

# Foundations of Medieval Europe

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# The Germanic Kingdoms

- Government was simple
  - Depended on loyalty of warriors
- Some adapted Roman ideals
  - Ostrogoths: simplified Roman law
- Others did not
  - Angles, Saxons, and Jutes: Germanic customs and languages, eventually evolved into modern English
- Christian Church also helped preserve Roman traditions
  - Ex. Clergy spoke Latin



# Kingdom of the Franks

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- ❑ Strongest kingdom to emerge in the early Middle Ages
- ❑ Occupied modern day Germany and Belgium
- ❑ Late 5<sup>th</sup> century
- ❑ Brilliant but ruthless leader Clovis
- ❑ Conquered land from the Pyrenees to central Europe



# Clovis

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- ❑ Believed by becoming Christian would lead to having more power in Europe
- ❑ Other Germanic kings were also Christian but belonged to the Arian sect, who the Roman Catholic Church believed to be heretics.
- ❑ R.C. Church would support Clovis
- ❑ After his death, the chief court official, the Mayor of the Palace would become ruler of the Frankish Kingdom

# Invasion by the Muslims

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- 700's: Germanic kingdoms of Western Europe faced invasion by Muslim armies
- Had won converts in the southern Mediterranean and pushed into Europe through Spain
- By 732 Muslim forces were spilling into France
- Charles Martel, Frankish Mayor of the Palace, rallied Christians to defeat the Muslims at the Battle of Tours
- Although Islamic civilizations would influence Europeans, the battle marked the end of the expansion in Europe.

# The Age of Charlemagne

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- ❑ Martel founded the Carolingian dynasty
- ❑ Son Pepin was elected King by Frankish nobles
- ❑ Had election approved by the Pope
- ❑ Pepin's son Charles would strengthen the central government during his long reign from 768-814
- ❑ “Charles the Great” , “Charlemagne”



# Charlemagne

- Able general who conquer an empire that reunited areas under the former Western Roman Empire
- Pope Leo III crowned him “Emperor of the Romans”
- Used local nobles who were responsible for local defense and justice
- Established uniform laws and appointed local judges
  - Missi dominici





# Charlemagne

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- ❑ Wanted to spread Christianity throughout the empire
- ❑ Used Christian missionaries
- ❑ Supported the effort of the Church to create local parishes (districts)
- ❑ To finance parishes, Charlemagne required all citizens to pay a tithe (10% of their income) to the Church



# A Revival of Learning

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- ❑ Encouraged scholars from all over Europe to his court.
- ❑ Could read but not write
- ❑ Monasteries set up schools and libraries
- ❑ Latin was the language used in Monasteries (language of the Church)
- ❑ Monasteries made copies of the Bible and ancient Greek and Roman texts
- ❑ Practiced the art off **I**llumination
- ❑ Clear written script (Carolingian Miniscule)
- ❑ Under Charlemagne the distinctions between Roman and Germanic traditions would blur and a new European culture would emerge.

# A New Wave of Invasions

- ❑ Heirs of Charlemagne lacked his wisdom and character
- ❑ Kingdom was divided in 3 by the Treaty of Verdun
- ❑ East and West rulers would fight for control of the middle
- ❑ Struggles would shape Europe for over 1,000 years





# New Invasions

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- 800's: Magyars and Slavs from Eastern Europe
- Muslims in Italy
- Vikings from Scandinavia
  - Burned and looted towns, castles, churches and monasteries in Western Europe
- 911: King of the Franks gave land in Northern France to the Vikings (Normandy: Men from the north)



# Vikings

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- ❑ Explored and traded along the rivers of Eastern Europe and Russia as far as Constantinople
- ❑ Other Vikings settled in Iceland and Greenland
- ❑ About 1000: Leif Ericson spent a winter in Newfoundland
- ❑ Occupied parts of England (Danes) but were eventually defeated by the Anglo-Saxons
- ❑ Seriously disrupted Europe but did not completely destroy the work of Charlemagne