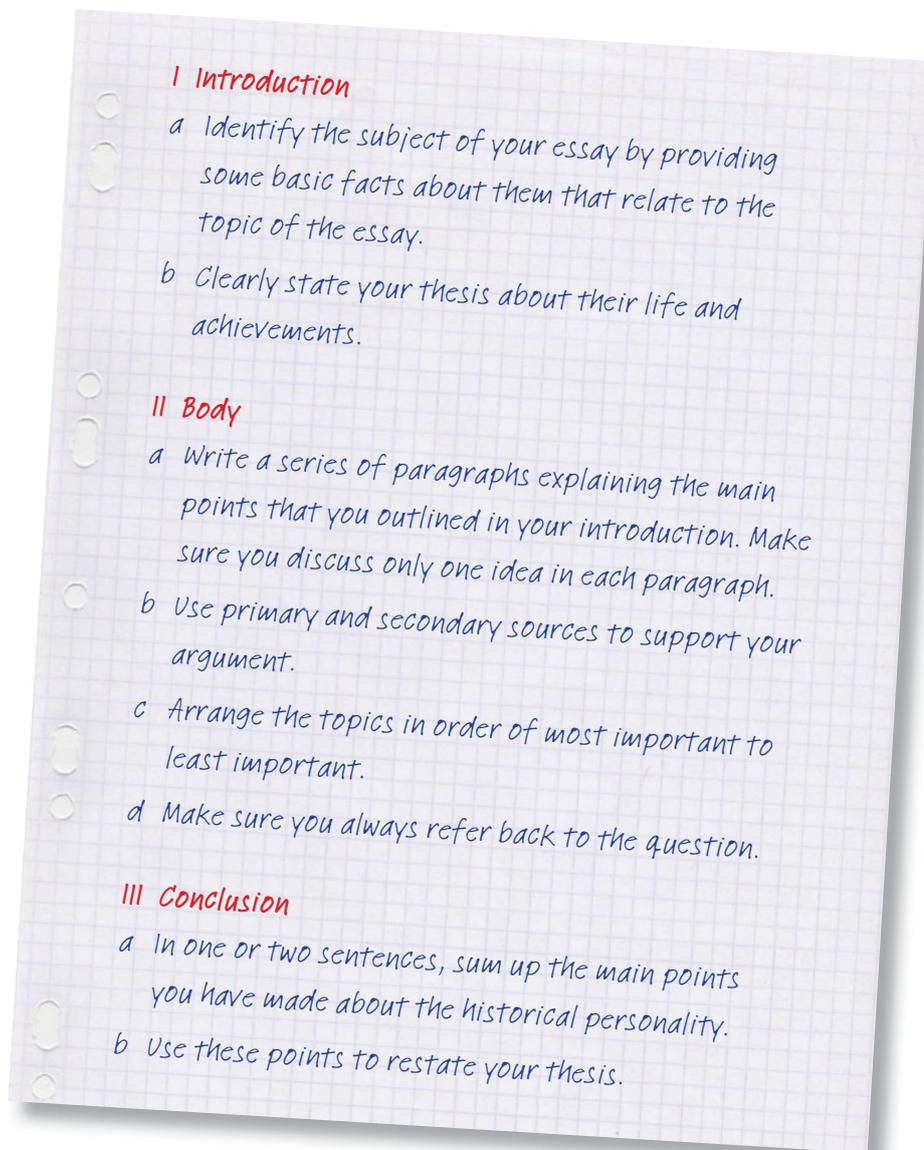
2 Drafting

Only once you have gathered all the information and organised your notes should you start writing a draft. A good written response directly answers the question and is structured in a way that presents your argument clearly and logically to the reader, with good use of supporting evidence. Thus, when you write your biography you should keep the following in mind:

- Does every topic relate directly to the question? (If it does not, then cut it from your work.)
- Does the evidence support every point you make?
- Is there a clear progression in the argument? That is, have you made a clear connection between the different sub-topics you are discussing?



A good framework for your written response is:



3 Revision and writing

Once you have a complete draft of your biography, you need to proofread the work and make all necessary corrections. You should take care to ensure that you have:

- provided a clear structure (that is, introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion)
- removed any repetition in your discussion
- checked that the spelling, grammar and punctuation is correct.

When you have proofread your work and made all necessary corrections, it will be ready for printing and submission.

Research writing

When historians begin researching a topic, they use a number of methods to develop their ideas and focus the direction of their investigations. In this section, the focus is on methods for drafting inquiry questions, organising source material and structuring an essay response.

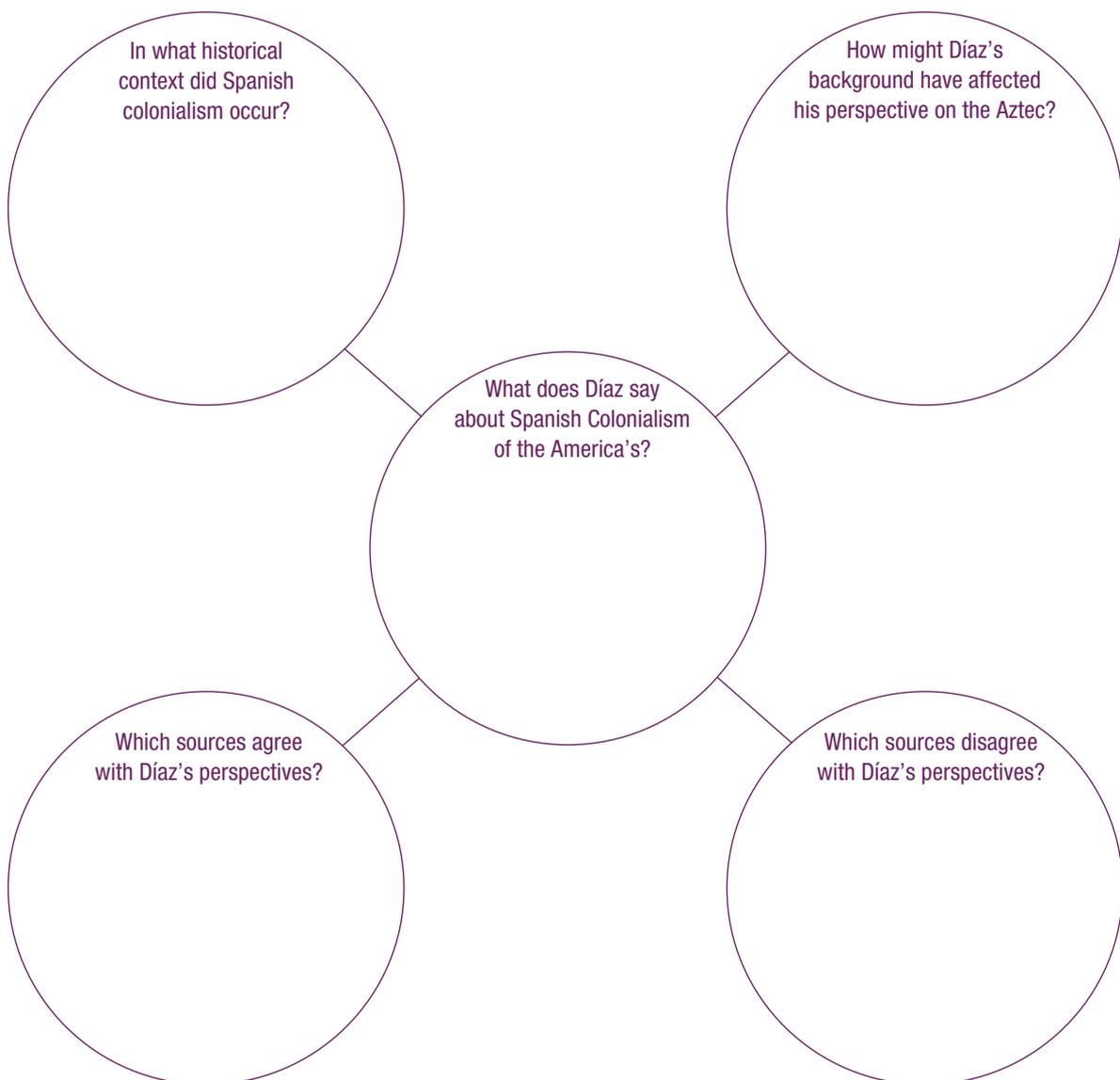
Drafting research questions

You may be asked to formulate a question for a research report on a particular topic in history. Such a task requires you to draft ideas for a research question that uses historical vocabulary (see above) and concepts that will allow you to write a piece of research about the past.

To formulate an historical question, you will need to examine primary sources and ask questions to identify the purpose, perspective and usefulness of the sources. Once you have identified these key aspects of a source, you can start to formulate historical questions that you can answer in your research. A good method for identifying key historical questions is to use a graphic organiser to summarise your questions and answers about the source.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise your thoughts on using the writings of Bernal Díaz as a source for the Spanish colonisation of the Americas.



Once you have identified a number of key questions, you can refine the different issues you want to cover into a general research question that covers your key questions. A good way to do this is to identify the overarching theme in your key questions, such as ‘the different views on Spanish colonialism of the Americas’.

You then need to decide the type of research you want to write about, and chose an appropriate task word, such as ‘analyse’ (identify key points and explain relationships between them and their implications), ‘assess’ or ‘evaluate’ (make a judgement), or ‘explain’ or ‘account for’ (cause and effect). When you combine your key theme

with a task word, you will have identified a good research question. An example is: ‘Assess the different views on the Spanish colonialism of the Americas.’

Tips on organising your research

It is a good idea to list and organise your sources as you find them during the research process. Historians typically compile a list of sources and the locations where they were found – whether in books, journals or databases – and detail the topics they discuss. This works for both primary and secondary sources.

👉 Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, compile the sources you have located by recording the details and your analysis.

| Source | Primary or secondary | Location | What does it tell us about the topic? |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| A written account | Primary | Cited in the textbook | Make notes on the source’s reliability, perspective and usefulness |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



Speaking skills

Speaking is an important form of communication. A good speaker who can clearly communicate their ideas to an audience will generally be more persuasive and effective. Thus, it is important that you become comfortable speaking in front

of other people. If the idea of public speaking seems scary to you, do not worry because there are a number of skills you can develop that will help you become a better oral communicator. Most speaking tasks that you will be asked to do at school will be oral presentations. The best oral presentations are performed in a style that is easy to listen to, but also informative. Activity 0.4 functions both as a research task and a guide to producing a good oral presentation (in this instance, the topic is Genghis Khan).

Activity 0.4

You are to create a 10-minute oral presentation for your class recounting the life of the Mongol emperor Temujin (Genghis Khan) and explaining his contribution to the Mongol world. Illustrate your presentation with visual and/or audio media.



Source 0.4 Portrait of Genghis Khan

Assessing the question Rehearsal

The question has two parts. The first part requires you to recount Temujin's life, so you will need to read the earlier section on biographical writing. The second part requires an explanation of Temujin's contribution to the Mongol world.

Gathering and organising information

To begin, you should read Chapter 9 of this textbook, 'Mongol expansion c. 1206 – c. 1368', and make notes on the different aspects of Temujin's life and the ways he changed the Mongol world. You should pay particular attention to the different sources presented.

To find more information and sources, go to your school library and search for relevant books, along with articles, images and video files through the school's electronic resources. If you get stuck, ask the librarian or your teacher for help locating materials. You could also search online for even more information and sources, if needed.

Once you have located and read a range of primary and secondary sources, you should start planning the structure of your presentation, topic by topic. Then organise the materials you have gathered according to structure of your presentation.

It is important that you practice delivering your speech. If you rely on reading your speech straight from a piece of paper or palm cards without practice, you will probably make mistakes and – worse still – bore your audience. Even the very good public speakers, like politicians and actors, spend a lot of time practising their speeches – and so should you. By practising your speech you will build your confidence. You will also pick up on errors and be able to make changes, if needed. Try practising your speech in front of your family or friends. Practising in front of a mirror is good to develop eye-contact skills and examine the way you stand and move while speaking. When rehearsing, be sure to work on the following points:

- **Speak slowly.** Make sure you do not rush through your speech. Speak clearly and slowly. This will ensure that your audience understands you and has time to think about what you are saying. Concentrate on projecting your voice so that everyone in the room can hear what you are saying, and stress those words to which you want the audience to pay particular attention.
- **Be aware of your body language.** Your body language is just as important as what you say. A good speaker is someone who makes eye contact with their audience regularly, has clear facial expressions and positions their body positively.
- **Include your audiovisual media.** When you practise your presentation, be sure to include your audiovisual media so you know that all items are in the correct order and are clear enough for all the audience to see and hear them.



Delivering the presentation

When it comes to the big day, you may feel nervous regardless of how much you have practised. Do not worry about your nerves; they usually go away once you start speaking. Here are four tips for making your presentation run smoothly.

- 1 Check that your audiovisual media are ready before you begin your speech.
- 2 Be sure to speak slowly. When we are nervous we tend to rush what we are doing and make
- 3 mistakes. When you speak slowly and clearly, your audience will better understand your presentation.
- 4 Focus on the purpose of your presentation. If you are reading your speech, it is important not to slip into half-conscious reading: you will certainly make mistakes and bore your audience.
- 5 Make sure you end your speech with a strong finish. This is your last chance to impress your audience, so make sure you finish by reaffirming your main argument.





Source 0.5 *Moai* on Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

1



Overview: the ancient to the modern world (c. 650 CE–1750)

Source 1.1 Crescent Moon Lake (Yueyaquan), near the ancient Silk Road city of Dunhuang, Gansu province, China

Before you start

Main focus

Between the end of the ancient world (c. 650 CE) and the beginning of the modern world (c. 1750), empires and civilisations rose and fell round the world, changing through contact with others.

Why it's relevant today

Studying the rise and fall of these civilisations helps us to understand changes in the world today, such as the growing importance of Asian powers. Learning about the spread of Christianity and Islam, and their interactions both through peaceful trade and through violent conflict, gives us insight into relations between Muslims and Christians today.

Inquiry questions

- How did societies change from the end of the ancient period to the beginning of the modern age?
- What key beliefs and values emerged and how did they influence societies?
- What were the causes and effects of contact between societies in this period?
- Which significant people, groups and ideas from this period have influenced the world today?

Key terms

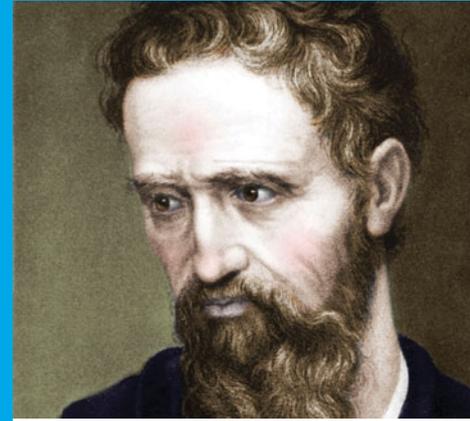
- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Columbian exchange
- Crusades
- empires
- feudalism
- globalisation
- Hinduism
- humanism
- Islam
- trading routes

Significant individuals

- Geoffrey Chaucer
- King Alfred
- Kublai Khan
- Muhammad
- Queen Isabella of Castile
- Zheng He

Let's begin

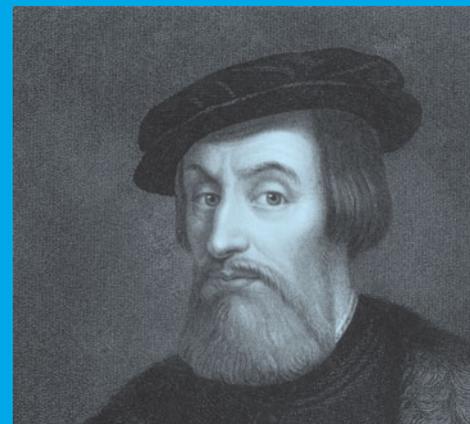
Over several centuries, the Roman Empire had unified the world around the Mediterranean and across much of today's Europe. However, by the third century CE it was in decline, and finally collapsed at the end of the fifth century. Meanwhile, the Christian Byzantine Empire rose to power in the eastern Mediterranean, and from the seventh century Islam spread widely and gained much influence. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in Britain, the Vikings in Scandinavia, the Turkish Ottoman Empire, the Mongol Empire in Central Asia, the Yuan and Ming dynasties in China, the Khmer in south-east Asia, and the Aztec and Inca in Central and South America all became important in their respective regions. Trading zones – such as those around the Mediterranean, the Silk Road between Europe and China, and around the Indian Ocean – brought civilisations into contact and also allowed for the movement of people and the spread of disease, such as the terrible Black Death in the fourteenth century. The Spanish and Portuguese empires from the late fifteenth century facilitated the 'Columbian exchange' of people, animals, plants, food and disease between Europe and the Americas.



Source 1.2 Self-portrait, Michelangelo



Source 1.3 Queen Isabella of Castile



Source 1.4 Geoffrey Chaucer

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

Last emperor of the **476 CE** western Roman Empire is overthrown

Birth of Muhammad, who **570** becomes the prophet of Islam

Charlemagne is crowned **800** Roman Emperor

First European Christian **1095** Crusade

Magna Carta is signed between **1215** King John and barons in England

Black Death reaches the **1347** Mediterranean Sea

Medici family assumes control **1434** of government in Florence

Christopher Columbus reaches **1492** the Caribbean, believing he has arrived in the 'East Indies'

c. 550 Japanese adopt Buddhism and Chinese script

793 Vikings attack Lindisfarne, England

c. 1000 Vikings settle at Vinland, Newfoundland

1206 Temujin takes the title 'Genghis Khan'

1271 Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, founds Yuan Empire in Beijing

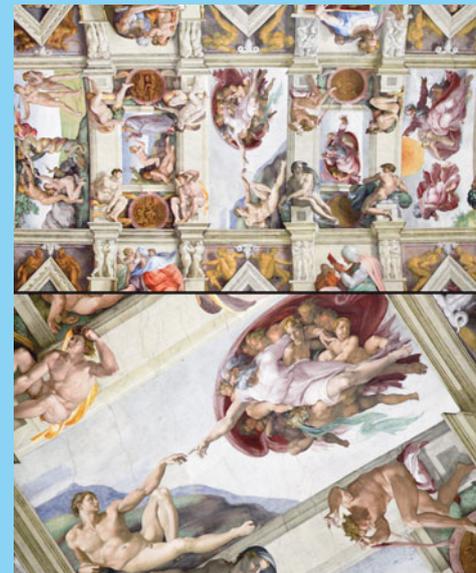
1387–1400 Chaucer writes *The Canterbury Tales*

1453 Turkish Ottoman Empire captures Constantinople and overthrows the Byzantine Empire

1508–12 Michelangelo paints the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Rome



Source 1.5 King John is forced by English barons to endorse the Magna Carta, 1215



Source 1.6 Michelangelo's ceiling painting, Sistine Chapel, the Vatican, Rome, Italy



Source 1.7 Charlemagne, Roman Emperor



Source 1.8 Map of the eastern half of the Roman Empire



Transformation of the Roman World

For centuries both before and after the beginning of the Common Era (CE), the Roman Empire had unified the region of the Mediterranean and much of Europe. But from the late second century CE,

the **empire** began to weaken – a slow and complex process that led to its collapse by the fifth century. In the wake of the Roman Empire, zones around the Mediterranean emerged. To the east, the partly Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire centred on Constantinople gained influence and developed a form of **Christianity** that it would later pass on to Russia. By the fifteenth century, the Byzantine

Empire gave way to the Muslim Ottoman Empire. From the seventh century CE, in North Africa and the south-eastern areas of the Mediterranean, both the religion of **Islam** and Arab political rule spread westwards.

The law and order that typified the Roman Empire had crumbled into chaos and violence, with local lords asserting regional power. Italy, Spain and other parts of Europe splintered into separate kingdoms that came under the rule of Germanic tribes, who were themselves fleeing the Huns invading from Asia. The Visigoths attacked Rome itself in 410 CE, and established a large kingdom covering much of what is now Spain, Portugal and part of France. The Vandals took control of Corsica, Sardinia and part of North Africa, while the Ostrogothic Kingdom covered Italy, Sicily, Austria, Hungary and much of the Balkan region. Large areas of what are now France (then Gaul) and Germany became the Frankish Kingdom.

In Spain the Visigoths would later give way to an invading Muslim force from North Africa. In central Europe the Carolingian empire would emerge, with Charlemagne its most prominent leader (being called Roman Emperor by the pope). From 793 CE, Vikings from the north terrorised areas of Western Europe with their devastating raids from the sea.

The formerly urbanised world of the Roman Empire, connected by a system of good roads, had disintegrated. Cities shrank and trade diminished. As the **feudal system** took hold across Europe, large landowners became powerful and villagers looked to them for support and protection.

feudalism a form of government based on the exchange of land for military service, with a strict hierarchy of status; also a system under which peasants were granted use of farming land and, in return, were obliged to provide services and loyalty to the lord of the manor

empire a group of states with a government that is under a single supreme authority

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

Islam a religion based upon belief in one God of whom Muhammad is the chief and last prophet

Spread of Christianity and Islam

One of the major developments in the wake of the Roman Empire was a slowly growing division between two expanding religions, Islam and Christianity. Islam grew in the regions we now call the Middle East and parts of South Asia. Muhammad (570–632 CE), the **prophet** of Islam, was born in Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula. Based on his revelations, Muhammad dictated to scribes the holy scriptures of Islam, the Qur'an (or Koran). Islam spread at first among Arabs, then rapidly in the seventh and eighth centuries through Syria and areas of the then Persian Empire (including contemporary Iraq and Iran) to what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan, and via Egypt across North Africa. By the thirteenth century, Islam had reached Sumatra and Java, and by the fourteenth century it had spread across large areas of Saharan Africa.

prophet one who claims to be in contact with the supernatural and acts as an intermediary concerning knowledge delivered from the supernatural

Christianity took hold in parts of the Byzantine Empire, as well as in parts of North Africa and across Europe. Its acceptance in the Byzantine Empire was helped by the conversion of the emperor Constantine; Orthodox Christianity would later become dominant in Russia and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, the Christian church was centred on Rome, under the leadership of the pope. From the fourth century, Christianity spread widely around the Mediterranean; however, by the eighth century Spain, North Africa and areas to the east had largely converted to Islam. Ireland and western areas of Britain became Christian from the fourth to the sixth centuries, though eastern Britain and areas now in Germany did

not convert until the seventh and eighth centuries. Christianity spread to Scandinavia in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, as the formerly pagan Vikings gradually converted.

Trade between regions around the Mediterranean, and between Europe and Asia was an important development in the centuries between the ancient and modern worlds. Relations between people of different regions and religions were often harmonious and based on exchange. But tensions between Christianity in Europe and Islam in the Middle East erupted in 1095 CE into almost two

centuries of warfare known as the **Crusades**. Following the Norman invasion of England in 1066 CE, European Christian **knights** turned their focus on the ‘Holy Land’ of Palestine, which included the city of Jerusalem.

Pilgrimages were a Christian rite, and included journeys to Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela (in Spain). Jerusalem was under Muslim control, and the security of Christian pilgrims was invoked to justify an invasion. The first Crusade was sparked by a speech of Pope Urban II in 1095 CE, and resulted in the capture of Jerusalem by Christians in 1099 CE. Waves of Christian attacks in succeeding Crusades to hold on to captured land met with much resistance, and Muslim forces retook Jerusalem in 1187 CE. Aggressive attacks by Christian forces on these Muslim lands were motivated by the desire for land and wealth, as well as religious goals. The costs of violence were heavy, but the Crusades spurred the introduction to Europe of commodities like soap and pasta, as well as Arab and Islamic science, literature and music.

pilgrimage a religious journey to a sacred place

Crusades military campaigns to restore Christianity in regions controlled by Muslims

knight a military servant of a king or other person of rank

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the spread of Christianity and Islam.

| Christianity | Islam |
|---|---|
| Spread of Christianity around the Mediterranean from the fourth century | Islam spread rapidly in the seventh and eighth centuries from the Arabian peninsula both to the east and the west across North Africa |
| | |
| | |



Britain after the end of the Roman occupation



Source 1.9 Map showing the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the British Isles, c. 800 CE

The British Isles were invaded by the Romans in 55 BCE and became part of the Roman Empire. Roman rule lasted until about 410 CE. The Romans left important legacies, not least cities such as London and York, as well as roads, buildings and Hadrian's Wall in the north. The Romans were soon

Anglo-Saxons Germanic inhabitants of Great Britain (and their descendants) following their arrival in the fifth century

replaced by Anglo-Saxons from northern Germany and Jutes from what is now Denmark, who arrived in large numbers in the last half of the fifth century. **Anglo-Saxons**

took control of eastern England and the Celts retreated to the west, establishing the continuing division between the English and the Celtic-descended Welsh and Cornish people.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

England became divided into a number of small kingdoms. These coexisted for centuries, until the House of Wessex emerged as the dominant

kingdom under King Egbert in the ninth century. From the late eighth century, England was invaded repeatedly by Scandinavian raiders known as **Vikings**. The invaders took control of an area of eastern England called the **Danelaw**, which later merged back into England. London was attacked in 982 CE and Canterbury in 1012. Egbert's grandson King Alfred ruled from 871 to 899 CE, dividing England into shires and establishing a unified legal system, as well as Anglo-Saxon language and literature. In 1066 CE, following a dispute over succession to the English throne, William of Normandy landed with a large army and defeated his English opponent Harold at the Battle of Hastings, thus becoming King of England.

Vikings explorers, warriors and pirates of Scandinavian descent who raided, traded, explored and settled in wide areas of Europe, Asia and the North Atlantic

Danelaw the parts of Anglo-Saxon England that came under Danish law and where Danish customs were observed, particularly in the late eighth and early ninth centuries

Times gone by ...

baron a nobleman who had been given his land by the king, often in return for military service

In 1215, the **barons** of England demanded that King John agree to a long list of principles, such as limits on the levies they had to pay, rights to legal processes, an independent church and a system of weights and measures. Signed at Runnymede near Windsor Castle, this **charter** became known as the Magna Carta, and is considered a step towards a form of government known as 'constitutional monarchy', where the monarch is the head of state but acts within the parameters of the constitution.

charter a written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature, granting rights or privileges, or creating a corporate entity



Source 1.10 One of the rare copies of the Magna Carta on display at Salisbury Cathedral

- 1 Examine the Magna Carta in Source 1.10. What strikes you about it?
- 2 Define the term 'constitutional monarchy'.

Anglo-Saxon institutions and the roots of medieval parliament

The Anglo-Saxons, Jutes and Normans all brought to England social systems of inherited monarchies and aristocracies. From the late eighth century, the Christian church played a role in recognising the king and also participated at the royal court. Shires were the basis of local government, each run by an **aristocrat** ('earl') and an administrator ('shire-reeve' or 'sheriff'). Monasteries and cathedrals were the centres of learning. After 1066 CE, William established a feudal system, giving land to his followers (barons) in return for loyalty and service.

English political institutions evolved gradually. England does not have a written constitution, but rather a body of precedents and practices as well as common law. King Edward I (reigned 1272–1307) held regular parliaments or council meetings in which he consulted leading subjects (nobles, clergy, knights and town representatives) on political matters. During Edward's reign, parliament came to ratify taxes and to advise the king on his statutes; Edward also revised the court system.

aristocrat a member of the nobility

Old English and the foundations of modern English

Written English also evolved slowly. In **medieval** England, the church used Latin for its services and scholars wrote in Latin. The law courts and parliament relied on a form of French. King Alfred's attempts to establish Anglo-Saxon as a written language in the ninth century CE were important; for example, he ordered monasteries to maintain chronicles in vernacular (native) language. The term 'Old English' refers to the early forms of the language used up to the twelfth century, and 'Middle English' refers to the form used from then until about 1450. The fourteenth century politician and writer Geoffrey Chaucer did much to shape Middle English, which is the direct ancestor of 'modern English'. Chaucer's most famous writings are *The Canterbury Tales*, completed about 1390 and still in print today. His wonderful stories of individual men and women on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas Becket captured English as it was spoken in London at that time. The introduction of the printing press in the fifteenth century did much to establish the English language, as also did William Shakespeare's plays and poems written in the decades before and after 1600.

medieval nineteenth-century Latin for 'middle age' (*medium aevum*)

Activity 1.1

- 1 Analyse the map of the British Isles c. 800 CE (Source 1.9). Where was the House of Wessex based?
- 2 Research King Alfred and King Edward I. Discuss why they are considered important kings.

Beowulf and archaeology

King Alfred's contributions to Old English language and culture included his translations of Latin works into Anglo-Saxon. He also oversaw the transcription of epic poems that had previously survived only in oral form, especially *Beowulf*. An epic poem from the seventh century CE, *Beowulf* tells the story of a nobleman living in a pagan world where **Christianity** had not yet had much impact. The character Beowulf enters the service of the king of the Danes, living at the king's court in Scandinavia, a turbulent world of allegiance and fighting. Beowulf himself fights with strange enemies and a dragon. His burial amid treasures in a mound overlooking the sea has been linked to archaeological finds in both Sweden and England.

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

The *Beowulf* story is thought to connect to events and people in sixth century Sweden, and to the 1874 CE excavation of the burial mound of Eadgils at Uppsala in Sweden. It is also seen as providing evidence for the rich finds at the 1939 CE archaeological site at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, England, which include the remains of the

ship burial of a nobleman or king around 625–50 CE. Thought by some to be the remains of King Raedwald, the burial mound contained armour, weapons, gold and jewels, with some items coming from far away. Treasures from Sutton Hoo are preserved in the British Museum.

Research 1.1

Find a copy of *Beowulf*. Using both the epic poem and internet research on Sutton Hoo and archaeological evidence from the 1874 site at Uppsala in Sweden, prepare a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation for the class. It might be best to work in groups. Try to answer these questions:

- 1 How does the Anglo-Saxon story of *Beowulf* connect to both archaeological sites?
- 2 What can we learn from the finds at the burial mounds about beliefs on death, and the status of noblemen and kings?
- 3 How can we tell from *Beowulf* that it was still a pagan culture, not yet changed much by Christianity?
- 4 Why is it significant that *Beowulf* is a transcription from an oral epic poem?



Source 1.11 The exhibition hall of the archaeological finds at Sutton Hoo, England





Key features of the medieval and early modern world

Major civilisations of the medieval and early modern world

During the medieval and early modern centuries, a range of civilisations flourished around the globe. The Byzantine Empire, centred on Constantinople (later Istanbul), was the major power in the eastern Mediterranean following the collapse of the Roman Empire. Christian and largely Greek-speaking, it was finally overthrown when the Turkish Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople in 1453 CE.

In the British Isles, alongside the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the Celtic culture became established

folklore the traditional customs, traditions and stories of a population, passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth

in Wales, Scotland and Ireland by at least the second century. With their roots in central Europe, Celts were known for their skills in mining and working with iron, and their **folklore** traditions.

In northern Europe, the Vikings or Norsemen began their raids on other parts of Europe in the late eighth century. From then until the eleventh century these Scandinavian long-distance sailors and warriors conducted raids and established settlements in places ranging from England to Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and even North America. To the east they established bases in Russia and reached parts of the Byzantine Empire.

In Southeast Asia, the Khmer kingdoms dominated areas now in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam from around 60 CE. The Khmer empire produced large and lavish monuments, especially the temple at Angkor Wat with its carved stone reliefs showing daily life in the twelfth century. Lasting for many centuries, the Khmer empire had very efficient **irrigation** and agricultural systems.

irrigation a system of bringing a supply of water to a dry area, especially in order to help crops grow

In Central Asia an empire arose on the Mongolian steppes in the thirteenth century. Led at



Source 1.12 Angkor Wat at Siem Reap, Cambodia



Source 1.13 The Sun Pyramid at Teotihuacan, Mexico, built by the Aztec

contiguous connected without a break

first by Temujin (or Genghis Khan), the Mongol Empire would become the largest **contiguous** land empire ever seen. The horse-riding Mongol tribes wreaked havoc and destruction, reaching as far west as Hungary and Poland, and stretching across China, Russia and Central Asia. In 1271, Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, founded the Yuan empire in Beijing, extending Mongol rule over southern China, as well as Tibet and Korea.

The Yuan Empire lasted until 1368, and was followed by the Ming **dynasty** that ousted the Mongols and ruled China for three centuries. The Ming dynasty extended its control into Annam in south-east Asia, and became a maritime empire that sponsored voyages around the Indian Ocean and as far as the east coast of Africa.

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

The Ottoman Empire became the largest Muslim empire in history, reaching its peak in the seventeenth century when it stretched from North Africa to southern Russia, and from Hungary in the west to the Red Sea in the east. The Ottoman Empire was a major naval force in the Mediterranean Sea, and encouraged a rich culture of art, architecture and literature in the Islamic world, particularly in

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Cultural attainments were matched by continuing scientific discoveries, and developments in technology, engineering and medicine.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese violently conquered territories in Central and South America, creating their own empires. The areas ruled by these empires are often called 'Latin America' because both the Spanish and Portuguese languages are derived from Latin. Despite the distances involved, the Spanish and Portuguese created these empires through the use of guns, metals and horses for transport. European diseases devastated the Aztec and Maya populations.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in 1521, for nearly a hundred years the Aztec had dominated central Mexico with their large capital city of Tenochtitlan, which the Spanish would take over as their capital, and today is known as Mexico City. The Aztec empire was based on three **city-states** that first joined together and then expanded outwards. The Maya regions were to their south.

city-state a government that rules a small area made up of one city and the towns and countryside around it

The Inca Empire, which was also conquered by the Spanish, lay along the Andes mountains in

the western coast of South America in an area that now includes Ecuador, Peru and Chile. The Inca Empire had arisen in the early fifteenth century, conquering neighbouring groups through violent means and establishing their own religion. Their city, Cuzco, was the largest in South America, and

they had a vast system of roads, bridges, **aqueducts** and temples.

aqueduct structures designed to transport fresh water to cities

Like the Aztec, the Inca were devastated by the invading Spanish in the early sixteenth century.

Feudalism

feudalism a form of government based on the exchange of land for military service, with a strict hierarchy of status

The term '**feudalism**' comes from the Latin word *feodum* which refers to lands granted for military service.

While the utility and accuracy of the term are now debated, it has been commonly used to describe

medieval systems of landholding and military service in parts of the world including Europe and Japan. It is especially applied to the landholding and economic arrangements in Europe from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, and is taken to mean

land grants given in return for the expectation of military service to the lord of the **manor**. However, there is evidence that military

manor the great house and lands of a rich nobleman

service arrangements did not fit just one model.

The term 'feudal' also has more accurate legal meanings, particularly in relation to landholding patterns. Essentially, it refers to social arrangements in which a privileged class of landowners had rights

to land, and the land was worked by peasants. The term is also applied to Japan from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, when the **daimyos**, or lords, formed

daimyo feudal Japanese lords, roughly equivalent to medieval European dukes or earls

a rural warrior elite. The knights of medieval Europe are sometimes compared to the samurai in Japan, though knights were defined primarily by their particular class status, and samurai occupied various ranks and were defined by their warrior traditions and duties.

Trading routes

From ancient times, the Mediterranean Sea formed a natural trading zone, where ships and sailors could reach foreign ports without straying too far from land. Constantinople, located between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, was a major trading centre for goods between east and west. By the eighth century, Venice was a centre for merchant trading and developed commercial relations with the Byzantine empire and Islamic cities such as Cairo. Genoa in north-western Italy also became an important port. Other Mediterranean trading centres in the medieval period included Barcelona in Spain and Tunis and Alexandria in North Africa.

Another oceanic trading area, requiring longer voyages, was that connecting the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the east coast of Africa. Voyages and trading around the Indian Ocean date back to ancient times. Indian sailors developed trade routes westward to the Middle East and eastward to south-east Asia, where

they obtained spices, gold and other precious items that could be traded for other commodities.

These voyages helped to spread **Hinduism** and **Buddhism** through south-east Asia, while Muslim trading communities developed around the Indian Ocean. Traders, sailors and passengers from China

Hinduism a religious tradition of the Indian subcontinent

Buddhism a religion that has a variety of beliefs, practices and traditions based largely on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (the historical Buddha)

HISTORICAL FACT

The potato is indigenous to South America, and was introduced to Europe only after the establishment of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. It would become a staple crop for Europeans.



also navigated their way around and across the Indian Ocean, stimulating trade in Chinese silk and porcelain in return for products such as pepper.

The ‘Silk Road’ refers to the vast trading routes that extended across Central Asia, linking Europe and China. Movement and trade along these routes dates back to well before the Common Era, but was especially significant from around 100 BCE to 900 CE, and again from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The Mongol Empire unified Central Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and brought a stability that allowed merchant caravans to expand. Along with a vast array of trade goods, ideas, religions, cultural practices, knowledge and even diseases travelled both ways along the

riches in the form of silver, as well as new plants and other goods. Historian Alfred Crosby has coined the term ‘**Columbian exchange**’ to refer to the two-way transfer between Europe and the Americas of food, animals, goods, plants and diseases. The tobacco and sugar plantations established in areas of Central and South America were worked by coerced labourers, and increasingly by enslaved Africans. From around 1600 CE the trade in slaves, who were captured in Africa and shipped in terrible conditions across the Atlantic Ocean, would itself become a major economic enterprise of the European **imperial** powers. In this way African cultures became an important part of the Americas.

Columbian exchange
the widespread exchange of people, animals, plants, food and diseases between Europe and the Americas

imperial related to an empire or emperor

Black Death the great outbreak of bubonic plague in the fourteenth century

Silk Road. The terrible plague that became known as ‘**the Black Death**’ originated in north-eastern China around 1330 CE and quickly moved westwards along the Silk

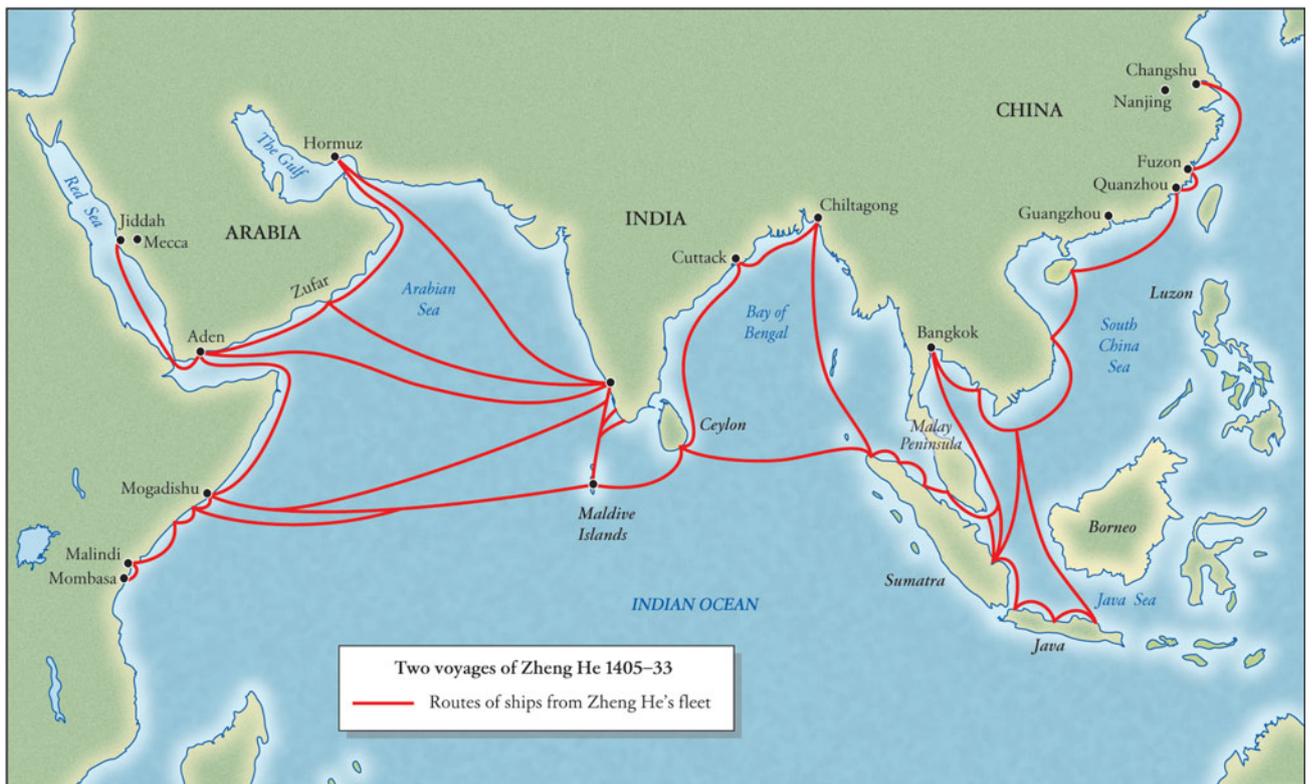
Road. By the 1340s it had taken a devastating toll on the nations around the Mediterranean and throughout North Africa and Europe.

The Spanish and Portuguese empires gained great wealth from their colonies in the Americas. Their ships plying across the Atlantic brought

Voyages of discovery

Globalisation is often referred to as a recent phenomenon, but it began in the centuries between the ancient and modern worlds. Advances in the design and

globalisation the increasing interconnection of different parts of the world



Source 1.14 Voyages of Admiral Zheng He of China’s Ming dynasty, 1405–33

construction of ships, and growing curiosity about the world, led to long-distance voyages. The settlement of many of the Pacific Islands from other islands in Melanesia occurred during this period, with Hawai'i settled by Polynesians around 500 CE and New Zealand around 1200 CE. From the late eighth century CE, the Vikings explored northern Europe and the northern Atlantic regions in their dragon-prowed wooden boats using both oarsmen and sails. Viking ships navigated up European rivers, while some weathered the serious Atlantic storms. The Vikings aggressively sought trade, slaves and plunder on many of their raids, but in the ninth and tenth centuries their exploration led to settlements in Iceland and Greenland. Remarkably, around the year 1000 they established the short-lived settlement of Vinland on Newfoundland, and were thus the first Europeans to reach North America.

expedition a purposive journey undertaken by a group of people

Chinese navigators undertook a series of naval **expeditions** around the Indian Ocean in the early fifteenth century CE. These voyages were mostly diplomatic in nature, and were led between 1405 and 1433 by Admiral Zheng He, a Chinese navigator of Muslim descent. One expedition included 27 000 sailors and troops. In 1415–16, several Swahili cities on the African coast sent emissaries to China, and

Zheng's later expeditions extended as far as the African east coast.

In the fifteenth century, Europeans began to explore the world around them, and to take Christianity to other regions. Just before 1450, Portuguese mariners began to chart the coast of Africa to their south. In 1497–98, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama led an expedition right around Africa and as far as India, with a fleet of ships with specially strengthened hulls and extra sail rigging. Even before that feat of navigation, Queen Isabella of Castile (whose marriage to King Ferdinand of Aragon had united Spain) sponsored a Genoese mariner who believed that he could reach India by sailing to the west. Christopher Columbus, as he became known, continued to believe that he had found the 'East Indies' after he reached the Caribbean in October 1492. Subsequent expeditions to the Caribbean and the South American mainland did not change his mind, and he insisted on calling the inhabitants 'Indians', a name that has persisted to this day. Others realised that it was a whole new continent, which was named 'America' after rival navigator Amerigo Vespucci. This explosion of European maritime exploration sparked the Spanish and Portuguese empires, and an **era** of Christian missionary evangelising and settlements around the world.

era a period of time in history; for example, the Roman era or the medieval era

HISTORICAL FACT

Christopher Columbus is an English version of the famous navigator's name. He was born in Genoa, Italy, and in Italian his name is Cristoforo Colombo. He sailed to the Americas under the flag of Spain. In Spanish, his name is Cristobal Colon.





Emergence of ideas about the world

The Renaissance

An important intellectual and cultural movement began in Italy in the fourteenth century and gradually moved north into the rest of Europe. The movement

humanism the study of politics, philosophy and the human experience of life generally, drawing upon classical Greek and Roman texts for ideas

Renaissance a rebirth of interest in the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome, with an emphasis on philosophy, art and architecture

Protestant a Christian belonging to one of many sects that split from the Catholic Church as a result of the Reformation

Reformation A division within the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, resulting from Protestant sects leaving the church

was based on **humanism**, which turned away from a focus on religion and the afterlife, focusing instead on human abilities and life in the world. This period was called the '**Renaissance**' (from the French for 'rebirth') because it involved a rebirth of interest in the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome, and it emphasised philosophy, art and architecture.

From 1517 onwards, the Christian church in Europe was deeply divided when **Protestant** sects split off from the Catholic Church. The split caused major religious controversy and warfare, with states and monarchs siding with different churches. This division is called the **Reformation**

because the Protestants claimed they were reforming the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's attempts to stamp out Protestantism and regain control are called the Counter-Reformation.

The scientific revolution

epistemology the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of human knowledge

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, discoveries in Europe in the fields of physics, astronomy and **epistemology** created what is considered a 'scientific revolution'.

Scientific ideas based on the study of nature and the universe radically altered understanding of the world, and overshadowed religion and philosophy. Discoveries by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Descartes were especially significant.

In the early 1500s, the Polish scholar Nicolaus Copernicus used mathematical theory to show

that the Sun (not the Earth) was at the centre of the universe, and that the Earth rotated on its axis once every day, and around the Sun once a year.

A century later, the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei built a telescope that enabled him to look at the stars. His careful experimental work showed that other planets were similar to ours. Isaac Newton, in England in the late 1600s, showed that the force of gravity exists in all material objects, and established the universal law of gravity.

In the first half of the seventeenth century the French philosopher Rene Descartes established principles of mathematics and logic. Famously asserting 'I think, therefore I am', Descartes applied logical reasoning to an array of philosophical questions.

Religion was still important, but the scientific revolution encouraged great interest in the natural world, and – combined with revulsion towards religious warfare – an attitude of secularism, or concern with matters of the world.

The Enlightenment

In the eighteenth century, there was a great deal of intellectual and philosophical ferment, with France at its centre. The self-styled *philosophes* who participated in this movement called it 'the Enlightenment', because they saw science and reason as light that would cast out the 'darkness' of ignorance, superstition and intolerance.

The *philosophes* agreed on five basic principles. The first was reason, which they believed could be applied not only to mathematics and physics but also to law and other aspects of society. They thought that the world had natural laws (the second principle) that could be discovered through the application of reason. Their third principle was happiness. Linked to the humanism of the Renaissance, the emphasis on happiness in this world led to Enlightenment beliefs in optimism, pacifism and egalitarianism. These thinkers held that their fourth principle, progress, was possible through science and technology. Finally, influenced by the English political

philosopher John Locke, they advocated liberty in political, economic and religious terms.

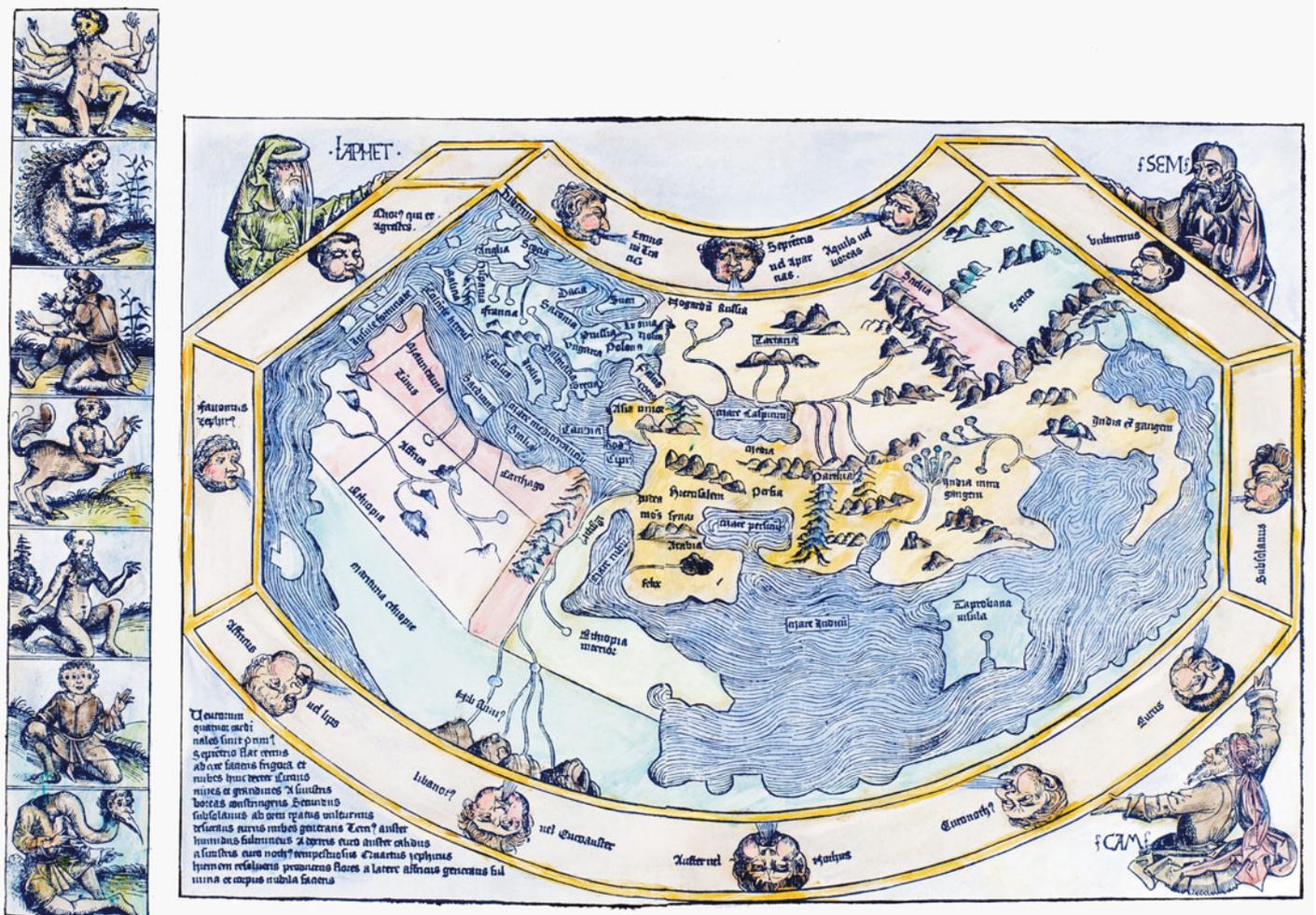
Important thinkers of the Enlightenment included Voltaire, whose criticism of the French monarchy landed him in the Bastille, a prison in Paris. Voltaire believed that natural law should guide people's actions more than church teachings, and translated the work of Isaac Newton and John Locke into French. Another influential writer of the eighteenth century was the Swiss Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued that civilisation had corrupted human nature, which was inherently good. He argued against privilege and for equality, and theorised about the 'social contract' in which citizens subordinated their individual will to the general good.

Another key figure of the Enlightenment was Denis Diderot, a great believer in the power of science and technology. Diderot's major

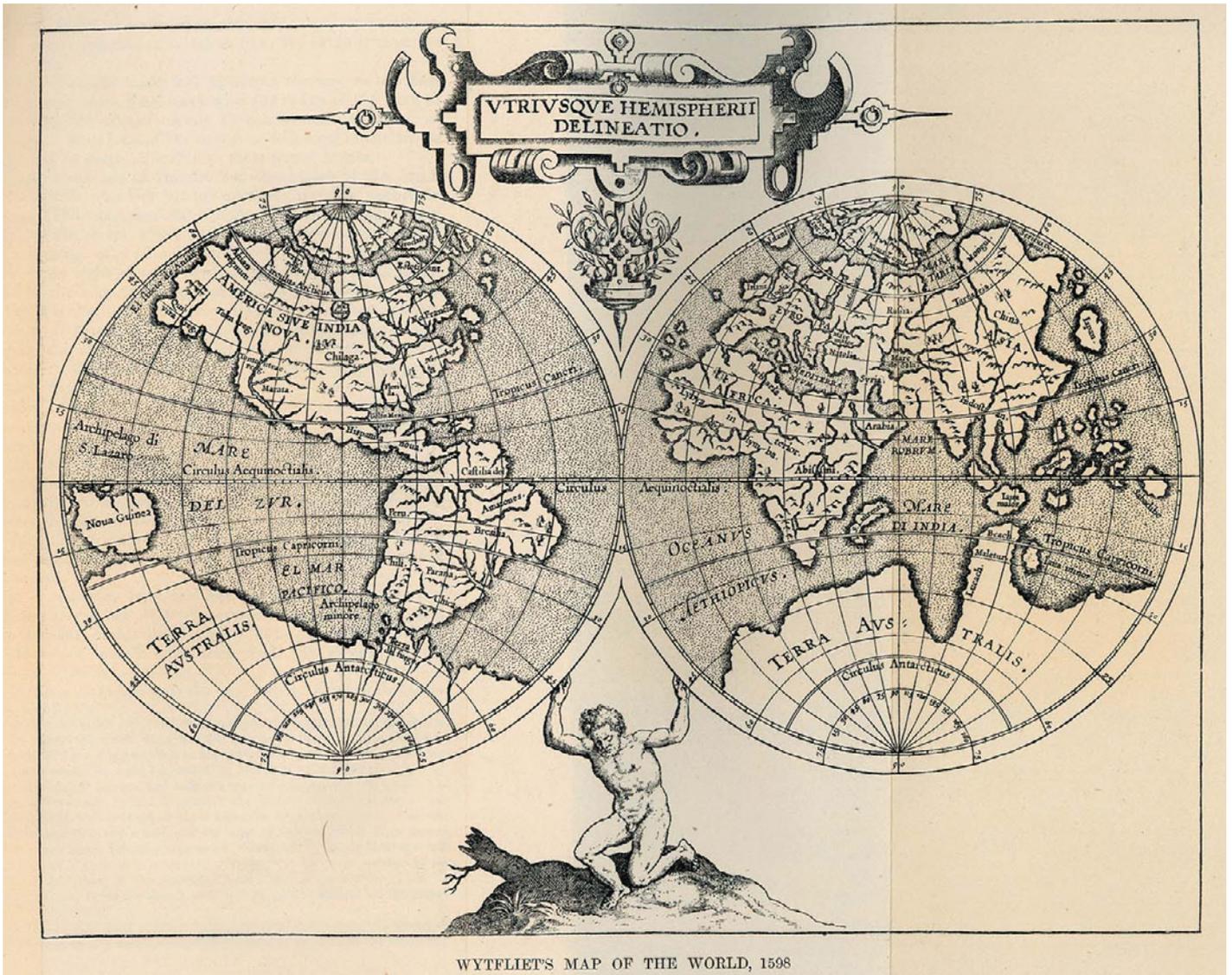
life work was the *Encyclopedie*, a voluminous reference work that circulated the political and philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment, and also included detailed and beautifully illustrated essays on machinery and manufacturing.

The map of the world changes

With the long-distance voyaging of the Vikings, the Indian Ocean voyages of Chinese fleets in the early fifteenth century, and Christopher Columbus's expedition across the Atlantic in the late fifteenth century, humanity's understanding of the Earth, its shape, and the size and location of continents evolved. Shared knowledge about the Earth's geography is reflected in maps from different periods, as illustrated by Source 1.15 and Source 1.16.



Source 1.15 Map of the world by German cartographer Hartmann Schedel (1493)



Source 1.16 Map of the world by Flemish cartographer Cornelius Wytfliet (1598)

Activity 1.2

Compare the 1493 map of the world by Hartmann Schedel (Source 1.15) with Cornelius Wytfliet's map from 1598 (Source 1.16). What differences can you see between the two?

Chapter summary

- After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Christian Byzantine Empire grew in the eastern Mediterranean region and Europe splintered into smaller kingdoms. Orthodox Christianity evolved in the Byzantine Empire and would spread to Russia, while Christianity in Europe was centred on Rome and spread from the fourth century CE.
- Based on the teachings of Muhammad, Islam grew among Arabs from the seventh century, then spread rapidly across Syria and the Persian Empire, and through Egypt across North Africa. Later, it would spread to south-east Asia.
- From 1095 to 1204, European Christian knights attacked Jerusalem and other areas of the 'Holy Lands' in successive Crusades. They ultimately failed to recapture Jerusalem, but they brought new goods and ideas back to Europe.
- Britain became divided between Celtic areas in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Cornwall and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England. Vikings attacked England from 793 CE, and an area of eastern England called the Danelaw fell under their control.
- From 1206 to 1368, the Mongol Empire became the largest contiguous land empire in history, and from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries the Ottoman Empire became the major power between Europe and Asia.
- Journeys and voyages of trade and exploration linked different civilisations and empires, including the Silk Road between Europe and China, the Indian Ocean trading area, the Mediterranean and, from the late fifteenth century, the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

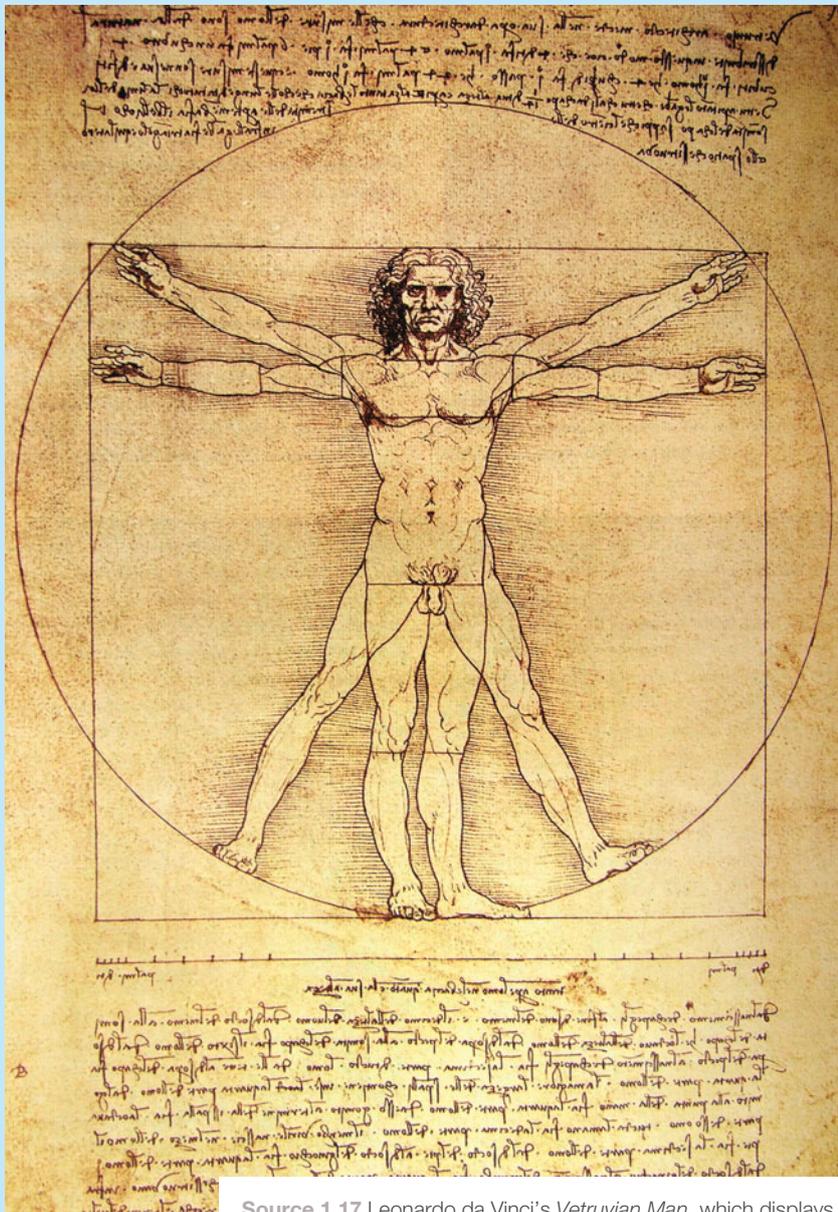
- 1 After the Roman Empire collapsed, the eastern Mediterranean region became dominated by:
 - A the Mongol hordes
 - B the Vikings
 - C the Byzantine Empire
 - D the Khmer Empire
- 2 The first Christian Crusade in 1095 sought to capture which city?
 - A Constantinople
 - B Beijing
 - C Cairo
 - D Jerusalem
- 3 What did the Silk Road allow to travel between Europe and China?
 - A silks and spices
 - B knowledge and ideas
 - C disease
 - D all of the above
- 4 Which early scientist showed that the Earth rotates around the Sun?
 - A Nicolaus Copernicus
 - B Galileo Galilei
 - C Rene Descartes
 - D Isaac Newton

5 In 1492, where did Christopher Columbus believe he had arrived?

- A Canada
- B Africa
- C East Indies
- D Madagascar

Short answer

- 1 To which countries did the Vikings travel on their raids and expeditions?
- 2 Consider which of the Khmer, Byzantine, Mongol and Ottoman empires was the most important, and why.
- 3 Identify which system of government the Magna Carta is considered an important step towards, and why.
- 4 Explain why the cultural movement that began in fourteenth century Italy was called the Renaissance.
- 5 What does the term 'the Columbian exchange' mean?



Source 1.17 Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, which displays the correlation of human proportions with geometry

Source analysis

Study Source 1.18 below and answer the following questions:

- 1 Based on your reading of this excerpt from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, what conclusions can you draw about how far some people in late-fourteenth century England had travelled?
- 2 Why do you think the knight and the business woman travelled so far?
- 3 From his descriptions of the pilgrims, what values does the story teller hold? Does he believe it is good for people to travel? If so, why do you think he believes this?

When the sweet showers of April have pierced
The drought of March, and pierced it to the root ...
Then people long to go on pilgrimages,
And palmers [pilgrims] to take ship for foreign
shores,
And different shrines, famous in different lands;
And most especially, from all the shires
Of England, to Canterbury they come,
The holy blessed martyr [St Thomas Becket] there
to seek,
Who gave his help to them when they were sick.
It happened at this season, that one day
In Southwark at the Tabard where I stayed
Ready to set out on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, and pay devout homage,
There came at nightfall to the hostelry
Some nine-and-twenty in a company,
Folk of all kinds, met in accidental
Companionship, for they were pilgrims all ...
There was a knight, a reputable man,
Who from the moment that he first began
Campaigning, had cherished the profession

Extended response

Do some research on Zheng He, the Mongolian-born admiral of the Ming dynasty Chinese fleets that sailed around the Indian Ocean between 1405 and 1433. Which countries or places did these remarkable expeditions visit? How many expeditions were there, and how many ships, sailors and troops did they involve? What were the motives for the expeditions? What do you think the Chinese learned from these expeditions and what did the countries they visited learn from them?

Of arms; he also prized trustworthiness,
Liberality, fame, and courteousness.
In the king's service he'd fought valiantly,
And travelled far; no man as far as he
In Christian and in heathen lands as well,
And ever honoured for his ability ...
There was a business woman, from near Bath,
But, more's the pity, she was a bit deaf;
So skilled a clothmaker, that she outdistanced
Even the weavers of Ypres and Ghent ...
Her stockings were of finest scarlet red,
Very tightly laced; shoes pliable and new.
Bold was her face, and handsome; florid too.
She had been respectable all her life,
And five times married, that's to say in church,
Not counting other loves she'd had in youth,
Of whom, just now, there is no need to speak.
And she had thrice been to Jerusalem;
Had wandered over many a foreign stream;
And she had been at Rome, and at Boulogne,
St James of Compostella, and Cologne.

Source 1.18 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*. Written 1387–1400; translation into modern English verse by David Wright (Oxford University Press, 1986)



DEPTH STUDY 1

The Western and Islamic worlds



2



The Vikings (c. 790 – c. 1066)

Source 2.1 Replica of a Viking longship

Before you start

Main focus

Between 790 and 1100, the various Scandinavian groups collectively referred to as the Norsemen or Vikings were the most culturally influential in Europe.

Why it's relevant today

A study of the Vikings allows us to appreciate their impact in this period and to assess the accuracy of their reputation as marauding barbarians. It also reveals the continuity over the centuries between their culture and ours.

Inquiry questions

- What do we know about the Vikings and how do we know it?
- Why and where did Viking societies develop?
- How justified is the medieval view of the Vikings as simply pagan barbarians?
- What is the legacy of the Vikings?

Key terms

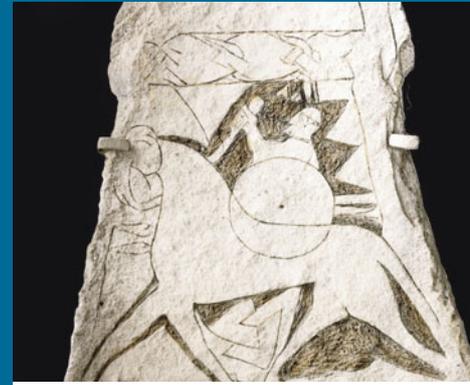
- Danelaw
- *drakkar*
- *jarl*
- *karl*
- *knarr*
- runes
- *thing*
- *thrall*

Significant individuals

- Adam of Bremen
- Charlemagne
- Erik 'the Red' Thorvaldsson
- Leif Eriksson
- Sigrid 'the Haughty'
- Snorri Sturluson

Let's begin

In the centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire, the Vikings, a Scandinavian society of raiders, traders, farmers and explorers had an enormous influence on the development of Europe. Spreading from their cold mountainous homelands of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, they brought war but also great wealth throughout Europe from England and Ireland to the Black Sea, and travelled in their famed longboats as far as Greenland and the eastern islands of Canada.



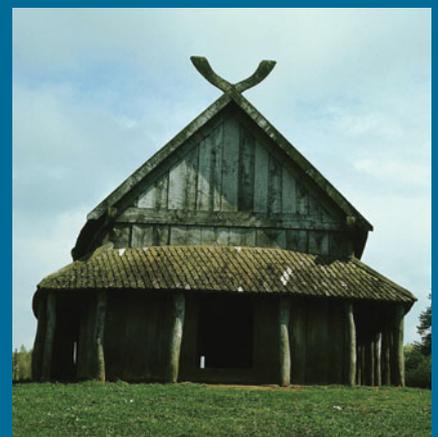
Source 2.2 Armed Viking horseman, rune stone, Lillbjars, Gotland, Sweden



Source 2.3 Statue of Leif Eriksson



Source 2.4 Detail of gilded bronze weather vane of eleventh century Viking ship, Heggen, Norway



Source 2.5 Reconstruction of a Viking longhouse

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

- Rome falls **c. 476 CE**
- 500 CE** . . .
- 'Dark Ages' in Europe **c. 500–900**
- 700 CE** . . .
- Christianity spreads through runic cultures **c. 700–1100**
in northern Europe
- Vikings attack Lindisfarne **793**
- 800 CE** . . .
- Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is compiled **c. 890–1154**
- Vikings settle in Ireland **c. 840**
- York is captured by Danish Vikings **866**
- Norse begin sea exploration and establishment of **c. 800**
new settlements
- Iceland is colonised by Norwegian Vikings **870**
- Vikings from Denmark and Sweden settle in England **876**
- Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum establishes the Danelaw in **886**
the north and east coast of England
- 900 CE** . . .
- Vikings settle in Normandy in northern France **c. 911**
- Ahmad Ibn Fadlan writes account of Vikings in Rus' **c. 922**
- Icelandic Age of Sagas **c. 930–1030**
- Erik 'the Red' Thorvaldsson settles in Greenland **985**
- Jelling stones are erected to announce the **c. 990s**
initial Christian conversion of Denmark
- 1000 CE** . . .
- Norse settle in Canada; Leif Eriksson settles **c. 1000**
in North America
- Sweyn Forkbeard invades England; **1013**
his son Cnut rules **1016–35**
- Pagan remnants are eradicated and **1015–28**
Christianity is established in Norway
- Normans conquer England **1066**
- 1100 CE** . . .
- Last Viking raid on England occurs **c. 1115**
- Christian archdiocese for Sweden established
at Uppsala **1164**
- 1200 CE** . . .
- Viking sagas are written **c. 1180–1300**
- Icelandic saga writer and poet, Snorri Sturluson dies **1241**

WORLD EVENTS

- 527–65 CE** Reign of Justinian I; flowering of Byzantine culture
- .
- 618–907** Tang dynasty in China
- 632** Muhammad dies
- 632–750** Rise of the Caliphate and Islam
- .
- c. 750–1174** Buddhist Pala Empire in northern India
- c. 794–1185** Heian period in Japan
- c. 750–1258** Abbasid Islamic dynasty
- c. 800–1200** Toltec civilisation in today's Mexico
- c. 848–1070** Medieval Chola empire in southern India and
south-east Asia
- c. 850–900** Great Mayan cities of central America are
deserted
- c. 890** Maya produce first book in the Americas
- .
- c. 900** Woodblock books are printed in China, Japan
and Korea
- 907–960** Era of the Five Dynasties in China
- 960–1279** Song dynasty in China
- .
- c. 1071** Seljuk Turks defeat Byzantines at Battle of Manzikert
- .
- c. 1100** Inca city Cuzco is founded
- .
- 1300 CE**
- c. 1200–1500** Great Zimbabwe in central-east Africa
- 1271–1368** Yuan dynasty in China



Source 2.6 Map showing area of Scandinavian settlement and raiding activity between the eighth and eleventh centuries



Way of life in Viking society

Jarls, karls and thralls Farming

empire a group of states with a government that is under a single supreme authority

Unlike many of the great **empires** of the past, the Viking society had no system of central government. Instead, the society was made up of small groups of clans, each ruled by a chieftain (*goði*). Within these small clans, the society was divided into three ranks: *jarls*, *karls* and *thralls*.

jarl a wealthy Viking; usually a nobleman or landholder

The **jarls** were the aristocracy of Viking society. They were typically wealthy landowners who often owned slaves. The majority of the population were **karls**. They were free men and women who owned or rented their farms and did most of the work themselves.

karl a free Viking person who typically worked as a farmer, merchant or artisan

Craftspeople, traders and warriors were all *karls*. When a *karl* died, his belongings and land were given to his eldest son. *Karls* who didn't have any land were servants or worked on other farms.

thrall a bonded Viking serf or slave

Thralls were essentially slaves, and could be either men or women. Some *thralls* were captives or the children of captives from battles

or raids, while others were those convicted of offences under Viking laws. They had no political or legal rights and were required to do the heaviest or most difficult labouring work. If a *thrall* worked hard or committed an act of bravery, he or she could earn their freedom. *Thralls* could be freed by their masters at any time, be freed in a will, or even buy their own freedom. Once a *thrall* was freed he or she became

freemen individuals who were free to choose whom they worked for, and were not tied to land under medieval serfdom

part of an intermediary group between slaves and **freemen** (there was no recognition of women by such a term). A *thrall* could also gain freedom through marriage to a Viking. *Thralls* were sometimes sacrificed or killed and buried with their masters and mistresses.

Farming occupied the time of the vast majority of Norse people. The climate of Scandinavia and settled islands like Iceland and Greenland meant the people relied heavily on a succession of successful farming years in order to survive. Most people lived on small farms, and in prosperous areas these tended to cluster into small villages or hamlets. Less prosperous areas were characterised by individual farms that were well separated. This was the case in Iceland.

Viking farmers planted grain every year to be harvested for bread and fodder. However, much of their farming activity involved **animal husbandry**. Farm animals included sheep, cattle, horses

animal husbandry the branch of agriculture concerned with breeding and rearing farm animals

and goats to supply the farm with meat, dairy products, wool and leather. Some of these became commodities for trade or sale. Horses were kept for transport, but their meat was also prized. In pagan times, it was a common and inexpensive part of the diet.

Because of their versatility, cattle were the most valued of farm animals. Dairy cattle produced milk that was not only a part of the daily diet but was also turned into cheese, butter and *skyr* (a type of yoghurt), which all could be stored during the winter months when cows stopped producing fresh milk. Wealthier farmers included beef from their cattle as a regular part of their diet. Oxen (working cattle) were used as draft animals to pull an early form of plow called an *aror*. These animals were also used to pull sleighs and sledges. Bulls were used as offerings to the gods in pre-Christian **era** sacrifices, underlining the importance of cattle to Viking society.

era a period of time in history; for example, the Roman era or the medieval era

Typically, farm settlements took the form of a central cluster of buildings enclosed by fences. Outside the fenced areas were the fields used for cultivation or grazing. Each homestead typically consisted of a longhouse and multiple outbuildings.



Source 2.7 Reconstructed Viking farming settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada. The Norse site has been dated to approximately 1000 CE; buildings were originally constructed of sod placed over wooden frames.

Activity 2.1

- 1 Why were the Vikings mainly occupied with farming?
- 2 To what extent were cattle valued?
- 3 Describe the features of a typical Viking farm.
- 4 What was the difference between a *karl* and a *thrall*?
- 5 Look at Source 2.7. How does this source relate to what we know about Viking farms?

Kinship

kinship having a relationship by blood or marriage

Kinship or ties with family and community was very important in Viking society. A household might consist of several families, sharing and working the same farm holding. This meant that up to twenty people lived and worked the land together as an extended family unit. Close relationships and family support was very important because of the harsh nature of the Scandinavian environment. Life expectancy was short and at least half the Viking population failed to reach 20 years of age. Social customs therefore emphasised loyalty to family or kinship bonds and values such as honesty and fairness.

Times gone by ...

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Deyr fé | Cattle die, |
| deyja frændr | kinsmen die |
| deyr sjálfr et sama; | you yourself die; |
| ek veit einn | I know one thing |
| at aldri deyr | which never dies: |
| dómr um dauðan hvern | the fate of the honoured dead. |

Source 2.8 *Hávamál* is a collection of verses that was traditionally thought to have been written by Odin. The verses provided advice for living, proper conduct and wisdom.

- 1 Identify what the poet means by 'the fate of the honoured dead'.
- 2 Do you think the poet is right to say this? In your answer, reflect on the harshness of the environment in which the Vikings lived.

In this difficult environment, it is understandable that the Vikings believed in fate. When a baby was born, they believed the three **Nornir** ('women of destiny') chose the moment of its death. The Norse people accepted that while nothing else in life was predetermined, no person could live past the moment of death chosen for them.

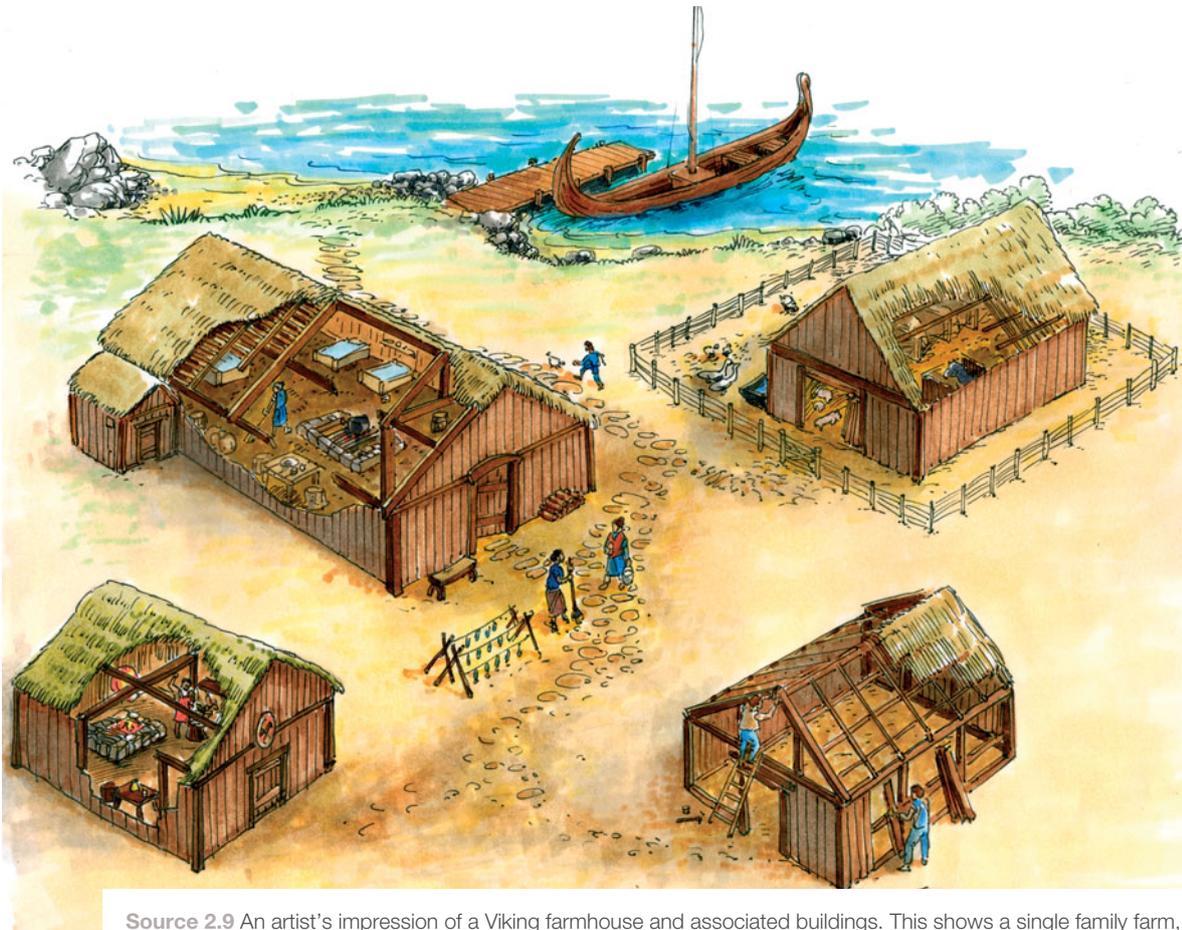
Nornir three female beings in Norse mythology who rule the destiny of gods and men; comparable to the Fates in Greek mythology

Dwellings

The Vikings lived in longhouses, which often housed multiple families. A longhouse was a rectangular building with one room and a central open fire for cooking and heating. There were no

windows, although there was a hole in the roof above the fireplace to allow smoke to escape. In winter, livestock were often kept in the longhouse, as access to other buildings could be difficult due to snow and weather. Body heat from the animals also added to the warmth inside.

Buildings were of wooden construction, sometimes with wattle and daub plastered over the exterior. In the later Viking Age, soil and turf were used to cover the outside of the building frame. Examples of these buildings have been found in Iceland and Greenland. External toilets were often holes dug in the ground covered by a wooden shed (privy) and could pose a threat of water contamination if they were dug too close to wells.



Source 2.9 An artist's impression of a Viking farmhouse and associated buildings. This shows a single family farm, typical of those scattered throughout Iceland. The longhouse was simply an extension of this in larger communities.

HISTORICAL FACT

Vikings used urine to start fires. They harvested a substance known as touchwood fungus that grew on the bark of oak and beech trees. This fungus was beaten into a flat, felt-like material that was charred by fire and then boiled in urine for days. Urine contains sodium nitrite, which when infused into the touchwood would allow it to slowly smoulder but not burn. This meant fire could be transported easily, even by ship.

Clothing and appearance

picture stones large slabs of stone engraved and decorated with pictures of ships, animals, gods, weapons and armour; they were often erected as memorials

There is not a lot of surviving physical evidence that tells us how the Vikings dressed. This is because the soft fabrics that they wore simply have not lasted. There are some **'picture stones'** with images of Viking dress, plus metal

pins and brooches, but most of our information comes from a range of contemporary accounts, such as Muslim emissary Ahmad Ibn Fadlan's firsthand description of Scandinavian traders in Rus' in the late tenth century.

Viking men had finely groomed beards and moustaches. They wore loose-fitting trousers and a long woven or leather tunic that was topped with a cloak. The outfit was held in place by a single brooch. Women had long hair that was plaited or

pinned, and wore multiple layers of ankle length clothing held in place by a pair of brooches, one on each shoulder. Garments for both sexes were made from woven fabrics, including wool and linen. Men and women wore lots of jewellery – bracelets, armbands, rings and necklaces – often made from silver or set with precious stones. Both sexes wore woollen or fur hats, woollen socks and leather shoes or boots.

These clothes were mostly produced at home. Women spun sheep and goats' wool into yarn and wove most of the fabrics, using vegetable dyes for colour. Girls assisted their mothers in this work. Weaving looms were a common item in Viking houses. Combs are among the most common objects found in Viking grave goods of both sexes.



Source 2.10 A collection of disc-shaped brooches found by archaeologists at Yorvik (York). Viking men and women used brooches to fasten cloaks and other clothing.



Source 2.11 A leather boot found at Yorvik (York), which dates from the eleventh century

Activity 2.2

- 1 What were the practical reasons for kinship ties being important?
- 2 Who are the *Nornir*?
- 3 Consider why our knowledge of Viking appearance is limited.
- 4 Using your knowledge and Source 2.10 and Source 2.11, describe how and why the Vikings dressed as they did. Can you suggest how Source 2.11 was fastened?
- 5 Imagine you are a member of a Viking family living in Iceland in the tenth century. Write a story about one day in your life on the family's farm. Use Source 2.7 and Source 2.9 to provide accurate historical detail. Include references to family members, work done, facilities, the time of year and the fatalistic nature of Viking attitudes towards family and death.

Role of women

Sources on Viking women are scarce and the most detailed accounts of Norse social expectations are contained in the **Icelandic sagas**. From these it is clear that men and women had distinct roles in Viking society.

Icelandic sagas histories and narratives of the Viking settlement in Iceland in the tenth and eleventh centuries; these were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

By law a woman was under the authority of her husband or father, with only limited freedom to dispose of property belonging

to her. She was prohibited from being a chieftain or judge. She was also prevented from acting as a witness in a legal proceeding or giving a speech at a governing assembly. Icelandic law also prohibited women from wearing men's clothes, from cutting their hair short or from carrying weapons.

Girls usually married between the ages of 12 and 15. Marriages were often arranged between families and the bride's family had to provide a **dowry**.

dowry an amount of money or property given by a bride's family to her bridegroom or his family upon marriage

Linen and wool cloth, a spinning wheel, a loom and a bed were commonly part of a Viking dowry. Brides from richer families could also provide silver or gold jewellery, farm animals and even farms in their dowries. Unlike dowry practices in other societies, everything a Viking bride brought into the marriage remained

her personal property and did not fully become part of her husband's estate. She could also **bequeath** her property to her children as part of their maternal inheritance.

bequeath to leave personal or other property to somebody after death

Despite many restrictions, Viking women had greater freedom and authority than many

others in Europe at that time. Women ran the household, supervised the food supply, managed the finances of the family and ran the farms when their husbands were away on raids. Women were allowed to divorce and remarry. As widows, they could be rich and important landowners.

The thing (*þing*)

A **thing** (*þing*) was the governing assembly of the freemen of a particular region. Only men could attend these gatherings. They were conducted throughout the Norse world and met regularly (usually once a year) in an open-air meeting in a place known as the *thingstead* (literally, the place of the *thing*). At these sessions, complaints were heard, disputes resolved, political decisions were made and laws were passed.

thing the assembly of freemen that governed a Viking community

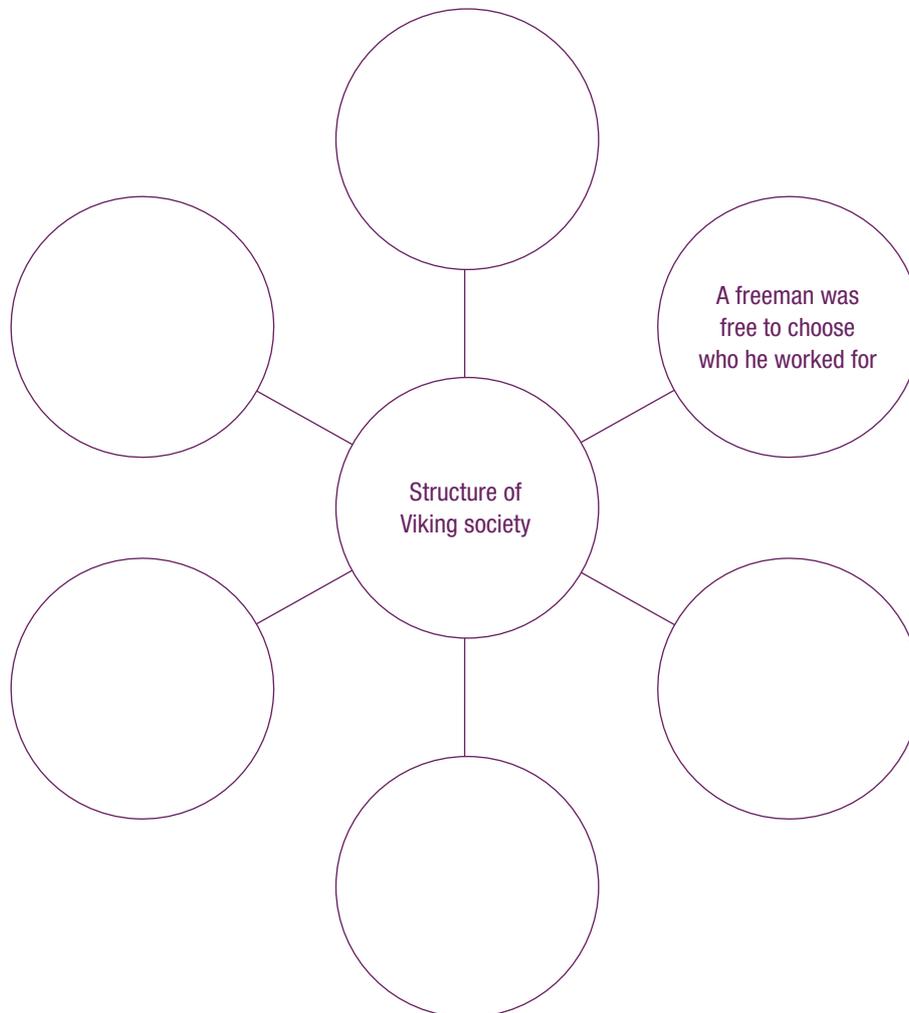
Chieftains and kings were elected at these gatherings. Negotiations were presided over by the 'law speaker' (*lögmaðr*) who memorised and recited the law. There were hierarchies of *things*, so the assemblies of small regions could be represented at the *thing* of their country. In theory, each freeman in the assembly had one equal vote, but in practice the assembly was dominated by the wealthiest, most powerful members of the community.

Icelandic records provide the most detailed accounts of the functioning of these assemblies. In Iceland, the highest ranking assembly was the *alþing* ('all-thing'). Founded in 930 CE, it met at the *Þingvellir*, ('assembly fields'), situated approximately 45 kilometres east of modern-day Reykjavík. The national parliament of modern Iceland is still called the *Alþingi*.



Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the different divisions within Viking society.



Justice and honour

In life, a person's honour and his or her good name after death were the most important of concerns to a Viking. Perceived wrongs were openly challenged and avenged. Such vengeance was sanctioned and even encouraged by the laws. Duels were an accepted way of satisfying verbal injuries, as people believed the gods would allow only a person in the right to prevail. The less formal type of duelling was known as *einvigi* (single combat) and was decided according to whose blood hit the ground first. The more formal duel, called a *hólmganga* (going to the island), was usually fought on small, deserted islands to ensure no

interference from other parties, and might be contested to the death. An imputation that a man showed cowardice was sufficient under the law for him to challenge his accuser in *hólmganga*.

As **Christianity** spread throughout Scandinavia during the later Viking age, duels were gradually replaced with 'trial by ordeal'. This involved the accused having to perform a task like walking barefoot on red-hot irons; if their feet blistered they were pronounced guilty because God had not miraculously healed them.

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ



Source 2.12 A modern re-enactment of *einviqi* (single combat) demonstrating the kinds of arms used

Activity 2.3

- 1 Describe the restrictions placed upon Viking women.
- 2 In what way did social expectations of women enable Viking men to go on voyages and raids?
- 3 How did the idea of 'honour' affect Viking men and women?
- 4 Outline the nature of the *thing* and its functions.
- 5 If you were a Viking and you were accused of a crime, would you prefer trial by duel or by ordeal? Explain your point of view, making reference to Source 2.12.

Entertainment

The Vikings' strong sense of community and family, as well as the cramped living conditions forced by the cold winters, meant there were many opportunities for communal socialising and entertainment. Entire villages might congregate in the chieftain's hall for poetry, music and feasting. Professional poets called *skalds* would recite epic

poems about heroes and gods for the enjoyment of all. Norse music was made on harps, lyres, pipes and flutes carved from sheep bone or wood. To accompany these entertainments, the Vikings consumed a strong alcoholic drink called mead, made from honey.

Communal athletic or sporting games (*leikar*) were also popular among Viking men and are mentioned in several Icelandic sagas. The Icelandic



Source 2.13 A fragment of a playing board for the game *hnefatafl* and playing pieces made from bone, antler and ivory

saga *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, for example, describes a skin throwing game (*hornaskinnleikr*) played in a hall, where four players threw a rolled bearskin around while a fifth player attempted to get the skin. Another game called *knattleikr* (ball game) was a team game played with a hard ball and a bat. Icelandic sagas suggest that it was a full-contact sport involving many contestants, and occasionally resulted in deaths.

Board games and games of chance were also very common. Boards and gaming pieces have been found in many Viking Age tombs. Chess was extremely popular, along with a game called *hnefatafl*. Unfortunately the exact rules for the game have not survived. *Hnefatafl* spread everywhere the Vikings travelled, including England, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland.

Research 2.1

- 1 Using resources found in your school library as well as on the internet, research some of the features of the poetry made by the Viking *skalds*. Define the following terms: alliteration, kenning and eulogy.
- 2 Many *skaldic* poems were written about heroes of the Viking age, particularly kings and warriors. Using the *skaldic* style, write a short poem about a modern-day hero; for example, a sportsperson, a spiritual leader, a politician or a famous scientist. Make sure you use alliteration and include at least one kenning.

Gods, Asgard, Valhalla and Ragnarök

polytheist a believer in more than one god

mythology a collection of myths that belong to a particular people or culture and tell about their history, ancestors, heroes, gods and other supernatural beings

Scandinavia was one of the last places in Europe to be converted to the Christian religion. The Vikings were **polytheists**, believing in and worshipping many different deities, and their **mythology** was complex. The Norse **pantheon** was made up of two races of gods – the Aesir (*Æsir*) and the Vanir –

both living in the realm of the gods named Asgard. This was joined to the Earth, Midgard, by a burning rainbow bridge (*Bilröst*). The chief of the gods was Odin.

Valhalla was an enormous hall located in Asgard, ruled over by the god Odin (*Óðin*). Vikings believed that after a battle, Odin would select half the dead to take up places in Valhalla. The dead would be led there by Odin's battle maidens, known as **Valkyries**. The remaining dead went to

pantheon all the deities of a religion considered collectively

Valkyries 'choosers of the slain' – female figures who decided who would die in battle; from the Old Norse *valkyrja*

a field called *Fólkvangr*, overseen by the goddess Freyja. Odin assembled the warriors to assist him at *Ragnarök* (the end of the world), a prophesied great battle between the gods and the forces of chaos, including frost giants, the wolf Fenrir and the giant sea serpent Jörmungandr.

Norse gods shared the strengths and weaknesses of humankind. They could fall in

love, feel jealousy and go to war. The Vikings took inspiration from and prayed to their gods with rituals and ceremonies, often in fields or in forests. These sometimes involved sacrifices of animals, including bulls and horses. For example, warriors made sacrifices to Odin before battle or to thank him for victory afterwards.

Activity 2.4

- 1 Identify the two classes of Viking gods.
- 2 Explain Valhalla.
- 3 What did the Vikings believe happened to them if killed in battle?

Odin

Odin (*Óðin*) was the one-eyed god of wisdom, poetry, war and the slain. He was the greatest of the Aesir and was patron of warriors, rulers and poets. Odin was renowned for his thirst for knowledge. It was believed that he had exchanged his eye for wisdom and information. The Vikings also believed that he practised a

powerful magic. He rode a grey, eight-legged horse named Sleipnir, and carried a spear called Gungnir, named after the Old Norse for ‘swaying one’.

Odin is often portrayed in sagas as visiting Midgard in the guise of a traveller with a long grey beard, a broad-brimmed hat and a long dark cloak, walking with the aid of his spear.



Source 2.14 A detail from a Viking Age image stone found at Tjängvide, Sweden, showing Odin on his horse Sleipnir in Valhalla

Thor

Thor (*Þórr*) was the son of Odin and the god of thunder. Known as the protector of the gods and men, he was powerful and virile. Thor was also associated with lightning, storms, oak trees, fertility and healing. These associations with great strength made him a very popular deity among the Vikings.

Thor rode through the sky in a chariot, which caused thunderstorms. His weapon was a magical stone hammer called Mjöllnir ('crusher') that was capable of levelling mountains. To wield this he wore iron gloves. He also wore a 'power belt' that allegedly doubled his godly strength. Thor exhibited very human attributes and was often depicted as quick-tempered and capable of being outwitted by others who were clever or devious.

Freyr and Freyja

One of the most important Norse gods, Freyr was the god of fertility. He was son of the sea god Njördr and was associated with farming and weather. His sister, Freyja, was the goddess associated with love, beauty, fertility, gold, war

and death. They were both Vanir gods. Together they brought peace and prosperity to humans and the blessings of fertility to their homes and their fields. Freyr was seen by the Vikings as the noblest of the gods. The Norsemen made sacrifices to Freyr *til árs ok friðar* (for fruitfulness and peace).

Christianity

Over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the pagan beliefs of Scandinavia were gradually replaced by the Christian beliefs of neighbouring realms. Vikings often wore crosses or carried Christian symbols in order to trade in Christian kingdoms.

In the late tenth century, the Danish king Harald 'Bluetooth' Gormsson erected runestones at the town of Jelling, which include the inscriptions: 'King Harold bade these memorials to be made after Gorm, his father, and Thyra, his mother. The Harold who won the whole of Denmark and Norway and turned the Danes to Christianity.'

These inscriptions indicate that Christianity was a useful way for rulers to unite formerly divided kingdoms (see Source 2.15).



Source 2.15 Sometimes called the 'Jelling Stones', these massive runestones were erected by Danish king Harald 'Bluetooth' Gormsson in the tenth century, and announce the transition of Denmark from paganism to Christianity

Religious practices

Adam of Bremen was a German medieval chronicler who wrote one of the oldest sources on pre-Christian Scandinavian religious practices. Produced in 1080, the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (*History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*) claimed to recount first-hand descriptions of pagan practices in Sweden. He says that men were sacrificed every nine years at the Temple of Uppsala, although he did not witness this personally.

In this temple, entirely decked out in gold, the people worship the statues of three gods in such wise that the mightiest of them, Thor, occupies a throne in the middle of the chamber; Wotan [Odin] and Frikko [Freyr] have places on either side. The significance of these gods is as follows: Thor, they say, presides over the air, which governs the thunder and lightning, the winds and rains, fair weather and crops. The other, Wotan – that is, the Furious – carries on war and imparts to man strength against his enemies. The third is Frikko, who bestows peace and pleasure on mortals. His likeness, too, they fashion with an immense phallus.

Source 2.16 Extract from *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* describing part of the Viking pagan temple at Uppsala in Sweden. No archaeological evidence has yet been found of this temple.

HISTORICAL FACT

'Bluetooth' technology is named after Harald 'Bluetooth' Gormsson, who had a reputation for uniting various warring tribes in Denmark and Norway, as the technology is intended to unite various other technologies.



Iceland was converted during the eleventh century, as were some parts of Sweden, although other parts remained unconverted until the eighteenth century. Scandinavian churches built in the early Christian period, known as stave churches, are often decorated with pagan symbols (see Source 2.17).

Source 2.17 A Norwegian stave church in Borgund, Laerdal, built between 1180 and 1250 with later additions and restorations

Activity 2.5

- 1 How did Odin disguise himself when he came to earth?
- 2 Explain the three things that gave Thor his power.
- 3 Why was Freyr such an important god to the Vikings?
- 4 Why would Harold 'Bluetooth' announce the conversion of his people to Christianity using pagan runestones?
- 5 Using Sources 2.14 and 2.16, explain the significance of Odin. How does this relate to Viking values?
- 6 Even after Christianity overtook the Vikings' pagan beliefs, what influence did the old beliefs have? Use both Sources 2.15 and 2.17 to illustrate your view.



Significant developments and achievements

Runes, sagas and archaeology

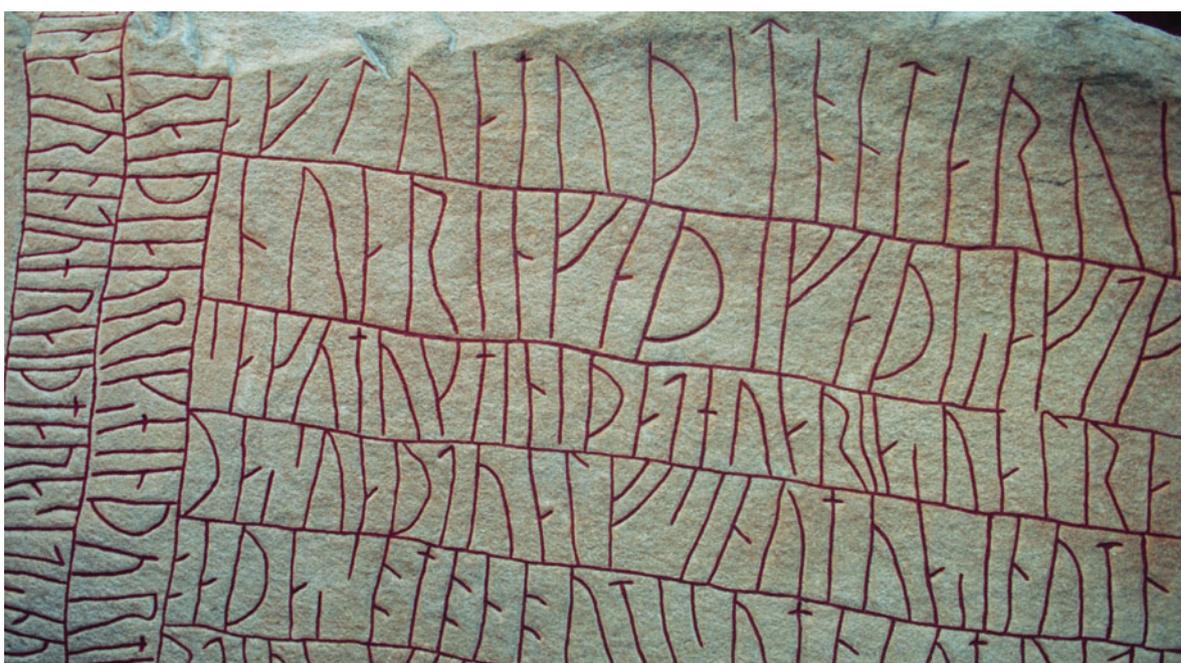
Old Norse the old form of the Norwegian language

The cultural achievements of the Vikings, particularly their literary achievements, are an extremely valuable source of information about Viking life. The **Old Norse** masculine noun *vikingr* appears in Viking Age Icelandic poetry and prose, such as the *Saga of Egil Skallagrimsson*,

and on **rune** stones found throughout Scandinavia.

Rune stones (see Source 2.18) were often carved as memorials to dead men and were originally brightly coloured. The runic language appears on inscriptions dating

runes letters within a set of related alphabets dating from the second century CE; they were used to write various Germanic languages before the adoption of the Latin alphabet



Source 2.18 A ninth century rune stone in Sweden. The rune language was able to be written in various ways: from left to right or right to left, with the first sentence written going one direction and the second sentence going the opposite; as a mirror image, upside down, or bound together.

from around the year 150 CE. The Scandinavian version is also known as *futhark* (or *fupark*, derived from their first six letters of the alphabet: F, U, Þ, A, R, K) and has only 16 runes (letters). It is not known how many Vikings could read or carve runes, but they form the only written records left

by the Vikings themselves. Usually the text on rune stones tells the name of the deceased, the name of the person who raised the stone and (often) how they and the deceased were related. Most rune stones were raised by men.

Times gone by ...

Excavations in 1955 at Bergen, Norway, found over 550 flattened wooden sticks. Called *rúnakefli* in Icelandic, it is thought they served as a way to send letters, at a time when most people had a knife to inscribe them. Some of these give us a very personal glimpse of the Vikings:

ost:min:kis:mik

ost:min:kis:mik

My love, kiss me

aneksua:konomansatmer:bykikaltræltr:
enekemuinr:uifspæsua

aneksua:konomansatmer:bykikaltræltr:

enekemuinr:uifspæsua

I love that man's wife so much that fire seems cold to me
And I am that woman's lover

Source 2.19 Runes found at an excavation in Bergen, Norway

Discuss what such personal letters suggest about runic literacy in Viking society.



eddas collections of poetry and prose containing accounts of Norse myth

myth a sacred narrative, either a song or a poem, explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form

The best written sources on the Vikings are sagas mainly written in Iceland between the late twelfth and early fourteenth centuries. Most of the sagas describe the period 930–1030, which in Icelandic was called *soguold* ('Age of the Sagas'). The sagas cover a wide range of human life, including conflict, games, marriages, migration and the lives of legendary heroes. The **eddas** are also Icelandic sources written between the eighth and thirteenth centuries containing Viking legends and **myths**. Some of the most well-known sagas such as *Njalssaga*, *Egilssaga* and *Laxdaela saga* are still read and enjoyed today.

Activity 2.6

- 1 Name three types of archaeological evidence relating to the Vikings.
- 2 Consider Source 2.18 and explain how rune stones are valuable sources of Viking evidence.
- 3 Go to www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks and research the Icelandic sagas. Pick one of them and write a dot point summary of it. Then review it by answering the following questions:
 - a Who are the main characters?
 - b Are all the events described believable? Do gods intervene, for example?
 - c How does this influence how we should interpret this as a source about the Viking Age?

The sagas are a particularly good source of information about Viking women, who are less well represented in other forms of evidence. The female characters in the sagas are praised for their beauty, but more frequently for their wisdom. Many of the character traits regarded as positive in men (such as a sense of honour and courage) are also found in the women depicted. It was thought to bring shame (*níor*) on a man for him to harm a woman, and examples in the sagas of such violence are rare.

Sigrid 'the Haughty'

A notable example of the female characters found in the sagas is Sigrid 'the Haughty' (Sigrið Storrada). She was a Swedish queen who appears in the *Heimskringla*, one of the best known of the sagas written by Icelandic poet and historian Snorri Sturluson. In 998 CE, when it was proposed

that Sigrid, daughter of the Swedish king, marry Olaf, the king of Norway, she rebelled because Olaf had converted to Christianity. He had insisted that all his people join him – or face death. The saga says that she told him in person: 'I will not part from the faith which my forefathers have kept before me.' In retaliation, Olaf struck her and she is alleged to have responded: 'This may someday be thy death.'

Sigrid then married the Danish king, Sweyn Forkbeard, who had already been feuding with Olaf, thus forging an alliance between Denmark and Sweden. Their combined forces defeated and killed Olaf at the Battle of Svolder in either 999 or 1000 CE. Some modern scholars have questioned whether Sigrid's story in the saga is an amalgamation of the lives and deeds of several historical women. The scarcity of details on individual women in the medieval chronicles makes such theories difficult to assess.

Activity 2.7

Consider the story of Sigrid the Haughty.

- 1 How does this reflect various Viking values presented so far?
- 2 What does the story of Sigrid suggest about the role of women and the attitudes towards them in Viking society?
- 3 Assess if the matter of whether or not Sigrid literally existed has an impact on the issues presented.

Ships and seafaring

The trading, raiding and exploring of the Vikings was made possible by advances they made in shipbuilding. Most important was the development of the longboat, which facilitated both coastal raiding and open ocean sailing. Longboats were ‘clinker-built’, which made the boats comparatively light compared with other ships of the time. They were also easily navigable because they were double-ended and shallow bottomed. The Viking longboat was the most powerful and advanced

naval vessel in Viking Age Europe and became synonymous with the ‘Viking raider’. Under favourable conditions it could travel at 15 knots (28 kilometres per hour).

Sea journeys could take weeks or months. Vikings slept on their boats using sleeping bags made of animal skins. Provisions were kept in barrels. Planking inside Viking ships was moveable so cargo could be protected during storms or when under sail. If the ship needed rowing, planks would be moved to create seating for the oarsmen. This was an aspect of most Norse vessels.

Times gone by ...

The Vikings sometimes navigated by depending on the instincts of birds. They took on board several ravens, releasing them one at a time as they sailed westward. If the raven flew back along the course from which it had come, the Viking ships continued due west. But when a raven flew a different way, the ships would change course, following its flight path in search of new lands.

- 1 Assess why the Vikings were willing to follow the raven when it flew a different way.
- 2 Suggest some other ways that the Vikings might have navigated. Discuss your ideas with a partner.

However, the cultural and practical significance of Viking ships was not limited to warships, as most of their various boats were designed for **mercantile** activity. The earliest known Danish coins have ships as emblems, showing both the importance of naval vessels in the region and that trading was of equal if not greater significance than raiding.

mercantile relating to trade or commerce

Commerce and transport

knarr a Viking cargo ship capable of open sea travel, with a wider, deeper and shorter hull than a longship, and operated by a smaller crew

Viking trade and exploration for new markets was based around the development of the **knarr** (plural: *knorr*). Shorter and sturdier than the longboats designed for war, and dependent mostly on sail power, *knorr* were capable of sailing up to 75 miles in a single day. The Viking merchants' ability to navigate the inland web of rivers in Central

and Eastern Europe was greatly enhanced by the *knorr*. Oars were used as auxiliaries if there was no wind on the open water. When rivers became impassable, they were light enough to be carried overland to the next accessible body of water. They were sometimes loaded onto wagons and pulled along. *Knarr*-class ships were also ideal for open sea travel. They routinely crossed the North Atlantic from Scandinavia carrying livestock and stores to Greenland from the late tenth century CE.

Ship burial

The importance of shipbuilding was not limited to war and trade. Boats also had important symbolic value. Viking chieftains and noblemen were commonly buried with an intact, luxurious ship to transport them to the afterlife. In some cases they were buried inside the outline of a ship made from stones. Vikings believed that you would sail to the afterlife if you were not killed in battle and taken



Source 2.20 A modern, full-scale replica of a *knarr* trading vessel being sailed from Newfoundland to Greenland in 1998. These clinker-built wooden ships were undecked and unadorned, but sufficient to carry cargo of up to 25 tonnes, with a displacement of 50 tonnes. This replica is 16.5 metres by 4.8 metres.

Activity 2.8

- 1 Explain a use for a Viking ship other than raiding or trading.
- 2 How were ships used as cultural symbols by the Vikings?
- 3 In what ways did *knorr* assist the spread of Viking trading?
- 4 Identify a type of Viking boat other than the *knarr* and how it might have been used.

there by Valkyries. Vessels, especially longboats, became a common feature in funeral rituals for kings and chieftains. Often the leader was cremated with all his possessions by torching the boat and allowing it to burn down and finally sink.

Ahmad Ibn Fadlan's account of Swedish Vikings in Rus' provides first-hand details of such a ritual in 922 CE, which culminated in the sacrifice of a *thrall*

woman whose body was then cremated with the chieftain on the burning ship.

Some prominent Vikings were buried with their possessions in ships. Excavation of these burial mounds has provided enormous information from the largely intact vessels found. These craft were in use prior to burial, giving unique insight into the shipcraft techniques of the time.



Source 2.21 An artist's reconstruction of the Oseberg ship burial ritual, which may have occurred by moonlight.

Oseberg ship

Excavated from its burial mound in 1904, this Viking ship and its rich contents of grave goods were in a remarkable state of preservation after being sealed under a clay barrow. Even so, it took over twenty years to subsequently conserve and restore the vessel.

Named after the location of its burial, it is the oldest clinker-built sailing ship from the Viking Age yet found. It is an example of a *karv* ship. It had iron riveted, overlapping oak planks and was 21.5 metres long with a maximum width of 5 metres. The ship could be propelled either by sail or 15 pairs of oars, and steered by a stern-mounted rudder. It did not have a dragon head but a spiral

form ending in a snake's head. The carvings of the stem and stern are the most beautiful and extensive ever found on any Viking ship.

Although the burial site had been robbed in the thirteenth century, remaining grave goods included a richly embellished carriage, three sleds, headpiece carvings, tablet weaving, basketry, dairy troughs, several beds, fine textiles and tapestries.

Remains of a woman of high rank were found in the burial chamber in the middle of the ship. Her identity is uncertain. Five animal-head posts were also found in a corner of the burial chamber. The purpose of these is unknown, but their placement there and the special nature of the heads suggest that they had magical or religious significance.



Source 2.22 Discovered in a large burial mound at the Oseberg farm near Tønsberg, Norway, the Oseberg ship's burial was dated by dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) to 834 CE.



Source 2.23 Detail of one of the five animal-head posts found in the Oseberg ship burial chamber. The heads are made of maple and are carved in various styles. The posts are 50–54 centimetres long.



Activity 2.9

- 1 For what purposes were longships used?
- 2 What speed could a longship travel at?
- 3 Describe two types of Viking funeral practice using longships.
- 4 Identify the 'grave goods' found on the Oseberg ship.
- 5 Examine what suggests that Source 2.23 may have had religious significance.

Research 2.2

Another important Norse vessel found in a burial mound is the Gokstad ship. In small groups research this using the internet and books in the library. Then prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the ship, its excavation, the grave goods and human remains it contained, and what we have learned about Viking maritime technology from it.

Weaponry

Weapons were an integral part of Viking society. Freeman were required to own weapons and be familiar with their use. Social status was reflected by these arms and freemen were allowed to carry them at all times; however, women and unfree men (such as slaves) were prohibited from carrying weapons. Swords were expensive. They were often given names and passed from father to son. In the *Laxdœla saga* written in Iceland in the thirteenth century there is reference to a sword named *Fótbíttr* (Leg Biter).

Iron was time-consuming to make, so anything that required a lot of iron in its construction – such as a weapon – was very costly. Steel swords were so difficult to fabricate that only highly skilled smiths could make them, further adding to their value and prestige. A farmer was likely to be limited to a spear, wooden shield and perhaps a

large knife. Only the very wealthy could afford to have a complete rig of a sword, metal helmet, wooden shield, **hauberk**, animal-skin coat and short sword.

hauberk a shirt of chain mail armour, usually reaching to mid-thigh and including sleeves

Spears and shields were the basic Viking armaments. Spearheads were made of iron and riveted to wooded poles. Shields were usually round, wooden and brightly painted or covered in leather with the rim strengthened by an iron band. They were typically about one metre in diameter, giving protection to the body from shoulder to thigh, and often had a metal **boss** in the centre.

boss a large metal circle in the middle of a shield

An axe was often the choice of poorer men in the Viking Age. Even the poorest farmer had to have an axe for cutting and splitting wood. Axes for fighting developed from these. Some people would also bring their hunting bows to use in the opening stages of battle.

Viking helmets did not have horns or wings. They were essentially a bowl with a prominent nose guard and were typically made from several pieces of bronze or steel riveted together. These were easier to make, and required less labour, than fashioning a helmet from a single piece of metal, which may be why they were widely used. Some had elaborations such as partial face masks, or a small spike on top of the helmet.



Source 2.24 A selection of steel Viking weapons (the wooden handles are modern) found in the River Thames in London; they were possibly thrown in the river during a battle or in celebrations afterwards



Source 2.25 A modern re-enactment of a Viking raiding party using reproduction armaments based on original artefacts and with reference to manuscripts from the Viking Age.

Activity 2.10

- 1 Describe the basic Viking armaments.
- 2 Explain why swords were uncommon.
- 3 What does Source 2.24 show us about Viking weaponry?



Conquests and relationships

Europe between the eighth and eleventh centuries is seen by some historians as a ‘Viking Age’, even though there was never a single unified Viking society. However, during this period their navigational expertise allowed the Norsemen to range over enormous distances in their raids and trading expeditions. As a consequence, they travelled further than any of their European contemporaries and in some cases it would be centuries before other Europeans would venture so far by sea. Consequently knowledge of, and contact with, the Vikings was widespread.

Starting in the eighth century, Vikings launched many sea voyages of exploration. As a result of these journeys, they established new

settlements in many areas including Russia, Ireland, Iceland and (for a brief time) North America. The motivations for this expansion and the associated Viking raids remain unclear. One theory is that the expansion of the non-Christian Vikings was partly a response to Charlemagne, the Frankish king and Holy Roman Emperor, and his wars to convert European pagans. Another theory is that the Vikings were attempting to expand trading opportunities as a response to the slump in European trade with the east, following the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century; and, more immediately, the challenge to Western Europe’s trade that was posed by the expansion of the Byzantine Empire in the seventh century. It is because of this expansion that Viking society had such a deep impact on the history of Europe.

Influence

It is arguable that in this period the Vikings were the most influential cultural group in Western Europe. Their navigational prowess meant they explored further than any other Europeans at that time and opened up routes as far as North America and China. Their settlements, such as Yorvik (York) in England, were centres of trade and power. Their art was original and influenced what is now seen as Gaelic and Celtic design.

Activity 2.11

- 1 Outline two theories explaining why the Vikings began their expansion in the late eighth century. Assess which of the theories you have outlined seems more plausible to you, and give reasons for your assessment.
- 2 Why were the Vikings so well-known in the period up to 1100?
- 3 Examine three ways in which the Vikings were influential.
- 4 Look back at the map at the beginning of the chapter (Source 2.2) and answer the following questions:
 - a In which century was there the greatest amount of Viking settlement?
 - b Compare this to a modern map of Europe. Which modern countries had Viking settlements in them?

Anglo-Saxons Germanic inhabitants of Great Britain (and their descendants) following their arrival in the fifth century CE

The combined cultural and political influence of the Vikings is typified by the example of the Normans who invaded England and conquered the **Anglo-Saxons** in 1066. They were descendants of the Viking conquerors of Normandy in northern France. Interestingly, the word 'Norman' comes from the French word for 'Norseman'.

Danelaw

Vikings from Denmark settled in eastern England in the mid ninth century CE. This settlement was generally peaceful, but in 878 the Danes under their warlord Guthum fought with Alfred the Great, the Saxon king of most of England, notably at the Battle of Ethandun. In 886, the Treaty of

Alfred and Guthum established an area in the north and east coast of England called the **Danelaw**, which remained under Danish control for about half a century. The area covered most of what is today known as the Midlands in England and included the Five Boroughs [of the Danelaw] – Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stamford and Lincoln – and the kingdoms of Northumbria and East Anglia.

Under this arrangement, Viking laws, customs, religious beliefs and language were practised in this area. Yorvik (York) became the centre of Viking trade for the region. Ironically, the prosperity of the Danelaw led to increasing attacks by other Viking raiders, which then led to its absorption into the Kingdom of England in the tenth century.

Danelaw the parts of Anglo-Saxon England that came under Danish law and where Danish customs were observed, particularly in the late eighth and early ninth centuries

Times gone by ...

Archaeologists have dug up the remains of Viking homes in an area of modern York known as Coppergate. From these finds, we know that the Viking city was busy – and probably dirty, with smoking houses (for preserving meat), workshops and farm animals all crowded together. It is estimated as many as 15 000 people may have lived in Yorvik.

Suggest some advantages of living in the same room as farm animals.

Activity 2.12

- 1 What was the Danelaw?
- 2 Suggest why the Treaty of Alfred and Guthum was signed.
- 3 Why do you think the Danish customs and laws practised in the Danelaw didn't protect it from further Viking raids? Consider the political structure of Viking society.

Trade and exploration

The Vikings were accomplished traders, and many of their explorations were launched to find new products to trade and new people to trade with. Erik ‘the Red’ Thorvaldsson sailed west from Iceland and founded two settlements in Greenland in 950 CE. Erik’s son, Leif Eriksson, probably became the first European to set foot in North America when he established the settlement of Vinland (in Newfoundland, Canada) in c.1000. Other Vikings founded trading cities like Duiblinn (Dublin) in Ireland and Yorvik in England. They travelled east along river networks through what is now Russia, Belarus and Ukraine to the Caspian and Black seas, establishing trading connections between Scandinavia and Jerusalem, Constantinople and even Baghdad.

The Vikings usually traded fur, animal skins, walrus tusk ivory, farm produce (for example,

honey), craftwork (for example, carved-bone combs and leather goods), fish, wool, soapstone pots and slaves. They traded these for Chinese silk, Arab silver, wine and spices, pottery and glassware. They traded in kind or for silver, usually in coins (see Source 2.26).

Swedish Vikings, known as Varangians, established a political state called Rus’ that lasted from the late ninth to mid-thirteenth centuries. The most important cities of this state were the cities of Novgorod (today in northern Russia) and Kiev (now the capital of Ukraine). They engaged in trade and mercenary activities and provided the critically important trade link at that time between early medieval Europe and the wealth of the Middle East. Rus’ became the means by which most Eastern silver coinage came to the West in this period. The name ‘Russia’ is derived from Rus’.



Source 2.26 The treasury of a Viking trader found in 2007 near York. It contains 617 coins and various silver fragments, ingots and rings. Some of the pieces could be traced to Afghanistan. The treasury has been dated to 927 CE.

Activity 2.13

- 1 Assess what Source 2.26 suggests about evidence of Viking trade.
- 2 Name two Viking trading cities.
- 3 List ten examples of things traded by the Vikings.
- 4 Who were the Varangians?

Berserkers

One of the most feared weapons of the Vikings were warriors known as berserkers. These were Norse warriors who, according to accounts in some of the Icelandic sagas, entered a trance-like state of rage. In this state of rage, it was thought that they gained nearly supernatural strength and that they didn't feel pain. This condition was referred to as *berserkergang*. Some sagas describe these fighters going into battle without armour, either naked or wearing the pelt of a wolf or bear.

There is debate about whether these fits of extreme aggression were simply the result of battle rage. The *berserkergang* may have been induced by consumption of hallucinogenic mushrooms or drinking large amounts of alcohol.

His [Odin's] men rushed forwards without armour, were as mad as dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and were strong as bears or wild oxen, and killed people at a blow, but neither fire nor iron told upon them. This was called *Berserkergang*.

Source 2.27 A description of berserkers from the *Ynglinga saga*, written by Icelandic historian and poet Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241)

Perceptions

The reputation of the berserkers fits neatly into the accepted view of the Vikings as ferocious, barbaric and merciless. However, most of what was written about the Norsemen at the time was from the viewpoint of their victims. The first recorded Viking raid was the attack on Lindisfarne in Northumbria in 793 (see Source 2.29). The accounts of this raid had a lasting influence on the perception of the Vikings for the next twelve centuries

As the Vikings travelled through Europe, their deeds were recorded in a variety of **chronicles**. These chronicles are an extremely important record of the outside perception of Vikings during the Viking age.

chronicle a historical account of facts and events ranged in chronological order; from the Greek *chronos* ('time')

One of the most famous of these chronicles is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which records the Viking activity in England over the two centuries between the reigns of Alfred the Great and Cnut the Great.



Source 2.28 Various Viking occupations in the form of chess pieces, carved from walrus tusk ivory. The chess piece on the right depicts a berserker warrior, who has bulging, staring eyes and angrily bites his shield ready for battle. Found at Uig Bay on the Isle of Lewis, in Scotland, they have been dated to the twelfth century.

This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island, by rapine and slaughter.

Source 2.29 An extract from the *Peterborough Chronicle* (part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) describing a Viking attack on the monastery at Lindisfarne, a tidal island off the north-east coast of England, in 793 CE

Not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did scholars outside Scandinavia begin to seriously reassess the achievements of the Vikings, recognising their artistry, technological skills and seamanship.

Archaeology has played a major part in shedding new light on their achievements and abilities. Excavations of Viking burial mounds and the associated discoveries of buried ships and artefacts in the twentieth century have demonstrated a much more sophisticated society than the popular image of the Vikings raiders suggested. In 2011,

researchers from Cambridge University stated that new archaeological evidence and analysis of the language, literature and coinage of the Viking period in Britain suggests the Norsemen were ‘model immigrants’ who lived in relative harmony with the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic locals. In fact, in England they had a reputation for excessive cleanliness, due to their custom of bathing once a week. This was most unlike the local Anglo-Saxons, who generally bathed once or twice a year at best.

The latest evidence does not point to a simple opposition between ‘Vikings’ and ‘natives’. Within a relatively short space of time – and with lasting effect – the various cultures in Britain and Ireland started to intermingle ...

Most people’s image of the Vikings centres on their arrival and disruption, but that only continued for a very short period of time. Afterwards they started building settlements and interacting with the locals and became assimilated into their culture and influenced them in many ways. As such, they provide a clear example of how a particular group came into a sophisticated established society and the resulting interaction was positive.

Source 2.30 Dr Fiona Edmonds and Dr Maire Ni Mhaonaigh, of Cambridge University, quoted in the *Daily Mail* newspaper, 13 March 2009 [adapted]

Activity 2.14

- 1 In what respects might the contemporary historical accounts of the Vikings be biased?
- 2 Does the possibility of bias affect the reliability of these sources?
- 3 Compare the reported cleanliness of the Vikings with that of the Anglo-Saxons.
- 4 What do Sources 2.27, 2.28 and 2.29 tell us about the reliability of the traditional picture of Vikings as merciless raiders? Make reference to each of the sources in your assessment.
- 5 Analyse how Source 2.30 supports the view that the Vikings may have been ‘model immigrants’.



Role of significant individuals

Erik ‘the Red’

Erik ‘the Red’ Thorvaldsson moved to Iceland from Norway as a child with his family. What we know about him is contained in the *Eiríks saga rauða* (‘Saga of Eric the Red’) and *Landnáma* (‘Icelandic Book of Settlements’). In 982 CE he was sentenced by the *alþing* to a three-year exile for several murders arising over a dispute with a neighbouring farmer. The saga says that in the same year he sailed west from Iceland, discovering Greenland and spending three years exploring the island.

expedition a purposive journey undertaken by a group of people

At the end of his exile, he briefly returned to Iceland to promote a settlement **expedition**. He gave it the attractive name of Greenland (*Grønland*), possibly to entice prospective settlers. Ironically, Greenland is far less suitable for settlement than the more unappealingly named Iceland. He set out for Greenland in 985 CE with twenty-five ships, fourteen of which reached their destination – some turned back, while others were lost at sea. He and his party founded two colonies on its south-west coast: the Eastern Settlement and the Western Settlement. Erik grew respected and wealthy as chief of the Greenland settlements. Though both settlements initially succeeded, growing to over 3000 inhabitants, both were abandoned during the fifteenth century.

Leif the Lucky

Leif Eriksson was the son of Erik ‘the Red’ Thorvaldsson and was born c.970 CE. The *Grœnlendinga saga* (‘Saga of the Greenlanders’)

is the source for much of we know about Leif. He is best known for being the first European to set foot in North America. His journeying was inspired by a Norwegian explorer, Bjarni Herjólfsson, who had sailed west from Greenland c.985 CE and sighted the North American coast. Leif Eriksson later bought Bjarni’s boat and set out with a crew of thirty-five men.

According to the saga, his first landfall was probably Baffin Island (now in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago), which he called Helluland (‘land of the flat stones’) after the rocks on the coast. He then sailed south, possibly to what is today the coast of Labrador. He called this Markland (‘Woodland’) because of the forest beyond the beach. He sailed further south and finally landed at a place he called Vinland (‘Wine-land’) as there were wild grapes growing there. The Vikings built a small settlement that they called Leifsbúdir (‘Leif’s storage houses’) and spent the relatively mild winter there. This expedition is now recognised as the first European venture to land in North America. Leif ‘the Lucky’ (*Leifr hinn heppni*) got his name from the return voyage to Greenland. He rescued an Icelandic castaway named Thorir and his crew, and got to keep Thorir’s cargo.

As well as the literary evidence found in the *Groenlendingasaga*, some information about Leif and his settlers was gained from archaeological evidence found at L’anse aux meadows, a site on the northern tip of Newfoundland, Canada (see Source 2.7). Archaeologists found the remains of sod houses similar in shape and construction to those found in Iceland and Greenland, which suggests that the L’anse aux meadows settlers had come from those settlements. Archaeologists also found other remnants of settler activity, including a forge and boat repair works, along with spindles and knitting needles, which strongly suggest that there were women in the exploration party.

Activity 2.15

- 1 What was Erik ‘the Red’ Thorvaldsson’s association with Greenland?
- 2 Research the history of the Viking Greenland settlements. Propose some reasons for its abandonment during the fifteenth century.
- 3 Compare the benefits of archaeological evidence (that is, sod houses, spindles and knitting needles) with literary evidence (the *Groenlendingasaga*) in informing us about the expedition of Leif Eriksson to North America. What are some of the things that the literary evidence can tell us that the archaeological evidence can’t?



Source 2.31 Statue of Leif Eriksson looking over Tunulliarfik Fjord, Greenland



Chapter summary

- Between the eighth century and the eleventh century, the Vikings were arguably the most influential cultural group in Western Europe.
- The Vikings came originally from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, but they established settlements in Iceland, Greenland, many parts of the British Isles and in Russia.
- Their economy was based on trade and agriculture, with each Viking community governed by an assembly of freemen called a *thing* (*Ping*).
- Vikings worshipped many gods, who had human-like qualities. Odin was the major god and the ruler of Asgard, which contained Valhalla, a majestic hall inhabited by many of those who died in combat.
- The geography of Scandinavia meant that the Viking culture developed along coastal areas in Scandinavia and that they developed prowess as boat builders, navigators and traders. These skills and technologies led to the spread of Viking culture via exploration.
- Viking raiding of Western Europe by boat started in the late ninth century, leading to their reputation for brutality. This coincided with the development of an extensive trading network, and the establishment of new settlements in what is now Russia, France, England and Ireland.
- Erik 'the Red' Thorvaldsson led the Viking settlement of Greenland. His son, Leif Eriksson, led a subsequent expedition to the western coast of Canada.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- In Norse mythology, Fenrir is a:
 - sea serpent
 - wolf
 - horse
 - frost giant
- Viking expansion occurred because of:
 - over-population
 - trade opportunities
 - religious unrest
 - all of the above
- In Norse society:
 - all women were banned from attending the *thing*
 - women made up the core of raiding parties
 - women could divorce but not remarry
 - women managed family finances
- Which statement about Vikings is false?
 - Slaves could be the child of captives.
 - The majority of the population were *karls*.
 - Women were allowed to divorce and remarry.
 - Jarls* were buried with their masters and mistresses.
- In Old Norse, *aror* means a type of:
 - cattle
 - spear
 - plow
 - yoghurt

Short answer

- 1 Where did the Varangians trade and what was its significance?
- 2 Explain Valkyrie.
- 3 Who and what was Snorri Sturluson?
- 4 What is the *futhark*?
- 5 Identify the places Leif Eriksson's journey took him to in the early eleventh century.

Source analysis

Examine Source 2.32 and answer the following questions:

- 1 What does this source show being transported?
- 2 In what ways are these vessels similar to the Oseberg ship? (See Source 2.21.)
- 3 How does this source relate to what we know about the success of the Norsemen during the Viking Age?

Extended response

Assess the importance of trade to the Vikings. Be sure to include specific examples of Viking activity and make reference to specific sources from this chapter to support your answer.



Source 2.32 Viking ships as part of the Norman invasion force of England in 1066, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry (c. 1077)

3

A detailed medieval tapestry depicting a scene where a man in a red and blue robe (Charles d'Orléans) is receiving homage from a kneeling vassal. The scene is set in a room with a tiled floor and a decorative wall. Other figures in period clothing are visible in the background.

Medieval Europe (c. 590 – c. 1500)

Source 3.1 Charles d'Orléans receives homage from a vassal

Before you start

Main focus

The Middle Ages are generally thought of as the period of time between the great civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome and the later culture of the Renaissance in the sixteenth century.

Why it's relevant today

This was a period of great cultural richness with much learning, thinking, writing and building, resulting in many important developments that influence us today.

Inquiry questions

- How did the Christian (Catholic) church come to dominate medieval Europe?
- What were the important developments in medieval societies?
- What were the main features of everyday life for people of medieval Europe?
- How have the achievements of the medieval Europeans contributed to the development of our modern world?

Key terms

- Christianity
- Crusades
- feudalism
- Gothic
- illuminated manuscript
- medieval
- scriptoria

Significant individuals

- Charlemagne
- Christine de Pisan
- Clovis I
- Fulcher of Chartres
- Pope Leo III
- Pope Urban II
- Robert the Monk

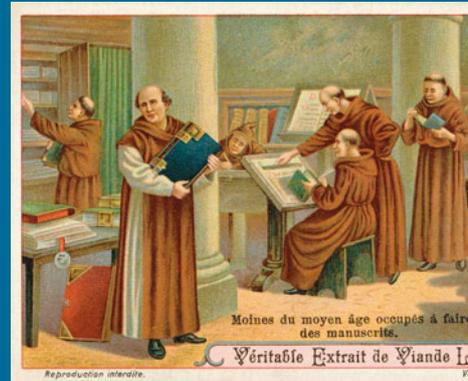
Let's begin

Most societies need a government and a political system. After the Romans left countries such as Britain and France, these societies had to create new types of government and organisation. They did this very well, and during the Middle Ages three new types of power appeared.

The first form of authority was religious, based on the Christian church. Christianity became the dominant religion for almost all in Europe, with the pope in Rome the head of the Catholic Church. He ruled with the help of educated officials and a system of monasteries and convents throughout Europe, making the church a united force providing stability throughout the region.

The second form of authority was political: this was monarchy, or rule by a king. Charlemagne and William the Conqueror are two important examples of the power of monarchy in the Middle Ages.

The third main form of authority was economic. In Europe's feudal system, landowners let other people use their land, in return for their support and work. When a king gave land to a baron, that baron became his vassal and promised to be loyal and to fight for him. The baron then gave land to a knight, who gave land to a peasant farmer, with each becoming the vassal of the other. This arrangement locked people into agreements, and increased security for all.



Source 3.2 Monks copying manuscripts in the Middle Ages



Source 3.3 Castello di Montebello fortress



Source 3.4 Musicians from the Middle Ages (illumination)

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

Romans leave **c. 410 CE**
Britain

The 'Dark Ages'

End of Roman Empire **c. 476**

Clovis I rules the **c. 481–511**
Franks in Gaul

. Early Middle Ages

Charlemagne becomes **c. 771**
King of the Franks

Charlemagne is **c. 800**
crowned Holy Roman Emperor

High Middle Ages

William the **c. 1066**
Conqueror invades England

Domesday Book **c. 1086–87**
is completed in England

Crusades **c. 1096–1270**
move through the Holy Land

. Late Middle Ages

Black Death **c. 1347–1352**
devastates Europe

Renaissance begins **c. 1350**
in Italy

Great Schism **c. 1378–1417**
in the church

WORLD EVENTS

c. 632 CE Muhammad dies

c. 846 Arab armies attack
Rome

c. 1099 Jerusalem is taken by
the Crusaders

c. 1187 Jerusalem is
recaptured by the Arabs

c. 1300 First Ottoman Turkish
state is created in Anatolia



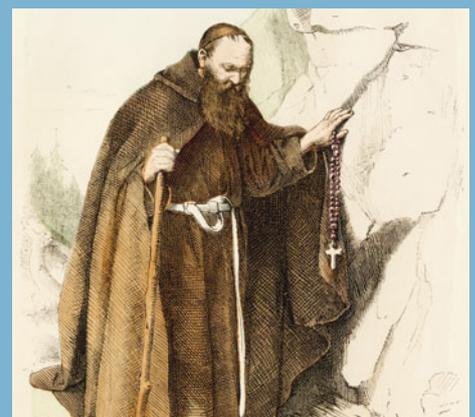
Source 3.5 Middle Ages prince; engraving at 'Germania', 1882



Source 3.6 Knights entering a medieval castle



Source 3.7 The Virgin flanked by Emperor John II Comnenus and Empress Irene of Byzantium (mosaic)



Source 3.8 Medieval hermit monk

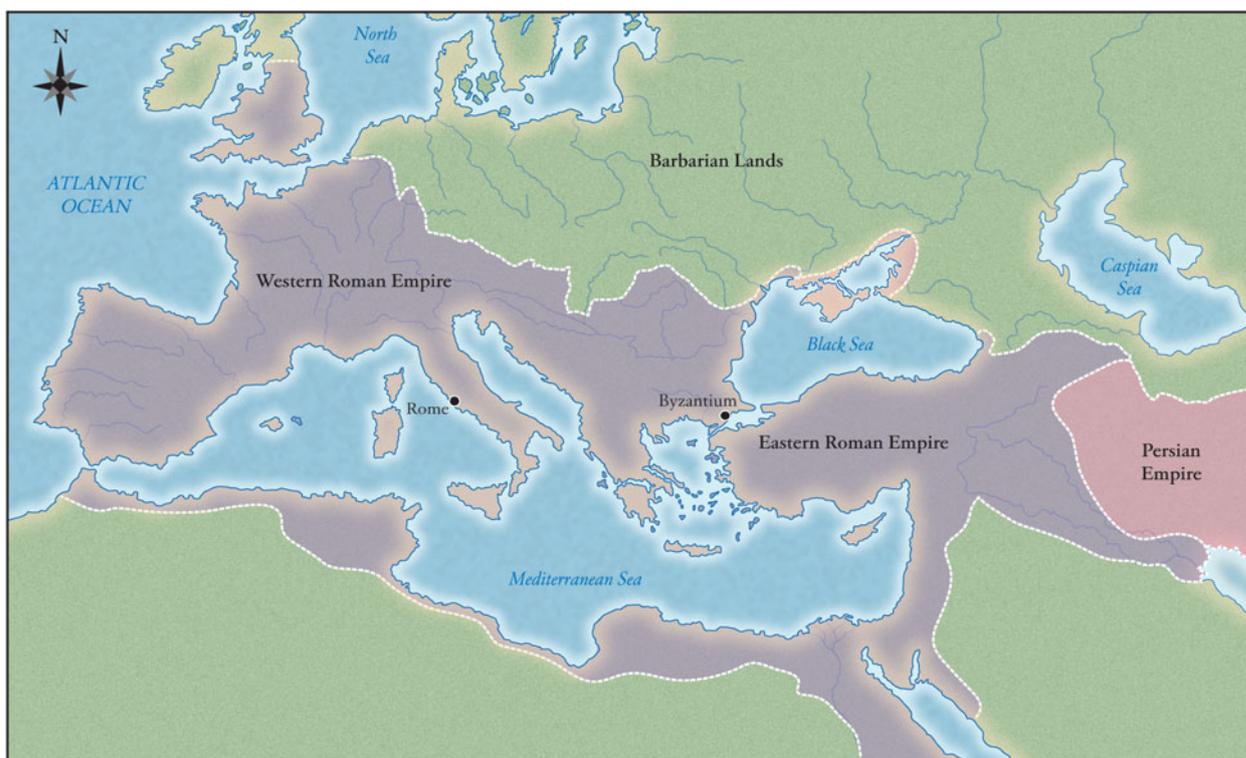


Source 3.9 Medieval Europe



Death of an empire, birth of modern Europe

For 500 years, most of Western Europe and the Mediterranean area were ruled from Rome (see Source 3.10). However, the mighty Roman Empire began to weaken in about 200 CE. Several problems caused its final collapse. First, the empire was weakened by the constant attacks on its borders by peoples whom the Romans called 'barbarians', tribes who lived outside the Roman Empire.



Source 3.10 Map of the Roman Empire c. 117 CE



Second, it was weakened by the poor leadership of several bad emperors. This in turn allowed further fighting between various governors and officials in parts of the empire. In 476 CE it collapsed completely; the 'barbarians' took over its lands and changed them dramatically within a century.

Source 3.11 A carved stone coffin shows the Roman army fighting Germanic tribespeople in the area of the Danube in about 180 CE

Troubled times

‘Barbarian’ tribes invade Europe

As the Germanic tribes swept in from the north, the peoples of Roman Europe saw their towns and homes destroyed. The occupants of Roman Europe might have hated their Roman leaders, but they had adjusted to Roman rule. It had brought them nearly five hundred years of peace, called the Pax Romana. After 476 CE, everything changed as the ‘barbarian’ invaders created new societies.

The Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded England in the fifth and sixth

centuries. The Franks, Lombards, Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths and the Huns invaded other parts of Europe. These invasions occurred in many waves, each one stronger than before. The Lombards, Visigoths and Vandals even attacked Rome and the Italian peninsula. Their destructiveness is remembered in our use of the word ‘vandal’ today.

Although the invaders were violent and destructive, they did intend to settle in the new lands and to build their own societies. While Roman society was not destroyed, its power lessened as Western European society evolved and adapted.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the information you have learnt on what happened in Western Europe after the Romans left. Include any glossary terms as well to ensure you understand them and to develop your vocabulary.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Time: | |
| Term: | |
| Issue: | |
| Solution: | |



The medieval world and Christian kings

The people who lived in Europe between 500 CE and 1500 CE probably did not *feel* that they were living in a ‘middle’ age, and would not have understood the term if they ever heard it. Although historical names like this can be useful, they can also give us the wrong idea about a period of time. The term ‘Middle Ages’ was made up later, by people living in the 1500s. These later people were discovering knowledge about Greek and Roman times that seemed to have been ‘lost’ for almost five hundred years; they thought that the people before them must have been less

interested in this knowledge, and so less civilised. In particular, they thought that between 500 CE and 900 CE people must have lived in the ‘Dark Ages’; that is, at a time when the ‘darkness’ of the Germanic invasions shut out the ‘light’ of the Greek and Roman civilisations.

In fact, civilisation continued steadily during the Middle Ages, and learning and culture continued to grow. After the fall of the Roman Empire, many people worked to save the knowledge of the past in their libraries for future use. Knowledge was therefore valued, and never

monastery a place of residence of a community of monks or nuns living under religious vows

medieval nineteenth-century Latin for 'middle age' (*medium aevum*)

era a period of time in history; for example, the Roman era or the medieval era

ignored. It is true that few people outside the **monasteries** had the education to read the books that had been saved. This skill came from the **medieval era** itself and was developed by the Germanic invaders and the church scholars. In modern times, historians have also used the term 'Middle Ages', but many now think that the term is misleading.

When we look more carefully at this period of time, we can see that there were some important developments during the so-called 'Middle Ages'.

For example, the old Roman province of Gaul (modern-day France) was, by the sixth century, divided between tribes such as the Franks, Burgundians and Visigoths. It was here that the powerful king of the Frankish people, Charlemagne (742–814 CE), went on to conquer large parts of present-day France, Germany and Italy to create his own great empire. Once he had done so, he created a completely new system of government and organisation of society to improve education and learning in his lands. The emergence of the great Christian kingdom of Charlemagne proved that people in the Middle Ages could develop their own form of civilisation very effectively.

Activity 3.1

- 1 Account for why some historians in the past have underestimated the Middle Ages by labelling them the 'Dark Ages'.
- 2 Explain how bias can affect our view of history.
- 3 Discuss how modern historians try to understand the medieval era.

The Frankish Kingdom of Charlemagne

This strong kingdom began when a group of tribes of Germanic origin called the Franks moved in to the lands now known as France. They were good soldiers, but also had the skills to build villages and farms. King Clovis I (466–511 CE) was an early king who made the important decision to convert to Catholic **Christianity**. From then on, the king's authority would be backed by the church, which in turn was protected by the **monarchy**. He was

poorly educated, could barely read and write, and was a particularly cruel ruler. Nonetheless, he did start the **dynasty** that ruled Frankland for 300 years. He also, however, started the tradition of dividing the kingdom between his sons on his death. This often led to civil wars between the sons, causing death and destruction to their people.

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

monarchy a style of government where a king or queen rules a society

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

The Frankish kingdom became powerful when Charlemagne ruled from 771. His father, Pepin, had divided his kingdom between Charlemagne and his younger brother Carloman, hoping they would cooperate to rule the land. Carloman inherited the most important lands and the two brothers resented each other. Carloman died suddenly in 771, allowing Charlemagne to rule as the sole Frankish king.

Charlemagne was a Germanic king. His biographer, Eginhard, states that he was able to 'converse in Latin and he understood Greek; but his native language was German [not the German language we know today but a dialect that has evolved over time]. He could not read and write.' He was competent in mathematics and astronomy. Charlemagne surrounded himself with **scholars** who knew Christian teachings, and others who studied the works of ancient Greece and Rome.

scholar a specialist in a particular branch of study, such as history



Source 3.12 This small bronze statue from the Louvre Museum, Paris, shows the emperor as a soldier and man of action on horseback. He is holding the orb of royal power. The figure may be Charlemagne or one of his successors, Charles the Bald.

A powerful friendship: king and church

The Frankish kings' royal authority was strengthened when they won the support of the Catholic Church. The later kings of Frankland also converted to Christianity, and were crowned by the church in Paris. By Charlemagne's time, there was a strong relationship between the church and the monarchy of Frankland. Charlemagne valued his role as protector of the church in his kingdom. Another ruler, Charles the Bald, actually commissioned a painting of himself on his throne, with the hand of God pointing down to him, indicating he was in power by **divine** right.

divine relating to a god or gods

The relationship between king and church was not, however, always smooth. Charlemagne would even interfere with the pope's ambitions if it would help his aims. He felt that the only authority he had to obey was God's alone.

Charlemagne's greatest achievements

A new political system

As Frankish King, Charlemagne developed a strong political and social system that became the basis of Europe during the Middle Ages. To strengthen his control over the kingdom, he divided his lands between his closest and most trustworthy supporters. He appointed some as **bishops** of the church, and others as counts, or heads of noble families. He created teams of officials to carefully check the loyalty of these supporters. This process of granting land and status in return for support produced the feudal system (or **feudalism**), which spread throughout medieval Europe.

bishop the senior member of the Catholic Church in a particular diocese

feudalism a form of government based on the exchange of land for military service, with a strict hierarchy of status; also a system under which peasants were granted use of farming land and, in return, were obliged to provide services and loyalty to the lord of the manor

Learning

Although Charlemagne himself could not read or write, he wanted to revive learning and culture in his kingdom. He built a magnificent palace and church in his capital, Aachen (Germany).

He ordered old books to be brought to his capital at Aachen to be copied carefully and accurately. Some were translated from largely forgotten foreign languages. He also ordered a new and clear form of writing called the Carolingian minuscule script.

War and conquest

As king, Charlemagne also wanted to increase his status and power by increasing the size of his kingdom. He did not ask his counts, **knights** and **vassals** whether to fight, but

knight a military servant of a king or other person of rank

vassal a slave or servant within the feudal system who received land in return for their service

where to fight. He fought more than fifty wars. The people he conquered had to convert to Christianity; any who refused were executed. For example, he killed 4500 people in Saxony because they refused to convert. He fought the Saxons for ten more years before they gave in. Later, in 774 CE, when the Lombards invaded the pope's lands, Charlemagne attacked them and took their land. He also conquered part of Spain.

cavalry soldiers who fight on horseback

stirrup a metal device that holds the foot of a horse rider steady, allowing the rider to use weapons while riding

Charlemagne was successful because he was a good organiser. First, he introduced new weapons into warfare. For example, he introduced **cavalry** into his army. He also used the **stirrup**, an invention recently arrived from China.

Second, he used clever tactics. In battle, he divided his army into two columns that worked together to trap the enemy between them in a **pincer movement**. Third, he used **military intelligence**; that is, a network of spies to gather information about his enemies and the area of the battle. Before battle, he informed his followers what size army to bring, which weapons to use and how the enemy forces were composed.

pincer movement when two parts of an army close in on the enemy from either side

military intelligence information about the size, location and tactics of enemy forces



Source 3.13 This painted page shows us what Charlemagne's efficient army looked like. Although the scene is meant to depict a battle in the Bible, the artist has shown the soldiers as he knew them in his own time. We can clearly see the stirrups, the chain mail, the spears and the dragon flag used by the soldiers.

International affairs

Pope Leo III was grateful to Charlemagne for helping him defeat the Lombards, and proclaimed him 'Emperor of the Romans' in 800 CE. This title later became 'Holy Roman Emperor' and was used by powerful **Catholic** kings in Europe for centuries.

Catholic a Christian who belongs to the original church led by the pope; also Roman Catholic

Death of Charlemagne and the slow collapse of his empire

Charlemagne died in 814 CE and was buried in his cathedral at Aachen. The empire was again divided between his sons. By the time his grandsons ruled, these kingdoms were weakening. By 900 CE, his great empire was divided into smaller kingdoms with Christian rulers.

HISTORICAL FACT

Charlemagne is still recognised today as having delivered a level of European unity not achieved again until the European Parliament was established in 1952. Every year since, the European Parliament has awarded the Charlemagne Prize to any adult who has made an outstanding contribution to European unity in our times.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the information about medieval Europe during the reign of Charlemagne.

| Key achievements | |
|----------------------|--|
| New political system | |
| Learning | |
| Military | |
| Diplomatic | |

Activity 3.2

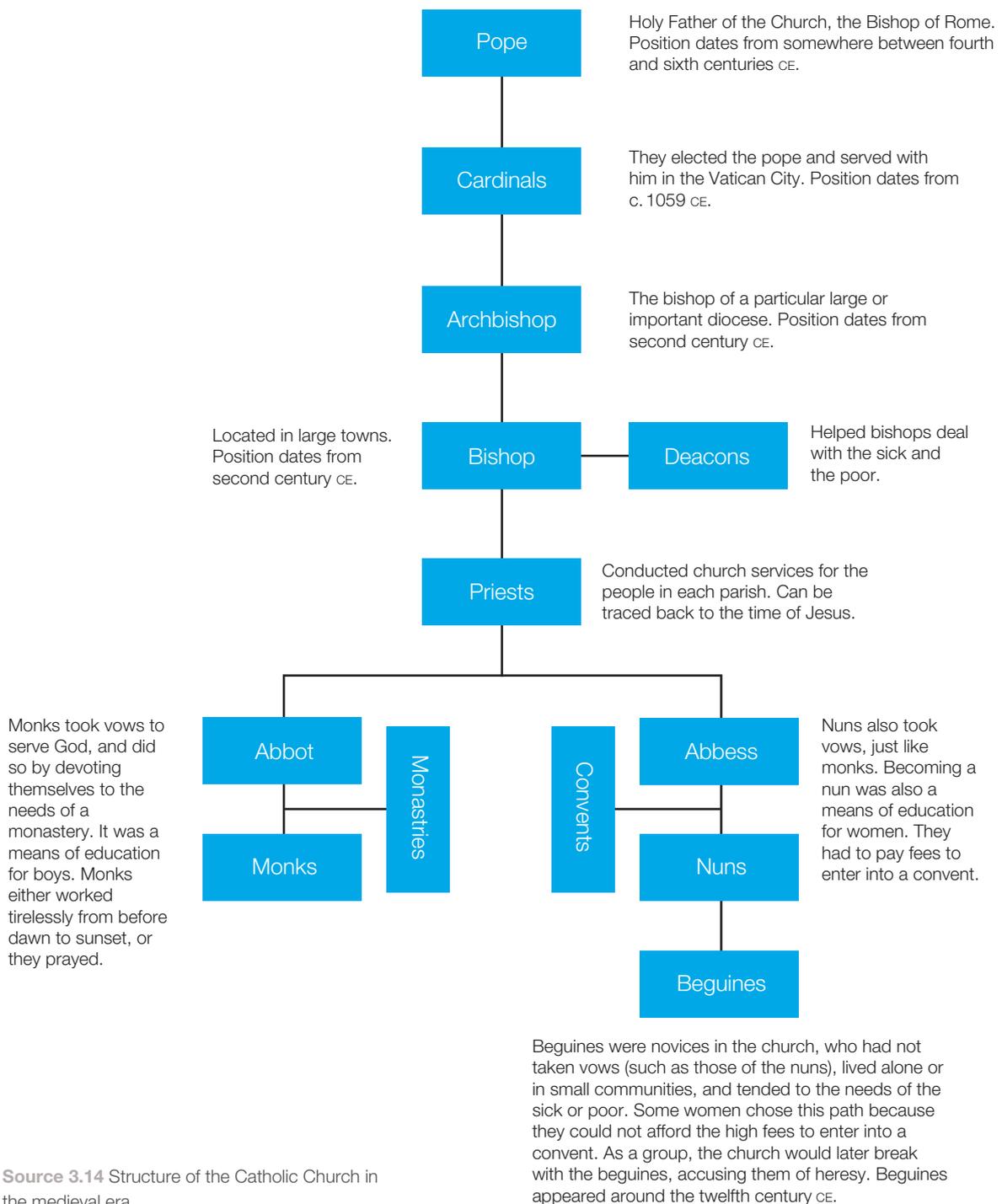
- 1 Outline the evidence you can find regarding whether Charlemagne thought Pope Leo III was his equal.
- 2 Explain how Charlemagne firmly established control over his kingdom.
- 3 Discuss why Charlemagne was considered to be a good organiser.



Living in the medieval Christian world

The Catholic Church

Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 391 CE, and spread out across Europe. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church dominated Europe. By the eleventh century the Christian faith and the Catholic Church were central to the lives of all people in medieval society.



Source 3.14 Structure of the Catholic Church in the medieval era

Core beliefs of the Christian faith

The core of the Christian faith was the teachings of Jesus Christ, a Jew who lived in first century Palestine in the Middle East. By the eleventh century CE, Christians believed that there was only one true God, that the Old Testament of the Bible was the word of God, and his son Jesus had been sent to lead believers to eternal life in heaven. The connection they saw between God and Jesus convinced Christians that Christ's teachings were an absolute truth that could only be explained by the church.

Organisation of the Catholic Church

archbishop a bishop of the Catholic Church in charge of a particularly large or important diocese

deacon a clergyman of the Catholic Church who assists the bishop deal with the sick and poor in their diocese

priest a clergyman of the Catholic Church who conducts services for the people in each parish

pope the head of the Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome

The Catholic Church did much more than teach religious beliefs. It also had a political and social role in European societies. Source 3.14 illustrates the structure of church organisation in Europe by the eleventh century CE.

The Catholic Church divided Europe into areas controlled by **archbishops**, who lived in larger towns of political significance, and by bishops, who lived in smaller cities and towns. **Deacons** provided poor relief and assistance for the sick. **Priests** worked with

the mass of the population, and lived among them. If their population was poor, the priest was usually poor. Only archbishops, bishops and priests were allowed to comment on matters of religious faith. The **pope** commanded them all. They all obeyed church rulings on matters of

scripture and personal behaviour. They could never marry and were not supposed to have children. Their role was to serve God and the people for whom they cared.

Relationships between popes and kings

The medieval kings and popes did not trust each other, but recognised that each other was necessary. For example, Pope Leo III disliked Charlemagne's many wars, but appreciated his work stopping the Lombard invasion of papal lands. The pope, as the head of the church, could **excommunicate** anybody from the church – even a king. Monarchs put up with interference by popes because the church could maintain social order in their kingdoms, and leave the politics to them. The church taught everybody from the king down that God had determined their position in the social order. To rebel against authority was to rebel against God himself. Rebellion was therefore rare.

excommunicate officially exclude someone from the Catholic Church

Roles of the church

By the eleventh century CE, the church was very important in Christian kingdoms because it carried out many roles. It ran courts of law, built bridges and roads, published books, educated the rich, cared for the sick and the poor, and organised festivities to entertain local populations.

Beliefs about heaven and hell

The church's greatest power was its control over people's beliefs about life and, especially, death. For most medieval people, life was short and

HISTORICAL FACT

The word you love to celebrate – holidays – comes from the various 'holy days' that the church would celebrate with festivities.



heaven the paradise to which the souls of good people go after death

hell the place of punishment and torture to which the souls of evil people go after death

purgatory the place that souls of the people go to be purified and made ready for heaven

death could come quickly and unexpectedly. The church first taught you about the life of the soul after death: **heaven** was God's reward for having lived a good, Christian life. Everybody knew that they must be baptised to become a member of the church. They were also expected to take Holy Communion. They must be married by a priest. They must donate money to the church. Finally, at death, if a person's soul was judged to be not good enough to enter heaven, but not bad enough to go to **hell**, the soul was purified in **purgatory** before going to heaven.

In 1275 CE, the German Mechtild of Magdeburg wrote a book that shaped how people understood the promise of heaven and the threat of hell (see Source 3.15).

Mechtild was not a nun but a **beguine**. Unlike a nun, a beguine did not have to make lifelong promises to join the church, and could leave the sisterhood to get married if she chose to do so.

beguine a member of a special society or Catholic sisterhood devoted to doing holy works, such as the care of the poor

Great achievements in architecture

The Catholic Church had built places of worship from the earliest days, but the first churches were

Times gone by ...

Oh, how narrow ... is the path to the kingdom of heaven!
 ... I have seen a city ... its name is eternal hate.
 Lucifer sits bound by his guilt in the deepest abyss.
 ... In the bottommost part of hell the fire, gloom,
 stench, shuddering and all kinds of intense pain are
 the greatest. It is there that Christians are placed
 according to their deeds. In the middle part of hell
 the suffering is more moderate. In the topmost part of
 hell the various kinds of pains are the least severe
 ... [here you find the non-believers.]

... [Lucifer will rob] the robber and hand him over
 to his henchmen to be chased and beaten mercilessly.
 ... The miser he eats, for he always wanted more. When
 he has swallowed him, he forces him out again by the
 tail ... Murderers must stand before [Lucifer] bloody
 and must receive fiery sword thrusts from [him]. Those
 who [on earth practised] ... fierce hatred must [in hell
 wear] a smelling pot [beneath his nose]. ... Those who
 ... ate and drank to excess [on Earth, will endure in
 hell] unending hunger ... [and will be forced to drink]
 sulphur and pitch. ... Alas, so horrible it is there!

... All who enter into the mouth [of hell] are never delivered from eternal death ...

I saw how paradise was [put together] ... I could find no end ... I saw trees, foliage and a little grass but no weeds. Some trees bore apples ... the leaves had a [lovely] fragrance. Swift waters flow there and the wind blows from the south to north ... the breeze was sweeter than I can say. [No animals or birds were there] for God had entrusted it [only] to man, that he might live in comfort.

Source 3.15 Mechetilde of Magdeburg (a beguine) writes on hell and heaven

- 1 Explain what role a beguine used to play in Christian faith during the medieval era.
- 2 Identify how Source 3.15 indicates that Christians in the Middle Ages might have thought about what happened to their souls after death.
- 3 Mechetilde's original work is lost to history because the church had it destroyed in the fourteenth century CE. The extracts in Source 3.15 have survived as a Latin copy that has then been translated into English by a number of people. As a budding historian, give your opinion as to how reliable these extracts are as evidence of beliefs of Christians during the medieval era.

small and built of wood or stone. By the eleventh century CE, important churches, especially cathedrals, had grown in size. The builders were limited, however, by their techniques because they could only support a roof with simple rounded arches. The walls also had to be very thick, and could not have large windows. In England, these solid churches with round arches were called the Norman style; in France, they were later called the Romanesque style. These great buildings towered over their local communities, impressing ordinary people with the wealth and power of the church. The church used money from rental of its lands and from donations by the faithful to keep up its campaigns of building, which often continued over decades or centuries.

In the years between 1150 and 1250, however, new building techniques allowed the construction of much taller cathedrals, with much larger windows that could be filled with stained glass. At the time, this was referred to simply as the New Style; later, historians called this the Gothic style in architecture. One of the earliest examples of the new architecture was the Cathedral of St Denis, located outside Paris. There, the architects developed the Gothic style arch on the inside of the building, and the **flying buttress** on the outside. The most famous Gothic cathedral in Europe is Notre Dame of Paris, but the greatest example of the style is the cathedral of Notre Dame of Chartres (see Source 3.16), about 80 kilometres south-west of Paris.

flying buttress a stone arch designed to support the main wall of a large church



Source 3.16 Statuary from Notre Dame of Chartres

Research 3.1

This exercise requires you to research a significant building of the Middle Ages. In consultation with your teacher, choose an important medieval building that interests you.

When you have chosen, go to www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks and explore the websites there.

After careful research, construct a model of one of the following:

- 1 a medieval manor
- 2 a medieval castle
- 3 a cathedral in the 'New Style' (later known as Gothic), such as Notre Dame of Paris or Notre Dame of Chartres.

Note that the first two might require a team of people to work with. Also keep accurate records of all research resources you use.

Relics, pilgrims and pilgrimages

Christians flocked to Chartres to see the garment supposedly worn by Mary when she gave birth to Jesus Christ, believing it brought them closer to

relic an object surviving from an earlier time

the Virgin, who they thought could intercede to God on their behalf. The worship of **relics** spread quickly across medieval Europe.

Other cathedrals collected relics of holy people, believing that they had magical powers to heal and to forgive. These relics included supposed parts of a body (such as the finger of St John the Baptist), garments or items dating from the time of Jesus, and even a feather said to be from the wing of the Archangel Gabriel. These relics were often stored in ornate containers called reliquaries (see Source 3.17).

In the Middle Ages, Christians were encouraged to travel to the holy lands, particularly to Jerusalem, Rome, Canterbury (England), Marburg (central Germany) and Chartres (France). The pilgrimage aimed to strengthen a person's Christian faith, and to earn forgiveness of sins, through the difficulty of the journey.

Some could afford to ride on horseback, but most walked, with some dragging heavy chains to add to their sense of punishment.

Pilgrims hoped to deepen their faith in Jesus, and show their repentance for any sins.

Another reason for attempting a pilgrimage in the medieval era was that most people were born, lived and died in the village where they grew up. A pilgrimage allowed people to travel and see things they never thought possible. A pilgrim might change his or her life altogether, deciding to return home and devote her or his time to caring for the poor or the sick, or to the church and God. Pilgrimages were dangerous, but the dangers added to the seriousness of the spiritual journey.

In modern times, pilgrimages are still very important. Many Catholics undertake pilgrimages to the Vatican in the hope that the pope will bless them. Others go to Jerusalem (in modern-day Israel) to get closer to God. Some Muslims make their pilgrimage to Mecca (in modern-day Saudi Arabia) at least once in their life to show their faith.

pilgrim a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons; the journey is the 'pilgrimage'



Source 3.17 This reliquary, from the State Museum in Zurich, Switzerland, is made in the shape of the foot that it contains. Medieval people believed that praying in front of a relic of a saint brought you closer to that holy figure.

Activity 3.3

- 1 Discuss why sacred places, such as Chartres Cathedral, and pilgrimages were so important to committed Christians of the medieval era.
- 2 Outline in what ways pilgrims might have personally benefited from their pilgrimages.
- 3 Describe how pilgrimages reinforced the Christian faith in Western Europe.

Great achievements in art

During most of the Middle Ages, there were no printing presses. If you could read and wanted a book, such as the Bible, you had to borrow one

and copy it out by hand. This was called a **manuscript**. People also took the time to paint beautiful scenes on the pages, showing events such as the crucifixion of Christ, called **illuminations**.

An illuminated manuscript had beautifully decorated borders, capital letters and illustrations. These books were the art masterpieces of the Middle Ages.

The illuminated manuscripts remind us that there were many other groups and religions in the medieval world, apart from Christianity. Jews and Muslims, for example, both had rich cultural traditions and deep religious beliefs, and they too expressed their faith in illuminated manuscripts. For example, a manuscript called *The Rylands Haggadah* shows scenes in the life of the Jewish community in Spain during the fourteenth century. One illumination shows every detail of the ‘Seder’ celebration during Passover.

The **Islamic** community also created beautiful manuscripts that clearly show the depth of its knowledge in fields such as mathematics and medicine. In a manuscript called *The Surgery of Abu'l Qāsim*

Halaf Ibn, we see the great Arab surgeon checking a patient and performing a surgical operation.

It is possible that the holy books of the Jews and Muslims first gave Christians the idea of writing such works to show their faith. There were strong Jewish and Islamic communities in

Iberia (modern-day Spain) until the mid fifteenth century CE. Christian pilgrims travelling in Spain may have seen their beautiful manuscripts and copied the idea when they returned to their Christian communities.

At first, medieval manuscripts were produced in monasteries, where monks worked in **scriptoria**.

The hard work was a form of prayer

– a way of doing God’s work. They produced large copies of the Bible, as well as other books for use in church services, such as lectionaries, from which prayers could be read during a church service.

Private book collectors and beautiful Books of Hours

By the thirteenth century, however, wealthy people wanted their own copies of books on philosophy, business, history, warfare, government and science.

Some wanted personalised prayer books, called **Books of Hours**.

These were highly decorated books containing prayers and psalms, specially designed with texts and

pictures to please the owner. Workshops were set up in towns, and the best artists were employed to make beautiful prayer books with special illustrations that often showed the person who had commissioned the book.

How illuminated manuscripts were made

Bookmaking turned into a big industry, with hundreds of scribes and painters in every medieval city making beautiful books for private customers. The process of making a book was lengthy. First,

manuscript a book written by hand

illumination the painting of beautiful scenes on pages, especially in manuscripts

scriptoria rooms where monks created or copied illuminated manuscripts

Book of Hours a personalised, illustrated prayer book

Islam a religion based upon belief in one God of whom Muhammed is the chief and last prophet

vellum sheets of material used for writing, which were made from thinned animal skin; also known as parchment

an expert created pages by cleaning and cutting lambskin, until it formed a dry material called **vellum** or parchment. In large cities, a whole street was taken up just with the workshops of parchment makers. There is

still a Street of the Parchment Makers in Paris today, although their workshops disappeared centuries ago.

The scribe first ruled lines on the page then wrote the text in black ink. The book was then passed to the illuminators, who painted pictures on the page. One Bible took about a year to make.



Source 3.18 This illuminated manuscript shows the workshop of a parchment maker in Italy during the fifteenth century. You can see the two parchment makers carefully scraping and smoothing the skin to make pages. There are bundles of parchment or vellum on the shelves above, ready for sale.

HISTORICAL FACT

The Duke of Berry was so keen to get a new manuscript that he often went into the workshop of the Limbourg brothers to take it before it was finished. The three brothers wondered how they could politely tell their rich employer that he had to learn to wait until the book was finished. Finally, they carved a copy of a book out of wood, painted it so that it looked exactly like a real book, and left it on their bench. The Duke of Berry rushed in, grabbed the book and tried to open it. The three artists roared with laughter at the trick, and the duke got the message and learned to wait until the brothers had fully finished their work.

The church and the Crusades, 1096–1270 CE

Medieval people wanted to show their commitment to their Christian faith. By 1066 CE, a new expression of faith became common. Thousands of Europeans, of all social backgrounds, travelled to Jerusalem and waged war to free what they called ‘the holy lands’ from the Muslims who then occupied the area. Understandably, the Muslims hated the savage attacks by the Europeans. To this day, the **Crusades** are remembered in the Islamic world as a terrible example of religious intolerance and violence.

From a European and Christian point of view, Jerusalem was the centre of the holy lands because Jesus Christ was born, lived and preached, and died there. Christian pilgrims often travelled to Jerusalem to visit the holy sites, and returned with stories of being attacked and robbed by the

Crusades military campaigns to restore Christianity in regions controlled by Muslims

Muslims. There may well have been incidents like this, but such stories may have also been made up.

Pope Urban II called church leaders and nobles to meet in Clermont, France, in 1095, where he urged them to capture the holy lands (see Activity 0.3 in the opening chapter). Fulcher of Chartres said that the pope promised sinners forgiveness for their sins. Robert the Monk recorded that the pope promised that the war was ‘the will of God!’ Part of the attraction was probably that Crusaders would be allowed to keep the treasures they captured.

In Europe, nobles gathered their soldiers for their ‘**holy war**’. They paid for their own supplies and transport to the holy lands.

holy war a war fought in the name of a god

Some nobles sold their lands to raise the money. The Catholic Church also gave money, while kings raised taxes to support the armies of 34 500 soldiers.

The armies travelled overland through foreign countries, fighting with local armies as preparation for fighting the Muslims in Jerusalem. They lost troops and used up food, so they had to steal more supplies along the way. Arriving in the holy lands, they prepared for battles with those they saw as the representatives of Islam. They recaptured Jerusalem after many battles. Some proudly justified their violence, recalling that ‘they did not [even] spare the [Islamic] women and children’.

Many Crusaders stayed in the holy lands and continued to fight Islamic armies. Some built mighty fortresses, such as the Krak des Chevaliers. After their victory in 1099, generations of crusaders returned six times between 1147 and 1270 in a sustained attack on Muslims by Christian Europeans, but they failed to recapture Jerusalem.



Source 3.19 This drawing was made in England in about 1250 CE. The figure – possibly King Henry III – kneels to take his solemn oath to go to the holy lands.

Richard the Lionheart and Saladin

King Richard I is one of the most famous crusading kings. He ruled England (1189–99 CE) from France. He led the Third Crusade (1189–92) with King Philip II of France and Frederick Barbarossa of Germany (the Holy Roman Emperor). The Crusade started badly: Frederick drowned on the way, and Richard and Philip squabbled. Philip withdrew his army, leaving Richard to fight the great Muslim commander, Saladin.

Richard tried to capture Jerusalem and place it in Christian control, but failed. In 1192, he and Saladin signed a truce. In recognition of Richard's courage, Saladin allowed Christian pilgrims safe travel in the city of Jerusalem.

Effects of the Crusades

From a Muslim point of view, the Crusades were an unprovoked attack by infidels who used their religion as an excuse for bloody warfare, destruction and looting.

From a European Christian point of view, the Crusades were justified by the religious aim of recapturing the holy city of Jerusalem. They were expensive: 173 years of warfare did not capture Jerusalem, armies were devastated, nobles were killed and the feudal system weakened. As a result, European kings had more power over their nobles.

When civilisations come into contact, they are changed by the experience. As a result of the Crusades, the Europeans became aware of new products such as silk and spices. Trade between Europe and the regions to its east increased, and European towns grew rich. European markets now traded products such as lemons, apricots,

sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon, melons, exotic carpets, slippers, cosmetics and glass mirrors. A new merchant class appeared, which did not fit into the groups of the old feudal system.

The Europeans also discovered new ideas and knowledge. The Muslims had a rich civilisation – far more advanced than that of Europe – with excellent knowledge in medicine, mathematics and astronomy. For example, Arab mathematics influenced the system of numbers used in Europe. New words also appeared in English, such as lemon, syrup, muslin, arsenal, admiral, almanac and alchemy.

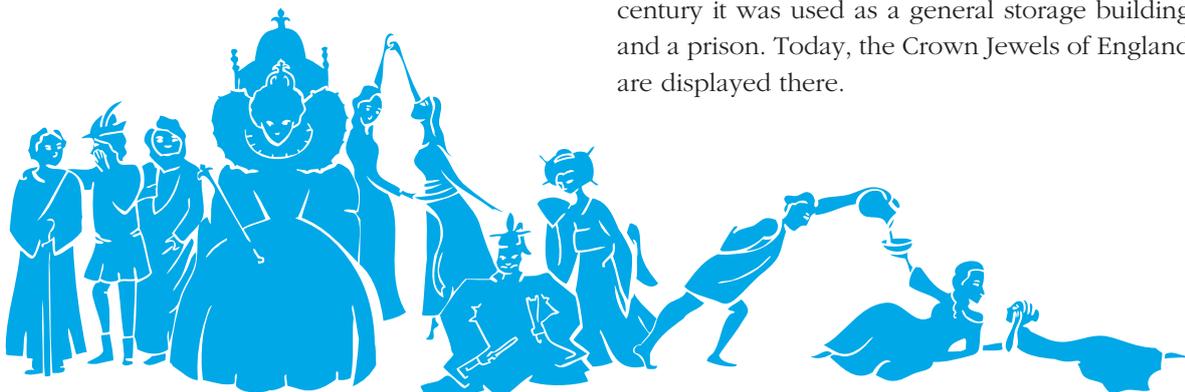
Barons, knights and castles

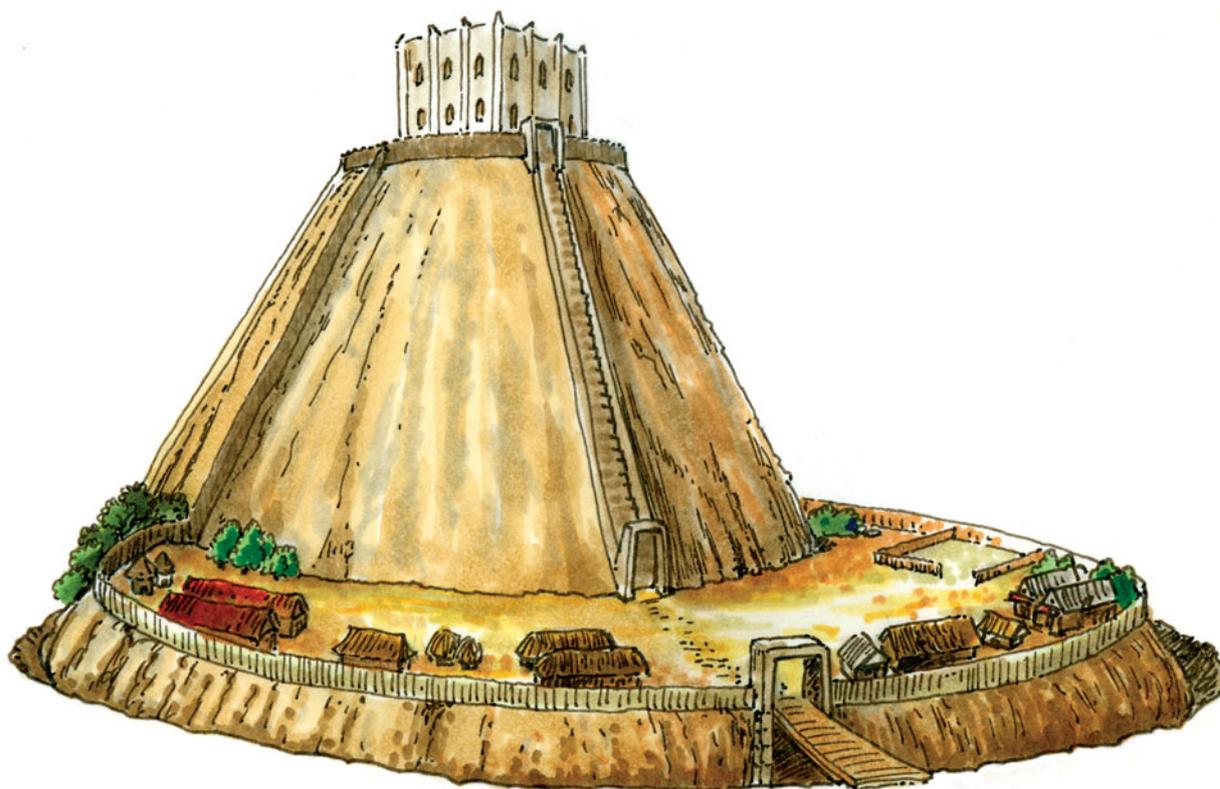
Just as the church built cathedrals to inspire faith, so kings and **barons** built great castles to express their wealth and power. A castle was a home and a safe place for the baron, his family, his knights and servants. The European castle began quite simply, but by the later Middle Ages it had developed into a large and impressive building.

Kings such as William the Conqueror introduced castles to keep control of the land they had conquered. William introduced the simple **motte and bailey castle** to England (see Source 3.20). These were made quickly with wooden walls and banks of earth. William's first castle was the Tower of London. It was a royal palace, and later became a prison. William built what is now called the 'white tower'. It is a number of buildings developed over two centuries and set within two rings of walls, surrounded by a moat or ditch. By the fifteenth century it was used as a general storage building and a prison. Today, the Crown Jewels of England are displayed there.

baron a nobleman who had been given his land by the king, often in return for military service

motte and bailey castle an early and simple form of the castle, made up of a bank of earth with a stone or wood wall on top of it





Source 3.20 A motte and bailey castle

Technological developments

By the twelfth century, motte and bailey castles were replaced by stronger stone fortresses. The wooden castles were cheap to build but could be easily set on fire. Kings and nobles knew that they needed stronger castles that could endure attacks and to express their power. Stone resisted burning and was easier to defend.

Stone castles began as a single multi-storey tower, called a keep, with thick walls, few windows and often only a single room per level. As they developed, walls connected several towers. The single tower became a series of fortifications, enclosing a wide area.

By the thirteenth century, concentric castles – a castle within a castle – developed. However, they could still be attacked. As castles became more advanced, new technologies threatened their defences. Devices such as the mangonel, the trebuchet, the siege tower and a variety of battering rams were all used to attack castles.

These stronger castles were seriously threatened in the thirteenth century when gunpowder was brought to Europe, allowing cannon fire to smash massive stone walls. Castles were then much harder to defend.

HISTORICAL FACT

Legend tells that the Venetian traveller Marco Polo discovered gunpowder when he visited China on a trade mission in the thirteenth century. He returned to Europe in 1299 with the discovery. However, the Arabs also knew about gunpowder long before Europeans did. Historians are still arguing as to who invented it first.

Medieval knights

Knights were the warriors of the medieval world. They crushed rebellions, protected the property of their king and nobles, protected the church and went on crusades. They differed from common soldiers because they fought on horseback, while others fought on foot. The cost of a knight's fighting armour and his horse was more than a peasant could earn in a lifetime's work, so only the wealthy could become knights.

We imagine knights as proud, devoted to their king and prepared to follow their orders to fight and to compete in tournaments. In the earlier part of the Middle Ages, though, knights fought for their king or baron against their enemies. They fought wars of conquest that brought fear and horror to the peasants and townspeople who were caught in the middle of the fighting.

chivalry a set of rules or code of conduct for knights, which obliged them to fight bravely and fairly, to act honestly and to defend the rights of others, especially women

By the twelfth century, however, knights had developed a code of behaviour called **chivalry**. They promised to protect the weak, defend the church and assist women.

There were religious knights and secular knights. The religious knights included:

- Knights of the Temple, formed in the twelfth century to protect pilgrims in holy places, especially Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem

- Teutonic Knights, formed in the thirteenth century to protect German pilgrims to the holy lands
- Knights of Saint John, formed in England in 1099 to protect pilgrims in the holy lands.

The secular knights were those attached to barons and kings.

Becoming a knight

Becoming a knight involved skill, courage and a knowledge of chivalry. You started with an apprenticeship. At the age of 7, you were sent to live in the baron's castle as a **page** for seven years. Your knight taught you appropriate behaviour, horse riding and care of horses.

page a boy who began his training as a knight by serving in the home of a nobleman

You also learned hunting and fighting skills, using wooden weapons. This involved physical training in riding and wrestling to build your strength and to provide a tactical sense. At age 15, you became a **squire** and the knight's personal servant.

squire a young man who has become the personal servant of a knight

You had many tasks. You served his food at the table, cared for his horses, cleaned his armour and weapons, and helped him at tournaments. You rode with your knight into battle, carrying extra weapons, holding the knight's horse if he dismounted, and guarding prisoners if he captured them.

Research 3.2

Use the internet and resources in your school library to do some follow-up research into:

- Saladin
- Prince John of England
- Robin Hood.

Your focus for the research is to establish the links between Richard the Lionheart and the other three men. Present your findings to your teacher as a podcast of no more than 10 minutes.

HISTORICAL FACT

A knight's armour had many pieces, all of which had to be cleaned. Pages learned to put them all inside a barrel filled with sand and roll it downhill. The tumbling action of the sand worked to clean every small part of the armour, with much less effort than cleaning by hand.

At age 21, you were promoted to a knight. This process involved some humiliation. In early days, the young man's knight slapped him on the back of the head, knocked him roughly to the ground and said, 'I dub you knight!' Later, the process was longer and more religious. The ceremony lasted for 12 hours, and then his knight simply touched his shoulders with his sword.

Activity 3.4

- 1 Outline the role the Knights of the Temple played in the Catholic Church.
- 2 Recall who the Teutonic knights were.
- 3 Explain the term 'chivalry'.

Weapons and weaponry

All knights had a ceremonial sword. It was made just for them, and was crafted to last a lifetime. Some might have precious jewels or family heirlooms placed into the handle. Often a family motto would be etched on the blade, or perhaps lines from the Bible that the knight had requested. This sword was never taken into battle.

The knight took into battle his battle sword, his helmet and body armour, his mace, his battle-axe and a weapon called the morningstar **flail**.

He also carried his shield with his own markings on it, and a dagger for close fighting. From the fourteenth century, an English knight's body armour weighed about 33 kilograms and his helmet an additional 5 kilograms. Later in the Middle Ages, knights had armour made for their horses, adding another 70–100 kilograms. A knight in full battle dress was a powerful warrior.

flail a weapon made up of a heavy metal ball with sharp spikes hung on the end of a rope; the weapon would be swung in the air and brought down heavily to crush the skull of an enemy



Source 3.21 Two knights train for war in a sporting event called a joust



Lives and experiences of women

During the Middle Ages, many people had negative attitudes towards women, partly because of the misreading of some Christian writings. Late in the fourteenth century, one woman, Christine de Pisan, spoke out against negative attitudes to women. In one book, *The City of Women*, she told stories that showed the great strengths of women. In another, *The Book of the Three Virtues*, she explained to women their responsibilities in life, according to their rank in society (see Source 3.22).

Lady of the manor

manor the great house and lands of a rich nobleman

Women of the upper classes, such as the lady of the **manor**, are often seen in paintings and stories. The

lady of the manor had many responsibilities. She also had many skills in managing the large household, including the kitchens, the farms and the castle. There were activities everywhere, all the time. She had to check the bakehouse to oversee the baking of bread, the brewhouse for the making of beer, and the dairy for the making of butter and cheese. She had to check the larder to see that meat was salted properly and that bacon was smoked so that it would last. Elsewhere, there was the production of the hundreds of candles needed to light the castle. Medieval ladies also did large amounts of 'laying in' of stores, or shopping. They had to plan ahead to buy goods from the local market or from the

Times gone by ...

Just as women's bodies are softer than men's, so their understanding is sharper.

If it were customary to send little girls to school and teach them the same subjects as are taught to boys, they would learn just as fully and would understand the subtleties of all arts and sciences.

Not all men believe that it is bad for women to be educated. But it is very true that many foolish men have claimed this because it displeases them that women knew more than they did.

How many women are there who because of their husband's harshness spend their weary lives in the bond of marriage in greater suffering than if they were slaves?

Source 3.22 Christine de Pisan speaks out for women

Referring to women who marry powerful noblemen, Christine claims that they:

(continued)

must be highly knowledgeable about government, and wise - in fact, far wiser than most other such women in power. The knowledge of a baroness must be so comprehensive that she can understand everything. ... Moreover, she must have the courage of a man. This means that she should not be brought up very much among women nor should she be indulged in extensive and feminine pampering. Although her husband is served by [many officials], she must govern them all. To do this according to her right, she must conduct herself with such wisdom that she will be both feared and loved. She should avoid oppressing her men, since this is the surest way to [cause] their hatred. Speaking words of good courage to her men-at-arms as well as to her other [servants], she will urge them to loyalty and their best efforts.

Source 3.22 Christine de Pisan speaks out for women (continued)

- 1 Why does Christine de Pisan believe that women can benefit from having a good education?
- 2 Why does Christine de Pisan believe that the wife of a powerful baron cannot afford to be too feminine?
- 3 How does Christine de Pisan advise women to develop good leadership and management skills?

nearest large town. In particular, they had to buy large amounts of spices, which were used to give flavour to meat, as well as fish and wine.

Many lords saw their wives as valuable and trusted partners. Eileen Power found evidence for this in the wills that people wrote when they were dying. In England in 1418 CE, for example, Stephen Thomas of Lee wrote his last wishes to his wife with strong feeling: 'I will not write any more to you, but may God keep you, dear and trusty wife. Here I come to my end, and so I ask you, as I trust you completely, that my last will be fulfilled, as well as everything I have ordered at home, for all the love that ever was between man and woman.'

Working women in the towns

Medieval women in the towns were free to go into business. A married woman could open a shop or a market stall without permission from her husband. Evidence has been found in the taxation records of Paris in the thirteenth century showing that women worked in many trades, including schoolteachers, doctors, chemists and in the arts. Others were bookbinders, painters or the artists who copied and illustrated manuscripts. Many found jobs as plasterers, possibly even builders. For example, we can see one woman who seems to have an entire workshop as a business in a painting called *Artist in her Atelier*

(see Source 3.23). It is clear that she has two skills: she can create paintings in a frame, as well as carve statues. On one table, we see the pots of colour that she would have prepared herself by grinding the paint into a powder. On another table, we see the hammer and chisel she used to make the sculptures we see behind her.

Working women in the fields

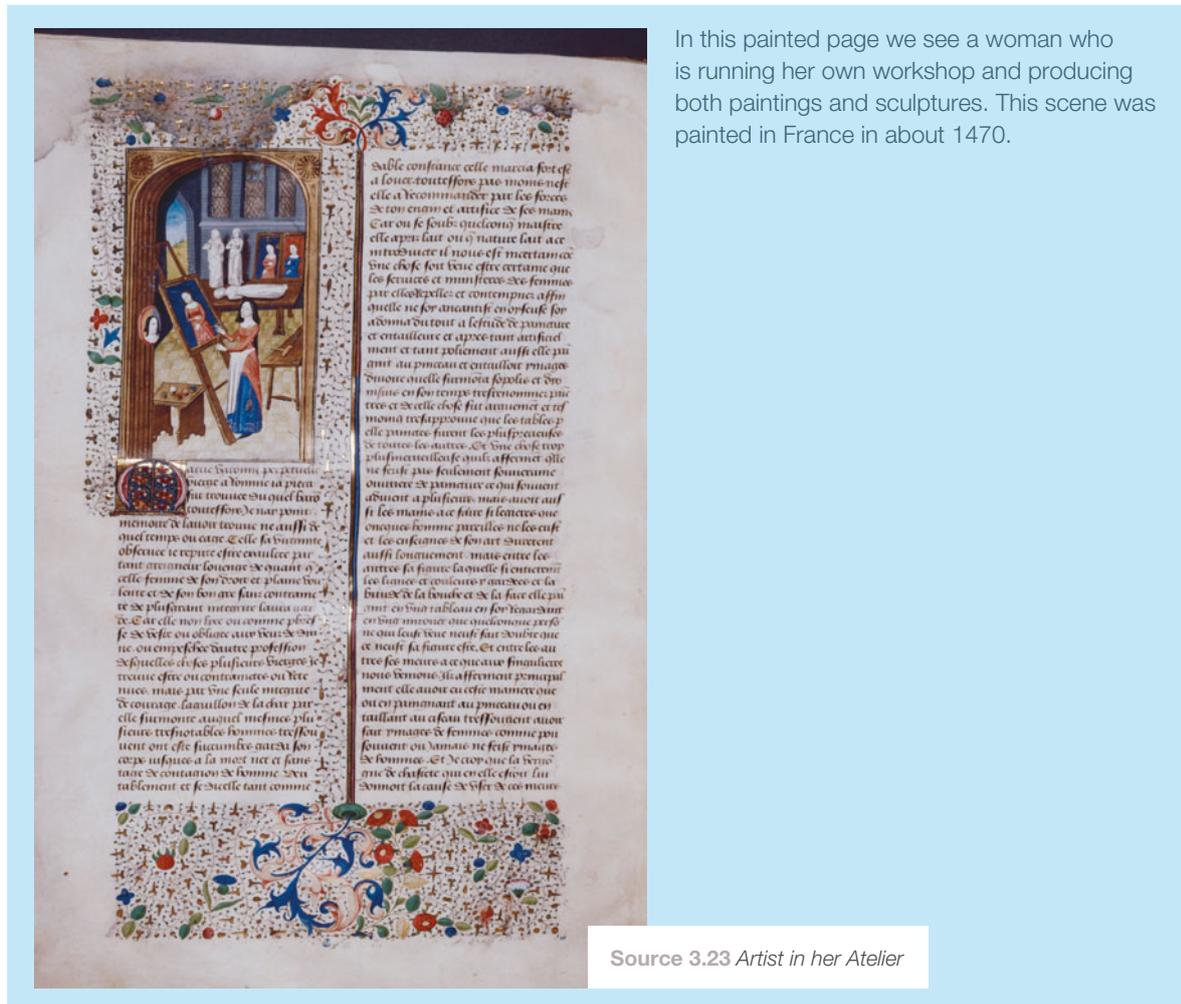
Attitudes to women might have been much simpler among working people in the countryside. The peasants probably had little time to worry about the position of women in their family.

In the painting *Dairy Scene* (see Source 3.24), we can look right into the life of a farm in Flanders. It is clear that everybody is involved in the never-ending work of the farm. It is early

morning. Two men bring sheep and a goat out of the stable, while a boy leads them out into the field. One woman milks a cow. Another woman brings the next cow from its manger. Inside the cottage, a woman is churning milk to make butter.

Another painting called *Collecting Chicken Eggs* (see Source 3.25) shows that women were given jobs like climbing a ladder to collect eggs from the high chicken coops.

Women did not simply do the light jobs. Some paintings, such as *Carrying a Sack of Grain to the Mill* (see Source 3.26), show women doing heavy tasks. This woman, dressed simply in a red robe, supports the weight of the heavy sack on her bent back by resting one hand on her hip. She treads carefully while she crosses a broken bridge over the river.



In this painted page we see a woman who is running her own workshop and producing both paintings and sculptures. This scene was painted in France in about 1470.

Source 3.23 Artist in her Atelier

This painted page shows the labours of April. The artist created this scene in Flanders in about 1515, and it clearly shows women sharing in all the work of the farm.



Source 3.24 Dairy Scene



This scene shows that women were often given work requiring delicate handling. This scene was painted in Italy in about 1390.

Source 3.25 Collecting Chicken Eggs

This manuscript illumination suggests that many rural women were equal to men in doing the really heavy tasks of farming. It was painted in France in 1450.



Source 3.26 *Carrying a Sack of Grain to the Mill*

Source 3.27 Working women

Life in towns

Origins of towns

The earliest towns in medieval Europe grew around the castles or monasteries, so their people could seek safety inside their stone walls in times of trouble. Some towns developed by the coast, where foreign traders anchored their ships to sell the cargoes they had on board. Small towns also developed along the rivers and the major tracks in which traders crossed Europe.

The town charter

At first, towns developed on land owned by the king or his nobles, and so its people had to obey them. As a town developed, its people wanted

to be free of outside authority and to govern themselves. Some paid the powerful landowners a large sum of money and a yearly tax to buy their freedom and a legal agreement called a **charter**. In England, towns that had been granted a charter were called a 'borough'. In Germany they were called 'burg'. Their citizens did not have to do service to the local lord: they were free men and women, allowed to marry whoever they chose and to work as they wished.

charter a written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature, granting rights or privileges, or creating a corporate entity

Security through walls and gates

There are many medieval walled cities surviving in Britain and Europe. In France, for example, the town of Carcassonne was surrounded by massive rings of walls (see Source 3.28). These provided protection in times of war.





Source 3.28 The town of Carcassonne, France, with its ringed walls



In times of peace, the city government raised money by taxing all the goods that came into the city. The Micklegate Bar at the City of York in England is a perfect example of a town gate (see Source 3.29). The citizens of York and the king were the only people not required to pay on entry.

Source 3.29 Micklegate Bar, York, England

Research 3.3

This activity will challenge you to learn about the beliefs, lives and experiences of a key person in the Middle Ages.

Start by exploring the sites at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.

After careful research, develop one 10-minute radio or television interview with one of the following:

- William the Conqueror, discussing his tactics before the Battle of Hastings
- a medieval tailor, discussing medieval fashion
- a lady of the manor explaining what she has to do to run the home efficiently
- a medieval knight, discussing his win in a tournament
- Pope Leo III, discussing the importance of Christianity in Europe
- a parish priest, discussing the plague in England in 1349
- a monk in a monastery (or a nun in a convent), discussing their daily routine.



Source 3.30 *The Tournament at St. Inglevert* shows three French knights in a jousting scene. From *Froissart's Chronicles* by Jean Froissart, c. 1337 – c. 1405.

Chapter summary

- The Christian Catholic Church was the only organised structure uniting Europe after the Roman Empire collapsed in c. 476 CE. Followers of the Christian Catholic Church tried to live their daily lives according to church teachings to ensure their place in heaven.
- The church expressed its wealth and power by building great cathedrals in many important towns of Europe. The two main styles, later known as Romanesque and Gothic, still influence architecture in our own times.
- Medieval societies experienced the trauma of invasions and occupations by Germanic tribes, but out of this chaos evolved strong centralised kingdoms under the rule of Germanic Christian converts.
- Most people of the medieval era lived in rural areas as towns were small. Village life was all that peasants knew. Their life was tied to the demands of their baron.
- Towns did grow, but on lands owned by barons, kings or the church. The prime focus of the towns was trade. Towns that grew larger could buy their freedom by paying for a charter.
- Conditions of life in towns and in the villages were simple and basic. Disease, fire, hunger could affect all equally badly.
- The European societies of the Middle Ages were strongly influenced by other cultures, especially Arab culture with its advanced techniques in mathematics and medicine.
- Medieval societies developed customs, traditions and practices that would all impact on the world beyond c. 1500 CE.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- Which statement about Charlemagne is not true:
 - Charlemagne was the king of a group of tribes called the Franks.
 - Charlemagne conquered England.
 - Charlemagne was an emperor between 800 and 814 CE.
 - Charlemagne did a great deal to improve learning and scholarship in his kingdom.
- The castles were initially built as:
 - tombs for the Barons
 - banks to keep all of the money in the kingdom
 - fortresses to control the countryside
 - temples
- Pages of the illuminated manuscripts were created by cleaning and cutting lambskin, until it formed a dry material called:
 - vellum or parchment
 - papyrus and scroll
 - paper
 - manuscripts
- Which statement about knights in medieval Europe is false:
 - knights were not always wealthy.
 - knights were subject to their baron.
 - knights were always men.
 - knights were expected to follow the rules of chivalry.

- 5 The purpose of the Crusades was:
- A to give rich nobles a reason to travel
 - B to make peace between the various Muslim peoples
 - C to free the holy lands from Muslim rule
 - D to bring back prisoners to work as slaves on farms

Short answer

- 1 Explain the chaos in Europe after c. 476 CE.
- 2 Consider why the Germanic invaders were so important to the future formation of the countries of Western Europe.
- 3 Examine why Charlemagne was such a powerful force in medieval Europe.
- 4 Assess why the building of the cathedrals served to increase the power and authority of the church.
- 5 In what ways did the failures in the Crusades benefit Europe?

Source analysis

Study Source 3.31 and answer the following:

- 1 Explore what this image tells you about what it was like for knights going into battle.
- 2 What does the equipment used by knights tell us about the style of their warfare?
- 3 Evaluate how likely it was that a knight would die young.

Extended response

Describe two ways that the Catholic Christian religion shaped the European medieval world. Be sure to include some examples of how it influenced the beliefs and everyday lives of people, as well as its influence on architecture and the arts.



Source 3.31 Typical armour and weaponry for knights at war

4



The Ottoman Empire (c. 1299 – c. 1683)

Source 4.1 The Hagia Sophia, Church of the Holy Wisdom of God (later Ayasofya Mosque), Istanbul

Before you start

Main focus

The Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest civilisations of the modern world and illuminates the strength of Muslim religion, architecture, arts and statecraft.

Why it's relevant today

At its peak, the Ottoman Empire, which linked Asia and Europe, provided a model for people of different ethnic groups and religions to live peacefully together. Its successor, the Republic of Turkey, is now emerging as an international power.

Inquiry questions

- How did the Ottoman Empire change from the end of the ancient period to the beginning of the modern age?
- What key beliefs and values emerged and how did they influence the empire and its subject peoples?
- What were the causes and effects of contact between societies within the empire in this period?
- Which significant people, groups and ideas from this period have influenced the world today?

Key terms

- caliph
- grand vizier
- Islam
- Janissary
- mosque
- Muslim
- Qur'an
- Sea of Marmara
- sultan

Significant individuals

- Hurrem (Roxelana)
- Mimar Sinan
- Osman I
- Sokollu Mehmed Pasha
- Sultan Bayezid I
- Sultan Mehmed II
- Sultan Murad IV
- Sultan Selim I
- Sultan Suleiman I

Let's begin

The Ottoman Empire occupies a critical historical position through both time and space. It was an empire that stretched from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. It marked a transition between the medieval world and the modern world – and also linked the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. At its peak, it was the crossroads of those continents and represented the flowering of Islamic culture, arts, economy and politics. Its distinctive form of government and processes of law offered different models from those of the West. At times its tolerance for different ethnic groups and religions provided an example of harmonious living. Its famous leader Suleiman the Magnificent (who reigned 1520–66) represents the strength and reach of the empire through both his military and cultural achievements.



Source 4.2 Sultan Bayezid II



Source 4.3 Hurrem Sultan (Roxelana), the powerful wife of Suleiman the Magnificent



Source 4.4 Turkish (Ottoman) soldiers marching

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

1200 CE . . .

Osman I declares **c. 1299 CE** himself leader

1300 CE . . .

Orhan succeeds his father **c. 1324**

Murad I becomes sultan **1362**

Edirne is declared Ottoman **c. 1365** capital

Battle of Kosovo **1389**

Siege of Constantinople **1394–1402**

1400 CE . . .

Mehmed II conquers **1453** Constantinople

1500 CE . . .

Selim I conquers Egypt **1517** and Mecca

Suleiman I reigns **1520–66**

Battle of Lepanto and **1571** capture of Cyprus

Ottomans are defeated **1683** at Vienna

WORLD EVENTS

. . .

1271–95 Marco Polo's travels from Europe to China

. . .

1348–50 Black Death sweeps through Asia and Europe

1368 Ming dynasty begins in China

. . .

1452 Leonardo da Vinci is born in Vinci, Florence

1492 Practising Jews are forced to leave Spain: many go to the Ottoman Empire

1493 Columbus returns to Spain from America

1498 Portuguese open sea route to Asia

. . .

1558–1603 Queen Elizabeth I reigns in England

1577–80 Sir Francis Drake sails around the world in an English galleon

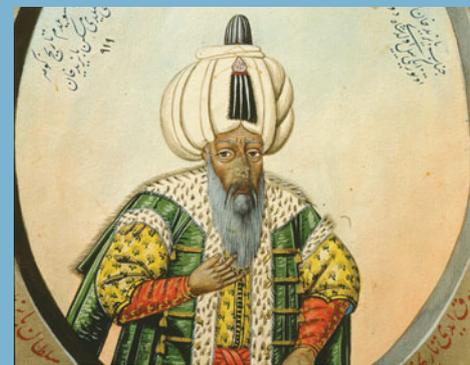
1642 Civil war in England; Dutch navigator Abel Tasman reaches what is now Tasmania



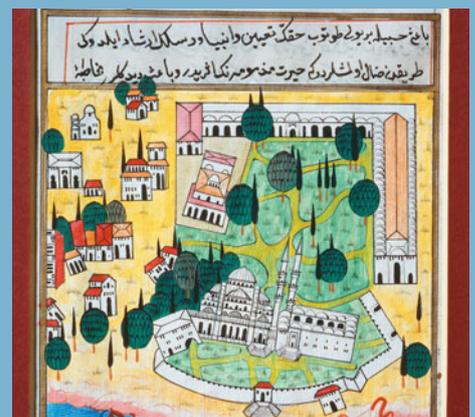
Source 4.5 Turkish dancers, from *The Ottoman Empire* by F.C.H. Poqueville



Source 4.6 Throne of Constantinople



Source 4.7 Sultan Suleiman I 'The Magnificent'



Source 4.8 Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point), Istanbul, Turkey



Source 4.9 Areas shown in pink and mauve were ruled by Osman I and Orhan, 1300–59



Ottoman beginnings 1299–1389

Emergence of the Ottoman dynasty

The Ottoman Empire was a successor to the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine period can be dated from 330 CE when the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great established a new capital on the site of the ancient Greek city of **Byzantium**. The city that he called New Rome became known as Constantinople and was the capital of the mostly Greek-speaking eastern portion of the Roman Empire, which included the **Balkans** and the area that is now modern Turkey.

Byzantium a Greek city, later called Constantinople; capital of the eastern Roman Empire

Balkans an area in south-eastern Europe, from the Balkan mountains and Danube River to the Aegean, Mediterranean and Adriatic seas

To distinguish it from the empire based in Rome, the eastern Roman Empire is described as the Byzantine Empire.

The story of the Ottomans begins with a local ruler named Osman. He started a **dynasty** that was to remain in power for more than 600 years. Osman came from a family of **nomads**, originally from Central Asia, which settled in **Anatolia** in the second half of the thirteenth century. Anatolia, also known as Asia Minor, had been an important part of the Byzantine Empire until a powerful local group, the **Seljuk** Turks, defeated the Byzantine emperor and set up their own dynasty. By Osman's time **Mongol** invaders (see Chapter 10) had overpowered the Seljuks and Anatolia was broken into tribal units.

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

nomads people who move from place to place

Anatolia the area from the Black Sea on the north, Aegean Sea on the west and Mediterranean on the South; sometimes called 'Asia Minor'

Seljuk a Turkish–Persian (Iranian) dynasty originating in Central Asia

Mongols a powerful tribe from Central Asia who set up a great empire



Source 4.10 A portrait of Osman I, the first leader of the Ottoman Empire, from a miniature held in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul

In about 1281, Osman became chief of a small group of Turkish settlers on the Sakarya River in north-western Anatolia. A great warrior, Osman used a strong force of archers on horseback to conquer his neighbours (see Source 4.11) and spread his influence to the coast opposite the city of Constantinople. Around 1299, he declared independence from Seljuk control and in 1302 defeated the Byzantine army in a key battle. Europeans knew this warrior as

gazi a Muslim warrior fighting for Islam

Othman, and the empire that he established was named after him. In Ottoman history he is known as Osman **Gazi**.

Islam and the Ottoman Empire

Islam a religion based upon belief in one God of whom Muhammad is the chief and last prophet

Muslim a follower of Islam

Qur'an (Koran) the holy book of Islam

The Ottoman clan, like the Seljuks, followed the religion of **Islam**, which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. He lived from 570 to 632 in what is now Saudi Arabia. Followers of Islam (**Muslims**) believe in a single God (Allah). Their holy book, the **Qur'an**

(**Koran**), is a collection of Muhammad's teachings. There are two branches of Islam. The majority of

Muslims (about 85 per cent) belong to the **Sunni** denomination. The Ottomans were Sunnis, as are most Turks today. About 15 per cent of Muslims are **Shi'ites**, followers of the Shia branch of Islam (including most people today in Iran). The growth of the Ottoman Empire spread the Islamic faith widely through military conquest.

Sunni a Muslim who believes that the leader of the Muslims after Muhammad should be elected from among the people close to him, not necessarily a family member

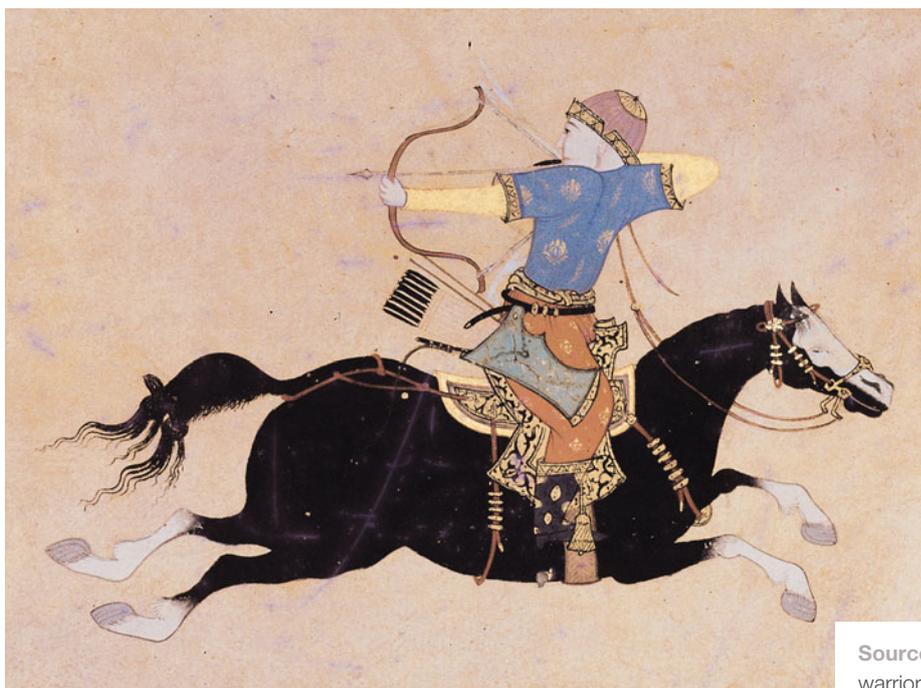
Shi'ite (or Shia) a Muslim who regards Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law) as his first legitimate successor

The growth of the military

Osman and his descendants claimed that God chose their family to rule and to extend the Islamic faith by **holy war**. In the early Ottoman Empire, the **sultan** held personal power because he belonged to the Imperial family and was a successful warrior. To emphasise that role, on taking office each new sultan was presented with Osman's ceremonial sword. The empire was, above all, a military organisation, and its commander had absolute authority. In the early centuries, he was prominent on the battlefield and knew personally his individual

holy war a war fought in the name of a god

sultan the leader or emperor of the Ottoman Empire



Source 4.11 An Ottoman mounted warrior (cavalryman) or horse archer

unit leaders and even many of his soldiers. Each of the first ten Ottoman rulers personally led his armies in battle.

In return for absolute obedience, the ruler promised that he would wage holy war and reward his followers with public works. Ottoman

mosque a Muslim place of worship

medrese an institute of Muslim education; 'madrasah' in Arabic

rulers built **mosques**, **medreses** (colleges) and roads, and protected their subjects. The ruler was responsible not only for physical protection but also for justice. He appointed local judges to decide disputes. All Ottoman subjects had

the right to appeal directly to him for protection of their legal rights, by submitting a petition or sending a delegation to the capital.

Ottoman leaders were superb military planners, adjusting their strategy (plans) to the region they were attacking. They usually took power in two stages. The first stage was the use of force. Once defeated, the local leaders were often permitted some independence – but they were required to provide troops for the following military campaigns.

The second stage of conquest was to remove the local leaders and take direct control of the region. Ottoman rulers were careful and thorough

administrators. Until the 1600s, regular detailed surveys of the wealth of different regions were carried out, and an efficient **timar** (land-holding system) was instituted to pay for the protection provided by the military troops in the provinces. The right to a share of the income from this taxation was granted to loyal supporters

timar an area of land on which taxes were gathered and partly shared by local officials, who in return provided military service to the empire

of the regime, who were described as timar-holders and in return provided military service to the central government. In this way a **gentry** class was created that was loyal to the sultan. The system differed from European **feudalism**, however, in that timars were not acquired by inheritance and the central government exercised firm central control throughout the empire. An additional difference was the Ottoman use of slavery.

gentry a reasonably wealthy landed class below the nobility

feudalism a form of government based on the exchange of land for military service, with a strict hierarchy of status

Activity 4.1

- 1 Recall who founded the Muslim religion and the name of its chief book.
- 2 Describe the main responsibilities of the Ottoman leader.
- 3 Discuss how the Ottoman social system differed from European feudalism.

Expansion under Orhan and Murad I

Osman's son Orhan captured more territory. In 1354 CE he took Ankara, in central Anatolia, and Gallipoli, on the European side of the Dardanelles (the entrance to the **Sea of Marmara**). Gallipoli became the main centre for the Ottoman navy for centuries. Orhan set up his capital at Bursa in western Anatolia.

Sea of Marmara the sea in Turkey that divides Asia from Europe

On Orhan's death in 1362, his son Murad I became ruler. Murad extended the area under his control to the European region north-west of Constantinople, capturing the important city of Adrianople. From 1365, under its new name, Edirne, it was the Ottoman base as they captured southern Bulgaria and the major Greek city of Salonica. As European regions were taken over, immigrants from Anatolia poured in to settle on the conquered territory. Ottoman expansion was temporarily halted in 1389 by Serbian forces in a

bitter battle at Kosovo where the leaders of both sides lost their lives. This ancient battle is still vividly remembered in the historical imagination of Serbs and Turks. During Murad's reign, coinage began to refer to him as sultan. He also began to capture and enslave Christian children. Many were trained to become soldiers known as Janissaries.

Times gone by ...

[T]here are many nice buildings, like hospitals, in three or four of which bread, meat and wine are distributed to those [in need]. On a low mountain at the western end of the city there is a fine, large castle. There are about a thousand houses inside. This is [the site of] the lord's very beautiful residence ... [within which] there is a garden and a very nice pool where the lord takes his ease.

Source 4.12 Bertrandon de la Broquiere, a traveller from Burgundy (France), describing Bursa in 1432

- 1 Assess whether or not you think Bertrandon de la Broquiere's observations were detailed because he had never seen a place like Bursa before.
- 2 Interpret why bread, meat and wine was distributed to those in need.



Activity 4.2

- 1 Identify who was the first Ottoman leader to describe himself as Sultan. How do we know this?
- 2 Recall where the main centre for the Ottoman navy was.
- 3 Outline why the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 is important.
- 4 Copy or trace the map at the start of this chapter. Using different colours, add the areas conquered by the Ottomans as the empire expanded. Start by shading the area conquered by Murad I by 1389.

Janissaries

Janissary the Ottoman sultan's permanent military corps of infantrymen, many of which were recruited by the *devshirme*

The **Janissary** corps was raised by Sultan Murad I in about 1365 and became the elite, full-time soldiers of the Ottoman Empire. They were devoted personally to the Sultan's service, so supported the ruling

family's hold on power. In contrast to free-born Ottoman warriors on horseback, Janissaries were infantrymen; that is, they fought on foot. After handguns were introduced in the mid 1400s, Janissaries wielded firearms. The most disciplined military corps of the time, with a strong team spirit, its soldiers wore special uniforms and tall and cumbersome headgear, which set them apart from other troops. Janissaries were forbidden from

mehter an Ottoman military band

wearing beards but were allowed moustaches. They were paid salaries, marched to distinctive music provided by **mehters**, lived

together in barracks and received pensions when they retired. At first Janissaries were not permitted

to marry, but later sultans relaxed this restriction. They comprised a distinct social class, being neither free men nor slaves. Most were conscripted into the corps through the **devshirme** system.

devshirme the forced collection of Christian children to train for positions in the Ottoman sultan's palace or army

Devshirme

The Janissary corps was first formed from captured prisoners of war. Soon, however, a system of special tax collection (*devshirme* is Turkish for 'collect') was set up. Under this system the sultan's men would enter a Christian town in a captured region, such as Greece or Albania. They would demand that the town and surrounding villages assemble boys, generally one in every



Source 4.13 A Turkish postage stamp issued in 2003, showing a Janissary corps member. Note the distinctive headwear.

forty households, between the ages of eight and eighteen. Fathers brought their sons for inspection and records were kept of the names of those selected. The collected boys were dressed in special clothing and taken away. The cleverest and strongest 10 per cent were sent to the Sultan's palace where they were soon converted to Islam. They received a thorough education to train them

grand vizier the sultan's chief advisor or prime minister

for the highest administrative positions in the Empire, some rising to become **grand vizier**, the Sultan's most powerful official, and marrying into the royal family. The 90 per cent not selected for palace training were hired to Turkish farmers from whom they learned the Turkish language and where they customarily converted to the Islamic faith. When they were about 22, they would be summoned to Istanbul to serve in the Janissary corps.

Military marching bands

Turkish units before the Ottomans had drums and military bands. Under the Ottomans, however, Janissary bands encouraged by the sultans reached new heights. Mehters often consisted of bass drums and kettledrums, trumpets, horns, bells and cymbals. A special Anatolian folk woodwind instrument, the *zurna*, had a penetrating, shrill sound that could be heard over the noise of battle. In warfare, the musicians were at the heart of the fighting: when the music ceased, the troops would stop fighting. The bands also provided a rhythm for marching in formation, while larger bands played for state ceremonial occasions. Beginning in the 1700s, many European countries introduced military bands, based on the Janissary example, into their armies.

Activity 4.3

- 1 Explain what is meant by the terms *devshirme* and *mehter*.
- 2 Discuss why Janissaries had a strong team spirit.
- 3 Imagine that you are a young Christian boy taken from your family in the *devshirme*. Write a letter home to your parents describing how your captors have treated you.



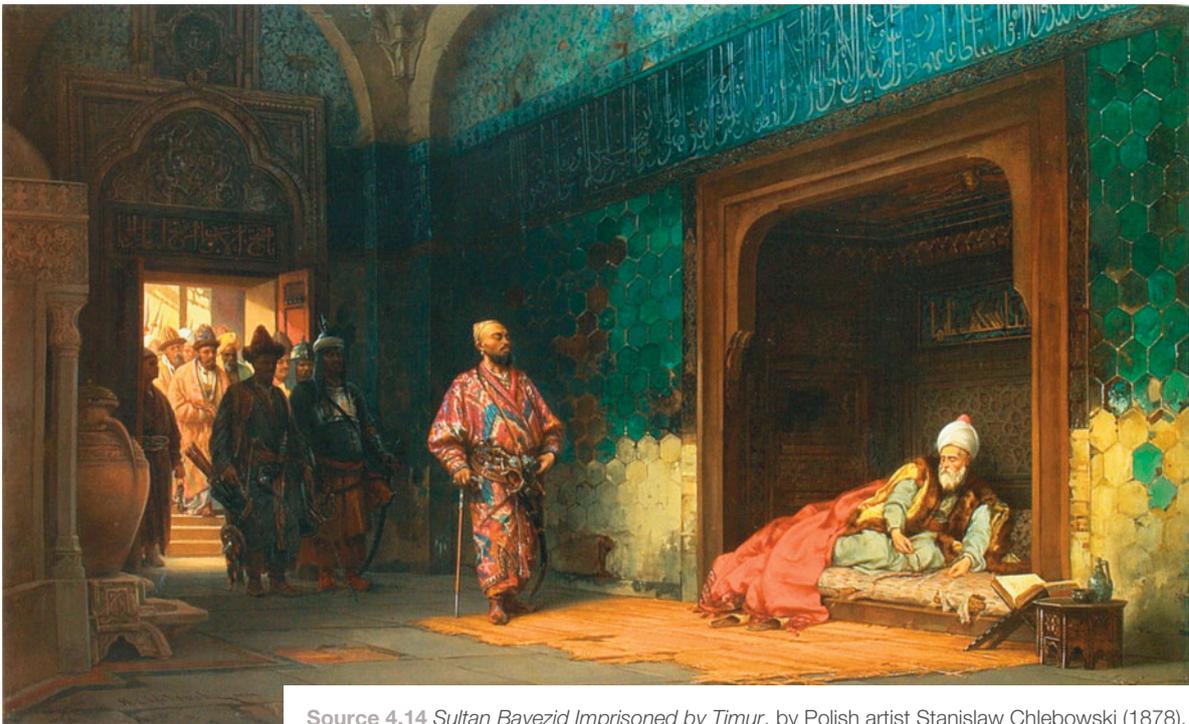
Setbacks and recovery 1389–1444

Sultan Bayezid I

After the Battle of Kosovo, Bayezid I became sultan. A cruel man, known as 'the Thunderbolt' because of his swiftness in war, Bayezid quickly defeated many of the Balkan states (such as Bulgaria and Serbia), and fought successful campaigns in Anatolia. By the end of his rule, Ottoman territory was forty times greater than a century earlier.

In 1394 and again in 1395 he laid siege to Constantinople. The last outpost of the Christian Byzantine Empire, Constantinople controlled the crossroads between east and west; that is, between Europe and Asia. The Byzantine Emperor sought European help to defend the city and a new **crusade** was organised. Bayezid defeated the crusading army at Nikopolis on the Danube in 1396. The siege of Constantinople continued.

crusade military campaign to restore Christianity in regions controlled by Muslims



Source 4.14 *Sultan Bayezid Imprisoned by Timur*, by Polish artist Stanislaw Chlebowski (1878), showing the lame Mongol leader Timur and his prisoner Sultan Bayezid I

Attack from the East

At this point a threat from the east saved Constantinople. In 1400, the Central Asian Mongol warlord Timur (sometimes known as Tamerlane) attacked Anatolia. Bayezid was defeated in the battle of Ankara in 1402 by Timur. He was captured and died in captivity.

Civil war and recovery

After Bayezid's death, the Ottoman state broke apart and civil war followed. Bayezid's four sons fought between themselves for control of parts of the Ottoman lands. After much bloodshed, Mehmed finally prevailed and in 1413 crowned himself sultan in Edirne.

Edirne

The city of Adrianople, named after the Roman emperor Hadrian, was occupied by the Ottomans about 1361 and renamed Edirne. Located in the north-western part of the empire, close to the border with Bulgaria, it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. It was from Edirne that Sultan

Murad II, who ruled from 1421 to 1451, was eventually to play a key role in restoring Ottoman fortunes. In Edirne he built a monastery for the Mevlevi Order, an Islamic sect that cultivated spiritual, cultural and artistic excellence. Its members were known as whirling **dervishes** as they danced in a trancelike state as part of their devotions.

dervish a member of a Muslim ascetic order, some of which performed whirling dances as acts of ecstatic devotion

Edirne played a key role in Ottoman Turkey and is rich in architectural treasures – such as the Selimiye Mosque, several other ancient mosques and a synagogue – an old quarter and several museums.

Religious tolerance

The majority of people within the Ottoman Empire were Islamic. However, due to the mixed heritage of the Ottoman state in the many lands and cultures that contributed to it, significant groups of Christians and Jews coexisted with Islam. In Anatolia, there were Orthodox Christian groups who differed from Byzantine Christians. Where they were treated well by Turkish *beys*

(governors), Christians supported their Ottoman rulers against the Byzantines.

There was also much intermingling of culture and history. There was, for example, significant merging of Christian and Turkish saints, leading to shared pilgrimage sites and shared festivals. There were also conversions to Islam such as in the case

of the Janissaries. Many Ottomans supported debates between Islam and **Christianity**. Lands conquered by the Ottomans, such as Bulgaria, were usually allowed religious freedom, although Christian or Jewish populations paid a special tax or tribute.

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

Activity 4.4

- 1 Recall the name that was given to Sultan Bayezid I.
- 2 Discuss why the empire almost collapsed after 1402.
- 3 Look at an atlas and mark Edirne on your map. Explain why it was important in Ottoman history.



Conquest of Constantinople 1444–81

The boy sultan

abdicate to give up rule

In 1444, Sultan Murad II **abdicated** in favour of his 12-year-old son Mehmed. Three weeks later, a large Christian army attacked the empire. Murad returned to the battlefield to defeat the enemy and again retired. A revolt by Janissaries, however, brought him back and he resumed the throne in 1446. Young Mehmed was forced to stand aside. The experience made him bitter, but he left the capital to bide his time.

Mehmed the Conqueror 1451–81

When his father died suddenly in 1451, Mehmed became sultan again at the age of 18. He was to rule the empire for 30 years. He resolved to pursue a career of conquest that would wipe out the failure of his earlier reign. First he ordered that his 15-month-old half-brother be strangled. With this rival eliminated, he began to plan the conquest of Constantinople.

Although defended by strong walls, the great city was half-abandoned. With the threat of a final

onslaught obvious, its Greek inhabitants had fled in their thousands and the population had fallen to about 50 000. Mehmed organised his siege carefully. First, he constructed a fortress north of the city, on the European side of the **Bosphorus**, directly opposite another on the Asian side. He equipped both with cannons, giving him control of the narrow channel. Second, his troops constructed a road from the Bosphorus over the hills and down to the Golden Horn (the inlet that provided Constantinople's protected harbour). Ottoman vessels were hauled up the road and down to the Golden Horn, evading the chain that the defenders had stretched across the harbour. Third, his men undermined the city walls. But it was not until Mehmed introduced an enormous cannon that could blast a hole large enough for soldiers to pass through, that he broke the city's resistance.

Bosphorus a narrow strait that connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara

On 29 May 1453, Mehmed's troops, with the Janissary corps in the lead, broke through the walls and in a bloody battle captured Constantinople. The Christian Roman Empire had finally fallen. Mehmed had won the title of Fatih (the Conqueror).

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, outline the steps by which Mehmed II captured Constantinople in 1453.

First:



Then:



Then:



Then:



Finally:

Importance of the conquest of Constantinople

Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople was a turning point in modern history, ending the Middle Ages in several ways. With the capture of the capital of the eastern Roman Empire, the Muslim empire now had a powerful and secure base from which to spread throughout Eastern Europe and threaten the dominant philosophy of Christianity. Second, the successful use of cannon, gunpowder and siege changed the way European warfare had been conducted. Third, the Ottomans now blocked the main overland trade link between Europe and Asia, stimulating the exploration of a sea route and leading to the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama establishing a direct link with India by the end of the 1400s. Fourth, Mehmed's victory meant that the Kingdom

of Russia was now the chief base of the Orthodox Church in Europe and its prince saw himself as heir to the Byzantine emperors: Ivan the Great now called himself tsar or caesar. Finally, the conquest had a significant effect on the city itself, which Mehmed revitalised.

Istanbul under Mehmed

In Byzantine times, Romans and Greeks had usually referred to Constantinople as 'the city'. Under Mehmed, it came gradually to be known as Istanbul: a Turkish version of the Greek phrase 'to the city'. Mehmed quickly repopulated it. Families from all over his realm were ordered to move to his new capital, where there were plenty of vacant fields and houses for them to occupy. A remarkable policy of tolerance saw Christians, Muslims and Jews return in large numbers,

assured of their lives, liberty and the free exercise of their religions.

When a new Greek Orthodox patriarch was elected, Mehmed performed the ceremony himself. The great church Hagia Sophia, completed by Roman Emperor Justinian in 537 CE, was converted into a mosque (it is now a museum), although other Christian churches were allowed to continue. Greek Christians were permitted to govern themselves through their own legal and administrative authorities under a system of tolerance known as the millet system (see below).

In 1463, Mehmed began to build the Fatih (Conqueror's) mosque. Among the outer buildings were religious colleges, a library and a public kitchen to provide food for the poor, as well as a primary school and hospital. In addition, following the example of the Seljuks and Persians, the complex contained a **caravanserai**.

caravanserai an inn or hotel where travellers and traders could rest on their journey

The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul

artisan a skilled tradesperson

Mehmed gave central importance to bringing merchants and **artisans** into the city. One of the highlights of a tourist's experience of Istanbul today is a visit to the crowded and vibrant Grand Bazaar, one of the largest and oldest in the world. Although enlarged in subsequent centuries, this great covered marketplace had its origin in a domed stone structure built under Mehmed's orders between 1455 and 1461.

Most merchants were Muslim, although Jewish shopkeepers also had premises in the marketplace. The central building of the commercial part of Istanbul, the bazaar had three main roles. It was a place where resident merchants housed and sold their wares (mostly textiles), conducted financial transactions and safely stored their valuables. So the bazaar combined the roles of marketplace, bank and financial exchange.

The millet system

Under the Ottomans, individuals were grouped by religion rather than by nationality. At the top of the pyramid was the Muslim community. Other

religious groups, each with its own religious leader, were organised into communities known as **millets**. The main categories were Greek Christians, Armenian Christians and Jews.

millet an Ottoman system of national communities, based on religion

Each millet was responsible for tax allocations and collection, education and legal relationships with other communities, and matters relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. The result was that although Islam was the dominant faith, there was a remarkable degree of religious tolerance in the Ottoman Empire.

Mehmed II extends the empire

Mehmed saw himself as the heir of the Roman emperors and the equal of contemporary European monarchs. The Venetian artist Gentile Bellini was invited to the Ottoman capital to record for future generations the image of the new caesar. But though he took on the trappings of a Renaissance prince, Mehmed was involved in constant warfare throughout his reign. In Europe he captured large areas of Greece, including Athens, as well as Serbia and Bosnia. He also engaged the powerful state of Venice in a long naval war, and by 1479 he controlled the whole eastern coastline of the Adriatic Sea.

In Anatolia, Mehmed conquered regions that had long held out against Ottoman rule, and dominated the Black Sea southern coastline. Finally, the Crimean peninsula on the northern coast was brought under his control when the **Tatar khan** accepted the status of a vassal (inferior subject) in 1475.

Tatar khan the leader of the Tatar group in the region of Crimea

As a result of Mehmed's conquests, his empire covered an enormous area, controlling trade routes into Russia and Central Asia, as well as westwards to Europe. However, the cost of his warfare was heavy. By the time of his death in 1481, and the accession of his son Bayezid II, there was widespread opposition to the exhausting military campaigns and crippling taxation.

Activity 4.5

- 1 Explain why Constantinople's name was changed. What is the name by which the city was previously known and by which it is known today?
- 2 Discuss who is known as 'the Conqueror' in Ottoman history and explain why the personal qualities of the sultan were so important in the growth of the Ottoman Empire.
- 3 Clarify what is meant by the term 'millet'.
- 4 Describe how the Ottoman Empire encouraged religious tolerance.



Height of Ottoman power 1481–1566

Conquests of Selim I

Selim I came to the throne after his father Bayezid II abdicated in 1512. Selim's major achievements were to lead the main Sunni branch of Islam against the Shi'ites of Persia (Iran) and enlarge the empire to twice its size. His conquest of Persia and then of Syria, Palestine and Egypt – and his power over the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina – gave the Ottoman Empire supremacy in the Middle East. Egypt's wealth, its vast resources of land and water, and its central location made it a key province of the empire. Selim's conquests meant that the Ottomans now controlled the world's richest centres of the transit trade. Ottoman state income doubled, and the reserve treasury in the palace was overflowing, enabling his son Suleiman I to continue Selim's conquests.

Adoption of the title 'caliph'

caliph a civil and religious leader of the Islamic world

After his defeat of Egypt, Selim I forced the last in the line of Abbasid **caliphs** in Cairo to surrender the title of caliph (spiritual leader of Islam) and its emblems: the sword and the mantle of Muhammad. Selim claimed the impressive titles 'King of the two lands' (Asia and Europe), 'Grand Khan of the two seas' (the Mediterranean and Indian seas), 'Conqueror of the two armies' (European and Persian) and 'Servant of the two

Holy Shrines' (Mecca and Medina). Selim then turned his attentions westwards and set out to conquer Hungary, but he became ill and died.

Rule of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66)

Suleiman I, son of Selim I and a Crimean mother, was the tenth and one of the greatest sultans of the Ottoman Empire. Known in the West as 'the Magnificent', he is generally known in Turkey as Kanuni ('the Lawgiver'). His long and successful reign coincided with the full flowering of the Renaissance in Europe. He was widely acknowledged as a great leader not only within his own dominions but in Europe as well. Suleiman was a complex character. Like several other sultans, he wrote poetry and encouraged the arts and educational reform, as well as undertaking bold military campaigns.

During Suleiman's reign, the Ottoman Empire again expanded significantly. Suleiman aimed for even greater European conquests and in 1529 the Turks laid siege to Vienna but were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Suleiman added to his realm Belgrade, Rhodes, Budapest, Temesvar (in Hungary), Tabriz, Baghdad, Nakshivan and Rivan (in the Caucasus), Aden and Algiers. His reign is considered the golden age of the Ottoman Empire.



Source 4.15 Suleiman the Magnificent

The Ottoman harem

As in many Muslim societies, women in Ottoman Turkey were usually veiled and separated from men. They did not frequent the coffee houses, for example, as men did. They lived in

separate women’s quarters called

harem women’s quarters in Muslim dwellings, sometimes used to describe the female occupants

the **harem**. Europeans were fascinated by the exotic nature of the harem and often exaggerated the position of women. Although women were secluded within the

home, they could purchase and inherit property, make contracts, appear in court and divorce an unsatisfactory

husband. Ottoman women also frequented the world outside the

hamam a Turkish public bath house, usually segregated for men and women

harem, attending **hamams** (bath houses), markets and picnics, usually accompanied by female relatives or slaves.

Harems contained not only the wives of Ottoman men (a very small proportion of the nobility practised **polygamy**) but also their mothers, sisters, daughters, young sons, slaves and **eunuchs**.

polygamy having more than one wife at one time

eunuch a civil servant who has been castrated; often employed in Ottoman harems



Source 4.16 These shoes (nalin) were used in women’s hamams to avoid slipping on wet, soapy floors. Their ornate, decorated nature was a sign of status.

concubine a female slave cohabiting with a man without marriage; in Muslim society often a secondary wife

kadin a most favoured concubine

Women and girl slaves valued for their beauty could become **concubines** of a sultan and senior officials, as a reward of battle. Their presence in a household was a sign of status. The most favoured concubines were called **kadins**.

They were treated like legal wives.

A few even reached the highest levels of Ottoman society by marrying a sultan, bearing his children and wielding considerable power and influence.

The Kadinla Sultanate

For a period from the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent to approximately 1680, a small group of women known as **valide sultans** (mothers of sultans) wielded a strong influence over

valide sultan the mother of the sultan

Ottoman politics. This was known as the Kadinla Sultanate, as some of the women had been *kadins*. The first and best known was Hurrem Sultan, also known as Roxelana (the Russian).

Originally Aleksandra Lisowska, a slave girl from Russia, Hurrem was eventually freed and became the legal wife of Suleiman. As well as advising her husband, Hurrem engaged in many public works, building mosques, bath houses, inns and hospitals.

Hurrem's daughter Mihrimbah Sultan became very wealthy and powerful, and an advisor to her father Suleiman. Nurbanu, the wife of Selim II, and her daughter-in-law Safiye, wife of Murad III, also played key roles in Ottoman politics. They were able to do so partly because neither Selim II nor Murad III was a strong leader. At these times, the harem was an important site of political power.



Source 4.17 The beautiful and powerful Hurrem, or Roxelana (the Russian)

Activity 4.6

- 1 Recall where the women who became concubines came from.
- 2 Investigate how we can find out about the lives of Ottoman women.
- 3 Discuss if Western travellers of the period were a reliable source of information.

Research 4.1

Use a library or the internet to research one of the following people in more detail:

- Mehmed II the Conqueror
- Hurrem, also known as Roxelana, wife of Suleiman the Magnificent.

Be sure to research the major achievements of the person you choose. Gather information about their birth, life and death.

Present your findings to the class as a PowerPoint presentation.

Ottoman art and architecture

calligraphy the art of formal handwriting

Repeated geometric patterns and **calligraphy** form the main subjects of Ottoman art. As with other Islamic cultures, the Ottomans did not encourage the painting of the human figure, because many Muslims regarded this as a form of idolatry; that is, turning them into gods. An exception to this was the more private art of miniature painting for the court, and these provide us today with images of Ottoman sultans. Suleiman encouraged this form of art. A notable court painter in the early 1700s was Abdulcelil Levni.

A major artistic achievement of the Ottoman Empire was architecture that employed massive yet airy domes to confine large spaces. The great mosques in Istanbul and Edirne are today among Turkey's glories. Mosques were major religious and cultural centres of Ottoman life. They consisted of a complex of a mosque, hospital, school, library, baths and sometimes soup kitchens and medreses (see over page). The elements that exemplify Islamic mosques include the characteristic dome and **minarets**, large courtyards and central prayer halls, and interior fountains for ritual washing. The interiors are adorned with bright colours, beautiful mosaics, calligraphy and tile work.

minaret a tall, thin turret connected to a mosque

HISTORICAL FACT

The novel *My Name is Red*, by 2006 Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, is about Ottoman painters of miniatures.



The mid-sixteenth century was the great age of classical Ottoman art and architecture. Under

aqueduct structures designed to transport fresh water to cities

Suleiman, his wife Hurrem and his son-in-law (and grand vizier) Rustem Pasha, an extensive building program was begun. Suleiman built roads, bridges and **aqueducts**, palaces and mosques, employing the great architect Mimar Sinan to adorn his capital.

Sinan (1490–1588), the son of Greek Orthodox Christian parents, was drafted into the Janissaries through the *devshirme* system and converted to Islam. He trained as a military engineer, later using those skills to construct many religious and civic buildings, including the Selimiye mosque in Edirne and the Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul (see Source 4.18). Sinan was one of the world's great architects.

Medreses

Medreses (sometimes spelled madrasahs), colleges for both religious and general education, were usually built as part of the mosque complex. Students could progress through junior grades to advanced levels. Students studied the Qur'an, Islamic law, the sayings of the prophet Muhammad and logic. Some advanced medreses offered Arabic literature, foreign languages, science and world history. The highest ranking medreses were those established by sultans such as Suleiman.

Turkish glazed tiles

In many Ottoman buildings, large quantities of tiles from the famous potteries at Iznik, a small town on the north-west Anatolian coast, were used to



Source 4.18 Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, Mimar Sinan's most famous work

decorate the walls. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul (the Blue Mosque) contains 20000 tiles. These beautiful Iznik tiles in cobalt blue, turquoise, green and red, finished with a transparent glaze,

depicted mainly plant designs, endlessly repeated. Abstract designs of tulips, roses, carnations and hyacinths are typical motifs. The Rustem Pasha mosque is another sumptuously tiled building.

Activity 4.7

- 1 Outline what is meant by the term 'harem'.
- 2 Recall what other buildings you would see in a mosque complex.
- 3 Discuss why Suleiman adopted the title 'caliph'.

Research 4.2

Visit the Topkapi Palace Museum online at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks. From your virtual tour, identify ten items that help you to understand Ottoman society. Write a sentence about the importance of each one.

Orientalism

Orientalism comes from the term 'orient', or east. From the sixteenth century, many Europeans travelled to the East, often to areas in the Ottoman Empire, and their accounts led to artists, writers and musicians imagining the East. It became very popular in wealthy European society to depict eastern scenes, to decorate houses with 'eastern' furniture or textiles and even to wear 'eastern' clothing.

Many adopted an attitude we call orientalism. They viewed the east as different and exotic – and often as backwards or sensual. Inevitably, this portrayed Europe (or the West) as superior and the East as inferior. In the case of the Ottoman Empire,

such travellers, artists and writers focused on aspects such as concubinage, slavery, veiled women or the harem as representing eastern society. Such views prevented a more balanced approach that could have focused on the positive aspects of eastern society, such as its art and religious tolerance, plus the possibilities it offered for talented ordinary people, even slaves, to rise to high levels in the society. Writers who lived in the centre of Ottoman society for some years, such as ambassadors and their wives, or the boy slave Giovanni Antonio Menavino, portrayed a more favourable view. Menavino was a captured Italian boy who escaped after nine years as a page to Sultan Bayezid I and later wrote about his experiences.



Source 4.19 An imaginary scene in a harem, painted by Jean-Baptiste van Mour (1671–1737)

Research 4.3

Use your library or the internet to find some material about Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was at one stage a British ambassador's wife in Constantinople (later Istanbul). Was she orientalist in her attitudes to the Ottomans? Find out which medical advance she introduced into England.

Slavery in Ottoman times

Islamic law did not permit enslavement of Muslims, therefore most slaves came from outside the Muslim world: from Eastern Europe, Southern Russia (the Crimea and the Caucasus) or North Africa. Many were Christian. Whereas two-thirds

of the enslaved Africans taken to North America were male, two-thirds of the slaves in the Ottoman Empire were female.

Slaves in the Ottoman Empire had more legal protection than in other parts of the world. For example, mothers and young children were not separated, as happened elsewhere. Many were educated and trained by their masters and

galley slaves slaves, often prisoners of war, who were forced to row in galley ships, sometimes chained to their oars

eventually freed. It was a pious act for a Muslim master to free a slave and he might do so to make amends for a sin. Children born to a slave mother (a concubine, perhaps, in a wealthy family) were often acknowledged by the Ottoman father and freed. On the other hand, those captured and put to work as **galley slaves** generally had a miserable life.

It was possible for slaves to achieve high status in Ottoman society. They were involved in all facets of Ottoman life. Slaves rarely undertook manual labour in the fields but were in domestic service as trusted personal servants and bodyguards, in the army (janissaries for example) or in administration. African slaves, particularly eunuchs, became harem or mosque guards, teachers and administrators. Female slaves became servants, cooks, nursemaids and entertainers within the harem. A small proportion became concubines. It was not uncommon for a master to marry a concubine and some, such as Hurrem (Roxelana), became very powerful. The children of such unions often became high officials or even sultans.



Source 4.20 Miniature by Abdulcelil Levni showing non-Muslim slave-girl musicians of the sultan's harem

Activity 4.8

- 1 Recall where Ottoman slaves came from.
- 2 Look through this chapter and find the stories of two or three slaves (men or women) or members of the Janissary who rose to high rank in the Ottoman Empire during the fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Write a blog explaining how he or she managed to move upward in Ottoman society and whether they had someone who helped them.
- 3 Identify when Turkey abandoned the institution of slavery. Compare this with the European abolition of slavery.



Way of life in the Ottoman Empire

Social and cultural features

The great majority of people in the Ottoman Empire were peasants. Very few could read or write. Religion was an important part of life in the towns, where the mosque, with its attached medreses and public baths, was a gathering place for all Muslims. From the mosque's minarets, the call to prayer rang out five times each day. Similarly, for Christians and Jews the church and the synagogue were powerful influences. In the countryside, most of the population engaged in agricultural activity and lived in villages. In the cities, men gathered in coffee houses to smoke and talk. Food preparation for Muslims and Jews was governed by religious rules. Neither ate pork, while alcohol was forbidden for Muslims. Reflecting their origin as nomads, Ottoman Turks enjoyed walking on beautiful carpets, and using them as hanging room partitions. In the homes, people generally removed their shoes.

Economic features

The economy of the Ottoman Empire was based on farmers cultivating small plots of land, growing cereal crops, fruits, vegetables and olives for their own consumption and raising animals for their milk and for their wool and hair to weave into cloth. Members of the family also sold homemade goods in their villages. The need to feed and clothe the people of Istanbul made the capital the centre of an integrated agricultural system. For example, wheat, rice, sugar and spices came from Egypt, fish and hides from north of the Black Sea, sheep and cattle from the plains of Bulgaria, Macedonia and eastern Thrace, cotton from Anatolia, and wine and olives from the Mediterranean regions including Greece. Wheat, the main cereal crop, also came from other areas such as Thrace and the fertile land at the mouth of the Danube. Women contributed to agriculture and also played a major part in the production of embroidery and carpets.

Political features

In the Ottoman political system the sultan was the absolute ruler. He appointed a council of advisers, and the grand vizier. The sultan's subjects were divided into two classes: the rulers (*askeri*), who were Muslim; and the ruled or the subjects (*reaya*), who included both Muslims and non-Muslims. *Askeri* included warriors, court officials, local governors (*beys*) and religious leaders. The most important court officials were Janissaries, based in Istanbul, who owed absolute obedience to the sultan and were neither slaves nor free. In the provinces, local governors were timar-holders of the *askeri* class, appointed by the sultan. *Askeris* were permitted to ride horses or carry and use weapons, but the *reaya* were not. In addition, strict dress regulations were imposed. *Reaya* had the important role of providing food and goods. They consisted of three main groups: townspeople (including merchants and craftsmen), peasants (families who worked in agriculture) and nomads.

Although women did not have a public role in Ottoman society, at times the wives and mothers of the sultans came to wield significant power. As explained earlier, despite their origins as enslaved concubines (*kadin*), the women of the sultan's family were important politically, particularly during the reign of Suleiman I and his wife Hurrem, and in the following century.

askeri the Ottoman military class, which was exempted from tax

reaya lower-ranking, tax-paying people in the Ottoman empire

Role of key groups in Ottoman Society

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Head of state: sultan, sultan's wife, concubines and family | | | |
| The rulers (<i>asker</i>) and their households (Muslim) | Men of the Pen | Administrators | Janissaries |
| | | | Freemen |
| | | Religious establishment | |
| | Men of the Sword | Military men | Freemen |
| | | | |
| The ruled (<i>reaya</i>) and their households (Muslim and non-Muslim) | Men of Negotiation | Tradespeople, artisans etc. | Muslim |
| | | | Non-Muslim |
| | Men and Women of Husbandry | Peasants, herders and nomads | Muslim |
| | | | Non-Muslim |
| Slaves and eunuchs | | | |

Source 4.21 The Ottoman social hierarchy

Roles and relationships

Each community had a head man of the *askeri* class who held a timar. As villages were liable to be plundered, the local military leader provided protection and summoned others to help repel attackers. He was also required to answer the call of the sultan to defend the empire. All *reaya* paid taxes to the *askeris*, who passed on to the sultan any funds remaining after covering their expenses. In addition, non-Muslims paid a separate tax directly to the sultan. Under the millet system, non-Muslims were permitted a large degree of self-government.

The sultan was the empire's religious leader, especially after the reign of Selim I. As the Sunni

branch of Islam does not have clergy, local religious officials, called **imams**, were more like teachers and prayer leaders. Most people in the countryside were farmers gathered in villages. Peasants did not own their holdings, but the land was generally passed from father to son. In larger towns and cities, the majority of the population consisted of merchants and craftsmen. Villagers would come to the town to shop in the markets, where blacksmiths, shoemakers, masons, carpenters, bakers and many others sold their produce. Muslim and non-Muslim merchants and craftspeople belonged to the same class (*reaya*), had similar rights and worked together, although they lived in separate districts. Craftsmen in each speciality belonged to a **guild**.

imam an Islamic religious official

guild an association of all the people in a particular trade or business, which set standards for that particular industry



Times gone by ...

An important source for Ottoman history was Evliya Celebi. Born in 1611, the son of a goldsmith in Sultan Murad IV's palace, he wrote a ten-volume description of his travels that gives valuable insights into Ottoman social history.

Once every forty years all the tightrope walkers gather here to vie and contest their skills ... The ropes ... were strung across the ravine from one cliff to the other and secured at either end by sheepskins, lest they be frayed by the rocks. Also armed guards were stationed to ensure that no rival cut the rope while a master was performing. Thousands of people gathered in the ravine below and on the cliffs above to observe the spectacle ... First up was the chief of the guild ... he seized the balancing beam in his huge hands and proceeded boldly out on the rope, crying *Allah Allah!* The sound of his voice mingled with the banging of the drums and resounded among the cliffs like thunder. His rope, known as a testing rope, was extremely thin, but he flashed out on it like lightning. When he reached the middle, he suddenly turned and scampered back, like a rabbit turning before a hound.

Source 4.22 Part of Evliya Celebi's description of a visit to Istanoz in Anatolia, where he saw a performance of the tightrope walkers' guild

- 1 Discuss why armed guards were needed while a master was performing.
- 2 Suggest a reason why a testing rope was extremely thin.



Turkish baths

As ordinary homes in the Ottoman Empire had no running water, one of the traditional practices of the Ottomans was public bathing, which they inherited from Turkish tribes of Central Asia. In this, the Ottomans were similar to other peoples such as those of Imperial Rome or Arabic cultures. In the Ottoman culture, however, public baths had a religious origin, being linked to requirements in the Qur'an for ritual washing. In the early Ottoman Empire, therefore, these structures were built as additions to mosques. Later separate buildings housed the hamam.

Public baths either had separate quarters for men and women, or men and women bathed at different times. They were more than simply hot baths; they were also social centres at which food and entertainment were available.

Turkish gardens and tulips

Mosques also featured courtyard gardens, as did the private homes of wealthy families. The Ottoman sultans built gardens in their palaces and encouraged gardening. Following the capture of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed included formal gardens in his design for Topkapi Palace.

Later in the empire, an important part of the gardeners' responsibilities was preparing for the annual tulip ceremonies. Commercial cultivation of tulips was a feature of Ottoman gardens. The name comes from the Turkish word for turban (tulban), which the flower resembles. Originally found in Turkey, Iran and Central Asia, the tulip became a favourite of the Ottomans and is now the floral symbol of Turkey. Its cultivation spread to Europe during the reign of Suleiman I.



Source 4.23 Tulips were popular in traditional Ottoman tile designs

Coffee houses

By the mid 1600s, the drinking of coffee was widespread throughout the Ottoman Empire. In the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the first coffee houses arrived in Istanbul. These became favourite places for men to gather to drink coffee, play chess and cards, and smoke (after the arrival of tobacco in the early 1600s). They also became places where literary and political opinions were exchanged. Sultan Murad IV banned coffee drinking and tobacco smoking, demolished coffee houses and executed some coffee drinkers and sellers. However, the ban was subsequently withdrawn and in later centuries coffee houses under Janissary ownership were centres of political discontent.



Source 4.24 An Ottoman coffee house

Activity 4.9

- 1 Discuss what eating and drinking restrictions there were for Ottoman Muslims.
- 2 Recall where the name for the tulip flower comes from.
- 3 In 2011 Evliya Celebi was UNESCO's Man of the Year. Explore the website at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks and write a short account of his travels.



Challenge and change 1566–1683

Crisis or decline?

For centuries historians have described the Ottoman Empire after the death of Suleiman I as being in decline. This theme can even be found among Ottoman chroniclers themselves. The causes they identified can be summarised as personal, military, economic and administrative:

- 1 Personal command by the sultan was seen to have weakened after Suleiman, shown by the sultans' reduced military role and the increased power of grand viziers and of the women of the palace.
- 2 Military superiority was lost at the end of the sixteenth century, when unified European armies prevailed in the use of handheld firearms and when wind-powered galleons (ships of war) proved superior to galleys (vessels using both sails and oars).
- 3 Economic factors – such as the inflation caused by the flooding of American silver in to Europe and the cost of paying the expanded Janissary force – led to the devaluing of the Ottoman coinage, which in turn led to widespread unrest.
- 4 The most important administrative failure was the breakdown of the timar system. Detailed surveys of regions ended. The military role of timar-holders became less important when firearms, wielded by Janissaries, began to dominate warfare and *reaya* were able to join the military. Poorer timar-holders left their lands

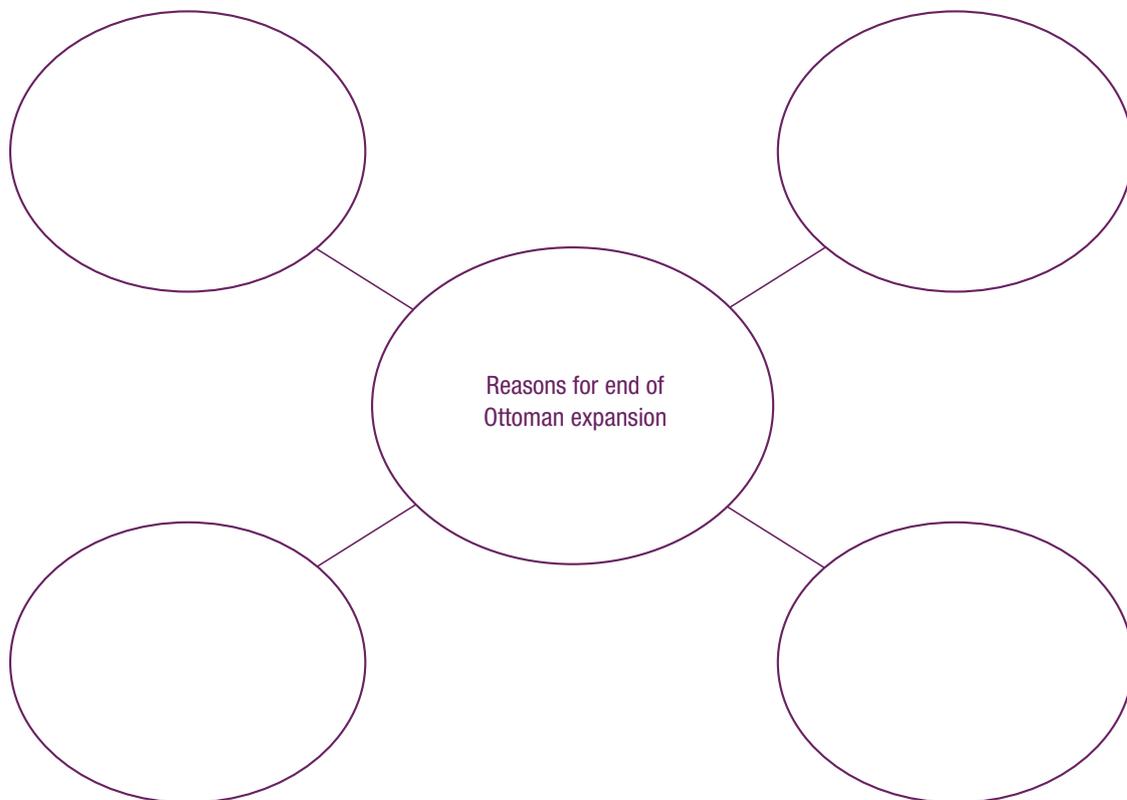
or imposed harsh taxation on the agricultural workers. The result was an increase in rebellion and revolt throughout the Empire.

For these reasons, many historians describe the Ottoman Empire as being in decline after 1600. Other historians, however, point to its continuing strength, including military successes, cultural achievements and political reforms. Modern

historians have argued that the Ottoman Empire remained significant until World War I, although it did lose some territory. While 1683 saw the end of Ottoman expansion, the continued existence of the empire for more than two and a half centuries indicated the strength and resilience of a remarkably successful political, religious, cultural and administrative structure.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the reasons for the end of Ottoman expansion.

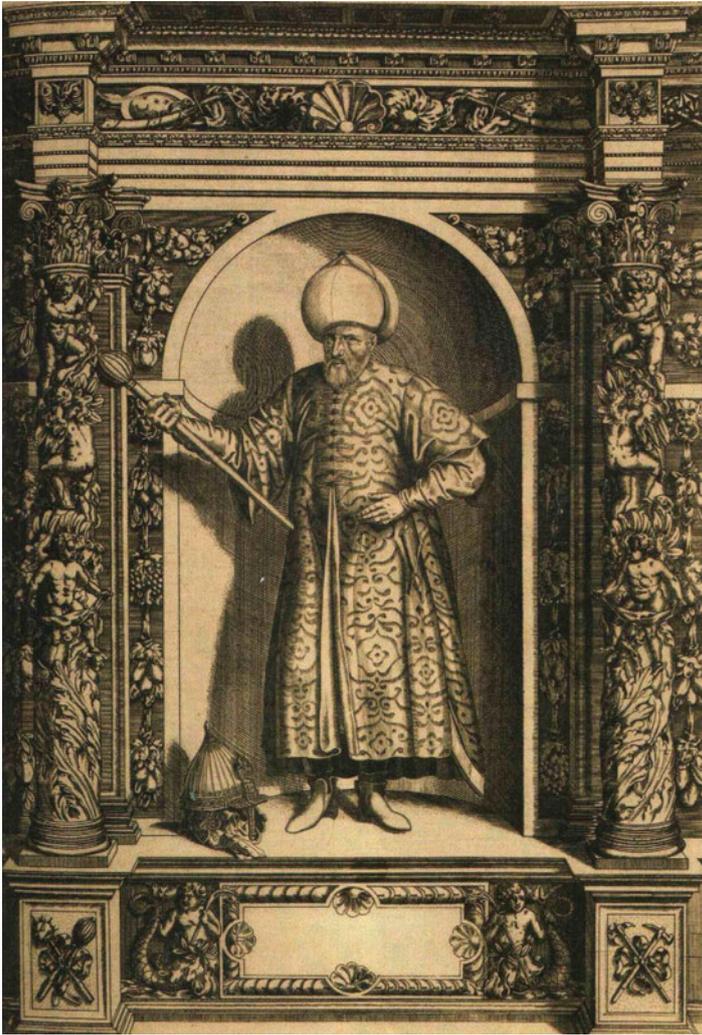


Sultanate power after Suleiman

Selim II, the son of Suleiman and Hurrem, became sultan in 1566. He had a peace-loving personality and did not enjoy the business of government. As a result, during his reign, his wife Nurbanu (1525–83) was a powerful influence and his grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (see Source 4.25) held more power than had any previous advisor to the sultans.

Born in 1506 in Bosnia, the son of a Christian Orthodox shepherd, Sokollu Mehmed was taken

from his family under the *devshirme* system to be converted to Islam and educated in the Sultan's palace in Istanbul. He served as a Janissary and rose to be an admiral, provincial governor and council member. In 1562, he married a granddaughter of the sultan. Three years later, Suleiman appointed him grand vizier. He held that position during the entire reign of Selim II (1566–74) and for five years during the reign of Murad III. The former slave became fabulously wealthy. He paid for mosques and medreses and other public works, including a bridge in his home town. He was murdered in 1579.



Source 4.25 Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, from a book published in Innsbruck, Austria, in 1601

Naval defeat at Lepanto and the capture of Cyprus

Sokollu Mehmed was a successful warrior and administrator. On land he built up Suleiman's empire, usually favouring negotiation over warfare. However, at sea he presided over a decline in Ottoman power. For centuries, Mediterranean warships had been galleys, powered by slaves manning oars. The most efficient galleys were built at the Ottoman shipyards at Gallipoli. By the late 1500s, however, English and Dutch galleons, powered by sail, appeared in the Mediterranean, where they revolutionised naval warfare.

Soon the Venetians were building their own galleons and equipping them with rows of iron

cannons. Ottoman shipyards were unable to produce superior vessels. Nor could the Ottoman admirals match the naval tactics of their rivals. At the battle of Lepanto in 1571, the Ottoman fleet was crushed. The fleet was quickly rebuilt and the Ottomans soon captured Cyprus, but that was to be their last major success in Europe.

Renewed land warfare

Sokollu Mehmed's successors pursued an aggressive war policy, rekindling hostilities with Iran (Persia). The struggle seesawed until 1639. Warfare against Austria also dragged on in the reigns of Murad III and his successors, but no new territory was gained. For the first time, the Austrians and their allies proved superior to the Ottoman army in weapons and tactics. Meanwhile,

the growth of the Russian Empire was a new threat.

At the same time, a series of rebellions broke out in Anatolia, which indicated that the empire was experiencing deep social and financial problems. Sultan Ahmed I's troops suppressed the uprisings in 1610, and in celebration he erected a great mosque in Istanbul, now known as the 'Blue Mosque'. His death, however, led to further revolts.

The last warrior Sultan

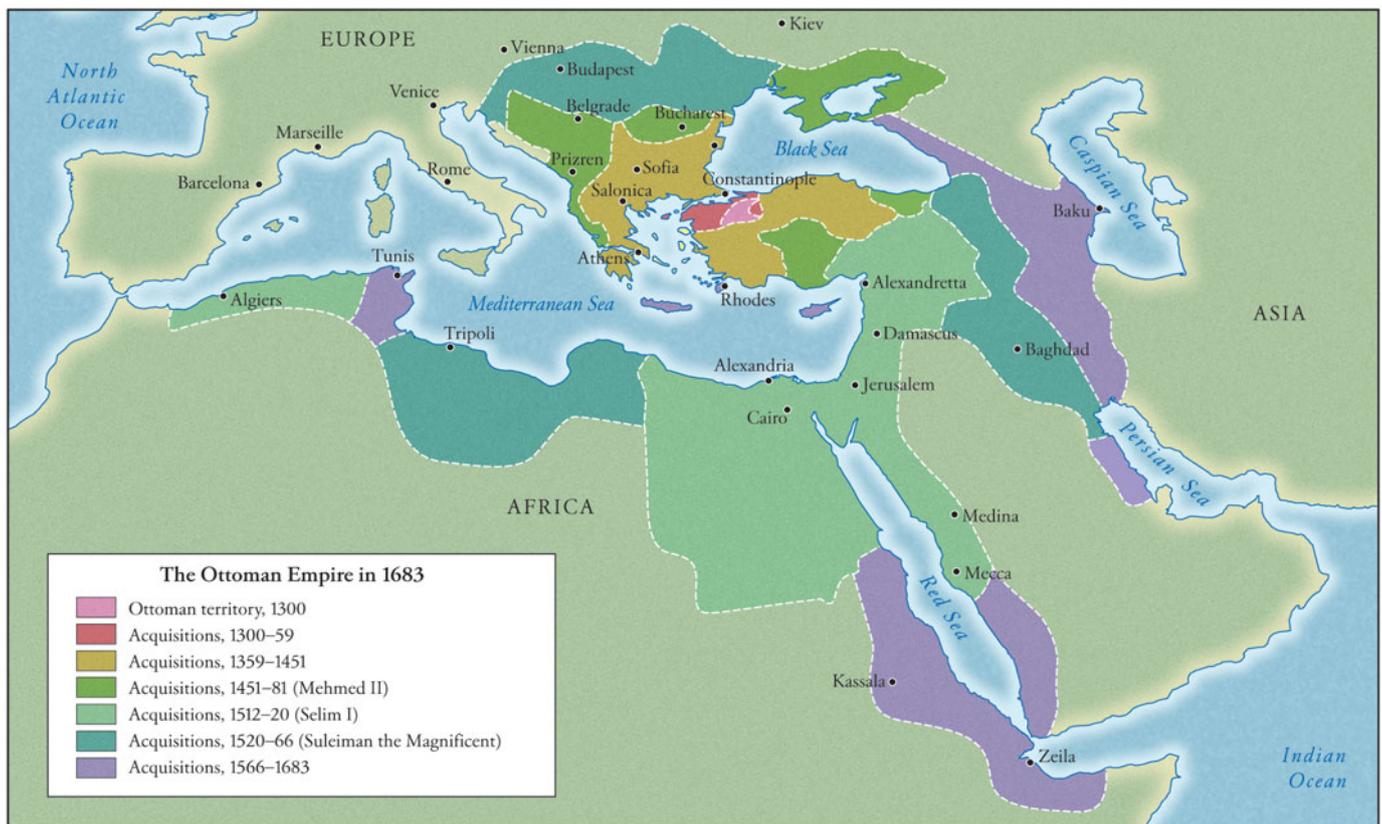
In 1623, Murad IV came to the throne at the age of only 11 years. He followed three weak rulers and found the empire in serious danger. He became, however, a vigorous and fearsome warrior: tall, strong, cruel and ruthless. Like all sultans up to and including Suleiman, but unlike later sultans, Murad personally led his troops in the field of battle. He resumed war against Iran and recaptured Baghdad in 1638 (it was to remain under Ottoman control until World War I). However, Murad died aged only 27 and without a son in 1640.

Murad's early death plunged the empire into disarray once more, partly because he had murdered three of his brothers. Once again power came to rest with the women of the court, first with Murad's mother Kosem, and then with Turhan, the mother of Sultan Mehmed IV.

The end of fratricide

In the early Ottoman Empire, the ability of an individual ruler was vital to the success of the state. For this reason the male sons of each sultan received a special education. Each was sent away from the capital for schooling and was appointed governor of a small province, where loyal officials helped him to learn the principles of leadership. This meant, however, that every prince was a potential sultan. Rivalry between brothers led to bitter warfare. A new sultan needed to rid himself of his brothers to secure his hold on the throne, a practice known as **fratricide**.

fratricide the killing of a brother



Source 4.26 The Ottoman Empire 1300–1683

Suleiman I ended the training of sons in the provinces. From then on, princes were kept in the harem, living a life of luxury among women and eunuchs. Known as the 'golden cages' system, this did not train future sultans in leadership. Nor did it end the murder of princes. When Murad III's coffin emerged from the palace in 1595, nineteen more, carrying the bodies of the new sultan's brothers, followed it. Fratricide continued until the 6-year-old Mehmed IV was enthroned in 1648, when he spared his two brothers. When he was later deposed, first one and then the other brother succeeded him. In turn, they spared Mehmed's sons, two of whom later became sultans. From then on, the oldest living male of the family was usually designated the next sultan.

Final siege of Vienna

Two wise grand viziers, who were unusual in that they were not Janissaries, reversed some Ottoman losses and conquered the island of Crete in 1669. They were Koprulu Mehmed Pasha and his son Fazil Ahmed. But their successor over-reached. In July 1683, a huge Ottoman army again laid siege to the Habsburg **imperial** capital, Vienna. Two months later, Austrian, German and Polish troops, led by King John III Sobieski of Poland, attacked the Ottomans and drove them from their camps. This humiliating defeat led to years of damaging warfare and a treaty in 1699 that saw Hungary, Croatia and Transylvania (central Romania) return to Christian control. Four hundred years of Ottoman expansion had come to an end.

imperial related to an empire or emperor

Activity 4.10

- 1 Discuss the reason fratricide was so common amongst ruling families.
- 2 Explain how the practice of dealing with the threat of brothers as potential rivals changed in the later years of the Ottoman Empire.
- 3 Look up the valide sultan Nurbanu on the internet and write a short account of her life. Why was she important?

Research 4.4

- 1 Research, at a library or on the internet, the area controlled by the Ottoman Empire in 1914, and write a short presentation comparing it with a map of Turkey today.
- 2 Turkey today is a modern state seeking to join the European Union. Although most of the population is Muslim, religious law no longer dominates the government. Who was the man responsible for changing the face of modern Turkey in the early twentieth century? Why did he turn away from religion in government?

Chapter summary

- One of the greatest civilisations of the modern world, the Ottoman Empire illuminates the strength of Muslim religion, architecture, arts and statecraft.
- The Ottomans set up a centralised political system based on talent rather than birth. They were unusually tolerant of rival religions such as Christianity and Judaism. Powerful sultans such as Selim I and Suleiman I expanded the empire and Ottoman influence deep into the heart of Europe and also in the Middle East and northern Africa.
- The Ottomans were Muslims and saw their conquests as a way to spread their religion, using techniques of control such as the *devshirme* and a unique force of infantry: the Janissaries. The family of Osman spread its influence by military conquest in the 1300s in the region of Anatolia and other parts of the weakening Byzantine Empire.
- In 1453, Sultan Mehmed II conquered Constantinople. Renamed Istanbul, it became the capital of the empire and a major influence on the politics and culture of Europe in the following centuries.
- The Ottoman Empire reached its peak in the late sixteenth century. Although it remained powerful and important until World War I, it was no longer an expanding empire or a significant threat to Christian control of Europe. Its legacy, however, remains in the rivalry between Christianity and Islam and in the fractured relations between them, especially in the Balkan peninsula.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- Which sea links Europe and Asia at Istanbul?
 - Mediterranean Sea
 - Black Sea
 - Sea of Marmara
 - Adriatic Sea
- Istanbul was previously called:
 - Edirne
 - Athens
 - Constantinople
 - Rome
- The mother of the Sultan was called:
 - harem
 - valide sultan
 - kadin
 - nalın
- Which statement about slavery in the Ottoman Empire is false?
 - Two thirds of the slaves were female.
 - Slaves were often freed.
 - A slave could never rise to a high position in society.
 - Slaves could be well educated and trained.
- Which Ottoman Sultan is known as ‘the Conqueror’?
 - Osman I
 - Mehmed II
 - Selim I
 - Suleiman I

Short answer

- 1 Explain the role of Islam in the spread of the Ottoman Empire.
- 2 Why was the city of Edirne important in Ottoman history?
- 3 Justify why Suleiman I was called 'the Magnificent'.
- 4 Who were the Janissaries and what was their role in the Ottoman army and administration?
- 5 Outline some of the legacies of the Ottoman Empire in the world today.

Source analysis

Study Source 4.27 and answer the following questions:

- 1 How can you tell from this painting that Mehmet II was an Ottoman sultan?
- 2 Consider why he had an Italian artist paint this image.
- 3 Portraits of previous Australian prime ministers are today held at Parliament House in Canberra. Assess why political rulers were keen to preserve their images for posterity.



Source 4.27 Sultan Mehmed II by Gentile Bellini (1479)

Extended response

What was the role of women in Ottoman society? Be sure to include specific individuals and explain their significance.

or

What were the main aspects of the Ottoman military machine?

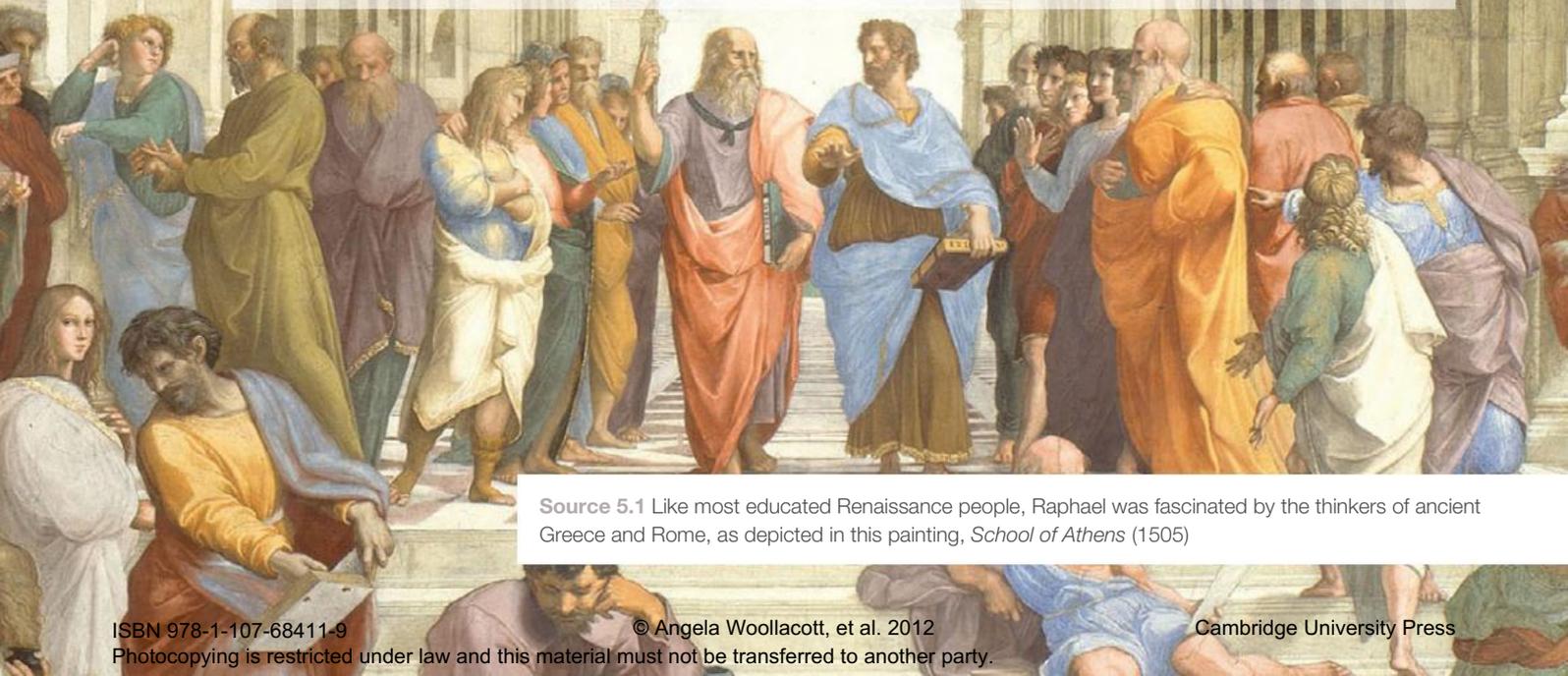


Source 4.28 Ottoman manuscript, 1588, showing the Battle of Mohács in Hungary in 1526 in which the forces of the Ottoman Empire, led by Suleiman the Magnificent, were victorious

5



Renaissance Italy (c. 1400–c. 1600)



Source 5.1 Like most educated Renaissance people, Raphael was fascinated by the thinkers of ancient Greece and Rome, as depicted in this painting, *School of Athens* (1505)

Before you start

Main focus

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the region we now call Italy experienced a brilliant period of thinking and discourse, along with great developments in architecture, art and literature.

Why it's relevant today

The Renaissance resulted in an explosion of new ideas that changed Europe and the world in ways that affect us still today.

Inquiry questions

- How do historians know about the experiences, feelings and thoughts of people who lived five hundred years ago?
- What is meant by the word 'Renaissance'?
- Why did the ideas of the Renaissance develop first in Italy?
- How did the Italians of the Renaissance organise their political and social life?
- What were the roles of ceremonies, architecture, art and scholarship in the Renaissance?

Key terms

- city-state
- guilds
- humanism
- merchants
- patronage
- Renaissance
- secularism

Significant individuals

- Galileo Galilei
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Lorenzo de' Medici
- Lucrezia Borgia
- Michelangelo
- Niccolo Machiavelli

Let's begin

The Renaissance was a period of great invention and discovery, both in Italy and other European countries. The Italians of these years loved new ideas, and they appreciated beautiful works of art. They were especially excited by the ideas of the great thinkers of ancient Greece and Rome, and set out to rediscover more of their ideas.



Source 5.2 *The Annunciation*, by Venusti, Italy, sixteenth century



Source 5.3 Alessandro of Richao, (1491)



Source 5.4 Detail of *Lorenzo de Medici Among the Artists*, by Ottavio Vannini, (1635)



Source 5.5 Facade of SS Annunziata of the Franciscans, Piacenza, Italy

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

1300 CE . . .

Dante begins writing **1307 CE**
The Divine Comedy

In Rome, the government crowns **1341**
Petrarch as an official poet

Black Death arrives **1348**

1400 CE . . .

Humanist Leonardo Bruni **1427–44**
serves as Chancellor of Florence

Medici family assumes control of **1434**
government in Florence

Federigo da Montefeltro becomes **1474**
Duke of Urbino and creates a humanist
centre of learning

Pazzi Conspiracy tries to **1478**
overthrow the Medici family in
Florence; Giuliano de' Medici is killed

Marsilio Ficino publishes his **1483**
translation of Plato's works

Pico de Mirandola publishes his **1486**
Oration on the Dignity of Man

French attack on Italy seems **1494**
like a 'barbarian' invasion

Religious leader Savonarola **1497–98**
influences public opinion in Florence;
he is later hanged and burned in the
Piazza della Signoria

Political thinker **1498–1512**
Machiavelli works for the republic in
Florence

1500 CE . . .

Leonardo da Vinci works as a **1502–13**
painter in Florence and Milan

Michelangelo works on the **1508–12**
ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome

Medici family comes back **1512**
into power in Florence

Machiavelli writes *The Prince* **1513**

WORLD EVENTS

. . .

1387 CE Geoffrey Chaucer starts writing
The Canterbury Tales in England

1421 Prince Henry the Navigator sends
out explorers from Portugal to find a
route to India around Africa

1453 Ottoman Turks capture
Constantinople; hundreds of scholars
flee to Europe, bringing with them their
knowledge of the Greek classic texts

1479 In Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella
join the two kingdoms of Aragon and
Castile to form one country

1492 Christopher Columbus sails from
Spain to the Americas

1497 John Cabot sails from England to
the North American coast

1498 Vasco de Gama sails from
Portugal around Africa to reach India

1507 First map is drawn that identifies
the 'New World' and 'America' by name



Source 5.6 Detail of *The Triumph of Death*, by Bonamico de Martino



Source 5.7 St Ambrose hands the habit to Saint Augustine



Source 5.8 *Dream of Life*, by Andrea Orcagna



Source 5.9 Michelangelo Buonarroti



Source 5.10 Map of the great European trading routes in the year 1483



Way of life in Renaissance Italy

Italy at the crossroads of the world

If we examine a map of Italy's position, we can understand why it seemed to be at 'the crossroads

of the world'. The **peninsula** itself is large, and has a long coastline with many good **ports**. Ships could cross the Mediterranean Sea and head east to the Middle East, south to northern Africa, or west towards the Atlantic Ocean and on to England and northern Europe. Because Italy was joined to the European continent, it also

had good lines of trade overland, giving it access to rich European countries such as France, Spain, Germany and especially the great trading nation of the Netherlands.

Merchants, markets and trade

One of the most important aspects of central and northern Italy during this time is that its cities were very wealthy. In Europe, about 2.5 per cent of people lived in cities; everybody else worked in the countryside, usually on farms. In Italy, 10 per cent of people lived in cities, which were some of the richest in Europe. Further, Italian towns were some of the largest in all Europe. Six cities had populations of more than 50 000 people. Most of the main achievements of the Renaissance took place in cities that had the wealth to pay for expensive works of art.

The city of Venice was a trading superpower whose ships were protected by a powerful navy. It had a large empire in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, and traded with Islamic countries far beyond.

When a city had no port, it made money in other ways. Florence grew rich first on the cloth

trade, making fine wool and later silk. With this money, the Florentines became bankers, even lending money to European kings and to the popes. There were many rich people who had money to spend on beautiful clothing, fine buildings and works of art. They also had money to spend on exploration and trade.

Trade was undertaken on a scale never before seen. A city such as Florence developed a great network of trading partners, including countries in northern Europe and the Middle East. Banking skills made it much easier to trade in foreign places. However, perhaps more important than *lending* money was the skill of *moving* money. **Merchants** found it difficult to trade with other countries: they had to carry heavy bags of metal coins – and risk robbery along the way – and then argue about their exchange value in a different country.

The Italians invented the idea of a simple paper document, known as a **bill of exchange**, which was guaranteed by the banks to be properly paid in the country where the goods were being bought.

New political thinking of wise merchants

Trade had another important effect. In earlier years, the cities of Italy were controlled by rich, noble families known as **magnates**. They were proud and keen to fight each other, often over minor matters to do with family honour. The violence was so great that each noble house originally had one or more towers for defence when whole families went to war (see Source 5.11). When families went to war, the whole city was paralysed: shops could not open, traders could not come to markets, and goods could not be made.

The new class of merchants and bankers created by trade realised that the constant fighting between proud noble families – such as the feud between the Montagues and Capulets in

peninsula a long piece of land surrounded almost entirely by sea, but joined to the mainland

port a harbour that is big enough to take large trading ships, and has the equipment to load and to unload them

merchant a business person who makes money by trading goods, especially with foreign countries

bill of exchange a document written on paper, promising the owner that they will be given a stated sum of money when they arrive in a foreign place

magnate a member of a noble family, with a special title and coat of arms to show their importance



Source 5.11 *City by the Sea (View of Talamone)* (c. 1340) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti shows an Italian city with private houses of noble families and their defensive towers

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* – interrupted trade and caused the city to lose money. These merchants quickly took over city governments, and passed laws making this fighting illegal. They also demanded that the great towers be cut down to size. Soon only the town hall of each city was allowed to have a great tower, as a symbol of the unity of all citizens in the town.

Activity 5.1

- 1 Discuss why wealth was an important aspect of the main achievements of the Renaissance in central and northern Italy.
- 2 Recall why the bill of exchange was an important invention.
- 3 Explain why trade was important to the cities of Italy.



Significant developments and achievements

The word 'Renaissance' is French, and means simply 'rebirth'. People who lived at the time of the Renaissance, such as Giorgio Vasari, actually did use the word *rinascità* (Italian for rebirth) to describe what they saw as a rebirth of learning in their own time. The important thing was that they *felt* that they were living at a time of a rebirth of learning.

Historians today use the term 'Renaissance' with more care. They do not believe that all thought and learning completely 'died' during the previous

period known as the Middle Ages, to be 'reborn' in the Renaissance. Learning continued during the Middle Ages. Scholars in the Middle Ages were already fascinated by classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome. Historians now believe in a 'medieval imprint', meaning that many of the ideas of the Renaissance already existed during the Middle Ages.

Today, historians agree that culture and scholarship were not so much reborn as *re-intensified* during the Renaissance. This was a

Times gone by ...

Educated people at the time felt that they were living in a special period of history, and said so. Read the letter below by the Italian scholar, Marsilio Ficino, to Paul of Middleburg.

This century, like a golden age, has restored the light to the liberal arts, which were almost extinct: grammar, poetry, rhetoric, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, the ancient singing of songs ... and all this in Florence. Achieving what has been honoured among the ancients, but almost forgotten since, the age has joined wisdom with eloquence, and prudence with military art, and this most strikingly in Federigo, Duke of Urbino ... In you, also, my dear Paul, this century appears to have perfected astronomy.

Source 5.12 Marsilio Ficino sums up his age

- 1 Identify the overall feeling or tone of Ficino's letter.
- 2 Why does Ficino feel that the arts have been reborn?
- 3 In which field of knowledge was Paul of Middleburg an expert?

time of many important advances in scholarship, architecture, literature, music and the arts. There are three main areas in which the Renaissance introduced great changes and improvements: ideas, art and architecture.

Firstly, in terms of ideas, the scholars of the Renaissance carried out a massive search to find lost copies of works by ancient writers such as Plato and Aristotle. By the end of the fifteenth century, they had found and translated nearly all the classical works.

Secondly, in terms of architecture, the builders of the Renaissance invented a new style, as well as new construction techniques. For example, projects such as the construction of the dome of the cathedral of Florence were so big that they could not have been done in previous ages.

Thirdly, in terms of art, the painters of the Renaissance made important changes. They changed the subjects of art by showing **secular** themes, such as the life of the streets and markets, and the operations of government. This meant that they painted scenes of everyday life, rather than just Christian and religious topics. When they did paint religious scenes, they gave them far greater human feeling and drama. These artists also improved painting techniques. Using the technique of perspective, they were able to paint scenes in which you seem to be looking into real space with depth.

secular non-religious

Cultural centres of Renaissance Italy

A patchwork of politics

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Italy was not the one united country we know today. It was broken up into a number of different governments (see Source 5.13). The problem was that they often fought each other, causing constant warfare. It also meant, however, that every government wanted to show its power by commissioning beautiful buildings and works of art. This created much work for architects and artists, and encouraged them to compete with each other by producing ever more beautiful things.

There were three main political areas: the Kingdom of Naples in the south, the central Papal States and the northern **city-states**.

city-state a government that rules a small area made up of one city and the towns and countryside around it

Kingdom of Naples

The south of Italy formed the Kingdom of Naples. This area had fewer towns and its economy relied more on farming than on trade. In 1442, it was conquered by the Spanish Alfonso, who named himself King Alfonso I of Naples. His achievements were limited. Politically, he always had to obey the pope's authority in Rome. Economically, he never quite succeeded in making his kingdom an important trading power. He did, however, turn his court into a centre of learning and was a great patron of **humanism**. He turned the University of Naples into a base for humanism, and employed important scholars such as Lorenzo Valla. He also encouraged Spanish scholars to meet Italian scholars, introducing new ideas into Italy. Alfonso's reign ended in 1453 when he fought in a battle on the side of the **papacy** against Bologna.

humanism the study of politics, philosophy and the human experience of life generally, drawing upon classical Greek and Roman texts for ideas

papacy the pope's system of government and administration of his lands

Papal States

The centre of Italy was known as the Papal States. It was ruled by the pope, the head of the Catholic Church, and his capital was in Rome. During this time, the papacy faced a number of difficult challenges that threatened its authority.

The first was a religious problem: some popes, such as Sixtus IV and Alexander VI, had allowed the church to do things that were not proper, such as selling forgiveness for crimes simply to raise money. This was wrong, and people began to criticise the church and to demand reforms. In time, these criticisms would develop into a movement called the Protestant Reformation, which was a serious challenge to the authority of the church.

The second problem was political: although the popes owned the Papal States, they did not necessarily control them. They had to learn to be political leaders and to rule their lands. In some cases, they went much too far and ruled with great cruelty.



Source 5.13 Map of the three main political areas in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

Later in the Renaissance, Rome became an important centre of art and learning. The church had earlier been weakened by divisions and conflicts, but by the fifteenth century it had largely recovered. During that time, the pope continued to be the religious leader of the church, but also became an important political leader. At the same time, it was governed by a number of popes who liked the humanist point of view. Pope Nicholas V

believed that Rome could again enjoy some of the importance it had had in ancient times if it became a centre of the new learning.

Pope Sixtus IV and the Papal Court in Rome

Pope Nicholas V was followed by the humanist Pius II (who ruled 1458–64) and by Sixtus IV (1471–84), who continued the tradition of



Source 5.14 Sixtus IV appoints Bartolomeo Platina Prefect of the Vatican Library by Melozzo da Forlì (c. 1477)

encouraging learning. In 1477, Sixtus founded the great Vatican Library. He also appointed the humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi, known as Platina, to be his librarian (see Source 5.14). Later, Julius II (ruled 1503–13) proved to be an excellent political leader and military commander strong enough to increase his territory to include Bologna and Perugia. He encouraged great artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael, and commissioned the painting of the Sistine Chapel.

City-states

The northern part of Italy was made up of many states: some very large, some small. These northern towns all had their own style of government, but

they all enjoyed freedom and independence. The four most powerful states were Florence, Milan, Venice and Genoa. These were called city-states. This meant that a powerful city, such as Florence, was the centre of government, and that it owned a certain amount of land around it, called the **contado**. Florence was considered a big city with 100 000 people; Padua was a smaller town with 15 000 people.

Venice and Florence were famous centres of cultural activity, but many other city-states, such as Bologna, Mantua, Ferrara, Pisa and Urbino, were also important centres of Renaissance learning and art.

contado the land around an Italian city, which is controlled by that city's government

Times gone by ...

There were many rich families in Florence. Most made their money by trading cloth, before moving into banking. One of them, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (1360–1429), became very rich indeed because he lent money to the pope in Rome.

When he died in 1429, his son Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464) took over the family's network of banks, but wanted more. He wanted to control the government of Florence. However, he was too clever to take over completely: he simply used his money and power to get rid of people who challenged him, and to encourage the people who supported him. By 1434, he was effectively in control of Florence. He himself pretended to be an ordinary citizen who simply advised the government on occasion. The rule of the Medici family began a long period of political stability during which Florence was able to become even more wealthy and powerful.

Imagine you are Giuliano de' Medici and the year is 1512. You were sent out of government in 1494 and your family has just returned to Florence to rule again. Your enemy, Girolamo Savonarola, is dead and the people of Florence are preparing for weeks of celebrations. Prepare a speech to deliver to the people of Florence in the Piazza della Signoria. In your speech:

- Describe the origins of the great Medici family. Pay respect to your ancestor, Giovanni di Bicci.
- Describe Cosimo the Elder's work on the church of San Lorenzo.
- Explain how Cosimo created the first public library in Europe.
- Explain how Lorenzo de' Medici made himself the centre of a circle of scholars.
- Explain how Girolamo Savonarola briefly took over the government of Florence.

Role of the church in Italian society

The Catholic Church was the most important influence on the lives of all people in Renaissance Italy, because it provided the moral teachings about a Christian way of life. People actively believed in the authority of the pope as the spokesperson of God on earth. They also believed strongly that their souls would go to heaven or to hell after they died, depending upon whether they had lived a good life. They looked to the church to confess their sins and to seek forgiveness.

Activity 5.2

- 1 Discuss some of the challenges faced by the papacy.
- 2 Identify the three main political areas of Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
- 3 Recall who commissioned the painting of the Sistine Chapel.

Trade guilds in society

The most important aspect of working life in a Renaissance city was that virtually every businessman, merchant, banker, lawyer and skilled worker in the city was organised in a special institution known as a **guild**. This was a trade association, responsible for maintaining high standards in each area.

guild an association of all the people in a particular trade or business, which set standards for that particular industry

By the fifteenth century, Florence had twenty-one craft guilds. They were important and powerful organisations. Arranged by occupations, each guild had its own official constitution. They were the single most important organisation shaping the lives of working people in the city. They controlled who enrolled in the guild. Without enrolment, you could not practise your trade in Florence.

There was also an elite made up of seven greater guilds. The Wool Guild was the most powerful, because wool imports were so important to Florence. It included every part of the wool trade, from dyeing to manufacturing. Altogether, it represented about 200 wool firms, which employed about 30 000 people, one-third of the city's population. Also affected were cloth importers, silk merchants, bankers, judges and lawyers, doctors and those who traded in fur. Originally, the seven important guilds played a political role in Florence: for a time, only members of the greater guilds could be elected to city government.



Source 5.15 A modern photograph of the Palazzo dell'Arte della Lana, the headquarters of the powerful wool guild of Florence



Gradually, the smaller trades insisted on having guilds. The lesser guilds included butchers, shoemakers, smiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, flaxmakers, winemakers, innkeepers, oil makers, cheesemakers, swordmakers, harness makers, bakers and the tanners of skins. Below them was a **proletariat** or working class of unskilled people, such as servants, labourers and travelling salesmen, who were forbidden by law from setting up their own organisations.

proletariat ordinary working people with no special skills

Source 5.16 The crest of the Guild of Stone Masons and Carpenters by Luca della Robbia

HISTORICAL FACT

At home, Renaissance people used some strange remedies for illness. They believed that they could cure a cold by putting sliced turnip in their nostrils. They also tried to cure baldness by rubbing pigeon droppings into the skin of their head.

Role of women in society

Historians often refer to women as ‘the other half of history’ to remind us that they are present in all societies and that they play a variety of important roles in society. The problem is that their lives, experiences and activities are not always well recorded, and so there is a danger that they will be forgotten by the writers of history books.

Lucrezia Borgia (1480–1519), a woman of the ruling classes

The lives of upper-class women had the benefit of wealth and the freedom it brings. On the other hand, life among the great rulers of Renaissance Italy could also be very dangerous. Lucrezia

Borgia was used by her father, Rodrigo Borgia (later known as Pope Alexander VI) as a pawn in his political plans.

He married her at age 11 to a Spanish noble, then to a member of the Sforza family twice her age. Her next husband was a young man she genuinely loved, but he was murdered by her own family. Her life improved finally when her father married her to Alfonso d’Este, who ended up as ruler of the city of Ferrara. By January 1502 she had moved to her new home in Ferrara. At first her new family was hostile to her because she was the illegitimate daughter of a Spanish priest; her husband, Alfonso, was rough in his manner and considered by some to be mad. Her worst enemy, initially, was her sister-in-law Isabella of Mantua, who looked down upon her with obvious dislike.



Source 5.17 *Portrait of Lucrezia Borgia* by Dosso Dossi (c. 1486-1542). The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) has owned this portrait since 1965, but until recently the artist and the sitter remained a mystery. In 2008 the NGV announced that, after several years of research, the subject of the portrait was in fact one of the most famous women of the Renaissance: Lucrezia Borgia

Times gone by ...

She is a pearl in this world. I dare say that neither in her time, nor for many years before, has there been such a glorious princess, for she is beautiful and good, gentle and amiable to everyone. And nothing is more certain than this: that though her husband is a skilful and brave prince, the gracious princess has been a great service to him.

Source 5.18 The Chevalier de Bayard on Lucrezia Borgia

- 1 Discuss what is meant by 'she is a pearl of this world'.
- 2 Compare this compliment to another that you may have given or received.
- 3 Explain why the the Chevalier de Bayard may have thought to mention her husband at all.

She lived miserably in the castle, arguing with her father-in-law about servants, falling pregnant then becoming ill with malaria and, finally, suffering a dangerous miscarriage. In 1505, her father-in-law died, and Alfonso became ruler. Almost immediately, the family saw a number of attacks and murders among its jealous members. It was a dangerous political world. However, Lucrezia now found her place. Her husband remained a rough man, more interested in warfare than in social graces, but by the 1500s, all princes were expected to have stylish social gatherings and to show a refined interest in fashion, food, scholarship and the arts. Lucrezia stepped in, and set the tone

of sophistication that her husband lacked. She began to order repairs to the neglected palaces of the d'Este family and developed friendships with important writers such as Baldassare Castiglione and poets such as Ariosto.

In 1508, when Alfonso left to fight with the League of Cambrai against Venice, Lucrezia stepped in as regent to rule Ferrara in his absence. At the age of only 30, she proved that a woman could be an excellent ruler in times of warfare and trouble. In Source 5.18, the French knight, the Chevalier de Bayard, explains why everybody admired the woman now known as 'the good duchess of Ferrara'.

Research 5.1

Use a combination of books (such as Leon's *Uppity Women of Medieval Times*) and the internet to research the life of one of the women listed below.

- Lavinia Fontana – one of the first female professional painters working on large projects in Bologna and Rome
- Sofonisba Anguissola – one of a family of six girls in Cremona who studied the classics and became painters
- Artemisia Gentilleschi – a professional painter who succeeded in a profession dominated by men
- Caterina Sforza – a fiery woman from Forli who fought battles and loved mixing both perfumes and poisons
- Isabella d'Este – a woman renowned for her fine taste in fashion and in art, and also for her political skills while ruling the city of Mantua
- Deborah Ascarelli – the wife of a Jewish merchant who wrote poems in both Hebrew and Italian
- Vittoria Colonna – a friend of Michelangelo, expert on Plato and a poet in her own right

You might like to start by asking yourself some basic questions:

- 1 What was the family background of your remarkable woman?
- 2 Which professional field did she wish to enter?
- 3 What were some of the problems she would have experienced as a woman entering a male domain?
- 4 How did she deal with these problems?
- 5 How important do you think her contribution to the Renaissance was?

Humanists: a passion for learning

Research via the internet and then look carefully at Sandro Botticelli's painting of the church father *Saint Augustine* (1480). You will notice that the artist has shown the saint's room as full of books and scientific instruments. Renaissance people loved rooms that were bursting with knowledge. They loved knowledge and ideas. Botticelli has depicted the saint as a modern Renaissance scholar.

The first humanists

The first scholars to save classical works were writers such as Dante, Giovanni Boccaccio and Francesco Petrararch. Petrarch wrote some of the most passionate and beautiful love poems in literature, but he was also fascinated by the ideas of the ancient thinkers. He understood that, if you only read a classical text from the point of view of later Christianity, you are reading history backwards, and not understanding the original text at all. He taught his contemporaries that you had to try to understand classical works in their own terms. You had to understand what they meant to the people who wrote them. He lovingly searched for manuscripts, and established good reliable texts.

These Italian scholars were, strangely, helped by a catastrophic world event: in 1453, the Byzantine city of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, in Turkey) was captured by the invading Turks. Hundreds of brilliant scholars fled the country, bringing with them Greek manuscripts, and many of them ended up in Italy.

Role of humanists

The greatest achievement of the humanists was to understand that they needed to have accurate copies of the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The problem was this: the great Roman authors had written their works in so-called manuscripts – texts written by hand – but few of these original versions had survived to the fifteenth century. The only books that had survived were copies, which had been written out by monks working in monasteries. Because they were copied and recopied, mistakes had crept in. In addition, the Christian monks added explanatory notes to the text, and when the books were recopied these were mistakenly included. So Roman texts were available, but they were not accurate.

The humanist Niccolo Niccoli wrote: 'Until the ancient sources flow clear again, all efforts must be directed with single mindedness to the task of recovering the classical languages and the genuine readings of the ancient works.'

A great treasure hunt: the rescue mission to find lost books

A whole generation of scholars set out on the roads of Europe, walking from monastery to monastery, searching through the darkest corners of libraries, even looking in rubbish pits, in the hope of finding a forgotten manuscript. Their search was soon rewarded: they found many books that had lain forgotten and unused. For example, the poet Petrarch, who lived in the fourteenth century, actually located forgotten



copies of works by the Roman writer Cicero and the Roman historian Livy. When he found a copy of Livy's *History of Rome*, people felt that a new world was opening up.

Another humanist, Poggio Bracciolini, became obsessed with the search. As he worked for the pope's administration, he travelled across Europe on official business. He searched every monastery library in Switzerland, France, Germany and finally England. An absolute book maniac, he burrowed into filthy rubbish pits to dig out books that had been carelessly thrown there, and again found forgotten manuscripts.

A passion for the past

The key to humanism is the passion for the past. To Renaissance people the past was as vivid, exciting and important as the present. They especially loved ancient Greece and Rome. A humanist is a scholar who wants to revive the study of ancient ideas. The name comes from *studia humanitatis*, the study of literature, history and rhetoric (the art of fine formal speaking). These subjects are still called 'the humanities' in universities around the world.

Some of the ideas of the authors of classical Greece and Rome were already known before the Renaissance, but the Catholic Church disliked these ancient ideas because they contained no Christian beliefs. A church father such as St Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the thirteenth century, wrote a study of Aristotle's work, and agreed with some of his ideas, but was really only interested in those ideas that confirmed Christianity. The classical works were always secondary to Christian thought.

During the Renaissance, there was a major change: people became interested in the classical works for themselves. They believed that you could find answers to the issues of the present in books of the past.

Importance of the patron

This new passion for scholarship among the rich and powerful was enormously important. The copying or translation of old texts, and the writing of new ones, took a vast amount of time. Scholars had to eat, but had no time to earn a living. In

general, they could not make a fortune from their writing. The only way they could survive and work was if a rich ruler provided them with support and money. The patron sometimes paid for the work, but sometimes even allowed the scholar to live and work in their house, effectively providing him or her with a living. In return, the scholar 'dedicated' the work to the **patron**.

patron a person who supports an activity, usually by giving money

Famous patrons: the Medici family

The most famous patrons of Renaissance learning were the Medici family. They even took scholars into their home and fed them. Cosimo de' Medici, for example, supported the humanist thinker and scholar Leonardo Bruni. In 1439, he announced that he wanted to create a sort of school called the Neo-Platonist Academy. The leading thinker was a man called Marsilio Ficino. They based their work on the ideas of the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato. They were not just copying his work mindlessly: they wanted to adapt his ideas to the world in which they lived. When they called their philosophy neo-platonism, they meant that it was a new form of Platonism for the fifteenth-century world.

Similarly, Lorenzo de' Medici used his massive wealth to support a group of the most brilliant minds of his time. He encouraged scholars such as Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano, as well as important artists such as Botticelli and Verrocchio.

Federigo da Montefeltro, Battista Sforza and the Duchy of Urbino

Any intelligent ruler was proud to be educated, and to be seen to be passing the new education on to his children. Another city, Urbino, became a great centre of learning.

Federigo da Montefeltro is the best example of how much can be done by one wealthy patron who wants to help learning and the arts. Born in 1422, he ruled Urbino from 1444 to 1482. He was educated in Mantua by the great teacher Vittorino da Feltre, who taught him to live simply, to learn self-discipline and to appreciate learning and the arts. He became a professional soldier, or *condottiere*, and helped the cities of Naples, Milan and Florence defeat the armies of the pope in 1469. He was a clever and cool commander: he

kept his troops under tight control early in a battle, and only made a bold attack when he knew his enemy was weakened. He was also trustworthy: he stayed loyal to the cities that employed him, and never tried the trick that many *condottieri* played of refusing to fight until they received higher wages.

He also increased the size of the Duchy of Urbino, until it had a population of 150 000. He was a popular ruler, known to be both determined and wise: the people of Urbino actually elected him to rule in 1444, and in return he promised them medical and educational services, and some voice in government. He was one of the few rulers

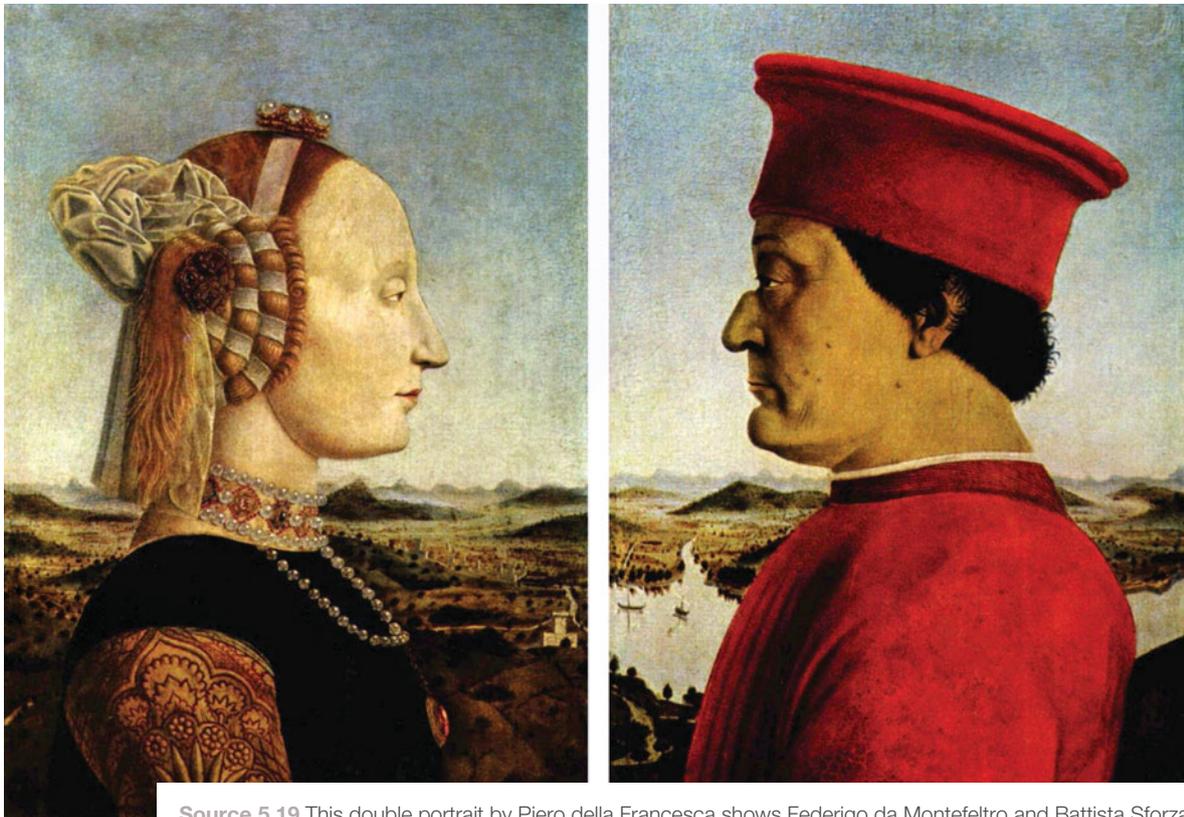
duchy an area of land which is ruled by a duke

of Renaissance Italy who could ride around the **duchy** without a bodyguard, since he had no fear of being murdered.

Equally important to Federigo was his second wife, Battista Sforza, who was 14 years old when she married him in 1460. During the twelve-and-a-half years of their marriage, she became the guiding spirit of the intellectual and artistic life

of Urbino. She encouraged great artists, such as Piero della Francesca, and architects, such as Luciano Laurana. She and her husband both worked closely with the architect when, in 1465, they began building their beautiful new palace, in which all the shapes were to be planned in perfect balance and proportion. Sadly, Battista died in 1472, only 26 years old, a few months after giving birth to their son, Guidubaldo.

Federigo is remembered today not for his fighting skills but for the use he made of the money he earned in war. He wanted to make his court at Urbino a great centre of learning. He attracted painters such as Piero della Francesca and Melozzo da Forlì, as well as writers such as Baldassare Castiglione. He also encouraged scholars such as Ficino, Landino and Poggio. He said that he wanted to create the greatest library since ancient times, and he kept at least forty writers busy just copying books; he also bought rare books from all over the world. This was partly because learning was a new form of prestige, and he wanted this new form of power.



Source 5.19 This double portrait by Piero della Francesca shows Federigo da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza (c. 1472). They are shown in profile, or side on, as the Roman emperors had been shown on ancient coins.

He also had a genuine love of beauty and of learning. First, he designed his duke's palace at Urbino to be a sort of city of learning and beauty. He used the skills of the architect Luciano Laurana to create a beautiful building, but he himself was very skilful in architecture, and helped create the beauty of the palace you can still visit today.

He was able to read both Greek and Latin, and could also talk well about Christian texts. His court even included five readers, so that he could hear his beloved books even when he was eating.

The main idea of humanism is that every human being has dignity and worth. People are not naturally bad: they have intelligence and goodness, with which they can find the truth and live a good and decent life. This is in contrast to medieval thought, especially Christian thought, which emphasised that people are essentially sinful.

The humanists' passion for Rome

The humanists loved ancient Rome, especially the period of the Roman Republic, which lasted from 510 BCE to 23 BCE, just before the birth of Christ. For them, the republic represented the idea that you could give up your own private interests for the general good of the whole society. These ideas did not exist only in the comfortable studies of scholars: some of these scholars actually held power and, more surprisingly, they introduced these ideas into the political world of the Renaissance. In Florence, for example, two humanists, Coluccio Salutati and then Leonardo Bruni, held positions as Chancellor of Florence, and they proudly pointed out that Florence was a republic. When Florence was threatened by the

civic humanism the belief that a man of learning should hold public office and use his skill in the service of the city

army of Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan, they spoke proudly of the way in which Florence represented a certain type of liberty, as opposed to a tyrant like Giangaleazzo. This is called **civic humanism**.

New education for a new world

The humanists felt that they should turn their attention to one important activity of the mind: teaching. To that point, most schools had been run by the Catholic Church, and had taught subjects such as Christian religion and Latin. They now opened a new type of 'humanist' school. Not surprisingly, the humanists looked for advice, and found it in the ancient world: Guarino Guarini, for example, found a book by the ancient Greek writer Plutarch, called *On Educating Children*, and translated it into Latin.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527)

Niccolo Machiavelli was not only one of the most brilliant thinkers of the Renaissance, but also one of the most misunderstood. His name has lent itself to the English word 'Machiavellian', which means a ruthless determination to gain power at any cost, without any ideals or sense of human decency. In fact, Machiavelli never recommended such an approach in politics; he simply described the realities of political life in the Italy of his time.

Machiavelli began his career in 1498, when he entered the civil service of Florence as Second Chancellor. He soon proved to be a good **diplomat**, and represented Florence in missions to Pope Julius II and to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. He was a sharp observer and a clever analyst. He was able to look below the ceremony and show of state visits, and see the realities of power within a city-state or foreign country. His reports demonstrated his sharp observation and his ability to use details to support his general descriptions of foreign states. His career lasted just fourteen years.

diplomat an official who represents the interests of their government in dealings with foreign governments

Machiavelli was lucky to work for the government in the period following the execution of Savonarola in 1498 and the return of the Medici in 1512. During these years, Florence enjoyed a genuine republican government that was not dominated by one powerful family. Machiavelli

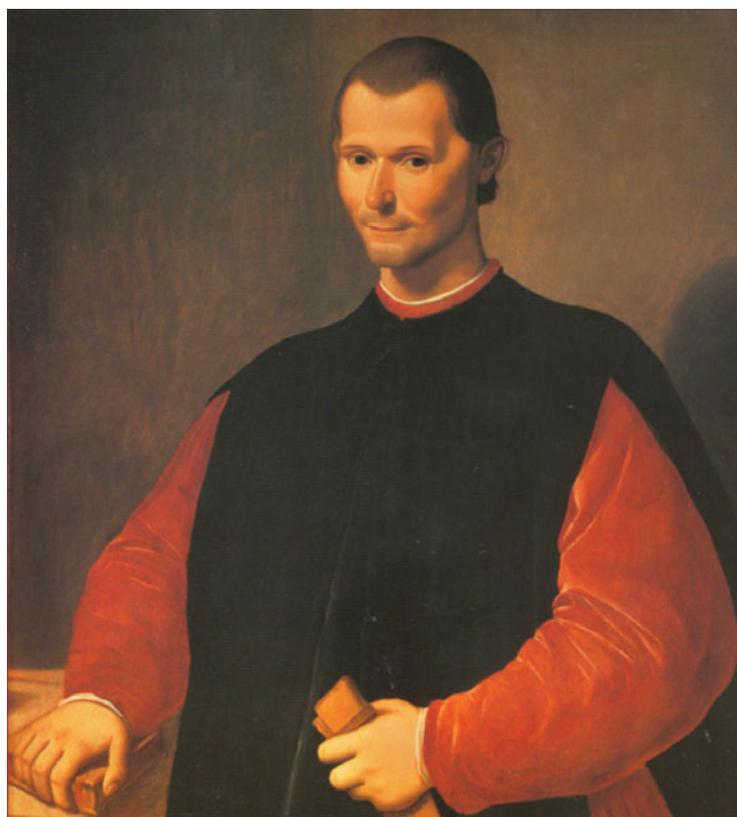
genuinely respected the republic and democratic government. This worked against him when the Medici family came back into power in 1512. They feared that he would oppose their rule, so they had him arrested, questioned, tortured and dismissed from his job.

For a man who lived and breathed politics, this was a personal disaster. He retired to live on his farm at San Casciano, outside Florence. Frustrated, angry and bitter, he began writing a work to describe the realities of political life as he knew it. In *The Prince* (1513) he explained how powerful princes such as Cesare Borgia used their power. He simply wanted to show the real facts of political life, but many people thought he was suggesting that this was how a ruler *should* behave. People who had not even read his book concluded that he was saying there was no room for morals or ideals in politics; some even said that he was inspired by the Devil to write such evil things.

In reality, his extraordinary intelligence created a totally new vision of politics. He began

by analysing the state of Italy, and pointing out that he had seen the French invasion of Italy in 1494. He then argued that a ruler such as a prince has to act to defend the interests of his state and his people. In such situations, it is not always possible for a prince to show good Christian qualities such as tolerance or forgiveness. If, for example, a dictator sends an army to slaughter his people, the prince cannot forgive him and must fight against the invader.

Machiavelli believed that strong government was good, because it brought peace and stability to the people, who could then grow wealthy. He repeatedly used the word ‘necessity’, by which he meant that sometimes the prince has to be cruel in order to defend the interests of everybody in his land. He concluded that the prince may want to be a good Christian in his private life, but that this is not always possible as a ruler dealing strongly with enemies. People at the time were shocked, and said that he had no Christian morals. Others admitted that he was right, but should not have said all this so frankly.



Source 5.20 This portrait of Machiavelli by Santo di Tito shows the political thinker as an intelligent and educated man, far from the ‘devil’ imagined by later generations.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, list the information you have learnt on humanism.

| Humanism |
|--|
| An intellectual movement in Italy during the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Activity 5.3

Your name is Giovanni Alberti. You have been a strong supporter of the new style of architecture and art in Florence. You have also been interested in the ideas of humanism. The government of Florence has commissioned you to write a traveller's guide to the city's main buildings and works of art. Your guide must be addressed to travellers coming from other cities in Italy, and to rich merchants coming here from the rest of Europe. Your guide must be 'procedural', in the sense that it explains to visitors where the main buildings are. It should also give visitors an idea of each building's purpose and of the meaning of the art works found inside it. Choose between six and ten buildings, and consider the following when writing:

- 1 In which part of Florence is each building located? How do you get to it? What other buildings are nearby?
- 2 Identify some of the main art works in this building. Who created them?
- 3 Reflect on what this building tells you about people's lives and values in the Renaissance.

Give your guide a name such as *The Lonely Globe Guide to Firenze* or *Firenze on Five Ducats a Day*.

Art in Renaissance Italy

The greatest achievement of Italian art during the Renaissance was to make human figures look real, as if moving about in an actual space. We know that a painting is actually a completely flat or two-dimensional surface, but the painter has to try to make the scene look as if it is deep; that is,

as if we were looking into a space like a room or a stage. The figures she or he paints are also flat on the canvas, and yet the painter has to make them look as if they are fully rounded. This is called the illusion of three dimensions.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)

Leonardo da Vinci was famous, in his own time, as a man whose intelligent mind led him to

investigate many different subjects and to make some astounding inventions. He began his career as a painter by being trained in the studio of Andrea del Verrocchio in Florence. He wrote a *Treatise on Painting* in which he emphasised the importance of observing the real world.

It was his desire to paint reality properly that led him to observe and sketch the world with great care. In particular, his desire to paint the human body accurately led him first to sketch live models, then to conduct dissections of dead bodies. Simply by looking and observing, he discovered that the heart was made up of four chambers, not the two that people had assumed to be there. He was the first to count the number of bones in the spine, and to guess that the nerves transmitted messages to the brain. He developed a new method to calculate the space inside the skull or the heart: he poured hot wax into these cavities, and then pulled it out when it was hard and measured it. Leonardo studied the male body, the female body and the ultimate mystery of the unborn child. When he studied the infant in the womb, he noted: 'In the case of this child, the heart does not beat and it does not breathe because it lies continually in water. And if it were to breathe it would be drowned, and breathing is not necessary because it receives life and is nourished from the life and food of the mother.'

His inventions were extraordinary, even though

some only existed as ideas and could not be made into reality. First, he understood that warfare was big business in the Renaissance. The city-states often went to war with each other and, when they did, they had to pay professional soldiers, called *condottieri*, to fight for them. Leonardo hoped to gain employment by designing machines that would allow rulers to win battles.

Leonardo also understood that Renaissance people were eager for new inventions that could be used more peacefully in everyday life. For example, he invented the idea of the modern roller chain, rather like a bicycle chain. He designed a rolling mill for making strips of metal. He designed a giant crane and excavator, a machine that could replace hundreds of human workers and dig a canal joining Florence to the sea. He seems almost to have thought of the modern car, at least as a sort of carriage that could move by itself, drawing its power from the action of large springs. In another set of drawings, he first studied the wings of birds to discover how they fly, then began designing wings that humans could use for flight.

The main limitations to his inventions were, in fact, to do with power: people could certainly build the bodies of carriages and assault vehicles, but they did not have a form of energy strong enough to drive them; they would have to wait until the invention of the steam engine in the eighteenth century.

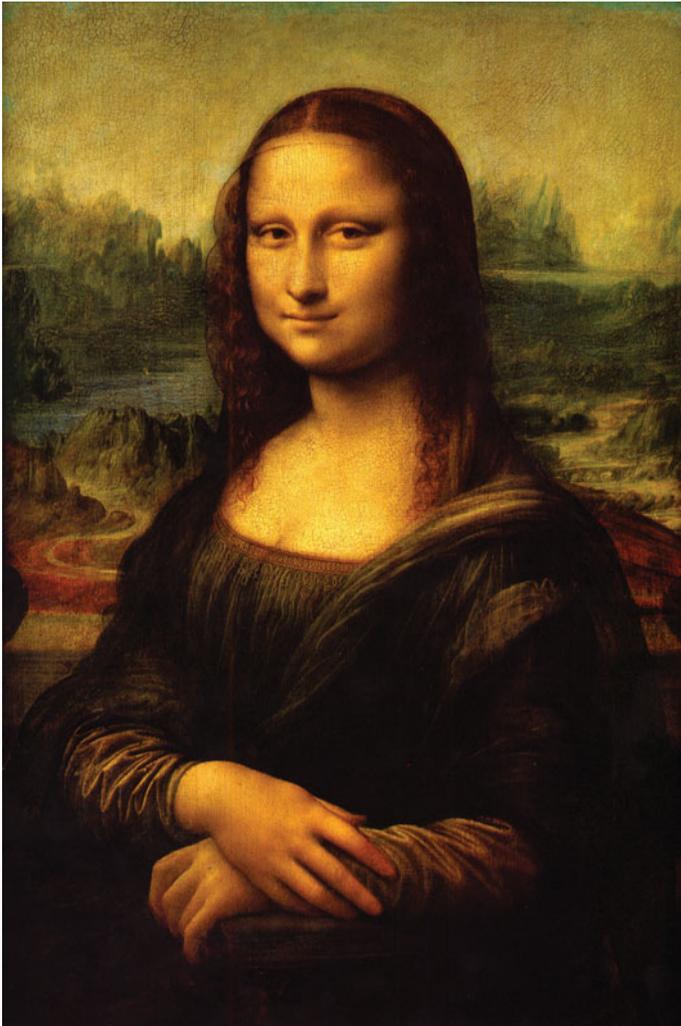
Activity 5.4

Historians often refer to Leonardo da Vinci as the 'Renaissance man' because he seemed to be able to turn his mind to almost any form of art or invention. Write a brief report about his four main areas of activity – art, medical science, warfare and industry – and evaluate what effects they had on his own times and on our own. To compile this report, make sure that you use both book resources from your library and ICT resources. You will find much useful information on www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.

Consider the following questions:

- 1 What was the family background of this Renaissance man?
- 2 What sort of training would he have received in the workshop of the painter Verrocchio?
- 3 What important discoveries did Leonardo make in terms of the human body and medical science?

Leonardo's most famous work is his *Portrait of the Mona Lisa* (see Source 5.21). The work is smaller than it was originally; the sitter was originally shown framed by a window. Historians do not know why Leonardo never delivered this painting to the patron, but he took it with him when, late in his life, he went to live in France at the court of King François I. It was later taken into the collection of the Louvre Museum, where it has become one of the most visited and famous paintings of the world.



Source 5.21 Leonardo da Vinci's *Portrait of the Mona Lisa* is perhaps the most famous Renaissance painting in the world. It can be seen in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

HISTORICAL FACT

Historians have always wondered about the meaning of the Mona Lisa's mysterious half-smile. One possible theory is suggested by the painting itself. This wife of a rich merchant wears a surprisingly simple dress and no jewellery. Most Renaissance women would have dressed beautifully for their portrait. The only exception might be during pregnancy, when it was not considered right to dress expensively. It is possible that the Mona Lisa's smile is that of a contented expecting mother. Historians also point to the fact that she wears no rings, and that her fingers seem to be slightly swollen, which is common in pregnancy.

Research 5.2

One of the best ways of getting a better understanding of Renaissance culture is to see examples of actual Italian paintings now held in museum collections. A number of Australian museums have beautiful examples of Italian art. It might be possible to visit one of these museums if it is close to your school. Otherwise, most of these museums have useful websites that you can explore on the internet. Choose three works of early Italian art located in Australia as the focus of your research. Using both book resources and the internet, research these works, and investigate the following questions:

- 1 Where was your artist born and educated? How was he or she trained?
- 2 Give a brief overview of some of the other important works that your artist has painted. (You may like to start by looking at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.)
- 3 Explain who bought the works the artist created, and where they were placed once they were finished.

Present your findings in a PowerPoint presentation or as an online blog.

Suggested paintings are listed below. Go to www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks to access the websites of the different galleries.

- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
 - Jacopo di Cione (Florence), *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* (c. 1367)
 - Giovanni di Paolo (Siena), *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* (c. 1444)
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 - Studio of Antonio Vivarini (Venice), *The Garden of Love* (c. 1465–70)
 - Annibale Carracci (Bologna), *The Holy Family* (c. 1587)
 - Antonio Correggio (Parma), *Madonna and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist* (c. 1514–15)
- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
 - Sano di Pietro (Siena) *Madonna and Child with Saints* (c. 1450–81)
 - Prospero Fontana (Bologna), *Deposition (Bringing Christ Down From the Cross)* (1563)
- Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
 - Tintoretto (Venice), *The Risen Christ* (c. 1555)
- Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 - Bonifazio Veronese (Venice), *The Holy Family Resting During their Flight to Egypt* (c. 1550)

Technology and science

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)

Galileo was born in Pisa in 1564, the son of a cloth merchant. As a boy, he showed real talent in making mechanical toys and in music. When he started school, he showed an independent mind by questioning what his teachers told him. At the University of Pisa, he questioned not only his lecturers but the texts he

was meant to learn by heart. He preferred to learn by doing actual experiments and by observing the real world carefully. He was quickly promoted, as a young man, to professor of mathematics. His experiments were simple but effective. For example, the lecturers believed Aristotle's statement that heavy objects fall faster than light ones. In 1591, he simply took his colleagues to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and proved this wrong by dropping one heavy and one light object, demonstrating that they still hit the ground at the same time.

He moved on to the University of Padua in 1592, which accepted students from all countries and all religions, including Catholics, Protestants and Jews. In 1609, he heard of an invention from a Dutch inventor that we now call the telescope. He made his own, with a magnification of ten times, and hurried to Venice to show it to the government of the city. Because the telescope could be used by both navy ships and trading ships, they saw its value and immediately gave Galileo a well-paid job.

This gave him the time to use his invention – which he called an 'eye reed' – to look into space and to study the universe. In 1610, he observed planets such as Venus and Neptune, and wrote his findings in *The Starry Messenger*. He became interested in an argument that had already been raging for some time. The Catholic Church had always taught that the Earth, created by God, must be the centre of the universe, and therefore all the other planets must revolve around it. In 1534, however, the Polish scientist Nicolas Copernicus had suggested that the Earth revolved around the Sun. The Catholic Church was furious that its teachings had been questioned. This was partly because it had recently been challenged by a new religion called Protestantism. The Catholic Church responded by setting up a special Holy Office

to punish anybody who created new ideas that might threaten religion.

In 1613, Galileo wrote a book about sunspots that included a statement that the Earth revolved around the Sun. In 1615, Galileo respectfully asked the church permission to study the question, but was warned not to make such statements. He had to do his research in private, until the election of pope Urban VIII in 1624. This pope was more open to new ideas, and it was agreed in writing that Galileo would write a book about different explanations of the universe. Galileo explained to him that he intended no attack on religion.

When he finally published his findings in the *Dialogue on the Great World Systems* in 1632, he was careful not to suggest that Copernicus' theory was right. He simply set up a dialogue, or discussion, between the old-fashioned view and Copernicus' new theory. He thought that an intelligent reader could work out which one was right. Even so, the Holy Office, also known as the Inquisition, called him before them in 1633 and threatened him with torture. By now, he was a 68-year-old man in poor health, and he would not survive being tortured. He publicly admitted that he had been wrong. (Many like to believe the story that when he finished his admission, he muttered under his breath, 'Nonetheless, it does still move!').

He retired as a prisoner to a house in the countryside near Florence, where police spies kept watch on his activities. He was not discouraged, however, and wrote one more book on the physics of the Earth, which he sent secretly to Holland, where it was published. Only old age and blindness finally stopped his extraordinary work. He died in 1642.

The Catholic Church did not officially accept Galileo's teachings until 1992, when Pope John Paul II acknowledged that the scientist had been right, but offered no apology for his treatment.



Activity 5.5

Historians see Galileo as the father of modern physics and the founder of the exploration of space that continues in our own time. Write a report describing his main discoveries, and explain why he faced such fierce criticism from the authorities of his time. To compile your report on Galileo, use both book resources from your library and ICT resources. You will find much useful information on the site of the Institute and Museum of the History of Science, Florence and the Galileo Project at Rice University, available at www.cambridge.edu.au/history&weblinks.

In your report, consider the following:

- 1 What special skills did Galileo display as a young boy?
- 2 Why was Galileo's initiative in taking the telescope to Venice a good idea?
- 3 Why was the Catholic Church so hostile to new ideas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?



Spread of Renaissance culture

When a great civilisation develops in a country such as Italy, it not only changes the lives of the people who live there, but it can also create enormous changes in other countries. Civilisations usually come into contact with each other through trade or warfare. In the case of one important European country, France, warfare gave the French their first glimpse of the society and culture of Italy. It also created a total change in the way their king ruled the country.

Culture as a form of power

During the late fifteenth century, King Charles VIII fought wars in Italy to try to claim territory there. He apparently *saw* Italian Renaissance life and culture, but was not affected by it. It was King Louis XII, who upon seeing Italy – again as an invader – was first struck by the beauty and sophistication of Italian culture. More importantly, he understood its political significance. This was important to Louis, because he was the ruler who began the process of creating a centralised nation-state in France; that is, one nation ruled by one government from a capital city such as Paris.

Louis XII was the first to use culture – fine architecture, sculptures, paintings, music, sophisticated dress and manners – as a way of creating this new form of government, but his work was taken up and completed by François I. His main achievement was to transform the government of France from its medieval form into a modern government of the sort we know today.

François I understands the political use of culture in Italy

The French first invaded Italy in Milan in 1499. In 1515, François personally led a conquering army. Like Louis XII, he saw something new – a new *form* of princely power, based not on weapons but on the command of culture and of knowledge. He saw how the splendour of Rome showed the power of the great Renaissance popes, and how the splendours of Florence showed the prestige of the Medici rulers of Florence. He saw the beautiful mansions and villas of Italy, and tried to build something similar in his Palace of Fontainebleau in France (see Source 5.22).

François carefully copied the Italian rulers. Like an Italian prince, he surrounded himself with scholars, particularly those trained in the Italian humanist learning. François did not actually have a good command of Greek or Latin, but wanted to show interest in scholarship.



Source 5.22 The royal palace at Fontainebleau, which shows François I's desire to have a beautiful residence like the elegant villas he had seen in Italy

François I develops the idea of the royal court

The civilisation of Italy also gave François I another way of showing his authority. Until now, the royal court – the important people who gathered around the king – was just a group of the king's hunting friends. Now, François understood that he could turn the court into a sort of theatre of power, in which he was always the main actor at the centre. He began by increasing the number of people at court. The royal court had 318 officers in 1490, but by 1535 François I had increased this to 622. An army of officials organised great dinners, exciting hunts, plays, concerts and festivals. Anybody who went to see François was dazzled by his power and wealth.

François learnt another lesson from the Italians: the importance of women, for their intellect and wit, and for their beauty and style. Previously, the court was a male affair, dominated by the king's hunting companions and fighters. François now increased the number of women at court, and appreciated the role of feminine fashion and graces. Women were expected to be beautiful, but they could also display their intelligence and education, and play some political role.

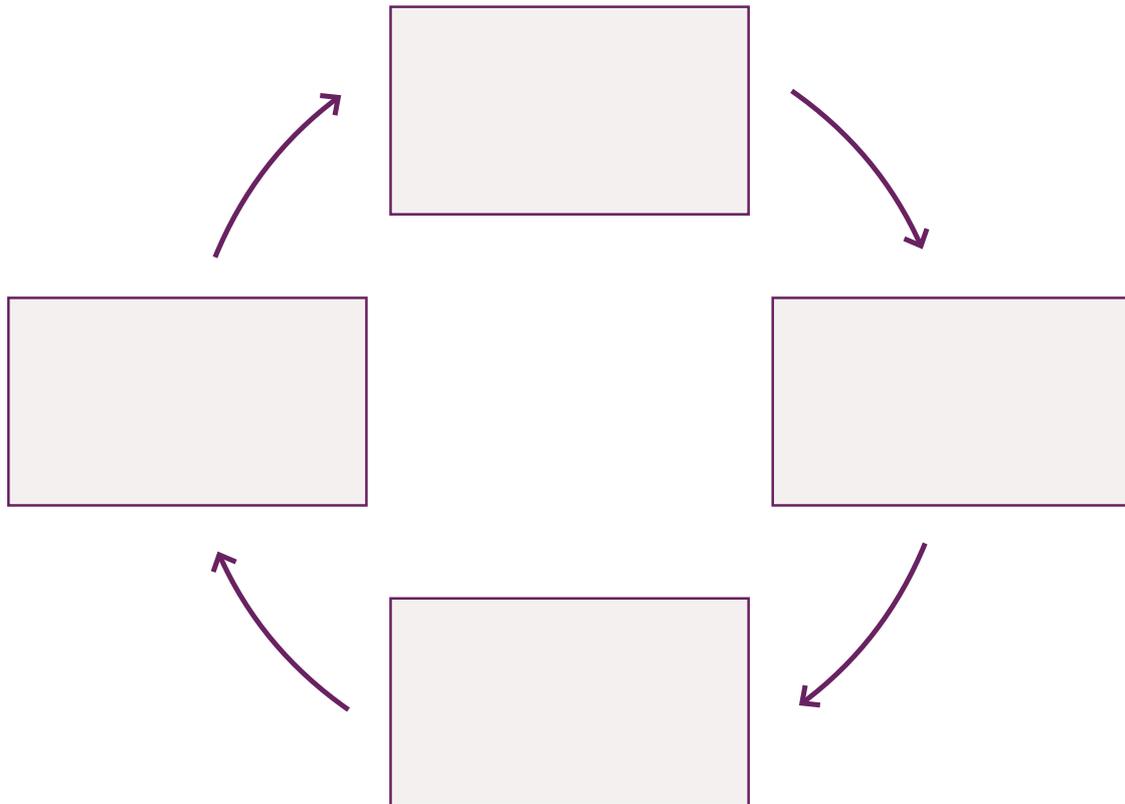
Importing the Italian Renaissance

François I was determined to import not just Italian paintings but a whole raft of talented painters. By the sixteenth century, Italian painters

were working in a style referred to both as 'Late' Renaissance and as Mannerism. At first, things went well; he attracted the ageing Leonardo da Vinci to France in 1516 and appointed him 'First Painter, Engineer and Architect to the King'. When da Vinci died, François handed the title of Artistic Director to Francesco Primaticcio (1504–70) who came to France in 1532. Another win was Niccolò dell'Abbate (1509–71) who arrived in 1552. All of these works represent a development of Italian Mannerism.

 *Note this down*

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the most important Renaissance achievements.



Chapter summary

- Great civilisations often develop in places where the geography of the land helps people to grow wealthy. Italy was 'at the crossroads of the world' because of the maritime trade on the Mediterranean Sea and the land trade across Europe to the north.
- Culture tends to develop in cities rather than in the countryside. Italy in the fifteenth century had many large cities, and they were some of the richest in Europe.
- The Italians of this time were experts in trade (moving goods) and banking (moving money). This expertise created much wealth, leading rulers and governments to commission great buildings and beautiful paintings, allowing the arts to develop very quickly.
- The humanist scholars looked to the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome for guidance as to how society could best be organised in the fifteenth century.
- France invaded Italy in search of territory, which it did not win. However, it did gain a new sense of civilised refinement, and soon set about creating its own Renaissance.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- The Italian peninsula sticks out into which sea?
 - Black Sea
 - Mediterranean Sea
 - Baltic Sea
 - Arctic Sea
- A city-state was:
 - a large city as big as a modern state
 - an Italian city in a foreign land
 - a city ruled by a foreign king
 - an independent city with its own government
- A guild was:
 - an association of all the people in one trade
 - an academy for intellectual discussion
 - a group of kings joined to fight a war together
 - a city-state's own army
- Which statement about humanism is false?
 - Humanism is the study of human life and the way society is best organised.
 - The humanists thought the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome were too old to be relevant to their time.
 - The humanists added new subjects to study at school.
 - The humanists' favoured hobby was searching for forgotten copies of Greek and Roman texts.
- The powerful family that most influenced the development of Renaissance Florence was:
 - the Pazzi family
 - the Borgia family
 - the Medici family
 - the d'Este family

Short answer

- 1 Explain why the 'patchwork of politics' (many small governments) in Italy actually helped to create work for artists, writers, architects and inventors.
- 2 What is Galileo Galilei said to have muttered under his breath to the Inquisition?
- 3 Describe some of the ways in which women contributed to everyday life in Renaissance Italy.
- 4 How and why did the Medici family rule Florence without showing their real power?
- 5 Assess how Venice was able to build up its large trading empire across the world.

Source analysis

Study Source 5.23 and answer the following questions:

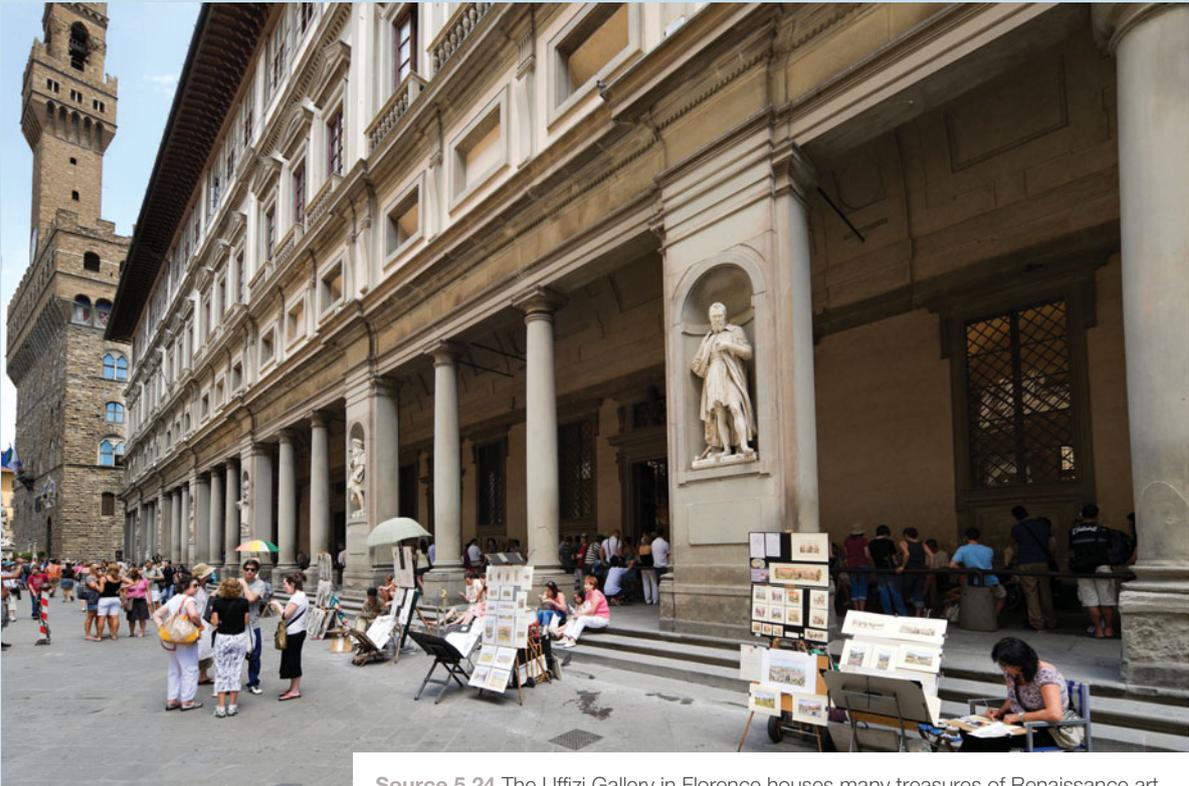
- 1 Many Renaissance rulers liked to be shown as either men of learning or men of war. How has Cellini chosen to show Cosimo de' Medici in this sculpture?
- 2 Cosimo de' Medici's costume has been copied from a past age. Can you identify which age it has come from? Why would he have been proud to wear a costume from this particular age?
- 3 Look closely at the expression on Cosimo's face. What does Cellini try to tell us about his character?
- 4 Do you think that modern Australians would be impressed if they saw a famous person shown in this way? How do we show key people in order to give a sense of their importance in our time?



Source 5.23 Sculpture of Cosimo de' Medici by the Renaissance artist Benvenuto Cellini

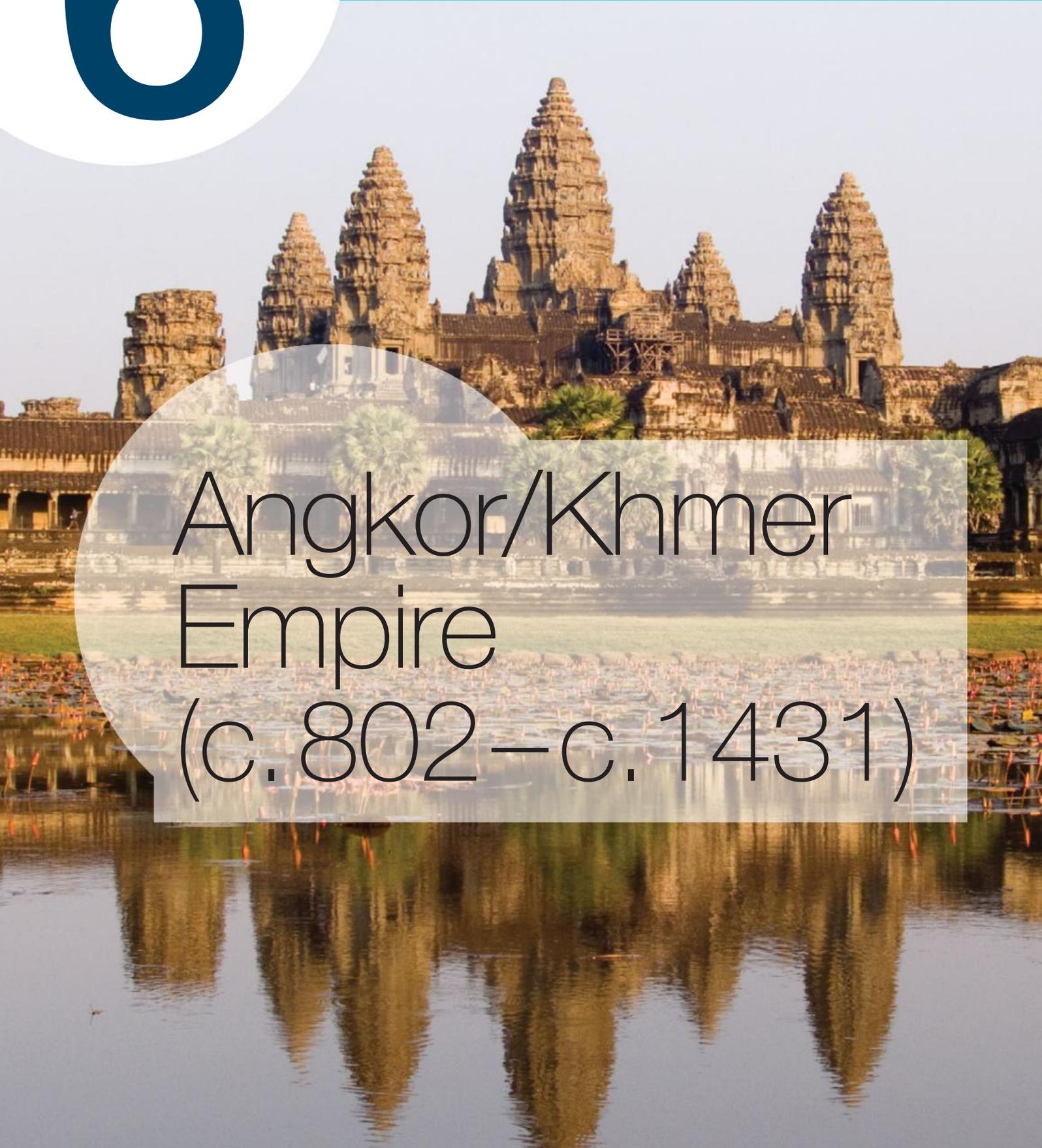
Extended response

Using your library and the internet, list as many reasons as you can to explain why Italy was so well suited to encouraging learning and the arts between c. 1400 and c. 1600. In your answer, try to decide what the most important factors were in helping the Renaissance develop first in Italy.



Source 5.24 The Uffizi Gallery in Florence houses many treasures of Renaissance art, and is one of the most visited museums in the world

6



Angkor/Khmer Empire (c. 802 – c. 1431)

Source 6.1 Angkor Wat

Before you start

Main focus

Angkor was the capital of the Khmer Empire, which covered most of mainland south-east Asia. It developed into a sophisticated civilisation famous for its temples and water management.

Why it's relevant today

Many of the challenges facing the modern world such as urban planning, deforestation, soil degradation, droughts, floods and climate change also challenged Angkor. Furthermore, the Khmer civilisation laid the foundations for modern-day Cambodian society.

Inquiry questions

- What features enabled Angkor to develop and flourish?
- What were the beliefs and values of Angkor?
- How was society organised within the Khmer Empire?
- How did the Khmer interact with other societies during the period?
- What happened to Angkor and what legacy did the Khmer Empire leave behind?
- When studying the Khmer Empire, how have historians reconstructed the past?

Key terms

- Angkor Wat
- *chakravartin/maharajadhiraja*
- Devaraja
- dharma
- Indianisation
- Mekong River
- Tonle Sap
- water management

Significant individuals

- Jayavarman II
- Jayavarman VII
- Queen Indradevi
- Queen Jayarajadevi
- Rajendravarman II
- Suryavarman II

Let's begin

Stone tools found in Cambodia have led archaeologists to conclude that hunter-gatherers first moved into the area around 60 000 years ago. The introduction of rice farming c. 2300 BCE encouraged these peoples to establish small farming communities. By c. 200 CE, wealthy settlements had been established throughout the area, including Cambodia.



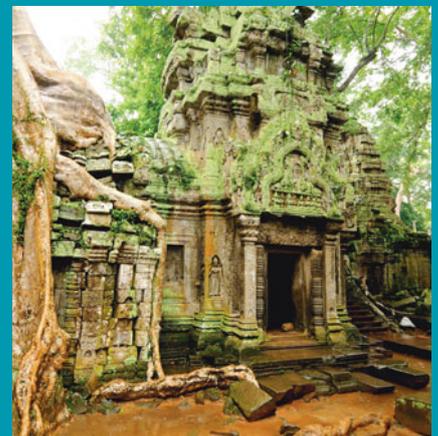
Source 6.2 Angkor Thom



Source 6.3 Avenue of Gods, South Gate, Angkor Thom



Source 6.4 Bas relief of Apsaras (sacred dancers), Angkor Wat



Source 6.5 Ta Prohm temple complex, Angkor

Timeline

| CHAPTER EVENTS | WORLD EVENTS |
|--|--|
| 0 CE . . . | . |
| South-east Asia is Indianised c. 100–500 CE | c. 1 CE Traditional date for the birth of Christ |
| 200 CE . . . | . |
| 300 CE . . . | 220 CE Han Dynasty ends in China |
| 400 CE . . . | . |
| 500 CE . . . | 320–535 Gupta Empire of India flourishes |
| Rudravarman of Funan dies c. 550 | . |
| 600 CE . . . | 476 Last western Roman Emperor is deposed |
| Jayavarman I reigns c. 657–c. 681 | . |
| Queen Jayadevi reigns c. 685–c. 720 | 570 Muhammad is born |
| 800 CE . . . | . |
| Jayavarman II founds the Khmer Empire 802–c. 835 | 618–907 Tang Dynasty rules China |
| Indravarman I builds Preah Ko, Bakong temples 877–89 and the Indratataka Baray | . |
| 900 CE . . . | 800 Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor |
| Harshavarman I reigns c. 910–23 | 871–99 Alfred ‘the Great’ rules England |
| Rajendravarman II reigns; he returns the capital 944–67 CE to the Angkor region | . |
| 1000 CE . . . | 960–1279 Song Dynasty rules China |
| Civil war is fought between Jayaviravarman 1002–10 and Suryavarman | 985 Eric the Red, Viking exploration of Greenland |
| Suyravarman I founds the Dynasty of the Sun 1011–50 | 987 Christianity is introduced to Russia |
| Jayavarman VI founds the 1080–1107 Mahidharapura Dynasty | . |
| 1100 CE . . . | 1066 Normans conquer England |
| Suryavarman II reigns; he builds Angkor Wat 1113–50 and Beng Mealea | 1071 Seljuk Turks defeat Byzantines at Battle of Manzikert |
| Jayavarman VII reigns; arguably Angkor’s c. 1181–c. 1220 greatest king, he builds temples, hospitals, highway rest-stops and other infrastructure | 1096–99 The First Crusade; Jerusalem is captured |
| 1200 CE . . . | . |
| Indravarman II reigns c. 1220–43 | 1163 Construction begins on Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris |
| 1300 CE . . . | 1170 Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is murdered |
| Jayavarman VIII reigns; a Hindu, 1243–c. 1295 systematically defaces images of the Buddha on the buildings of Jayavarman VII | . |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1206 Temujin takes title of Genghis Khan or universal ruler |
| The Thai sack Angkor, enslaving thousands and causing 1431 the Khmer to move capital to Phnom Penh region | c. 1220 Manco Capac founds the Inca Empire |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1215 King John of England signs the Magna Carta |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1271 Marco Polo leaves Venice bound for China |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1271 Yuan Dynasty rules China |
| 1400 CE . . . | . |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1347–52 Black Death devastates Europe |
| 1400 CE . . . | . |
| 1400 CE . . . | 1453 Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Empire, destroying the Byzantine Empire |



Source 6.6 South-east Asia
Cambridge University Press



Angkor's rise to prominence

Trade and agriculture

The Mekong River was one of the most important reasons people chose to settle in Cambodia and southern Vietnam. The Mekong is the world's seventh-longest river, rising in the snow-capped Himalaya mountains of Tibet and slowly cutting its way through China, Burma, Thailand and Laos. As the Mekong crosses the border into modern-day Cambodia, it passes over the world's largest waterfall, the Khong Falls. The river continues to flow southwards into the Cambodian Basin and eventually to Phnom Penh, the present-day capital of Cambodia.

confluence the intersection of two or more rivers

Phnom Penh is situated at an important **confluence**, known as the Quatre Bras ('the four arms' in French). Here the river splits and takes four different paths: the original Mekong River coming from the north; the Tonle Sap heading off to the north-west; and the

Bassac and main Mekong heading south towards the Vietnamese border and the Mekong Delta, where they empty into the South China Sea.

South-east Asia has a tropical climate and is affected by **monsoons**, which bring heavy rains and afternoon thunderstorms from late May until October. The dry season lasts from November until May, when little rain falls.

During the wet season, the snow of the Himalayas begins to melt, which combines with the monsoon rains to make the Mekong overflow, flooding low-lying areas such as the Cambodian basin. So much water flows down the Mekong that when it reaches the Quatre Bras, water moves up the Tonle Sap in the reverse direction to its usual flow. During the dry season, the Tonle Sap Lake covers 2700 square kilometres with an average depth of 1.5 metres, but during the wet season it expands to 10400 square kilometres with an average depth of 9.5 metres.

One of the secrets behind Angkor's success was the management of the monsoon rains and the flooding Tonle Sap. As the waters of the Tonle

monsoon strong winds that blow into south-east Asia from the southwest during the wet season, bringing heavy rains, and from the northeast during the dry season



Source 6.7 Khmer rice paddies

HISTORICAL
FACT

Today, Cambodia's flood-retreat rice farming can yield an average of 2–3 tonnes per hectare.



bund a low-level wall used to create shallow ponds for growing rice

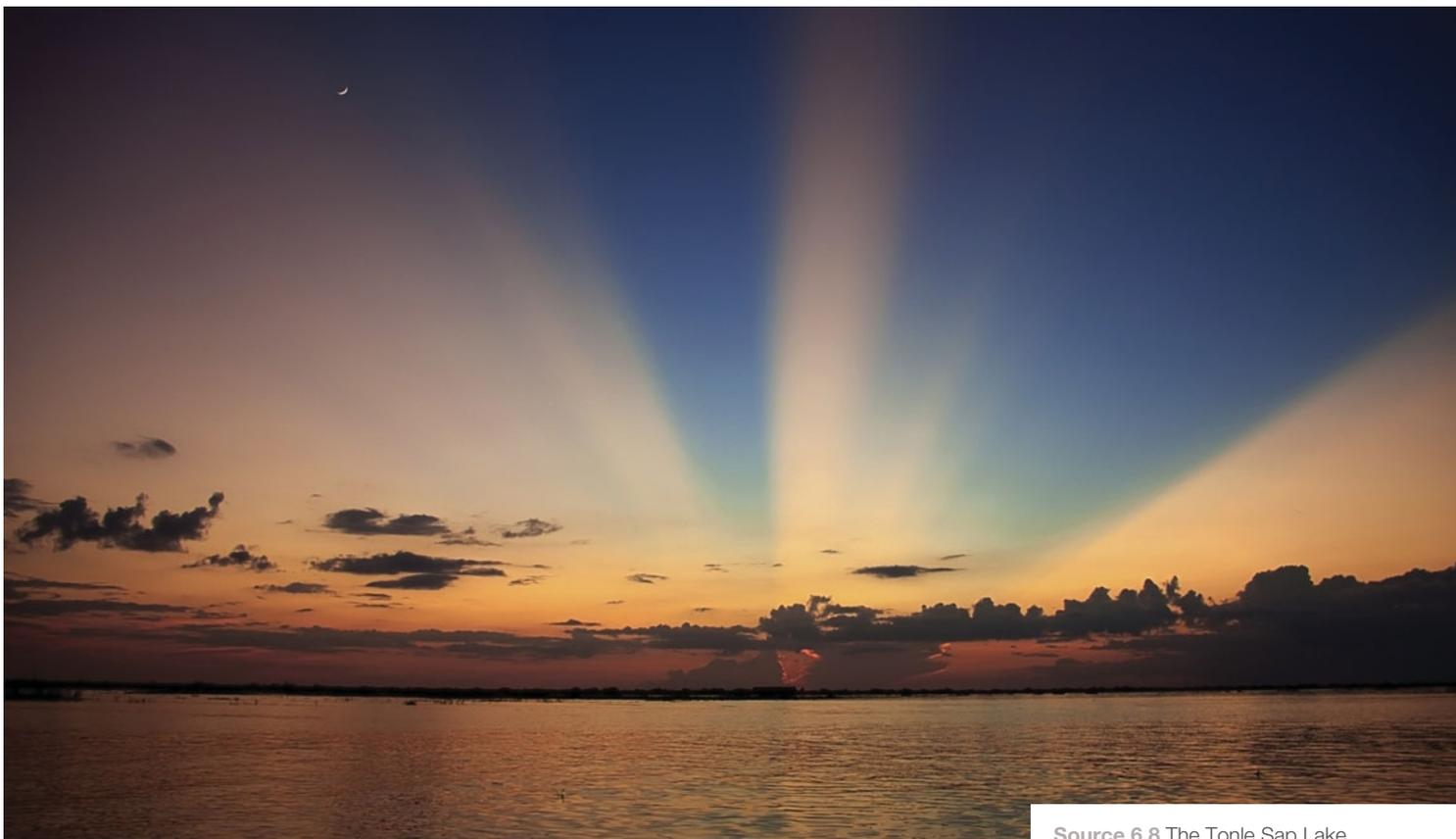
Sap spread across the Cambodian basin, the Khmer created millions of **bunded** rice paddies, and built canals and embankments to slow down the retreat of the water when the wet season ended. Reservoirs of varying size were also constructed throughout the area. The Khmer

capital moved many times, but was generally situated close to the Tonle Sap.

To the north of the Cambodian Basin are the Bolaven Plateau, the Dangrek Range and the Kulen Hills, where much of the stone used to build Angkor was quarried. Beyond these mountains is the Khorat Plateau, a tableland roughly the size

HISTORICAL
FACT

The Tonle Sap Lake is so rich in natural resources that people have built floating villages upon it.



Source 6.8 The Tonle Sap Lake

of Tasmania. To the south of the Cambodian Basin are the forest-covered Cardamom and the Elephant Mountains: areas rich in spices. Historically, the Khorat Plateau and the Mekong Delta regions were also populated with Khmer people, but the Cambodian Basin has been the heart of the Khmer civilisation for nearly 2000 years.

HISTORICAL FACT

A lack of records is one of the problems historians and archaeologists face when studying the Khmer Empire. The Angkorians recorded all their official documents and histories on palm leaves, which have been lost. This means that scholars must rely upon other sources, such as archaeological remains, Khmer and Sanskrit stone inscriptions (about 1200 in total), statues and **bas-reliefs**, and Chinese historical accounts. Note that all Khmer stone inscriptions have been catalogued with a 'K' number, some of which appear in this chapter.

bas-reliefs pictures carved into stone walls

The Pre-Angkorian era

stele a free-standing stone, often carved with an inscription

chakravartin a title used for the kings of Angkor meaning 'universal monarch' or 'king of kings'

According to the Sdok Kak Thom **stele**, Jayavarman II was crowned **chakravartin** of the Khmer Empire in 802 CE, uniting all the smaller Khmer states under his authority. However, the area had already witnessed the development of a couple of earlier states that shared many characteristics with the later Khmer Empire, such as Funan and Zhenla.

The period before 802 CE is called the Pre-Angkorian era. From the first century CE onwards, much of south-east Asia began to adopt Indian religious, political and cultural practices, combining them with their own local ideas. Historians refer to this process as '**Indianisation**' and have proposed many explanations for how and why these Indian ideas were introduced:

Indianisation the adoption of Indian religious, political and cultural practices in south-east Asia from the first century CE

Cambodia has a legend that traces its origin back to the marriage of a foreigner and a dragon-princess, or Naga, whose father was the king of a waterlogged country. According to one version of the myth, a **Brahmin** named Kaundinya, armed with a magical bow, appeared one day off the shore of Cambodia; a dragon-princess paddled out to meet him. Kaundinya shot an arrow into her boat; this action frightened the princess into marrying him. Before the marriage, Kaundinya gave her clothes to wear, and in exchange, her father, the dragon-king, enlarged the possessions of his son-in-law by drinking up the water that covered the country. [Kaundinya] later built a capital, and changed the name of the country to 'Kambuja'.

Brahmin highest order within the Aryan social system; they were the priests and teachers

Source 6.9 According to the historian David Chandler, a mythological marriage marked the introduction of Indian ideas and the beginning of Cambodia

Even though there is no evidence to confirm the existence of Kaundinya, the myth demonstrates that mainland south-east Asia was heavily influenced by India. Like the legendary marriage, Khmer civilisation joined Indian ideas about monarchy, government and religion with local ideas.

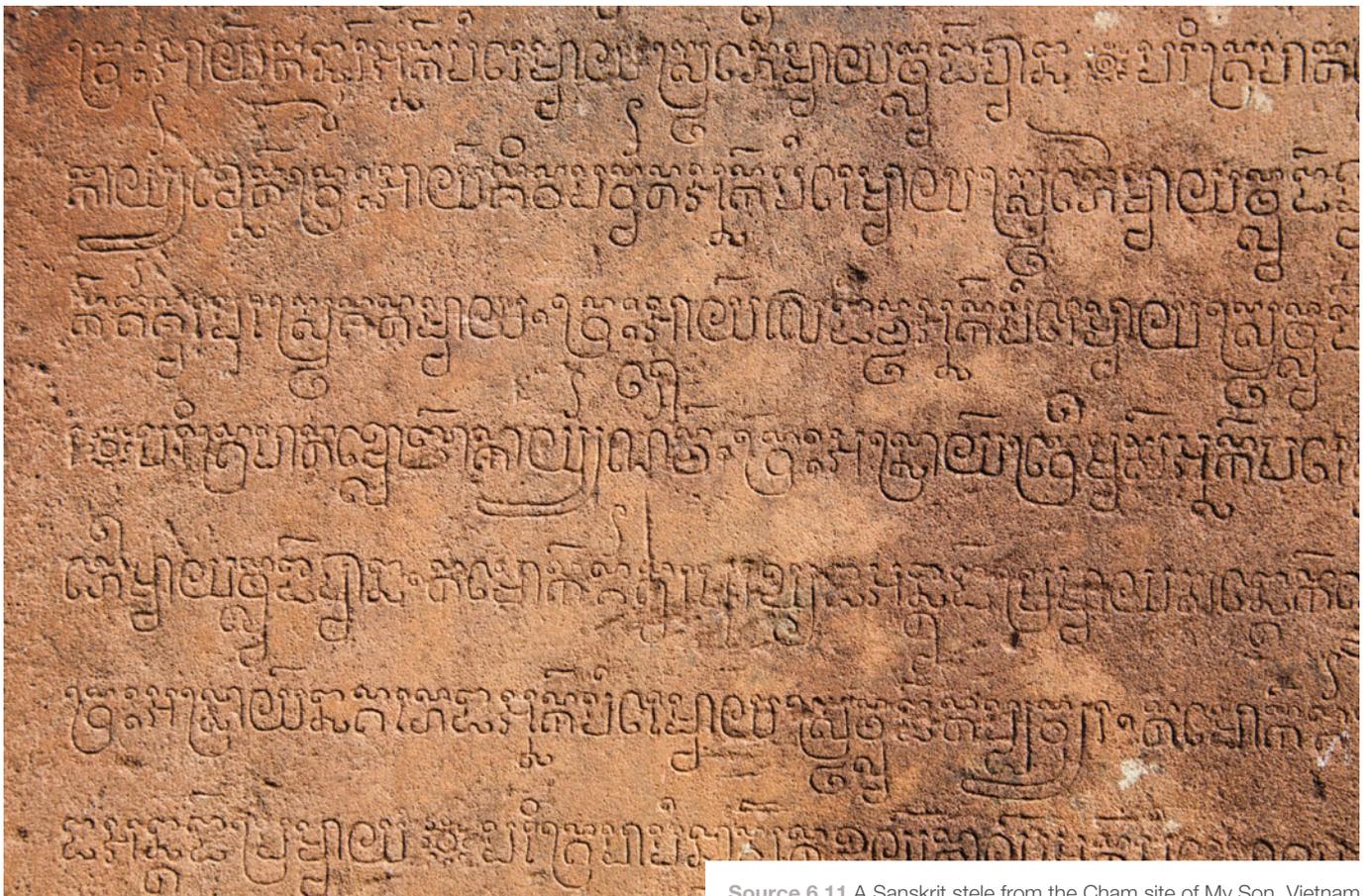
A number of later kings claimed to be descendants of Kaundinya, which helped to legitimise their right to the throne. Furthermore, the myth indicates the importance of water management to the civilisation.

Many nineteenth century scholars, on seeing extraordinary south-east Asian religious art, concluded that Indianisation occurred mainly as a result of Hindu and Buddhist missionaries converting the local peoples. However, most historians now believe that Indianisation came about initially through trade.

Chinese documents indicate that during the first century CE, major sea trade routes developed between China and India, via south-east Asia. The peoples of south-east Asia became involved in this trade, either as seafaring traders themselves or as suppliers of goods destined for China, India or beyond. Indian, and to a lesser extent Chinese, traders brought political, religious and cultural ideas with them, which the locals adopted or adapted to their specific needs. Along the trade routes, ports soon developed to cater for the needs of the merchants, bringing great wealth to the region.

Long ago in the time of Fanzhan there was a man from ... Tanyang [modern Afghanistan] named Jiaxiangli. He travelled in stages from his country, doing business along the way, until he reached Funan. He told Fanzhan [ruler of Funan] about the customs of India, the great riches, the fertile land ... Fanzhan asked him 'How far away is this place, how long does it take to get there?' Jiaxiangli replied 'India must be more than 30 000 li [approximately 9500 kilometres] from here; to sail there and back would take a good three years, and it could be even four years before reaching home ...

Source 6.10 An account of a merchant in Funan in the *Nan Qi Shu*



Source 6.11 A Sanskrit stele from the Cham site of My Son, Vietnam

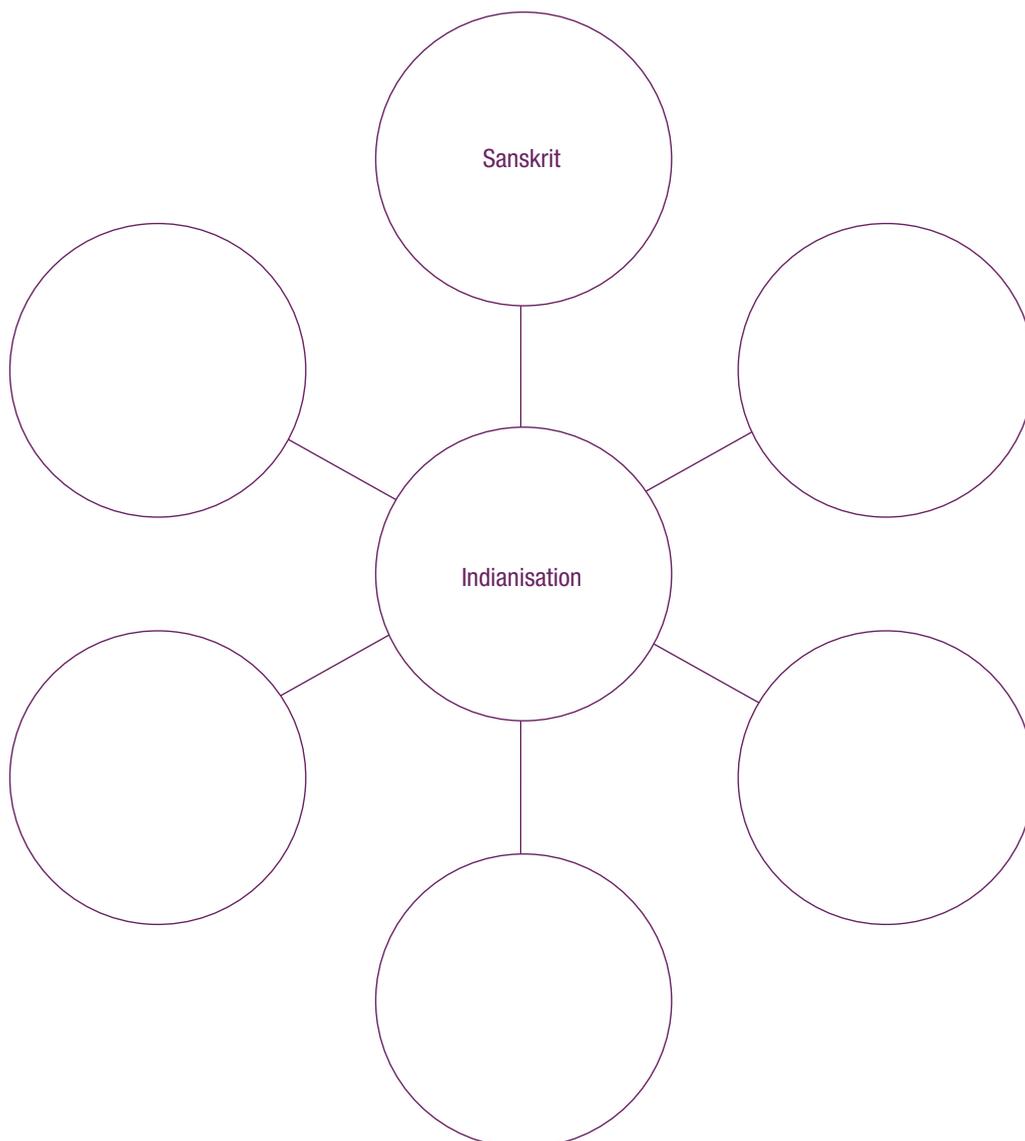
According to historian Claude Jacques, Indianisation would have benefitted the local rulers and thus encouraged them to adopt Indian ideas. Hinduism and Buddhism viewed kings as the representatives of the gods and therefore worthy of loyalty.

Historian Michael Coe has identified the following elements of Indianisation that influenced the Khmer civilisation:

- the Hindu religion, its mythology and rituals, particularly the worship of Shiva and Vishnu
- the Sanskrit language; many Khmer words were borrowed from Sanskrit
- the Indian writing system, stone inscriptions and palm-leaf books
- Hindu temple architecture built in brick and stone
- statues representing gods, kings and Buddha
- cremation burials among the upper classes
- rectilinear town and city plans
- artificial water systems, including rectangular reservoirs and canals.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the impact of Indianisation upon south-east Asia.



HISTORICAL FACT

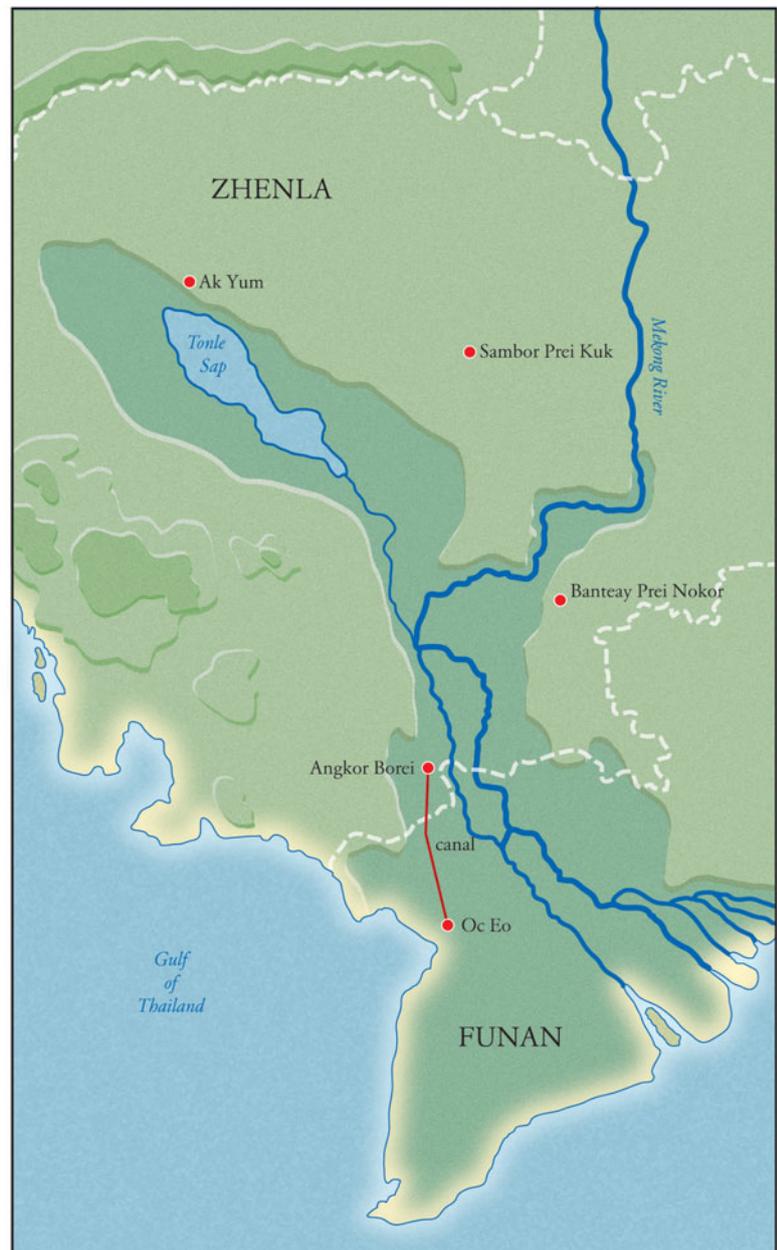
Scholars have divided Khmer history into six phases:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Prehistoric era | c. 2300 BCE–c. 200 CE |
| Pre-Angkorian era | c. 200–802 CE |
| Angkorian era | 802–1431 |
| Post-Angkorian era | 1431–1862 |
| Colonial era | 1862–1953 |
| Post-colonial era | 1953–present day |

Funan

According to the *Nan Qi Shu*, Funan, which located in the Mekong Delta region, became an important trading power on the trade route between China and India during the period c. 550 CE: ‘The Funan market is the meeting place between east and west ... as Funan offers a point of passage from one ocean to the other.’

Archaeological excavations at Oc Eo, a port in southern Vietnam, have revealed evidence of an important port, which the historian Jacques Muisic has called south-east Asia’s first great cosmopolitan trading city. Numerous artefacts from the Mediterranean have been found at Oc Eo, including gold medallions of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius (c. 152 CE), iron from the Philippines, gold and jewellery from India, mirrors from China, which demonstrate that Oc Eo received goods from round the world. Inscribed seal stones and Buddhist and Hindu statues also demonstrate the influence of Indian religion and culture upon the Mekong Delta region. Furthermore, pottery made at Oc Eo has been found in Malaysia and Indonesia.



Source 6.12 Map of Funan and Zhenla, c. 100–800 CE

However, during the early sixth century CE, trade began to move away from the Mekong Delta as Chinese traders found alternative trade routes via Java. Funan's power and influence began to decline,

which radically altered the future of mainland south-east Asia. The last recorded ruler of Funan was King Rudravarman, who died c. 550 CE. The region was eventually absorbed into Zhenla.

HISTORICAL FACT

Oc Eo is a rectangular site (3 kilometres by 1.5 kilometres) located about 15 kilometres inland from the Gulf of Thailand. It lay behind five ramparts and four moats covering an area of 450 hectares. Oc Eo was linked to the coast by a large canal, while other canals connected Oc Eo with many inland areas, including a 70-kilometre canal that ran to the ancient city of Angkor Borei. Oc Eo itself was divided into suburbs by bisecting canals. Oc Eo could not survive the decline in trade and was abandoned sometime during the late sixth century.



Source 6.13 This statue of Vishnu from the sixth or seventh century CE was found at Oc Eo and is now housed at the Museum of Vietnamese History

Times gone by ...

Where they live, they do not dig wells. By ten families, they have a communal pond where they get water and bathe. The custom is to adore the spirits of the sky. Of these spirits, they make images in bronze; those which have two faces have four arms; those which have four faces have eight arms. Each hand holds something – a child, a bird, the sun, the moon. The king, when he travels rides an elephant. So do his wives and the people of the palace. When the King sits down, he squats on one side, raising the right knee, letting the left knee touch the earth. A piece of cotton is spread before him, on which are placed gold vases and incense burners.

In the case of mourning, the custom is to shave the beard and hair. For the dead, there are four kinds of disposal: burial by water, which consists of throwing the body into the water; burial by earth, which consists of interring it in a grave; burial by the birds, which consists of abandoning it in the fields; burial by fire, which consists of reducing it to ashes.

Source 6.14 An excerpt from the *History of the Liang Dynasty* (502–56 CE) describing life in Funan

- 1 How did families collect water?
- 2 What are the various ways the people dispose of the dead?
- 3 How does Source 6.14 compare with Source 6.15?



Source 6.15 'Rajalalisatana', a way of sitting used mainly by rulers and gods

Zhenla

As Funan began to decline and as the economy shifted from trade to agriculture, the territory to the north of Funan, which the Chinese called Zhenla, began to prosper. Stone inscriptions indicate that the area was not united as a single country but was ruled by a number of regional leaders. However, Ishanavarman I of Sambor Prei Kuk (reigned c. 616–28 CE) managed to bring Funan and much of modern-day Cambodia under his control. Ishanavarman's great-grandson, Jayavarman I (reigned c. 654–95 CE), continued to expand the kingdom and a stele declared that 'his commands were obeyed by innumerable defeated kings. In combat, he was a living incarnation of victory, the scourge of enemies, lord of the land inherited from his ancestors, and

conqueror of yet more lands.' Other stelae reveal that Jayavarman controlled a large bureaucracy to centrally administer his kingdom.

However, despite the achievements of Ishanavarman I and Jayavarman I, the kingdom only remained united through the military strength of the monarch and the personal loyalty the monarch commanded. Jayavarman was succeeded by his daughter Jayadevi who also ruled in the Angkor region, but the **dynasty** soon disappears from the historical record and the kingdom broke up into smaller competing states. It would take another local ruler from Vyadhapura to forcibly unite these Khmer states and provide long-term political stability: Jayavarman II, the founder of the Khmer Empire.

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

HISTORICAL FACT

Jayavarman's name translates as *Jaya* ('victory') + *varman* ('protected by') = 'Protected by victory'.



Source 6.16 A depiction of the 'floating palaces' on a temple at Sambor Prei Kuk, the capital of Ishanavarman I

Times gone by ...

Every three days the king goes solemnly to the audience-hall and sits on a bed made of five pieces of sandalwood and ornamented with seven kinds of precious stones. Above this bed is a canopy of magnificent cloth, whose columns are of inlaid wood. The walls are ivory decorated with gold flowers of gold ... A golden incense burner, which two men handle, is placed in front. The king wears a knee-length red girdle. He covers his head with a crown covered with gold, precious stones and pearls. On his feet are sandals of leather and sometimes of ivory; in his ears, gold earrings ... There are five great ministers ... there are many inferior officers.

Those who appear before the king touch the earth three times with their forehead, at the foot of the steps to the throne. If the king calls them and orders them to show their credentials, then they kneel, holding their hands on their shoulders ...

Source 6.17 An excerpt from the *History of the Sui Dynasty* (581–618 CE) describing the court of Zhenla

- 1 Describe the king's appearance.
- 2 What impression does the king's court give?
- 3 Explain the purpose of the king's court.



Way of life in the Khmer Empire

Religion

Religion played a particularly important role in Angkor. Before the arrival of Indian religious ideas, the Khmer worshipped ancestor spirits and nature spirits known as *Neak Ta*. This spirit worship continues today and simple shrines dedicated to these spirits are found throughout

Cambodia. People often leave a little food, some flowers or alcohol to please the spirits.

Buddhism and Hinduism arrived in south-east Asia about the same time as part of the Indianisation process. While Buddhism appears to have been more popular in Funan, Hinduism became the dominant religion in Zhenla and later in the Khmer Empire. The historian Monica Smith has suggested that the powerful and prosperous Gupta Empire of India (c.320–455 CE) was a great cultural and religious influence upon the peoples of south-east Asia, who wished to copy



Source 6.18 Preah Ko, which was erected by King Indravarman I for the worship of Shiva, Jayavarman II and ancestors

this success. Brahmin priests followed the Indian merchants and introduced the worship of Shiva and Vishnu.

Hinduism

polytheist a believer in more than one god

Trimurti the Hindu Trinity, which comprises the three most significant gods: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu

dharma the Hindu and Buddhist idea of good order and harmony being maintained in the world

Hinduism is a **polytheistic** religion, but central to this was the worship of the **Trimurti**, a trinity of the gods Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. The religion emphasises the idea of **dharma**, whereby the order of the world is dominated by the balance of good and evil forces, between the gods (*devas*) and their demon enemies

(*asuras*), and between the human world and the world of the gods. Hinduism also emphasises the concepts of **samsara** and **karma**, the combination of good and bad actions in a person's life that determine what a person will come back as in the next life. If someone wants to break out of the repeated cycle of reincarnation, a person must dedicate him or herself to a life of poverty, chastity and meditation.

The gods live on Mount Meru, a mythological mountain in the Himalayas, surrounded by seven seas. The gods are looked after by fairy-like dancers, called *apsaras*.

samsara the Hindu process of reincarnation, which is influenced by karma

karma the Hindu (and Buddhist) belief that the way a person lives their life has an effect on how happy or successful they will be in their next life



Source 6.19 A depiction of Mount Kailasa, Banteay Srei



Source 6.20 A depiction of a king worshipping Vishnu, the Bayon temple

Khmer gods and goddesses

Agni

The god of fire and the sacred flame. Agni acts as a mediator between humans and the gods, and travels on a sacred rhinoceros.



Brahma

The creator of the universe. Along with Vishnu and Shiva, Brahma forms the Trimurti. His wife is Sarasvati (the goddess of language, art and learning) and he travels on Hamsa, the sacred goose.



Ganesh

The elephant-headed god of wisdom and literature. He is a son of Shiva.



Indra

The king of the gods. Indra travels on Airavata, the sacred three-head elephant.



Shiva

The god of creation and destruction, and part of the Trimurti. Shiva is usually shown with a third eye in the centre of his forehead, while holding a trident and a string of beads. His wife is Uma (the mother goddess) and he travels on Nandin, the sacred bull. He lives on Mount Kailasa (see Source 6.19). In his temples, he is represented by a **linga**.



linga a phallus-shaped stone that is a 'sign' from Shiva; followers of Shiva make offerings to it

Surya

The sun god. Surya travels in a horse-drawn chariot.

**Vishnu**

The maintainer of the universe and part of the Trimurti. Vishnu is often depicted with four arms, holding a disc, shell, mace and bowl. His **avatars** include Krishna (in the *Mahabharata* – see over page) and Rama (in the *Ramayana* – see over page). His wife is Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and good fortune) and he travels on Garuda, the king of the birds.



avatar an incarnation of a god

Yama

The god of judgement, the dead and ruler of Hell. Yama travels on a buffalo.



Source 6.21 Khmer gods and goddesses

HISTORICAL FACT

The *Mahabharata*, the world's longest epic poem, retells the story of a cosmic struggle between two sets of cousins: the Kauravas (the sons of Darkness, who overthrew the rightful rulers of the world) and the Pandavas (the sons of Light, overthrown by their cousins.) The epic ends with an 18-day battle between the Kauravas and Pandavas.



Source 6.22 A scene from the *Mahabharata*, Angkor Wat

HISTORICAL FACT

The *Ramayana* (*Reamker* in Khmer) is another epic story about Rama, King of Ayodhya. Rama's beautiful wife Sita had been kidnapped by the demon Ravana, the King of Lanka. Rama set out to free his wife, with the help of Sugriva, the Monkey King, his general Hanuman and his monkey army. Eventually, Ravana was defeated and Sita freed. The *Reamker* is still popular in Cambodia today.



Source 6.23 Ravana from the *Reamker*, Angkor Wat

Activity 6.1

The ‘Churning of the Sea of Milk’ is another popular story depicted on bas-reliefs. Go online to research the story and explain the meaning behind this bas-relief.



Source 6.24 The ‘Churning of the Sea of Milk’, Angkor Wat

The Devaraja Cult

When Jayavarman was proclaimed *mabarajadbiraja* (King of Kings) at his coronation in 802 CE, the Devaraja was also crowned ‘King of the Gods’. Claude Jacques has shown that just as Jayavarman united the Khmer people politically under his authority, so too the Devaraja Cult brought spiritual unity to the empire, uniting all the old regional Khmer gods under one supreme god. Previously, these gods had protected their local rulers; now, under the Devaraja, they would collectively protect the ‘Great King of Kings’.

The king was closely associated with the Devaraja Cult and when the king moved capitals, he always brought the cult shrine with him, as it was central to guaranteeing the empire’s safety. No images of the Devaraja have survived, but it may have been like a linga. Jayavarman II appointed his personal priest Shivakaivalya and his descendants to maintain the cult.

Much controversy has surrounded the Devaraja. Early scholars mistranslated the word as ‘God-King’ and mistakenly concluded that Jayavarman claimed he was a **divine**, all-powerful monarch, but the evidence suggests that the Devaraja was an object, not a person. Furthermore, the Khmer king shared his power with a large administration and the regional kings subordinate to him. The significance of the Devaraja Cult has probably been exaggerated, as the cult is very rarely mentioned in the inscriptions.

Buddha

The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born c. 480 BCE, the son of a northern Indian King. According to tradition, Gautama’s father raised him in absolute luxury. However, at the age of 29, while taking a chariot ride, he saw a poor elderly woman, a sick man and a dead body. Gautama

enlightenment the realisation of how suffering is caused, and how to avoid the process of *samsara*

was shocked by the suffering in the world. This motivated Gautama to search for a way to free people from suffering. Eventually he gained **enlightenment** at the age of 35 and spent the rest of his life preaching a message of compassion, humaneness and a desire to break the endless cycle of rebirth. When he died, Gautama was not reincarnated, but went to nirvana, a place of non-existence that is devoid of suffering. Hundreds of stories from the Buddha's life were recorded in the *Jataka*.

Two forms of Buddhism developed: the older, stricter form called Theravada Buddhism, and the younger form named Mahayana Buddhism. An avatar called Avalokiteshvara (abbreviated to Lokeshvara; see Source 6.25), the Buddha of Compassion, was the most widely worshipped. Even though Buddhism arrived in south-east Asia at the same time as Hinduism, it was not until the reign of Jayavarman VII that Mahayana Buddhism became the state religion. During his reign, Buddhist temples were built throughout the empire.



Source 6.25 Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion

Despite Jayavarman's support, Mahayana Buddhism did not remain the state religion. During the fourteenth century, Theravada Buddhism became the state religion and remains so today.

Worship of the gods

To the Khmer, the gods controlled all aspects of life. Thus they needed to consult the gods and seek the advice of the priests about everything. For example, gods were consulted about the best time to plant and harvest crops or to build a house. People often prayed to Shiva, a fertility god, to guarantee a plentiful harvest, but he was also consulted about marriage and pregnancy.

At first glance, Khmer temples such as Angkor Wat appear to be enormous, but this can be deceptive. Khmer temples were built to house the gods and they only required sufficient space to shelter a statue. For example, the central sanctuary of Angkor Wat is only five metres square. The Khmer did not build large halls for worshippers to gather in; rather the scale of Khmer temples has come about as a result of dozens of little shrines being constructed within the same complex.

In the shrines, the gods were treated like royalty by their servants, the priests. The priests were responsible for waking the god, then washing, dressing and feeding them daily. The food was symbolically eaten by the god and then distributed to the priests. People could come and request help from the gods when the shrine doors were open and when the priests were taking care of the gods. According to Claude Jacques, once a year a feast would be held in honour of the god and a miniature statue of the god would parade around the temple. This often occurred on the anniversary of when the statue of the god was installed in the temple.

In an attempt to improve a person's karma and break the cycle of samsara, people were motivated to **make merit** by building a temple/monastery, donating to an existing temple/monastery, providing for the poor, or by praying (or paying for priests to pray in their stead). Queen Jayarajadevi made substantial donations to the monasteries and temples of Angkor and to regional temples as well.

make merit the Buddhist idea that doing good works will earn enlightenment

HISTORICAL FACT

Zhou Daguan, the author of *A Record of Cambodia – the Land and its People*, was a Chinese **diplomat** from the important port city of Wenzhou in south-east China during the thirteenth century. The purpose of his mission was to deliver an 'imperial proclamation', most likely informing King Indravarman III that China had a new emperor. The previous Chinese emperor, Kubilai Khan, had launched five unsuccessful invasions into south-east Asia, and his greatest general, Sodu, had been captured and beheaded by the Chams in 1285. However, Emperor Temur adopted a more peaceful approach towards south-east Asia and Zhou Daguan's mission to Angkor would have tried to improve relations between China and the Khmer Empire.

Zhou stayed in Angkor from August 1296 to July 1297 and he later recorded his observations, which included descriptions of religious practices, the social structure, the legal system and daily life. He also provided details about the buildings, agriculture, landscape, resources, flora and fauna of the Khmer Empire. Zhou is an invaluable outsider's account, recording unique information about Angkor that has not survived in the Khmer sources.

diplomat an official who represents the interests of their government in dealings with foreign governments

Times gone by ...

The first month of the year is called Kaitek [October–November]. A large stage is set up in front of the royal palace, with room for a thousand or more people and hung everywhere with globe lanterns and flowers. Facing it on a bank between 60 and 95 metres away are some tall towers that are made of wood, well over 60 metres high. Every night they put up three to six of these and place fireworks and firecrackers on top of them. The various provincial officials and the nobility take care of all the costs. When night comes, the king is invited to come out and watch. He lights the fireworks and firecrackers – the fireworks can be seen five kilometres away. The firecrackers are as big as the rocks thrown by catapults and make enough noise to shake the whole city. The officials and members of the royal family give away candles and betel nuts ... This continues for fifteen days ...

Every month there is always an event. For example, in the fourth month there are ball games. In the ninth month there is *ya lie*, which involves everyone in the country gathering together in the capital and being reviewed in front of the palace. In the fifth month there is 'water to welcome the Buddha', when Buddhas throughout the country ... are brought together and taken into the water, where they are bathed in the company of the king ...

The seventh month is the time for 'rice burning', when new rice that is ready for harvesting is ceremoniously received outside the south gate and burned as an offering ...

In the eighth month is *ailan*, a dance that selected female dancers perform daily in the palace. There are boar fights too, which the king invites foreign diplomats to watch. This continues for ten days.

Source 6.26 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan detailing Khmer Festivals c. 1296

- 1 During which month does the 'rice burning' festival occur? Why?
- 2 What role does the king play in the Khmer festivals?
- 3 Analyse what these festivals reveal about Angkor.

Apart from the festivals mentioned in the 'Times gone by' box, other important religious festivals included Prachum Ben, dedicated to ancestor worship, and the Festival of the Waters, celebrating the end of the rainy season on the first full moon in Kaitek, during which boat races were held.

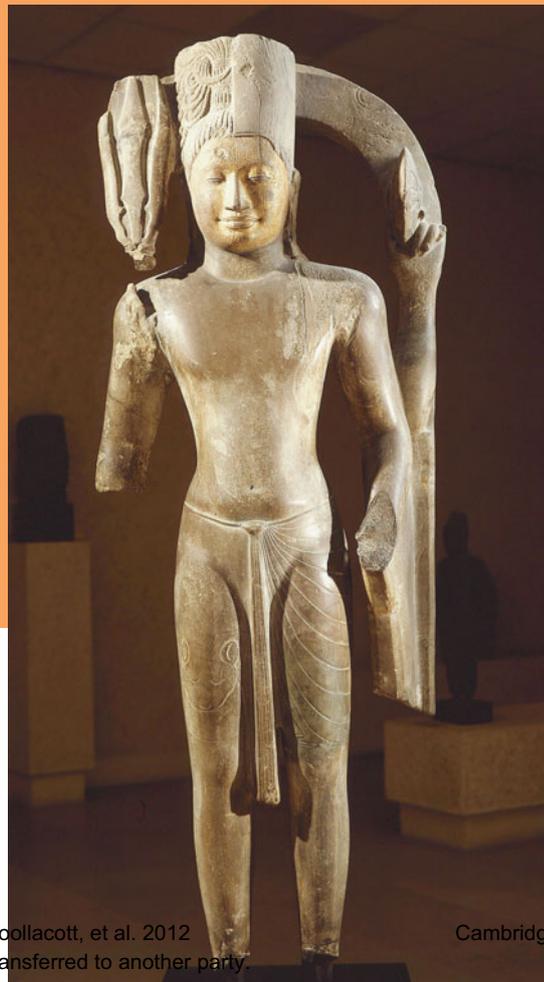
Research 6.1

The Angkorians were great craftsmen, producing beautiful artefacts in metal, stone and wood. This is evidence of their material culture and provides a lot of information about the Khmer civilisation. Visit one of the following museums online at www.cambridge.edu.au/history&weblinks and choose one Angkorian artefact to research:

- National Museum of Cambodia
- Angkor National Museum
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Art Gallery of New South Wales.

You will need to find out the following information about your chosen artefact:

- 1 Where is the artefact from?
- 2 When was it made?
- 3 What it is made from?
- 4 What is the artefact? What purpose did it serve?
- 5 What are the artefact's features? How would you describe them?
- 6 How is this artefact useful to an historian studying the Khmer civilisation?



Source 6.27 A sandstone statue of Hariharalaya, representing Shiva on the right-hand side and Vishnu on the left-hand side. Sixth century, Phnom Da.

The king

From the time of the coronation of Jayavarman II, the kings of Angkor were referred to as *chakravartin* or *maharajadhiraja* ('king of kings'). Other regional kings could remain in power, as long as they paid homage to the *chakravartin*. According to Claude Jacques, the king's main duty was to ensure the prosperity of his kingdom and the maintenance of dharma, which would provide harmony for all throughout the empire.

There were two significant ceremonies in the life of a Khmer king: his consecration as

king, which confirmed his role as the supreme protector of the empire and his subjects; and his cremation, which extended his role as protector into the next life. The king and his kingdom were inseparable, as seen in an inscription found at one of the hospitals built by Jayavarman VII: 'The bodily ills of his people became his spiritual sufferings.'

The construction of a new state temple and other large public works also became mandatory for every king, demonstrating his authority and his responsibility to provide for his people.



Source 6.28 A king and his court at the Terrace of the Leper King, Angkor Thom

The queen consort

The king often had more than one wife, but his most important wife was called *agramabishi* (queen consort). The *agramabishi* had considerable influence over the Angkorian court, particularly if one of her son's was appointed as the *yuvaraja* (crown prince). If the king died, **usurpers** often tried to marry the queen consort to help legitimise their claim to the throne. Also, when the king died with a young son, the **regent** was often appointed from the *agramabishi*'s family. Occasionally, kings emphasised their mother's ancestry because it was more prestigious than their father's.

usurper one who illegally becomes king

regent a person appointed to reign on behalf of an under-age ruler, until they are old enough to rule in their own right

HISTORICAL
FACT

The founder of the Khmer Empire, Jayavarman II, is surrounded in mystery owing to the lack of substantiating evidence. Two inscriptions from the last years of the eighth century suggest that he was originally a local ruler from Vyadhapura (Banteay Prei Nokor). However, when investigating his later career, historians and archaeologists have had to rely upon inscriptions written hundreds of years later.

The Sdok Kok Thom stele, erected in 1052 CE to commemorate the 250-year history of a prominent Khmer family, provides information about the foundation of the empire. It states that Jayavarman II returned to free the land from foreign control, possibly by the Javanese. The stele outlines Jayavarman II's coronation in the Kulen Hills, which occurred at the same time as the foundation of the Devaraja cult, along with the expansion of his empire and the repeated movement of the capital. Another stele from 1069 CE indicates that Jayavarman's expansion met with opposition that needed to be suppressed by force. Jayavarman established a centralised authority to administer his growing empire, rewarding loyalty with hereditary offices and substantial land grants.

While little detail remains about Jayavarman II's reign, he had an enormous impact upon the development of Angkor. He united the Khmer people under the authority of a supreme king, founded a national cult and established a strong, centrally administered empire.



Source 6.29 The Sdok Kok Thom temple, located in modern-day Thailand

Rajendravarman II

Rajendravarman II (944–68 CE) was the cousin of his predecessor, Harshavarman II. He had an illustrious ancestry, being descended from Jayavarman II's aunt. As a loyal ally of his cousin, Rajendravarman had successfully campaigned against enemies in Thailand. Upon becoming king, he moved the capital back to Yasdharapura (Angkor) and set about restoring the capital to its

former glory. He built a number of new temples, including the mountain temple Pre Rup (see Source 6.34), dedicated to Shiva and his ancestors.

Although he was a follower of Shiva, Rajendravarman had also studied the Buddhist scriptures and appointed Buddhists as officials. Rajendravarman was succeeded by his 10-year-old son, Jayavarman V (968–1000 CE). During their reigns, rice cultivation increased and Angkor prospered.

Times gone by ...

His Majesty surpassed other kings by his royal power ... His beauty gives joy to thousands of eyes and surpassed the beauty of Smara [goddess of Love], which excited the great anger of Shiva ...

Source 6.30 An excerpt from a stele (K. 286) at Baksei Chamkrong, dated 947 CE

From his infancy, His Majesty was complete in talents ... Like the beauty of spring, like the fullness of the moon, so arose, enchanting, splendid, the beauty of fresh youth ... This servant, Kavindrarithana, was charged by the king to build a stone temple in the middle of the [East Baray] ...

The king was always in movement attractive, omnipresent, strong, large, bringing order to the turbulent world, his glory was complete. Eloquence, valour, beauty, grace, sweetness, goodness, these virtues and still others, only he possessed; and by Shiva he was created still superior in energy and intelligence ... The city of the King of Champa, having the sea for its moat, was reduced to ashes by his warriors, obedient to his orders ... Having obtained his throne ... he rid the land of his enemies all the way to the ocean, that even today his glory has not been diminished ... Nothing was comparable to the greatness of his virtues. Having studied the Buddha's teachings, he had no false ideas ... Shining brilliantly, his toenails reflected the rays thrown by the crowns of

the stubborn enemy kings who now lay prostrate before him. A mango tree, sterile since its birth, obeyed his order to produce fruits ...

Source 6.31 An excerpt from a stele (K. 528) from the East Mebon, dated 952 CE

He restored the holy city of Yasodharapura [Angkor], long deserted, building beautiful houses decorated with gold, palaces glittering with precious stones, recreating [Indra's heavenly palace] on earth ... Early in his reign, he instructed his minister, Kavindrarithana, to build him a palace. This official, dear to the gods and as gifted as Visvaharman [Khmer god of Architecture], was instructed by his king to make at Yasodharapura a charming palace.

Source 6.32 An excerpt from a stele (K. 266) from Bat Chum, dated 960 CE

It was play for him to break into three a large bar of iron, by striking it lightly with a single stroke of his sword, as if he had struck a banana stalk. There is no need to talk about his bodily strength and the stroke of his sword made into the flesh of his enemy ... Despite having the skill of the great Kshatriya [the greatest warrior from the Mahabharata] and born from the arm of Brahma, his enemies disputed his authority and challenged him on the battlefield, but his victory proved that he held Brahma's strength.

Source 6.33 An excerpt from a stele (K. 806) from Pre Rup, dated 961 CE

- 1 Identify the types of evidence that provide information about King Rajendravarman II.
- 2 Explain how Rajendravarman is described in Sources 6.30, 6.31 and 6.32. List the adjectives used.
- 3 In Source 6.31, what is the significance of him 'bringing order to the turbulent world'?
- 4 In Source 6.32, what motivates Rajendravarman to restore Yasodharapura and build new temples? How does this relate to his role as *chakravartin*?
- 5 Examine the purpose these inscriptions serve.
- 6 How accurate do you think these inscriptions are?
- 7 Explain what historians should be wary of when reconstructing the reign of Rajendravarman II.

Activity 6.2

Imagine that you are King Rajendravarman's wife, Queen Narendradevi. Your husband has just died and you wish to dedicate a stele commemorating his life and achievements. Using the information from Sources 6.30 to 6.33, write a eulogy for Rajendravarman. In your response try to write in the style of an Angkorian scribe.



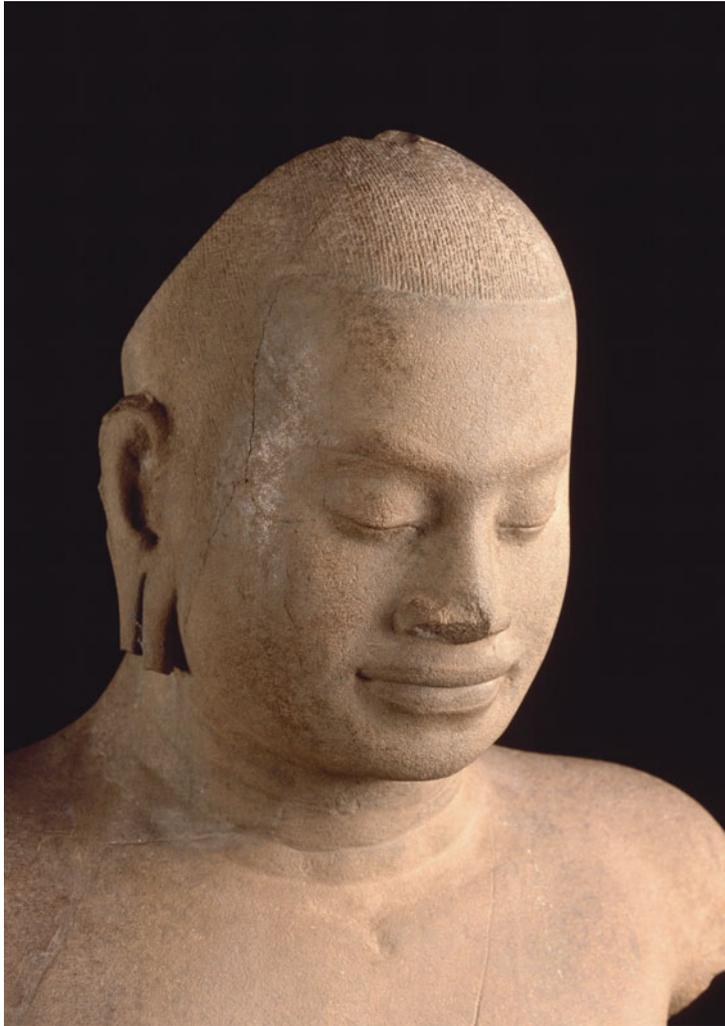
Source 6.34 Pre Rup mountain temple

Jayavarman VII

Jayavarman VII was arguably Angkor's greatest king. He was a successful campaigner, expanding the frontiers of the empire to their greatest extent. He was also a prolific builder, founding the new city of Angkor Thom, constructing dozens of temples and monasteries, and building 102 hospitals throughout the realm. The empire was serviced by his new **barays**, bridges and highways, including a road between Angkor and Phimai that stretched for 225 kilometres. One inscription states that he installed 20 400 statues across the empire.

baray an enormous reservoir of the Khmer empire that held millions of cubic metres of water





Source 6.35 Jayavarman VII from Krol Romeas, Angkor Thom

HISTORICAL FACT

When Jayavarman VII founded Ta Prohm, he provided the following:

- 18 hotars (priests)
- 2740 kamsten (lower-ranking religious officials)
- 2202 assistants
- 615 dancers
- 66265 villagers assigned to supply the temple
- 500 kilograms of gold dishes
- 500 kilograms of silver dishes
- 35 diamonds
- 40260 pearls
- 4540 gemstones
- 523 parasols
- 512 sets of silk bedding
- 876 Chinese veils
- 165 744 candles



Queen Jayarajadevi and Queen Indradevi

Queen Jayarajadevi was Jayavarman VII's first *agramabishi* and, according to a eulogy composed by her sister Indradevi, Jayarajadevi married Jayavarman while he was still a prince. During the early years of their marriage, they were often separated, which caused her to worry greatly and so she spent much of her time in prayer and fasting, hoping for her husband's return. Her sister Indradevi encouraged her to study the Buddha's teachings. When Jayavarman eventually returned to Angkor as the victorious king, she decided to donate all her wealth to the gods and the poor. Numerous temple inscriptions reveal her generous

and devout nature. Unfortunately, she was not queen for long, as Indradevi's dedication states that 'despite her eternal loyalty to her husband, soon after her master was invested as king, she entered nirvana'.

Jayarvarman then married Jayarajadevi's sister, Indradevi, supposedly in an attempt to ease the 'fire of pain that was burning the world'. Indradevi is said to have been a lady of great intelligence, grace and culture. She was appointed by Jayavarman as the main teacher of two important temples, where she was 'always distributing her knowledge to a crowd of women'.

Both Jayarajadevi and Indradevi are believed to have had a great influence upon Jayavarman, especially in terms of his religious ideas.

HISTORICAL FACT

Jayarvarman VII constructed Preah Khan (Sacred Sword) on the battle site where he had finally defeated the occupying Cham.



Source 6.36 King Jayavarman VII (centre) with sisters Jayarajadevi and Indradevi © Phalikan.com

Activity 6.3

- 1 What did Jayarajadevi do while her husband was away?
- 2 Identify what motivated Jayavarman to marry Indradevi.
- 3 Why was the religious influence of Jayarajadevi and Indradevi upon Jayavarman VII significant?

Times gone by ...

Many questions remain about Jayavarman VII and debate rages over various aspects of his reign, including how he became king. The traditional interpretation suggests that in 1165 CE, King Yasovarman II was overthrown by a rebellious official named Tribhuvanadityavarman. During the chaos that followed, the Cham took advantage of the situation, sailing up the Tonle Sap, pillaging Angkor and killing the king. Jayavarman VII then appeared, driving the Cham out and eventually conquering Champa.

When [King] Yasovarman had been [overthrown] by an official seeking to be king himself, [Jayavarman] returned promptly from Vijaya to rescue the king. However, the Usurper robbed Sri Yasovarman of his kingdom and his life, so [Jayavarman] stayed, waiting for the best moment to save the earth burdened with crime ... Sri Jaya Indravarman, king of Champa, arrogant as Ravana ... having an army led by Chariots, went to [Cambodia] in order to fight ... Jaya Indravarman [with the blessing of the gods] killed that usurping king, who suffered the consequences of his previous acts ... Now, Jayavarman, having waited patiently, defeated in combat Jaya Indravarman and his ocean of warriors. Then, after his coronation, he [Jayavarman] enjoyed conquering Vijaya and other countries.

Source 6.37 An excerpt from the Phimeanakas Inscription (K. 485), written by Queen Indradevi

(continued)

In [1171] there was a Chinese mandarin shipwrecked on the coast of Champa ... [The Cham and Khmers] used elephants for fighting, without great advantage. The mandarin advised the king of Champa to use horsemen armed with crossbows, to whom he taught the art of using their bows on horseback ... the success of the innovation was enormous; the Cham were victorious ... Then in [1177], King Jaya Indravarman, with the help of a shipwrecked Chinese navigator, launched a sea-based attack ... The Cham king suddenly overwhelmed the capital of Cambodia with a powerful fleet, pillaging it and putting the king [Tribhuvanadityavarman] to death, without listening to any peace proposals.

Source 6.38 An excerpt from the Chinese scholar Ma Duanlin's *Comprehensive Assessment of Historical Records*, published in 1307

Close attention to the evidence in the Champa inscriptions suggests that the traditional academic history of the time needs revision. There is no good evidence of a great Cham conquest of Angkor in 1177, certainly not with the detail supplied by the Chinese. During the time when Cambodia was in turmoil in the 1160s and 1170s, there may have been more or less successful raids from Champa, while the future Jayavarman VII was in Vijaya, and, we may assume, was part of the Champa political scene. The evidence suggests further that the real conquest of Angkor was by Jayavarman VII and his Cham allies, probably in the 1170s, at least before 1182, and that the subordination of central and southern Champa to him dated from that time, but was never secure.

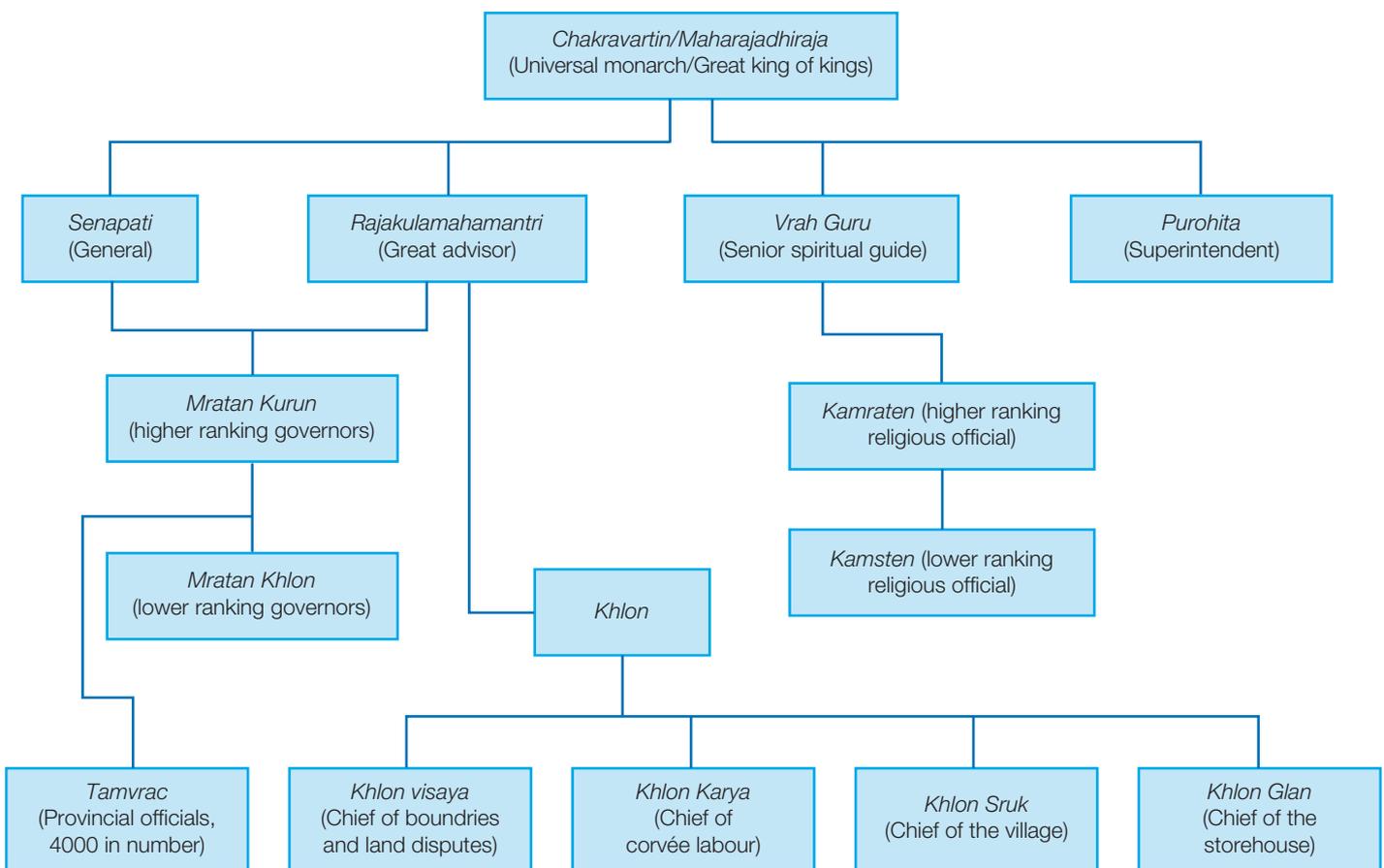
Source 6.39 An excerpt from Michael Vickery's 'Short History of Champa' in *Champa and the Archaeology of My Son (Vietnam)*

- 1 Compare Sources 6.37 and 6.38. List the similarities and the differences.
- 2 Who wrote Sources 6.37 and 6.38? Consider how this might influence the way historians view the evidence?
- 3 How has Source 6.39 interpreted the events? Compare how this differs from Sources 6.37 and 6.38.

Angkorian bureaucracy

As the Khmer Empire expanded, the Angkorian administration grew in size and complexity. The role of the king united religion and government, and many of his administrators had religious and secular responsibilities at the same time. The *rajakulamahamantri* was the king's 'great advisor', with authority in the religious court. He could also issue taxation exemptions. The *vrah guru*

('senior spiritual guide') was very important, being responsible for educating the *yuvaraja* (crown prince) and praying for rain. The *purohita* was a priest responsible for the Devaraja cult and a close political advisor to the king. Khmer inscriptions mention a number of important priests called *hotar*, while a *senapati* was a military general. Other inscriptions also provide details about a range of lower level officials and all officials had to take an oath of allegiance (see Source 6.41).



Source 6.40 Hierarchy of Angkorian administration

HISTORICAL FACT

The highest title the king could award someone was *dhulijenvrahkamratenan*. *Dhulijen* translates as 'dust of the feet'. In Khmer culture, it is extremely rude to show someone the soles of your feet. However, 'those who appear before the king touch the earth three times with their forehead, at the foot of the steps to the throne'. Thus, owing to the king's important position, the 'dust of the feet' of the king was considered an honour.

Times gone by ...

Following the death of Udayadityavarman I in c.1001 CE, civil war tore the Khmer Empire apart as two claimants, Jayaviravarman and Suryavarman, battled for the throne.

Here is [our] oath: We all who belong to the division of the *tamrvāc* ... swear, cutting our hands and offering our lives and our devotion gratefully and unerringly, to His Majesty Sūryavarman, who has been our legitimate and rightful monarch since 1002 CE in the presence of the Sacred Fire, of the Holy Jewel of the Brahmins and the religious teachers. We will not serve any other king; we will not be hostile to him, we will not comply with his enemies; we will not commit any act which might do him harm. All these acts which are the fruit of our grateful devotion towards His Majesty Sūryavarman, we will endeavour to accomplish. In case of war we will strive to fight with all our hearts, not to bind ourselves to life; by devotion [to the king] we will not run away from combat. If, in times of peace, we die of disease, may we obtain the reward of people devoted to their master. If we remain in the service of the king, when the time to die [in service] arrives, we will do it gladly.

Source 6.41 An excerpt from a stele (K. 292) erected by Suryavarman I in 1011 CE

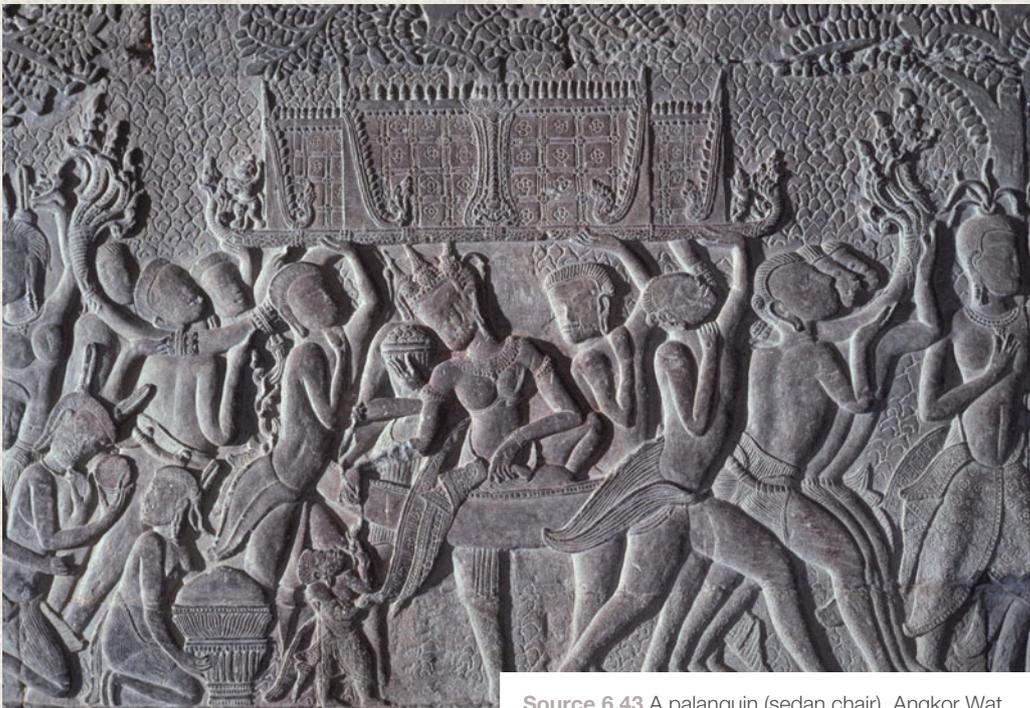
As in China, the country has officials with a rank of chief minister, commander-in-chief of the army, astronomer, and so on. Below them are various kinds of junior officials, but they are not called by the same titles as ours. Usually, those who take on these positions are the king's relatives. If they are not, they give him a daughter as a **concubine** as well.

In going out and about, the appearance of the officials varies according to their rank. The most senior are those with a palanquin with gold poles and four parasols with gold handles. Next in rank are those that have a palanquin with gold poles and two gold-

concubine a female slave cohabiting with a man without marriage

handled parasols. Next down are those with a palanquin with gold poles and one gold-handled parasol; and next again those with just one gold-handled parasol. At the lowest level are those who just have a parasol with a silver handle and nothing else. There are also those who have a palanquin with silver poles.

Source 6.42 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan, detailing the Angkorian government



Source 6.43 A palanquin (sedan chair), Angkor Wat

- 1 Consider when Source 6.41 was inscribed, then explain why the oath claims that Suryavarman had been the legitimate monarch since 1002 CE.
- 2 Explain why in Source 6.41 Suryavarman I needed an oath of allegiance from his officials.
- 3 According to Source 6.41, what does the oath require of Suryavarman's officials?
- 4 According to Source 6.42, who were appointed to be officials?
- 5 According to Source 6.42, how are officials' different ranks demonstrated?
- 6 Assess the reliability of Source 6.41 and Source 6.42. How useful might they be to a historian?

Armed forces

The epic battles depicted on the walls of Angkor Wat and the Bayon provide excellent information about the Khmer armed forces. The bas-reliefs reveal that the Khmer made use of non-Khmer forces, such as Cham, Thai and Chinese troops. They also depict weapons such as spears, bows, swords, daggers and the *phkeak*, a large battle-axe with a curved blade. Catapults and ballistas were mounted on the saddle-packs of elephants. A small, round shield and a long, rectangular shield were used for protection. The army was accompanied by a priest and the 'Sacred Fire' to provide spiritual protection.

The Khmer also had a navy, consisting of single-decked ships about 17–25 metres in length. The vessels were shaped like the mythical Naga and were powered by 12–26 oarsmen.

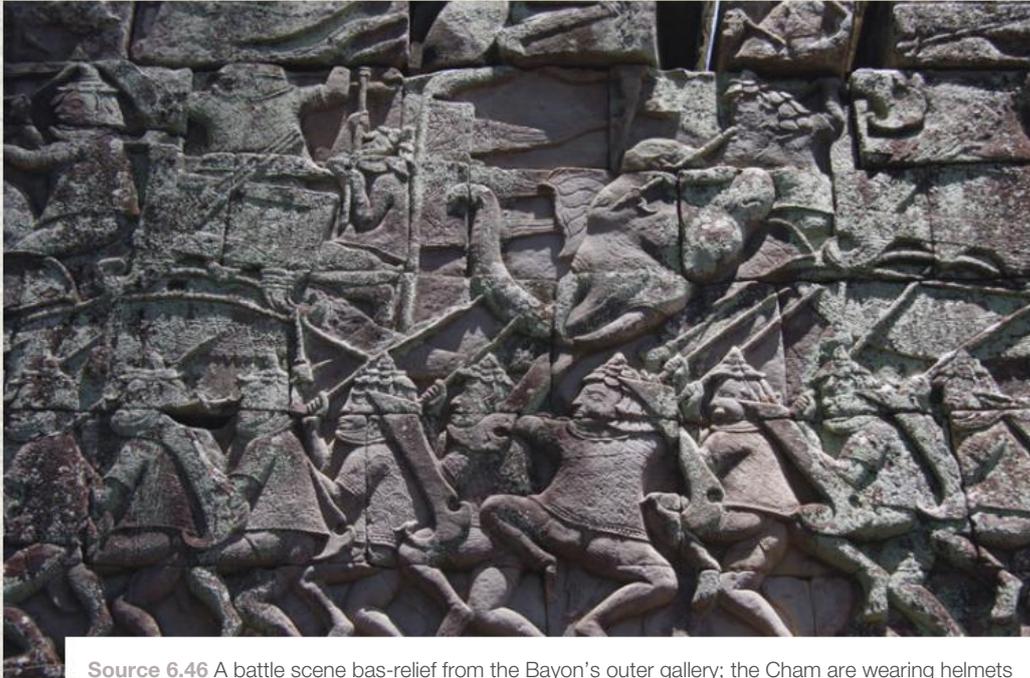
Times gone by ...

The soldiers ... go naked and barefoot. In their right hand they carry a spear and in their left hand a shield. They have [no] bows, catapults, body armour, helmets, or the like. Apparently, when the [Thai] attacked, all the ordinary people were ordered out to do battle, but with no good strategy or preparation.

Source 6.44 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan concerning the Khmer army



Source 6.45 A battle scene bas-relief from the Bayon's outer gallery



Source 6.46 A battle scene bas-relief from the Bayon's outer gallery; the Cham are wearing helmets



Source 6.47 A Khmer naval vessel, from the Bayon's outer gallery

- 1 What weapons can you identify in Sources 6.45, 6.46 and 6.47?
- 2 Compare how Source 6.44 differs from these other sources. How would an historian explain these differences?

HISTORICAL FACT

The Khmer were surrounded by a number of other peoples, including the Cham city-states to the east, the Thai to the west and the Vietnamese to the north-east. Relations with them were at times complicated. The inscriptions frequently mention wars with the Cham, but at other times it appears that alliances were formed and various Khmer kings used Cham mercenaries.

Angkor's growing desire to trade with China during the twelfth century, and the need for sea ports, would have strained relations with the Cham city-states. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries, the Thai were under Khmer control, but whenever an opportunity arose, they tried to establish their independence. While occupying Thailand, the Khmer came into contact with the powerful Pagan Empire, which led to a number of confrontations. Angkor's relations with the Vietnamese were greatly influenced by the Chinese, who persuaded the Khmer to attack Dai Viet on a number of occasions.

Social structure

While Indianisation had an enormous impact upon the development of Angkorian culture, the caste system was not successfully implemented. Khmer inscriptions indicate that a person could be a member of the Brahmin (priestly) or Kshatriya (warrior) caste, but this did not prevent them from marrying someone from outside their caste. Michael Coe suggests that membership of a caste was more like an honour awarded by the king in recognition of outstanding service.

At the top of Khmer society was the *chakravartin* (king), who served both a religious and a secular role. The king was supported by his family, who often filled many of the administrative and military jobs. The Angkorian administration made up the next level of Khmer society and lower down in the

social hierarchy were the artisans and craftsmen, but very little information is available about them.

The majority of the people were peasant rice farmers, subject to regular **corvée** labour and occasional military service. As the Khmer did not use money, peasants paid the rent owed to their landlords in the form of crops, while taxes to the administration and to the local temple were paid either in the form of labour or in crops.

The inscriptions describe three kinds of slave:

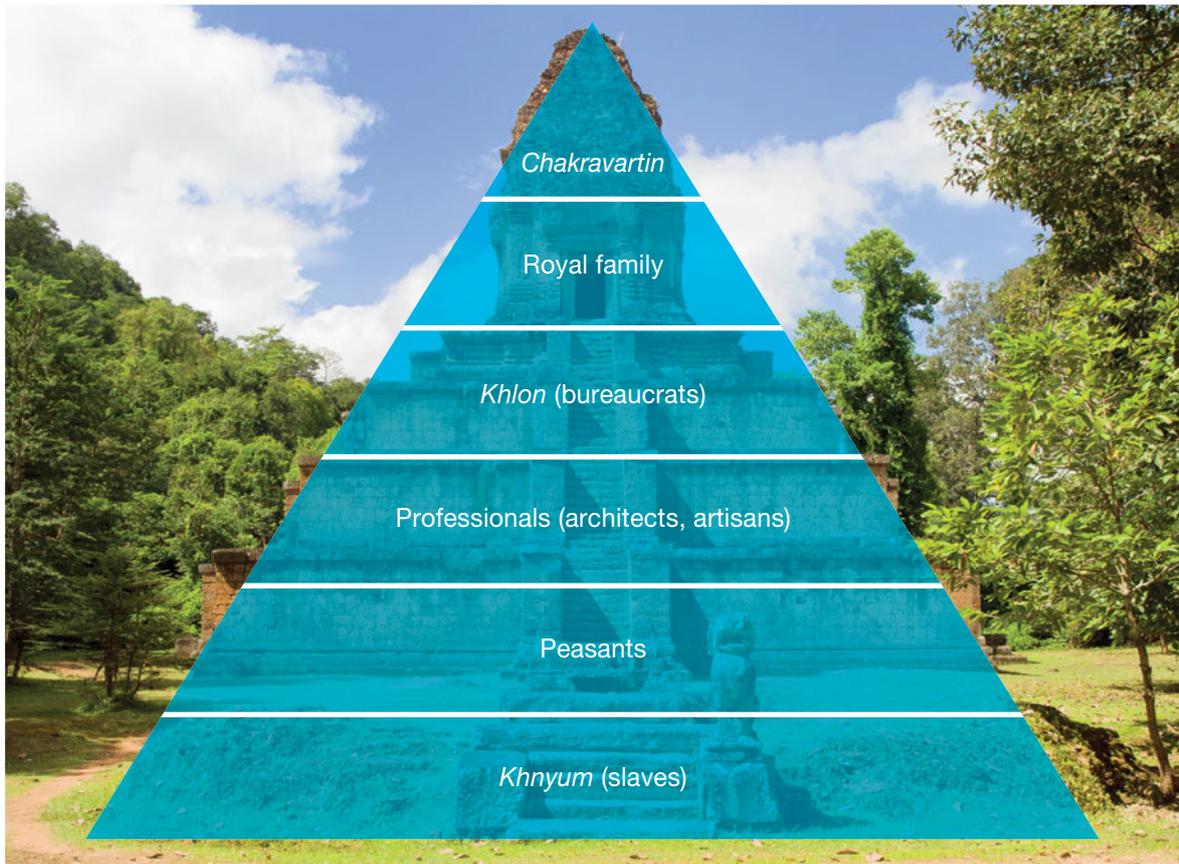
- slaves who were legally acquired
- slaves who were inherited
- 'religious slaves', or people who had dedicated themselves to work for the temple for a period of time, perhaps instead of paying the temple taxes.

corvée compulsory work by peasants for the Khmer king or local officials

HISTORICAL FACT

From the sixth to the tenth centuries, **matrilineal inheritance** was the law. However, after the creation of the Khmer Empire, this became increasingly rare.

matrilineal inheritance in the Khmer Empire, inheritance passed from a man to his sister's son, rather than to his own children



Source 6.48 Social hierarchy in the Khmer Empire

HISTORICAL FACT

The Khmer Empire was an immense revenue-gathering machine and everyone except priests, monks and slaves was subject to taxation. The king officially received all the tax revenue – the Khmer expression *svey vrahrajya* (‘he eats the kingdom’) demonstrates that he metaphorically and literally consumed the empire’s produce – but this was administered by his officials. Many things were taxed including land (based on size and productivity), rice, salt, wax and honey. There was even a market tax.



Activity 6.4

Use the sources provided to answer the following questions about daily life in Angkor.

From the king down, the men and women all wear hair wound up in a knot, and go naked to the waist, wrapped only in a cloth. When they are not out and about, they wind a larger piece of cloth over the small one. There are very many different grades of cloth. The materials the king wears include some that are extremely elegant and beautiful, and worth three or four ounces of gold a piece. Although cloth is woven locally, it also comes from Siam [Thailand] and Champa [southern Vietnam]. Cloth from the Western Seas [India] is often regarded as the best because it is so well made and refined.

Only the king can wear material with a full pattern of flowers on it. On his head he wears a gold crown, like that worn by the Buddha. Sometimes he goes without a crown, and simply wears a chain of fragrant flowers such as jasmine wound round the braids of hair. Around his neck he wears an enormous pearl. On his wrists, ankles, fingers and toes he wears gold bracelets and rings, all of them inlaid with cat's-eye gemstones ...

Senior officials and relatives of the king can wear cloth with a scattered floral design, while junior officials can wear cloth with a two-flower design. Among the ordinary people, only women can wear cloth with this design. However, if a newly arrived Chinese wears it, people are not offended, on the grounds that he ... does not understand what is appropriate.

Source 6.49 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan describing Angkorian clothing



Source 6.50 Women's clothing, Angkor Wat

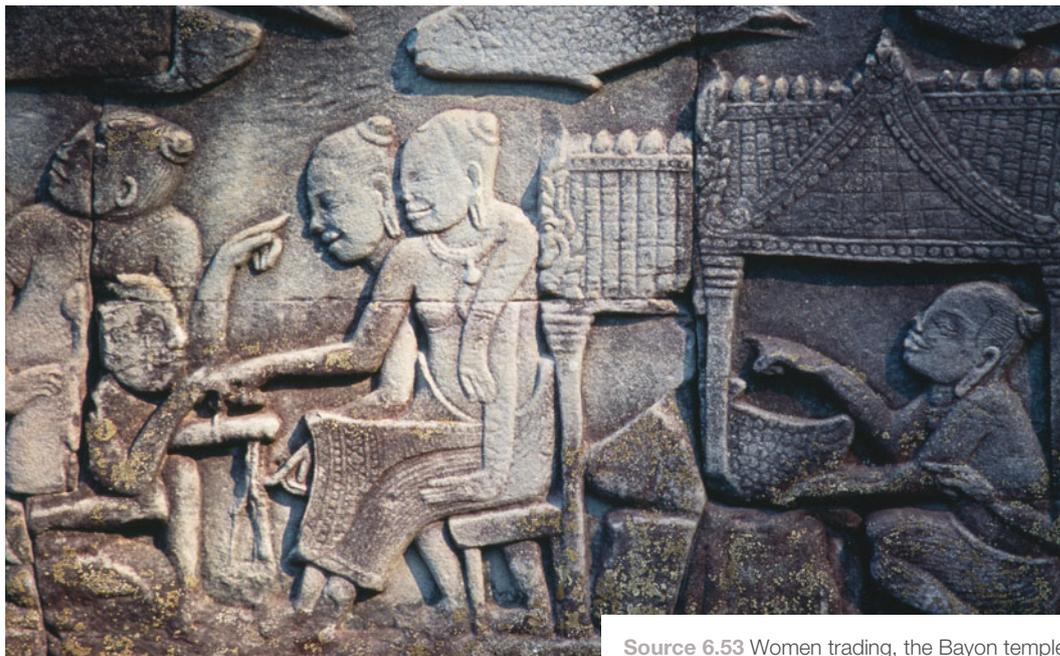
Family slaves are all savages purchased to work as servants. Most families have a hundred or more; a few have ten or twenty; only the very poorest have none at all. The savages are people from the mountains. They have their own names for themselves, but are commonly called 'thieving savages' ...

A strong young slave is worth perhaps a hundred pieces of cloth; a weak old one can only fetch thirty or forty. They are only allowed to sit and sleep under the house. If they are carrying out their tasks then they can come up into the house, but they must kneel, join their hands in greeting, and bow down to the floor before they can venture forward. They address their master as 'father' and their mistress as 'mother'. If they do something wrong they are beaten and take their caning with their heads bowed, not venturing to move even a little ... Sometimes slaves run away. Those that are caught and taken back must carry a dark blue tattoo on their face, and sometimes an iron shackle around their neck, arms or legs.

Source 6.51 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan concerning slaves

The local traders are all women ... There is a market held every day from about six in the morning until midday. There are no stalls, only a kind of grass mat laid out on the ground, each in its usual place. I gather there is also a rental fee to be paid to officials. Small market transactions are paid for with rice or other grain and Chinese goods. The ones next up in size are paid for with cloth. Large transactions are done with gold and silver.

Source 6.52 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan concerning trade



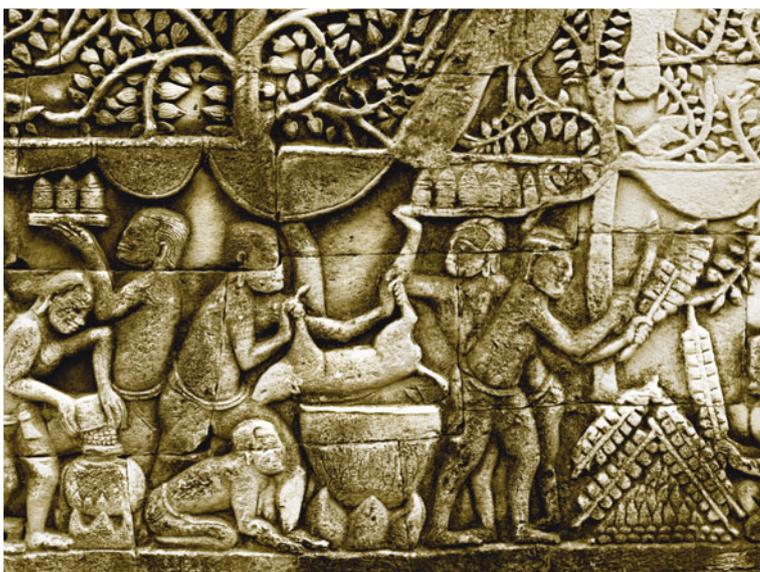
Source 6.53 Women trading, the Bayon temple

(continued)

If there is a dispute among the people, it must be taken to the king, even if it is a small matter. There are never any whippings or floggings as punishment, only fines. Nor do they hang or behead anyone guilty of a serious crime. Instead they just dig a hole in the ground outside the west gate of the city, put the criminal inside it, fill it up with earth and stones, and leave it at that. Otherwise people have their fingers or toes amputated, or their nose cut off ...

If two have a dispute to resolve and cannot agree who was right and wrong, there are twelve small stone towers on a bank opposite the palace, and the people concerned are sent to sit in two of them. Outside, members of each family keep guard against the other. They may sit in the towers for one to four days. Then, the one who is in the wrong becomes visibly ill, and leaves. The one who is in the right is absolutely fine. Thus right and wrong are assessed and decided on, in what is known as the Judgement of Heaven. Such is the spiritual power of the local gods.

Source 6.54 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan about resolving disputes



Source 6.55 Men cooking, the Bayon temple



Source 6.56 Cock fighting, the Bayon temple

- 1 According to Source 6.49, how was social rank demonstrated in Angkor?
- 2 Consider whether social status was an important feature of Angkorian society.
- 3 According to Source 6.51, how were runaway slaves dealt with?
- 4 If Angkor had no coinage, examine how things were bought and sold. See Source 6.52.
- 5 According to Source 6.54, how were serious crimes dealt with?
- 6 Explain how the ‘Judgement of Heaven’ works, as described in Source 6.54.



Cultural achievements

Water management

According to archaeologist Miriam Stark, water management was integral to the Khmer economy, allowing widespread settlement and farming throughout the Angkor region. The Khmers were expert water engineers: they dug canals, dredged and straightened rivers, built dykes into floodplains to redirect and hold back floodwaters, dug moats around their temples and housing areas, and built reservoirs to hold water. Several Khmer kings built *baray* (enormous reservoirs), such as the West Baray, which measures 8 kilometres by 2.2 kilometres.

Scholars are divided on how the water system worked. For many years, it was argued that Angkor’s agriculture relied upon **irrigation**, but more recently archaeologists have suggested that the Angkorians relied upon rain and the regular flooding of the Tonle Sap. Owing to the scale of the water engineering at Angkor, it might be assumed that it was centrally controlled, but no evidence has been found to explain how the water system was organised and maintained.

irrigation a system of bringing a supply of water to a dry area, especially in order to help crops grow

Transport

A vast network of highways was constructed to link Angkor with the provinces. These highways were usually raised above the flood level and



Source 6.57 A laterite bridge, Spean Brab Tes (Bridge of Indication) at Kampong Kley

laterite a soft, clay-like material that is easy to cut and hardens when exposed to the air

varied from 10 metres to 25 metres in width. They acted like dykes, diverting water into the surrounding fields. **Laterite** bridges, up to 160 metres long, enabled the highways to cross rivers – some still carry traffic today. At regular intervals along the highways, Jayavarman VII erected 121 identical ‘Houses of Fire’ that may have served as rest stops.

Buildings

Throughout the Khmer Empire, only religious structures were built of brick and stone. The simpler temples comprised a shrine surrounded by an enclosure wall and a moat. This ground plan replicated the Hindu world, surrounded by mountains and the mythical ‘ocean of chaos’.

Larger temples had an enclosure within an enclosure, with entries on one or two sides, called *gopura*. Within the enclosure was a Sacred Fire shrine, which was lit daily before the priests attended to the temple’s main shrine. A timber kitchen for preparing the god’s food also would have been located in the enclosure.

During the Pre-Angkorian era, brick was the building material of choice and intricate decorations were carved into the brickwork, like the ‘floating palaces’ of Sambor Prei Kuk (see Source 6.16). These buildings did not use cement but a very strong vegetable compound, which left an almost invisible join. During the Angkorian era, the use of stone became increasingly popular, initially being used as **lintels** (see Source 6.58), door and window frames to decorate brick buildings.

lintel a stone that spans the top of a doorway

HISTORICAL FACT

Door lintel styles changed so significantly over time that the carvings can be used to date a building to within a 25-year period.



Source 6.58 Plaster work at Pre Rup temple

HISTORICAL
FACT

Khmer temples also served an important social and economic role. The temple was a local administrative centre, collecting tributes and redistributing gifts. Farmers used the temple to store their seed and harvest. Temples and monasteries, like Preah Khan and its 1000 teachers, were responsible for education.



Source 6.59 A door lintel from Banteay Srei

Beautiful decorations in plaster (see Source 6.59) were also applied to brick buildings. However, during the reign of Jayavarman V (968–1000 CE), plastered brick was replaced by stone and laterite, which remained the preferred building material until the end of the era. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these stone temples became increasingly complex structures.

Unlike the Romans who constructed arches with keystones that locked the stonework in place, the Khmer used corbelled arches. This involved building two walls on either side of an open space and gradually placing the stones closer together until they met at the top, forming an arch. Theoretically, each side pushed against the other, preventing the roof from falling in. Sadly, corbelled arches are structurally weak and can only span narrow spaces, which has caused many corbelled arches to collapse over time.

Other interesting features of Angkorian architecture are stone windows that often feature **balusters** made with hand-turned lathes, and pediments – triangular-shaped stones set above doorways carved with intricate bas-reliefs.

Secular buildings, including palaces and ordinary houses, were built of timber. Owing to Cambodia's tropical climate, no timber buildings from the Angkorian period have survived. Fortunately, Zhou Daguan recorded the appearance of Khmer palaces and ordinary housing. Along with temple bas-reliefs and excavated ceramic tiles, archaeologists have been able to reconstruct Khmer palaces. Zhou's description of ordinary housing (see Source 6.61) is very similar to housing still being built throughout Cambodia today (see Source 6.62).

balusters stone pillars that form the horizontal bars in Angkorian windows



Source 6.60 A depiction of palace architecture

The royal palace, officials' residences, and great houses all face east. The tiles of the main building are made of lead; all the other tiles are made of yellow clay. The beams and pillars are huge, and are all carved and painted with images of the Buddha. The rooms are quite grand-looking, [with] long corridors and complicated walkways ...

[The houses of the royal family and senior officials] are large and spacious in style, very different from ordinary people's homes. The roofs are made entirely of thatch, except for the family shrine and the main bedroom, both of which can be tiled ...

At the lowest level come the homes of the common people. They only use thatch for their roofs, and dare not put up a single tile. Although the sizes of their homes vary according to their wealth, they do not dare emulate the styles of the great houses.

Source 6.61 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan concerning housing



Source 6.62 A Cambodian stilt house



Angkor Wat

Angkor Wat was built by King Suryavarman II. Most Angkorian temples face east, but Angkor Wat faces west, suggesting that it was originally dedicated to Vishnu (as west is Vishnu's direction). George Coedès argued that west was also the direction of death, so Angkor Wat may have been built as a funerary temple for Suryavarman. However, Eleanor Mannikka has suggested that the temple functioned as an observatory. Since the fourteenth century, the temple has been used as a Theravada Buddhist pagoda.

The site is surrounded by a 200-metre-wide moat and the main entrance is from the west, across a massive sandstone causeway. The temple itself consists of three increasingly higher galleries. The Third Gallery is famous for its bas-reliefs of the *Reamker*, the *Mahabharata* and royal processions. The four peaks of the inner gallery and the peak of the central shrine represent the mythical Mount Meru.

Suryavarman II (reigned 1113 – c.1150 CE) is considered one of Angkor's greatest kings. He overthrew his predecessor and suppressed several regional rebellions. He formed a close alliance with China and, according to Michael Vickery, 'pursued a policy of eastward expansion, to bring Cambodia into the developing international maritime network initiated by the new policy of the Southern Sung Dynasty in China. For this Cambodia required seaports.' Under Suryavarman, Angkorian architecture reached its pinnacle. Suryavarman died sometime around 1150. The notable dates of his reign are as follows:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1113 | Suryavarman becomes king by overthrowing his aged grand-uncle, King Dharanindravarman I. |
| 1116 | Diplomatic relations are re-established with China. |
| 1120s | Suryavarman asserts control over the Chao Phraya Valley (modern-day central Thailand). |
| 1128 | Angkor is given 'special ally' status by the Chinese emperor. |
| 1128–34 | China persuades Suryavarman and the Cham to launch several unsuccessful raids on Dai Viet. |
| 1144–45 | Suryavarman invades Champa, defeats the King of Vijaya and sacks the city. |



Source 6.63 Stone windows with lathe-turned balusters



Source 6.64 Suryavarman II seated



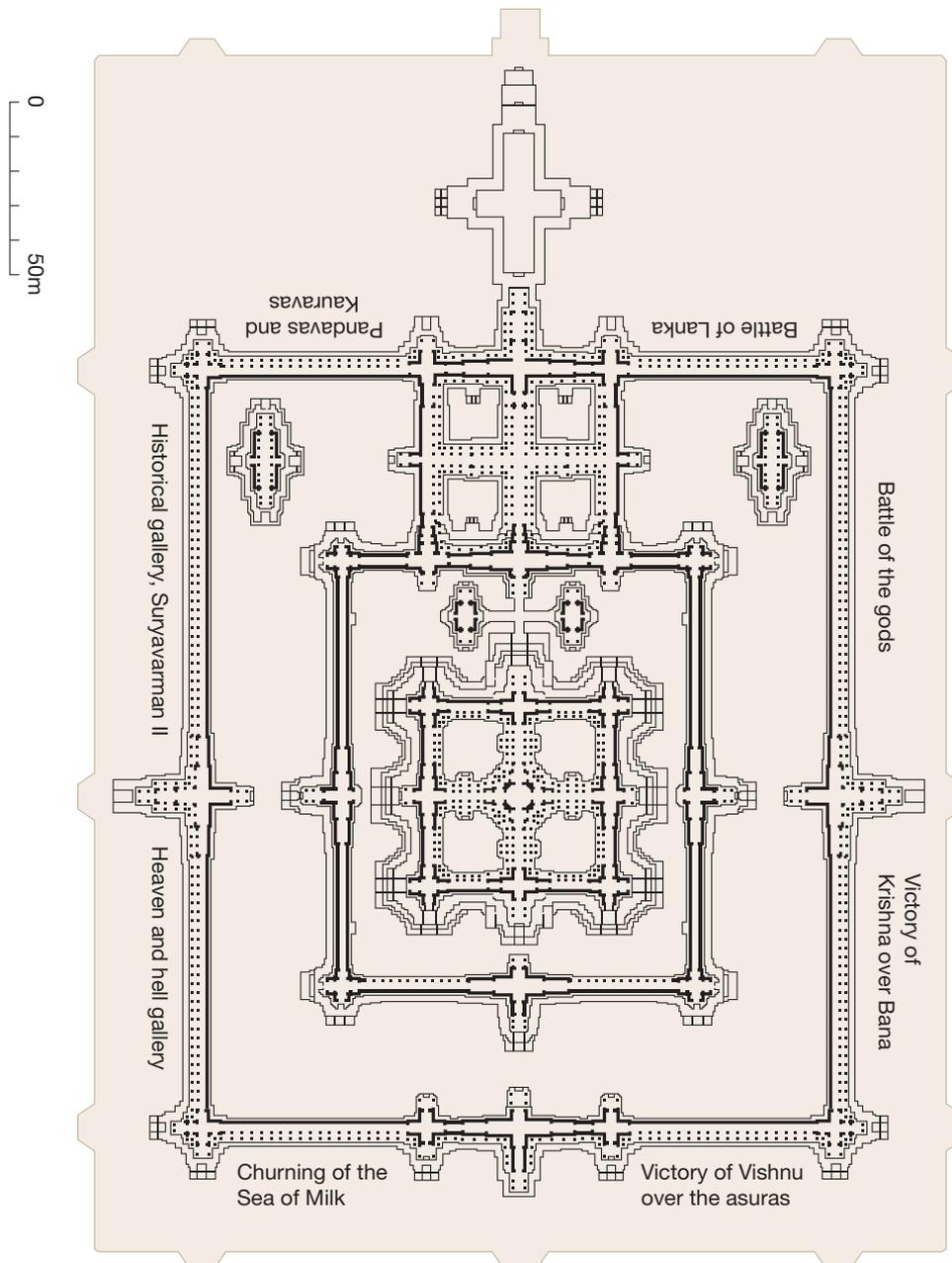
Source 6.65 An apsara



Source 6.66 The Death of Valin, from the *Reamker*



Source 6.67 Angkor Wat



Source 6.68 Floor plan of Angkor Wat

His Majesty Suryavarman ... grandnephew of Jayavarman [V] and Dharanindravarman [I], ascended to the throne and invited the Vrah Guru to conduct the coronation. The king then performed the sacrifices, starting with the sacred mysteries ... [he then] gave rich presents such as palanquins, fans, fly-whisks, crowns, buckles, pendants, bracelets and rings ...

Still young, his religious studies finished, he commanded armies as vast as the ocean. Bounding on the head of the elephant of the enemy king, he killed him as Garuda on a mountain's edge would kill a serpent.

Source 6.69 An excerpt from a stele (K. 357), dated 1113 CE

Research 6.2

Our understanding of the Khmer Empire relies heavily upon the work of historians and archaeologists who have over the last century discovered so much about the civilisation, bringing together many different types of evidence, such as inscriptions, Chinese texts, bas-reliefs and archaeological information to reconstruct the past. However, our understanding of Angkor can only be a reconstruction based on the evidence that has survived, as much valuable information has been lost. Over time, interpretations have changed and not all scholars agree about various aspects of Angkor's past. How have historians and archaeologists developed their interpretations? Why do their interpretations differ? Is one interpretation more correct than another?

Using the internet, research one of the following scholars and write a biographical profile, outlining the contribution they have made to our understanding of Angkor and the Khmer Empire:

- Bernard-Philippe Groslier
- Claude Jacques
- Etienne Aymonier
- George Cœdès
- Miriam Stark

Decline of Angkor

Following the death of Jayavarman VII, the Khmer Empire began to decline. Many theories have been proposed to explain the decline of Angkor:

- 1 **Jayavarman exhaustion.** Briggs, a scholar, suggested that Jayavarman's 'building frenzy' exhausted the empire physically and economically. Certainly, very few constructions were undertaken after the death of Jayavarman.
- 2 **Religious revolution.** The adoption of Theravada Buddhism radically altered the warring nature of the Khmer. However, the adoption of Theravada Buddhism by other peoples, such as the Thai, didn't prevent them from military expansion.
- 3 **Problems at home.** The last Sanskrit inscription, erected by King Jayavarmaparameshvara in 1327, hints at internal conflict. However, the lack of sources prevents further research.
- 4 **Thai growth.** Whenever Angkor had a weak king, the peoples of the Chao Phraya Valley tried to assert their independence. Following the death of Jayavarman VII, Angkor's kings were unable to prevent the growth of states like Ayutthaya. As the Khmer lost control of this land, the Thai began to displace the Khmer inhabitants and grew in population. The Thai sacked Angkor in 1431, taking thousands captive.
- 5 **Soil sterilisation.** Groslier suggested that Angkor's growing population created increasing

demand for land. This led to deforestation, which in turn led to soil erosion. The soil silted up the irrigation works, making the land sterile and forcing the Khmer to abandon Angkor.

- 6 **Over-intensification.** Fletcher and Pottier follow Groslier's theory, but rather than the irrigation collapsing, they argue that Angkor's farming land became increasingly degraded and the system of transport canals broke down, stopping agriculture from moving, which led to depopulation.
- 7 **Climatic change.** Angkor's rapid growth in the tenth to twelfth centuries was aided by a wet climate. However, after c.1280, Cambodia became much drier, reducing the productivity of Angkor's land. This forced the Khmer to

move to wetter, more fertile areas like the Quatre Bras region.

- 8 **Maritime trade.** From the late fourteenth century, Chinese maritime trade increased dramatically and the movement of the capital closer to the coast may have been in response to the Khmer wishing to participate in this trade. Interestingly, the Khmer sent more delegations to China between 1371 and 1419 than they had in the previous 500 years.

- 9 **Black Death.** Some have speculated that Angkor's depopulation may have been caused by the Black Death.

However, Lieberman rightly points out 'there is no evidence that the Black Death hit any part of mainland south-east Asia'.

Black Death the great outbreak of bubonic plague in the fourteenth century

Activity 6.5

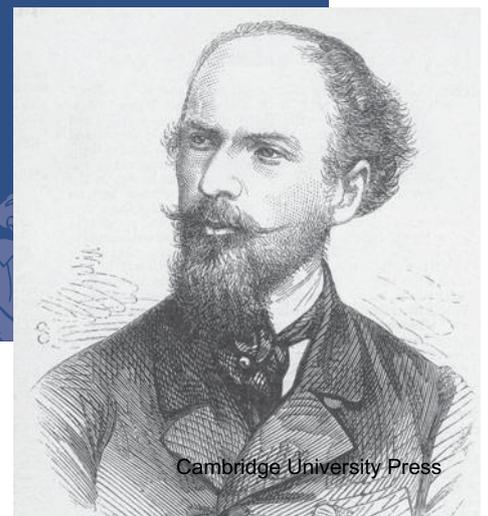
As a class, discuss which of the theories concerning the decline of Angkor is the most plausible. Consider whether a combination of these theories might have caused Angkor's decline.

Rediscovery

The Western world may not have known about Angkor, but this does not mean that the city was abandoned or lost. Angkor Wat contains bas-reliefs carved between 1546 and 1564, and recent excavations have unearthed large amounts of pottery from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, indicating that the area was still settled, even if with a reduced population. During the late sixteenth century, several Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese travellers recorded their visits, and the king's court stayed in the area for extended periods throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. However, the global significance of Angkor was not realised until scholars followed in Mouhot's footsteps to study the site.

HISTORICAL FACT

Henri Mouhot (1826–61) was a French explorer and zoologist, who trekked extensively in Thailand and Indochina between 1858 and 1861. In January 1860, he reached Angkor and recorded his observations, which were published after his death in 1863. While Mouhot never claimed to have discovered Angkor, the popularity of his illustrated book about the ruined city in the jungle inspired the common belief that he had discovered a lost civilisation.



Source 6.70 Henri Mouhot

Research 6.3

Khmer archaeological sites are very popular tourist destinations, but few people are familiar with Khmer civilisation. Choose one of the following archaeological sites and create a website that will inform visitors about the site's main features. On your website, you will need to consider the site's location, date of construction, the materials used and notable things to see at the site. In your website, explain why the site is important and worthy of visiting. Use images to illustrate the features of the site.

- Banteay Srei
- Beng Mealea
- Phimai
- Preah Khan
- Ta Prohm

HISTORICAL FACT

Roland Fletcher is the Professor of Archaeology at the University of Sydney and Director of the Greater Angkor Project, which has been researching Angkor since 2001. His investigations into Angkor's landscape, water management and urban planning have revealed that at 1000 square kilometres, Angkor was once the world's largest city. Fletcher's research has looked at how this low density city functioned, considering the physical and ecological stresses it faced and which he suggests were unsustainable, ultimately contributing to Angkor's decline.



Source 6.71 Professor Roland Fletcher and Dr Dan Perry, Sydney University



Legacies of the Khmer Empire

Despite the popular belief that Angkor was discovered in the 1860s, the Khmer knew of the city's existence and the legacy it had upon Cambodia. The country's economy is still reliant upon rice cultivation, but the tourism generated by Angkorian sites is becoming increasingly important.

The rural housing hasn't changed in centuries and many modern buildings are made to look Angkorian. Their cooking methods have not changed since the twelfth century, nor have their cart designs. Cambodian social etiquette, like their respect for superiors and courtesy, all stem from the Angkorian Era. Cambodia's religious beliefs have changed little from the fourteenth century, combining elements from *Neak Ta*, Hinduism and Buddhism, and Angkor's temples remain culturally significant. Angkor Wat is depicted on Cambodia's national flag. The Cambodian King's coronation has not changed in centuries and the king remains the physical and spiritual protector of the realm. Cambodian ballet keeps alive the

Reamker epic, depicted on the walls of Angkor Wat. The Khmer language and alphabet is based upon those used in Angkor. The legacy of Angkor has also stretched beyond Cambodia, influencing the cultural and political developments of Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.

However, Angkor's legacy has also caused much suffering. Under Pol Pot, the communist leader of Cambodia between 1975 and 1979, millions starved to death trying to recreate the agricultural achievements of Angkor. Pol Pot also tried to invade southern Vietnam, claiming it was historically part of the former Khmer Empire. Vietnam's retaliatory occupation of Cambodia triggered a 10-year war against Pol Pot's guerrilla forces, during which millions of landmines were laid across northwest Cambodia, especially around Angkorian sites. Ironically, Jayavarman VII's famous monastery, Preah Khan, became the site of yet another battle and bears the scars of bullet fire. Landmines continue to maim and kill indiscriminately.



Source 6.72 The Cambodian flag and the Independence Monument, which commemorates independence from France in 1953



Source 6.73 The *Reamker* being performed by a traditional Khmer dancer

Some ethnic Khmers living in Vietnam and Thailand, along with nationalists in Cambodia, still want to see the former Khmer Empire's territories returned to Cambodia. Angkorian temples, the obvious symbols of the Khmer civilisation, have given substance to their argument. Border disputes

occur frequently between Thailand and Cambodia over the rightful ownership of temples such as Preah Vihear. The situation is further complicated by Cambodian nationalist claims that ethnic Khmers are being forced to become Vietnamese and Thai, thus losing their link with Angkor's past.



Source 6.74 Preah Vihear temple



Source 6.75 Thai demonstrators in Bangkok outside Government House, claiming that Cambodia has annexed Thai territory, February 2011

Activity 6.6

- 1 Consider why certain aspects of Khmer society remained the same since the Angkorian era while other things have not. What might motivate change?
- 2 Why is history such a contentious issue? Explain why people might argue over an archaeological site.
- 3 Evaluate how important history is to the creation of a nationality.
- 4 Examine the role an historian plays in creating national identity. Who owns the past?

Research 6.4

Imagine another border clash has erupted at Preah Vihear and the International Court of Justice wants the dispute resolved permanently. Divide the class into two even groups, one representing Thailand and the other representing Cambodia, to research the various claims that each nation has to this site. Each group should present their case before the International Court of Justice (your teacher). You must be able to back up all your claims with evidence, which could include maps, photos and documents. Each group should be given the opportunity to reply to the points raised by the opposition. The stronger case will determine who owns Preah Vihear.



Source 6.76 Monks on the causeway, Preah Vihear



Chapter summary

- The Khmer took advantage of the regularly flooding Tonle Sap, developing a water management system that fostered successful rice cultivation. This provided an excellent foundation for the development of the Khmer Empire.
- Indianisation greatly influenced the development of the Khmer civilisation religiously, politically and culturally. Trade between China and India enabled Funan to flourish. However, when the trade routes changed, Funan declined and the region's economy was forced to become more self-reliant.
- The inland state of Zhenla profited from the rich agricultural land of the Cambodian basin and encouraged the development of a sophisticated Indianised Khmer culture.
- Zhenla consisted of a number of local rulers, who occasionally had sufficient power to dominate the rest of the region, but this was only temporary, lasting until that king's death.
- Jayavarman II managed to unite the Khmer under his authority and created a lasting union. He initiated the Devaraja Cult to help maintain his authority, while religiously uniting the Khmer.
- The king was responsible for maintaining dharma in the empire and he was the people's protector, both militarily and spiritually. The prosperity of the empire was tied to the behaviour of the king.
- The Khmer Empire relied upon a large bureaucracy, looking after the legal system, government and taxation. Some of these officials held hereditary positions, but many were appointed personally by the king, demonstrating the king's control over a centralised administration.
- The daily life of the Khmer has been recorded by a Chinese diplomat, Zhou Daguan, enabling historians to study their way of life in greater depth.
- The prosperity of the Khmer Empire enabled art and architecture to flourish, leading to the construction of some of the world's greatest buildings, such as Angkor Wat. Infrastructure, such as highways, bridges, reservoirs and hospitals helped to maintain the empire.
- Many reasons have been proposed for the decline of the empire, including invasion, religious revolution, climate change, ecological disasters and economic change.
- The Khmer Empire has left an important artistic, religious, cultural and political legacy not only to Cambodia but also to the world.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- Which lake is in the middle of Cambodia?
 - George
 - Titicaca
 - Tonle Sap
 - Ontario
- A popular Cambodian epic is the:
 - Aeneid*
 - Gilgamesh*
 - Reamker*
 - Odyssey*
- The Angkorian economy was based upon:
 - rice
 - tourism
 - logging
 - mining
- Which god rides a three-headed elephant?
 - Shiva
 - Indra
 - Brahma
 - Vishnu

5 Which Khmer king built Angkor Wat?

- A Jayavarman II
- B Rajendravarman II
- C Suryavarman II
- D Jayavarman VII

Short answer

- 1 Explain why water management was important to Angkor.
- 2 How did Angkor relate to other peoples?
- 3 Describe the role of Angkor's king.
- 4 Outline how Indianisation influenced Angkor.
- 5 What function did Angkor's temples serve?



Source 6.77 A sculpture lion guards the Terrace of Elephants, Angkor Thom

Source analysis

Study Sources 6.78 and 6.79 and answer the following questions:

- 1 List the features identified by Zhou Daguan.
- 2 Compare the similarities and differences between Sources 6.78 and 6.79.
- 3 How does Source 6.78 relate to the depiction of the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk' (Source 6.24)?
- 4 Why might religious imagery be used to decorate non-religious buildings?

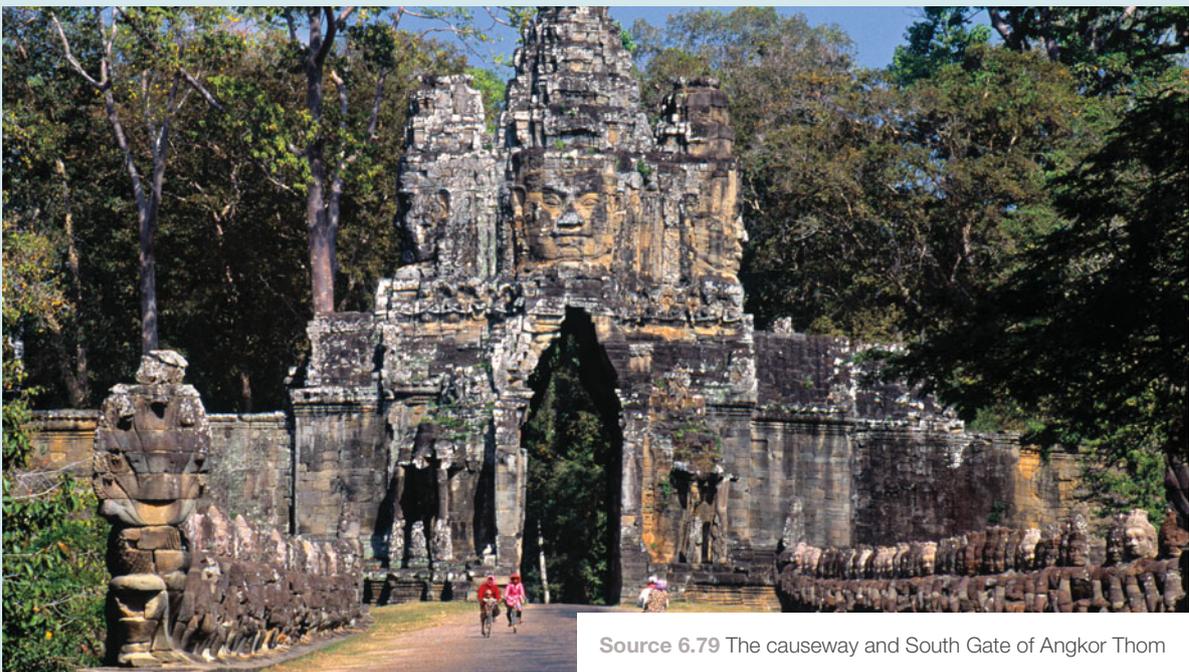
Extended response

Imagine that Jayavarman VII has appointed you to head a trade delegation to China. Your mission is to convince the Chinese Emperor of the strengths of the Khmer economy and explain why China should accept Khmer goods, highlighting the country's resources, agricultural productivity and the water management systems. However, as the Chinese Emperor rarely meets ambassadors face-to-face, you are required to set out your argument as an essay. To convince a sceptical emperor, you must be thorough in your delivery and use evidence to support your claims. *Somnaang la-or* (Khmer = Good luck)!

The walls of the city are about 20 *li* [roughly 10 kilometres] in circumference. There are five gateways ... There are two gates facing east, one gateway facing in each of the other directions. Around the outside of the city walls there is a very large moat. This is spanned by big bridges carrying roads into the city. On either side of every bridge there are 54 stone deities. They look like generals, huge and fierce-looking.

The five gateways are all alike. The [handrails] of the bridges are all made of stone and are carved into the shape of snakes, each snake with nine heads. The 54 are all pulling at the snake with their hands, and look as if they are preventing it from escaping. Above the gateways in the city wall there are five Buddha heads. Four of them face toward the four cardinal points, and one of them is placed in the middle. It is decorated with gold. On either side of the gates the stones are carved into the shape of elephants.

Source 6.78 An excerpt from Zhou Daguan concerning Angkor Thom



Source 6.79 The causeway and South Gate of Angkor Thom



Source 6.80 Vintage image of Angkor Wat

7



Japan under the shoguns (c. 794–1867)

Source 7.1 *The Great Wave off the Coast of Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai (1831)

Before you start

Main focus

From early times in their long history, Japanese people have sought to adapt foreign influences to their needs, while keeping their unique culture.

Why it's relevant today

Japan is once again a world power, adapting to international influences while retaining essential aspects of its national identity that have a powerful impact in the wider world.

Inquiry questions

- How did society in Japan change from the end of the ancient period to the beginning of the modern age?
- What key beliefs and values emerged in Japan and how did they influence society?
- What were the causes and effects of contact between Japan and other societies in this period?
- Which significant Japanese people, groups and ideas from this period have influenced the world today?

Key terms

- Buddhism
- *bushido*
- *daimyo*
- feudal
- Meiji
- samurai
- Shinto
- shogun
- *tenno*

Significant individuals

- Emperor Kammu
- Hojo Masako
- Katsushika Hokusai
- Matsuo Basho
- Minamoto Yoritomo
- Murasaki Shikibu
- Oda Nobunaga
- Commodore Matthew Perry
- Tokugawa Ieyasu
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Let's begin

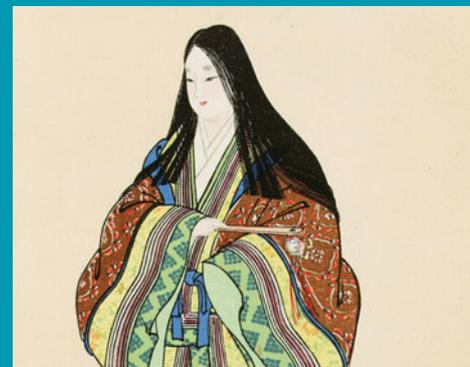
Japan is a chain of islands in the northern Pacific Ocean, dominated by mountains and forest; consequently the sea, mountains and forest play an important role in its culture. From the fifth century CE, the Japanese have been greatly influenced by the culture, religion and government of Japan's powerful neighbour, China. From the ninth to the twelfth centuries, the power of the ruling emperor was diverted, first to the Fujiwara family and then to retired emperors. Emperors became ceremonial or religious figureheads (leaders in name only), while someone else held political power. This structure continued when military dictators called shoguns ruled the country. From 1603 to 1868, members of the Tokugawa family were shoguns. They closed the country to outside interference or influence. People were forced into strict classes, but the period was generally peaceful. In the mid 1800s, when Western powers forced Japan to open its borders to trade, its people saw how weakened their country had become. A group of reformers overthrew the shogun and the country quickly adopted Western technology. However, Japan retained important religious, cultural and military elements of its unique society.



Source 7.2 Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–99), founder of the Japanese shogunate

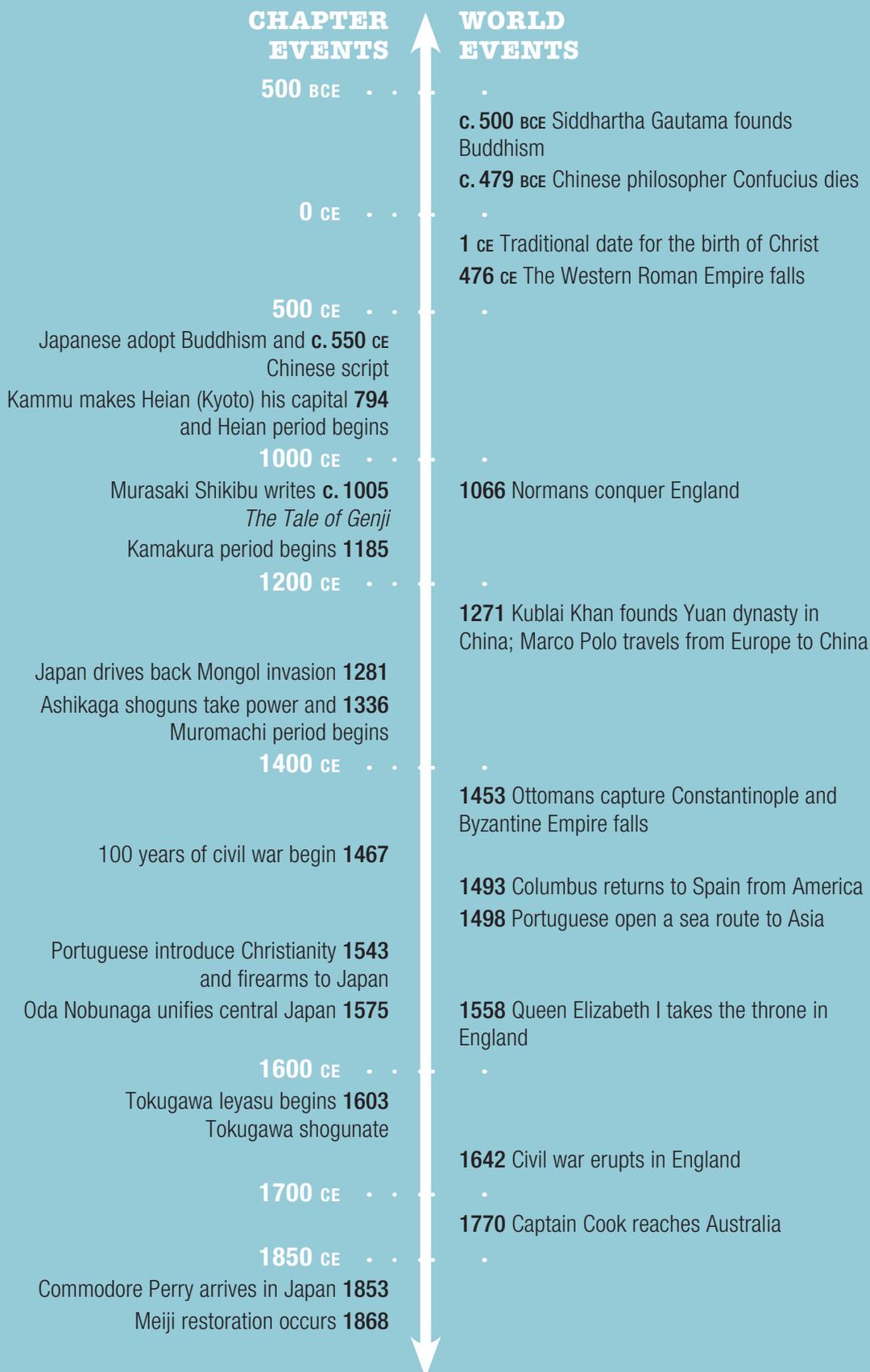


Source 7.3 Tokugawa Ieyasu, Toshogu Shrine, Nikko



Source 7.4 Murasaki Shikibu, author of *The Tale of Genji*, one of the world's first novels

Timeline





Source 7.5 Map of Japan today
Cambridge University Press



Way of life in Shogunate Japan

The Heian period (794–1185)

Shinto

Shintoism an ancient Japanese religion involving worship of ancestors and nature

kami Shinto deities (spirits)

torii a gate to a sacred place, dividing the natural world from the spirit world

The oldest religion of Japan is known as **Shinto**, meaning ‘the way of the gods’. For over two thousand years, Japanese people have prayed at outdoor shrines to the spirits of heaven and earth, known as **kami**, which can be not only human but also birds, beasts or natural features such as trees or mountains. Simple, wooden shrine gates (**torii**) can be seen throughout Japan today. At festivals, people ask for help from the gods for such blessings as a successful harvest or good weather. In earlier times, women had an important role as priestesses. A shrine of the Sun Goddess at Ise, cared for by priestesses, dates from the late seventh century. Today, there are more than 119 million followers of Shinto in Japan.

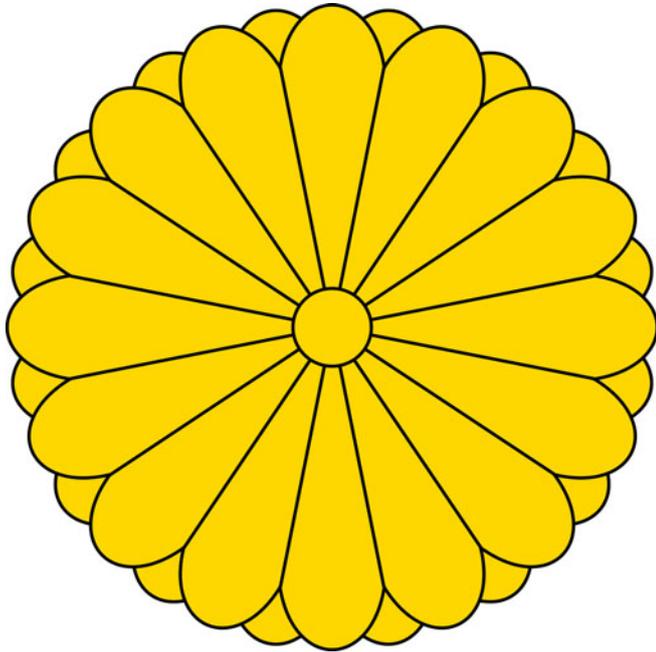


Source 7.6 A gate (torii) to a Japanese shrine

HISTORICAL FACT

The written language of Japan is based on Chinese script, which was adopted c. 550 CE.





Source 7.7 The crest (symbol) of the Japanese imperial family: a formal design in the shape of a chrysanthemum flower

The emperor

Two thousand years ago, Japan was divided into many tribal units. In the fifth century CE, a family on the Yamato Plain, in central Honshu, increased their power and wealth by warring and trading with rival clans (family groups). This Yamato family can be traced back historically to c. 350 CE, but they traced their descent from the Japanese sun goddess **Amaterasu**, and claimed the title of emperor or **tenno**. The present emperor of Japan – Akihito – descends from this family, which is the longest ruling **dynasty** in history.

As emperor, Kammu (see ‘Times gone by’ box) claimed that all land belonged to him and he **taxed** farmers for the right to farm it. Taxes were paid in kind (that is, in goods rather than money), mostly in rice. So this taxation system could be

Amaterasu Shinto sun goddess and legendary founder of the Japanese imperial family

tenno emperor of Japan

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

tax a compulsory contribution made for the support of the government

Times gone by ...

Kammu, who ruled 781–806 CE, was one of the strongest of the early emperors. In 794, he moved to a new capital, Heian (which means ‘city of peace and tranquillity’). The four centuries that followed are called the Heian period. By late in the eleventh century, the city was known as Kyoto. Japanese have looked back to the court culture of this time as a golden age. To help him bring northern Honshu under his control, Kammu appointed a *sei-i-tai-shogun*, meaning ‘barbarian-subduing general’. The word is usually shortened to **shogun**.

shogun military dictator of Japan

- 1 Explain how the appointment of a shogun helped Kammu.
- 2 Compare the Japanese political system at the beginning of the Heian period with that of modern Australia. Is there a modern-day equivalent of the shogun? What about in other countries?

province a region or district within a country

imperial related to an empire or emperor

shoen privately owned landed estates in Japan

administered efficiently, the country was divided into **provinces** ruled by governors sent from the capital. During the Heian period, members of the **imperial** family, other nobles and religious leaders (through temples and shrines) were given rights over land that was not subject to tax. These estates were called **shoen**. Because of these exemptions, families at the emperor's court and religious leaders became very powerful. In time, the central government lost income, and local governors became more powerful at its expense.

HISTORICAL FACT

The Japanese emperor is often said to occupy 'the Chrysanthemum Throne'.

Chinese influences

During the Heian period, noble families in the capital lived a life of luxury. They saw, and were envious of, the fact that the leaders of China and Korea had ancient and educated civilisations. So, using their great wealth, Japanese **aristocrats**

adopted many aspects of their neighbours' cultures.

In the 500s CE, the Chinese system of writing was introduced to Japan, via Korea. Japanese rulers also adopted **Confucianism**, a Chinese philosophy (system of ideas) that is based on the writings of Confucius. It emphasises the importance of order and authority, but is not a religion.

Buddhism, a religion based on the teachings of the Indian holy

man Siddhartha Gautama, known as 'the Buddha', was also imported from China. The imperial family and the court in Kyoto incorporated Buddhist ideas about life, sculpture, painting, architecture, music, dance and arts and crafts into Japanese culture. Although they were very different, the old and the new religions of Shinto and Buddhism existed side by side.

While Shintoism is native to Japan and has no sacred scripture, Buddhism was imported from India, via China, and is based on the writings of the Buddha. It emphasises preaching, whereas Shinto does not. Shinto stresses ritual purity and the performance of practices linked to the agricultural cycles of planting, growth and harvesting. Buddhism focuses on correct conduct in life to achieve salvation and end the cycle of life, death and reincarnation. In general, Japanese people use Shinto rituals for birth and Buddhist rituals for death.

aristocrat a member of the nobility

Confucianism a philosophical system of ethics based on the teachings of Confucius (c. 551–479 BCE)

Buddhism a religion that has a variety of beliefs, practices and traditions based largely on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (the historical Buddha)



👉 Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, list the differences between Shintoism and Buddhism.

| Shintoism | Buddhism |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Native to Japan | Imported from India via China |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



Source 7.8 Giant Buddha at Todaiji in Nara; first erected about 750 CE, it has been recast several times

The Fujiwara family

After Kammu, weaker emperors allowed power and wealth to be lost to their relations, the Fujiwara family. For two centuries the heads of this family ruled Japan, but did not take the title of *tenno*. Fujiwara leaders married their daughters to the emperors, ran the government and diverted taxes to themselves. Since an adult emperor might try to take back power, many emperors were forced to abdicate (resign) and were replaced by their younger relatives.

Times gone by ...

One of the most powerful Japanese leaders was Fujiwara Michinaga (see Source 7.9). He controlled the court from 995 to 1028 CE, which was a time of great cultural achievement. Michinaga managed the appointment of weak or young emperors cleverly. In addition, he kept peace by a mixture of conciliation and force, which he could pay for because of the wealth his family had amassed. His personal diary, an important source for the history of his time, has survived.

- 1 Explain what 'conciliation' means. Identify some actions that Fujiwara Michinaga might have taken to conciliate the emperors.
- 2 Why do you think Fujiwara Michinaga required a mixture of conciliation and force to maintain control over his rivals?



Source 7.9 Fujiwara Michinaga (966–1028 CE) sketched by an artist in the 1800s

HISTORICAL FACT

Japanese family names are shown first and their given names second.



Rule of retired emperors

puppet ruler a ruler whose decisions are made or controlled by another person

From 1068 CE, four strong emperors (whose mothers were not Fujiwara) held power, using the title ‘senior retired emperor’. The young men on the throne were still **puppet rulers**, but now their fathers or their fathers’ fathers pulled the strings. This system was known as

rule from the cloister (the grounds of a monastery) because emperors usually entered a monastery after

rule from the cloister rule by a retired emperor

abdicating. Although the imperial family had regained power, it had lost most of its wealth. In order to manage the government, retired emperors relied on warrior families for military support.

Activity 7.1

- 1 Discuss why Emperor Kammu was important in Japanese history.
- 2 Recall the original name of Kammu’s capital. What is it called today?
- 3 Identify how the Fujiwara family gained and kept control over the emperor.
- 4 State why the period when retired emperors dominated the court is called ‘rule from the cloister’.

Research 7.1

According to Japanese mythology, two gods, Izanagi and his wife Izanami, created the islands of Japan. Use the internet to research these two mythical creatures and write a paragraph telling the story.

Heian arts and culture

Literature

In the Heian period, a new Japanese culture emerged at the court of the emperor. Aristocrats, both women and men, remained fluent in Chinese, but another writing system was introduced that used simplified characters to write Japanese phonetically (that is, based on

sounds) and led to a flowering of literature. A poetic style, later called **tanka**, became popular. These are unrhymed poems, often about nature.

tanka a Japanese poem of five unrhymed lines

Here is one *tanka* written c. 875 CE:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| yama takami | So high the mountains |
| kumoi ni miyuru | they seem afloat in the sky |
| sakurabana | those cherry blossoms |
| kokoro no yukite | my spirit visits daily |
| oranu hi zo naki | longing to break off a bough |

Source 7.10 A *tanka* by Monk Sosei

The world's first novelist?

kemari an ancient Japanese game in which a leather ball is kicked by players in a circle who keep it from touching the ground as long as possible

In c. 1005, Murasaki Shikibu wrote *The Tale of Genji*, which is one of the world's first novels. It tells the story of a nobleman and his family. The men enjoy games (including **kemari**), play music and take part in archery and poetry contests.

Women are rarely depicted outdoors, only occasionally watching boat racing or playing in the snow. The book is mainly about relationships between men and women, as lovers or as family members, and shows the importance of rules about dress, manners (correct conduct) and cultural taste (see Source 7.11), which in many ways remain strong in Japan today.

The moon turned the deepest recesses of the garden a gleaming white. The flower beds were wasted, the brook seemed to send up a strangled cry, and the lake was frozen and somehow terrible. Into this scene [Genji] sent little maidservants, telling them that they must make snowmen. Their dress was bright and their hair shone in the moonlight. The older ones were especially pretty, their jackets and trousers and ribbons trailing off in many colours, and the fresh sheen of their hair black against the snow. The smaller ones quite lost themselves in the sport. They let their fans fall most immodestly from their faces. It was all very charming. Rather outdoing themselves, several of them found that they had a snowball which they could not budge. Some of their fellows jeered at them.

Source 7.11 Extract from *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu

Music

koto a flat musical instrument from Japan with thirteen or more strings that are plucked

lute a plucked, guitar-like string instrument with a long neck and pear-shaped body

Playing music was an important court pastime, with instruments based on models from China. Both men and women played the **lute**, the flute or the **koto**. A court orchestra, using string instruments, wind instruments and drums, played Korean and Chinese music.

In the countryside, wandering musicians played lutes, entertaining listeners with songs of heroic exploits.

Art

Although Buddhist influence was strong in art, sculpture and architecture, a local style emerged with less emphasis on religious subjects. Landscape scenes around Kyoto and local plants, like the cherry blossom, replaced the Chinese fashion for rocky mountains. Wall-sized paper scrolls became popular. Others were hand-sized, which were unrolled to reveal a story, reading from right to left. Faces had two lines for eyes, a hook for the nose and 'rosebud' lips. Subjects included Japanese legends or Buddhist tales. Paintings often included **calligraphy** to tell the stories. One series showed cartoons of frolicking animals such as frogs, rabbits and monkeys (see Source 7.12).

calligraphy the art of formal handwriting

Times gone by ...

Murasaki Shikibu was a widowed member of the Fujiwara family with one daughter when she became a **lady-in-waiting** to the empress. While at court, Murasaki wrote a diary, which was also published. She died c.1015. Her life shows that, in Heian society, aristocratic women had some equality in marriage, education and property rights, as well as an influential role in literature. Another female writer, Sei Shonagon (born c.965 CE), was Murasaki's rival. Her *Pillow Book* also reveals aspects of aristocratic life.

lady-in-waiting a female attendant of an empress, queen or princess

Identify some of the things that the work of Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shonagon can tell us about the Heian period that traditional histories (that is, a chronicle or an account of war) cannot.



Source 7.12 *Scroll of Frolicking Animals*, drawn in the Heian period



Source 7.13 The Byōdō-in temple, near Kyoto, built by Fujiwara Michinaga; it is known as the Phoenix Hall because of the gilded birds on its roof

Chinese influence was also felt in architecture (see Source 7.13). However, buildings were lighter in structure, symmetrical in design and built largely of wood, with bark rather than tile roofs. As well as lavish palaces, nobles erected religious buildings; however, the construction of Kyoto had consequences for the environment, as it cleared nearby forests of trees.

Peasants and warriors

The hard life of a Heian peasant

The literature and art of the court at Kyoto had little to say about the life of the vast majority of Japanese people. Most worked in the rice fields and their

peasant a labourer who relies on subsistence farming or fishing

crop was heavily taxed, so that they had nothing left over apart from what was needed to work and stay alive. **Peasants** were unable

to read or write, worked long hours in the fields, ate rough food and lived simple lives. Villages were small, and housing basic with most people sleeping on bare boards. Authorities often issued laws forbidding people to eat or drink certain foods, such as fish or wine. In times when food was short, peasants sometimes moved to find better conditions but the government tried to prevent this, by making travellers carry identification. When the country was engulfed in warfare, farming was even harder. Shinto festivals, rather than Buddhism, were important for the ordinary people.

Rise of the warrior class

Early imperial armies mostly employed foot soldiers. The emperor appointed officers and forced peasants to fight in battles. When Kammu conquered northern Honshu, soldiers on horseback were introduced, but they were stood down after warfare ended.



Source 7.14 The family crests (*kamon*) of the Taira (left) and Minamoto clans

bushi Japanese mounted warriors (later called samurai)

samurai the hereditary warrior class of Japan

In the 800s CE, a warrior class of archers who fought on horseback, known as **bushi** (later **samurai**), emerged when the Emperors' authority began to weaken and local lords fought

for land and power. Gradually warriors entered the service of the emperor, provincial governors and later powerful families. By the end of the Heian period, two strong warrior clans employing these professional fighters had emerged in the provinces: the Minamoto and the Taira.

To identify men in battle, family emblems known as **kamon** were placed on uniforms or banners. The Taira family's **kamon** was an elaborate butterfly design; the Minamoto's was bamboo leaves and **gentian flowers** (see Source 7.14). At first the clan led by Taira Kiyomori was victorious, and he became the first samurai leader to dominate the government of Japan.

kamon an emblem or crest that identifies a particular Japanese family

gentian flowers blue flowers usually found in mountainous areas of Japan

👉 Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, identify important events in the history of Shogunate Japan.

Main idea:

Activity 7.2

- 1 Investigate which popular Japanese art forms of today can be linked to narrative paper scrolls and cartoons painted nearly a thousand years ago. Can you find an example?
- 2 Check your State Art Gallery or the National Gallery of Art for Heian art and either visit or look up their collections online. Select one work and write a short description. (The Art Gallery of NSW has a good Asian art section.)
- 3 Design and draw a *kamon* (symbolic family crest) for yourself and your family.
- 4 Research, in the library or on the internet, Sei Shonagon and her *Pillow Book*. Identify some of the topics that she wrote about, and characterise her relationship with Lady Murasaki.

The Kamakura shogunate (1185–1336)

In 1160, the Taira clan killed most of the family of a 13-year-old boy of the Minamoto clan named Yoritomo, but spared the boy's life and sent him to a distant province. Later, Yoritomo raised an army, gained control of his province and captured Kyoto.

Warfare between the Taira and Minamoto clans ended in a sea battle won by Yoritomo in 1185.

Yoritomo took the title of shogun in 1192; from this time, the title came to mean military ruler. The emperor remained as a figurehead in



Source 7.15 Map of the four main islands in Japan, showing some key locations

Kanto the largest and most prosperous area of flat land in Japan (near present-day Tokyo)

bakufu Japanese military government

Kyoto but had little income or power. As Yoritomo's strength lay in the east, on the **Kanto** plain, he made a town there, Kamakura, his capital. It remained the shogun's headquarters for 150 years, a period known as the Kamakura

Shogunate or **bakufu**.

Yoritomo rewarded his military supporters by giving them land previously held by enemies, and appointing them as his official representatives and protectors of provinces. These officials administered their regions and collected taxes to be sent to the shogun, keeping some for themselves. This was an important change in society, because peasants were no longer tax-paying subjects of a central government, as was the case under the system administered by the imperial court. Instead, they were now **serfs** (a kind of slave required to serve their lords) under a new class of local leaders, or warlords.

In some ways this was a drop in status for the peasants, but they were safer since they received protection from strong warriors.

In centuries to come, this system

developed even further in Japan and today is known as **feudalism**.

When Yoritomo died suddenly in 1199, his widow Hojo Masako (1157–1225), known as the 'nun shogun', became an important political figure. The eldest child of a warlord, Masako married Yoritomo in about 1180. After he died, Masako became a Buddhist nun, but was influential when her two sons were shoguns. Both sons were assassinated, but Masako remained a dominant

figure in politics until her death, helping her own family, rather than her husband's, to hold power. In later years, when women's importance was downgraded in Japan, she was portrayed as heartless and ambitious.

Rule of the Hojo regents

Masako's family ruled from Kamakura as **regents**, allowing young noblemen to retain the title of shogun. Now both emperors and shoguns were puppets while the Hojo family had political power. During the Hojo rule, **Zen** Buddhism, in which a teacher or master plays an important role, became popular in Japan. Zen's emphasis on simplicity, restraint and meditation led to traditional arts like **bonsai**, **ikebana** and Japan's dry-landscape gardens of raked gravel and boulders.

regent a person appointed to reign on behalf of an under-age ruler, until they are old enough to rule in their own right

Zen a form of Buddhism stressing self-discipline and the role of a master

bonsai the Japanese art of growing miniature trees

ikebana the Japanese art of flower arrangement

Downfall of the Kamakura regime

A weakness of Kamakura as a headquarters was its distance from Kyoto, where the imperial family plotted to regain power. In the other provinces, powerful lords of the new warrior class became more and more independent. In this unstable situation, Japan was faced with a dangerous external threat. In 1274, troops of the Mongol emperor of China, Kublai Khan, landed in Japan, armed with weapons that used gunpowder. When a storm damaged part of the fleet, the invaders retreated to Korea. A second attack in 1281, with larger forces, was defeated when a typhoon wrecked the Mongol fleet. The Japanese attributed the victory to **divine** intervention, calling the typhoon the 'Wind of the Gods' or **kamikaze**.

divine relating to a god or gods

kamikaze 'divine wind', especially relating to the typhoon of 1281



Hojo dictators feared a third Chinese invasion, and spent much effort and expense preparing for it. But because the political rulers had not conquered new territory, they did not have enough money or land to reward supporters. As a result, provincial warrior chiefs became even more rebellious. The warrior general Ashikaga Takauji (see Source 7.16) helped the emperor to wipe out the Hojo family and other rivals, and to flatten Kamakura, but then turned on the emperor and forced him to flee from Kyoto in 1336.



Source 7.16 Ashikaga Takauji (1305–58), founder of the Ashikaga dynasty

Activity 7.3



Source 7.17 The family crest (*kamon*) of the Hojo clan

- 1 The Hojo *kamon* (Source 7.17) is a stylised design of three snake scales. Find and draw designs used to identify firms or products in the same way in the present day.
- 2 Identify the weakness of the rule of the shogunate at Kamakura.
- 3 Discuss why the Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281 failed and what was their result in Japan.
- 4 Name the samurai leader who ended the rule of Japan from Kamakura.
- 5 Find images of bonsai and ikebana on the internet. In what ways do you think they reflect the central ideas of Zen Buddhism?

Ashikaga shogunate (1336–1573)

After the destruction of Kamakura, Ashikaga Takauji held the reins of power. When one emperor refused to appoint him shogun, Takauji installed an emperor who would. The new shogun returned the government to Kyoto, and built a splendid palace in the Muromachi district. The following 200 years are known as the Muromachi period or Ashikaga shogunate. The most successful Ashikaga leader was Yoshimitsu (1358–1408; see the ‘Times gone by’ box).

Times gone by ...

Yoshimitsu became shogun at the age of 11. He was a strong-willed and domineering leader, but also a **patron** of the arts. Yoshimitsu resumed relations with China, and a new period of Chinese cultural influence began. He attempted to curb the growing power of the provincial governors by giving them appointments at court and forcing them to live in Kyoto, where he could keep an eye on them. In 1397, he had the Golden Pavilion built (see Source 7.18). On his instructions, his son converted it into a Zen temple.

patron a person who supports an activity, usually by giving money

- Explain how being forced to live in Kyoto curbed the power of the provincial governors during Yoshimitsu’s reign.



Source 7.18 The Golden Pavilion at Kinkaku-ji, Kyoto

Poetry and drama

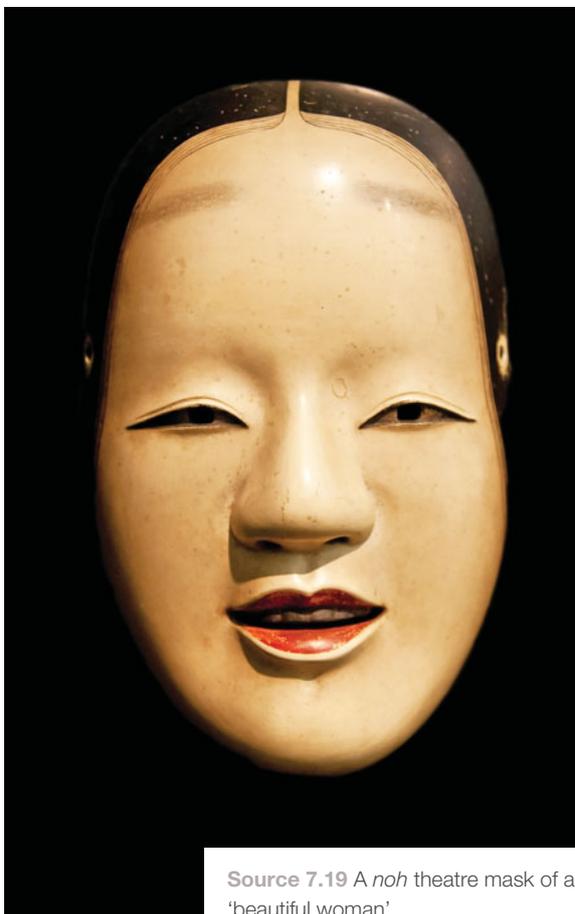
renga a form of collaborative Japanese poetry made up of a chain of verses

stanza a section of a poem

noh a type of traditional Japanese play

In the Muromachi period Japanese people enjoyed **renga**, a form of collaborative poetry where verses are linked in a chain, sometimes of a hundred **stanzas**. In spring, parties gathered on temple grounds to compose 'renga under the blossoms'. Ashikaga shoguns

also encouraged plays. After seeing a performance of a **noh** play – a form of theatre introduced from China that presented Buddhist beliefs – Yoshimitsu supported the career of a young actor, Zeami (c.1363–c.1443). Zeami's plays, written 600 years ago and still performed today, have non-religious subjects and include Shinto folk rituals. The dramas are often based on tragic encounters in war. Many feature ghosts. Men play all roles, some wearing masks and rich costumes (see Source 7.19). Actions are refined and restrained. Musicians, playing such instruments as drums and flutes, accompany the chanted plays.



Source 7.19 A *noh* theatre mask of a 'beautiful woman'

Civil warfare

After Yoshimitsu, Ashikaga shoguns were less powerful. Conflict between rival samurai houses resulted in destructive civil wars. Warrior lords grew increasingly powerful in the provinces and engaged in ferocious territorial battles. Samurai numbers grew. For protection, local warrior lords, later known as **daimyo**, began to erect wooden fortresses.

daimyo feudal Japanese lords, roughly equivalent to medieval European dukes or earls

Hostility between followers of different sects of Buddhism also threatened peace. As monasteries acquired more land and wealth, they employed poorly educated monks as warriors, despite teachings banning monks from carrying weapons. Violence was common, often over conflicting claims to temple lands. Wealthy monasteries established a huge network of priests throughout Japan. In battles between the emperor and noble families, both sides used these temple warriors to assist them.

The samurai sword

After the attempted Mongol invasion, warriors changed from being mounted archers to swordsmen who also fought on foot. The sword was the symbol of the samurai (see Source 7.20).

Samurai usually wore one long and one shorter sword. In battle they were slung across the warrior's back. A short dagger was thrust into the belt. Japanese sword-smiths became skilled at making weapons, combining toughness and flexibility with a sharp edge. A samurai sword could sever a man's head from his body in a single blow. After a successful battle, hundreds of warriors' heads would be presented for inspection by the victorious general.



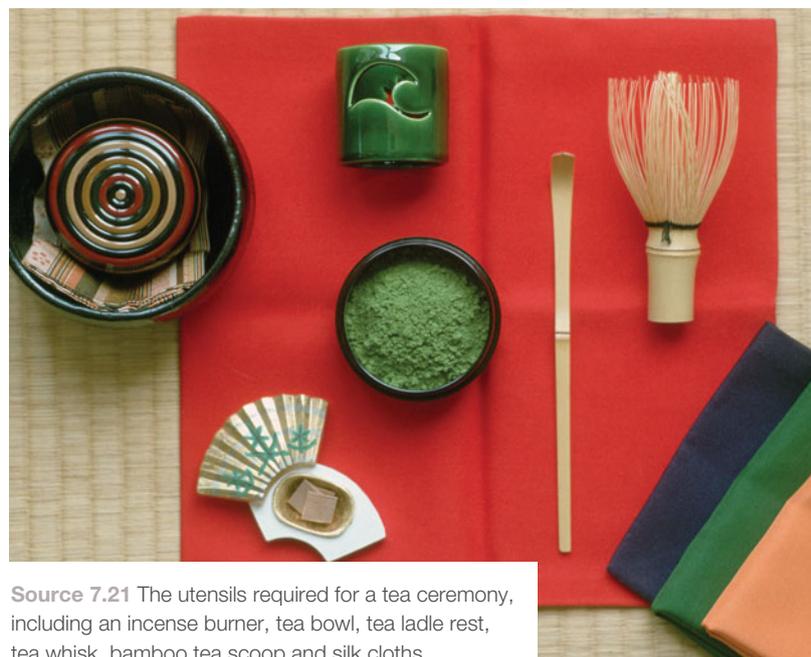
Source 7.20 A short and a long samurai sword

HISTORICAL FACT

Samurai swords were tested for sharpness and strength on the corpses of criminals.

Japanese tea ceremony

Despite the savage warfare, warrior leaders were keen to show they retained the culture of previous centuries. They particularly enjoyed the tea ceremony. The drink had been introduced from China as a medicine and was first confined to Zen monasteries. Slowly, a ritual of drinking tea spread, which continues to this day. In a room with rice-straw matting on a wooden floor (and a doorway so low that tea-drinkers would need to bow humbly when entering) hot water is poured over green tea in a bowl, and the brew is stirred and served. The unrefined ingredients, rough pottery bowls and bamboo whisk (see Source 7.21) represent the giving up of costly possessions and a celebration of the spiritual values of life. The tea ceremony is another example of Zen influence and the enduring Japanese love of ritual.



Source 7.21 The utensils required for a tea ceremony, including an incense burner, tea bowl, tea ladle rest, tea whisk, bamboo tea scoop and silk cloths

Arrival of Europeans and Christianity

missionaries people sent to spread a particular religious faith, in this case Christianity, in another country

In 1543, Portuguese seamen became the first Europeans to reach Japan when they landed on the south-western tip of Kyushu. Six years later, Jesuit **missionaries**, including Francis Xavier, arrived and gained the support of a local leader. Francis left after two years, but his successors began to win converts. The port of Nagasaki grew under Christian control and became the entrance for trade between China and Japan, through Portuguese vessels. The arrival of the Europeans brought not only a new and powerful religion but also technology, including guns, and so added to the disorder that accompanied the overthrow of the Ashikaga shogunate.

Activity 7.4

- 1 Identify the essential elements of the Japanese tea ceremony. Which religion encouraged its development?
- 2 Describe the main feature of *renga* poetry. Deduce what was meant by *renga* 'under the blossoms'.
- 3 Make some *noh* masks (for example, of a woman, a demon and a warrior) and perform a play based on an episode in Japanese history.

Research 7.2

Through your library or the internet, research the making of a traditional Japanese sword. Present your findings to your class as an illustrated talk or a PowerPoint presentation. Be sure to include a labelled sketch or copy of a picture of these swords.

Reunification of Japan (1560–1603)

By the mid 1500s, Japan was breaking apart after a century of warfare. Three military leaders halted the collapse. The first was Oda Nobunaga, who gained control over central Honshu.

Born in 1534, he was the second son of a minor military governor. At the age of 25, Nobunaga took over his province. In 1568 he seized Kyoto, supporting an Ashikaga shogun, but then drove him from the capital. Nobunaga was notorious for his savagery. His motto 'rule the empire by force' led to a life spent in warfare. He built a massive castle, north of Kyoto, as a symbol of his

power, and adopted the cultural refinement of Japan's historical past.

Nobunaga first reorganised his army: from separate groups under clan leaders it became a single force, comprising separate divisions such as **cavalry**, swordsmen and **musketeers** (see Source 7.22). As commander, he overwhelmed his opponents with ruthless force, destroying not only rival samurai lords but also the military power of Buddhist monasteries.

cavalry soldiers who fight on horseback

musketeer a soldier who is equipped with a musket, an early form of rifle



Source 7.22 Ashigaru firing muskets. Note the *jingasa* (samurai hats) on their heads

Nobunaga also set up an efficient system of centralised political control, demanding complete obedience from *daimyo*, replacing disloyal *daimyo* with supporters and placing loyal allies between less loyal ones. All *daimyos* were ordered to demolish all their forts except one. The wives and families of *daimyo* were required to reside in Kyoto as hostages. Finally, Nobunaga ordered his *daimyo* to survey their regions and provide him with a detailed summary of their economic wealth.

Nobunaga's army was small but well equipped, especially with the guns that had been introduced

ashigaru Japanese foot soldiers armed with handguns

by the Portuguese. Warriors in heavy armour on horseback could not wield early firearms, so Nobunaga issued them to **ashigaru**. Previously

poorly trained, these spear-carrying foot soldiers were now given light armour and trained carefully. Their firearms were called **arquebuses**, which had to be **primed** and a fuse lit before they could be fired.

arquebus an early hand-held gun or musket; also known as a matchlock

prime prepare a firearm for firing

Nobunaga lined up *ashigaru* in rows. He ordered the front rank to fire together then step back, prime and reload. The second, then the third row did the same. Using these methods at Nagashino in 1575, his *ashigaru* defeated a large army of samurai on horseback.

Betrayed by an ally and wounded, Nobunaga committed suicide in 1582. After his death, the son of an *ashigaru*, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, seized power in Japan.

Rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Toyotomi Hideyoshi had risen through the ranks to become second in command to Nobunaga, who nicknamed him ‘monkey’ because he was short, thin and ugly. Once in power, he extended Nobunaga’s conquests, gaining control over the islands of Shikoku and Kyushu. In 1590, Hideyoshi built his castle fortress, the largest in Japan, at Osaka. At first

exterminate to bring to an end or finish

preferring to negotiate with (rather than **exterminate**) his enemies, he gained a less violent reputation than Nobunaga. Later he became cruel

and suspicious, even ordering his tea-ceremony master, Sen Rikyu, to commit suicide.

Hideyoshi continued Nobunaga’s reforms. He surveyed the country in detail to find out the extent of each *daimyo*’s holdings, crops and industries,

along with the location of towns and roads. His ‘sword hunt’ **decree** forbade farmers from carrying weapons: only samurai (now forced to live in their lords’ castles) could be armed. A ‘separation’ **edict** forbade any change of status among peasant, merchant or samurai: it would no longer be possible for a peasant to become a samurai or for a samurai to farm or engage in trade.

decree a rule or law issued by a central authority

edict an order given by an authority

In 1592, Hideyoshi invaded Korea. Although his armies were successful on land, Korean fleets defeated his ships at sea. The dictator’s death in 1598 ended the war, but his unprovoked invasion left a bitter legacy in Korea. On his deathbed, Hideyoshi forced his allies to swear to support his infant son.



Source 7.23 A portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, blowing his war horn before a great battle

Tokugawa Ieyasu comes to power

The council members who swore to support Hideyoshi's son soon fought for power among themselves. In 1600, a battle at Sekigahara, won by Tokugawa Ieyasu, decided the struggle.

Ieyasu, born in 1543, was the son of a minor warrior lord. After a failed attempt to gain power, he acknowledged Hideyoshi as his overlord. Ieyasu had his own wife and son put to death to prove his loyalty. But Hideyoshi transferred the dangerous rival from his family's stronghold in central Honshu to the Kanto region. Instead of weakening Ieyasu, this strengthened him, as he now controlled Japan's largest and most fertile region.

Neither Nobunaga nor Hideyoshi had taken the position of shogun. In 1603, however, Ieyasu forced the emperor to make him shogun and demanded the right to appoint all court officials. Two years later he gave up the title to his son. But Ieyasu remained in control until he died in 1616.

Ieyasu, who was the first of the many Tokugawa shoguns, was both clever and lucky: he lived a long life and had enough sons and daughters to surround himself with family allies. The saying 'Ieyasu ate the pie that Nobunaga made and Hideyoshi baked' shows the importance of his predecessors in unifying Japan.



Source 7.24 A portrait of Tokugawa Ieyasu

Activity 7.5

- 1 What is a *jingasa*? Draw a picture to illustrate your explanation.
- 2 Explain why the Battle of Nagashino (1575) is important in Japanese warfare.
- 3 Look up 'arquebus' or 'matchlock' on the internet. How did these weapons differ from later firearms?
- 4 Describe the forms of political control that Hideyoshi introduced.
- 5 Decide who, in your opinion, was the most important of the three men who unified Japan. Why do you think so?



The Tokugawa era

Ieyasu set up his headquarters in the Kanto where he built a new city, Edo (now called Tokyo). It grew spectacularly: within 100 years about one million people lived there, and it was probably the largest city in the world. A unique culture also grew up around Ieyasu's mighty stone castle.

Growth of feudalism and intensive agriculture

The first signs of the system of government known as feudalism grew from the large, tax-free rural estates acquired by noble families and temples during the Heian period. In the following centuries,



Source 7.25 A screen showing the attendance of the daimyo at Edo castle, by Kyosai Kiyomitsu (1847)

Japanese land gradually began to be privately owned as it passed from the central government to the local governors. These governors used the land more intensively and taxed the farmers who worked on the estates. Other farmers saw that the local governors provided better protection than the distant emperor, so joined the *shoen*.

By the mid 1500s little public land remained. Instead, military families governed private estates independent of both the emperors and shoguns. These clans increased the yield (amount produced) on their land by such methods as intense **irrigation**, increased use of fertiliser and double-cropping (harvesting twice each year).

irrigation a system of bringing water to a dry area, especially in order to help crops grow

Ieyasu strictly enforced the divisions in society of the existing feudal system. Regulations divided people into four classes. Starting from the top rank, they were samurai, peasants, craftspeople and merchants (see Source 7.26). Outside the class structure were the emperor, who had no political power, court officials, scholars and priests. Far below were outcasts.

Ieyasu claimed absolute right to rule. The Tokugawa family directly controlled the richest 25 per cent of the country. The rest was parcelled into about 260 domains (or regions) ruled by *daimyo*.

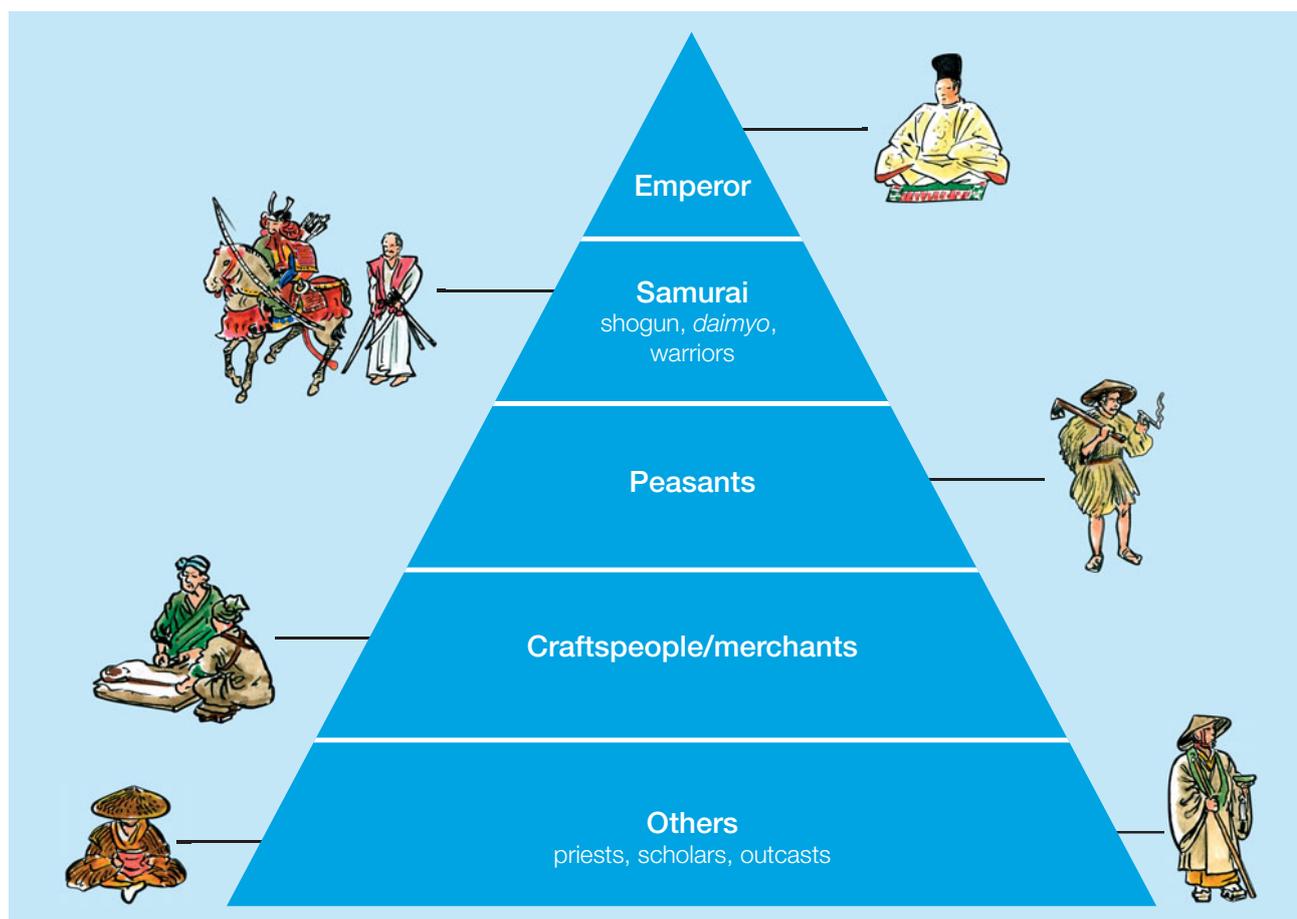
Each *daimyo* passed his own laws, gathered taxes and performed central duties such as military defence or large building projects. However, elaborate rules ensured that no *daimyo* became rich or powerful enough to be a threat. For example, each *daimyo* had to:

- obtain approval to marry
- follow strict and expensive dress codes
- travel at great expense every second year with his samurai army to Edo and live there
- house his family permanently in Edo, making them virtual hostages
- have no more than one castle, where he must house his samurai and retainers
- obtain approval to carry out castle repairs.

Samurai below *daimyo* rank – about 6 per cent of the population – were forced to live in barracks in the castle towns, had to obtain the shogun's



National Museum of Japanese History



Source 7.26 Social hierarchy in Japan between 1600 and 1868

permission to marry or inherit, and were forbidden from engaging in farming or trade.

With no wars to fight, descendants of fierce warriors became bureaucrats (government officials). Many simply attended their lord, and travelled with him every second year to Edo, where they had little to do but patronise the pleasure district. Others carried out duties in the *daimyo*'s domain. In this enforced inactivity, the principles of *bushido* (see 'Code of *Bushido*', on page 259) became important for morale.

Only samurai were permitted to have surnames. Most were educated by Confucian scholars and were literate (that is, they could read and write). Internal divisions were enforced: high-ranking samurai could wear a sword and ride a horse, but descendants of

ashigaru, the lowest grade, could not. All were required to serve a *daimyo*, who paid their salary. Samurai without masters were called *ronin*; with no income they led a **precarious** existence.

ronin samurai warriors without masters, who therefore received no salary

precarious dangerously insecure

Peasants (subsistence farmers or fishermen who provided the necessities of life) were second in importance to samurai, and made up about 85 per cent of the population. In return for protection and the right to farm the land or fish the sea, peasants paid taxes to their *daimyo*.

Craftspeople – skilled providers of such items as swords, clothing, food and tools – were regarded as inferior to peasants. Builders and carpenters, fortune-tellers and doctors were also included in this class.

The lowest-ranking official class was that of merchant. It was also the wealthiest – because trade was regarded as less honourable than other work, merchants were not heavily taxed. Many samurai became deeply indebted to them. Like samurai and most craftspeople, merchants were required to live in the castle towns, where they played an important role in the growth of popular culture.

Priests and scholars were outside the system. In this period, Buddhism was sidelined, although every household was required to register annually with a monastery. Instead, Confucianism, which

emphasised obedience and order, had a stronger influence. A well-known Confucian saying was that ‘a woman should obey her father in her youth, her husband in maturity and her son in old age’.

In this period, the rights of women declined. They could no longer own property and were more poorly educated than their brothers, husbands and sons.

Below the formal class system were labourers and hereditary outcasts, known as **eta**. These were mostly people who followed trades associated with butchery, leatherwork or burial.

eta an offensive term used to describe Japanese outcasts who were regarded as below the officially decreed class system

Edo culture

A distinctive flowering of culture occurred in this period of peace. Shoguns and samurai leaders claimed that their fitness to lead the country was demonstrated by their refinement; for example,

they enjoyed entertainment such as *nob* drama. In the growing townships and commercial districts, however, less dignified forms of entertainment grew up, and a lifestyle known as **ukiyo** emerged.

ukiyo ‘the floating world’; a lifestyle emphasising pleasure, centred on the cities

The art that portrayed this world was called **ukiyo-e**. A new form of theatre, **kabuki**, also developed. *Kabuki* featured extravagant make-up, costumes and scenery, and violent dramatic action. Men played all roles.

In the countryside, peasants toiled as always, though at least there was general peace. Villagers could generally manage their own affairs, since samurai were banned from living outside castle towns. There were 63 000 villages by 1800, each with an elementary school in a Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine. Wandering musicians who entertained the villages included **komuso**, members of a Zen Buddhist sect who hid their heads under a basket and played the **shakuhachi** (see Source 7.27).

These travelling musicians sometimes spied on behalf of the central government, but the music they played was serene.

A unique art during the Tokugawa period was woodblock printing. This evolved from the black-and-white images of previous centuries to

ukiyo-e art that portrayed the Japanese *ukiyo* (pleasure-seeking) lifestyle

kabuki a style of Japanese theatre that developed during the Tokugawa period

komuso wandering priests of a Zen Buddhist sect who played the *shakuhachi*

shakuhachi Japanese bamboo flute



Source 7.27 Komuso playing a shakuhachi

become mass-produced, lavishly coloured illustrations, often of *kabuki* actors or courtesans from the cities' pleasure districts. The skill of the artist who designed the image was important, but the work also required expert engravers to cut the woodblocks, printers to produce multiple sheets with different colours, and publishers to finance production and market the prints.

Many artists became famous, including Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806), Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) and Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849; see the 'Times gone by' box).

Times gone by ...

After training as a woodblock engraver, Katsushika Hokusai learned to design prints at the age of 18. Early in his career he portrayed courtesans and *kabuki* actors; later he specialised in landscapes. Among his most notable works is *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. He also produced many cartoons and humorous sketches. He was an unusual man; for example, he used more than thirty names and moved houses more than ninety times. Hokusai's prints, like *Great Wave off the Coast of Kanagawa* at the front of this chapter, remain popular.

- 1 Why do you think Hokusai changed names so many times? Can you identify any other artists, writers or musicians who have changed their name?
- 2 Compare one of Hokusai's prints (for example, *Great Wave off the Coast of Kanagawa*) to a modern cartoon. Do the two drawings have anything in common? What differences are there?



Source 7.28 Self-portrait as an Old Man by Katsushika Hokusai

Poetry always had a central place in Japanese culture. Around the 1670s, poets added new styles that quickly gained widespread popularity. One of the masters was Matsuo Basho (1644–1694; see Source 7.30). The second son of a down-on-his-luck samurai, Basho moved to Edo c.1672. After a disciple planted an ornamental banana tree (*basho*) in his garden, he changed his name to that of the tree. Influenced by Zen Buddhism, he began to travel in Japan, writing poetry about nature and emotions such as loneliness, fear

and serenity. He was welcomed, housed and fed wherever he went, even in remote mountain villages. Gradually, he concentrated on writing **haiku** (brief structured poems, often about nature, that sketch a scene or an emotion).

haiku a distinctive Japanese poem with three unrhymed lines, the first and third lines consisting of five syllables each, and the second of seven syllables

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| furu ike ya | The old pond |
| kawazu tobikomu | A frog jumped in, |
| mizu no oto | Kerplunk! |

Source 7.29 A haiku by Basho (1686)

Code of *bushido*

From their beginnings, warriors in Japan had a code of honour, which became known as **bushido**, meaning ‘the way of the warrior’.

bushido a Japanese warrior code of conduct

Over centuries of warfare, heroes were celebrated for their battle skills, loyalty and bravery. Under the Tokugawa rule, when there was little fighting, *bushido* became part of the feudal system. One



Source 7.30 Portrait of Matsuo Basho by Katsushika Hokusai

incident became famous as ‘The Forty-Seven Ronin’. In 1701, a *daimyo* named Asano Naganori, insulted by a shogunate official, drew his sword in the shogun’s castle and wounded the offender – a crime punishable by death.

Naganori was forced to commit **seppuku**, leaving his samurai (who were now masterless *ronin*) to plan revenge. Nearly two

years later, they killed the official and placed his head on their master’s grave. The *ronin* then committed suicide, becoming examples of the principles of *bushido*: rectitude (straightness), courage, goodness, respect, honesty, honour and loyalty. Their graves in Tokyo still attract pilgrims and tourists today. The principles of *bushido*, based on warrior chivalry, merged into rules for government officials and lasted long afterwards.

seppuku a method of ritual suicide considered honourable for samurai

A closed country

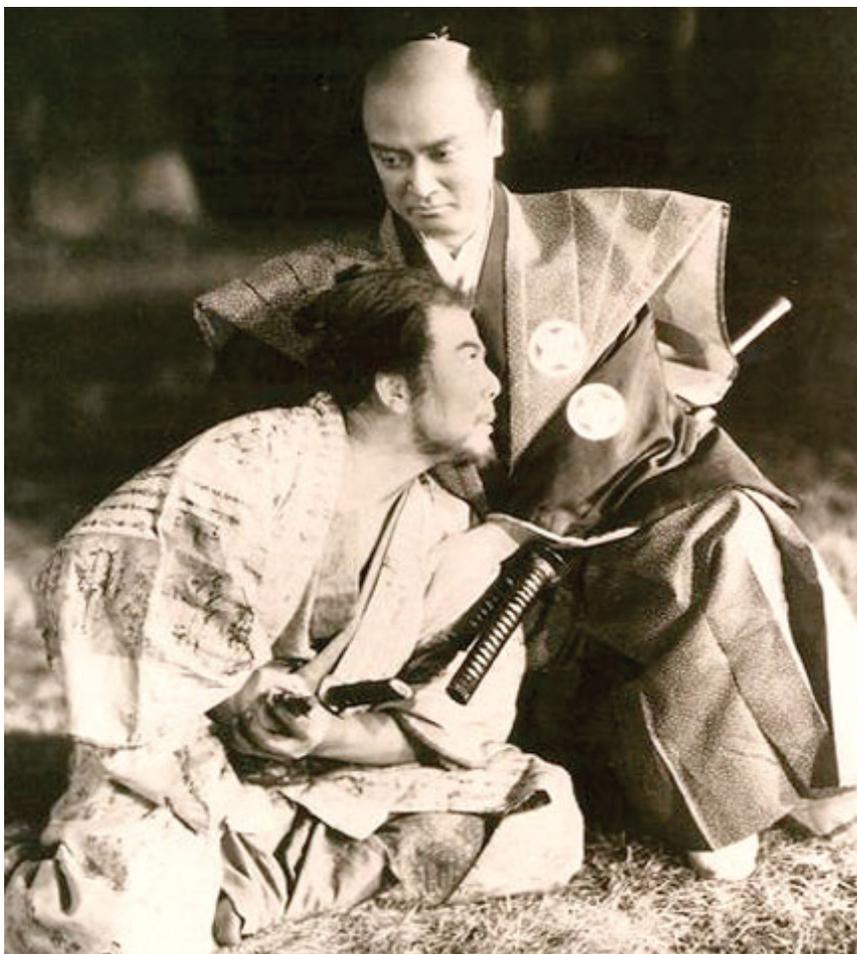
Tokugawa shoguns were suspicious of foreign influences. Ieyasu confined Westerners to Nagasaki, where the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and British set up trading posts. Alarmed by the large number of religious converts, in the early 1600s shoguns banned **Christianity** and ordered **Catholic** missionaries and most foreign traders to leave Japan. After famine (a widespread scarcity of food) led to an uprising by Christian communities in 1637, Catholicism was savagely outlawed and many followers were **martyred**. Dutch traders were permitted to stay, because they were **Protestants**. But they were confined to a tiny island, Dejima, in Nagasaki harbour and forced to tread on Christian images once a year to comply with shogunate laws.

Christianity a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

Catholic a Christian who belongs to the original church led by the pope; also Roman Catholic

martyr someone who is put to death for her or his beliefs

Protestant a Christian belonging to one of many sects that split from the Catholic Church as a result of the Reformation



Source 7.31 A still from the 1941 film *The 47 Ronin*, directed by Kenji Mizoguchi; the many films made about this episode are a testament to the popularity of the story, both within Japan and internationally

Japanese people were forbidden to travel overseas. No one was allowed to build sea-going vessels. Chinese and Korean traders and a few Dutch vessels each year were Japan's only links with the

outside world for over 200 years, the 'closed country' period. Any form of foreignness was forbidden, except for translators who were permitted limited contact with what was called 'Dutch learning'.

HISTORICAL FACT

The story of William Adams, a British seaman known as the 'foreign samurai' who arrived in Japan in 1600, inspired James Clavell's novel, *Shogun*, and a TV series.

The Tokugawa and the environment

In this period of seclusion, the country enjoyed peace, the economy grew and cities expanded. Most Japanese buildings were wooden, because stone or brick structures were vulnerable to earthquakes. Wood was also needed for fuel. In addition, because soils were poor in minerals, forests were raided for green fertiliser – for example, as burnt or rotted mulch. Between 1600 and 1720, as the population grew from 12 million to 31 million, more marginal land was farmed and even more woodland was destroyed. The result was severe environmental damage, as forests were destroyed and soil was washed away throughout the four main islands.

From the mid 1700s, however, the population stopped growing and environmental damage

began to be repaired. Expansion of irrigated land ended. Fisheries were developed for both food and fertiliser. Officials began to protect the forests. The collection of wood was limited and replanting was enforced. Scholars wrote books promoting the growing of trees. During the 1800s, tree plantations spread and became an important source of timber. These practices are a major reason for the survival of Japan's forests today.

Tokugawa rulers made the country's boundaries clearer. From 1600, southern Hokkaido was included among the shogun's domains. In that island's harsh and difficult northern region, the original inhabitants, the **Ainu**, were left to themselves until Russian ships began to arrive at the end of the 1700s, when the shogun placed the whole island under his direct control.

Ainu the original inhabitants of Japan who now mainly live in Hokkaido



Modernisation and Westernisation

Osaka uprising

Japan's major internal port and commercial centre, Osaka, was under the direct control of the shogun. With no local *daimyo*, and a large population of nearly half a million people, it was very different from other castle-towns and contained many large merchant businesses and no resident samurai quarter. Here, in 1837, an uprising occurred that

revealed serious problems in the political and economic system.

Although the previous two centuries were mostly prosperous, occasional crop failures had created hardship throughout Japan. Serious food shortages occurred in 1786 and 1836, and on both occasions they produced rebellions. The famine in 1836 followed years of cold weather that had destroyed crops. In Osaka there was widespread



Source 7.32 The restored Osaka castle, originally built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi

epidemic a disease that affects many people at the same time

death and starvation, which was made worse by **epidemics**. In response, a local official blamed the disasters on divine discontent with the shoguns' treatment of the imperial family. He urged his followers to attack the government and merchants, seize their warehouses and distribute rice to the people.

The revolt failed, but the government's response was incompetent. Famine had exposed faults in the single crop economy. Failure of a rice harvest was devastating when there was no back-up crop. As well, a country divided into hundreds of self-governing domains was shown to be unable to deal with occurrences (like famine) that spread over large parts of the country.

Activity 7.6

- 1 List the main features of the Tokugawa feudal system.
- 2 Play a recording or DVD of the *shakuhachi*. Describe the effect of this music on you.
- 3 Write your own haiku (see glossary definition on page 259 or look up the internet for examples).
- 4 Identify the failings in the Tokugawa system of government revealed by the 1837 Osaka uprising.

The closed country opens

During the 1800s, European countries and the United States tried unsuccessfully to gain direct access to Japanese trade. In July 1853, four dark-hulled warships steamed into Edo Bay. Six times larger than Japanese vessels of the time, and carrying sixty-one guns and 967 men, they became known as ‘the black ships’. They were commanded by Commodore Matthew Perry (1794–1858), an experienced officer in the US navy. Perry was ordered to Japan to make three demands: humane treatment of shipwrecked sailors; the opening of ports for provisions and fuel; and access to ports for trade. Perry indicated that he was prepared to use force if necessary.

After presenting a letter from the President of the US, he departed for China, promising to return the following year. He was back in February 1854, this time with a larger fleet. The Tokugawa leadership reluctantly agreed to Perry’s demands and signed a **treaty** permitting the US to station a **consul** in Japan.

Soon other Western powers imposed similar treaties. Foreign consuls arrived in Japan and traders settled in Japanese ports. The Tokugawa regime was humiliated by its forced surrender, and public opinion in Japan was hostile to the treaties. Opponents attacked foreigners and officials under the slogan, ‘Revere the emperor, expel the barbarian’. A rival group, however, urged a policy of learning from the foreigners. In a decade of violence, leaders were assassinated as samurai attacked samurai. Soon enthusiasm grew for Western ‘civilisation and enlightenment’.

Perry’s ‘black ships’ had a powerful effect. The Tokugawa shogun’s officials began to adopt Western technology. In 1855, a naval training centre opened near Dejima in Nagasaki. Because of the Dutch trading post there, this was one of the few places where officials knew a European language. For the same reason, and because the Dutch had warned Japan of Perry’s plans, Dutch naval officers were in charge of the training. The training centre

was closed after only four years, but its students included officers and engineers who would be important in the shipbuilding industry and in setting up the imperial Japanese navy, although eventually it would be based on French and British models rather than on Dutch. The shogunate government continued with its naval program, and by 1867 had the largest fleet in the region.

Some naval students became active among the **reformers** urging Westernisation. Both reformers and opponents turned to the traditional

reformer a person who works to improve social policy

centre of Japanese culture, the emperor. In 1867, 14-year-old Prince Mutsuhito (1852–1912) came to the throne. This allowed new advisors to take power, in the same way that regents had done in centuries earlier.

Restoration of imperial rule

Late in 1867, the reformers took control of the court in Kyoto. In the name of the emperor, they issued an edict in January 1868 announcing a return to imperial rule. After a series of land battles, an imperial army seized the shogunate capital, Edo, in July. The last shogun resigned.

The new group used the authority of the emperor to rule as his grand council, adopting the name **Meiji**, meaning ‘enlightened rule’, for the new period of government.

Meiji a period of reform in Japan after 1868; also the posthumous name of Emperor Mutsuhito

In 1869, the Tokugawa naval forces were defeated in a sea battle and the emperor moved from Kyoto to the shogun’s residence at Edo, which now became the Imperial Palace. Known after his death as Emperor Meiji, he was a powerful symbol of the nation. Edo was renamed Tokyo, meaning ‘the eastern capital’.

The men who overthrew the Tokugawa regime were middle- or low-ranking samurai mostly from western Japan. Although they announced their policy as ‘restoration of imperial rule’, they replaced the Tokugawa shogun and his eastern advisors with themselves. Through their decisive action and by winning the battles that followed, they took political power and accelerated the modernisation of Japan.

treaty an agreement between countries

consul an official representative of a foreign government

Industrialisation of Japan

Beginning under the shogunate, but accelerating under the reformers, there was a rush to develop European and American practices in Japan after 1853. Under this ‘cult of modernity’, numerous groups of Japanese officials visited Europe and the US. Japan’s society and economy were transformed, helped by the strong unifying figure of the emperor, the ethnic homogeneity (sameness) of the Japanese people, a strong national and cultural identity, a history of learning from outside Japan, the existence of an honest, efficient bureaucracy and a relatively high rate of literacy (45 per cent for men and 15 per cent for women).

Social changes

In the name of the emperor, all land was nationalised (declared the property of the government). Private land was then legalised and deeds (documents proving ownership) issued to the owners. *Daimyo* relinquished to the emperor their territories and became governors, although officials appointed by the central government administered the new **prefectures**.

prefectures the subdivisions or states within Japan

abolish to formally put an end to something

The feudal system was **abolished**. The samurai class lost power, salary and privilege; for example, the wearing of swords was banned. Farmers, craftspeople and merchants became a single class of commoners, who could now have surnames. Outcast groups (the *eta*) were given equal rights. Women, too, were declared to have equal rights with men. Their role certainly changed, because they were required to work in the new factories, especially in the textile industry. But it was not until after World War II that women’s rights began to improve.

Economic changes

Monetary land taxes replaced the previous practice of charging a percentage of agricultural yield. Taxpayers, such as farmers, were confirmed as the owners of their land. A modern **mint**, a privately owned banking system and decimal currency were established.

mint a place where money is manufactured

Industrial changes

The government set up a telegraph and postal service, and built railways. By the end of the nineteenth century, 8000 kilometres of tracks had been laid. Western experts were invited to Japan to advise on industrial development. Mines, shipyards, factories, transport services and textile factories were built rapidly. Because Japan was a latecomer, it could use the newest technology and avoid the expensive mistakes made by Western countries that had industrialised slowly. But environmental damage, which had lessened under Tokugawa shoguns, now accelerated.

Military changes

Commoners were permitted to engage in warfare, and **conscription** was introduced. A permanent national army and a navy were set up, based on those of the great Western powers. Munitions factories were built.

conscription compulsory enlistment for military service

Legacy of shogunate Japan

Faced with the military power of Western industrial nations in the mid 1800s, Japan’s leaders did what they had done for centuries: they adopted aspects of their opponents’ culture. Japan quickly industrialised, becoming an international trading nation and strong military force. Its leaders took over the policies of international rivalry, territorial expansion, economic development and environmental destruction that Western powers had shown them. As a result, the country was a major combatant in the fields of **diplomacy**, warfare and economic activity during the twentieth century.

diplomacy the practice of negotiating between representatives of different countries

At the same time, Japanese traditions in arts such as literature, painting, theatre, music, gardening and religion had a great influence on the wider world. Japanese refinement and thinking – such as Zen Buddhism, with its emphasis on the fleeting nature of material things and the importance of nature – are among the abiding legacies of the country’s unique history.

Activity 7.7

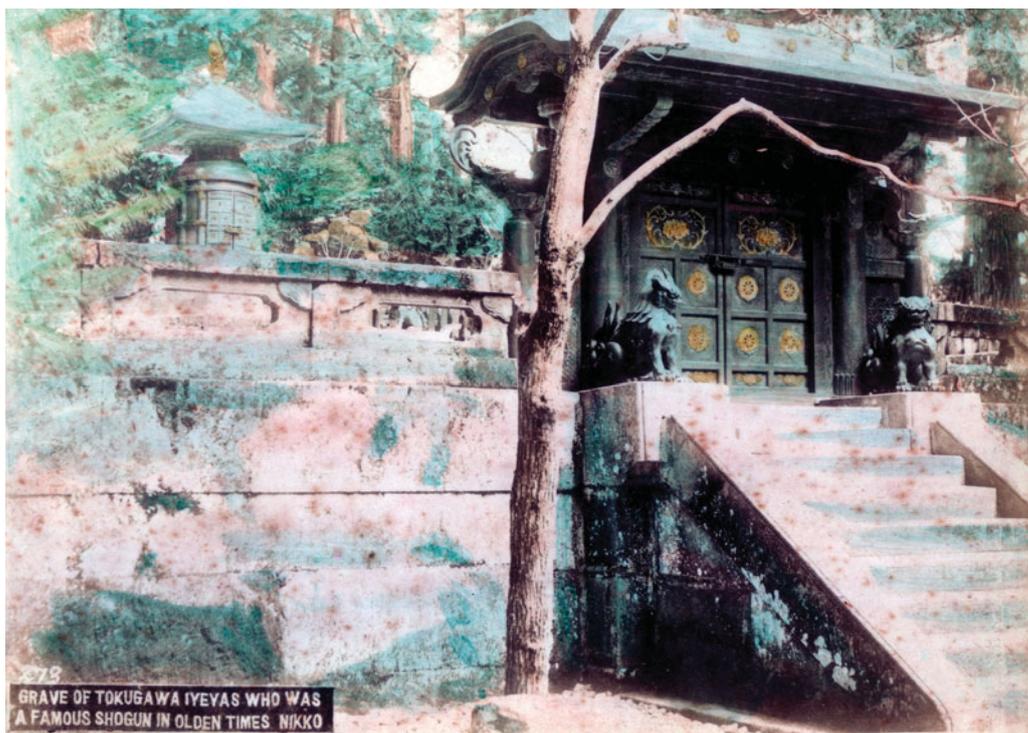
- 1 After the last shogun resigned, what was his residence in Edo used for?
- 2 Role-play a meeting between Admiral Perry and a representative of the shogun, presenting arguments for their ideas.
- 3 List the main ways in which Japanese society and economy changed after 1853.
- 4 Explain why Dutch instructors were the first to train naval officers in Japan.
- 5 Write a short explanation of how Japan industrialised so quickly.

Research 7.3

Use the internet to research one of the following shoguns in more detail:

- Ashikaga Yoshimitsu
- Minamoto Yoritomo
- Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Be sure to research the major achievements of the shogun you choose. Gather information about their birth, life and death. Present your findings to the class as a PowerPoint presentation.



Source 7.33 Grave of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Nikko, Japan

Chapter summary

- In the Heian period, a golden age of culture when Kyoto was the imperial capital, influences from Chinese and Korean culture were adapted to become distinctively Japanese. Later, a class of warriors began to emerge.
- The Kamakura period saw the beginning of rule by a shogun and of a system that historians call feudalism. Kamakura, a rival capital to Kyoto, was built in eastern Japan. New influences from China included Zen Buddhism. In 1281, a Mongol invasion was repulsed.
- Central political power, again based in Kyoto, weakened during the Muromachi period as agriculture intensified. Despite civil warfare, poetry and drama flourished. In the 1540s, Europeans introduced Christianity and gunpowder.
- Three warriors reunited the country in the late 1500s and set up a system of central control.
- Under Tokugawa shoguns, Japan had 250 years of peace, but was isolated from the rest of the world. The Japanese economy grew quickly at first, but stabilised to do less harm to the environment from the mid 1700s. A system of centralised feudalism continued until the arrival of an American fleet in 1853.
- After 1853, Japan changed quickly from an agricultural to an industrial society and a military power.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- Which of the following is not one of the four main islands of Japan?
 - Honshu
 - Fujiwara
 - Hokkaido
 - Shikoku
- The American admiral who forced Japan to open its borders in 1853 was:
 - Abraham Lincoln
 - George Armstrong Custer
 - Horatio Nelson
 - Matthew Perry
- Which of the following is influential in the history of Japan but is not a religion?
 - Buddhism
 - Christianity
 - Confucianism
 - Shintoism
- Which statement about shogunate Japan is false?
 - For much of Japanese history the emperor has been largely a ceremonial figure while a regent or a military dictator held real power.
 - The arrival of a fleet of American warships in 1853 forced Japan to set up a naval college with Dutch instructors.
 - In the Japanese feudal system, the lowest rank was that of the peasant.
 - Under the Tokugawa shoguns, regional lords were forced to live every second year in the shogun's city of Edo.
- Which aristocratic woman wrote *The Tale of Genji*?
 - Sei Shonagon
 - Toyotomi Hideyoshi
 - Murasaki Shikibu
 - Ashikaga Yoshimitsu

Short answer

- 1 Name the original inhabitants of Japan.
- 2 Identify the important Japanese religions and philosophies. Which of them encourages meditation and simplicity?
- 3 Explain in a few sentences how Japan defended itself from the Mongol invasion in 1281. What was the main cause of the invasion's failure?
- 4 Which famous Japanese poet was named after a banana tree? What type of poetry did he write?
- 5 Examine why Japan is one of the most forested regions on earth today.

Source analysis

Study Source 7.34 and answer the following questions:

- 1 Which Japanese religion or philosophy inspired gardens such as these?
- 2 What cultural and spiritual attitudes are expressed in such gardens?
- 3 Write about the sort of gardens you like. What feelings do gardens inspire in you? Compare and contrast the two gardens.

Extended response

- 1 Write an account of the role of women in the history of shogunate Japan. Be sure to include individual women and to describe how the position of women changed over time.
- 2 Describe the rise and fall of the samurai class in Japan. Include individual samurai leaders and an account of the role of the code of chivalry known as *bushido*.



Source 7.34 The rock garden of the Ryoanji temple in Kyoto, dating from the 1400s

8



The Polynesian expansion across the Pacific (c. 700–c. 1756)

Source 8.1 *Moai* statues on Easter Island

Before you start

Main focus

The last wave of the human settlement of the Earth was performed by the Polynesians, who developed a flourishing culture across the vast distances of the Pacific Ocean.

Why it's relevant today

Polynesia occupies most of the Pacific Ocean between Australia and the United States, and includes many of the countries in our region. Studying the cultural achievements of the Polynesians, as well as how they adapted to their marginal environments, helps us to understand the challenges facing our own society.

Inquiry questions

- Who were the Polynesians and what were their origins?
- How do we explain the spread of Polynesian cultures throughout the Pacific region?
- What was it like to live in a traditional Polynesian society?
- What were the significant cultural achievements of the Rapa Nui (Easter Island) society?
- Were Polynesian communities sustainable?

Key terms

- *ahu*
- *mana*
- Melanesia
- moa
- *moai*
- Polynesia
- *tapa*
- *tapu*
- *tiki*

Significant individuals

- Andrew Sharp
- Captain James Cook
- Hotu Matu'a
- Jacob Roggeveen
- King Kamehameha I
- Queen Kaahumanu
- Queen Pomare IV
- Thor Heyerdahl

Let's begin

From our earliest beginnings we humans have always been migrants. More than a million years ago, early humans arrived on the shores of what we know today as the Pacific Ocean. As they stood looking out on this ocean, they were unaware that the Pacific was larger than the Indian and Atlantic oceans combined. They were also unaware that beyond the horizon it was full of rocky island chains and coral atolls. But having arrived on its shores they were not yet equipped to venture further. It would be a long time before they could cross the waters of this ocean.



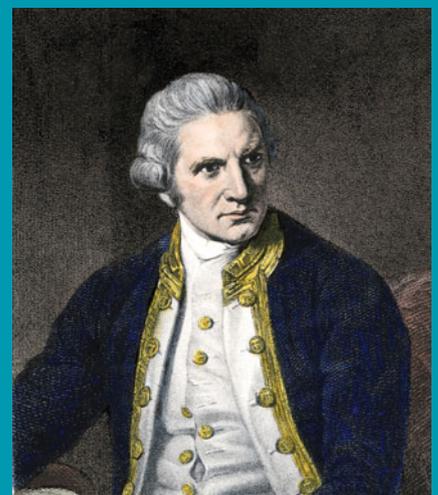
Source 8.2 A *hokulea* sailing canoe



Source 8.3 Unfinished *moai* statues, Rapa Nui (Easter Island)



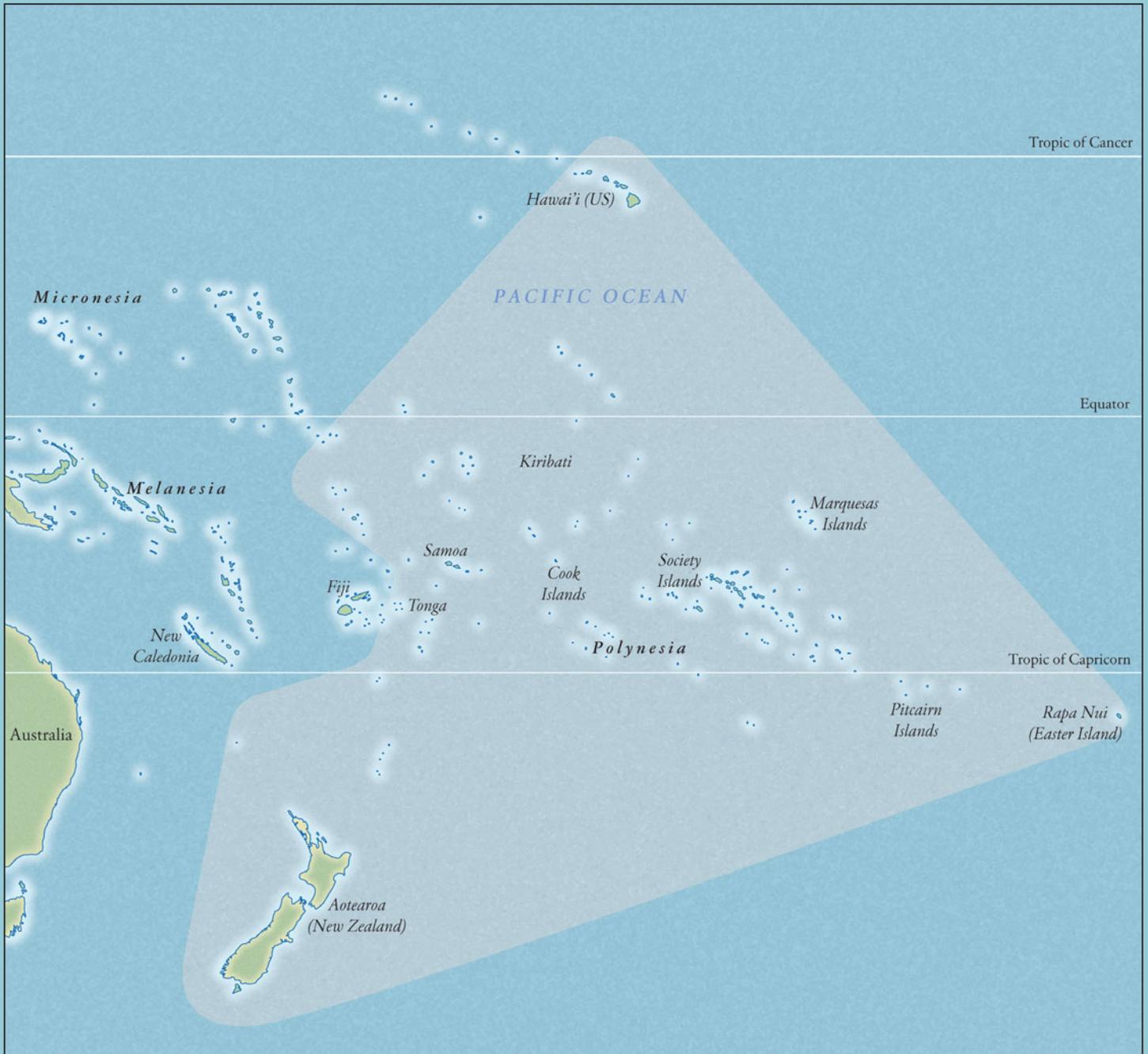
Source 8.4 Traditional Maori wood carving, Okains Bay, Maori and Colonial Museum, Banks Peninsula, New Zealand



Source 8.5 Captain James Cook

Timeline

| CHAPTER EVENTS | WORLD EVENTS |
|---|---|
| 60 000 BCE . . . First humans arrive in what we know as Australia and Papua New Guinea | . |
| 40 000 BCE . . . Solomon Islands are first settled | . |
| Land bridge between Australia and Tasmania is flooded | |
| 10 000 BCE . . . | c. 10 000 BCE Last ice age ends; pottery is first developed in Japan |
| 8000 BCE . . . Land bridge between Australia and Papua New Guinea is flooded | . |
| 6000 BCE . . . Migrants leave what we know as Taiwan for Melanesia | c. 8000–7000 BCE Indochina is settled |
| 4000 BCE . . . Migrants leave the Solomon Islands for what we know as New Caledonia | . |
| 2500 BCE . . . Migrants continue further to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga | c. 4000–3000 BCE Mesopotamian cities first emerge in what we know as Iraq |
| 200 BCE . . . Samoan migrants continue on to what we know as the Marquesas Islands | c. 2000 BCE Middle Eastern and Chinese societies begin using bronze |
| 300 CE . . . Island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) is occupied by migrants from the Marquesas Islands | . |
| 400 CE . . . Hawai'i is settled by migrants from the Marquesas Islands | c. 300 CE 'Classical' era of the Maya civilisation begins in Mesoamerica |
| 800 CE . . . Maori settlers leave the Cook Islands for Aotearoa (New Zealand) | . |
| 1000 CE . . . Almost all islands of Polynesia are settled | c. 500 Aztec city of Teotihuacán thrives as a major trading centre |
| | c. 800 Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor |
| | c. 1000 Leif Eriksson sets sail from Greenland to North America |



Source 8.6 The Polynesian triangle in the Pacific



Origin and spread of the Polynesians

Theories about Polynesian origins

When European explorers sailed into the Pacific in the eighteenth century, they were stunned to find so many people living on the thousands of islands they encountered. Their first thought was, ‘How did they get here?’

anthropologist an expert in the study of human societies, cultures and their development

Polynesia from the Greek: *poly* meaning ‘many’ and *nesos* meaning ‘islands’

Over the past two centuries, **anthropologists**, archaeologists, scientists and historians have been trying to pinpoint the origins of Polynesians and to explain how they spread across the region we today call **Polynesia**. In many cases individual reputations have been staked on the conclusions reached by these experts.

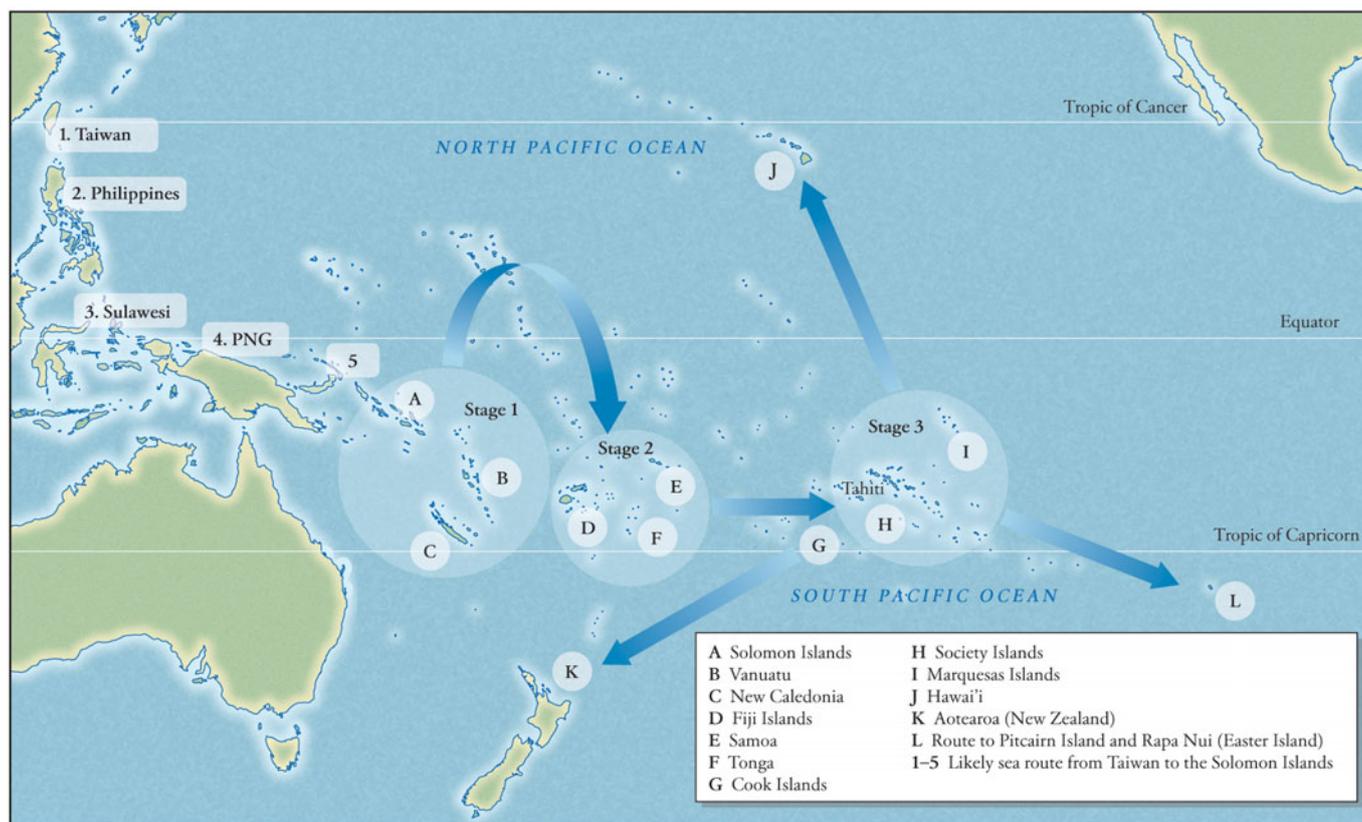
From all of the evidence we have managed to accumulate, it is clear that humans occupied

Polynesia over a long period of time. However, a number of issues still cause debate among specialists on the subject. Put simply these issues are:

- Did the people who would become Polynesian occupy the islands and atolls in the region in carefully planned stages or by a series of happy accidents?
- Did these people travel eastwards from Papua New Guinea or westwards from South America in their occupation of Polynesia?
- How did they manage to successfully navigate the Pacific Ocean across vast distances using primitive technology and without maps?

Planned or by accident?

While this debate continues today, the general consensus is that the people who occupied Polynesia did so in a series of planned stages (see Source 8.7). New Zealand historian Andrew Sharp proposed in 1956 that any argument that Polynesians set out to explore and occupy the Pacific was little more than ‘romantic nonsense’. He argued that occupation of the islands of Polynesia



Source 8.7 Stages of occupation of Polynesia

was probably more accidental than intentional. He claimed that the boats of the Polynesian explorers were simply not seaworthy enough, and their navigational equipment not accurate enough, for them to be able to deliberately find land across the vast stretches of the Pacific.

Sharp's views were controversial when he published them and have remained a challenge

to the views of the majority of experts on the subject. After navigation experiments were successfully conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, employing replicas of the double canoes that the Polynesians would have used, most scholars today think that Andrew Sharp was mistaken in his understanding, although Sharp continues to argue his case.

Times gone by ...

Almost a decade before Sharp wrote his book, a Norwegian adventurer named Thor Heyerdahl argued in 1947 that all the experts had it wrong. He argued that it was not possible for the Polynesians to have sailed east from Melanesia into the Polynesian triangle because both the winds and the currents constantly would have been against them. Instead, Heyerdahl proposed that the Polynesians must have left the west coast of South America and sailed westwards into Polynesia, and he intended to prove it by demonstration.

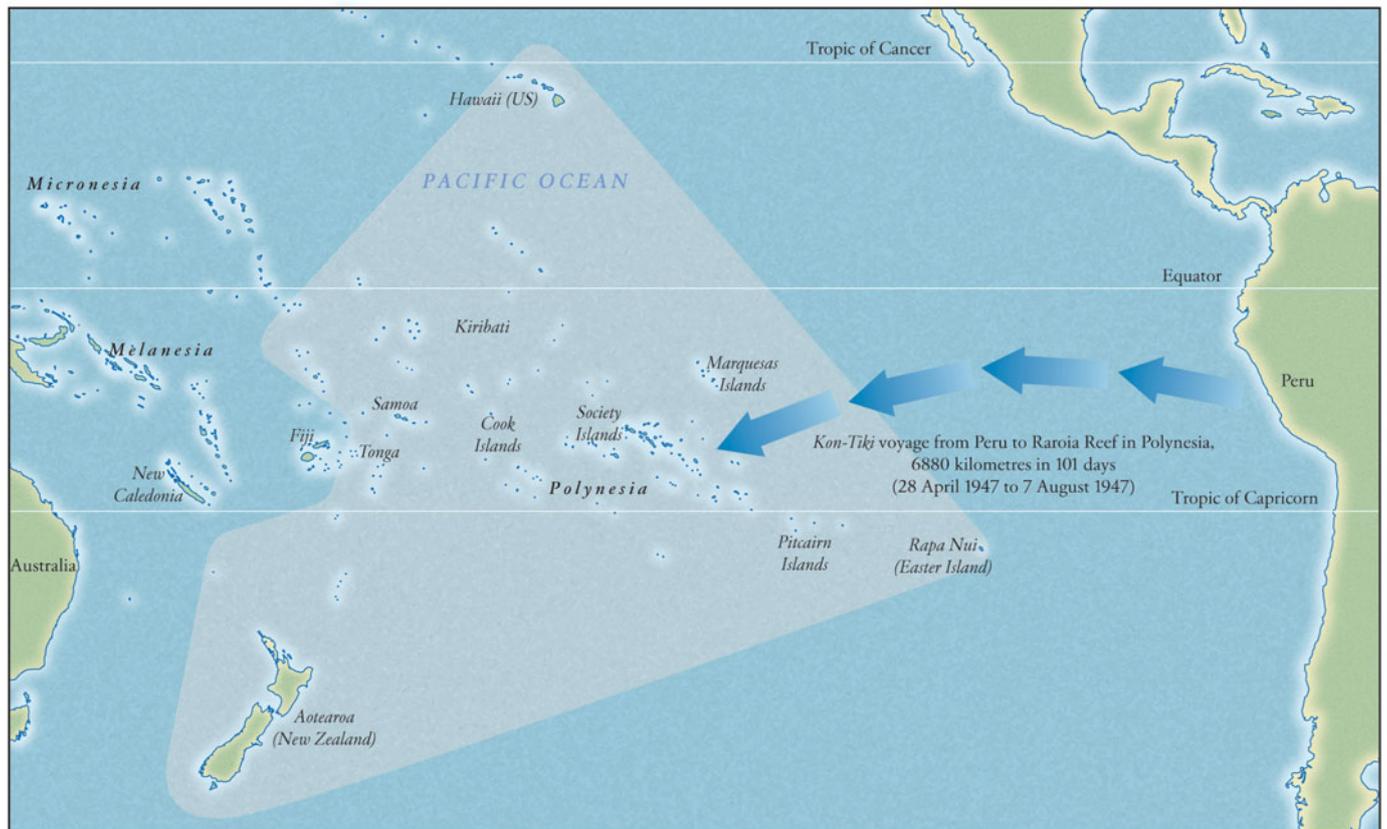
Heyerdahl and his team of fellow adventurers went to Peru on the west coast of South America and built a raft of balsa wood that they then named the *Kon-Tiki*, after an ancient name for the Incan sun god. The raft was lashed together with hemp ropes. It sailed out of the port of Callao on the coast of Peru in April 1947. After 101 days, Heyerdahl and his crew did indeed arrive in Polynesia.

- Did Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* expedition conclusively prove his argument that the Polynesians sailed west from South America?

From which direction was Polynesia settled?

Just because Heyerdahl was successful in demonstrating that it was possible to sail westwards from South America into Polynesia (see the 'Times gone by' box), it does not follow that he was correct in arguing that Polynesia was settled this way. To be certain, we would need more evidence than this. Surely if the Polynesians

had settled the Pacific by sailing westwards from South America, there would be evidence of some transference of traditional crafts, religions, customs and languages from South America as they moved on westwards. This does not seem to be the case, however, although the appearance of the sweet potato in eastern Polynesia does provide a riddle. It is an American vegetable, so how did it appear in eastern Polynesia?



Source 8.8 Voyage of the *Kon-Tiki*, 1947

The alternative hypothesis, namely that the Polynesians sailed eastwards out of Melanesia, explains cultural and genetic links between Polynesian cultures and Melanesian and even indigenous Taiwanese cultures. For all the books and lectures that followed his voyage, Heyerdahl might have shown that it was possible to settle Polynesia from South America, but he had not proved it beyond all doubt. There are many scholars who would like to locate the evidence to prove that Heyerdahl was correct all along. To date, however, that evidence has eluded all who have searched for it.

Successful navigators

By c. 40 000 BCE, some of the earliest settlers had worked their way from the Malay Peninsula and the islands of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to reach the Solomon Islands, east of Papua New Guinea. Archaeology and history know little about the origins of these people, for time has erased much of their imprint. However, one thing

is certain: these people were the descendants of those who had arrived on the shores of the Pacific Ocean more than a million years ago.

These early settlers were later followed by migrants from the area around Taiwan in about c. 6000 BCE. Whereas the earliest settlers came overland with short, shallow sea crossings, these later people seemed more confident in their ability to traverse the seas as they island-hopped through the Philippines and Sulawesi (in modern Indonesia) to Papua New Guinea. Arriving at the Solomon Islands they were able to slowly push further over time to what we know today as Vanuatu and New Caledonia. These later migrants raise a number of important questions for students of history.

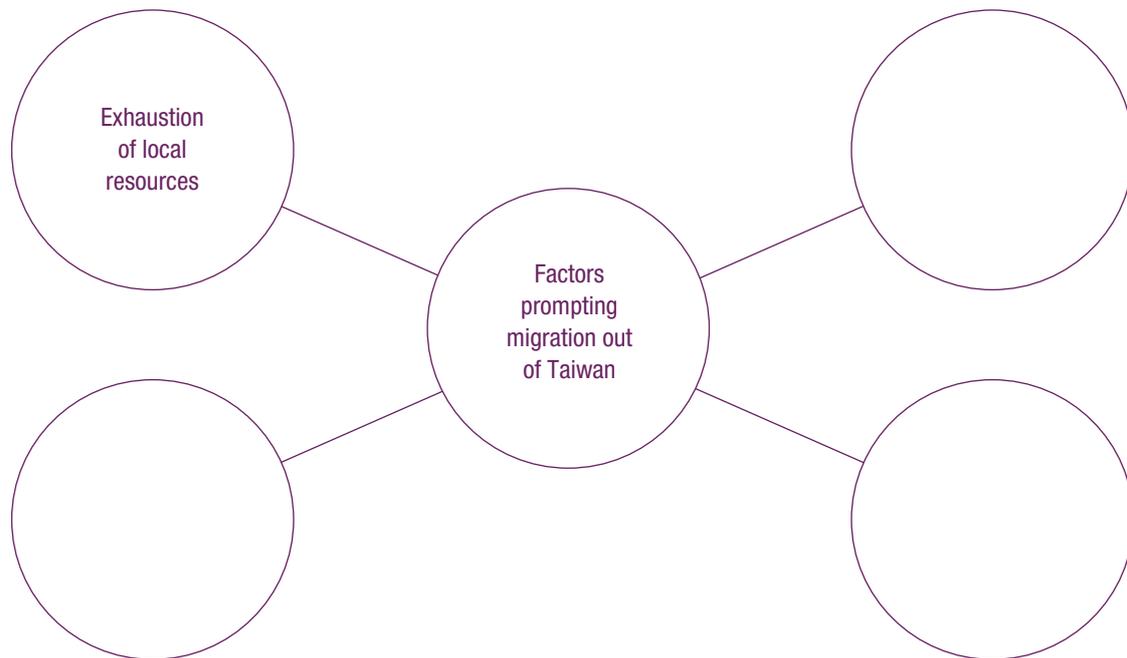
Why did they leave their homeland to undertake such a perilous journey?

The truth is we do not really know. Perhaps an answer is that migrations to Taiwan from the continental mainland of China put pressure on

already established populations on the island. Perhaps more aggressive people arriving in Taiwan drove out the migrants, or the climate of Taiwan might have changed, thus prompting the people to leave. Perhaps the impact of a cyclone or tsunami forced them to leave. Or, perhaps their local resources were exhausted. Unfortunately, reliable evidence of this event, so long in the past, is extremely difficult to come by.

👉 Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the four factors that may have prompted Taiwanese people to migrate to new lands.



How did these migrants from Taiwan sail over such long distances?

Today, an aircraft flying between Taiwan and the Solomon Islands in a straight line would fly for 5653 kilometres. But the route taken by these early travellers was not a straight line, so the distance they travelled would have been greater. When they left Taiwan it was not in ones or twos, but in larger groups. They brought food and water with them, their families, domesticated animals such as dogs, pigs, and chickens, plus the technology and know-how of the civilisation they had left behind.

As mentioned earlier, they employed a strategy involving frequent stops at islands to gather fresh

supplies of fruits and vegetables plus water. This strategy is known as **island hopping**. The rafts they used on the voyage (the technology was not there in c.40000 BCE to hollow out logs to build canoes)

were specifically designed for use on rivers, inland lakes and inshore seas, not deep and extensive ocean waters. Therefore, sailing from island to island was the most appropriate strategy.

We'll never know how many of these travellers were lost in storms at sea or how many were attacked and killed by indigenous people on the islands they encountered. We just have to acknowledge that both were a distinct possibility. The voyage from Taiwan to the Solomon Islands was no pleasure cruise. It was risk-taking at its highest level.

island hopping breaking up a long voyage with stops at many islands, gathering crucial supplies at each one

Activity 8.1

- 1 Briefly explain the concept of 'island hopping'.
- 2 Why do you think that it was perfect strategy for settling Polynesia?
- 3 Locate one piece of evidence that indicates that Polynesian languages had a common origin.

Research 8.1

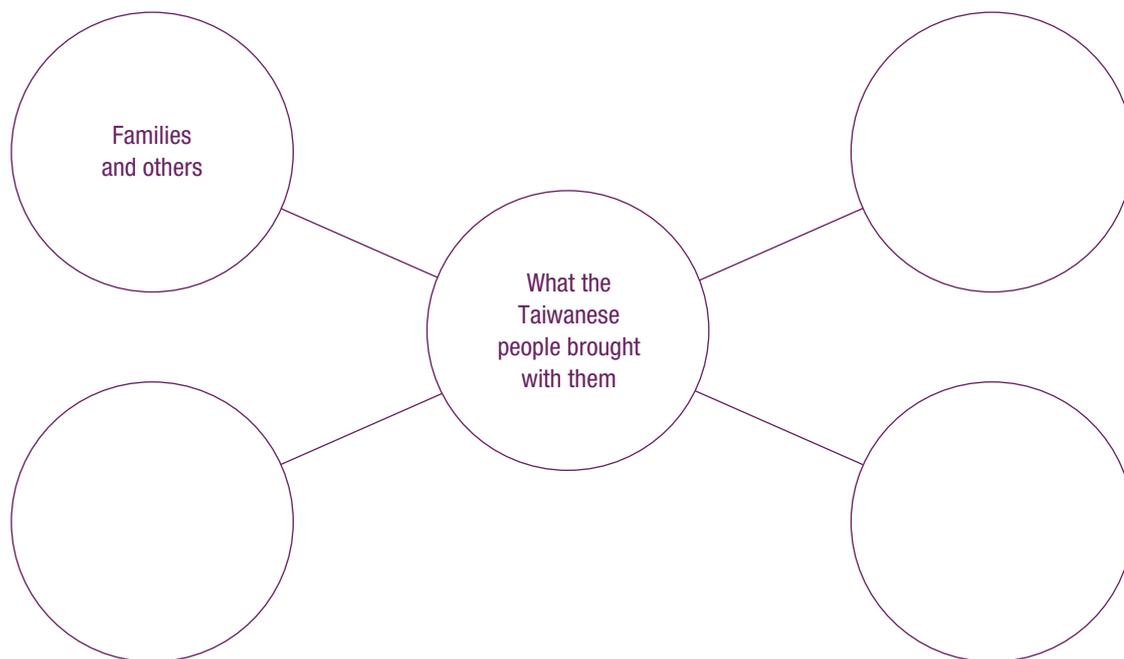
Research the English translation for the following Maori words:

- Aotearoa
- haka
- iwi
- kia ora
- patu
- po
- rangi
- tangata
- te
- Te Reo Maori
- umu
- wairua
- waka
- whetu

You can find some useful links at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise what the Taiwanese migrants might have brought with them on their voyage.



How do we know today that these people living in Melanesia had originated in Taiwan?

DNA testing performed by **geneticists** has revealed a close connection between the people

of Melanesia and the indigenous people of Taiwan. The same work revealed that the Taiwanese migrants who came to the Solomon Islands in c.6000 BCE were also closely connected with the modern people of Polynesia.

Another key piece of evidence is that the languages spoken by Polynesians today belong to a group called **Austronesian**, a family of languages that are today

spoken throughout of the islands of Melanesia and the Philippines, along with Madagascar, the Indonesian **archipelago** and (originally) Taiwan. As a result, **linguists** believe there is a strong connection between the Polynesian people and the original migrants who left Taiwan and travelled through the Philippines and on to the Solomon Islands.

What we do know for certain is that once the migrants from Taiwan had reached Melanesia, and most notably the Solomon Islands, they intermingled with the indigenous inhabitants of the area – and stayed there. They had gone as far as they were going. However, within two thousand years they were slowly pushing out to what we know today as Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

archipelago a group of islands

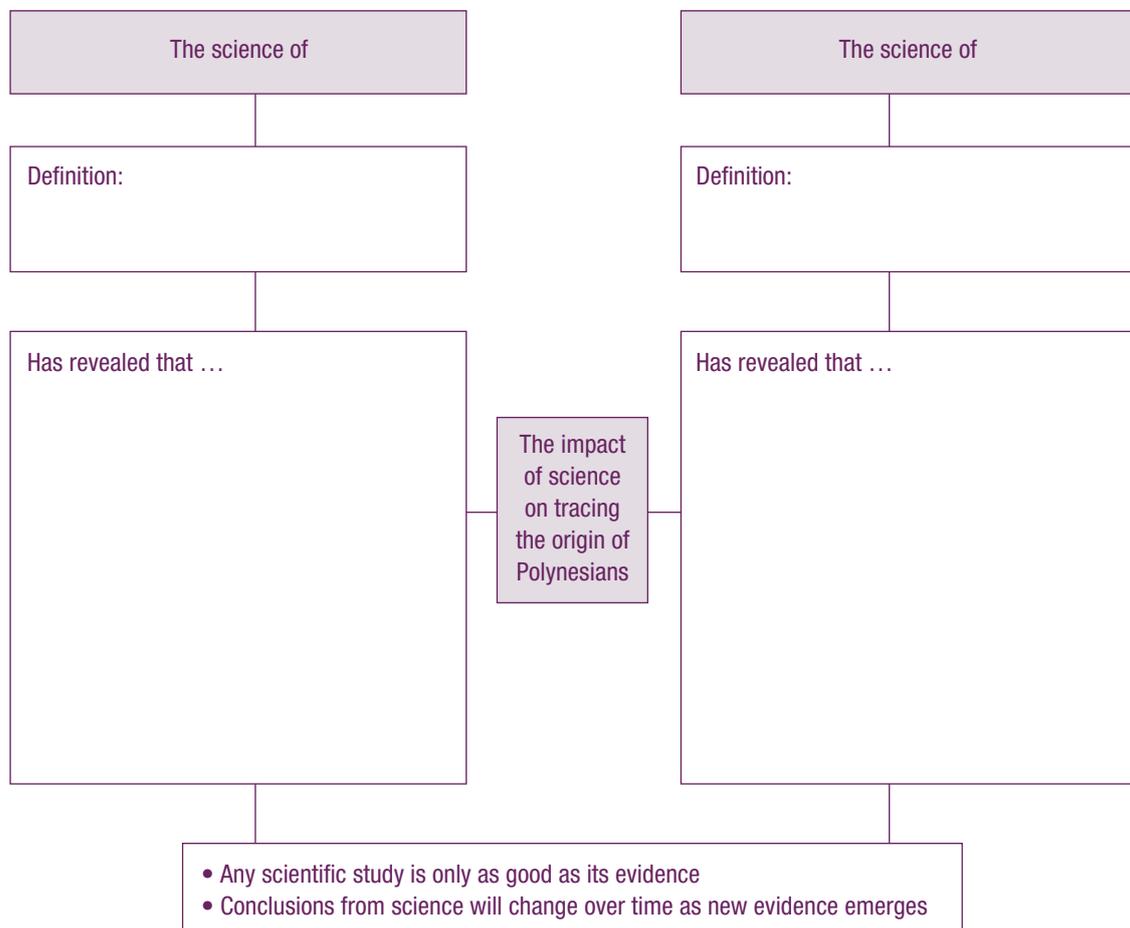
linguist an expert in the study of language and its structure (linguistics)

geneticist an expert in the study of inherited characteristics in animals and humans (genetics)

Austronesian a family of languages spoken in Madagascar, the Pacific and Southeast Asia

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, outline the impact of the sciences of genetics and linguistics on tracing the origins of the Polynesians.



Though they were not yet geographically in the triangle of Polynesia (see Source 8.6), stage one of Polynesian migration was complete.

It was their descendants, along with perhaps some of the earlier indigenous inhabitants from the Solomon Islands, who would become the people who reached out in quest of settling Polynesia's many island archipelagos.

The Lapita culture

sherd broken pieces of ceramic material found in an archaeological site (abbreviation of potsherd)

In 1952, American archaeologists Edward W. Gifford and Richard Shulter Jnr discovered **sherds** of pottery at a site they called Lapita in New Caledonia. The pottery was ornate and had been scratched by a toothed instrument in the process of making it. Human

faces appeared on many pieces (see Sources 8.9 and 8.10).

What surprised archaeologists most about the pottery was that it was found at all. No people in Melanesia were using pottery of this form in the twentieth century, so the discovery raised many questions:

- Who were the people that had made this pottery?
- What had become of these people?
- When had it been made?
- What was the meaning of the scratched decoration on the pottery?
- How had the people of Lapita used the pottery?

Around 3000 BCE, skilled potters were at work in Taiwan. Archaeologists now believe that Taiwanese migrants brought pottery-making skills with them during their travels in c. 1350 BCE.



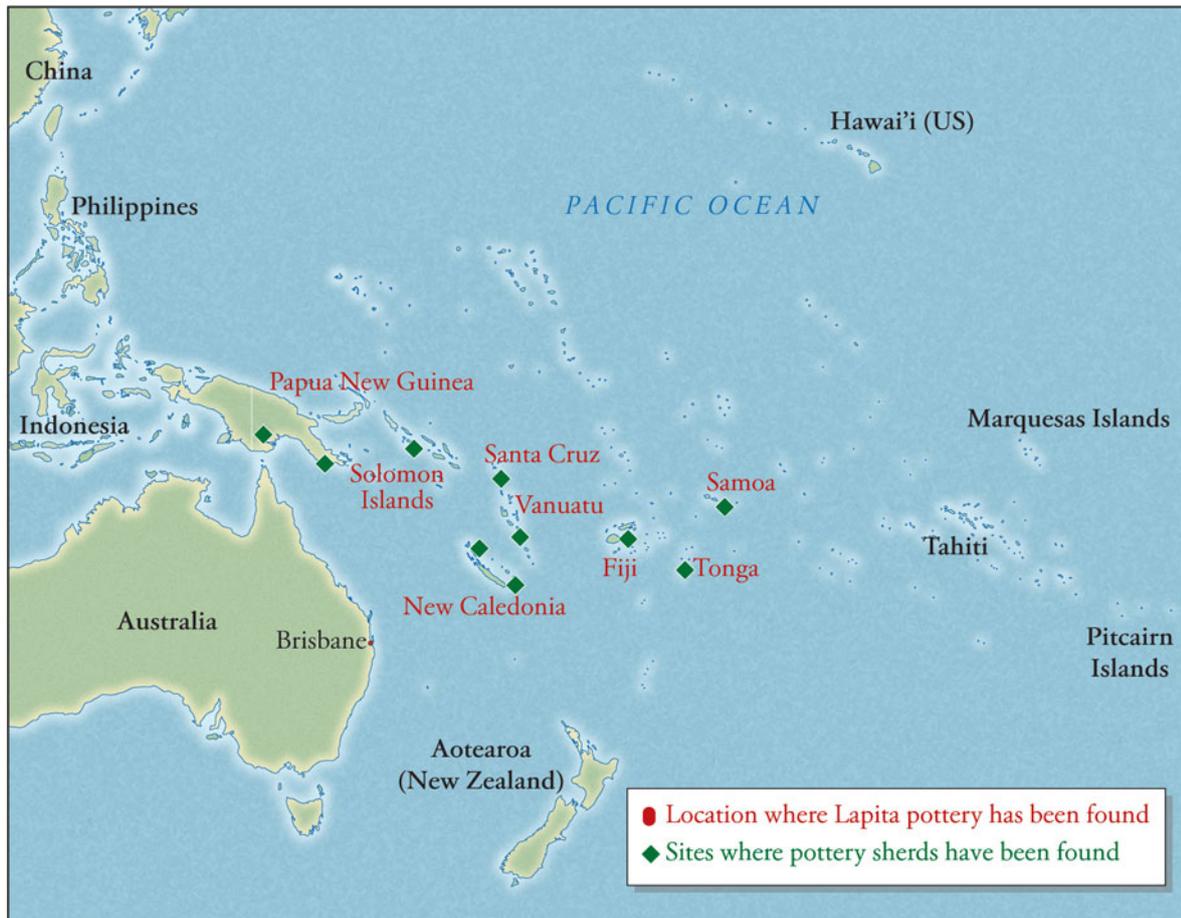
Source 8.9/8.10 Lapita pottery designs

HISTORICAL FACT

When the original pottery discoveries were made in 1952, Gifford and Shulter coined the term 'Lapita' after they misheard indigenous people using the word xapeta'a (meaning 'to dig a hole') in their local language. So, whereas archaeologists specifically describe the Lapita culture even today, we still do not know for certain the name of the culture that made the pottery.

These people migrated along the northern coast of Papua New Guinea to the Solomon Islands, ending up in New Caledonia where the original 1952 pottery discoveries were made. Why they had come to New Caledonia at that time is still unknown. Archaeologists have now discovered

Lapita pottery in numerous places as far away as Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, quite apart from the original finds in New Caledonia (see Source 8.11). The highly decorated sherds are now described as samples of earlier-Lapita culture.



Source 8.11 Locations of Lapita pottery finds in Melanesia and Polynesia

In 2011, new unexpected finds were reported on the southern coast of Papua New Guinea by Australian archaeologists Bruno David and Ian McNiven. These new finds were less decorated than the earlier discoveries, and archaeologists are now referring to the culture that produced

them as later-Lapita culture. Carbon-14 dating of the pottery sherds found in New Caledonia and Vanuatu indicate the remains came from the period c.1000 BCE to c.800 BCE. The later-Lapita discovery in Papua New Guinea has been dated as c.400 BCE (that is, 400–600 years younger than the earlier finds) and has come as a real surprise for the archaeologists, who had always believed the Lapita culture was an island culture.



Activity 8.2

- 1 Identify some of the historical problems we have today in using the term 'Lapita culture'.
- 2 How do the pots of the early-Lapita and late-Lapita cultures differ?

Research 8.2

Go to www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks and watch the Catalyst program, 'Lapita People', then answer the following questions:

- 1 Is the site representative of early-Lapita or late-Lapita culture?
- 2 What did the archaeologists find at the site?
- 3 What did the archaeologists discover about the diet of the people at this site?
- 4 Why do you think that the pottery finds are so important for analysing the history of Polynesia?

Later stages of expansion

Between c.2000 BCE and c.1000 BCE, the islands of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga were occupied by Melanesians from Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Today, Fiji is chiefly a Melanesian nation, though there are some among its population who can be considered Polynesian genetically and culturally. Just as their ancestors from Taiwan had done, these migrants took all they needed with them: coconut palms, breadfruit plants and banana plants were part of their baggage, along with pigs, chickens and the occasional stow-away rat. Once more the new populations stopped where they had arrived, adapted to and changed their environment, planted their foods and consolidated their culture. Stage two of Polynesian settlement was complete.

It would be about another 2000 years before migrations to eastern Polynesia began again. By that time, the cultures of Samoa and Tonga were no longer Melanesian. The people had evolved new traditions, new languages and new ways of doing things. Although there were connections

with their Melanesian past, by the third century CE they were a new people. They had become Polynesian – occupiers of 'many islands'.

Stage three of Polynesian settlement began in c.200 CE when migrants from Samoa pushed outward to the east, travelling more than 3550 kilometres to the island chain of the Marquesas. The Marquesas became the springboard for further Polynesian migration south-eastward to Pitcairn Island and, by c.300 CE, the remotest destination of all, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), 3058 kilometres from the Marquesas. They then moved northward to Hawai'i (3862 kilometres from the Marquesas) by c.400 CE, and southward to New Zealand by c.700 CE. Clearly, the people involved in these migrations had confidence in the canoes they used as well as their navigation skills.

Ships and seacraft

Original outrigger canoes – such as that pictured in Source 8.12, and still in use today – were not ideal for long sea voyages. The outrigger provided more stability than the simple canoe could do, but



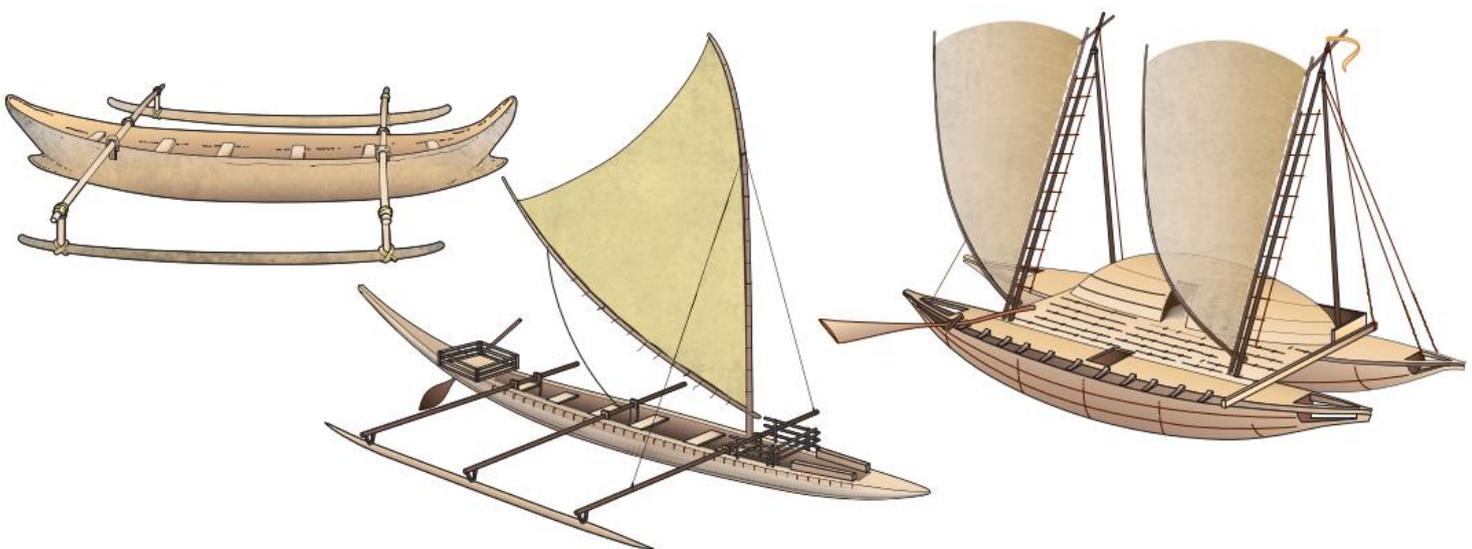
Source 8.12 A traditional outrigger canoe in Tonga

in deeper waters, craft like this were too easily flooded and capsized. Much sturdier craft were required for ocean travel.

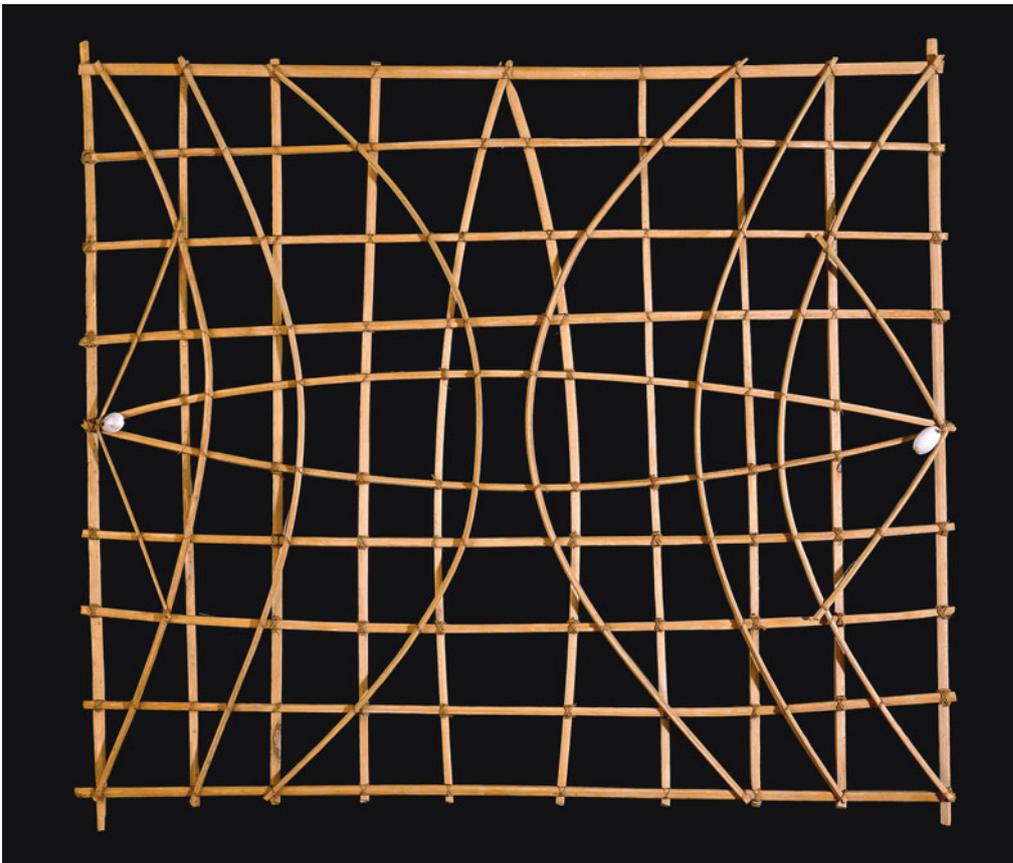
Over time, Polynesian peoples learned to construct canoes with higher sides on them and with a double hull that was crossed by a decking joining the two hulls. Both Melanesians and Polynesians

developed the skills to construct such craft. Topped with a mast and triangular sail, they were able to sail long distances connecting the archipelagos.

But how did Polynesian sailors find their way? Sailors in Melanesia and Polynesia had to deal with changing wind directions, currents and variable wave patterns as they crossed the oceans. Just as



Source 8.13 Canoe development for ocean voyages: the central canoe was joined to the two outrigger floats by two booms, making the craft one unit. Sometimes, the booms supported a whole deck on which people could walk, sit, carry livestock in wooden cages or even shelter under a lean-to construction on board. A mast and a triangular sail made the craft perfect for sailing across deeper waters over long distances. Over time they became even more sophisticated, with two sails and two canoes joined together.



Source 8.14 A Polynesian stick chart

stick chart a map used by Polynesian navigators that indicated islands, waves and currents across the ocean

we might use a geographical map, they invented a unique method of keeping track and recording for later reference the variations they experienced. The invention was the **stick chart** (see Source 8.14). The lines of sticks represented a course to be followed; the knots visible on the chart represented the islands and atolls that would be found on the course between two knots; and curved sticks represented the impact of wave patterns, winds and currents.

Each canoe had to rely on many such charts to navigate large areas of ocean.

The Tahitians introduced the charts to Captain Cook when he arrived there in 1777 on his third and final voyage of the Pacific. He was both intrigued and amazed by this technology, for European sailors weren't able to show the effects of winds, currents and wave patterns on their maps. The charts were used throughout Melanesia and Polynesia, and clearly reveal a cultural transference between the cultures of the two regions.

Research 8.3

In groups, construct a PowerPoint presentation to explain the major developments that allowed Polynesians to sail unknown waters.

Settlement and isolation

adze a tool similar to an axe with an arched blade at right angles to the handle, used for cutting or shaping wood

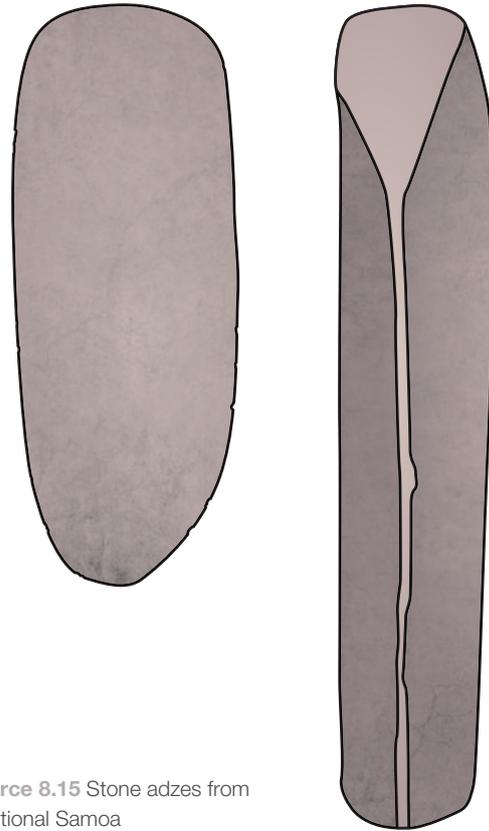
The people who settled Melanesia used rafts lashed together by vines. By the time Polynesia was being settled, breakthrough technology was available to build canoes.

The **adze** allowed canoe-builders to hollow out entire logs from trees. The earliest adzes were made of stone.

These earliest forms of stone adzes (dating from around c. 2500 BCE) did not have handles attached to them. They were held by the narrowest part and thrust into the wood in a hammering and grinding motion to help shape the wood into the desired shape. The whole exercise took considerable skill and effort. People who built canoes were usually highly regarded in Polynesian society.

From around 1700 BCE new, slimline triangular adzes began to appear in Samoa. Archaeologists believe that either new materials for making adzes became available, or that much more refined work was needed by the craftsmen who used them.

As they colonised one group of islands after another, the people of Polynesia made use of the same island-hopping strategy employed by their ancestors when they migrated to Melanesia centuries before. When new settlers left their island bound for the horizon, the people left behind experienced isolation from those who had left. By the time Europeans encountered the Polynesians between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries CE, isolation had become part of cultural life across all Pacific societies. Rapa Nui (Easter Island), for example, lies 4426 kilometres from Tahiti, and 1800 kilometres from its nearest neighbour, Pitcairn Island, both to the west.



Source 8.15 Stone adzes from traditional Samoa

To the east of Rapa Nui, 3600 kilometres away, lies the South American country of Chile. By any stretch of the imagination, such distances in times past were significant.

Travelling between islands from one location to another over such distances could not have been possible without keen navigational skills. Rapa Nui is only 24 kilometres long and 11 kilometres wide, so, sailing from Pitcairn or Tahiti, it was a small target to locate in a huge area of ocean. To locate Rapa Nui in the first place, the Polynesians have to be admired for their skills of seamanship as well as navigation.

The Tahitians explained to Captain Cook in 1777 that Polynesians used the sun and stars to navigate from island to island. They were also able to recognise other signs of land as they sailed the Pacific. Bird life at sea indicated that they were

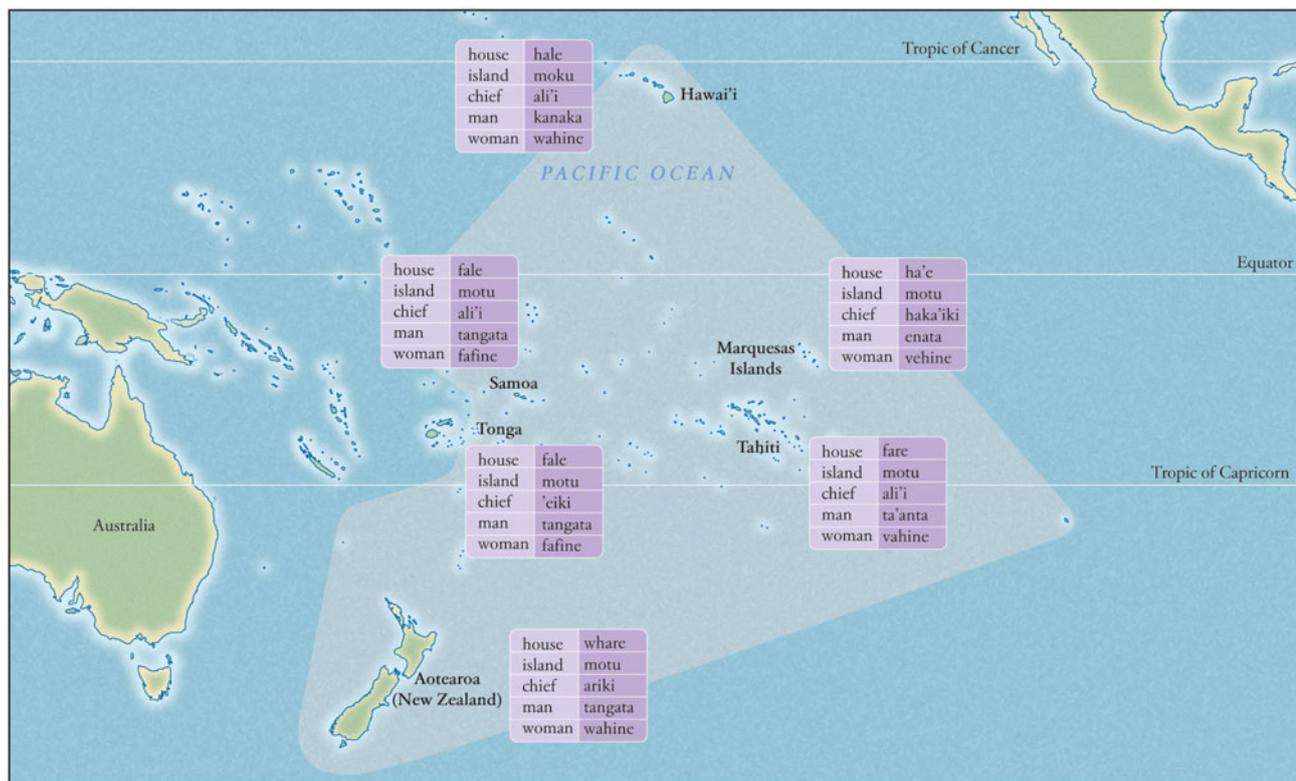


flotsam wreckage or lost cargo from ships found floating at sea or washed up on shore; also pieces of plant life floating at sea

within 200 kilometres of land; **flotsam** floating on the waves indicated that they were close to land; and specific cloud shapes forming over islands during the heat of the day also revealed that they were nearing land. Wind and wave patterns were also affected by the proximity of land and they learned to anticipate this over time.

All of the peoples of Polynesia share a common ancestry, yet as they sailed the seas of the region and settled new islands, their isolation from one

another saw adaptations of cultural connections. Languages were related, but over time variations in spoken words or vocal sounds had emerged. However, when Captain James Cook arrived in Hawai'i on his third voyage in the Pacific in 1777, he had onboard a Tahitian man who was instantly able to speak with the Hawaiians that Cook encountered. Captain Cook was amazed, but the Polynesians were not. Source 8.16 reveals how close the language connections are, no matter the location of the Polynesian society.



Source 8.16 Some common words in Polynesian societies



Way of life in Polynesian society

The Polynesians expanded to the many islands throughout the the Pacific Ocean, which comprises one-third of the entire Earth, studded with almost 25 000 rocky volcanic islands and **coral atolls**. Island chains such as Hawai'i and Samoa form archipelagos built by volcanic action.

coral atoll a ring-shaped reef, island or chain of islands formed by coral

The earliest settlements by Polynesian people were along the island belt just below the Equator. This allowed the people to predict the climate and the suitability of islands for cultivating the crops they brought with them. It also allowed them to use their knowledge of growing seasons and rainfall patterns. The nature of archipelagos such as Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Tahiti and the Marquesas allowed the earliest Polynesians to exploit knowledge that was familiar to them as they extended their colonisation of the region. But

it was not just the land they were interested in: the oceans and reefs surrounding the islands allowed them to harvest seafood and other resources that formed part of their diet.

Climate

The vast majority of Polynesia lies within the equatorial zone, and has a tropical climate with

high rainfall, high humidity, storms and cyclones. The Polynesians had to be highly familiar with, and responsive to, this climate as it dictated which plants would grow, how the natural resources of Polynesia would be used by its inhabitants, the style of architecture of houses and important buildings, the style of clothing worn by people and the food these people would eat.

Activity 8.3

- 1 Explain what you understand about the term 'Polynesia'.
- 2 Identify three characteristics of the Polynesian islands.
- 3 Name the tool needed for the construction of ocean-going canoes.
- 4 Analyse why the DNA evidence for the origins of Polynesians and the archaeological evidence may not be mutually inconsistent.

Activity 8.4

Research the formation of a coral atoll and explain how this determined the nature of the many of the islands of Polynesia. You can find a useful link at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.

Agriculture and food production

As they spread across the Pacific Ocean, the people who settled on the islands had the task of making the new lands their home. This involved several steps. Planting the crops they had brought with them was a priority. All Polynesian groups introduced new flora into the lands they settled. Crops such as coconuts, breadfruit, taro and bananas moved eastwards out of Melanesia as people migrated into Polynesia. Some of these products were native to south-east Asia or India

and had been carried with migrants during the earlier stage of the migration.

Establishing crops was never easy, but it was vital to the survival of the new settlements. The crops had to supply food, materials for housing, clothing, tools and medicine. There were three stages in the development of agriculture on a newly settled island:

- the *adaptation* stage, in which plants were adapted to the new conditions
- the *development* stage, after the crops had become established, and decisive action was taken to increase the area under cultivation

- the *expansion* stage, when the demanding needs of a growing population promoted further development and increase of successful crops under cultivation.

Each stage reflected the nature and needs of the society being established. Adaptation reflected a

hierarchy a system of organisation in which individuals or groups are ranked one above the other

small population, with everybody working together to establish a viable settlement. Development began to reflect the emergence of a **hierarchy** in the society, as well

as a significant land clearing. Expansion reflected a fully developed hierarchical society.

From the time they lived in Melanesia (before c. 2000 BCE) Polynesia-bound immigrants consumed seafood as well as crop foods. As they explored their way eastwards through Fiji to Samoa, they were always on the lookout for supplies of the seafood they knew so well. Some of this was to be found inside coral reefs in lagoons, but some

was found in deeper waters outside the reefs. Using nets and pens, the Polynesian settlers were able to catch seafood. Even they must have been surprised at how rich the waters were.

Occupation of new islands also tied the people to the land they settled. On all islands where settlement had evolved to maturity, a complex social hierarchy emerged.

The exact nature of this hierarchy not only reflected the power and authority of certain individuals or groups in society, but also the **folklore** or **mythology** that often supported the social hierarchy. Stories of the gods and their connection with the chiefs, for example, guaranteed the status of the island chief and tied the population not only to the island but to the chief as well.

folklore the traditional customs, traditions and stories of a population, passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth

mythology a collection of myths that belong to a particular people or culture and tell about their history, ancestors, heroes, gods and other supernatural beings

Activity 8.5

In groups, discuss the following questions then complete the task.

- 1 Do members of our Australian community have folklore and mythology?
- 2 Can you name five examples of the various folklore and mythology present in our community?
- 3 Select one example of a piece of folklore or mythology and explain it in a poster, using illustrations and text. Historical work requires you to keep records of sources. Ensure you identify the sources you use for your illustrations and text.

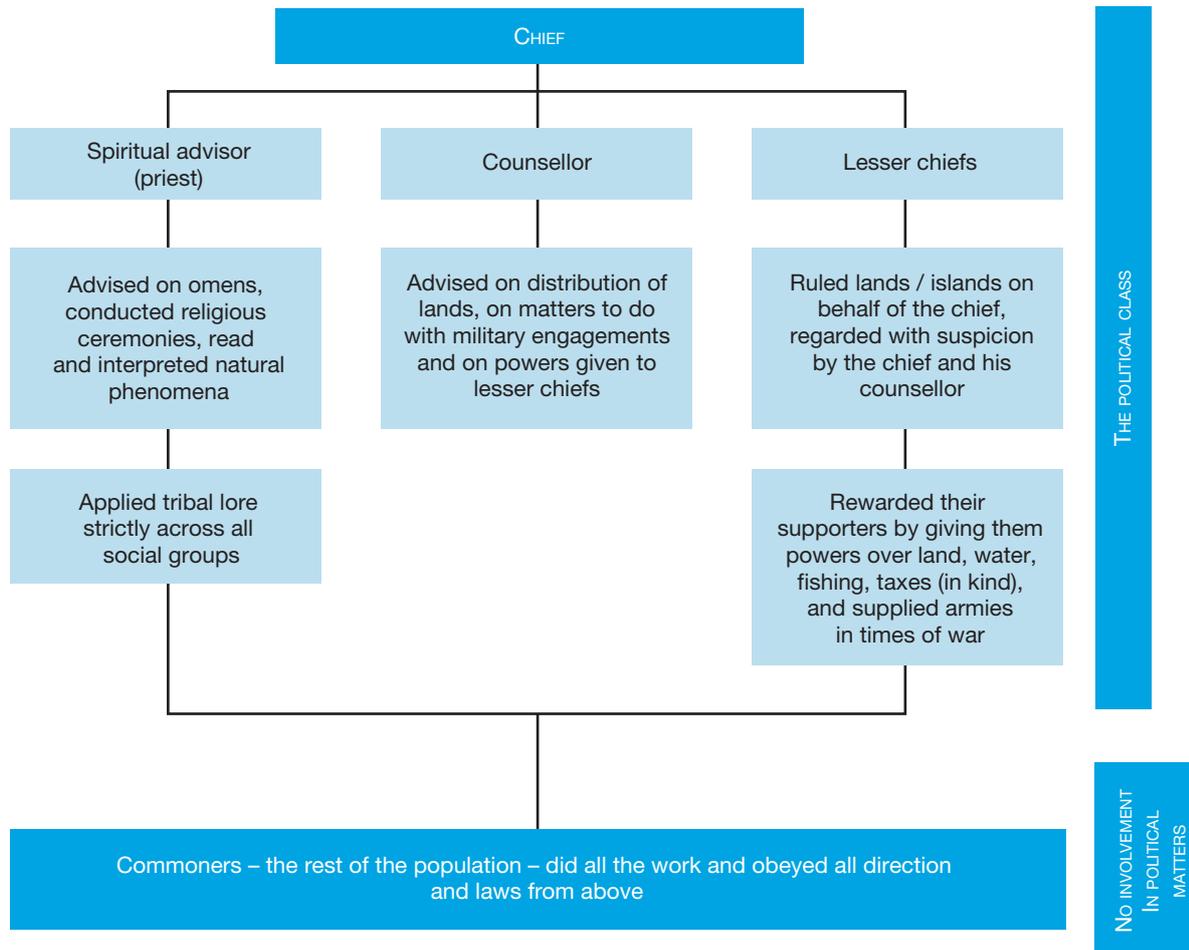
Role of key groups and individuals

The social structure of Polynesia was similar to that of many societies in history. The power and authority within the society was given to and exercised by the few (the elite, or the political class), while the majority of the population (the commoners) lived with little control over the shape of their lives. They were required to obey those who had power (the elite), and those in the elite could exercise their power and authority as

gently or as harshly as they desired. As is inevitable with cultures spread out over thousands of ocean kilometres, there was a reasonable amount of variation among the different Polynesian nations. The concepts the societies had in common, however, is illustrated by common terms across their languages.

Chiefs and priests

No Polynesian society could exist without its chief. In traditional Hawai'i and Samoa, the chief's title was *ali'i*, while on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) it had



Source 8.17 Simplified structure of a Polynesian society before European contact

changed to *ari'i* and in Aotearoa (New Zealand) it was *ariki* (see Source 8.16). The first chief might have been the first leader to arrive on the island or the eldest of a group of chiefs. Alternatively, he may have been the one who could command the most power in the group, perhaps through being successful in war. On Rapa Nui, which was settled around or after 300 CE, there was a legend of a founding chief named Hotu Matu'a. Oral traditions indicated that the eldest child in each generation inherited the title *ariki* and the position of high chief from that time.

The position of chief was never guaranteed. His population could flee his lands and go somewhere else. He could be killed in battle with another island group, or by somebody with a grievance in his own group. An ambitious lesser chief could overthrow him. And if misfortune befell his population, he might be exiled or killed. The very idea of being a high chief rested on the well-being of his population. Should earthquakes, volcanic

eruptions, cyclones or tsunamis affect his villages, it might be interpreted that the gods were angry with his people and, by extension, with him.

Spiritual advisors or priests were the link between the spirit world of the gods and the chief. They would interpret natural phenomena and the actions of people, and would advise the chief of what action to take in order to please the gods. The priests were also responsible for applying *mana* and *tapu*, two concepts that both legitimised and reinforced the existing social and political hierarchy. *Mana* was a supernatural or sacred energy force common to both Melanesian and Polynesian cultures. When things were going well, the chief had *mana*. When things were going badly the chief had lost *mana*, and this was a dangerous time for him.

mana in Polynesian and Melanesian societies, a supernatural or sacred energy force believed to run through all natural things

tapu the behaviours and things that were believed to be prohibited by the gods in Polynesian societies

Tapu

Tapu (or *kapu* in some other places in Polynesia) referred to things that were forbidden by the gods, and a breach of the rules of behaviour could be punishable by death. The rules equally affected the elite and the commoners, and men and women. The exact content of these rules varied between Polynesian communities, so it is difficult to generalise about them. However, some common examples include the following:

- It was forbidden for any commoner to allow his or her shadow to cover all or part of the person of the chief or priest.
- It was forbidden for a commoner to enter the house of a member of the elite, or to touch their clothes or their symbols of power.

- Women could not eat with men, and the food of each gender had to be cooked in separate ovens.
- Women were also forbidden to eat certain foods, such as pork, bananas or foods offered in sacrifice to the gods.

From childhood, a Polynesian grew up convinced that unless *tapu* was respected, bad things would occur – to either an individual or the group. It was a powerful force in traditional Polynesian society.

Powerful and influential women

Chiefs, or ‘kings’, were not the only influential forces in Polynesian societies. Some women rose through the ranks to influence the future of their people. Often this happened because they were

HISTORICAL FACT

The English word ‘taboo’ originates from *tapu*.



Source 8.18
Queen Pomare IV of Tahiti

married to the chief or inherited his position after the chief's death.

Queen Pomare IV in Tahiti was one such woman. Like all Polynesian islands, Tahiti had a royal line. Generally, only men inherited the title, but women were not excluded entirely. If there was no male heir, the queen could rule in her own right. Pomare IV became the ruler of Tahiti at the tender age of 14. In 1857, she also became the chief of the island of Ra'iatea and married the chief of the island of Bora Bora. In 1860, when her husband died, she reunited the two kingdoms together with Tahiti under her rule. She opposed French control of Tahiti, writing a protest letter to the King of France and exiling herself to Ra'iatea. She battled French control from 1847 to her death in 1877, arguing that because France had never formally proclaimed their ownership of Tahiti, their control was illegal. During her life she had ten children, of whom seven survived to adulthood.

Another prominent Polynesian woman was Queen Kaahumanu in Hawai'i. She was the first

of 17 wives of the chief known as Kamehameha I, who united the islands of Hawai'i under his rule in 1810. At the age of 10, she was given to the chief by her father to demonstrate his loyalty to the chief and his acceptance of his rule. After the death of Kamehameha in 1819, she became co-ruler of Hawai'i with his successor Kuhina Nui. She is best remembered for her devotion to her people, the reform of Hawaiian culture and the integration of Christianity into Hawaiian life.

As Kamehameha I lay dying, Kaahumanu wondered how she might rid Hawaiian culture of its *tapu*. She had noticed European men and women eating together and wondered why the gods had not punished them for breaking what she had always understood was *tapu*. Perhaps, she speculated, their god was more forgiving. She converted to Protestant Christianity and was baptised in the faith in 1825 and began the task of dismantling the Hawaiian *tapu*. She used the Ten Commandments in the Bible to write a set of laws that became the more modern, if not European, system of *tapu* for the Hawaiian people.



Source 8.19 Kaahumanu, the reforming Queen of Hawai'i. The leis and flowers are still placed on this statue in Honolulu today by those who revere the role Kaahumanu played in preserving the future of Hawai'i and in promoting the education of the young. Photo courtesy of Maria Marsh.

Like Pomare IV in Tahiti, Kaahumanu is also remembered for resisting foreign domination in Hawai'i. She believed that education of Hawaiian children would allow them to resist the tricks of the foreigners and would be the best tool to

preserve Hawaiian independence. She died in 1832 and on her deathbed was presented with the first printed copy of the New Testament in the Hawaiian language. Statues and memorials commemorating her abound in Hawai'i.

Activity 8.6

- 1 Imagine being given away to marry at 10 years of age. Describe how the expectations of childhood and adulthood differed between traditional Polynesian and modern Australian societies.
- 2 Suggest what effect that Kaahumanu's replacement of *tapu* would have had on Hawaiian society.

Activity 8.7

Examine Sources 8.18 and 8.19 and answer the following questions:

- 1 Why were these subjects chosen to be represented in artistic form?
- 2 Identify the art form used to represent each subject.
- 3 To what extent does each artwork use symbols to reflect the subject's importance?
- 4 Classify each artwork as a primary or secondary source.
- 5 Consider the value of each artwork to you as a student of history.



Achievements of Polynesian societies

The wide range of Polynesian settlement encouraged the development of a wide range of technologies, arts and artisanal crafts. Polynesians were skilled in the art of making canoes to sail the breadth of the Pacific Ocean. Canoe-builders were held in high regard in all Polynesian societies.

Women became highly skilled in the making of *tapu* (also known as *kapa* or *ngatu*) cloth, made from the bark of the paper-

tapu cloth made from the bark of the Polynesian paper-mulberry tree

mulberry tree that grows throughout Polynesia. Strips of bark are beaten together using a wooden mallet into a single piece of cloth. Often women would work together on such a task, producing a sheet of cloth about 3 metres wide and between 6 and 15 metres long. Designs were then drawn onto the cloth, which was painted and dried in the sun. The availability today of so many cheap textiles has meant that *tapu* cloth is less popular than it once was, but the islands of Tonga seem to be persisting with the craft.

The traditional housing in Polynesian villages showed a cultural transference from the ancestral home of Melanesia. Whether it was known as the

Source 8.20 Tongan women sell *tapa* cloth at a market

fale (in Tonga and Samoa), the *fare* (in Tahiti), the *whare* (in Aotearoa, or New Zealand) or the *bale* (in Hawai'i), it reflected a style that made use of local timbers and thatched plant roofs. Usually many families shared the one dwelling, similar to the 'long house' of Papua New Guinea in Melanesia. Such a design provided tribal security for the group and could be easily repaired if damaged by storms or cyclones. Following the arrival of Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century, there was a move away from the use of this design towards the construction of single houses for independent families.

missionaries people sent to spread a particular faith, in this case Christianity, in another country

With thatched dwellings, the cooking was always done outside in earth ovens. The food of men and women would be prepared in separate ovens, so as to not break *tapu*. These ovens were known in Aotearoa as *hangi*.

Canoe building and *tapa* making were not the only crafts that were highly regarded in Polynesian societies and by European visitors to the region. Traditional societies also excelled in representing their spiritual ancestors in terms of

Source 8.21 A carved wooden *tiki*

carving wooden images of them. Such images are referred to as *tiki* (in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, parts of Tahiti and the Marquesas islands), *ti'i* (more commonly throughout Tahiti) or *ki'i* (in Hawai'i). In all cases, the word seems to be related to the origins of the first man, and so is related to creation mythology of the Polynesians.

The craftsmen who created these images and many others like them elsewhere in Polynesia were considered to be guardians of the mythology of the community. As such, they were highly respected for their work. Many Polynesian villages had such statues near them in order to show outsiders that the village was protected by *tiki*. The hope of the people of the villages was that evil spirits would be kept at bay, and that only good would come of the statues.

The *moai* on Rapa Nui

The inhabitants of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) took their craftwork to quite another level. They did, for a time, create small wooden statues, but

eventually shifted to carving giant statues of stone called *moai* (see Source 8.22). Of all the statues in Polynesia, the *moai* made the early European visitors to the island gasp when they laid eyes on them. The *moai* seemed to have been created between 1000 CE and about 1500 CE, and like the *tiki* elsewhere in Polynesia, the *moai* were a representation of the ancestral spirits of those living on the island. Some looked out to sea, and some looked at the villages that early European visitors saw when they arrived. They appear to have been guardians of Rapa Nui.

There are more than 800 such statues scattered over the island. Those pictured in Source 8.22 are located in the quarry where the Rapa Nui people found their volcanic stone. For some reason, they were never moved to where it was intended that they be placed. Hundreds of the *moai* were moved to specific locations and placed on stone platforms called *ahu*, which

moai the large stone statues erected by the inhabitants of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

ahu platforms on which the Easter Island *moai* were placed



Source 8.22 Typical *moai* on Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

were constructed around the edge of the island. The *moai* were up to 10 metres in height and weighed up to 72 metric tonnes.

How these were moved is still a mystery, and has caused much debate within scholarly communities. However, archaeological evidence suggests the island's forest was cut down to

create rollers on which the islanders could move them. Despite creating these rollers, moving the statues would not have been at all easy. The largest unfinished statue found on the island by archaeologists has been estimated to be 21 metres in height and would have weighed in at 244 metric tonnes – a simply enormous load.



Use of environmental resources

Polynesia is a difficult and isolated environment, with limited land for growing crops, fragile and sensitive ecosystems, and low-lying land that is vulnerable to changes in sea level. While some Polynesian societies have flourished, others have collapsed – the Rapa Nui civilisation in particular.

What happened to the Rapa Nui civilisation?

The collapse of the once-flourishing Rapa Nui civilisation is a great historical mystery. By the sixteenth century, it was a shadow of what it had once been. When Dutch explorer Jacob Rogeveen encountered it in 1722, he was unaware that he was seeing a civilisation well in decline.

While the civilisation had flourished after people first arrived, some time between 300 CE and 800 CE, later migrations to the island placed significant pressure on the island's population. Unlike other Polynesian islands, the range of seafood was more limited and the range of land animals was small. The original population had spread across the island, forming close clan connections with one another. They would trade with each other, share labour between groups when something had to be done, and intermarry. But unlike the experience of earlier settlers elsewhere in Polynesia, their crops failed miserably. Only the sweet potato seemed to flourish; together with the chickens they brought with them, sweet potato became the islanders' staple diet.

The scientist Jared Diamond has suggested that the deforestation of Easter Island was brought about by the construction of the rollers for the *moai*. This deforestation dramatically reduced the

ability of the islanders to feed themselves, as it caused soil degradation and stopped the islanders from building their wooden fishing boats, which of course heavily restricted their access to seafood.

When Jacob Rogeveen arrived, he estimated the population to be about 3000 people, but some modern estimates suggest that it was perhaps closer to 10000. Rogeveen found the people living in reed huts and caves. They were at continuous war with each other, even resorting to cannibalism in bad times. Like all European sailors, Rogeveen did not realise that he and his crew were introducing exotic diseases that would kill many of the island's inhabitants.

In 1770, the Spanish took possession of the island but did not colonise it. What they did do was to kidnap some inhabitants as slaves for their American empire. American sailing ships and sailors from Peru continued this practice in the nineteenth century.

The food shortage suffered by the Easter Islanders, Diamond suggests, caused internal conflict and the breakdown of traditional social structures. This factor, combined with external interference, slavery and the impact of foreign diseases, undermined the civilisation of Rapa Nui.

Extinction of native species

Across Polynesia, there was a limited range of land-based foods, apart from the food crops that the migrants brought with them. Some islands were infested with snails and insects, and some had large quantities of flightless birds. These birds existed right across Polynesia, though their isolation from each other meant that there were

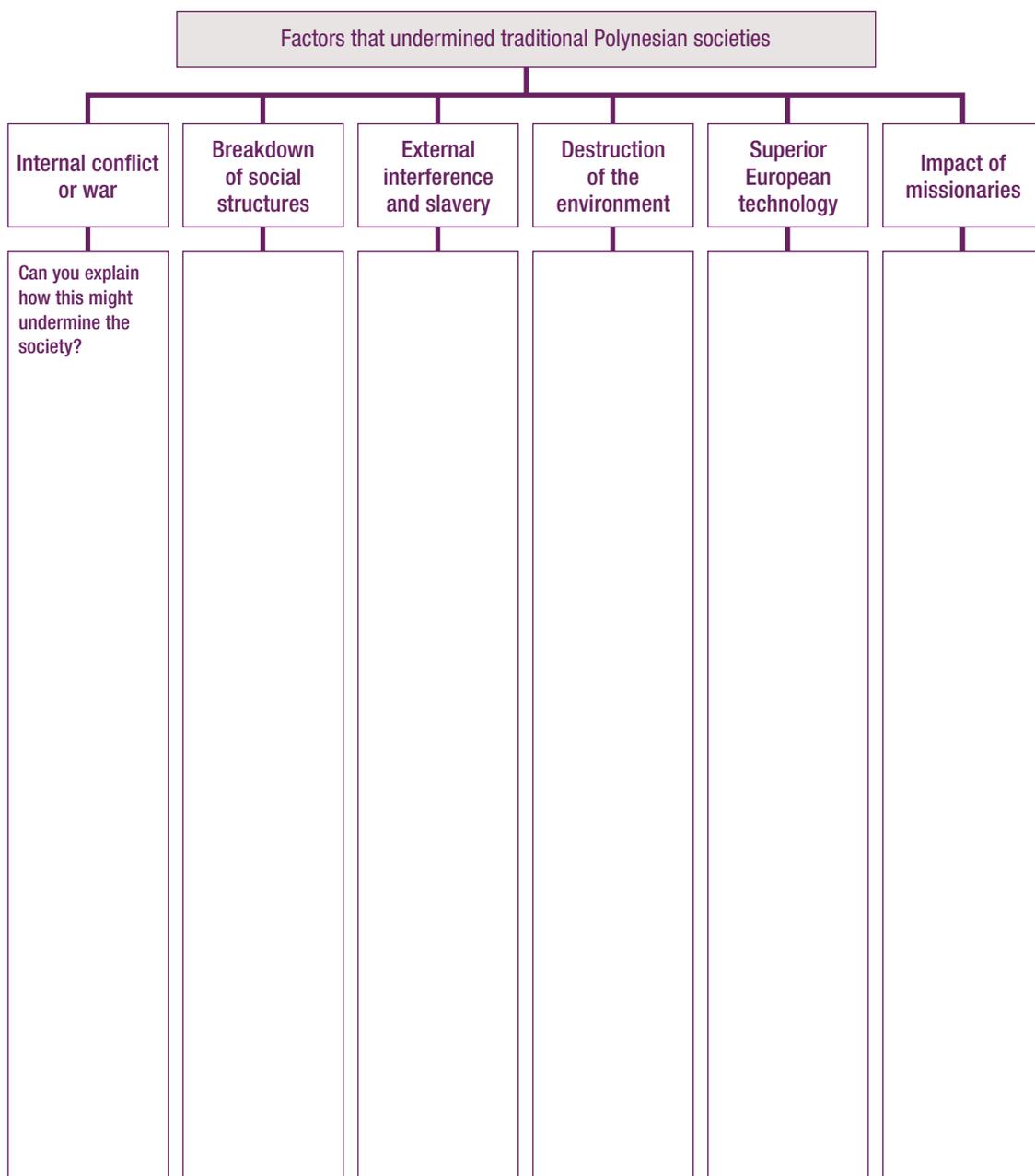
differences in size. Some were as small as parrots or chickens, while others were as large as birds like today's ostrich or emu.

These birds did not have any predators before the arrival of humans, and by the sixteenth

century they had been hunted into extinction. Most famously, the New Zealand bird known as the moa – a flightless bird bigger than an emu – was hunted to extinction by the Maori population of Aotearoa by the fourteenth century CE.

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, outline how Polynesian societies may have declined.



Chapter summary

- Polynesia is a triangular region across the Pacific Ocean bounded by Hawai'i to the north, Aotearoa (New Zealand) to the south-west and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) to the south-east.
- The Polynesian expansion was caused by migrations of people leaving south-east Asia and travelling through Melanesia across the Pacific. Polynesian sailors were highly skilled, using well-designed ocean-going canoes and a sophisticated stick chart to navigate the seas.
- Traditional Polynesian societies were highly spiritual, well-organised and complex communities headed by a chief. While the position of chief was often hereditary, it was not guaranteed. He could be killed in battle or overthrown by a rival lesser chief. If misfortune befell his population, it might be interpreted that the gods were angry with him, which could lead to his death or exile.
- Spiritual advisors (or priests) provided a link between the spirit world of the gods and the chief. They would advise the chief of what action to take in order to please the gods. The priests were also responsible for applying *mana* and *tapu*, two concepts that legitimised and reinforced the existing social and political hierarchy.
- On occasion, women would rule Polynesian societies. Queen Pomare IV (Tahiti) and Queen Kaahumanu (Hawai'i) were influential Polynesian women in the nineteenth century CE.
- Polynesian communities produced many technological achievements, including *tapa* cloth, canoes, communal family dwellings, *tiki* and *moai*.
- Many factors undermined the traditions and continuity of Polynesian societies, especially that of Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- The Pacific Ocean represents how much of the Earth's surface?
 - one-quarter
 - one-sixth
 - one-third
 - one-half
- The island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) is in:
 - Melanesia
 - western Polynesia
 - eastern Polynesia
 - Micronesia
- Samoan settlers set sail to the Marquesas Islands in:
 - 350 BCE
 - 700 CE
 - 200 BCE
 - 1000 CE
- Aotearoa is a Polynesian name for:
 - Fiji
 - Tonga
 - New Caledonia
 - New Zealand
- In the early nineteenth century CE, Chief Kamehameha I ruled:
 - Rapa Nui (Easter Island)
 - Tahiti
 - the Marquesas Islands
 - Hawai'i

Short answer

- 1 Who was Thor Heyerdahl and why is he important in the historical analysis of Polynesia?
- 2 Why was Queen Kaahumanu so important for the Hawaiian people?
- 3 Compare the role played by Queen Pomare IV in Tahiti with that of Queen Kaahumanu in Hawai'i.
- 4 How did Polynesian cultures pay respect to their spirit ancestors?
- 5 Identify two pieces of evidence that support the idea that the Polynesians migrated from west to east.

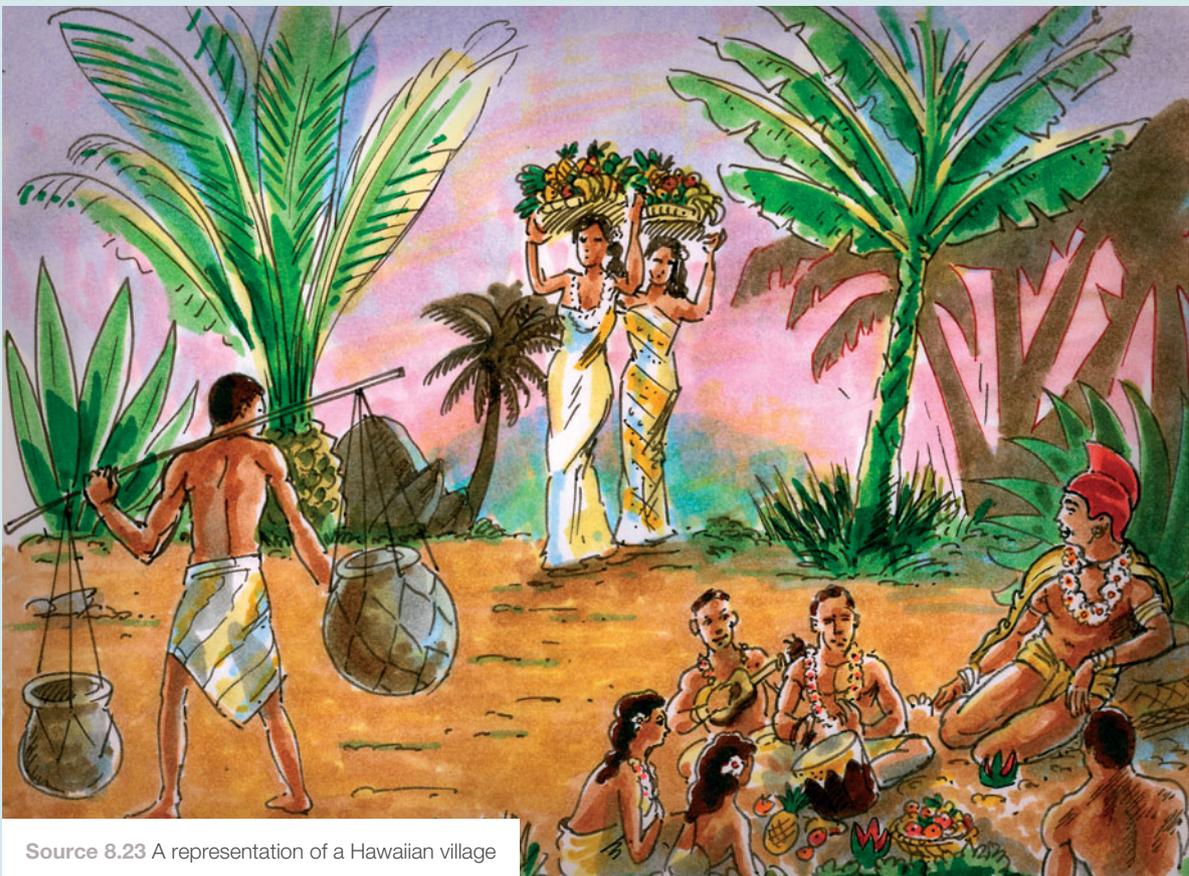
Source analysis

Study Source 8.23 and answer the following questions:

- 1 What evidence can you find in this painting to indicate that it depicts a joyful occasion?
- 2 Locate the chief in the painting. What indicators did you use to identify the chief?
- 3 Identify commoners in the painting. What indicators did you use to find them?
- 4 Using this painting as your source, do you think life in Hawai'i was full of harmony, courtesy and abundance? Give reasons for your answer.
- 5 Evaluate how misleading the painting could be.

Extended response

Write a response to the arguments of Thor Heyerdahl and Andrew Sharp in 400–500 words. Consider in your essay the nature of Polynesian navigation and shipbuilding, as well as other explanations for the spread of the sweet potato.



Source 8.23 A representation of a Hawaiian village



DEPTH STUDY 3

Expanding contacts



9



Mongol expansion (c. 1206–c. 1368)



Source 9.1 An artist's impression of the Mongol army on the move

Before you start

Main focus

The Mongols were nomadic warriors led by Genghis Khan, who rode out from the remote steppes of Central Asia to relentlessly conquer the greatest land empire that the world has ever known.

Why it's relevant today

The Mongols brought a long period of stable rule, which allowed for the interchange of beneficial knowledge, new technologies and important religions, as well as creating wealthy trading routes between Europe and Asia.

Inquiry questions

- Why did the Mongols become such a powerful conquering force in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries?
- How large did the Mongol land empire become?
- How did the Mongol leaders treat their conquered peoples?
- How did they govern their vast empire?
- What was the legacy of the Mongol empire?

Key terms

- dynasty
- *khan*
- *kuriltai*
- nomadic
- Pax Mongolica
- steppe
- tribute
- *yam*
- Yassa

Significant individuals

- Genghis Khan
- Kublai Khan
- Marco Polo
- Ogedai
- Sorghaghtani Beki

Let's begin

Genghis Khan and his descendants conquered the largest contiguous land empire the world has ever known, stretching from China across Central Asia to Eastern Europe, by 1300 CE. The highly trained Mongol armies had a well-deserved reputation for ruthlessness and brutality towards their captives, and left towns and cities ransacked.

The conquered Mongol territories served as a bridge between the civilisations of Asia and Europe. Under Mongol rule there was a long period of relative peace and unity under a strict governing code. This enabled trade to flourish, the benefits of new technology and ideas to be shared, and many different cultures and religions to spread across a large region of the world. Rivalries and tensions between Genghis Khan's successors eventually weakened the empire and led to its decline.



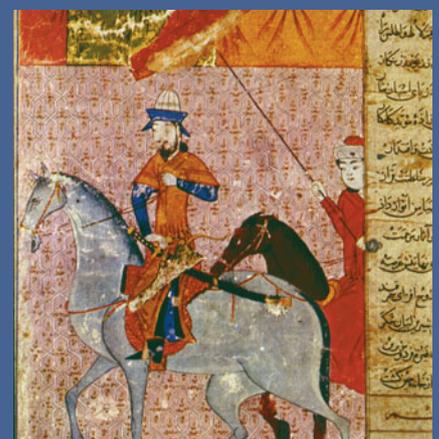
Source 9.2 Miniature of steppe war between Mongols and Oghuz Turkic people



Source 9.3 Tiki Mongolian nomads with donkey



Source 9.4 Genghis Khan



Source 9.5 Miniature of Timur Lenk (Tamerlane)

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

1100 CE ...

Temujin is born **c. 1167 CE**

1200 CE ...

Temujin takes title of Genghis **1206**
Khan or universal ruler

Kublai Khan is born; Genghis **1215**
Khan invades northern China

Genghis Khan crushes **1221**
Khwarezm empire

Genghis Khan dies **1227**

Ogadei becomes Great Khan **1229**

Mongols conquer Korea **1231**

Kiev is razed **1240**

Baghdad is destroyed **1258**

Kublai Khan becomes **1260**
Great Khan

Yuan dynasty rules China **1271**

Marco Polo reaches China **1275**

Kublai Khan dies **1294**

1300 CE ...

Chinese revolts against **1355**
the Mongols occur

Yuan dynasty is overthrown; **1368**
Mongols flee China

WORLD EVENTS

c. 960 CE Song dynasty rules China

1215 Magna Carta is signed in
England

1276 Song dynasty falls in China
c. 1280 Ottoman Turks rise

1337 Hundred Years War begins in
Europe

1347 Black Death reaches Europe

1368 Ming dynasty rules China



Source 9.6 Typical dress of the Mongol and Cochin Chinese



Source 9.7 The Great Wall of China



Source 9.8 Silver gilt plaque from horse trapping, Black Sea



Source 9.9 Mongol warrior spearhead



Source 9.10 Map of the Eurasian steppe



The Mongols

Before the rise of Mongol Empire, Central Asia had long been home to many **nomadic** tribes whose

nomads people who move from place to place

steppe a vast area of grasslands that spans much of Central Asia

Mongol the nation, people or culture of Mongolia

sedentary relating to an inactive or settled lifestyle

lifestyle was based on animal herding. They lived in a remote and sparsely populated region of semi-desert and windswept grasslands known as the **steppe**. The term **Mongol** was the name given to one of the many different tribal groups that would eventually form the Mongol nation. The Mongols were natural warriors who were tough, mobile and resourceful on

horseback. Their way of life contrasted greatly with the settled or **sedentary** peoples of other Asian countries, such as China and Korea, where there were towns and cities, cultivated farm lands and highly developed cultures. The steppe nomads had lived an unchanging life for centuries, cut off from the rest of Asia. In the thirteenth century, this changed dramatically as Mongol warriors prepared to launch a massive assault beyond the steppes across Asia and into Eastern Europe.

Nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols

The harsh and unpredictable environment of the steppe was not suited to farming. Bitter winter temperatures could drop as low as -30°C and remain below freezing for six or seven months. Sudden blizzards could strike at any time and the soil remained frozen for long periods. The short summers were hot with only low rainfall. The vast and forbidding Gobi Desert bordered the Mongol territory to the south, while rugged mountain chains ringed the western lands.

The Mongols were animal herders, caring for large flocks of sheep, goats, camels and cattle. Their most prized possessions were the short, stocky horses that were so vital to their way of life. Even children became skilled riders at an early age. Such a difficult environment meant that the Mongols had to constantly travel with their large herds from one pasture area to another, according to the seasons, in search of grass and water. They relied on the animals to provide them with meat and milk along with wool for rugs, clothing and saddle blankets. The Mongols traded



Source 9.11 Typical steppe landscape



Source 9.12 Gers in the onset of winter

with the settled farming peoples to the south for goods they needed, such as grain and cloth, in return for hides and animals.

The Mongol shelter was a circular tent known as a **ger** or *yurt* (see Source 9.12). Wool was pressed into felt and used for the outer covering of the ger. It could be quickly assembled on its wooden frame, then easily dismantled and transported, providing the mobility needed by nomadic pastoralists. The portable homestead was windproof in winter and cool in summer. Even today, these homes are still widely used by nomadic peoples in Central Asia.

The basic organising unit of Mongol society was the tribe. Each tribe was divided into clans, who camped and herded together on the steppe. Bound together by **kinship**, the clan was led by a chief or **khan**. In the event of enemy threat, or in preparation for a lightning raid on the settled farming communities, the clans could be joined into huge groupings known as confederations.

Women in Mongol society performed many domestic tasks, such as milking the herds, collecting animal dung for fuel and making felt for

the *gers*. They were influential within the family, fought as warriors on occasion and had a voice in tribal councils, but it was the men who dominated leadership of the clans.

Rise of Temujin

Temujin was born around 1167 CE into a warfaring tribe. His father, Yesugei, was a clan leader who was poisoned by rival chiefs when the boy was only nine years old. Temujin was taken prisoner, but escaped to the mountains for refuge. He vowed to take revenge on the clan that had enslaved him. Temujin was raised by his mother Hoelun, living a very harsh life in exile with few comforts and scarce food. His arranged marriage at age 15 was interrupted by the capture of his young wife Borte by the rival Merkit clan. Temujin led a campaign against the Merkit and rescued his wife. This bold and enterprising act drew many followers.

Temujin went on to defeat all remaining rival tribes (including the Naimans, Keraites and Tartars, who frequently raided and battled each other) and brought them under his control. His reputation as a military leader grew and he soon won further allies, as clan chiefs were keen to attach themselves to such a promising young steppe warrior.

ger the Mongolian word for 'home'; a tent-like structure suited to the nomadic lifestyle

kinship having a relationship by blood or marriage

khan an important leader of the Mongols



Source 9.13 Image of Genghis Khan by an unknown Chinese artist

Genghis Khan, universal ruler

Mongol leaders had to show the qualities and skills essential for survival in the steppe environment. Courage in battle and the ability to forge alliances between rivals and to attract followers were vital for a new leader. The lean and dangerous years in exile had taught Temujin to be practical, patient and cunning. He was courageous and daring in battle and had already demonstrated his strong leadership skills in uniting clans and tribal groups. The young Mongol leader had shown that he was ambitious, ruthless and disciplined, with superb

organisational ability and strategic brilliance. Temujin had no formal education but took a great interest in the arts and learning.

In 1206, at a **kuriltai** or massive assembly of all the Mongol chieftains, Temujin was proclaimed universal ruler of the Mongol tribes and took the new title of Genghis Khan. He had now been elected as the leader of nearly half a million tribesmen. This significant event marked the beginning of the Mongol Empire under his leadership.

kuriltai a gathering of Mongol leaders to make important decisions

Activity 9.1

- 1 Study sources 9.11 and 9.12 which show typical landscapes of Central Asia.
 - a Provide evidence to suggest that the steppes are a harsh environment.
 - b Explain how the Mongol peoples adapted to these harsh conditions.
- 2 Consider how the boy Temujin's early life might have shaped his character.
- 3 Discuss why Temujin adopted the new title of Genghis Khan.



The Mongol army under Genghis Khan

Organisation and tactics

The military organisation that Genghis Khan established was the best armed and trained of the thirteenth century. A key feature of his highly disciplined army was easily managed units based on the decimal system. Soldiers were organised into armies made up of fighting units called *tumens*, which consisted of 10 000 **cavalrymen**. Each *tumen* was then further divided into units of 1000, 100 and 10 warriors. These units were made

up of non-tribal groupings, so that the first loyalty for a soldier was to the leader and his Mongol identity rather than to his tribe. Commanders took charge of the training and discipline of the cavalry at each level. The leader of each *tumen* had a close relationship with Genghis Khan and promotions to leadership were given on the basis of ability.

All males aged from 15 to 60 were eligible for **conscription** into the army, which was considered a source of honour in the tribal tradition. If a warrior deserted his company, he could expect immediate execution as any form of disloyalty was not tolerated. The battle front appeared like a giant moving city as each *tumen* was accompanied by its herds of livestock, thousands of horses, family members and their *gers*.

conscription compulsory enlistment for military service

cavalry soldiers who fight on horseback



Source 9.14 Mongol cavalrymen engage the enemy, from *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din

HISTORICAL FACT

If supplies of food were not readily available, Mongols could survive for up to a month by drinking horse's milk or even cutting the horse's neck vein to drink its blood.

Superior military tactics

[B]y nature they are good at riding and shooting. Therefore they took possession of the world through this advantage of bow and horse ...
[Chinese chronicler]

Source 9.15 From *All the Khan's Horses* by Morris Rossabi

The stocky Mongol horses were fast and flexible, which was a considerable advantage in combat, as soldiers were well equipped for speed and manoeuvrability. Each Mongol soldier maintained three or four horses, which could be changed regularly, allowing the cavalry to move over long distances at high speeds without exhausting their animals. The sturdy horses were able to cross rugged terrain and survive on little feed. Warriors could spend up to a week in the saddle and cover distances as great as 140

kilometres per day. In their saddle bags were simple rations of dried meat and yoghurt.

The chief weapon used in combat was the Mongol bow, which was made of wood, horn and sinew. The short bow had a very powerful range of nearly half a kilometre and was far superior to any other European bow of this period. Quivers of assorted arrows were strapped to the backs of the archers in readiness for unleashing a rain of arrow fire on the enemy.

The light cavalry relied on the bow and arrow and they were extremely skilled at shooting accurately while mounted in the saddle. A sturdy stirrup, devised by the steppe nomads, enabled the rider to turn while on horseback and fire arrows in any direction, including backwards.

The heavy cavalry wore metal armour and carried long lances for close combat after the archers had brought the enemy into disarray. Each warrior carried a curved sword, a battle axe and a dagger, which was hung from the belt.



Source 9.16 Mongol soldiers using the bow, from *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din

Mongol armour

Mongol armour was relatively light and made of iron scales, chain mail or even hard leather. Many of the horses were also protected by armour. The helmet was cone shaped, with the upper part made of iron plates. Heavy silk undershirts protected each soldier in the event of an arrow piercing the metal armour.

Technological weapons

The Mongols also adapted technological weapons for use in their warfare. War machines such as siege engines were constructed using the military talents of captive engineers from Persia and China. The siege engines could be transported on pack horses and assembled ready for an attack. The Mongols were skilled in using trebuchets and catapults, both of which could hurl heavy rocks and explosives against a city wall or fortress. Battering rams for bombarding walls, flaming arrows that spread fire inside the walls and smoke bombs were other effective means of attacking fortified positions.

Clever strategies

Clever strategies assisted the Mongols to gain a psychological advantage over their enemies. All campaigns were preceded by scouting parties, who used flags and signal fires to keep the main force informed of the enemy's movements. A separate messenger force carried urgent communications between the khan and his commanders. The messengers' bodies were tightly bandaged to allow them to remain in the saddle for days, as they switched from one horse to another to gain maximum speed. A special unit supplied the armies with maps based on the information provided by a network of spies and informers. During the intensely cold winters, the Mongol armies even used the frozen rivers as highways.

The Mongol attack would often come from a number of different directions before the fighting force united to begin the major strike. An ingenious battle tactic was the **feigned withdrawal**. With rapid arrow fire coming from the front lines, the troops at the rear

feigned withdrawal a faked retreat, designed to draw enemy forces out of formation



Source 9.17
Mongolian troop using a trebuchet in a siege, from *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din

would quickly flank or encircle a city. The cavalry would attack the enemy forces, but then pretend to be defeated and retreat from the battle. When the enemy had let its guard down, the cavalry would suddenly re-emerge, wheeling around savagely on their opponents.

Fear as a tactic

The Mongols deliberately employed terror tactics in their warfare, building up a horrifying reputation as the ‘devil’s horsemen’ by their conquests. As one chronicler lamented:

In the countries that have not yet been overrun by them, everyone spends the night afraid that they may yet appear there too.

Source 9.18 Original quote from Islamic historian Ibn al-Athir

Invasions would be preceded by a delegation warning the city to surrender or suffer the consequences. Every town or city that resisted or refused to surrender was subject to destruction. This was widely publicised and was part of the element of terror conveyed throughout the empire. One man who escaped from the pillage of Bukhara in 1220 relayed the grim tidings:

They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered and they departed.

Source 9.19 Original quote from Persian historian Juvaini, c. 1250

Activity 9.2

- 1 Draw a diagram to illustrate how the army based its organisation on the decimal system.
- 2 Consider the aspects that made the Mongol army so successful. Build up a summary diagram of as many aspects as possible.
- 3 Imagine you are a soldier in Genghis Khan’s army. Describe what your life on a typical day’s campaign is like. Include the challenges and hardships you experience.

A merciless conquering force

As the Mongols swept out of the steppe lands into new territory, they were noted for their cruelty and wide-scale destruction in battle. They would first

tribute money paid by one state to another in acknowledgement of military submission

offer the enemy the opportunity to surrender and pay taxes (or **tribute**) rather than having their town or city plundered and destroyed. If the city refused to

surrender, the Mongols would mercilessly ransack it and slaughter its inhabitants.

His greatest pleasure in life was making war, defeating enemies, forcing their beloved to weep, riding on their horses, and embracing their wives and daughters.

Source 9.20 Genghis Khan was remembered for this philosophy

Times gone by ...

One of the earliest accounts of Mongol warfare comes from Giovanni de Plano Carpini, a Franciscan friar sent by the pope to learn more about Mongol intentions. He undertook a heroic journey across Asia, passing through Kiev in 1246 en route to the Mongol capital at Karakorum.

Batu Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, had led a huge army into Russia, and destroyed the great walled city of Kiev in a winter invasion of 1240.

They attacked Russia, where they made great havoc, destroying cities and fortresses and slaughtering men; and they laid siege to Kiev, the capital of Russia; after they had besieged the city for a long time, they took it and put the inhabitants to death. When we were journeying through that land, we came across countless skulls and bones of dead men lying about on the ground. Kiev had been a very large and thickly populated town, but now it has been reduced to almost nothing, for there are at the present time scarce two hundred houses there and the inhabitants are kept in complete slavery. Going on from there, fighting as they went, the **Tartars** destroyed the whole of Russia.

Tartar the name given to the Mongols by the Russian peoples

Source 9.21 The destruction of Kiev

- 1 What effect do you think the vast number of killings perpetrated by Batu Khan's army in Kiev might have had on the rest of the Mongol campaign?
- 2 Research whether the Mongols did this to all the cities they conquered. If not, describe why other cities were treated differently.



Times gone by ...

One of the most catastrophic Mongol events recorded was the siege of Baghdad, which was undertaken by Hulagu Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan. Baghdad was a wealthy and cultured city of the Islamic empire, headed by a **caliph**. Hulagu demanded that the city surrender, but the caliph refused. The attack began with siege engines and catapults, and the Mongols formed a pincer force around both sides of the city. The caliph's army was soon defeated. A week of massacre and destruction began. The following description was written by the Persian historian Abdullah Wassaf.

caliph a civil and religious leader of the Islamic world

They swept through the city like hungry falcons attacking a flight of doves, or like raging wolves attacking sheep, with loose reins and shameless faces, murdering and spreading terror ... beds and cushions made of gold and encrusted with jewels were cut to pieces with knives and torn to shreds. Those hiding behind the veils of the great Harem were dragged ... through the streets and alleys, each of them becoming a plaything ... as the population died at the hands of the invaders.

Source 9.22 The siege of Baghdad, 1258

- 1 How do you think the perspective of Abdullah Wassaf would be different from that of the Catholic friar Giovanni Carpini, if he described the same event?
- 2 Identify the kind of language Wassaf uses to portray the Mongols.
- 3 Research the city of Baghdad during the early thirteenth century. Describe what was lost in the Mongol attack, apart from the gold and jewels described by Wassaf.



Source 9.23 The caliph crosses the bridge over the Tigris to meet Hulagu Khan, Baghdad, 1258 (from a fifteenth-century illuminated Islamic manuscript)

Many other accounts detail the cruelty of the Mongols in their attack on Baghdad:

- The Grand Library of Baghdad with its precious documents and books on medicine and astronomy were destroyed.
- At least 90 000 fleeing citizens lost their lives.
- Magnificent old buildings such as mosques, palaces, treasuries and hospitals were looted and ruined.

- The network of irrigation canals that supported agriculture around the Tigris River was severely damaged and never repaired.

- The caliph was captured and trampled to death, along with most of his family.

As a result, Baghdad remained in ruins and depopulated for several centuries, although today it is the large capital city of modern Iraq.

HISTORICAL FACT

Survivors of the siege of Baghdad said that the waters of the Tigris ran black with ink from the huge quantities of books flung into the river, and red from the blood of philosophers and scientists who were killed.

Activity 9.3

- 1 Deduce what information the two primary sources on Kiev (Source 9.21) and Baghdad (Source 9.22) have in common.
- 2 Search for evidence to support the view that the Mongols were a merciless conquering force. How would their victims have suffered in these invasions?
- 3 Study Source 9.23, depicting the siege of Baghdad. What does it tell us about the methods of warfare used by the Mongols? What evidence suggests that Baghdad was a wealthy and cultured city?



The Mongol Empire expands

Conquest under Genghis Khan 1206–27

By the time of his death in 1227, Genghis Khan controlled an empire that stretched from Persia and the Caspian Sea in the west to China and the Pacific Ocean in the east. It extended south to Tibet and north into Siberia. This represented an area of 26 million square kilometres, about four times the size of the Roman Empire.

In 1209, Genghis Khan turned his attention south to the lands of the Xixia, a state of north-west China, devastating buildings and written records and killing tens of thousands of civilians. In 1211, he led his armies across the Gobi Desert

against the Jin **dynasty** of northern China. A long campaign against the capital Zhongdu (Beijing) saw a ruthless conquest in 1215 and rich new resources gained.

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

Then Genghis Khan headed far across Central Asia and set out to demand the submission of the Khwarezm Empire, a wealthy kingdom to the west of the steppe in the region of modern-day Iran. He managed to conquer most of the great urban centres of the Islamic world. These included prosperous cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara, where the arts and sciences flourished and beautiful buildings abounded. Great atrocities were committed and the Khwarezm Empire was brutally destroyed.

Source 9.24 The Kalyan minaret of Bukhara (in modern-day Uzbekistan), dating from 1127. Genghis Khan was so impressed with the minaret that he decided not to destroy it. The highest structure in Central Asia, it was used as a watchtower and lighthouse for trade caravans. Today it is the only remnant of the pre-Mongol invasion in Bukhara.



Death of Genghis Khan

On his way back to Mongolia in 1227, Genghis Khan died following a fall from his horse, and was buried in an unknown location on the steppe. All those who knew of the burial place were killed and the resting place remains undiscovered to this day.

Before his death, he divided the empire among his sons and immediate family, warning against the dangers of quarrelling among themselves for the riches of the empire. He nominated Ogedai,

one of his four sons, to be his successor as the great khan. At the *kuriltai* following Genghis Khan's death, the great empire was divided into **khanates** or kingdoms under his sons and grandsons; these were later to become the four great *khanates*.

khanates areas or territories under the rule of a khan

But Genghis Khan's death was by no means the end of the Mongol empire and its ongoing expansion.

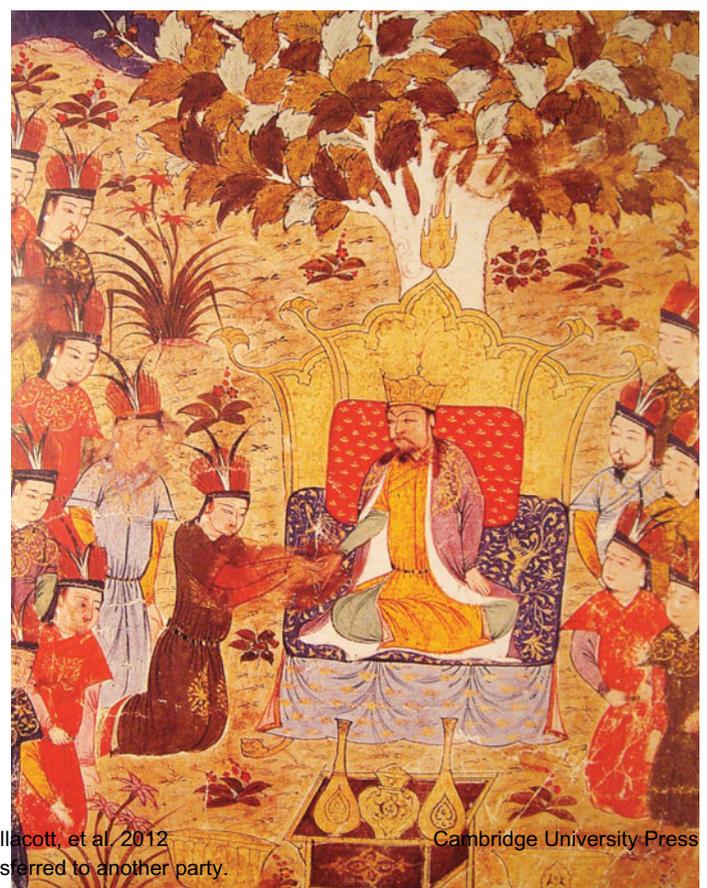


Source 9.25 The Mongol empire in 1227 at the time of Genghis Khan's death

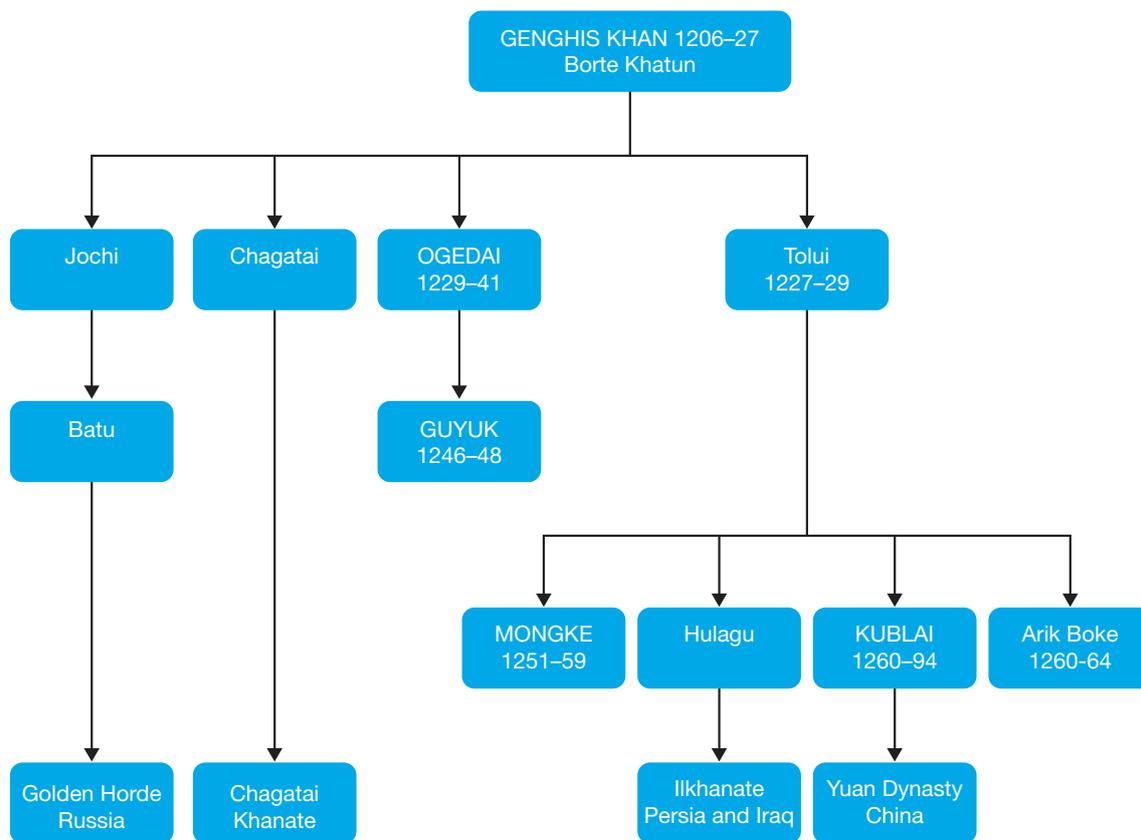
Expansion after Genghis Khan

Ogedai, 1229–41

During his twelve-year reign, Ogedai directed the Mongol armies into further campaigns and conquests. He presided over the greatest expansion of the Mongol empire. The Mongols invaded the steppe lands of Russia, Western Asia and Persia, and reached Eastern Europe under the military leaders who were the grandsons and descendants of Genghis Khan. Ogedai built a grand new capital at Karakorum on the Mongolian steppe, which was completed in 1238.



Source 9.26 The coronation of Ogedai, from *Jami' al-tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din



Source 9.27 Royal family tree of the Mongol empire (dates refer to length of reign, leaders in capital letters were Great Khans)

Research 9.1

Choose *one* of the following options to research in greater depth using ICT skills. Present your findings to the class.

1 A significant Mongol leader such as Batu Khan, Hulagu Khan or Mongke Khan.

or

2 An important Mongol battle such as the Battle of Mohi (1241), the Battle of Legnica (1241) or the Battle of Ain Jalut (1260).

Mongol expansion in the Middle East

Under Genghis Khan's descendants, the Mongols conquered either by force or through voluntary submission the areas we know today as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. A lack of grazing lands handicapped the Mongols from expanding further south. In 1260, The Egyptian Mamluks prevented the Mongols from expanding further west, defeating them decisively in Syria.

Expansion in East Asia

The most significant campaign was to continue the invasion of China, destroying the Jin dynasty and ultimately overwhelming the Song Dynasty. The country of Korea (or Goryeo as it was known) was invaded in 1236 and made a subject state, as was Tibet. Unsuccessful attempts were made to conquer Japan and Vietnam.

Expansion in Europe

The Mongols were for a century or more Europe’s most formidable and dangerous eastern neighbour. The Mongols invaded Russia, destroying the major cities of Eastern Europe such as Kiev, Ryazan and Vladimir. They stormed into Poland and the city of Krakow was burnt to the ground. The Hungarian army was crushed and the Mongol invasion is believed to have killed up to half of Hungary’s two million people.

Control extended into the countries of Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Romania, which became vassal (or subject) states, accepting Mongol rule and paying tribute to the *khans*. The Mongols may perhaps have made further conquests in central Europe had it not been for one significant event: the news of Ogedai’s death in 1241. As was customary, the leaders returned to Mongolia to elect a successor at the *kuriltai* at Karakorum. The Mongol army withdrew from central Europe, never to return in force again.

By 1260, the struggles over the leadership and succession had led to a gradual breakdown of the empire. The different branches of the family jostled for position, with feuds and wars breaking out between them. The domains were split into four separate territories or *khanates* and governed as independent realms by Ogedai’s sons and grandsons, as follows (also see Sources 9.27 and 9.28).

- 1 Golden Horde: This influential western Mongol empire encompassed European Russia as far west as the Danube River and as far south as the Black Sea. It is likely that the Golden Horde gained its name from the golden tent used by the *khans* and the Mongol word ‘horde’, meaning army camp. It was ruled by Batu Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, from the splendid new capital Sarai. Turkish became the main language and Islam the official religion. Trade with the Mediterranean merchants was promoted.
- 2 Ilkhanate: An area of the Islamic world including Iran and Iraq, it was ruled by Hulagu, also a grandson of Genghis Khan, who was noted for conquering Baghdad.
- 3 Chagatai Khanate: A smaller area of north-west China and Central Asia in the region of Uzbekistan, it included the great cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. This was assigned to Genghis Khan’s second son Chagatai.
- 4 Yuan dynasty (or Empire of the Great Khan): This *khanate* included China, Mongolia, Korea and Tibet, and was ruled by another grandson, Kublai Khan. Failed attempts were made to conquer Japan and the lands to the south of China.

 *Note this down*

Using the graphic organiser below, make a list of the countries defeated by the Mongols.

| Conquests in Europe | Conquests in the Middle East | Conquests in eastern Asia |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |



Source 9.28 The Mongol Empire in 1294

Activity 9.4

Study Source 9.28 and answer the following questions:

- 1 Calculate the land distance from east to west that was under Mongol control by 1294 CE.
- 2 Which of the *khanates* respectively controlled Russia, Korea and Persia?
- 3 What parts of Asia were *not* controlled by the Mongols?



Sorghaghtani Beki, mother of the great khans

Sorghaghtani Beki was Genghis Khan's daughter-in-law and the mother of four sons, all of whom became great *khans* of the Mongol empire. She was married to Tolui, Genghis Khan's youngest son, and raised each of their four sons—Mongke, Hulagu, Arik and Kublai – to be leaders who would inherit their grandfather's legacy. Although she herself was illiterate, she recognised the importance of a good education for each of her sons. Each son learnt a different language that the Mongols needed to administer their vast empire. She believed that it was important for the Mongols to build up the economies of their subject peoples in order to increase both production and taxes, so she encouraged the Chinese peasantry.

Although she was a Christian, Sorghaghtani practised religious toleration and gave support to all the major religions. She introduced Kublai to the ideas of Confucian scholars to help him understand and later rule China. This powerful and wise Mongol woman died in 1252.

Governing the conquered lands

Not all of the inhabitants of the conquered cities were put to death. Those towns that surrendered without a fight were usually spared the worst fate, but the people were still treated as slaves and required to pay heavy taxes or tribute payments to the Mongol *khans* as the price of their deliverance. Horsemen taken as prisoners were placed into the Mongol armies. Skilled people such as engineers

artisan a skilled tradesperson

and **artisans** were retained by the Mongols, but were not required to pay taxes as they were valued for their contributions. They were often resettled to other locations in the empire and lived miserable lives in the service of their Mongol masters. Objects fashioned from gold and silver, woven textiles and paintings were all highly prized by the Mongol upper classes, as they had no artisan class of their own.

Teachers, lawyers, musicians and artists were also spared and exempted from paying taxes. Scholars who were learned in astronomy and medicine were often employed as advisors.

The Yassa

Genghis Khan devised a legal code in order to govern the empire. It set out rules to be observed for everyday life and imposed strict penalties, even death, on those who disregarded the code. The **Yassa** set out an orderly and systematic method of collecting taxes, along with rules governing conduct in battle, the treatment of slaves and the allocation of grazing lands. Theft or vandalising of property was strictly forbidden. Animals were not to be hunted in the breeding season. The Mongol nobility were expected to share much of the same hardship as ordinary individuals. The *Yassa* also forbade the abduction of women, and **decreed** that men should be occupied only with hunting or war. Horse stealing and defection from the army were both offences punishable by death.

Yassa a code of laws that helped to govern the Mongol empire

decree a rule or law issued by a central authority

This traditional set of laws was inscribed on scrolls, seen only by the *khan* or his closest advisors, but the rules were well known and followed by the people. In this way, Genghis Khan was able to maintain strict discipline, safety and sound organisation across his empire.

Pax Mongolica

Across their unified empire, the Mongols were able to guarantee the safety and security of travellers and promote strong links between the various parts of the empire. They achieved this through the **Pax Mongolica**, or Mongol peace. They were very supportive of trade and commerce, and maintained good road networks such as the **Silk Road** for the merchant caravan trains that criss-crossed Central Asia. This was most important in allowing goods, ideas and new knowledge to be transmitted across a wide region of the world.

Pax Mongolica a long period of relative peace and stability across Central Asia

Silk Road a network of trade routes that linked Asia with Europe and the Mediterranean world

**HISTORICAL
FACT**

According to legend, a woman carrying a sack of gold could travel safely from one end of the empire to the other.



Source 9.29 A mountain pass on the Silk Road in western China

Religious tolerance

The Mongols were quite tolerant of different religions in their empire, although the majority of Mongols were shamanistic in belief (that is, they worshipped nature spirits). Tax benefits were offered to religious leaders – including members of Buddhist, Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths – to help to win their support. All groups were able to worship without fear of persecution throughout the empire. There were few existing places of worship because of the nomadic lifestyle. Under Ogedai, however, mosques, churches and temples were built in Karakorum. Three of the four *khanates* eventually favoured Islam over other faiths. The Mongols were also receptive

to foreigners and envoys from popes, artisans, mathematicians and astronomers were welcomed at Karakorum.

The *yam*

The Mongols created an extensive postal relay system along the trade routes stretching over the vast empire. This was known as the *yam* and was used by merchants, travellers and especially the messengers who frequently journeyed between China, the Middle East and Europe. The *yam* helped maintain fast transfer of important information from one part of the empire to another. Well-guarded relay

yam an efficient mail system using fast horse relay in the Mongol Empire

posts were set up at regular intervals along the major trade routes and were stocked with supplies of food, horses and lodging. Riders changed horses at these posts, which were approximately 40 km apart, or else they relayed the mail on to a new rider. The Mongol riders were able to cover exceptional distances of up to 200 kilometres per day.

Activity 9.5

- 1 Explain why animals weren't allowed to be hunted in the breeding season.
- 2 Identify three classes of people that were exempt from taxation under Mongol rule. Why do you think these classes of people did not have to pay tax?
- 3 Discuss why the Mongol religious policies could be seen as unusual.



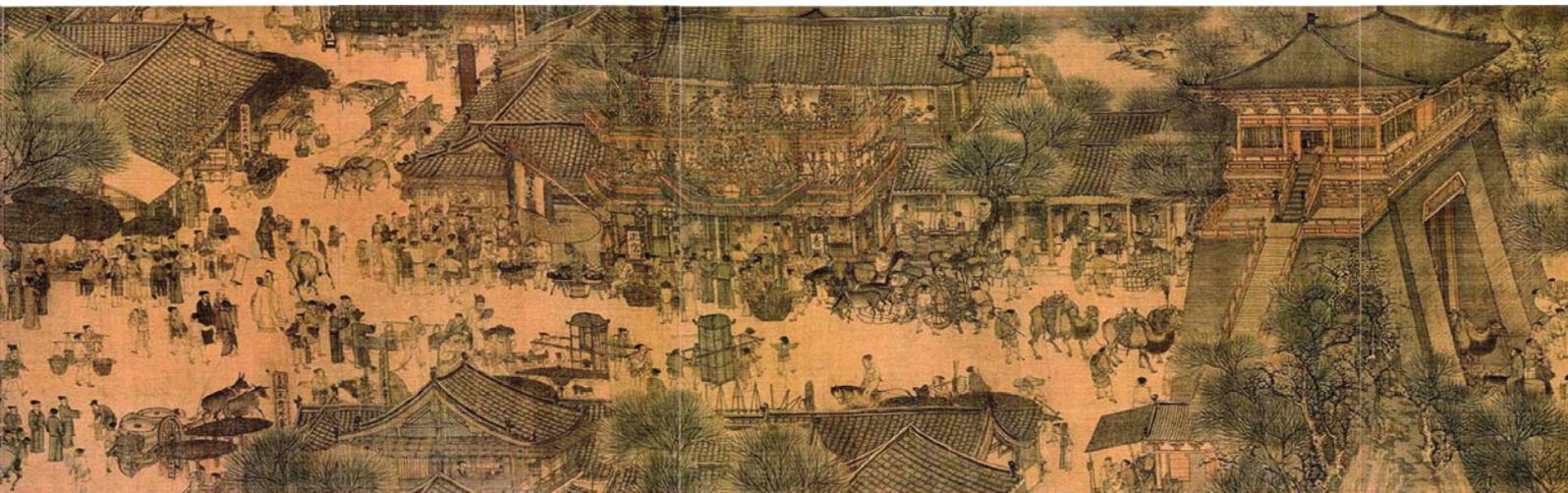
Mongol rule in China

China before the Mongol conquest

China was an advanced civilisation. Under the Song dynasty of the thirteenth century, science, technology, literature and the arts flourished. It was a sedentary society of peasant farmers who grew crops such as rice and tea and cultivated silk worms. China's population and its economy were

growing rapidly, with an estimated population of 90 million at the time. More people were living in the cities, which were very large by the standards of this period.

However, China was not a united country, with the northern Jin and Xia dynasties and the southern Song dynasty in conflict with each other. China had always faced threats of invasion from the nomadic animal herders to the north. The Mongols were hard to defeat and the Chinese resorted to maintaining an uneasy peace with them by annual payments of silk and money. The Chinese regarded the Mongols as uncultured



Source 9.30 A portion of the 5.3 metre Qingming scroll, depicting city life in Kaifeng during the twelfth century

and barbaric. The Great Wall was built over many centuries to prevent raids and invasions from these warring tribes.

The upper levels of government were run by well-educated scholar officials who were chosen through competitive written examinations. China was organised into provinces, which were further divided into districts for administration by local officials. Paper money had replaced the cumbersome metal coins used by the merchants for trade. Fine porcelain and silk cloth were highly prized, even although merchants and craftsmen had a relatively low status in Chinese society.

Kublai Khan establishes a powerful empire in China

Kublai Khan became the Great Khan of the Mongol empire in 1260 CE. He was determined to complete the conquest of China, begun by his grandfather Genghis Khan, by defeating the southern Song dynasty. Despite fierce resistance, the last Song ruler was finally overthrown and in 1271 Kublai Khan declared himself emperor of the new Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). This was the first non-Chinese dynasty to rule the whole of China.

Kublai Khan had a deep fascination with Chinese civilisation but also wanted to retain much of his traditional Mongol identity. He resided in a lavish Chinese-style palace in his newly built



Source 9.31 Portrait of Kublai Khan painted in the Chinese style

capital of Daidu (present-day Beijing), laid out with Chinese-influenced buildings. It was also known as Khanbalik: the city of the emperor. Kublai Khan adopted a largely Chinese lifestyle. He also built a magnificent summer palace at Shangdu (or Xanadu).

[He is] the most powerful of men, in subjects, lands and treasures, that there is on Earth or ever was, from the time of our first father Adam to this day.

Source 9.32 Italian explorer Marco Polo describes Kublai Khan in extravagant terms

Yet he preserved the distinction between Mongol and Chinese people by forbidding marriage between them and encouraging traditional customs. Mongol women refused the Chinese practice of foot-binding, and maintained

the hunts, feasts and ceremonies they enjoyed in Mongolia. It was even said that the Khan had steppe grass sown in the courtyard of the imperial palace to remind him of his Mongolian homeland.

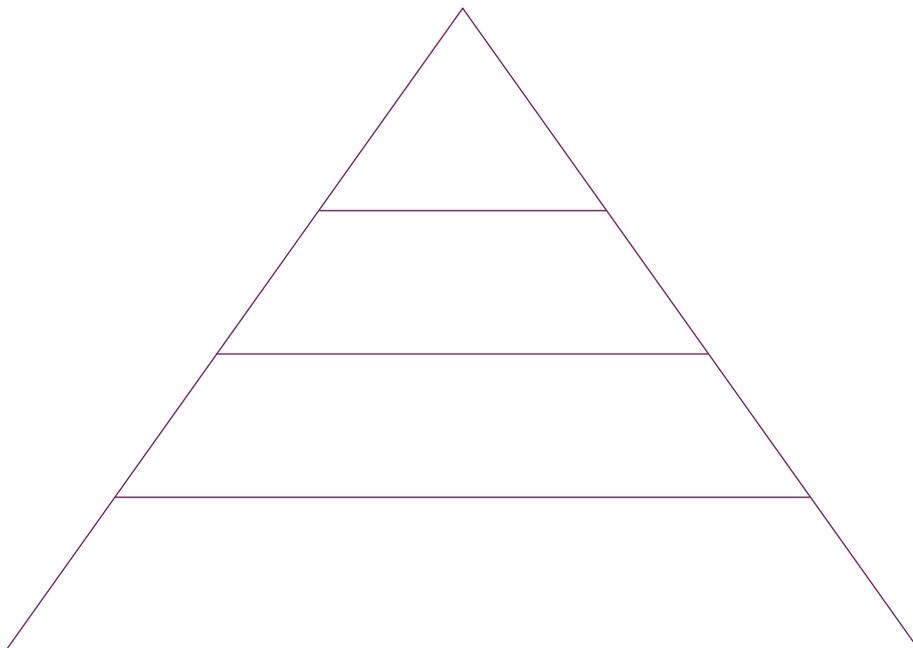
The Chinese subjects resented Mongol rule, regarding the leaders as insensitive to Chinese culture and likely to endanger Chinese traditions. Kublai Khan recruited many foreign advisors to assist him in ruling China, chosen from all over the empire. The Chinese scholar officials were replaced in the top positions in the government, and the civil service examinations were eliminated. A different social structure developed that was headed by the Mongols. The new advisors directly below them served in key positions as government administrators and tax collectors. Beneath these were the northern Chinese, followed by the southern Chinese at the bottom of the rung, whose power was limited to holding minor government positions.



Source 9.33 Kublai Khan on a hunting expedition with the empress; note the Mongolian furs worn over silk robes

 *Note this down*

Using the graphic organiser below, outline the social hierarchy in China during the Yuan dynasty.



Source 9.34 The arts flourished during the Yuan dynasty, including fine porcelain

Generous patron of the arts

Kublai drew artists, scholars and musicians to his court. The artisan class enjoyed an improved social status, tax benefits and freedom from unpaid labour. Works of art in jade, bronze and porcelain flourished. The blue and white porcelain for which the later Ming dynasty was so famous began to be produced during the Yuan dynasty. Paintings by artists such as Zhao Mengfu were greatly admired and he was given artistic freedom and rewarded by the Mongols. Popular entertainments such as plays and musical dramas were written for the court and upper classes. A new script was devised for the Mongolian language by Tibetan scholar Phagpa to help keep records and to overcome the difficulty of many different languages across the empire.

HISTORICAL
FACT

The communication system under Kublai Khan consisted of an extraordinary 1400 postal stations, which used 50 000 horses along with many thousands of oxen, mules, carts and boats.

Building programs

Apart from the new capital and the luxurious summer palace, Kublai Khan began many other ambitious building projects. These included extending the Grand Canal to Beijing, which made shipping grain from the south much easier, and completing an extensive postal station network. Labour for these projects was recruited from the peasantry, which was a source of anger to them. The Mongols further developed the navy, creating the Mongol war fleets that were used in the costly failed invasions of Japan (see Chapter 7).

Peasants

The peasants were burdened with heavy taxes, although Kublai Khan's administration did support the peasantry with many practical measures. These included providing granaries for surplus grain so famine could be avoided, and preventing the Mongol cavalry from turning croplands into pastures for their animals. All peasant households

were organised into cooperative clusters of fifty houses under a village leader. The purpose was to guide farming practices, assist with flood control and improve silk production. Basic literacy for peasant children was provided and public schools were set up.

Foreign trade

Under Kublai Khan, the Mongols continued their policy of supporting merchants and encouraging trade. China became the most productive trading and manufacturing centre of the era. Merchants brought all manner of luxury items and useful goods to the Mongol court via the Silk Road routes. They rarely travelled the entire distance overland, instead trading the goods at regular intervals from one middleman to another. Merchants were given tax exemptions and allowed to use the relay stations of the empire. Kublai Khan expanded the use of paper money and invited foreign merchants from Europe, Persia and India to visit China.

Activity 9.6

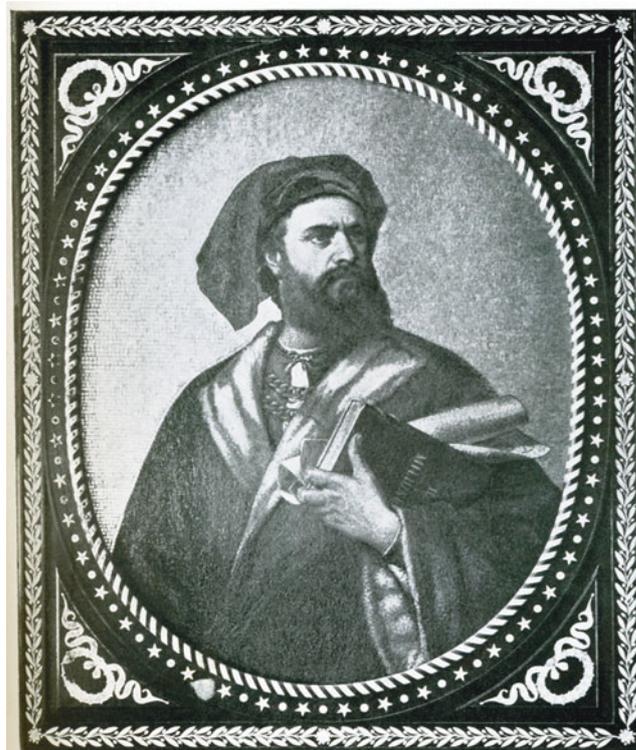
- 1 Identify when Kublai Khan established the Yuan dynasty.
- 2 Name two ways in which the Yuan dynasty encouraged the growth of trade.
- 3 List some of the benefits that the separation of Mongol and Chinese people had for the Yuan dynasty. Analyse the effect of this policy on the longevity of the dynasty.

Marco Polo – adventurer and traveller

Many travellers, envoys and missionaries did make the challenging journey to China during the relative safety of the Pax Mongolica period. One of the most renowned was Marco Polo, who set out from Venice as a 17-year-old boy in 1271 CE, accompanying his father and uncle. He spent seventeen years in China in the service of Kublai Khan. His accounts documented his epic journey, which took three years traversing the Silk Roads of Central Asia, crossing the Gobi Desert and travelling throughout much of China.

Marco Polo marvelled at the use of paper money made from mulberry bark, and was overawed by the size and splendour of China's cities. He was curious about the burning of black stones (or coal) and praised the efficiency of the postal system.

Marco Polo made a long sea voyage back to Venice where the story of his travels was written in prison after he was captured during a war against the rival city of Genoa. It was through the eyes of



Source 9.35 A portrait of Marco Polo, who said: 'I only wrote half of what I saw.'

Marco Polo and his accounts that Europeans first learned about the civilisations to the east.



Source 9.36 According to Polo, the Gobi Desert consisted entirely of mountains of sand and valleys with nothing at all to eat

Times gone by ...

Marco Polo's exotic tales of Kublai Khan's palace and Chinese life would intrigue Europeans for centuries, although there were doubts cast by many on the truth of these fabulous accounts.

There is at this place a very fine marble palace, the rooms of which are all gilt and painted with figures of men and beasts and birds, and with a variety of trees and flowers, all executed with such exquisite art that you regard them with delight and astonishment.

Round this Palace a wall is built, enclosing a compass of 16 miles, and inside the park are fountains and rivers and brooks, and beautiful meadows, with all kinds of wild animals (excluding such as are of ferocious nature) which the Emperor has procured and placed there to supply food for his gersfalcons and hawks. The khan himself goes every week to see his birds sitting in mew [cages] and sometimes rides through the park with a leopard behind him on his horse's croup [hindquarters]: and then if he sees any animal that takes his fancy, he slips his leopard at it, and the game when taken is made over to feed the hawks in mew. This he does for diversion.

Source 9.37 Polo's description of Kublai Khan's summer palace and hunting ground at Shangdu

- Do you think Marco Polo is an accurate and reliable source of historical knowledge? Identify three biases you should be wary of when reading his account.

China after the Mongol era

In the last years of Kublai Khan's reign, the dynasty was beginning to weaken. His building projects had been enormously costly and the public works projects in irrigation and flood control could no longer be sustained. The Yellow River flooded disastrously, causing a decline in agriculture and the economy. The failed naval campaigns to conquer Japan were financially ruinous, weakening the Mongol forces and undermining their reputation. The luxurious lifestyle of the Yuan court created resentment among the heavily taxed peasants. In addition, subsequent Mongol emperors following Kublai Khan's death in 1294 were less able rulers.

In the south, rebel forces were gathering and beginning to drive the Mongols out. The Yuan dynasty was finally overthrown in 1368 and the Mongols fled north to their homelands. The dynasty had lasted less than a century. Zhu Yuanzhang, a rebel peasant leader, became the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, which was to rule China for the next three centuries (1368–1644).

The Ming rulers rejected many of the Mongol influences, restored the civil service examinations and placed Chinese people back in positions of government. The new script fell into disuse. The merchants were expelled and Kublai Khan's summer palace was torched by the Ming army. China's trade declined, the overland routes withered and paper money was abandoned. China became a closed society, and was virtually isolated from the rest of the world for many hundreds of years.

Research 9.2

- 1 Investigate the reasons for the unsuccessful invasions of Japan during the Yuan dynasty.
or
- 2 Use your research skills to discover more about the journeys that travellers and merchants such as Marco Polo undertook.

Activity 9.7

- 1 Explain what enabled Marco Polo to travel such an extraordinary distance across Asia.
- 2 Discuss why his journey is of such interest to historians today.
- 3 Analyse how Mongol rule during the Yuan dynasty affected the lives of the Chinese people.
- 4 Design a portion of a scroll that illustrates life in the imperial palace during the Yuan dynasty.



Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, analyse the effect that the Yuan dynasty had on China.

| China before the Mongols | China during Mongol reign | China after the Mongols |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | Civil service examinations were restored |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Decline of the Mongol Empire

Like many dynasties, personal ambition and rivalry began to take root among the descendants of Genghis Khan. The weaknesses were foreshadowed after Ogedai's death when succession disputes became commonplace. Kublai Khan and his brother Arik-Boke both competed for title of *khan* after Mongke's death. Hulagu of the Ilkhanate and Berke of the Golden

Horde were at civil war with each other. These bitter internal divisions meant that the once-united empire under Genghis Khan began to fragment.

High death tolls due to the outbreak of the plague also weakened the empire and interfered with trade along the silk routes. The Mongols were defeated and humiliated as they tried to invade new territories in Japan and Southeast Asia. The fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368 signified the end of Mongol supremacy across Asia.



Consequences of Mongol expansion

The terror unleashed by the Mongol invasions cannot be overstated: a wasteland of the cultured cities of Central Asia were left in the wake of the Mongols. Civic and religious leaders were massacred, innocent women and children were put to the sword, and enemy soldiers butchered. Ancient irrigation systems were destroyed, and large areas depopulated, many of which never recovered. Researchers estimate the death toll from Mongol conquests to be at least 30 million people.

By contrast, new learning and knowledge benefited East and West alike. Chinese innovations such as printing, paper currency, the compass and

gunpowder reached Europe. Persian knowledge of mathematics, astronomy and science was brought to China, while Chinese books on medicine and agriculture travelled to the West. The knowledge of world geography expanded and travellers' stories sparked interest in the exploration of a sea route to China.

The Mongol peace and code of law provided a long period of stability. This enabled safe passage for merchant caravans, artisans and missionaries who could travel freely.

Trade between Europe, the Middle East and Asia was promoted. Chinese produce like silk,

jade, tea and porcelain were in great demand in Europe. Carpets and weapons travelled from the Middle East. Spices, silver, fine cloth, horses and new plants and foods moved eastwards along the trading routes from Europe. The trade routes brought great wealth to the traders and the caravan cities.

Tolerance and openness to new ideas meant that cultural exchanges increased and the distribution of the major religions became much more widespread in this period. Buddhist, Christian and Islamic faiths spread along the trade routes, as did styles of music, art and dance.

An unintended consequence of Mongol expansion was the spread of the bubonic plague to Europe and North Africa. Flea-infested rats carrying the plague travelled with the soldiers and horses across Central Asia to Europe. The dreaded **Black Death** became the

Black Death the great outbreak of bubonic plague in the fourteenth century

greatest killer of all in the fourteenth century (see Chapter 10).

Never again were nomadic tribes able to assert their dominance over large regions and threaten sedentary civilisations. The Mongol conquests were 'the last and the most dreadful of all the nomadic assaults on civilisation'.

The advent of powerful guns and improved fortifications, the rise of new dynasties (such as the Ottomans of Turkey), the dawn of sea conquest and the growth of new trading powers were all about to change the face of global history. In the space of two hundred years, the Mongol empire grew and fell.

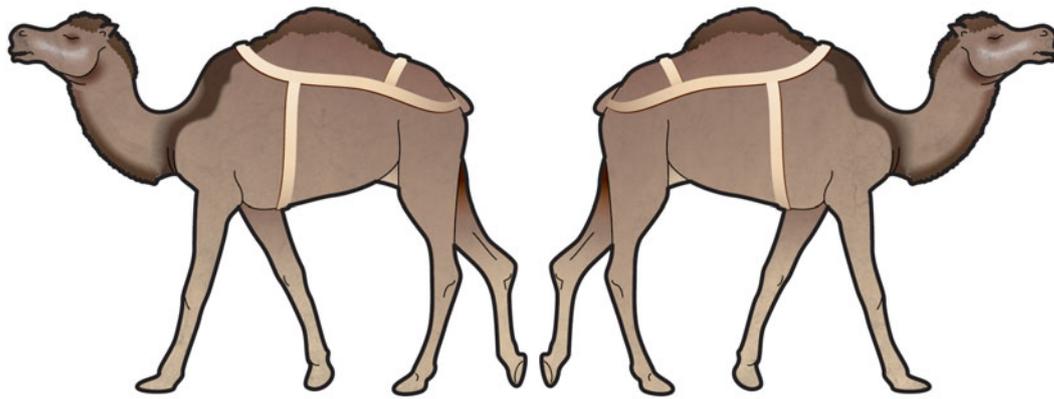
China eventually took over much of Mongolia and it remained part of China until the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911. Today Mongolia occupies a similar region of Central Asia as it did in Genghis Khan's time.

HISTORICAL FACT

In Mongolia today Genghis Khan is regarded as a national hero. His name can be found on buildings and on products such as sweets, banknotes and liquor. Even the international airport is named after him! Genghis Khan sits astride a horse on top of an enormous statue near the capital city of Ulan Bator. Many of his descendants still herd cattle on the Mongolian steppes in the traditional nomadic lifestyle, just as they did in Genghis Khan's time.



Activity 9.8



Source 9.38 Two camels (A and B)

- 1 On camel A show examples of goods and knowledge that came on trade routes from the east to Europe.
- 2 On camel B show examples of the goods and knowledge that came from the west to China.



Source 9.39 Statue of Genghis Khan in Ulan Bator, Mongolia

Chapter summary

- The harsh steppe grasslands of Central Asia were home to many nomadic tribes who were noted for their superb horsemanship, courage and toughness.
- The organising genius of Genghis Khan transformed warring Mongol tribes into a unified and highly disciplined military machine.
- The Mongols set out on relentless conquests under Genghis Khan and his descendants that saw them invade China, Persia, Russia and Eastern Europe during the thirteenth century, creating the largest contiguous land empire in history.
- Noted for their cruelty and ruthlessness, the Mongols slaughtered those who did not surrender willingly and plundered their towns and cities.
- Mongol reign brought a long period of relative peace and trade, a strict governing code, religious tolerance, new technologies, and the beneficial transfer of culture and ideas across Asia, the Middle East and Europe.
- Under the Yuan dynasty of Kublai Khan, China became a united country in which trade, culture and technology flourished.
- Power struggles and leadership disputes began to weaken Mongol supremacy and the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368 marked the end of the Mongol empire.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- As a young boy Genghis Khan was known as:
 - Timur
 - Temujin
 - Tartar
 - Tumen
- The period of the greatest expansion of the Mongol empire took place under which of the following leaders?
 - Kublai Khan
 - Genghis Khan
 - Batu
 - Ogedai
- The Yassa was:
 - the fermented mare's milk consumed by Mongol people
 - a form of torture that the Mongols inflicted on their captives
 - the name used by the Chinese to describe their Mongol rulers
 - a code of laws used to help govern the Mongol empire
- Which statement about the Mongol empire is incorrect?
 - The empire is commonly referred to as the largest continental empire in history.
 - The Mongol shipping fleet assisted in extending the boundaries of the empire.
 - The Mongol army relied on its skilled horseman and cunning battle tactics.
 - Trade and commerce were actively promoted by the Mongols along the Silk Road.
- Kublai Khan became emperor of which Chinese dynasty?
 - the Yuan
 - the Ming
 - the Song
 - the Manchu

Short answer

- 1 The Mongols have been described as ‘the devil’s horsemen’. Do you think this is an appropriate term?
- 2 What was the Pax Mongolica? Why was it important in promoting trade and the flow of ideas across Asia?
- 3 Suggest four qualities of Genghis Khan that made him such a notable leader.
- 4 Explain the benefits the rule of Kublai Khan brought to China.
- 5 Outline the factors that led to the decline of the Mongolian empire by the mid-fourteenth century.

Source analysis

Study Sources 9.40 and 9.41 and answer the following questions:

- 1 What is taking place outside the walls of Vladimir (an important city in Russia) in Source 9.40?
- 2 Explain why the second image of Vladimir (Source 9.41) is so different.
- 3 Do the two images together provide useful source materials for historians? Can they give an accurate picture of Mongol conquest?

Extended response

Do you consider that the expansion of the Mongol empire had a negative or a positive impact on the peoples of Asia and Eastern Europe? In a short essay, present a well-planned argument that sets out your main points and supports your position.



Source 9.40 Mongols outside the walls of Vladimir, 1239



Source 9.41 Returning to Vladimir, 1239

10



The Black Death in Asia, Europe and Africa

Source 10.1 Burying plague victims at Tournai, 1349

Before you start

Main focus

The Black Death was a devastating plague that swept across Europe, North Africa and Asia during the fourteenth century.

Why it's relevant today

The Black Death was a major crisis in history that caused an immense loss of life and hastened significant economic and social changes in the late Middle Ages.

Inquiry questions

- What was the Black Death and how was it caused?
- How did the disease spread across such a vast area in Europe, Asia and North Africa?
- In what ways did people respond to the onset of the Black Death?
- What were the immediate and long-term impacts of the Black Death on fourteenth century society?

Key terms

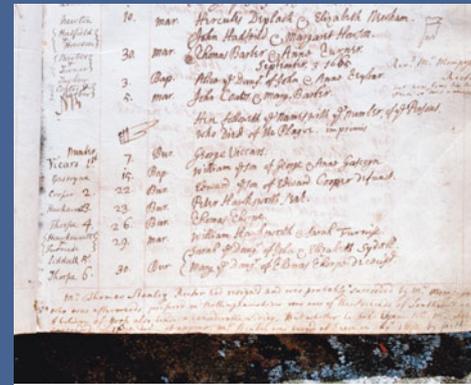
- Black Death
- buboes
- feudal system
- flagellant
- pandemic
- penance
- Silk Road
- sumptuary law

Significant individuals

- Agnolo di Tura of Siena
- Brother John Clyn
- Jean de Venette
- Jean Froissart
- Jean Gethin
- Marchionne di Coppo Stefani
- Pope Clement VI

Let's begin

The fourteenth century world was devastated by a global pandemic known as the Black Death. From its origins in China, this plague spread along land and sea trade routes and reached the Mediterranean Sea in 1347. The lethal duo of the plague-infected black rat and the fleas it harboured caused the disease to spread rapidly across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Medical doctors and authorities alike were powerless to prevent millions of terrified people from contracting the frightening symptoms of the plague. Some 75 million people are thought to have perished during the Black Death, the greatest medical disaster of the Middle Ages. Such a great loss of population resulted in significant social and economic changes. These included labour shortages, a weakening of the feudal system, loss of prestige for the church, greater social mobility and peasant rebellion.



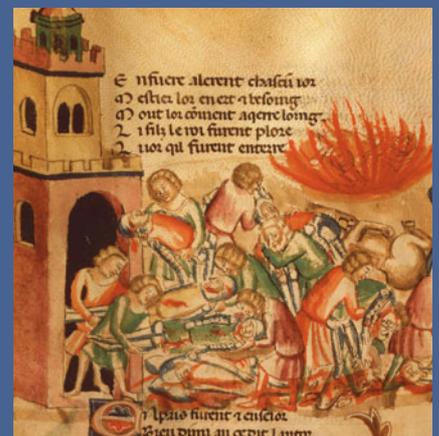
Source 10.2 Parish records of the first Black Death mortalities, Eyam, Derbyshire, England



Source 10.3 Burying plague victims, Holywell Mount, England, 1665



Source 10.4 Flagellants scourge themselves



Source 10.5 Plague scene from a fourteenth century manuscript

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

c. 1330 CE ...

Origins of the plague in c. 1330 CE north-east China

Plague moves west along 1334–47 caravan routes from China

Mongol armies spread plague 1347 at Kaffa; plague enters Italy; plague enters Egypt

Plague spreads around Late 1347 Mediterranean sea ports

Plague reaches Paris and 1348 southern England

Plague spreads across 1349 England and Ireland, and reaches Scotland and Norway

c. 1350 CE ...

Plague enters Russia; c. 1352 and begins to abate

c. 1360 CE ...

c. 1370 CE ...

c. 1380 CE ...

Peasants' Revolt takes place 1381

WORLD EVENTS

1315–22 Great Famine strikes northern Europe

1337 The Hundred Years War begins

1342–52 Clement VI is Pope in Avignon

1368 Mongol empire is overthrown in China; Ming dynasty begins

1378 The Great Schism takes place with rival popes in Rome and Avignon

1387 Chaucer writes *The Canterbury Tales*



Source 10.6 St Bernard Tolomei of Siena, Italy, ministers to victims of the Black Plague, 1348



Source 10.7 Wood cut *Drink the Black Plague Death*



Source 10.8 *Tasting the Medicine*, London, England



Source 10.9 Death taking plague victims, French illuminated manuscript, c. 1503



Source 10.10 Map of Europe at the time of the Black Death



Life in the fourteenth century

Living conditions

Some 650 years ago, European cities, towns and villages were very different places in which to live. Populations were growing rapidly, with medieval towns and cities becoming very congested and unhealthy. People emptied their garbage and dirty water into the narrow unpaved lanes. Sanitation was very basic, with streets often used as open sewers, which eventually seeped into sludge-choked rivers and streams. King Edward III of England in a letter to the lord mayor of London in 1349 complained that the streets and lanes were ‘foul with human faeces, the air of the city poisoned to the great danger of men passing’.

[There was] filth running in open ditches in the streets, fly-blown meat and stinking fish, contaminated and adulterated ale, polluted well water, unspeakable privies and epidemic disease ... which were experienced indiscriminately by all social classes.

Source 10.11 Conditions in Bristol, Britain’s second largest city

The small houses that belonged to the poor had clay floors that were covered in dirty straw or rushes, with animals often living under the same roof. Peasants’ houses had no glass windows, so there was very little sunlight. Nor were there chimneys, so smoke from the fire escaped through a hole in the thatched roof. Without running water or bathrooms, personal hygiene was poor as people rarely bathed and their clothing was often visibly dirty. Rats and other vermin such as lice and fleas flourished in these unsanitary conditions and shared a close relationship with people.

Medical knowledge

Medical knowledge was very basic in the fourteenth century as there was little understanding of the causes of disease. Treatment by poorly trained doctors was a risky business and medical remedies were largely based on superstition and ignorance. It was commonly believed that illness arose from ‘miasmas’, or deadly airborne vapours, and that God sent illness as a punishment.

A common principle of medicine was the theory of the four humours. These were fluids in the body which included black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. It was believed that these humours had to be in balance in order to maintain good health and that any imbalance was a major cause of health disorders. Bloodletting, often by attaching leeches to the body, was a popular method of treatment, as were numerous herbal remedies. The church prohibited the dissection of corpses, so little was known about the workings of the human body. Operations could very easily result in death as there was no knowledge of antibiotics or of the need to sterilise surgical instruments. Hospitals were places of isolation of the sick – or homes for the blind, lame or elderly – rather than being places to regain health.

Life expectancy was very low: barely 30 years on average. This was due in part to the high number of children dying in infancy, along with deaths in childbirth and the high toll brought about by infectious diseases spreading rapidly in overcrowded conditions. If individuals survived the dangers of childhood, they could expect to reach the age of 50.

Already weakened by war, famine and malnutrition, Europe in the mid-fourteenth century was ripe for a tragedy such as the Black Death. It was not until the nineteenth century, some 500 years later, that medical advances proved that **epidemics** could be blamed on poor sanitation, overcrowding and unhealthy diets.

life expectancy the average length of time that a given population is expected to live

epidemic a disease that affects many people at the same time

Activity 10.1

- 1 Discuss the three main reasons why there was little anyone could do to prevent or cure the Black Death.
- 2 Explain why the plague spread so quickly in medieval towns and cities.
- 3 Research the important advances made to medical understanding in the 1800s by an individual such as Edward Jenner, Edwin Chadwick, Joseph Lister or Louis Pasteur. Suggest how these advances might have made a difference for people affected by the Black Death. Share your findings with your class in a brief PowerPoint presentation.

Importance of religion

The medieval church had an active influence on people's lives. Across Europe, the Catholic Church was a powerful and wealthy organisation. The spiritual leader of the church was the pope, who was based in Rome, but there were also French popes in Avignon from 1303 to 1377. The vast majority of people were deeply religious in medieval Europe. The church's teachings were carefully observed and people attended church every Sunday to hear the Latin mass being conducted by the priest. Beautiful stone cathedrals were slowly being built, which testified to the importance and role of the church in society.

Every village had its own parish church and clergy who organised charitable works, provided education and tended to the needs of the sick. Each peasant family was required to give the church an annual tithe of one-tenth of all they had produced during the year. Monks, friars and nuns lived in monasteries and convents, devoting their lives to worship and good deeds such as caring for the sick. People relied on the church to provide explanations for misfortunes that occurred, regarding events such as the plague as signs of **divine** anger and God's punishment for people's sins. In the Islamic world of North Africa and the Middle East, people similarly believed that misfortune was a sign of Allah's displeasure.

divine relating to a god or gods

Origins and spread of the Black Death



By 1347, the dark shadow of a sinister plague had arrived from China to begin its deadly path across Europe and North Africa. Its fearful victims called it the great pestilence, plague or the great mortality, and within four or five years it would take the lives of up to one-third of the population. This major event in history later became known as the Black Death.

What was the plague?

The plague was a large-scale infectious disease, which has appeared throughout history and at times spread rapidly when people travelled over long distances in large numbers. In the fourteenth century it was characterised by three related forms: the bubonic plague, the pneumonic plague and the septicaemic plague.

Bubonic plague

This was the most commonly seen form of the plague, and it killed two-thirds of its victims. A person experienced egg-sized swellings or **buboes** on their neck, armpits and groin. The pus-filled buboes continued to expand until they burst. These symptoms were followed by an outbreak of black spots, fever, headache and vomiting, with death occurring in five to seven days.

buboes painful pus-filled swellings of the lymph nodes, characteristic of the bubonic plague

Pneumonic plague

This form attacked the respiratory system and was characterised by coughing and the discharge of blood. It resulted from airborne transmission via sneezing or coughing and had a fatality rate of 95 per cent.

Septicaemic plague

This was more rarely seen and almost always fatal. This version attacked and poisoned the blood system of the patient causing very rapid death.

The plague was termed 'the Black Death' due to the internal bleeding that occurred in all three types of the disease, causing large black bruises to appear on the skin. The grotesque appearance of the victims and the swiftness with which the disease struck made the plague especially terrifying.

We see death coming into our midst like black smoke, a plague which cuts off the young, a rootless phantom which has no mercy or fair countenance. Woe is me of the shilling in the armpit: it is seething, terrible, wherever it may come, a head that gives pain and causes a loud cry, a burden carried under the arms, a painful angry knob, a white lump. It is of the form of an apple, like the head of an onion, a small boil that spares no-one. Great is its seething, like a burning cinder, a grievous thing of an ashy colour.

Source 10.12 Welsh poet, Jeuan Gethin, died shortly after writing this description in 1349



Source 10.13 A physician lances a telltale bubo in fourteenth century France

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, compare the features of each type of plague.

| Bubonic | Pneumonic | Septicaemic |
|---------|-----------|-------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

A disease spread by infected rats and fleas

The source of the plague was traced back to the black rat and the oriental rat flea. The rats were carriers of the *Yersinia pestis* bacteria that caused the plague. They were frequently infested by fleas. After biting the rat, the flea became the carrier of the deadly plague bacteria, which then began to multiply in the flea’s gut. Transmission to humans occurred when the biting flea passed bacteria into the human bloodstream. The disease was also spread by tiny droplets of bacteria in the air from coughing by an infected person.

The causes of the plague were not understood in the fourteenth century and so there were no cures. Doctors were quite powerless to prevent the disease, which rapidly spread in overcrowded conditions via infected people, clothing and corpses, as well as the rats and fleas.

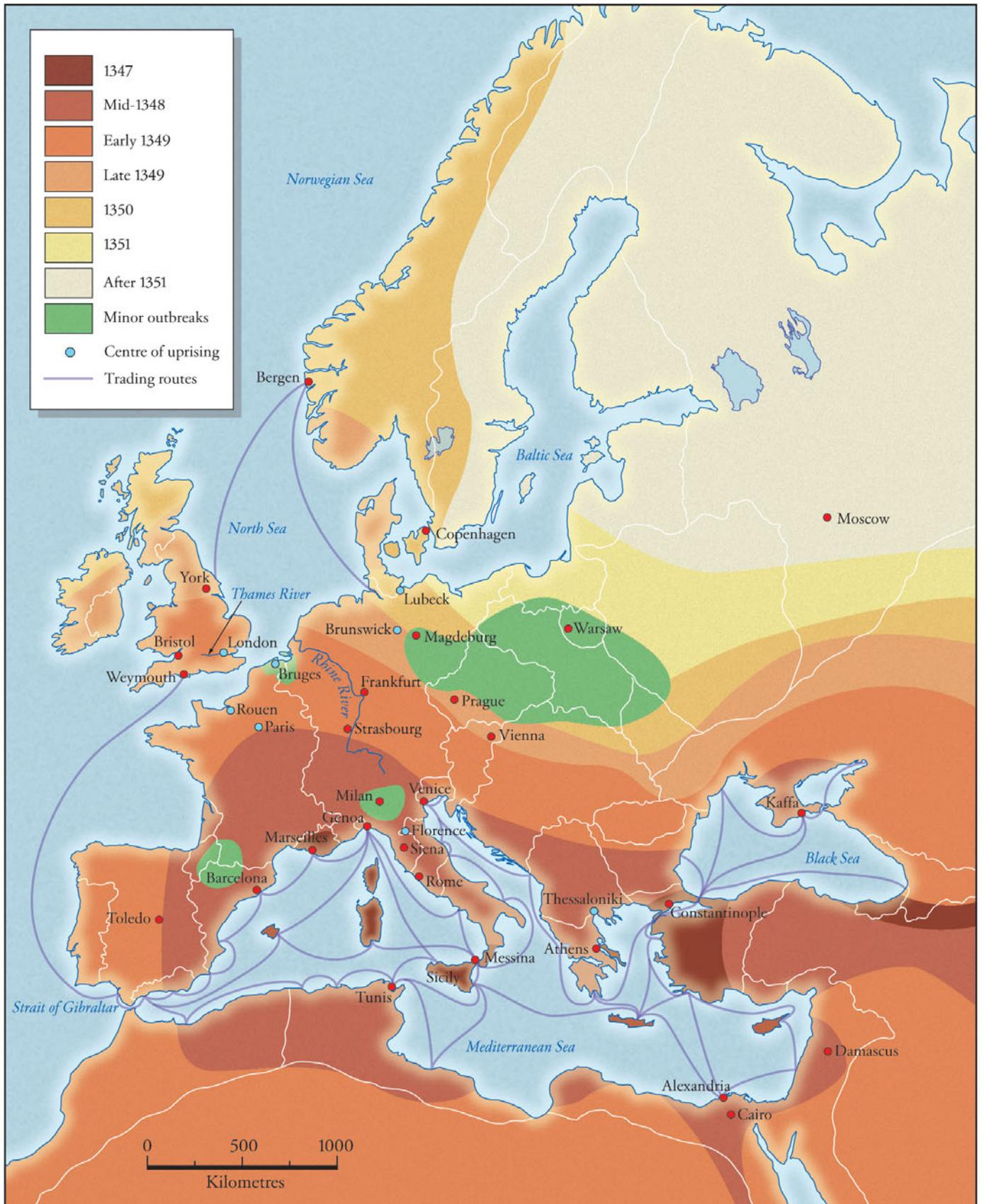


Source 10.14 Fleas were a carrier of the plague bacteria (*Yersinia pestis*), which multiplied in their gut

HISTORICAL FACT

HISTORICAL FACT

The plague bacillus (*Yersinia pestis*) was identified by a French doctor, Andre Yersin, in 1894, and found to be a disease spread by rats and fleas. It was not until 1932 that sulphur drugs were used as an effective treatment for the plague – over six centuries after the Black Death occurred!



Source 10.15 Progress of the plague from Central Asia across Europe and North Africa c. 1347–52 ce

Activity 10.2

- 1 Explain why the plague became known as the Black Death.
- 2 Construct a flow diagram to explain how a person might fall ill with the plague.
- 3 Identify what Jean Gethin means by the 'shilling in the armpit'.
- 4 Imagine that a member of your family contracts the plague in London in June 1349. Describe the terrible events of the next five days.
 - a Ensure you include a description of the symptoms you observe and the progress of the disease.
 - b Explain how your family responds during this time.
- 5 Research modern-day pandemics that might be compared with the bubonic plague. Can you suggest any similarities in the ways in which people might respond to an outbreak of that disease? In what ways are we better able to cope with epidemics than people in the fourteenth century?

Where did the Black Death originate?

The origins of the plague appeared around 1334 in north-eastern China. From there the plague spread south within China, striking down millions of people in its wake. It also began its long westward journey with the Mongol horsemen across the dry steppes and rugged mountains of Central Asia towards Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. By 1346, the shores of the Black Sea were plague-ridden.

HISTORICAL FACT

Cats were killed in medieval times by superstitious people who considered them to be associated with the devil. Had there been more cats, the local rat population could have been kept down, lessening the spread of plague-infected fleas from host to host.

The role of expanding trade routes

Silk Road a network of trade routes that linked Asia with Europe and the Mediterranean world

trade caravan a group of merchants travelling together with their goods

By the fourteenth century, significant land and sea trade links existed between Europe and Asia. The expansion of the Mongol empire had opened up trade along the **Silk Road** routes and there was strong demand in Europe for silk, spices, jewels, furs and perfumes from China. Merchants, **trade caravans**, pilgrims,

postal carriers, soldiers and nomads all travelled many thousands of kilometres overland on these well-maintained routes in very harsh conditions.

Sea trading routes in the Mediterranean Sea were busy thoroughfares with many ports of call. There were also sea routes through the Straits of Gibraltar to England, Holland and Germany. Several large navigable rivers across Europe linked the sea ports to inland cities.

Rats and the oriental rat flea were regular passengers along all these trade routes: hitching a ride with the Mongols' horses and hiding in



Source 10.16 The black rat (*Rattus rattus*)

their grain bags, infesting the food stores of the trade caravans, or lurking inside the crates of the merchant ships and then scurrying down the mooring ropes when the ships were in harbour.

The Black Death strikes Europe and North Africa

It is believed that the plague first arrived in Europe during 1347 from the Black Sea port of Kaffa. Mongol armies besieged the port where Italian merchant vessels from Genoa docked. Plague had broken out among the Mongol troops and the infected corpses were loaded onto huge catapults by the survivors and tossed over the walls of the city. The Genoese ships fled Kaffa carrying their plague-ridden cargoes and crew, and set sail for Messina in Sicily. Here they unloaded not only their trading goods but the dreaded Black Death. From then on, the plague's spread was dramatic and unstoppable.

A swift and horrifying progression

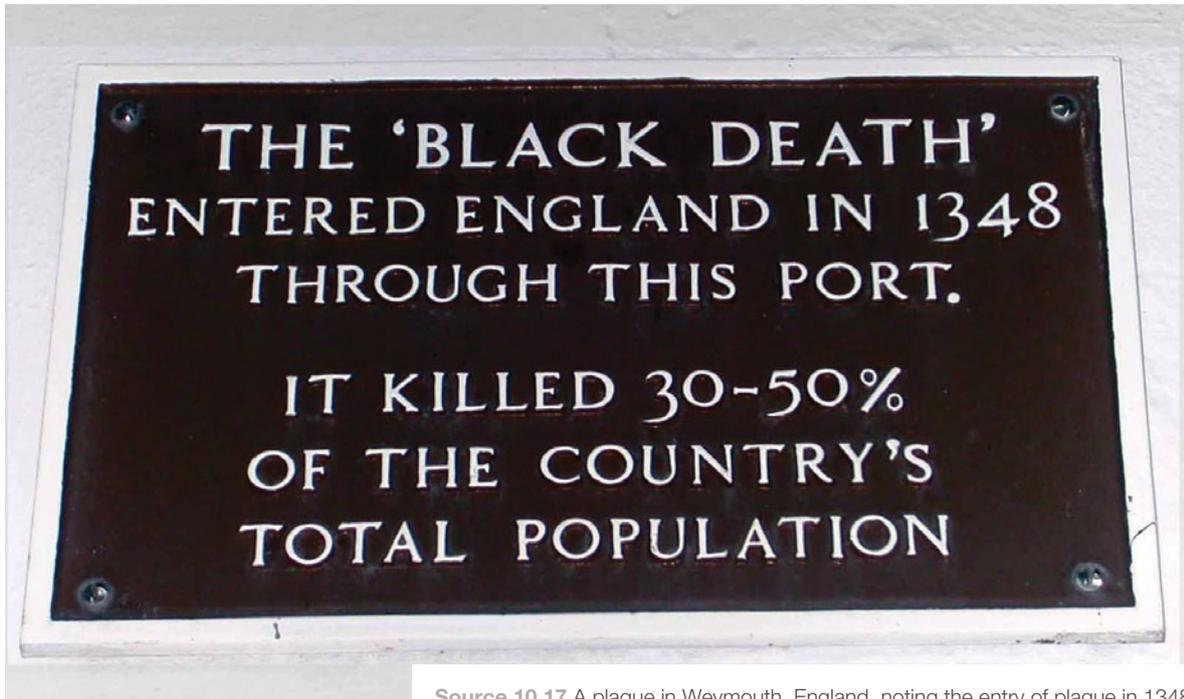
Within a few days, Sicily's rat and human populations were infected. From Sicily the plague quickly spread north into Italy and around the ports and fishing villages of the Mediterranean Sea. The great trading ports of Genoa and Pisa became entry points for the plague in northern Italy. In the same year, the citizens of Alexandria in North Africa, the Turkish city of Constantinople and the French port of Marseilles all began to reel from the plague.

By June 1348, the plague had travelled north to Paris and south-east to Palestine and Syria. By the end of that year, the town of Weymouth on the southern coast of England had become the entry point for the plague's deadly progress across Britain. London, the country's principal port, had trade connections throughout Europe. Ships sailed up the River Thames into the city, while roads linked London to the ports of Bristol and Southampton. By late 1348, the plague had reached the city.

In 1347–48, the plague gained hold in Egypt. Cairo was at the crossroads of the spice trade route between Europe and Asia, and this city was especially severely hit, as evidenced by the corpses piled high in mosques and along roadsides. Other Islamic countries also suffered, with cities such as Damascus and Mecca recording severe outbreaks of the plague.

It was estimated that the plague's advance reached over three kilometres per day. Trading barges along the Rhine River and road passes through the Alps helped the plague to reach Germany by 1349. Later in that same year, the plague arrived in Scotland and Ireland. It jumped to Norway on a wool ship from London via the chief trading port of Bergen, then travelled even further north to reach the Viking settlements of Iceland and Greenland by 1350. The dreaded disease had extended east to the streets of Moscow in Russia by 1352.

Very few parts of Europe escaped the plague. Only remote, mountainous or less-populated areas seemed immune from its onslaught. Poland was one country that experienced a lower toll. Having killed one-third or more of Europe's population, the plague then began to slowly decline.



Source 10.17 A plaque in Weymouth, England, noting the entry of plague in 1348

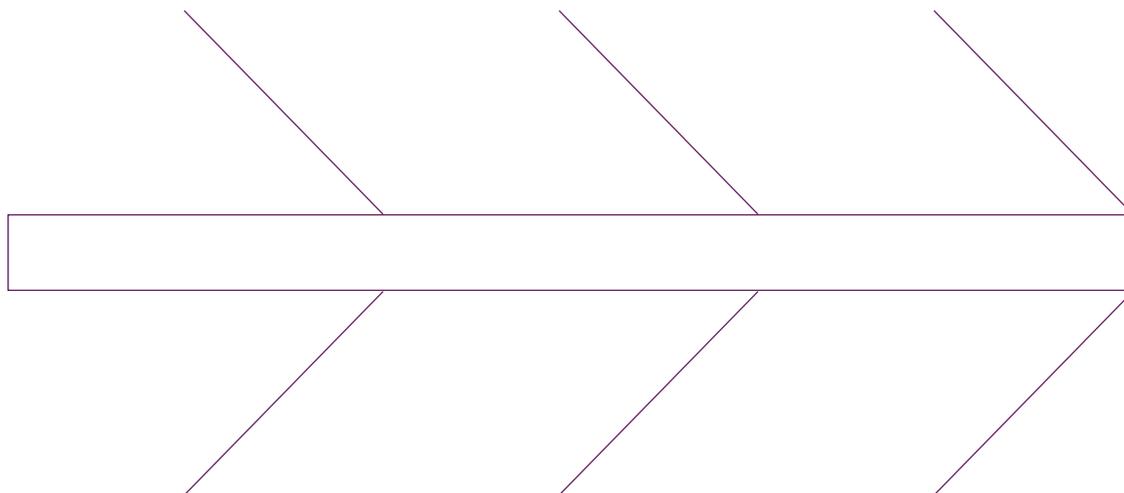
Activity 10.3

- 1 Look at a map to find the distance between Beijing in north-east China and the Black Sea. Using this information, determine the average speed (per year) of the spread of the Black Plague.
- 2 Identify where and how the plague entered Italy.
- 3 Research on the internet or in the library some of the locations in Europe that were not severely affected by the Black Death. Identify some features that these locations had in common.



Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, record the spread of the plague across Europe and North Africa for each year during the years 1347–54.



Effects on the population

Daily lives turned upside down

Living through the Black Death was a deeply shocking experience. Daily lives were marked by death, grief, a sense of helplessness, chaos and despair. Medieval graffiti etched in Latin during 1349 in England provides an insight about how people felt:

wretched, terrible, destructive year, the remnants of the people alone remain.

Source 10.18 Translation of medieval graffiti on the walls of St Mary’s church in Ashwell, England





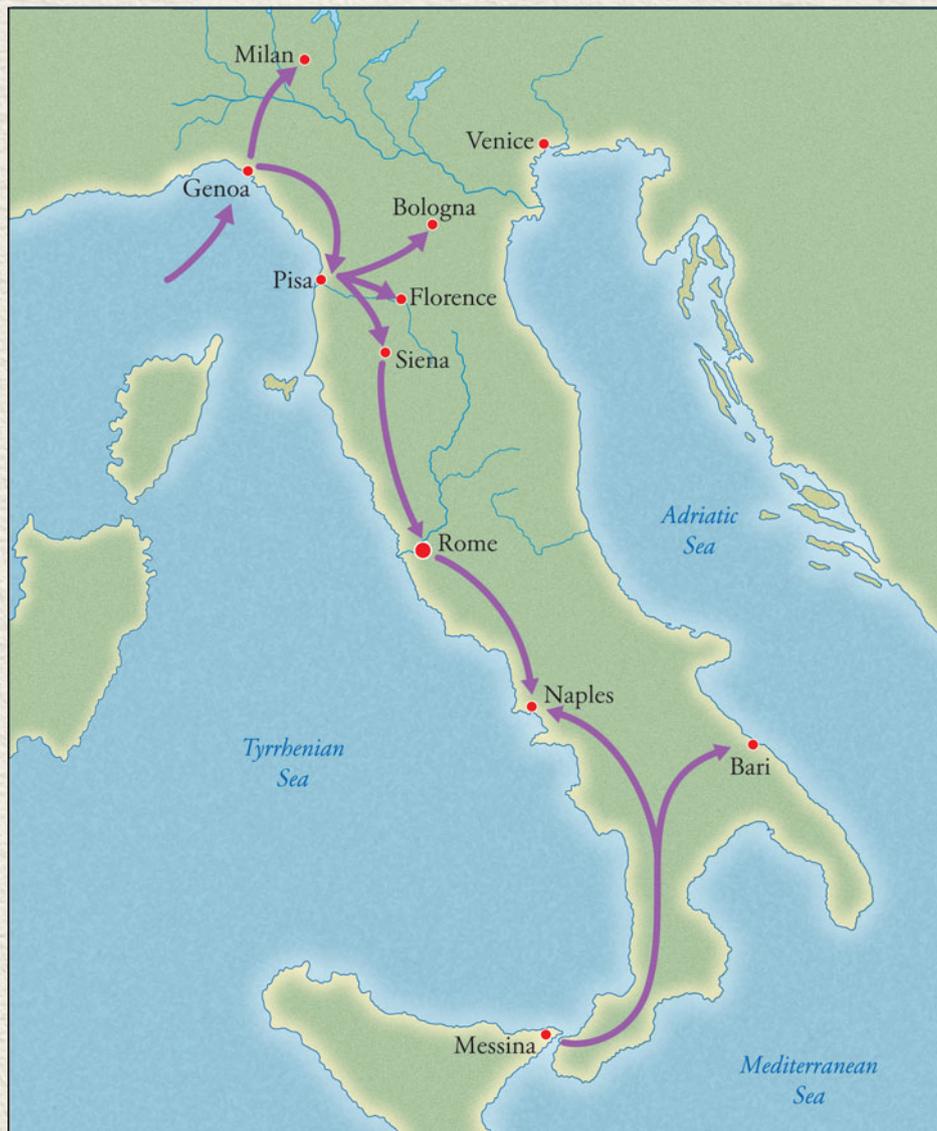
Source 10.19 Fear of the plague in the house of Fitzeisulf, from a Canterbury Cathedral window

Times gone by ...

The mortality in Siena began in May. It was a cruel and horrible thing ... It seemed that almost everyone became stupefied seeing the pain. It is impossible for the human tongue to recount the awful truth. Indeed, one who did not see such horribleness can be called blessed. The victims died almost immediately. They would swell beneath the armpits and in the groin, and fall over while talking. Father abandoned child, wife husband, one brother another; for this illness seemed to strike through breathe [sic] and sight. And so they died. None could be found to bury the dead for money or friendship. Members of a household brought their dead to a ditch as best they could, without priest, without divine offices. In many places in Siena great pits were dug and piled deep with the multitude of dead. And they died by the hundreds, both day and night, and all were thrown in those ditches and covered with earth. And as soon as those ditches were filled, more were dug. I, Agnolo di Tura ... buried my five children with my own hands ... And so many died that all believed it was the end of the world.

Source 10.20 Italian writer Agnolo di Tura vividly records his agonising experience from Siena, Italy

(continued)



Source 10.21 The plague spreads through Italy in 1348

- 1 Identify the form of plague Agnolo di Tura describes.
- 2 Why could no one be found to bury the dead?
- 3 Outline the routes by which the plague reached Siena (see Source 10.21).
- 4 Draw a cause and effect diagram that shows the impact of the plague in Siena.
- 5 Explain Agnolo di Tura's own personal tragedy.
- 6 What evidence is there in his account to suggest that the death toll in Siena was very high?

When the telltale swellings and black spots appeared, no one was safe. Towns and cities were hit disproportionately hard by the plague. Rich and poor alike were at the mercy of the disease, but it was the poor and undernourished – including peasants, labourers, clergy and artisans – who suffered most of all. Giovanni Boccaccio, an Italian writer, observed darkly that the victims ‘ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise’.

The wealthy often fled from urban centres to the countryside, but the plague soon followed them there. There are many references to the deaths of upper-class citizens, such as nobles, bishops and lords of manors, although their mortality rates tended to be significantly lower. Edward III’s daughter, the 15-year-old Princess Joan of England, died in France in 1348 en route to Spain for her marriage to Pedro of Castile. The Archbishop of Canterbury was struck down the following year, as were his two successors. In Tournai, Gilles le Muisit concluded: ‘No one was secure, whether rich, in moderate circumstances or poor, but everyone from day to day waited on the will of the Lord.’

The population remained in a state of constant terror, believing the plague to be a mark of God’s

wrath. Many were so afraid of infection that they left loved ones to die alone. Others fled their homes in panic. St Mary’s Abbey in York recorded that there were ‘hardly enough living to care for the sick and bury the dead’. Animals such as dogs, chickens, oxen and sheep also showed the same symptoms and died of the plague.

While many people fled the Black Death, and many more suffered heart-rending losses, the uncertainty of daily survival caused others to live for the moment. They devoted their days to pleasure-seeking and excesses of all kinds such as gambling and drinking in taverns. Boccaccio observed that while some people took to prayer:

others were drawn to the opposite opinion ... affirming that drinking, seeking pleasure, singing, amusements, satisfying one’s every appetite, laughing and mocking reality are the best medicine for such an evil ...

Source 10.22 Giovanni Boccaccio, writing in *The Decameron*

HISTORICAL FACT

Consumption and popularity of alcohol in Europe increased dramatically during this period as it was taken as a remedy for the Black Death.





Responses to the Black Death

Flagellants

Renewed religious fervour and even fanaticism grew in the wake of the Black Death. One of the more extreme responses to the plague was that of the **flagellants**. These were unruly bands of people wandering through the countryside and towns inflicting all sorts of punishment on themselves. They wore white robes, capes and hoods, which were

flagellant a person who whips himself to make amends for their sins

pulled down around the waist so they could beat themselves with leather whips tipped with sharp metal. They believed that by doing **penance** in public they would make amends for the sins of humankind. Pope Clement VI eventually condemned the flagellants and the authorities were ordered to suppress them.

penance an act of self-punishment to make amends for one's sins



Source 10.23 A flagellants' procession in the Dutch town of Tournai, 1349



Times gone by ...

Read the following two accounts of the flagellants.

While the plague was still active and spreading from town to town, men in Germany, Flanders, Hainault and Lorraine uprose and began a new sect on their own authority. Stripped to the waist, they gathered in large groups and bands and marched in procession throughout the crossroads and squares of cities and good towns. They formed circles and beat upon their backs with weighted **scourges**, rejoicing as they did so in loud voices and singing hymns ... Thus for 33 days they marched through many towns doing penance and affording a great spectacle to the wondering people. They flogged their shoulders and arms, scourged with iron points so zealously as to draw blood.

scourge a whip for punishment

Source 10.24 Jean de Venette, a fourteenth-century chronicler

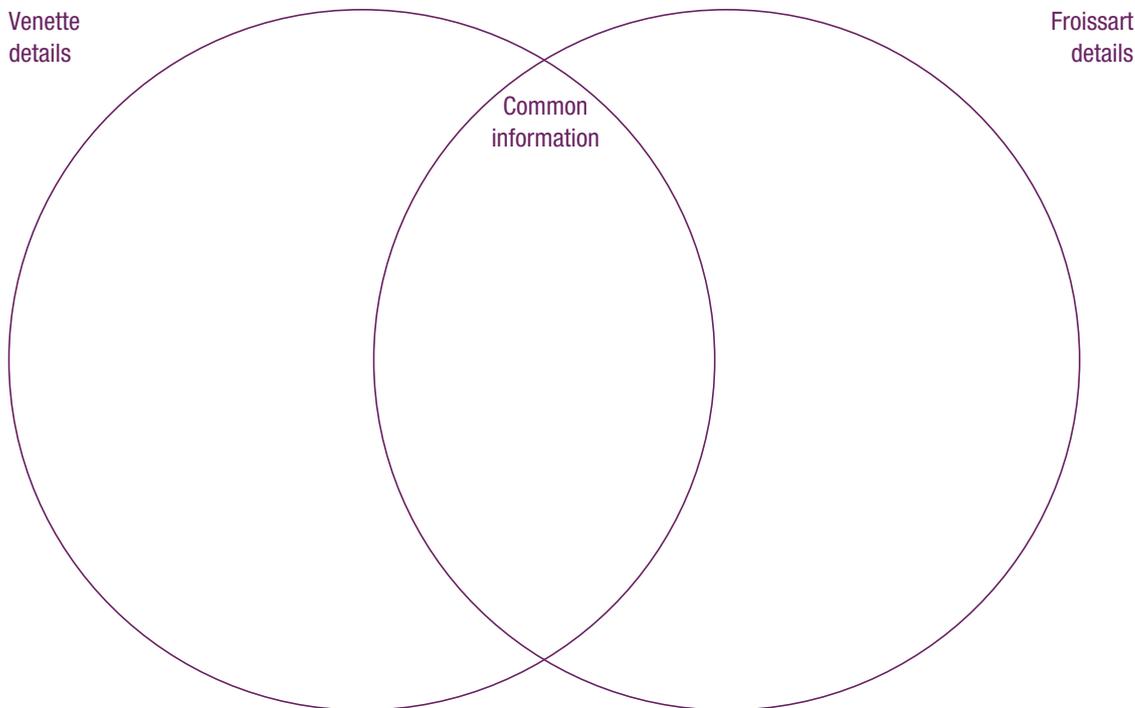
The penitents went about, coming first out of Germany. They were men who did public penance and scourged themselves with whips of hard knotted leather with little iron spikes. Some made themselves bleed very badly between the shoulder blades and some foolish women had cloths ready to catch the blood and smear it on their eyes, saying it was miraculous blood. While they were doing penance, they sang mournful songs about nativity and the passion of Our Lord. The object of this penance was to put a stop to the mortality, for in that time ... at least a third of all the people in the world died.

Source 10.25 Jean Froissart, a fourteenth-century historian

- 1 Compare the two accounts carefully. Draw a diagram to record the following details:
 - common information found in *both* accounts of the flagellants
 - information *only* recorded in Venette's account
 - information *only* recorded in Froissart's account.
- 2 How does the illustration of the flagellants in Source 10.23 add to our understanding?
- 3 Why is it important for historians to use more than one source where possible when writing about historical events?

Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, compare the two accounts of the flagellants.



Scapegoats

Some groups became easy targets of blame. Despite the fact that they, too, were dying horrible deaths, minority groups including Jews, gypsies, ‘witches’ and foreigners were persecuted. Jewish people were particularly singled out and

accused of causing the plague by poisoning the drinking water in wells. In Strasbourg, 2000 Jews were killed by angry mobs, while in Mainz and Cologne thousands more lost their lives. Across Europe, more than 350 massacres of Jews took place, especially in Spain and Germany. Pope Clement VI issued orders for the protection of Jews



Source 10.26 Jews being burned alive during the Black Death

and gave them refuge in Avignon, pointing out that they were dying like everyone else, but his voice was hardly heard against the general outcry.

People thought witches brought harm to society by causing illness or bad luck. The churches regarded witches as evil as they were associated with worship of the devil. Witchcraft trials steadily increased as the fear and anger associated with the Black Death was directed against the often vulnerable people who were identified as witches. Lepers and others with skin diseases also became easy targets. In Cairo, Muslim women were blamed for bringing Allah's wrath in the form of the plague and were forbidden from leaving their homes.

Ineffective medical measures

Doctors, the authorities and the church were all powerless to help plague victims as there was so little understanding of the causes of the disease. Medical measures proved ineffective and highlighted the shortcomings of fourteenth century medical science. No one considered rat control a way to ward off the plague! Pope Clement VI wrote to the medical faculty in Paris in 1348 seeking advice. Their report recommended the following precautions against the plague:

No poultry should be eaten, no waterfowl, no pig, no old beef, altogether no fat meat ... It is injurious to sleep through the daytime ... Fish should not be eaten, too much exercise may be injurious ... and nothing should be cooked in rainwater. Olive oil with food is deadly ... Bathing is dangerous ...

Source 10.27 Advice from the medical faculty, Paris 1348

HISTORICAL FACT

Pope Clement VI, who resided in Avignon, was ordered by his doctors to sit between two huge fires to breathe pure air and ward off the plague. As the plague bacillus is destroyed by heat this may well have been an effective measure!



Source 10.28 Pope Clement VI, the French pope who ruled from Avignon in 1342–52

Sufferers were treated by measures designed to draw poison or infection from the body by bloodletting, lancing the buboes or the application of hot plasters. People turned to all sorts of bizarre remedies in desperation. Marchionne in Florence wryly concluded:

Those who especially profited from the plague were the chemists, the doctors, the poulticers, the undertakers, and the women who sold mallow, nettles, mercury plant and other poultice herbs for drawing abscesses. And those who made the most were these herb sellers.

Source 10.29 From the *Florentine Chronicle of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*

Towns rang church bells loudly to drive away the plague as this was done in crises of all kinds. People used sweet-smelling herbs such as rosemary or pine to ward off evil odours. They resorted to charms, magic cures and astrology in the hope of surviving the disease.

plague doctors medical officers employed to treat plague victims; often they had limited medical training

Plague doctors (see Source 10.30) were hired by many towns to attend the sick. Pope Clement VI hired several in Avignon to visit victims of the plague. These well-paid but poorly trained volunteer doctors must have presented

an extraordinary spectacle indeed. The plague doctor wore a wide-brimmed hat and a mask in the shape of a bird beak. The beak was filled with herbs and spices to overcome the bad air believed to carry the plague. Red glass eyepieces inset into the mask acted to ward off evil. They wore a long black overcoat coated in wax or suet to minimise skin exposure. A wooden cane was used to examine patients without touching them directly. It is not known if the plague doctors were effective; like the flagellants they may even have unknowingly contributed to the spread of the plague.



Source 10.30 'Doctor Beak of Rome' in the typical garb of the plague doctor

Powerless authorities

Many cities did attempt measures to combat the spread of the plague by placing a ban on incoming ships – Venice, for example, had a forty-day quarantine of vessels on an island away from the city – but this measure was designed to exclude

people rather than the flea-infested rodents, and was largely to no avail. A partly effective measure to combat the plague may have been the decision of the authorities in Milan to wall up houses where people had the plague and isolate both the sick and the healthy inside. Milan's death toll of 15 per cent was lower than most other cities.

Activity 10.4

- 1 Name a common feature of the groups persecuted during the Black Death.
- 2 Describe how witches might have been identified by those conducting witchcraft trials.
- 3 Assess whether the flagellants would have been more or less likely to contract the plague compared with the general population. Give reasons for your answer.



Effects of the Black Death

A death toll of unimaginable proportions

pandemic an infectious disease that spreads over a large area of the world

The most striking feature of the **pandemic** was the scale of the death toll it exacted. This was a worldwide phenomenon: a shared experience across medieval Europe and the neighbouring region of North Africa, as well as the Middle East, India and China. In Europe, an estimated 25 million people lost their lives, one-third of the total population at that time. In China, the early plague outbreak caused enormous loss of life with five million deaths in Hubei province alone. Outbreaks in the Chinese empire may have contributed to a total death toll as high as 25 million people. China's population dropped from 125 million to 90 million by the middle of the fourteenth century, with Mongol invasions and famine also contributing to loss of life.

hearth-tax a tax imposed on each hearth, and therefore on each family unit

Across Europe, the experience of individual countries was repeated over and over. In France, the **hearth-tax** surveys recorded that Provence lost 60 per cent of

its people. In the villages of Normandy, black flags were flown from the church steeples to warn people of the presence of the Black Death, but 30 per cent of the population perished nevertheless. In the Italian city of Venice, 60 per cent of people died within 18 months of the plague's onset. The small country of Norway was brought to the brink of extinction as two-thirds of its population died. This may have been due to the cold northern climate and the prevalence of pneumonic plague. Switzerland's population decreased from 800 000 to 600 000, while Spain's plague mortality was estimated to be 30 per cent of the population.

North Africa also suffered greatly, especially those port cities that had close links to the Italian merchants. At the height of the plague, Tunis and Cairo lost 1000 people per day. Egypt lost roughly half of its population over the fourteenth century due to the Black Death and later outbreaks of plague. It seems that the countries first affected by the plague around the Mediterranean Sea, along with those that had multiple entry points (such as Britain), suffered the greatest population losses. Countries such as Germany, where the plague arrived later, generally experienced a lower percentage loss of their population.

Assessing the Black Death toll

It is hard for historians to estimate accurately the true extent of the death toll. While Pope Clement VI added up the European death toll to a precise figure of 23 840 000, there were only basic ways of recording such information in the fourteenth century. There is a scarcity of records, although some useful evidence remains from a range of source materials such as church registers, manorial records, hearth-tax details, cemetery records and eye-witness accounts from the time.

We know that crowded cities were worst affected and that some groups in society – such as the poorer classes, the clergy and doctors – suffered most of all. Personal accounts by writers of the time provide many insights, but some of these may have been exaggerated because of the widespread terror. The experience of the plague varied across regions and among different social classes so average figures need to be examined with care.

Examples of conflicting estimates from England show why a modern historian cannot be as precise as Pope Clement VI was about the Black Death toll.

- The Weymouth plaque to the plague victims records that 30–50 per cent of the population died.
- Ralph Higden of Chester, a contemporary chronicler, declared: ‘Scarcely a tenth of mankind was left alive.’
- A monk from Malmesbury, Wiltshire wrote: ‘Over England as a whole a fifth of men, women and children were carried to the grave.’
- Dene of Rochester noted: ‘In this pestilence scarce one-third of the population remained alive.’
- The Museum of London Archaeology currently estimates that 75 million people worldwide fell victim to the pandemic. An estimated 25 million Europeans lost their lives. In London, the plague wiped out 40 000 people, which was half of the city’s 80 000 population, while in the towns and countryside up to half the population of men, women and children perished.

Activity 10.5

Examine the sources that describe a range of death tolls experienced in England and answer the following questions:

- 1 Why do you think the sources vary so widely?
- 2 Can a historian draw accurate conclusions about the loss of life? If not, why not?
- 3 Which source or sources do you consider to be the most reliable?



Immediate effects of the Black Death

Because the death toll was so great, and the onset of the plague so rapid, there were simply not enough people to carry out daily tasks or to comfort the sick and bury the dead. Brother John Clyn, a friar of Kilkenny in Ireland, lamented:

[T]he plague stripped villages, cities, castles and towns of their inhabitants so thoroughly that there was scarcely anyone left alive in them. The pestilence was so contagious that those who touched the dead or sick were immediately affected themselves and died, so that the penitent and confessor were carried together to the grave. Because of their fear and horror, men could hardly bring themselves to perform the pious and charitable acts of visiting the sick and burying the dead ... It was very rare for just one person to die in a house, usually husband, wife, children and servants all went the same way, the way of death.

Source 10.31 Brother John Clyn on the effects of the plague

The friar died shortly after writing his account in 1349. Monks and priests such as John Clyn assisted the sick in the monasteries and performed the last rites and burials. Consequently they were very susceptible to the plague, and religious orders were badly affected by the loss of great numbers of clergy. In England, the cities of Exeter, Winchester, York and Norwich all lost roughly half their priests. The churches were unable to hear

confessions or offer last rites due to the scarcity of clergy. Pope Clement VI offered remission of sins to all who died of the Black Death in an effort to counteract the fears of those who were about to die without receiving the last rites.

Cemeteries quickly became overcrowded: mass graves and plague pits such as those in Siena were commonly used. In Avignon corpses were thrown into the Rhone River until burial pits were dug.



Source 10.32 Cemetery excavations of Black Death victims, Smithfield, London

In London a new cemetery was hurriedly opened by the Bishop of London at East Smithfield. The photo in Source 10.32 shows recent archaeological excavations at the site. These suggest that the dead were buried with respect as they were neatly stacked five deep in well ordered individual graves. The burial scene at Tournai shown in Source 10.1 indicates that plague victims there were fortunate enough to have coffins.

Scarcity of labour

The overwhelming sense of powerlessness and fear was further complicated by severe shortages of labour and craftsmen. Shops and businesses closed, fields were no longer worked and rural villages were abandoned with houses remaining empty. When in 1349 King Edward III ordered the streets of London to be cleaned up the council replied that it could do nothing as the street cleaners had all died of the plague! Wages began

to rise for labourers, but landlords' income fell as less rent was received from peasants. Food soon became scarce as there were insufficient workers to tend animals or bring in the harvests. Governments across Europe responded by forbidding the export of food to other countries and setting price controls on grain. Universities and schools closed down so education suffered, and courts were adjourned so that wills were not able to be settled. Parliament was suspended in London in 1348. Craft guilds were forced to shorten the length of apprenticeships in order to provide enough skilled labourers as quickly as possible. In Siena where half the inhabitants of the city died, work was abandoned on the great cathedral due to the loss of its stone masons and has not been completed to this day.

In Italy, writer and politician Marchionne described the situation in the prosperous city of Florence.

No industry was busy in Florence: all the workshops were locked up, all the inns were closed, only chemists and churches were open. Wherever you went, you could find almost nobody: many rich good men were borne from their house to church in their coffin with just four undertakers and a lowly cleric carrying the cross ... Woollen merchants and retailers when they came across cloth could sell it for whatever price they asked.

Source 10.33 From the *Florentine Chronicle of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*

Activity 10.6

You undertake a journey across the countryside during 1349 at the height of the Black Death. En route you encounter many peasants, some Jews, a monk, a doctor, a nobleman and his family, and a group of townsfolk who seem to be living for the moment. They are eager to share stories about their personal experiences of the Black Death. Working in small groups, prepare a script and present a role-play that explores some of the different responses that people had to the Black Death.

Long-term effects of the Black Death

Significant social and economic changes that were already taking place in society were hastened by the impact of the Black Death.

Economic effects

Weakening of the feudal system

feudal system a system under which peasants were granted use of farming land and, in return, were obliged to provide services and loyalty to the lord of the manor

manor the great house and lands of a rich nobleman

Because so many peasants died, labour became very scarce.

Feudal landlords were desperate for people to farm the land, so were forced to compete for peasant labour. Peasants could now demand higher wages and better conditions. Their obligation to remain on the **manor** lands was

lessened, allowing them to leave their current employment and seek the highest wage on offer. This weakened the feudal structure. Villages and hamlets were often left deserted and the amount of cultivated land shrank.

In 1351, the English Parliament responded to the peasants' demands for freedom and increased earnings by passing the *Statute of Labourers*. This prevented workers from moving in search of a better job and also pegged wages at pre-plague levels. Peasants could be punished by fines or by being placed in the stocks, but the statute was difficult to enforce. Peasants were further angered in 1350 when a poll tax was introduced. Designed to help fund the Hundred Years War, it changed a tax on communities to a tax on individuals who had survived the plague.

Peasant unrest

There were peasant uprisings in many parts of Europe. In France, rural peasants rebelled in the Jacquerie Revolt of 1358, while the textile workers of Florence protested in the Ciompi Rebellion of

1378. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 saw rebellion flare across much of England. Peasants marched to London under the leadership of Wat Tyler demanding an end to **serfdom** and the poll tax. None

serf a person who is bound to work the land of their master in return for a small amount of land from which to feed their family

of these uprisings was successful and each was quickly put down by the authorities.

Lives slowly begin to improve

Eventually the population decline meant cheaper and more plentiful land, more available food and rising incomes for the peasant class. Meat and dairy consumption also rose as farmland was increasingly used as pasture for animals.

Social effects

Social mobility

As peasant incomes rose and their standard of living improved, they began to increase their social status. New people began to move into key positions in society in government and the church. Lower classes began to dress in better clothing and began to eat some of the foods that had traditionally been the preserve of the upper classes. In England, the upper classes tried to stop these changes and a **sumptuary law** was passed in 1363. This limited the colour and quantity of cloth that ordinary people could use in their dress. Nobles could now ensure that peasants did not begin to dress or act as if they belonged to a higher class.

sumptuary law a law that regulated what peasants could wear so that they couldn't begin to dress or act as a member of a higher class

The Danse Macabre

The mood of despair and gloom following the Black Death was often reflected in works of art. Skeletons and the persona of death featured in many paintings alongside the living, amid scenes of everyday life. The realistic depiction of human suffering and the symbolic use of the skeleton acted to remind people of the ever-present possibility of a gruesome death. These disturbing images portrayed the view that death strikes everyone without exception. They became known as the Danse Macabre, or the Dance of Death, and can still be seen in frescoes and murals in churches and public buildings.

The fresco in the chapel of St Mary in Beram, Croatia (see Source 10.34) was painted by Vincent de Kastav in 1474. This portion of the fresco shows the characters of a king, queen and innkeeper each accompanied by a skeleton.



Source 10.34 Portion of the Dance of Death fresco (1474) from chapel of St Mary, Beram, Croatia

Research 10.1

Research some other examples of Danse Macabre images. Design a small collage of labelled images in your notebook, and include a descriptive sentence that explains their relevance for us today. The series by Hans Holbein the Younger is especially interesting to examine.

Loss of prestige by the church

The position of the Catholic Church weakened after the Black Death. It had been powerless to cure the plague or banish the disease. The loss of monks and priests had been disproportionately great, while hastily trained and inexperienced clergy replaced those who had perished. The church struggled to maintain its credibility and suffered a loss of respect for its authority. However, it did gain in wealth as people often left money or property to the church when they died.

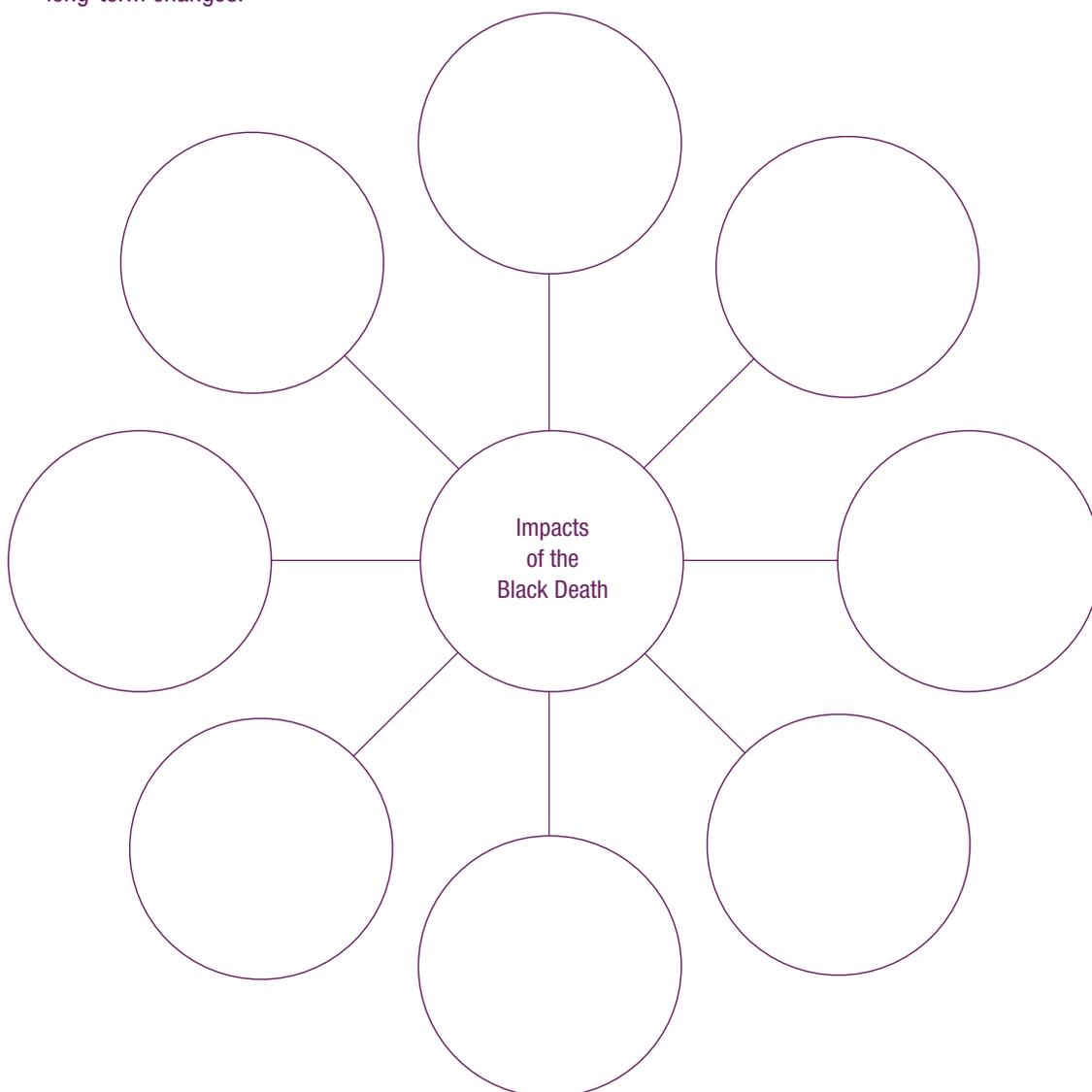
Improvements in medical understanding

Medical science gradually improved as the Black Death had highlighted its serious shortcomings. There was new emphasis on understanding the human body, and the teaching of anatomy and surgery in universities improved. Autopsies were increasingly performed, which led to greater accuracy in the study of anatomy. The use of herbal cures was questioned as people saw that they did not affect the progress of the epidemic; indeed, some of the potions actually worsened the condition of the sick! Medical books began to be written in the local spoken language rather than in Latin. Hospitals began to treat the sick

 *Note this down*

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise of the most important impacts of the Black Death. Be sure to include the following using different colour keys:

- economic, social or religious aspects
- short-term changes
- long-term changes.



Chapter summary

- The Black Death was the most devastating outbreak of disease in human history, a terrifying fourteenth century plague that wiped out a third of Europe's population between 1348 and 1352. Comparable losses were experienced in China and North Africa.
- The disease travelled primarily along the medieval trade routes from China to Europe and North Africa, where it then spread very rapidly, carried by infected rats and fleas in overcrowded, dirty towns and cities.
- The three forms of the plague attacked rich and poor alike and fearful populations across Europe and North Africa believed that the Black Death was a punishment for their sins.
- Doctors and authorities were powerless to respond as there was so little understanding of the causes of disease. People turned in desperation to superstitious remedies or looked for scapegoats to blame.
- The short-term impact of the Black Death included a death toll of unmatched proportions, severe shortages of labour and lives that were thrown into upheaval and despair.
- The Black Death hastened economic and social changes that were already taking place in Europe. These included a weakening of the feudal system, a decline in the authority of the church, and an increase in social mobility.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- The plague's arrival in Europe was in the year:
 - 1346
 - 1347
 - 1348
 - 1350
- The first recorded outbreak of the plague in Europe was in the city of:
 - Messina
 - Genoa
 - Marseilles
 - Constantinople
- The most effective treatment for the plague in medieval times was:
 - a visit by the plague doctor
 - a physician lancing the buboes on the patient's body
 - carrying a posy of sweet-smelling herbs to ward off evil odours
 - none of the above
- Which statement about the bubonic plague is false?
 - The bubonic plague was the most common form of the plague spread by rats and fleas.
 - Bubonic plague was even more lethal than the pneumonic or septicaemic forms of the plague.
 - Victims of bubonic plague would have buboes or pus-filled boils on the neck, armpits or groin.
 - Typical symptoms include fever, headaches, delirium and vomiting.
- Choose the statement which best describes one important long-term impact of the Black Death.
 - The feudal system was weakened.
 - The Catholic Church was divided between rival popes in Rome and Avignon.
 - The Mongol empire declined.
 - Wealthy people fled in fear to the countryside.

Short answer

- 1 Explain how living conditions in medieval towns and cities assisted the rapid spread of the Black Death.
- 2 Identify the trading routes that were significant in the spread of the plague across Europe and North Africa.
- 3 Consider why there were no effective measures to combat the Black Death in the fourteenth century.
- 4 Outline four long-term impacts of the Black Death on medieval society.
- 5 Analyse why it is difficult for historians to be accurate about the death toll arising from the Black Death.

Source analysis

Study Source 10.36 and answer the following questions:

- 1 What evidence is there in this image that the monks have contracted the plague?
- 2 Why would it be important for them to receive the priest's blessing?
- 3 Examine why the death toll of the clergy was generally higher than that of the population at large.



Source 10.36 Monks disfigured by the plague receive a blessing from the priest

Extended response

To what extent can the rat be blamed for the spread of the plague across Asia, North Africa and Europe and for the immense death toll? Discuss this question carefully, showing your understanding of the role of the rat in spreading the plague in the fourteenth century. What other factors also affected the spread of the disease and size of the death toll?



Source 10.37 *Rattus rattus* (black rat), from a vintage illustration

11



The Spanish Conquest of the Americas (c. 1492 – c. 1572)

Source 11.1 The citadel of Machu Picchu

Before you start

Main focus

During the last Ice Age on earth, migrants crossed the Beringian land bridge into the Americas. They owned this world in isolation for thousands of years, until confronted by strangers from the east.

Why it's relevant today

Studying the conquest of the peoples of Mesoamerica and South America allows us to reflect on how the Spanish reacted to changes in their world. They had fought against the Moors for their liberty and imagined all other peoples to be aliens. Their unwillingness to appreciate the cultures of the 'New World' saw them introduce European savagery to what was already a violent world.

Inquiry questions

- Who were the people of the Americas and what were the essential features of their cultures?
- When did the Spaniards arrive in the Americas and why did they go there?
- What did they find there and how did this impact on the relations between the indigenous peoples and the Spaniards?
- What were the longer-term impacts on the world of indigenous Americans of Spanish colonisation?

Key terms

- Aztec
- Beringia
- conquistador
- Inca
- Maya
- Mesoamerica
- Olmec
- pre-Columbian
- Sapa Inca

Significant individuals

- Atahualpa
- Christopher Columbus
- Diego de Almagro
- Francisco Pizarro
- Hernán Cortés
- Itzacoatl
- King Ferdinand I and Queen Isabella II
- Malinche (Doña Marina)
- Moctezuma
- Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli
- Tlacaelel

Let's begin

The Spanish first arrived in the Caribbean in the fifteenth century. To their surprise they found entire cultures flourishing in these lands that they had not known even existed. But the Spaniards had not come to gaze admirably on these new cultures; instead, they had come to plunder.



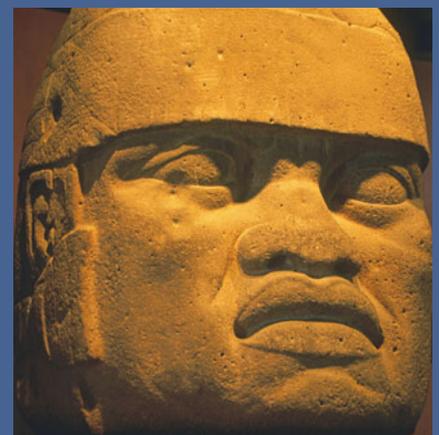
Source 11.2 Scene from a painted basket showing Spanish horsemen hunting a giant snake



Source 11.3 Hernán Cortés and his Spanish captains



Source 11.4 Christopher Columbus



Source 11.5 Olmec head, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City

Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

60 000 BCE . .

40 000 BCE . .

First humans arrive in Alaska after having **c. 40 000 BCE** crossed the land bridge from Siberia

10 000 BCE . .

Large game herds of mastodons and **c. 10 000–8 000 BCE** mammoths are hunted into extinction in North America

8 000 BCE . .

Crops such as potatoes, squash and **c. 8 000–6 000 BCE** beans are harvested in South America

4 000 BCE . .

2 500 BCE . .

On Andean coast of South America large temple **c. 2 500 BCE** complexes are built

2 000 BCE . .

First ceramics and metalwork in Peru **c. 2 000–1 500 BCE**

1 400 BCE . .

Olmec civilisation dominates **c. 1 400–500 BCE** Mesoamerica's east coast

900 BCE . .

Chavin civilisation emerges on the **c. 900–200 BCE** Andean coast of Peru

400 BCE . .

Zapotec civilisation emerges on the **c. 400 BCE–1 521 CE** west coast of Mesoamerica

300 CE . .

'Classical' era of Maya civilisation begins **c. 300–900 CE**

900 CE . .

Chimú civilisation emerges in Peru **c. 900–1 470 CE**

1 400 CE . .

Aztec civilisation dominates Mesoamerica **c. 1 427–1 521 CE**

Inca civilisation dominates Peru **c. 1 438–1 533 CE**

Christopher Columbus arrives in the 'New World' **c. 1 492 CE**

1 500 CE . .

Spanish conquer the Aztec Empire **c. 1 519–21 CE**

Last Inca resistance is crushed **c. 1 572 CE**

1 600 CE . .

Spanish empire is established in the Americas **1 600 CE**

WORLD EVENTS

. .

c. 60 000 BCE First wave of Aboriginal Australians crosses into Australia

. .

c. 35 000 BCE *Homo sapiens* replaces Neanderthal man in Europe

. .

c. 10 000 BCE Last Ice Age ends

. .

c. 8 000–7 000 BCE Indochina is settled

c. 6 000 BCE Wheat and barley crops are first grown in Egypt

. .

c. 4 000–3 000 BCE Mesopotamian cities first emerge in what we know as Iraq

. .

c. 2 500 BCE Stonehenge in England is constructed

. .

c. 2 000 BCE Middle Eastern and Chinese societies begin to use bronze

. .

. .

. .

. .

. .

c. 1 000 CE Leif Eriksson sets sail from Greenland to North America

c. 1 096 CE The First Crusade begins

. .

c. 1 450 CE Gutenberg sets up the first printing press

. .

1 533 CE English Reformation begins; Henry VIII breaks with Rome and makes himself head of the Anglican Church

1 588 CE Spanish Armada is defeated by the English

. .



Source 11.6 The Americas (with the modern-day country borders)



Pre-Columbian life in the Americas

The people who became the earliest Americans first began arriving in North America between 50 000 and 35 000 years ago, approximately the same time as Aboriginal Australians were first settling Australia. These early Americans had crossed the land bridge (today's Bering Straits) from North Asia, probably following herds of bison, mastodons and mammoths, as well as other migrating animals. But there may have been other more direct motives for their migration. Perhaps they were fleeing dramatic climate change or some greater catastrophe. Or they might have been fleeing an imagined or a real enemy, whose hostile actions were driving them further eastwards. The events occurred so long ago that we will never really know what prompted this daring migration. At best, any attempt at explaining the reasons has to be regarded as speculation.

Long into the distant past, the Ice Age glacial sheets connected Alaska with Siberia into a geological region known as Beringia, thus allowing for the movement of herds and humans between the lands masses. These migrating people were hunters and gatherers who could never imagine life in settled communities. Only their descendants would come to experience that, but it would be thousands of years into the future. The ice sheets melted sometime between c. 11 000 and 10 000 BCE, and rising sea levels made further migrations more difficult, trapping both migrating game and humans on the American continent.

Over time, and through natural exploration, these early migrants fanned out into the interior of Alaska and Canada, or followed the coastline of Alaska into Canada and North America. By around 11 000 BCE, they had settled the entire American continent from north to south. By no means could it be said, however, that these people were alike: the cultures of the people who first settled the Americas developed significant diversity through time. Still, they shared some surprising common elements.

How many **pre-Columbian** Americans there were at the time of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 CE is a matter for dispute among **anthropologists** and historians. In 1928 an American **ethnologist**, James Mooney, suggested that the indigenous population of what is today the United States was as low as 1.15 million by the sixteenth century. Indigenous Americans in the nineteenth century, of course, argued that it had been much higher. In 1934, American anthropologist Alfred Kroeber estimated a population as high as 8.4 million from north to south, with at least half of that number living in the Caribbean and South America. Kroeber's calculations held sway well into the 1960s.

But the use of statistics as evidence in history is always open to question. The method of calculation, the assumptions behind the numbers, and the conclusions drawn from them are always problematic. Mooney and Kroeber belonged to a school of thought that assumed that the impact on indigenous American cultures of post-Columbian European colonisation was small. By the 1970s, however, new scholars revisited the question. According to historian Alan Brinkley, they concluded that the indigenous American cultures had been 'catastrophically decimated by European plagues not long after the arrival of Columbus'. American historians Alfred Crosby and William McNeill produced evidence of dramatic depopulation of indigenous tribes because of the influence of diseases such as smallpox, measles, tuberculosis and other plagues imported from Europe. American anthropologist Russell Thornton takes great care to remind us that evidence of population numbers before or after Columbus is not a good indicator of the quality of life of the indigenous people. The impact of the arrival of the Spanish on the population and their quality of life must be considered together.

pre-Columbian a term used by historians, anthropologists and archaeologists to describe the cultures in America before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 CE

anthropologist an expert in the study of human societies, cultures and their development

ethnologist an expert in the study of character traits of populations

Activity 11.1

- 1 Explain how the earliest Americans were able to migrate on to the continent.
- 2 Identify why the timing of this migration is important.
- 3 List 10 other things that were occurring during this time elsewhere in the world (you may wish to refer to the other chapters in this textbook).

Civilisations of Mesoamerica

Even before Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain to the 'New World', the American world (from north to south) was already old. By 1485 when he first began promoting the need for his voyage, there were an estimated five hundred nations scattered throughout the Americas. Some were semi-nomadic; some lived in villages and had developed agricultural practices similar to any European town; and some were developing sophisticated cultures equal to anything found in Europe. However, this was a world unknown to anybody in Europe. Columbus believed that by sailing west from Spain he would land on the coast of China or Japan, and then sail southeast to the Spice Islands in Asia. The Olmec, Maya and Aztec civilisations in **Mesoamerica** and South America were the first cultures encountered by the Spanish after the arrival of Columbus in 1492. Each is explored further in the following sections.

Mesoamerica the area of Central America before the arrival of the Spanish

The Olmec

The first civilised society in Mesoamerica was the Olmec. These people appear to have occupied the southern parts of modern-day Mexico around 5000 BCE, but like all migrating tribes they would take time to establish themselves. The earliest remains of their civilisation appear to date from c. 1500 BCE and their civilisation appears to have collapsed by c. 400 BCE. In their prime, they established sites such as San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, which was abandoned by 900 BCE, when they moved their capital closer to the sea, at La Venta. Why the

original city no longer served its purpose is still in dispute. Some experts think that a dramatic climatic impact had forced the move; however, because there was evidence of vandalism at Olmec sites, others argue that a civil war – or an invasion – had erupted, forcing the survivors to move. Increasingly the idea of invasion is losing traction. The most recent arguments suggest that vital river systems dried up or changed course, interrupting the lives of the people of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán.

The geographical features of the region near La Venta were similar to that found in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China. In all of these places, there was a strong river system suitable for transport and water supply, and rich alluvial soils allowing for successful and sustainable agriculture. This meant that a large population could be maintained at this new site. It appears that the Olmec planted crops such as maize, beans, squash, manioc (cassava root), sweet potato and cotton along riverbanks between flood periods. They also employed slash-and-burn agriculture to create new fields when old planting areas became exhausted. Fruits such as cacao and avocado helped to supplement the diet of fish, turtle, snake and molluscs from the nearby rivers, and crabs and shellfish in the coastal areas. The domesticated dog seems to have been the single most important source of animal protein, even though they had access to jungle sources such as possums, raccoons, rabbits and deer. But the diet was indeed rich and diverse.

The Olmec became proficient at constructing early styles of stepped pyramids of about 30 metres in height. The pyramids were made from clay and topped by wooden temples. These structures would, over time, influence all future cultures



Source 11.7 Olmec stone head

in Mesoamerica and would reach their most significant in the later Maya and Aztec periods. It appears that in the era dominated by the Olmec, they served a spiritual function. The Maya and Aztec would expand this further by using their step pyramids for ritual human sacrifices.

In all of the Olmec cities sculptures were created of massive stone heads (see Source 11.7),

2–4 metres in height and often weighing as much as 18 tonnes. This style of stone sculpture also would influence sculpture in future dominant cultures in Mesoamerica. The Olmec were skilled at sculpting in jade and obsidian, as well as stone. They also developed a calendar and a system of written signs, including a symbol for zero, which Europeans did not possess until the Middle Ages. The European symbol for zero was inherited from the works of Islamic writers, but this was long after the Olmec were using their own.



Times gone by ...

The Cascajal Block, found in the 1990s by road builders in the San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán region, might shed new light on the Olmec civilisation. The 36 centimetre by 21 centimetre block weighs about 25 kilograms, and is inscribed with 62 **glyphs**, some of which are repeated a number of times. These glyphs are arranged in horizontal rows and have not yet been translated or understood, so their significance and precise meaning remains in dispute. The experts who first had access to the stone believe that the glyphs may be the very first writing anywhere in the 'New World', However, because the glyphs did not feature in later cultures, this theory is viewed with scepticism by many in the scientific community.

glyph a carved or inscribed symbol; it may be a pictogram or an ideogram, or part of a writing system

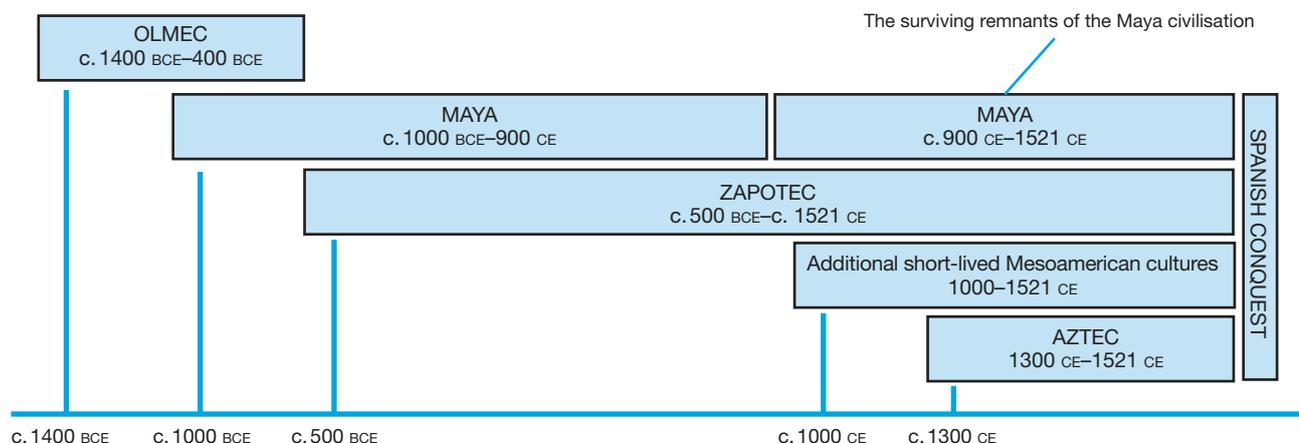
- 1 Investigate more about the Cascajal Block using links available at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.
- 2 Identify two other ancient languages we have not been able to yet translate, using the Smashing Lists website available at www.cambridge.edu.au/history8weblinks.

HISTORICAL FACT

The Olmec were responsible for beginning a tradition that would be picked up by future Mesoamerican cultures: the ball game. Across time, the custom of a solid rubber ball being used in a stone court with sloping sides became a feature of Mesoamerican cultures. The evidence we have for this is the earliest surviving balls, as well as figurines of notable players.

By c.400 BCE, the Olmec culture had mysteriously collapsed. Archaeologists and historians still puzzle over the reasons. Again some have sought explanations in climatic disruptions, but many today look to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions

as the likely cause. But as their 'writing' is a mystery to us (and because we have so very little of it), we may never know. The explanation might be a combination of things, but perhaps a neighbouring civilisation simply absorbed them as it grew.



Source 11.8 Timeline of Mesoamerican cultures

Activity 11.2

- 1 Identify the evidence in the text to support the view that the Olmec people lived a civilised lifestyle.
- 2 Explain why historians may dispute over whether or not the Olmec civilisation died out.

The Maya

One likely candidate for the absorption of the Olmec is the Maya, a civilisation that would emerge in c. 1000 BCE and endure until c. 1000 CE. When the Spanish arrived in Mesoamerica, they found the Maya culture alive and well in people living near the ruins of the old civilisation – but none of them could remember all of its details.

The Maya culture did not just ‘spring up’ in the year 1000 BCE. Over time it had evolved its own cultural values and traditions, as well as absorbing some from the Olmec as well. Just like the Olmec before them, they had been developing strong trade routes across Mesoamerica to supplement their local resources. The Maya civilisation developed on the Yucatán Peninsula in modern-day Mexico, though their empire would stretch into modern-day Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras. The map in Source 11.9 provides some idea of the scope of the Maya Empire at its peak, as well as its proximity to the old Olmec cities of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán and La Venta.

The Maya were clearly a dynamic culture. The most recent historical view is that the Maya

culture was first established on the Pacific coast, suggesting that over time they extended their influence over the Yucatán Peninsula. They traded with cultures throughout Mesoamerica, and in the beginning controlled the export of cacao trees to other parts of the region, as well as the trade in jade and obsidian. The Maya even traded with island communities such as the Taino in the Caribbean. These were the people Christopher Columbus would first encounter on his arrival in the ‘New World’ in 1492.

Like the Olmec before them, the Maya used slash-and-burn techniques to establish new plantations for crops. Their primary crops were maize, beans and squash. They ate corn straight from the cob and produced a flat bread from it (to make tortillas) and also used it to make tamales. Other crops such as chilli peppers, wild onions, pumpkin, avocado, papaya and pineapple all added diversity to the diet. For meat they usually relied on the domesticated dog, turkey or ducks, but also included wild deer (although this eventually became a meat for the nobility), armadillo, tapir, monkey and a wild pig called a



Source 11.9 Map of the Maya Empire

HISTORICAL FACT

The Maya made a drink from ground-up cacao beans mixed with chilli peppers, cornmeal and honey, which they called *xocolatl* (actually pronounced 'nahuatl'). The drink was exclusively for the nobles and the Maya *ajaws* (rulers). It appears that the Maya were the first people to cultivate and domesticate the fruit of the cacao tree. Without it, we would not have chocolate.

peccary, as well as the odd manatee (or sea cow), all often varied sometimes by birds, turtle and iguana. Their proximity to the sea also encouraged them to eat molluscs, fish, lobster and shellfish. Essential to the diet was also a range of herbs and spices: salts, allspice, vanilla, white cinnamon and so on.

Social organisation

The Maya civilisation was not a single entity with a clearly defined capital or centre of power. None of the Maya cities reached the size or sophistication of the later Aztec capital Tenochtitlán, which comfortably supported a population of well over 100 000. Indeed, it seems that the Maya cities

were more designed as religious centres rather than political ones. The housing that surrounded each city was relatively rustic – made of stone or mud with thatched roofs – yet the actual religious temples were constructed with precision and attention to detail.

Each city had its political head or **ajaw**, as well as its ruling elite or nobility. Maya society had evolved with a hierarchy of a ruling elite (including priests) and commoners. The *ajaw's* position was hereditary, a quality they had in common with European monarchies of the time. But the Maya did not have a single overriding leadership: each kingdom within their

ajaw the modernised term for a Maya ruler, lord, king or political leader

loose federation of states was ruled separately. This made it quite difficult for the Spaniards after Columbus to subdue the Maya civilisation, even though it was already in tatters by that time. Yet it must be acknowledged that a sense of a Maya 'empire' emerged because of the common nature of economic, intellectual and spiritual traditions and customs across the various kingdoms.

Beliefs

Like the Olmec before them, and the Aztec who were to succeed them, the Maya believed in multiple deities or gods. The priest class was hereditary, with positions handed from father to son, or a close relative if there was no son. Often, the ajaws and members of the nobility also played a spiritual role in their kingdoms. Most anthropologists and historians agree that there seems to have been a 'professional' priest class in the Maya world that fulfilled a range of tasks from private and public rituals to large festival celebrations and human sacrifices.

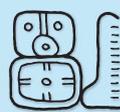
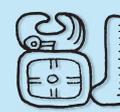
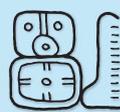
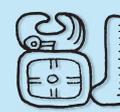
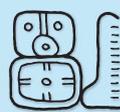
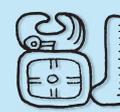
To the Maya, the influence of their deities was everywhere. It was in the wind, in the sun, the moon, the soil, the crops and the water. Their gods also had many manifestations, often matching the cardinal points of the compass (east, west, south and north). Sometimes they would be linked to dominant animal species in a region. Sources vary on the names of the deities or the spelling of the names, but one thing seems clear – gods were often regional and not worshipped universally throughout the loose Maya Empire. But some gods seemed to take a prominent position (see Source 11.10).

Maya ajaws were believed to be intermediaries between the gods and the people, and were

considered to be semi-divine. When they died, they were buried in elaborate tombs filled with all sorts of offerings for them to take into the 'afterlife'. All Maya understood the afterlife to be a dangerous and unpredictable voyage. It meant travelling through the underworld, which was occupied by many sinister gods, all represented by the jaguar – the symbol of darkness. Unlike Western and Middle Eastern religions, 'heaven' was only an option for those who had been sacrificed or for women who had died in childbirth. Apart from this, all Maya recognised that the fate of their ajaw and the common people was to go to the underworld after death. Their personal and individual fate was unpredictable once there.

For the Maya, their science and religion were considered to be one and the same thing. For their time and place, the Maya developed an impressive system of mathematics and astronomy, far ahead of anything in Europe in the same time. Both science and religion were intimately connected to their religious rituals. Their mathematics included a system by which numbers could be coded plus the use of zero; in astronomy, they accurately calculated a solar year, compiled precise tables of positions for the Moon and Venus (in the past as well as into the future), and were able to predict solar eclipses. The Maya were also obsessed with time, as understanding and predicting various cycles of time allowed them to adapt to and best make use of their natural world. The Maya also believed that the world had been created five times and destroyed four times, so all life lived on borrowed time. They dated the origins of their culture to 11 August 3114 BCE and their calendar even forecast the end of this life on 21 December 2012 CE. Most informed scholars of Maya history



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|------|-------|------|---|--|---|---|-------|-------|-------|--------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Hunab Kú</p>  | <p>The Creator God. He seems unhappy with humanity and likes to wash them away with floods. According to Maya legend there have been two great floods.</p> | <p>The Bacabs</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">north</td> <td style="text-align: center;">east</td> <td style="text-align: center;">south</td> <td style="text-align: center;">west</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">XAMAN</td> <td style="text-align: center;">LIKIN</td> <td style="text-align: center;">NOHOL</td> <td style="text-align: center;">CHIKIN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> </tr> </table> <p>The four sons of the affair between Itzamná and Ixchel, representing the four cardinal points of the compass: Mulac (the North, always painted white), Cauac (the South, always painted yellow), Kan (the East, always painted red) and Ix (the West, always painted black).</p> | north | east | south | west |  |  |  |  | XAMAN | LIKIN | NOHOL | CHIKIN |  |  |  |  |
| north | east | south | west | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| XAMAN | LIKIN | NOHOL | CHIKIN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Itzamná</p>  | <p>Son of Hunab Kú. He introduced agriculture and maize to the Maya, and also taught them about books and writing.</p> | <p>Chaac</p>  <p>The God of Agriculture, Fertility, Rain and Lightning</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Ixchel</p>  | <p>Wife of Votan (God of War). She had an affair with Itzamná and produced four sons (the Bacabs). Appropriately, she was the Goddess of Pregnant Women and the Rainbow Goddess of Childbirth. She also taught weaving and painting to the Maya.</p> | <p>Ah Puch</p>  <p>The God of Death. He ruled over the ninth level of hell in the Underworld.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source 11.10 Important Maya deities

are not convinced by the current gloom-and-doom merchants about this matter.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, most anthropologists and historians had promoted the image of the Maya as a peaceful culture, obsessed with higher-order pursuits such as mathematics and astronomy. Since we have translated most of their hieroglyphics, we now have a different perspective of the Maya. In fact, human sacrifice seems to

have been a central Maya religious practice. It was believed to encourage fertility, demonstrate commitment to the religious beliefs, and to satisfy the desire for blood for the gods. The Maya were convinced that their gods were nourished by human blood, and ritual bloodletting was seen as the only means of making contact with them. The Maya believed that if they ignored these rituals, cosmic disorder and chaos would result.

At important ceremonies, the sacrificial victim was held down at the top of a pyramid or on a raised platform while a priest made an incision below the rib cage and ripped out the heart with his hands. The heart was then burned in order to nourish the gods, and the victim hurled down the steps of the pyramid. It was not only the captives who suffered for the sake of the gods: as the mediators between the gods and their people, the Maya ajaws and nobility underwent ritual bloodletting and self-torture. The higher one's position, the more blood was expected. Spines were jabbed through the ear or genitals, or a thorn-studded cord was passed through the tongue, and the blood was spattered on bark paper or otherwise collected as an offering to the gods.

Like the Olmec before them, the Maya built step pyramids (see Source 11.11). Instead of clay, however, they used limestone rock. On average, the height of Maya pyramids was about 30 metres. Maya city complexes have revealed that there were two types of pyramids: the first was used for religious rituals and festivals (including human sacrifices), and the second to promote civic pride

by acting as a reflection of the power and prestige of the ajaw and his nobility, and in honour of a selected god of the kingdom. Both types of pyramids had steep staircases leading to the top, some pyramids with two sets of stairs, and others with four. The top of the pyramid was always flat, and a temple for rituals was built there. When priests performed their rituals on the religious pyramid, they climbed the stairs in front of the assembled population below. This act symbolised climbing from earth to heaven.

If the Maya thirst for blood (a quality they would come to share with their successors, the Aztec) was not enough, they painted their pyramids a vivid 'blood-red' colour. Today, most of that colour has been washed away. The redness of the ritualistic pyramids highlighted their spiritual nature and their connection with their gods.

The Maya domestic housing for the common people was much simpler and smaller. They were made of perishable organic materials, which is the main reason why no intact examples from the period have been found. Most researchers believe that they were much like the rural



Source 11.11 A Maya pyramid from Chichén-Itzá

houses still seen throughout the region today. As Spanish conquerors were mainly interested in the significance and social power of religious and civic buildings, they paid little attention to the habitats of the common people.

Most sources today describe Maya houses as being built on low platforms that defined the space of each family plot of land (which may have included a family cemetery). A low wall of neatly stacked stones may have surrounded each plot of land. Inside the wall there may have been a well, a toilet, a chicken coup for the family's chickens, a small private garden of foods, and perhaps a laundry adjacent to the house.

The house was one rectangular room with rounded corners, no windows and one central door built to face east. Sometimes there was another door that led to a second hut, used as both a kitchen and a chicken coup. In the traditional kitchens, women would cook on a grill set over three rocks. When the hammocks were hung at night, the main, single-roomed house was converted into a dormitory.

The floor in a Maya home was made of a foundation of gravel covered with white packed soil. The walls had a wood matrix that was covered with mud and straw (adobe), and then whitened with lime. Sometimes (although this was rare) a house would have wooden floorboards.

The roof itself is made of a frame of wood lashed together to form beams. The beams were then thatched with native palm fronds. As the Maya had no nails, all of the joints in the home were tied together with a supple, tropical vine called a liana.

End of the Maya

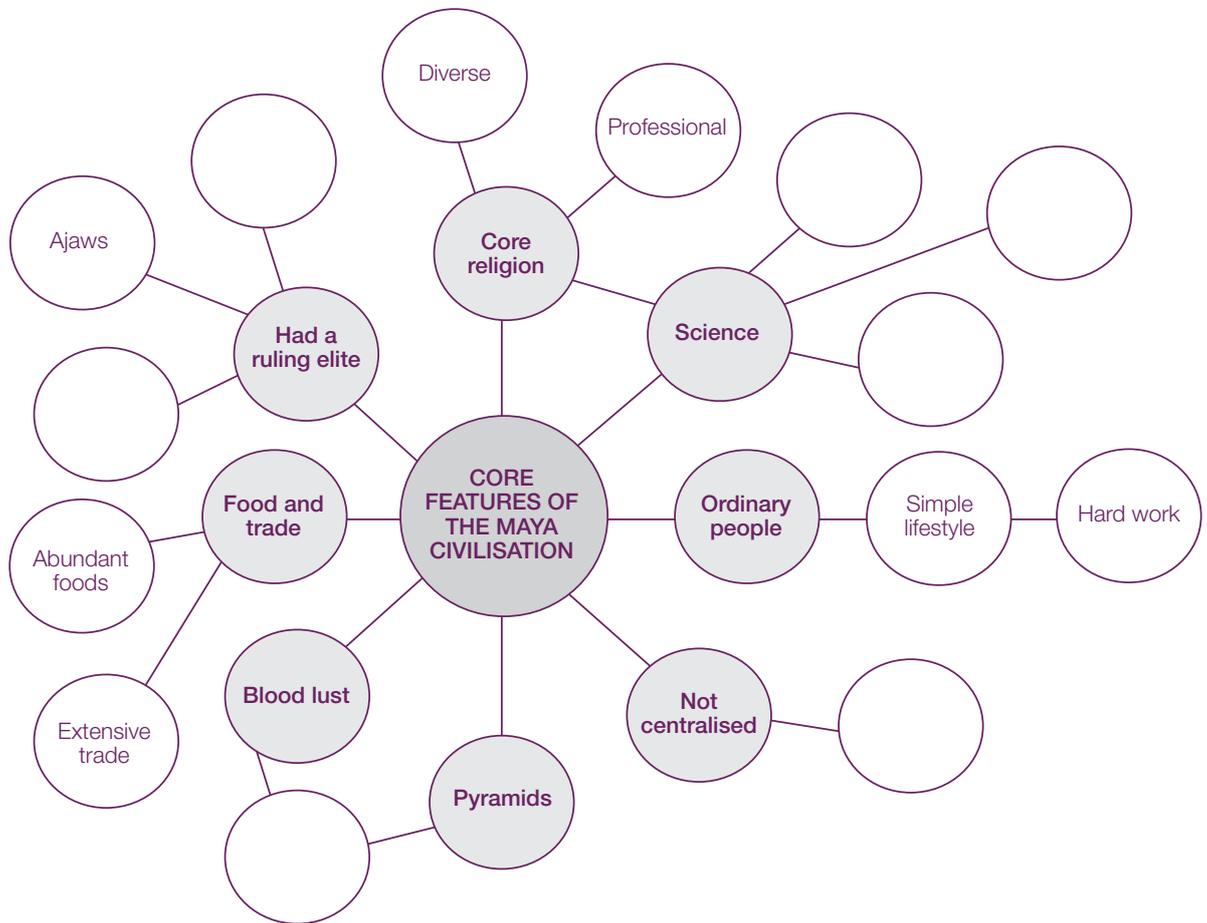
Just as we do not know what brought an end to the Olmec civilisation before them, we are at a loss to explain the mysterious and apparently sudden end to the Maya civilisation sometime in the tenth century CE. Did the civilisation run into climatic difficulties, or did their slash-and-burn agriculture fail them so badly that they could not recover? Perhaps they fought among themselves so much that it destroyed the fabric of the life that had sustained them for more than a thousand years. The explanation for their collapse may lie in the fact that they had never managed to reach the status of a centralised empire that their descendants, the Aztec, would reach. But one thing is clear to us: the collapse of the Maya all those years ago sends a clear signal to our highly developed world that even advanced civilisations may not be permanent unless we first imagine our end, and then take positive steps to avoid it. Despite their advanced skills, it seems that the leadership of the Maya were unable to do that, and therein lays the real mystery.

What is also mysterious about their end is that when the Spanish arrived six centuries later, they found people living in the same manner as the ancient Maya, speaking in the same language or dialects, but who had no direct knowledge of their ancestors. How does a strong culture disappear from the face of the earth and yet somehow survive in small communities, even though the people have no direct memory of the original culture? This is a puzzle that ethnologists, anthropologists and historians have yet to resolve.



Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise the core features of the Maya civilisation.



The Aztec

Smaller and short-lived civilisations came and went following the end of the Maya. Legend has it that one of seven tribes in a place called Aztlán, called the Mexica, left the northern regions of Mexico or southern United States, where it was dry and arid. They were looking for better lives for themselves and their families. Over the course of a century they wandered before arriving in the valley of Mexico. The existence of Lake Texcoco filled with water was probably a reason to look upon this site as favourable for a new homeland.

Social organisation

By c. 1350 CE this tribal group were building a capital city on an island in Lake Texcoco. They began with temples and causeways to bring water to their city. Over time, and in the hands of many rulers, that

city would become the fabled Tenochtitlán – a city capable of supporting more than 100 000 people at its peak. In 1452, the city was flooded and destroyed, and famine hit the population. Between 1458 and 1490, the empire recovered chiefly by conquering other tribal groups and seizing their lands and resources. Under the kingship of Moctezuma II (some sources use the name Montezuma), the Aztec Empire even expanded into what had once been Maya territories. But it was local tribal groups such as the original inhabitants of Texcoco – the Tlacopan and Tepanacs – that would be **subjugated** first. Tenochtitlán was rebuilt as the resources of the empire improved.

Unlike most other Mesoamerican cultures before them, the Aztec centralised authority in

subjugate bring under domination or control by conquest

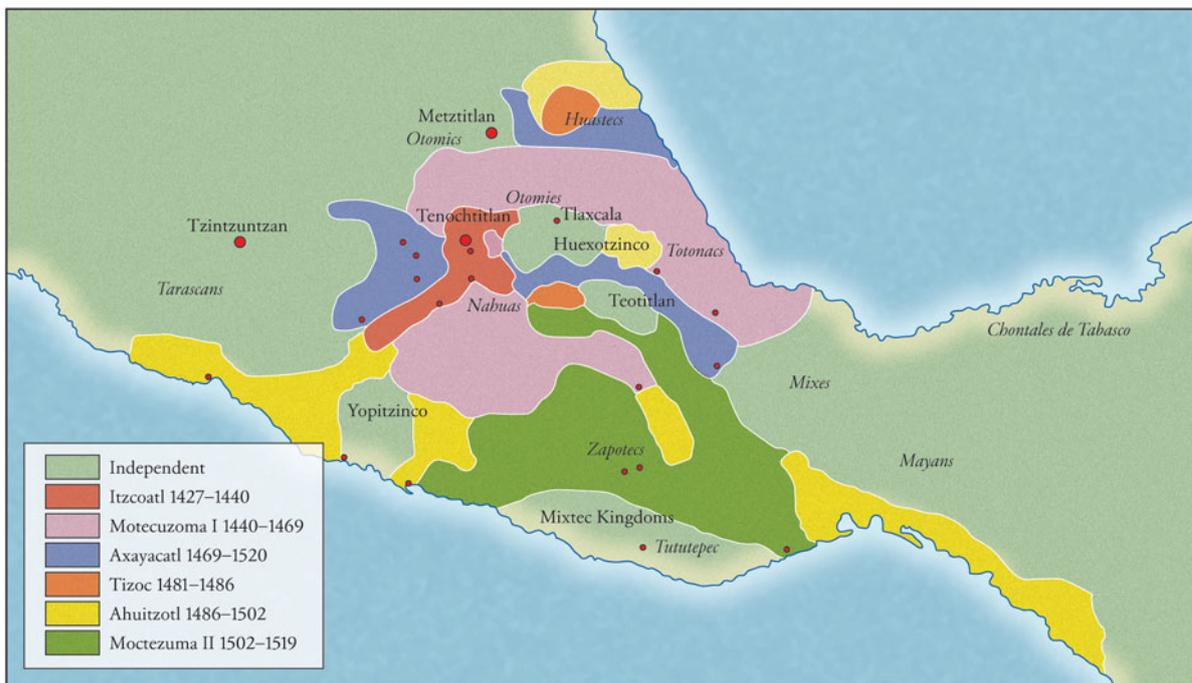


Source 11.12 An artist's impression of the city of Tenochtitlán

their empire. In this way, they were inspired by the short-lived civilisation to the south that preceded them: the Toltecs. The Aztec centralised authority from the earliest times in their migration to the valley of Mexico and Lake Texcoco. Perhaps an explanation for this is that King Achamapitchli (c. 1376–96) wished to prevent breakaway groups being formed during the migration. As the Mexica people established the city and their empire (becoming known to us as Aztec), it became even

more important to ensure that subjugated people were kept under control. Having a centralised authority made this easier.

The wealth and power of Tenochtitlán and the Aztec Empire came about chiefly during the reign of King Itzcoatl (c. 1428–40). He engineered a triple alliance between the Aztec, the people of Texcoco and the people of Tlacopan. Together they crushed the people of Azcapotzalco. But, as is often the case in royal matters, Itzcoatl was



Source 11.13 Map of the expanding Aztec Empire

not the supreme ruler. His nephew and royal advisor, Tlacaelel, seems to have been the real power behind the throne. As the empire and its power grew, Tlacaelel began a reform program of Tenochtitlán's political, religious, social and economic structures. One of the first steps he took was to destroy the history books of the Aztec, and to set about creating a new one that was suited to the times and the newfound power of the Aztec. He wanted the Aztec people to

know their history as a reflection of this new city, not the hungry years as they migrated south. Under the reforms, Huitzilopochtli replaced Quetzalcoatl at the head of the **pantheon** of gods. Tlacaelel also organised the construction of a new temple dedicated to Huitzilopochtli. Until the arrival of the Spanish, it was used for human sacrifices.

pantheon all the deities of a people or religion considered collectively

Research 11.1

Much of what took place between the Spanish and the Aztec occurred in the city of Tenochtitlán. Today, the city lies within the limits of Mexico City. It is important to have some awareness of what the city was like in 1519 when Hernán Cortés first arrived. Go online and complete some detailed research on the fabled city of Tenochtitlán. Present your findings to the class in an oral presentation.

Beliefs

Like the Maya before them the Aztec were convinced of the need to sacrifice people. Many of the victims were captives from war, particularly

those from the Tlaxcala people (to the south-east), whom Tlacaelel persuaded Itzcoatl (and the other kings he later served) not to absorb into his empire. We will never know the reason for

this because it was never recorded. It has been suggested by some historians that the decision was aimed at having the Aztec people permanently prepared for war. The nearby presence of (and apparent rivalry with) the Tlaxcala people gave the Aztec army every opportunity to train new warriors in battle as **skirmishes** took place

all the time. Apart from prisoners of war, other sacrificial victims included those who had committed serious crimes. Treason, theft and cutting down living trees were all crimes punishable by death in Aztec society, as were adultery and frequent drunkenness. Another capital crime was the wearing of cotton clothing by commoners, as this was the exclusive claim of the nobility and kings.

skirmish continual and unplanned battles between parts of opposing armies

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Huitzilopochtli</p>  | <p>God of Tenochtitlán; patron of earth, fire and the sun</p> | <p>Tezcatlipoca</p>  | <p>God of Rulers, Sorcerers and Warriors; a rival to Quetzalcoatl, symbolised by a jaguar</p> |
| <p>Quetzalcoatl</p>  | <p>God of Creation; patron of rulers, priests and merchants</p> | <p>Acolnahuacatl</p>  | <p>God of the Dead; symbolised as a puma</p> |
| <p>Tlaloc</p>  | <p>God of Rain, Fertility and Lightning</p> | <p>Xochiquetzal</p>  | <p>Goddess of Love</p> |

Source 11.14 Important Aztec gods

Whether or not it was accurate, the news of the blood-drenched ceremonies in Tenochtitlán struck terror into the hearts of people such as the Tlaxcala, who were destined for sacrifice if captured. Festivals and sacrifice were almost continuous in the Aztec ceremonial year, with many other gods apart from Huitzilopochtli deserving of their share of blood. Each February children were sacrificed to the maize gods on tops of nearby mountains. In March, prisoners fought to the death, as they would have done in the days of the gladiators in ancient Rome. After these battles, priests would skin the dead and parade around wearing those skins. In April, a maize goddess would receive her share of Aztec children. And so it went on through the year. It has been estimated that shortly before the Spanish arrived, between 50 000 and 200 000 victims a year were being sacrificed in Aztec ceremonies. The first Spaniards who came to Tenochtitlán claimed they could smell the blood of the victims everywhere in the city. Source 11.14 (on the previous page) lists some of the Aztec gods to whom sacrifices were made.

End of the Aztec

An Aztec legend foretold that the god Quetzalcoatl – who had once lived on Earth, and who had once been at the head of the pantheon of Aztec gods – would one day return to claim the land and the Aztec people. The prediction even identified the exact year, month and day of his return. On that very day, King Moctezuma II was told of a man who had arrived in Aztec territory. He wore unusual clothes, spoke a language hitherto

unknown to the Aztec and his skin was white. Perhaps this was Quetzalcoatl who was predicted to arrive – of this Moctezuma could not be sure. Moctezuma initially resisted any thought of contact with this man, but eventually, together with his priests and advisors, Moctezuma II decided it was best to approach this man with caution and so sent ambassadors bearing gifts to meet this man.

The year was 1519 CE. Moctezuma and his Aztec people could not know that their world would be no more within two years. Moctezuma would be dead – his city burned, looted and destroyed – and his people would be subjugated under Spanish conquerors. Their culture would be crushed by the Spaniards, their ancient books destroyed and their religious artefacts smashed. The surviving people would be forced to either work with the Spanish to conquer the rest of Mesoamerica, or become slaves within their own land. This story is examined later in this chapter.

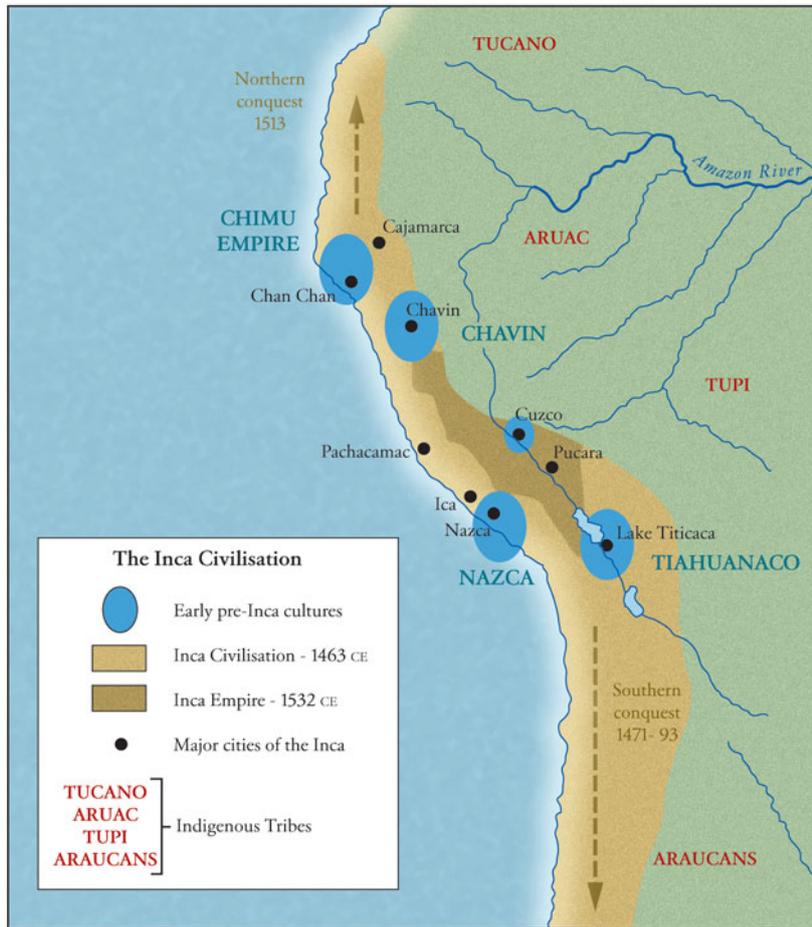
The Inca

Much further to the south, on the western coast of South America, several attempts had been made to establish a civilisation. By the time the Spaniards were conquering Mesoamerica, the Inca had established their empire in what we know today as the country of Peru, along with parts of modern-day Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Columbia.

Like the Aztec to their north, the Inca Empire was highly centralised. Its political and administrative centre was Cuzco. The empire had grown by both the military conquest and

Activity 11.3

- 1 Explain why you think that the Aztec were able to build a stronger and more powerful civilisation than the Maya before them.
- 2 Reflect on why Tlacaélel, the Aztec ruler's advisor, persuaded the Itz'coatl not to form an alliance with the Tlaxcala people to the south of Tenochtitlán.
- 3 Using evidence, justify the claim that human sacrifice was central to Aztec religious beliefs.



Source 11.15 Map of the Inca Empire

peaceful absorption of other cultures. By the early sixteenth century CE, the Inca Empire stretched along the west coast of South America for about 4000 kilometres.

Within the reigns of two supreme rulers, Pachacuti and Topa Inca (both known as Sapa Inca), the empire developed a complete centralised organisation and a road network of more than 22 500 kilometres. These roads could not be compared with the smooth and paved roads of the Roman Empire, however. Like the Mesoamericans to their north, the Inca did not possess knowledge of the wheel, so did not require smoothed roads. However, the road network was essential to the system of trade and communication established by the Inca civilisation. It connected to suspension bridges that spanned ravines, allowing trade and communication to continue unimpeded. Messages were also sent from place to place along these roads, and housing was built along them to shelter the message couriers. We can only wonder whether all of the detail of the

messages got through every time. Perhaps the messages were essentially simple: orders for an army to ready itself to fight or to go to a particular place; or news about a ruler’s death or the name of his successor.

The same network of roads supported trade. Teams of llama made slow but steady progress along the roads, carrying raw materials and supplies throughout the empire. All empires require political, social and economic control. Just as the Aztec had achieved it to the north in Mesoamerica, so the Inca did in the south.

Social organisation

Like the Maya and Aztec, the Inca had strict hierarchical societies. Western concepts such as liberty or equality did not exist in the minds of those who ruled the Inca Empire – nor in the minds of those who were ruled. Farmers in the empire worked land allocated to them by the ruler and could never own it. They could keep food for themselves and their families, but only at

a subsistence level. All food above this level was required to be paid in taxes. Male farmers and their sons could also be required to tend fields owned by the Inca rulers, or their labour might help build roads in their region; they also could be called into the army to help defend the nation.

Inca families could also be expected to move to new locations under the orders of the Inca ruler. It may well have been to newly acquired territories as the empire expanded. This was a way that the ruler could ensure he had 'friendly' people occupying outlying regions of his empire, and not people who may conspire against him. Families forced to move under such circumstances were often called *mitmakuna*.

Some in society were often selected from a very early age to serve the Inca ruler. These were called the *yanakuna* and the *mamakuna*. They

segregate isolate, divided or separate apart from one another

lived in **segregated** communities from each other and the rest of society. The first of them, the *yanakuna*, were young men who cared for the ruler's herds of

llamas and alpacas. He could, as he grew up, get married. The *mamakuna* were young women, who could end up doing many things. The most attractive among them might end up in the ruler's harem or given away in marriage to outside rulers who decided to subjugate themselves to the Inca ruler. In general terms they became priestesses in the temples dedicated to the Sun god or they learned the art of spinning the textiles for which the Inca were known, as well as making chicha (a type of maize beer). When the Spaniards first arrived in 1527 in Peru and witnessed the *mamakuna* at work, they thought that they were nuns.

Life in the Inca world was harsh at the best of times. Children were expected to become independent as early as possible. Punishments for misbehaviour were severe, even for children as young as twelve months. Their fathers could be called away to work for lengthy periods and their mothers left to do everything around the house – without any of the aids so common these days. Boys reached maturity at the age of fourteen, when they were presented with a special loincloth as part of a ceremony to celebrate the day. Girls were usually married by the time they were sixteen,

without all of the ceremony we take for granted with such occasions. For the Inca, marriage was an economic issue, not one of romance.

The major crops produced in the small fertile coastline and the dry, arid interior of the empire consisted of twenty-seven varieties of maize, along with potatoes, sweet potatoes, chilli peppers, cotton, tomatoes and peanuts. All of these were unknown to Europeans at the time. The crops were frequently grown in terraced fields, particularly high up in the Andes Mountains. Such an approach allowed them to grow more food in a short period of time, making use of microclimates in regions of their empire. The diet also included the meat of llamas and alpacas, as well as fish near the coast. Unlike Mesoamerican cultures, the Inca built huge stone warehouses where they stored food surpluses, allowing them to survive leaner times.

Beliefs

Just like many of the cultures to their north, the Inca had many deities or gods. It is important to note that that all societies begin this way. For example, the Greeks and Romans, to which much of Western culture owes its origins, had many deities. As their empire expanded they were willing to keep the gods of those they subjugated, but to enforce their own as well.

The major gods of the Inca were Inti (the Sun God) and Mama Quilla (the Moon Goddess). There were also gods associated with the stars, the rainbow and the lightning. The worship of the Inca gods took place at the highest peaks that the Inca could access, as they held such places sacred. The Inca Temple to Inti was located at Machu Picchu at an altitude of 2434 metres. The city of Machu Picchu was begun sometime between 1460 and 1470 by Sapa Inca Tupac Yupanqui, the ninth and most expansive ruler in the Inca dynasty. It is believed that the city was used for solely religious purposes. Few people outside the ruler's closest advisors were actually aware of its existence, and when the Spaniards began the task of dismantling Inca rule and destroying the civilisation, they were not even able to find it. Its glory as a religious site became apparent to us only in 1911 when an American historian located it – for the first time in centuries.



Spanish arrival in the Americas

In 1492 Christopher Columbus set sail under the Spanish flag on a voyage to Asia. Two matters distinguished his voyage from others before it: he was going by sea, and he was sailing west over an ocean where no European had previously been. In 1992, Spain and some parts of the Americas commemorated the five hundredth anniversary of this voyage, which had changed the world forever. But over the 520 years since Columbus set sail, we are now much more aware of the damage his arrival inflicted on the cultures of the peoples of the 'New World'.

Spain was one of the powerhouses of Europe in 1492. It had only recently driven the Islamic Moors out of its territory, and had united the two kingdoms of Aragon (under King Ferdinand II) and Castile (under Queen Isabella I). The battle to expel the Moors, which ended in 1491, gave Spain a new sense of confidence about itself and its destiny. The killing of 100 000 Moors in that ten-

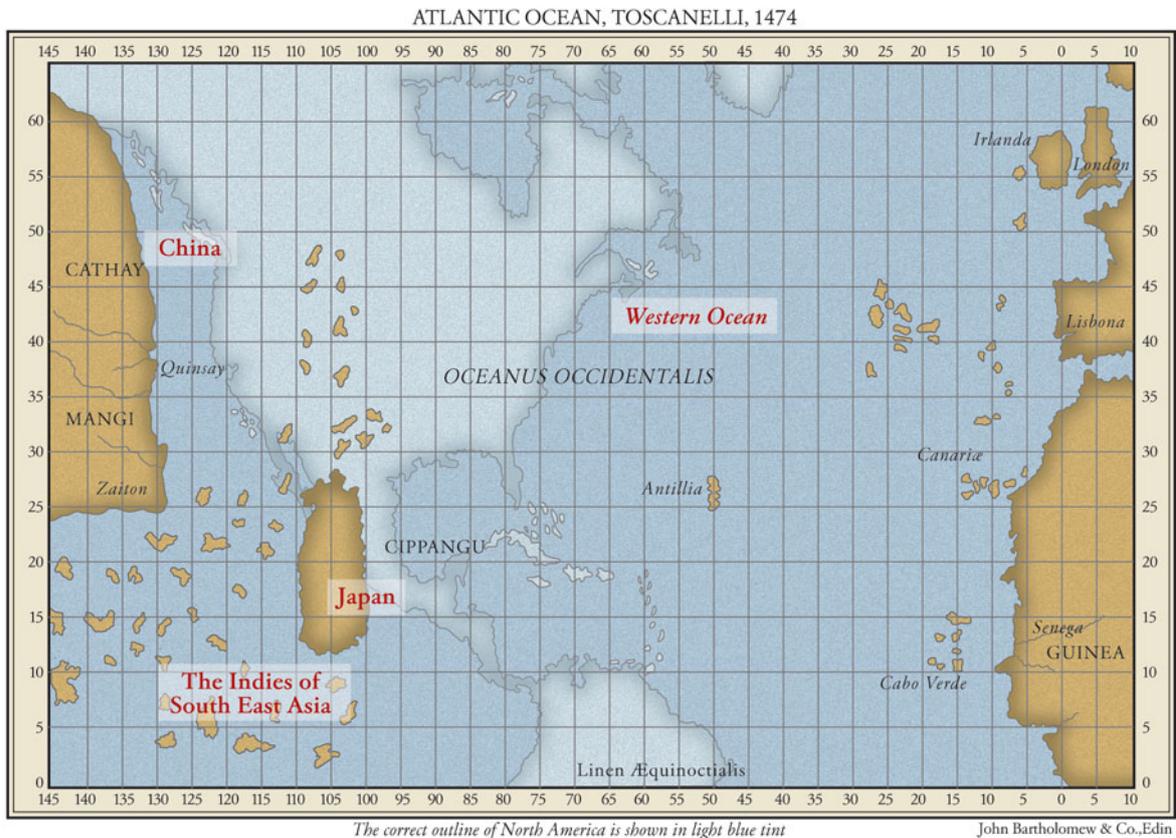
year battle offered a good indication of how the new Spanish rulers would act towards anybody who questioned their authority or challenged their Catholic faith.

Portugal, Spain's rival in all things maritime, was also keen to find its way to Asia, but preferred to sail down the West African coast. Bartholomew Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope at South Africa (1487–88), and then Vasco Da Gama reached India via South Africa (1497–99).

Columbus dared to offer Queen Isabella the alternative of sailing west over the Atlantic Ocean. He argued that he could reach China by sailing west in only a matter of weeks, whereas it would take a year or two around Africa. Of course, he did not know that there were two bodies of water to cross – the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean – and that there was an entire continent in between. As evidence in presenting his case to Queen Isabella, he used a map drawn by the Florentine cartographer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli in 1474 (see Source 11.17). Note: Toscanelli's map has been superimposed over the correct position of the Americas, which was not on Toscanelli's map.



Source 11.16 The Iberian 'Old World' powers, c. 1492 CE



Source 11.17 Toscanelli's map of 1474

Queen Isabella agreed to finance the voyage of Columbus to Asia. She provided half of the funds for his three ships (the *Niña*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa María*) as Columbus had already secured some funding from Italian investors. On 3 August 1492 he set sail from Spain, making his first landfall at the Canary Islands to resupply before heading on into unknown waters. He left the Canaries on 8 September. On 7 October his crew discovered flocks of birds at sea (usually a sign of nearby

land) and on 12 October, at 2 a.m., land was sighted by a sailor named Rodrigo de Triana on board the *Pinta* – though Columbus was to record in his log that he had made the discovery, thus earning a substantial reward for himself. He made first landfall on an island he named San Salvador in the Bahamas, off the eastern coast of modern-day Florida. The indigenous people of the island had already named it Guanahani.



Times gone by ...

Christopher Columbus sailed west into unknown waters from Spain. The risks he was taking were as great as those taken by the United States in 1969 when they sent men to the Moon. Columbus sailed ships called 'caravels', which were invented by the Portuguese.

- 1 Outline the essential features of a caravel that made it useful for sailing into the Atlantic in 1492.
- 2 Identify the technology Columbus possessed to ensure the success of his voyage.
- 3 Explain how knowledgeable Columbus was about sailing in the Atlantic Ocean.
- 4 Reflect on whether you think King Ferdinand I and Queen Isabella II took a great risk by agreeing to Columbus's plan.



Source 11.18
Columbus Landing
at Guanahani by
Theodor de Bry, 1594

Activity 11.4

Look carefully at Source 11.18. This woodcut by Theodor de Bry was completed in 1594. Clearly he was not there on the day of the landing by Columbus at Guanahani. It is a presentation of the event.

- 1 Identify Christopher Columbus in the woodcut.
- 2 List what you notice about the way the Europeans are dressed as opposed to the Arawak people of Hispaniola.
- 3 Offer an explanation for the differences.
- 4 Explain how the Europeans and Arawak people seem to be relating to each other.

Columbus continued on to the coast of modern-day Cuba, which he took to be Cippangu (or Japan). He then sailed to the island that is home to the Dominican Republic and Haiti of today, naming it Hispaniola. He returned to Spain carrying some indigenous people with him, a small amount of gold and a mysterious plant that would soon be named 'tobacco'. Additional voyages in the region took him right across the

Caribbean to Central America and modern-day Panama. Despite his optimism, he never found the River Ganges (in India) that he was seeking; the reason is obvious to us now: he was half a world away from there. He died in May 1506 in his mid fifties, still not knowing that the discoveries he had made were lands never before seen by Europeans. To the day of his death, he believed he had been in Asia.



Impact of the conquest: the Spanish and indigenous populations

Colonisation of the 'New World'

Just twenty years ago the peoples of the Americas marked the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the 'New World' by the Venetian-born sailor, Christopher Columbus. To Americans of Italian and Spanish descent, the anniversary was an occasion for celebrations. From this perspective, the voyage of Columbus was a vehicle of discovery and progress. It forged a lasting link between the civilisations of the 'Old World' and those indigenous peoples who had occupied the 'New World.'

However, many residents of the Americas of indigenous and African descent regarded the anniversary in less positive terms. To most of these people, the legacy of the voyages of Columbus was slavery and colonialism. Rather than regarding Columbus as a discoverer, many central and South Americans regard Columbus as an invader who set in motion a train of events that devastated the 'New World' peoples and their cultures. Some pointed out that it was Columbus who was the first to begin the Atlantic slave trade, condemning tens of thousands to a life of slavery. Others more soberly reflected that Europe's prosperity from the fifteenth century onwards was

based, at least in part, on the exploitation of the 'New World'. Five hundred years later, different perspectives have emerged over Columbus and the impact of his voyages.

Disease and death was one consequence. Pre-Columbian America had been isolated from many infections that had plagued Asia, Europe and much of Africa during the medieval era. Indigenous Americans had been spared most of the diseases

influenza and measles, which were most lethal to adults in their most productive years. The eight million Arawak Indians who lived on Hispaniola (the site of the first Spanish 'New World' colony) were reduced to ten thousand by 1520 – just 28 years after Columbus's arrival. The twenty-five million indigenous people in Central Mexico were reduced to 1.9 million by 1585 – within a century of Columbus's arrival. Inca populations in the Andes and Native American populations in North America were also decimated. Source 11.19 indicates the impact of disease on the indigenous peoples of Florida, settled from 1514.

epidemic a disease that affects many people at the same time

common to societies that raised livestock. As a consequence, the 'New World' was defenceless against **epidemics** of smallpox,

| Year | Disease | Percentage decline | Estimated population |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1517 | – | – | 722 000 |
| 1520 | smallpox | –50 | 361 000 |
| 1528 | measles | –50 | 180 000 |
| 1545 | bubonic plague | –12.5 | 158 000 |
| 1559 | influenza | –5 | 150 000 |
| 1564–70 | influenza | –10 | 135 000 |
| 1585 | unidentified | –10 | 121 500 |
| 1586 | Cape Verde Island fever | –20 | 97 200 |
| 1596 | measles | –25 | 72 900 |
| 1613–17 | bubonic plague | –50 | 36 450 |

Source 11.19 Depopulation of indigenous Americans in Florida, 1517–1617

The development of the African slave trade was another important consequence of the voyage of Christopher Columbus. Within decades, Spain had introduced black slaves and sugar plantations into the 'New World'. With the indigenous population

seemingly on the path to extinction, the Spanish and Portuguese turned to African labour, which they used to mine gold and silver, and to raise crops and livestock.

Research 11.2

Research and create a poster on two of the diseases in Source 11.19 and explain how they impact on the human body. On your poster, outline why influenza had such a disastrous impact on the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

The ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’ offered Europeans an opportunity to consider ‘Old World’ fears and ambitions in the light of what was found in the Americas. Explorers, and the colonists who followed them, believed that the indigenous Americans seemed to embody a sense of ‘innocence’, yet they enjoyed freedoms unknown in Europe. Some noted that the indigenous peoples lacked sexual restraints, law or private property, yet appeared healthy and seemingly enjoyed eternal youth. All of these beliefs were based on a superficial awareness of the indigenous cultures – and were mistaken. There were others still who were appalled by the hostility of the indigenous peoples who resisted colonisation, and by the blood lust of the Aztec. These European colonists came to the belief that these people – ‘children of the devil’ – had to be exterminated.

But the voyages of Columbus also helped to stimulate European philosophical thought. In 1516, just twenty-four years after Columbus’s first voyage, Thomas More published a book in England titled *Utopia*. In its pages, he described an ideal country where poverty, crime, injustice and other ills – which were all well known to the educated classes in Europe – did not exist. More was taking what he had heard and read about the Americas, and the societies found there, in an effort to re-examine the European world. In time, he would not be alone.

With each voyage sailed by Columbus in the Americas, adventurers, soldiers and colonists

followed. Otherwise known as **conquistadors**, they were all seeking to reverse their fortunes. First they came to Hispaniola, but as new lands were identified they began to look over the horizon. The three ‘Gs’ drove their motivations: all of them sought

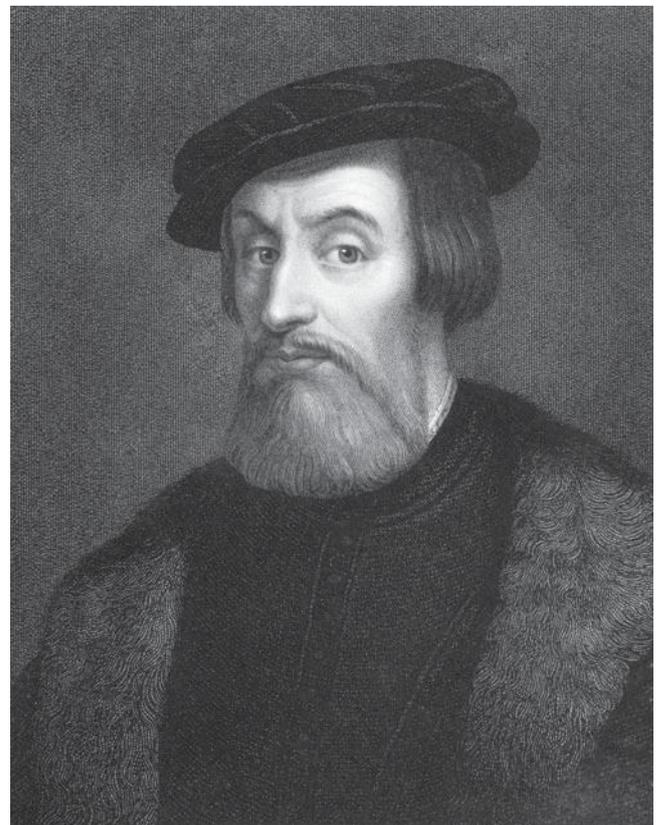
gold (for personal wealth, the wealth of the Catholic Church or the wealth of a patron back in Spain); some sought glory (for the prestige of Spain and an expansion of its territorial claims); and some worked for God (for the converts they could bring to the Catholic faith).

conquistadors the adventurers, soldiers and settlers who sailed in the service of Spain and Portugal to help establish their country’s empire around the globe

The colonists who came to Hispaniola ill-treated the indigenous people. As the population declined because of disease and brutal treatments, other indigenous people were kidnapped and brought to Hispaniola to replace them. The hostility that developed between the colonists and the indigenous people is, in modern terms, perfectly understandable. The Spaniards believed in their superiority, so it followed in their minds that the Arawaks were, by the nature of things, inferior beings. On the other hand, the Arawaks could not understand why these invaders were so brutal, and why they seemed intent on destroying their culture.

Hernán Cortés and the Aztec

In 1519, the conquistador Hernán Cortés set sail from what is today the modern country of Cuba bound for the land of the Aztec. He would not be the first Spaniard to visit Mexico: two years earlier explorers had encountered hostile Maya forces on the Yucatán Peninsula. Cortés came



Caption 11.20 Portrait of Hernán Cortés

better prepared than that expedition – he brought cannon with him, plus cavalry in armour with their horses. His first landfall was on the Yucatán, where a small band of indigenous Americans offered Cortés and his party some food and refreshments and a small quantity of gold – then asked them to go. Cortés made it clear that he would not go without more gold being given to him. A battle between his army and the local people ensued, and it was not long before 450 local warriors were dead, and many more wounded and in retreat. The indigenous group surrendered and offered Cortés more gold and gifts, plus twenty of their women. One of the women called Malinche (later changed to Doña Marina) would become first his mistress and then his wife, and would bear him children. But she had a unique capacity: she could speak both the language of the Maya and that of the Aztec. This skill would serve Cortés well as he could utilise her as a translator.

The real target of the ambitious Cortés was not the Maya but the Aztec under Moctezuma. The Aztec ruler had sent emissaries to meet with Cortés and his army.

The first article presented was a wheel like a sun, as big as a cartwheel, with many sorts of pictures on it, the whole of fine gold, and a wonderful thing to be behold ... Then another wheel was presented of greater size made of silver of great brilliancy in imitation of the moon with other figures shown on it, and this was of great value as it was very heavy.

Source 11.21 The Aztec presented Cortés with gifts on his return that had been set aside to welcome the god Quetzalcoatl

In return, Cortés gave Moctezuma's emissaries a demonstration of his cannon and cavalry on horseback. The noise of the first shocked the Aztec party, and the sight of mounted soldiers on horseback flying along the beach with swords

flashing high in the sun terrified the Aztec emissaries. The Aztec had never seen horses – indeed no American culture had until the Spaniards arrived. They mistakenly told Moctezuma that the men had been riding 'deer'. They also confused him by suggesting that the man and deer were one, somehow joined to each other. No American culture possessed steel swords; they still used sharpened stone tools. To see hardened steel swords flashing in the sun was an amazing thing.

Cortés requested a meeting with Moctezuma. The emissaries asked him to be patient. Although he had not personally set eyes on Tenochtitlán, Cortés knew it was only about 300 kilometres away. For his mission to be considered a success, he had to push on to the Aztec capital. First he formed alliances with the Tlaxcala people (who for decades had been the sacrificial captives of the Aztec) and then marched on to meet his destiny. Along the way, almost as a practice run, the two armies destroyed another indigenous people at Cholula. The whole affair seems to have been driven by the Tlaxcala who wanted revenge against the people of Cholula for some reason. Cortés and his army were there to help out.

When Cortés and his men reached Tenochtitlán they were stunned. On 8 November 1519, the Spaniards marched along the causeway leading into the city. The towers, temples and canoes were thick with crowds who gathered to gape at these strange men and their horses. Rather than have him enter the city uninvited, Moctezuma decided to meet Cortés at the entrance to the city. Moctezuma was in a **litter** draped with fine cotton curtains and borne on the shoulders of members of his nobility. He emerged from the litter and placed necklaces of gold and precious stones round Cortés's neck. Cortés placed a necklace of pearls and cut glass around the neck of Moctezuma, but was held back by two lords when he tried to embrace him.

litter a vehicle containing a bed or a seat, enclosed by curtains and carried by men



Source 11.22 Cortés is received by Montezuma

The Aztec led the Spaniards into the heart of the city, where Moctezuma showered them with more gifts and then housed them in luxury apartments. The Aztec knew about the massacre in Cholula and were taking no chances; they believed that if they were provoked in any way, the Spaniards could behave unpredictably and with great cruelty. Cortés and his commanders were invited to Moctezuma's throne room, and for the visitors the entire experience was a surprise: here was ruler who sat on a throne just like their

monarch in Spain, in a magnificently appointed room with intricately carved wood, burning incense and flowing drapes. It was as if they had suddenly been transported home.

The remainder of Cortés's army had the opportunity to wander the city. Among them was Bernal Díaz del Castillo, who had the presence of mind to continually quiz his fellow soldiers and travellers about their thoughts, which he later published under the title, *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*.

[It] seemed like an enchanted vision ... some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream ... It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before ... We saw the fresh water which came ... to supply the city ... We saw a great number of canoes, some coming with provisions and others returning with cargoes and merchandise ... We saw [temples] and shrines in these cities that looked like gleaming white towers and castles: a marvellous sight ... We turned back to the great market and the swarm of people buying and selling ... Some of our soldiers who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, in Rome, and all over Italy said that they had never seen a market so well laid out, so large, so orderly, and so full of people ...

Source 11.23 Díaz on Tenochtitlán

Activity 11.5

Look back to Source 11.12 and to Source 11.23 on the previous page.

- 1 Outline the essential features you notice about the design of the city of Tenochtitlán.
- 2 Identify a place you have visited that has had a similar impact on you that Tenochtitlán had on Díaz.
- 3 Reflect on the place you nominated and explain why it stood out so much.

The constant smell of blood from the sacrificial temples also flooded into the nostrils of the visitors. Cortés was concerned that because his army was trapped within the city – and he was clearly outnumbered – he might not be able to escape. His greatest fear was that he or members of his army might be sacrificed. The issue was how to prevent this from happening. Thus, on 16 November 1519, Cortés placed Moctezuma under house arrest and attempted to rule the Aztec through him. However, the power of the Moctezuma was dwindling in the eyes of his people and the Aztec grew ever more resentful of the attacks by the Spaniards on their religion and their relentless demands for gold.

When resistance broke out among the people of a powerful lakeside ruler, Cortés held a ceremony to formalise Moctezuma's submission to the Christian King of Spain. He installed Christian images on the great pyramid, and set in motion the first attempts to destroy the Aztec idols. Still trying to be reasonable, Moctezuma suggested an astonishing compromise: the placing of his gods on one side, the Christians on the other.

Cortés had to leave the city to settle a dispute with another group of conquistadors. While he was away he managed to recruit almost 10000 Tlaxcala and additional Spanish soldiers to support his cause. On his return, he discovered that the Spaniards he had left in the city, under the leadership of Pedro de Alvarado, had panicked during the Festival of Huitzilopochtli when thousands of enthusiastic revellers packed the city squares. In the mistaken fear that his group was about to be attacked, Alvarado ordered the soldiers to slaughter the revellers. Cortés discovered these soldiers besieged in their apartments by the people of Tenochtitlán, who were now prepared

to overthrow Moctezuma and kill the Spaniards to avenge their compatriots' deaths. Under the cover of darkness, the Spaniards and their Tlaxcala allies attempted to flee the city. In the following days, the Aztec warriors killed almost 5000 of Cortés's army as Cortés attempted to retreat.

In May 1521, Cortés returned with a larger army, cannon, cavalry and 25000 Tlaxcala warriors. Cortés ordered that the fresh water supply to the city be cut off, and blockaded the city to prevent both people escaping and supplies entering the city across the water of the lake. What Cortés did not know was that in the ten months or more that he had been away from Tenochtitlán, smallpox had decimated the population of the city. The Aztec had been busy sacrificing people to the gods to stop the sickness, but to no avail. A new ruler, Guatemoc, had replaced Moctezuma. Cortés had him arrested and tortured to reveal the whereabouts of the Aztec gold, and then he gave orders for the city of Tenochtitlan to be destroyed. The mighty Aztec Empire was no more.

Francisco Pizarro and the Inca

Francisco Pizarro first made a tentative foray into Peru in 1528. He then hurried back to Spain to seek an audience with the new King Charles V of Spain, showing him his souvenirs of his visit to Peru. He told the king that he had heard of an empire similar to that of the Aztec and was seeking royal permission to conduct a more thorough investigation. King Charles must have been impressed, for in 1529 Pizarro was given approval to return to Peru without the interference of any other Spanish official in what



Source 11.24 Portrait of Francisco Pizarro

was quickly becoming called Spanish America. Pizarro organised his expedition and set sail for Peru in January 1531.

Pizarro arrived in Peru at an important time: the Sapa Inca, Huayna Capac, had died. There is some evidence that he had died of smallpox, first introduced to the Americas when Cortés was attacking the Aztec at Tenochtitlán in Mexico in 1519. Now it had reached Peru.

The Inca ruler's advisors urged him to name a successor before he died. Some later said that he had chosen his son Huascar, who was the Sapa Inca's representative in Cuzco, the capital. However, others who witnessed the Sapa Inca's death were convinced that he had nominated Huascar's half-brother, Atahualpa, who was in control of the northern part of the empire at Quito. A civil war erupted over who had the right to the throne. Civil wars produce two key results: they divide loyalties between the opposing forces, and they weaken the ruling government in the face of outside invasions, because it is so focused on the internal problems. Spanish writing of the

time praised the civil war because they knew it aided their conquest of the Inca civilisation. On the other hand, Inca observers knew that the civil war had undermined their capacity to resist the Spanish invasion.

The armies of the two contenders for the Inca throne fought their battles. For a while it appeared that Huascar had the upper hand, when Atahualpa's army was routed and he was captured. His escape was an inspiration to his army as it remobilised to support him. In the end, Atahualpa was successful when his half-brother was captured.

All the while, Pizarro had landed his own army in Peru. He had two advantages over the Inca: he had Inca translators with him who could communicate with ordinary Inca people as they marched to the Inca city of Cajamarca; and the Inca army had been too focused on its civil war to offer any resistance. But it would be the Spanish weaponry that would be the difference. Like Cortés before him in Mexico, Pizarro had steel swords, cannon, cavalry on horseback and

mechanical crossbows. And, just like the Aztec before them, the Inca were astonished at the sight of men on horseback. They believed the horses to be very large llamas or alpacas. Atahualpa had been first convinced that Pizarro was a god, but one of his trusted advisors who had met Pizarro assured him they were not gods at all.

Atahualpa planned to meet with Pizarro at Cajamarca, but when he arrived in the city in 1532 he found that there was nowhere for him and his army to stay – the Spanish had already occupied every available space. Pizarro sent one of his priests, Father Vincente de Valverde, to meet with Atahualpa. Valverde's plan was to convert the Inca ruler to the Christian faith, and showed Atahualpa the Catholic Bible, telling him it was the word of 'the Lord'. Atahualpa looked at the book, held it to his ear and said to Valverde dismissively that it did not speak to him. He threw the Bible to ground.

This act provided Pizarro with the reason to attack Atahualpa. He gave the order to fire cannon into the Inca people in the city square, and sent in his cavalry and infantry to finish off the dying and wounded. The Inca army tried to retaliate, but they could not combat such weaponry and were in disarray. Atahualpa was captured and

imprisoned. Pizarro treated his royal captive well by all accounts, instructing his Spanish guards to provide him with whatever he needed.

The Spanish conqueror had charged Atahualpa with trying to organise a rebellion against the Spanish, with the murder of his half-brother Huascar, and with worshipping idols. At his trial he was found guilty of all charges and was to be executed by burning at the stake. Historians dispute what happened next. Some recount that Atahualpa tried to bribe Pizarro and the Spaniards by offering as much gold and silver as wanted; some suggest it was Pizarro who demanded the gold and silver as a ransom. It has been estimated that almost 4.6 million ducats of gold and silver was paid – at a time when ordinary people in Europe would not have earned a single ducat in their entire lives. One-fifth of the fabulous treasure was put aside for Charles V in Spain, and the remainder divided up between Pizarro's army.

Despite the payment of the ransom, Pizarro had Atahualpa executed in November 1534 because of a rumour of an impending revolt of the Inca people. Between 1536 and 1537 they did rebel. Within the year, resistance was crushed and the dazzling Inca Empire passed into history.

Research 11.3

Select one of the significant individuals below and create a PowerPoint presentation that details their arrival in the Americas and their reasons for coming. Include information on the effects this had on the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

- Christopher Columbus
- Hernán Cortés
- Francisco Pizarro





Longer-term effects of colonisation

By 1537, Spain controlled both Mexico and Peru. Political back-stabbing and intrigue occurred between Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru and others wanting a bigger share of the spoils for themselves. Cortés left Mexico in 1541 and returned to Spain a bitter man. Supporters of Diego de Almagro murdered Pizarro in Peru in the same year, then Pizarro's brother Hernando captured Diego and had him executed. Once the conquistadors were removed, Spain began to exploit the resources in both Mexico and Peru.

Christianity became the established religion, Catholic churches and monasteries replaced temples, and peoples who believed in a diversity of gods were forcibly converted to a religion of a single god. In Peru, however, there were isolated places where tradition continued for a number of years. Source 11.19 depicts the impact of diseases across the Spanish Empire. The impact was largely on the indigenous peoples, and we will

never know the real extent of diseases throughout the empire. In Mexico it is estimated that the indigenous population fell by 90 per cent between 1518 and 1568. In Peru, estimates suggest that the population declined by 95 per cent on the coast and about 50 per cent in the Andes.

Indigenous peoples in both areas lost their land, and were forced to work it as servants of the Spanish authorities. One wonders how demoralised they must have felt. For Spain, the conquest proved to be a boon, as they acquired:

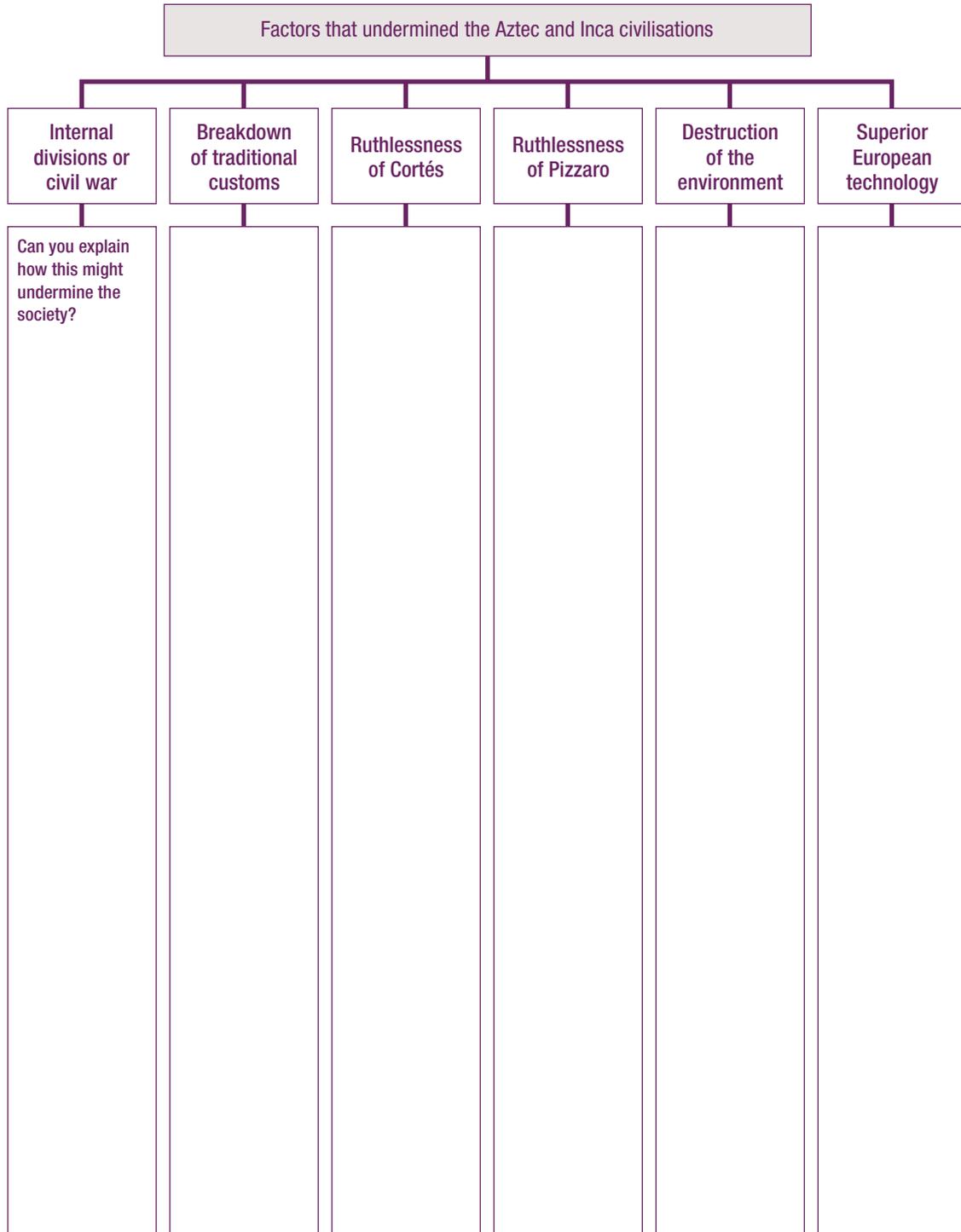
- enormous wealth from the gold, silver and precious stones of the 'New World'
- large amounts of territory (which included two-thirds of what would later be the United States)
- new markets for Spanish manufactured goods
- new resources previously unknown in Europe (such as tomatoes, avocados, sweet potatoes, potatoes, tobacco and cacao).

Thanks to the wealth forcibly acquired in the 'New World', by the middle of the sixteenth century Spain was the wealthiest and most powerful nation in Europe.



Note this down

Using the graphic organiser below, summarise how Aztec and Inca civilisations were undermined.



Chapter summary

- Complex civilisations had emerged in the Americas long before Europeans even knew of the continent. These civilisations were already old when Europeans encountered them. Only some of these civilisations had longevity, including the Maya, the Aztec and the Inca. These societies were highly organised but not always well coordinated. They all had hereditary rulers and elite classes.
- The rulers and priests were considered to be intermediaries between the gods and the people. If bad luck befell their culture, it was believed that it was because the gods were angry. The Mesoamerican cultures used human sacrifice to appease the gods.
- These indigenous cultures produced many technological achievements. The Maya, Aztec and Inca all used sophisticated mathematics and calendars that could accurately predict events far into the future.
- The Spanish conquest of their lands came about because of a burning desire to expand the wealth of Spain through trade with Asia. Christopher Columbus believed that he could get to Asia more quickly by sailing west from Spain across the Atlantic Ocean. The Portuguese, their rival, persevered by going down the west coast of Africa.
- The conquest was left in the hands of conquistadors, who were more interested in their own profits rather than the results for their king or queen. This meant that conquistadors operated independent of government control and they committed great atrocities.
- The cultures of the Americas were crushed by the superior technology of the Europeans, the ruthless application of it in conflict, and the absolute determination of the conquistadors to plunder what they saw and found in the 'New World'. Internal disputes also assisted in undermining these cultures in the face of the European encroachment. Indigenous traditions were smashed and long-standing empires were routed.

End-of-chapter questions

Multiple choice

- 1 The first indigenous people who came to the Americas did so:
 - A overland via Greenland
 - B across the Pacific Ocean in canoes
 - C across the ice sheets in the Bering Straits
 - D across the Atlantic Ocean in ships from Africa
- 2 The Andes Mountains are in:
 - A Mexico
 - B the Yucatán Peninsula
 - C California
 - D South America
- 3 The first true civilisation in Mesoamerica was:
 - A the Inca
 - B the Toltec
 - C the Olmec
 - D the Maya
- 4 The civilisations in Mesoamerica that used pyramid-type structures were:
 - A the Olmec
 - B the Aztec
 - C the Maya
 - D all of the above

5 The civilisation that controlled the trade in chocolate were:

- A the Toltec
- B the Maya
- C the Olmec
- D the Aztec

4 Examine the significance of the role played by Tlaccateotl in the Aztec political system.

5 Select one of the Aztec gods. What was his or her importance to the culture?

Source analysis

Study Source 11.25 and answer each of the questions.

Short answer

- 1 Identify the location of Machu Picchu and its significance in the history of the Inca.
- 2 Who was Hunab Kú and why would the people of the Maya civilisation have feared him?
- 3 Explain the origins of the Aztec and how they became the dominant culture in Mesoamerica by 1500.

1 What evidence in this painting can you find that this event was regarded as worthy of celebration?

2 Look closely on the right-hand side of the painting in the background. Why do you think that some people are touching the ground and others are celebrating further back?

3 Consider what the people in the centre foreground of the painting might be doing.



Source 11.25 *First Landing of Columbus on the Shores of the New World* (1892)

- 4 How are the indigenous people (left) responding to this event?
- 5 Analyse the accuracy of the painting as a representation of what took place in the 'New World' in 1492. Consider the feelings of the people with Columbus and the responses of the indigenous people.
- 6 Compare the representation of this event in Source 11.24 with Source 11.18. What conclusions can you reach about the purpose of each representation?

Extended response

Describe the impact of the Spanish conquest of the Americas in terms of its indigenous inhabitants. To what extent do you agree that the conquest cost more than it gained for the world as a whole?



Source 11.26 Maya pyramid in Uxmal, Mexico

Glossary

- abdicate** to give up rule
- abolish** to formally put an end to something
- adze** a tool similar to an axe with an arched blade at right angles to the handle, used for cutting or shaping wood
- Ainu** the original inhabitants of Japan who now mainly live in Hokkaido
- ajaw** the modernised term for a Maya ruler, lord, king or political leader
- Amaterasu** Shinto sun goddess and legendary founder of the Japanese imperial family
- Anatolia** the area from the Black Sea on the north, Aegean Sea on the west and Mediterranean on the South; sometimes called 'Asia Minor'
- Anglo-Saxons** Germanic inhabitants of Great Britain (and their descendants) following their arrival in the fifth century
- animal husbandry** the branch of agriculture concerned with breeding and rearing farm animals
- anthropologist** an expert in the study of human societies, cultures and their development
- aqueduct** structures designed to transport fresh water to cities
- archbishop** a bishop of the Catholic Church in charge of a particularly large or important diocese; see also *bishop*
- archipelago** a group of islands
- aristocrat** a member of the nobility
- arquebus** an early hand-held gun or musket; also known as a matchlock
- artisan** a skilled tradesperson
- ashigaru** Japanese foot soldiers armed with handguns
- askeri** the Ottoman military class, which was exempted from tax
- Austronesian** a family of languages spoken in Madagascar, the Pacific and Southeast Asia
- avatar** an incarnation of a god
- bakufu** Japanese military government
- Balkans** an area in south-eastern Europe, from the Balkan mountains and Danube River to the Aegean, Mediterranean and Adriatic seas
- balusters** stone pillars that form the horizontal bars in Angkorian windows
- baray** an enormous reservoir of the Khmer empire that held millions of cubic metres of water
- baron** a nobleman who had been given his land by the king, often in return for military service
- bas-reliefs** pictures carved into stone walls
- beguine** a member of a special society or Catholic sisterhood devoted to doing holy works, such as the care of the poor
- bequeath** to leave personal or other property to somebody after death
- bias** having a particular interest or view that limits one's ability to make a fair judgement
- bill of exchange** a document written on paper, promising the owner that they will be given a stated sum of money when they arrive in a foreign place
- bishop** the senior member of the Catholic Church in a particular diocese
- Black Death** the great outbreak of bubonic plague in the fourteenth century
- bonsai** the Japanese art of growing miniature trees
- Book of Hours** a personalised, illustrated prayer book

- Bosphorus** a narrow strait that connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara
- boss** a large metal circle in the middle of a shield
- Brahmin** highest order within the Aryan social system; they were the priests and teachers
- buboes** painful pus-filled swellings of the lymph nodes, characteristic of the bubonic plague
- Buddhism** a religion that has a variety of beliefs, practices and traditions based largely on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (the historical Buddha)
- bund** a low-level wall used to create shallow ponds for growing rice
- bushi** Japanese mounted warriors (later called samurai)
- bushido** a Japanese warrior code of conduct
- Byzantium** a Greek city, later called Constantinople; capital of the eastern Roman Empire
- caliph** a civil and religious leader of the Islamic world
- calligraphy** the art of formal handwriting
- caravanserai** an inn or hotel where travellers and traders could rest on their journey
- Catholic** a Christian who belongs to the original church led by the pope; also Roman Catholic
- cavalry** soldiers who fight on horseback
- chakravartin** a title used for the kings of Angkor meaning 'universal monarch' or 'king of kings'
- charter** a written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature, granting rights or privileges, or creating a corporate entity
- chivalry** a set of rules or code of conduct for knights, which obliged them to fight bravely and fairly, to act honestly and to defend the rights of others, especially women
- Christianity** a religion that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ
- chronicle** a historical account of facts and events ranged in chronological order; from the Greek *chronos* ('time')
- city-state** a government that rules a small area made up of one city and the towns and countryside around it
- civic humanism** the belief that a man of learning should hold public office and use his skill in the service of the city
- Columbian exchange** the widespread exchange of people, animals, plants, food and diseases between Europe and the Americas
- concubine** a female slave cohabiting with a man without marriage; in Muslim society often a secondary wife
- confluence** the intersection of two or more rivers
- Confucianism** a philosophical system of ethics based on the teachings of Confucius (c. 551–479 BCE)
- conquistadors** the adventurers, soldiers and settlers who sailed in the service of Spain and Portugal to help establish their country's empire around the globe
- conscription** compulsory enlistment for military service
- consul** an official representative of a foreign government
- contado** the land around an Italian city, which is controlled by that city's government
- contiguous** connected without a break
- coral atoll** a ring-shaped reef, island or chain of islands formed by coral

corvée compulsory work by peasants for the Khmer king or local officials

Crusades military campaigns to restore Christianity in regions controlled by Muslims

daimyo Feudal Japanese lords, roughly equivalent to medieval European dukes or earls

Danelaw the parts of Anglo-Saxon England that came under Danish law and where Danish customs were observed, particularly in the late eighth and early ninth centuries

deacon a clergyman of the Catholic Church who assists the bishop deal with the sick and poor in their diocese

decree a rule or law issued by a central authority

dervish a member of a Muslim ascetic order, some of which performed whirling dances as acts of ecstatic devotion

devshirme the forced collection of Christian children to train for positions in the Ottoman sultan's palace or army

dharma the Hindu and Buddhist idea of good order and harmony being maintained in the world

diplomacy the practice of negotiating between representatives of different countries

diplomat an official who represents the interests of their government in dealings with foreign governments

divine relating to a god or gods

dowry an amount of money or property given by a bride's family to her bridegroom or his family upon marriage

duchy an area of land which is ruled by a duke

dynasty a succession of rulers from the same family

eddas collections of poetry and prose containing accounts of Norse myth

edict an order given by an authority

empire a group of states with a government that is under a single supreme authority

enlightenment the realisation of how suffering is caused, and how to avoid the process of *samsara*

epidemic a disease that affects many people at the same time

epistemology the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of human knowledge

era a period of time in history; for example, the Roman era or the medieval era

eta an offensive term used to describe Japanese outcasts who were regarded as below the officially decreed class system

ethnologist an expert in the study of character traits of populations

eunuch a civil servant who has been castrated, often employed in Ottoman harems

excommunicate officially exclude someone from the Catholic Church

expedition a purposive journey undertaken by a group of people

exterminate bring to an end or finish

feigned withdrawal a faked retreat, designed to draw enemy forces out of formation

feudalism a form of government based on the exchange of land for military service, with a strict hierarchy of status; also a system under which peasants were granted use of farming land and, in return, were obliged to provide services and loyalty to the lord of the manor

flagellant a person who whips himself to make amends for their sins

flail a weapon made up of a heavy metal ball with sharp spikes hung on the end of a rope; the weapon would be swung in the air and brought down heavily to crush the skull of an enemy

flotsam wreckage or lost cargo from ships found floating at sea or washed up on shore; also pieces of plant life floating at sea

flying buttress a stone arch designed to support the main wall of a large church

folklore the traditional customs, traditions and stories of a population, passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth

fratricide the killing of a brother

freemen individuals who were free to choose whom they worked for, and were not tied to land under medieval serfdom

galley slaves slaves, often prisoners of war, who were forced to row in galley ships, sometimes chained to their oars

gazi a Muslim warrior fighting for Islam

geneticist an expert in the study of inherited characteristics in animals and humans (genetics)

gentian flowers blue flowers usually found in mountainous areas of Japan

gentry a reasonably wealthy landed class below the nobility

ger the Mongolian word for 'home'; a tent-like structure suited to the nomadic lifestyle

globalisation the increasing interconnection of different parts of the world

glyph a carved or inscribed symbol; it may be a pictogram or an ideogram, or part of a writing system

grand vizier the sultan's chief advisor or prime minister

guild an association of all the people in a particular trade or business, which set standards for that particular industry

haiku a distinctive Japanese poem with three unrhymed lines, the first and third lines consisting of five syllables each, and the second of seven syllables

hamam a Turkish public bath house, usually segregated for men and women

harem women's quarters in Muslim dwellings, sometimes used to describe the female occupants

hauberk a shirt of chain mail armour, usually reaching to mid-thigh and including sleeves

hearth tax a tax imposed on each hearth, and therefore on each family unit

heaven the paradise to which the souls of good people would go after death

hell the place of punishment and torture to which the souls of evil people would go after death

hierarchy a system of organisation in which individuals or groups are ranked one above the other

Hinduism a religious tradition of the Indian subcontinent

holy war a war fought in the name of a god

humanism the study of politics, philosophy and the human experience of life generally, drawing upon classical Greek and Roman texts for ideas

Icelandic sagas histories and narratives of the Viking settlement in Iceland in the tenth and eleventh centuries; these were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

ikebana the Japanese art of flower arrangement

illumination the painting of beautiful scenes on pages, especially in manuscripts

imam an Islamic religious official

imperial related to an empire or emperor

Indianisation the adoption of Indian religious, political and cultural practices in Southeast Asia from the first century CE

inference the process of drawing conclusions from evidence that is probable but still uncertain

irrigation a system of bringing a supply of water to a dry area, especially in order to help crops grow

Islam a religion based upon belief in one God of whom Muhammed is the chief and last prophet

island hopping breaking up a long voyage with stops at many islands, gathering crucial supplies at each one

Janissary the Ottoman sultan's permanent military corps of infantrymen, many of which were recruited by the *devshirme*

jarl a wealthy Viking; usually a nobleman or landholder

kabuki a style of Japanese theatre that developed during the Tokugawa period

kadin a most favoured concubine

kami Shinto deities (spirits)

kamikaze 'divine wind', especially relating to the typhoon of 1281

kamon an emblem or crest that identifies a particular Japanese family

Kanto the largest and most prosperous area of flat land in Japan (near present-day Tokyo)

karl a free Viking person who typically worked as a farmer, merchant or artisan

karma the Hindu (and Buddhist) belief that the way a person lives their life has an effect on how happy or successful they will be in their next life

kemari an ancient Japanese game in which a leather ball is kicked by players in a circle who keep it from touching the ground as long as possible

khan an important leader of the Mongols

khanates areas or territories under the rule of a khan

kinship having a relationship by blood or marriage

knarr a Viking cargo ship capable of open sea travel, with a wider, deeper and shorter hull than a longship, and operated by a smaller crew

knight a military servant of a king or other person of rank

komuso wandering priests of a Zen Buddhist sect who played the shakuhachi

koto a flat musical instrument from Japan with thirteen or more strings that are plucked

kuriltai a gathering of Mongol leaders to make important decisions

lady-in-waiting a female attendant of an empress, queen or princess

laterite a soft, clay-like material that is easy to cut and hardens when exposed to the air

life expectancy the average length of time that a given population is expected to live

linga a phallus-shaped stone that is a 'sign' from Shiva; followers of Shiva make offerings to it

linguist an expert in the study of language and its structure (linguistics)

lintel a stone that spans the top of a doorway

litter a vehicle containing a bed or a seat, enclosed by curtains and carried by men

lute a plucked, guitar-like string instrument with a long neck and pear-shaped body

magnate a member of a noble family, with a special title and coat of arms to show their importance

make merit the Buddhist idea that doing good works will earn enlightenment

mana in Polynesian and Melanesian societies, a supernatural or sacred energy force believed to run through all natural things

manor the great house and lands of a rich nobleman

manuscript a book written by hand

martyr someone who is put to death for her or his beliefs

matrilineal inheritance in the Khmer Empire, inheritance passed from a man to his sister's son, rather than to his own children

medieval nineteenth-century Latin for 'middle age' (*medium aevum*)

medrese an institute of Muslim education; 'madrasah' in Arabic

mehter an Ottoman military band

Meiji a period of reform in Japan after 1868; also the posthumous name of Emperor Mutsuhito

mercantile relating to trade or commerce

merchant a business person who makes money by trading goods, especially with foreign countries

Mesoamerica the area of Central America before the arrival of the Spanish

military intelligence information about the size, location and tactics of enemy forces

millet an Ottoman system of national communities, based on religion

minaret a tall, thin turret connected to a mosque

mint a place where money is manufactured

missionary people sent to spread a particular religious faith, in this case Christianity, in another country

moai the large stone statues erected by the inhabitants of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

monarchy a style of government where a king or queen rules a society

monastery a place of residence of a community of monks or nuns living under religious vows

Mongol a powerful tribe from Central Asia who set up a great empire

monsoon strong winds that blow into Southeast Asia from the southwest during the wet season, bringing heavy rains, and from the northeast during the dry season

mosque a Muslim place of worship

motte and bailey castle an early and simple form of the castle, made up of a bank of earth with a stone or wood wall on top of it

musketeer a soldier who is equipped with a musket, an early form of rifle

Muslim a follower of Islam

myth a sacred narrative, either a story or poem, explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form

mythology a collection of myths that belong to a particular people or culture and tell about their history, ancestors, heroes, gods and other supernatural beings

noh a type of traditional Japanese play

nomads people who move from place to place

Nornir three female beings in Norse mythology who rule the destiny of gods and men; comparable to the Fates in Greek mythology

Old Norse old form of the Norwegian language

page a boy who began his training as a knight by serving in the home of a nobleman

pandemic infectious disease that spreads over a large area of the world

pantheon all the deities of a religion considered collectively

papacy the pope's system of government and administration of his lands

patron a person who supports an activity, usually by giving money

Pax Mongolica a long period of relative peace and stability across Central Asia

peasant a labourer who relies on subsistence farming or fishing

penance an act of self-punishment to make amends for one's sins

peninsula a long piece of land surrounded almost entirely by sea, but joined to the mainland

picture stones large slabs of stone engraved and decorated with pictures of ships, animals, gods, weapons and armour; they were often erected as memorials

pilgrim a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons; the journey is the 'pilgrimage'

pilgrimage a religious journey to a sacred place

pincer movement when two parts of an army close in on the enemy from either side

plague doctors medical officers employed to treat plague victims; often they had limited medical training

polygamy having more than one wife at one time

Polynesia from the Greek: *poly* meaning 'many' and *nesos* meaning 'islands'

polytheist a believer in more than one god

pope the head of the Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome

port a harbour that is big enough to take large trading ships, and has the equipment to load and to unload them

precarious dangerously insecure

pre-Columbian a term used by historians, anthropologists and archaeologists to describe the cultures in America before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 CE

prefectures the subdivisions or states within Japan

prejudice an unreasonable opinion formed without evidence

priest one who conducts church services for the people in each parish

prime prepare a firearm for firing

proletariat ordinary working people with no special skills

prophet one who claims to be in contact with the supernatural and acts as an intermediary concerning knowledge delivered from the supernatural

Protestant a Christian belonging to one of many sects that split from the Catholic Church as a result of the Reformation

province a region or district within a country

puppet ruler a ruler whose decisions are made or controlled by another person

purgatory the place that spirits of the dead go to suffer for acts of evil

Qur'an (Koran) the holy book of Islam

reaya lower-ranking, tax-paying people in the Ottoman empire

Reformation A division within the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, resulting from Protestant sects leaving the church

reformer a person who works to improve social policy

regent a person appointed to reign on behalf of an under-age ruler until they are old enough to rule in their own right

relic an object surviving from an earlier time

Renaissance a rebirth of interest in the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome, with an emphasis on philosophy, art and architecture

renga a form of collaborative Japanese poetry made up of a chain of verses

ronin samurai warriors without masters, who therefore received no salary

rule from the cloister rule by a retired emperor

runes letters within a set of related alphabets dating from the second century CE; they were used to write various Germanic languages before the adoption of the Latin alphabet

samsara the Hindu process of reincarnation, which is influenced by karma

samurai the hereditary warrior class of Japan

scholar a specialist in a particular branch of study, such as history

scourge a whip for punishment

scriptoria rooms where monks created or copied illuminated manuscripts

Sea of Marmara the sea in Turkey that divides Asia from Europe

secular non-religious

sedentary relating to an inactive or settled lifestyle

segregate isolate, divided or separate apart from one another

Seljuks a Turkish–Persian (Iranian) dynasty originating in Central Asia

seppuku a method of ritual suicide considered honourable for samurai

serf a person who is bound to work the land of their master in return for a small amount of land to feed their family

shakuhachi Japanese bamboo flute

sherd broken pieces of ceramic material found in an archaeological site (abbreviation of potsherd)

Shi'ite (or Shia) a Muslim who regards Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law) as his first legitimate successor

Shintoism an ancient Japanese religion involving worship of ancestors and nature

shoen privately owned landed estates in Japan

shogun military dictator of Japan

Silk Road a network of trade routes that linked Asia with Europe and the Mediterranean world

skirmish continual and unplanned battles between parts of opposing armies

squire a young man who has become the personal servant of a knight

stanza a section of a poem

stele a free-standing stone, often carved with an inscription

steppe a vast area of grasslands that spans much of Central Asia

stick chart a map used by Polynesian navigators that indicated islands, waves and currents across the ocean

stirrup a metal device that holds the foot of a horse rider steady, allowing the rider to use weapons while riding

subjugate bring under domination or control by conquest

sultan the leader or emperor of the Ottoman Empire

sumptuary law a law that regulated what peasants could wear so that they couldn't begin to dress or act as a member of a higher class

Sunni a Muslim who believes that the leader of the Muslims after Muhammad should be elected from among the people close to him, not necessarily a family member

tanka a Japanese poem of five unrhymed lines

tapa cloth made from the bark of the Polynesian paper-mulberry tree

tapu the behaviours and things that were believed to be prohibited by the gods in Polynesian societies

Tartar the name given to the Mongols by the Russian peoples

Tatar khan the leader of the Tatar group in the region of Crimea

tax a compulsory contribution made for the support of the government

tenno emperor of Japan

thing the assembly of freemen that governed a Viking community

thrall a bonded Viking serf or slave

timar an area of land on which taxes were gathered and partly shared by local officials, who in return provided military service to the empire

torii a gate to a sacred place, dividing the natural world from the spirit world

trade caravan a group of merchants travelling together with their goods

treaty an agreement between countries

tribute money paid by one state to another in acknowledgement of military submission

Trimurti the Hindu Trinity, which comprises the three most significant gods: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu

ukiyo the floating world'; a lifestyle emphasising pleasure, centred on the cities

ukiyo-e art that portrayed the Japanese ukiyo (pleasure-seeking) lifestyle

usurper one who illegally becomes king

valide sultan the mother of the sultan

Valkyries: 'choosers of the slain' – female figures who decided who would die in battle; from the Old Norse *valkyrja*

vassal a slave or servant within the feudal system who received land in return for their service

vellum sheets of material used for writing, which were made from thinned animal skin; also known as parchment

Vikings explorers, warriors and pirates of Scandinavian descent who raided, traded, explored and settled in wide areas of Europe, Asia and the North Atlantic

yam an efficient mail system using fast horse relay in the Mongol Empire

Yassa a code of laws that helped to govern the Mongol empire

Zen a form of Buddhism stressing self-discipline and the role of a master

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