



LIFE·PAC®

# History & Geography



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# HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 1003

## THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

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# THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

The term *medieval* refers to anything that is concerned with the Middle Ages. The name *Middle Ages* was given by Renaissance men to describe the years from the fall of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the Renaissance. At that time the term *Middle Ages* was meant as an insult, as a reference to a time of ignorance, a sort of “Dark Ages” that immediately preceded the Renaissance. Later historians, scholars, and archaeologists have proved these men wrong. The term *Middle Ages*, or *medieval period*, remains; but it now stands for a time rich in art, culture, architecture, and history.

History is a record of people and events from the past, a record of the life of humanity on earth. Because history is a record of man, it cannot be separated into neat categories as you would divide a pie into eight perfectly even segments. The history of man is much more complex.

Nothing that happens affects only itself. Every event, every person fits into a complex pattern of events which form the large picture of the history of the world. Certain major events, certain important people stand out; but these men and events are linked to the rest of mankind and to the historical setting in which they lived.

Historians try to divide history into neat, well-defined periods of time. They will divide world history, for example, into the Ancient World, the Classical World, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and so on, until they reach the present day. Few of them, however, will agree on the precise dates for the beginning and the end

of any of these time periods. The reason for this lack of agreement is the nature of life itself: Nothing happens all at once. Life does not stop on December 31 of one year, and begin all over in a different manner on January 1 of the next. The resolutions or decisions that are made may eventually change the way of life, but nothing happens with the mere turning of a calendar page.

How, then, are the Middle Ages set off in time? The Renaissance scholars would say that they begin with the fall of the Roman Empire and end with the beginnings of the Renaissance. This definition is perhaps still the best one. Historians disagree on the precise date of the fall of the Western Empire, some will date the fall about the year 376 when the barbarians began a serious move into Roman territory. Others will say that the full decline of the Western Empire lasted until around the year 800. Many others will propose key dates in between these two. In this LIFEPAC® you will compromise and speak of the beginning of the Middle Ages as about the year 450.

The same problem arises with the closing dates. The Renaissance began anywhere from the mid-1200s to the 1400s, depending on the country. The full changes in society, government, and the church that led to the mental attitude and political climate of the Renaissance did not occur in an instant. In this LIFEPAC you will consider the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance to be about 1450.

## OBJECTIVES

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAC.

When you have finished this LIFEPAC, you should be able to:

1. Explain the developments that led to the decline of the Roman Empire.
2. Describe the role played by the Christian church in the first four hundred years of its history.
3. Identify the barbarian invaders.
4. Explain the changes brought to Europe by the Germanic barbarians.
5. Describe the Germanic ideas of government and law and their influence on future systems of government and law.
6. Explain the role of the Eastern Empire in the sixth century.
7. Identify some of the early church fathers and Christian writers and missionaries.
8. Explain the Arab invasions and the rise of Islam.

9. Explain why Charlemagne and Alfred the Great were the best leaders of their time.
10. Describe the effects of Charlemagne and Alfred's attempts to renew and preserve learning.
11. Trace the beginnings of modern European countries.
12. Identify the effects of the Viking invasions.
13. Explain the state of the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic Empire at this time.
14. Describe the role of the church, and the developments that led to the break between the eastern and Roman sections of the church.
15. Explain feudalism, manorialism, chivalry and the rise of the town.
16. Describe the overall effects of the re-establishment of trade in Europe.
17. Explain why strong monarchies developed in France and England, but did not develop in Germany or Italy.
18. Identify the role of the Roman Church, and the church-state problems that led to the loss of political power by the church.
19. Describe the decline of the Byzantine Empire and the rise of new eastern empires.

**Survey the LIFEPAC.** Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

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## I. THE MIDDLE AGES: AN INTRODUCTION

To fully understand the Middle Ages, you must understand the developments of the previous 400 years which led to the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious conditions that separated the medieval world from the classical world, especially the world of the Roman Empire.

### SECTION OBJECTIVES

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Explain the developments that led to the decline of the Roman Empire.
2. Describe the role played by the Christian church in the first four hundred years of its history.

## SECTION VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

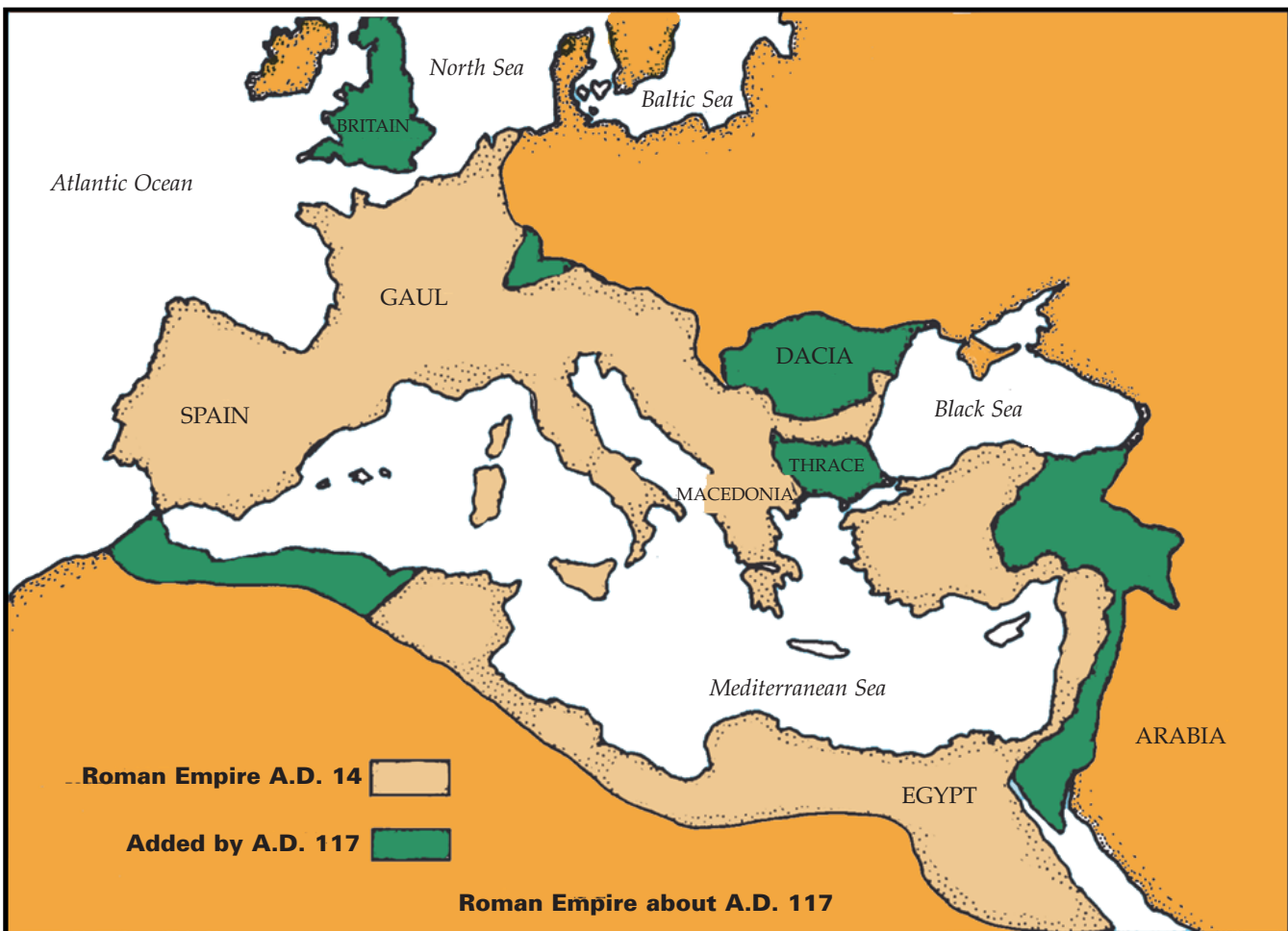
abbot  
anarchy  
aqueduct  
Arianism  
diocese

heretic  
hermit  
mercenary  
metropolitan

patriarch  
regular clergy  
secular clergy  
see

**Note:** All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

### THE ROMAN EMPIRE



After the death of Augustus in A.D. 14, the Roman Empire established by him was ruled by his stepson Tiberius. From this time until the fall of the Western Empire in Rome (476), the empire changed greatly because of the variety of rulers, the political and economic conditions of both the empire and the countries surrounding it, and the beliefs of the people.

Augustus had left an empire that was extensive, as the map indicates, and well organized. His

construction of roads throughout the empire, combined with the uneasy surface peace guaranteed for a time by Augustus, enabled tradesmen to travel from East to West with materials from far off lands, such as China and India. Roman trading posts were established in southern India. At least one hundred ships per year sailed from the Red Sea to India and east Africa.

**Early rulers of the empire.** A variety of men ruled the Roman Empire after Augustus. Some were good men and good rulers, others were wicked men or incompetent rulers. The empire established by Augustus was strong enough to survive some of the incompetent rulers. When the combination of incompetence, social problems, and economic difficulties accumulated, the empire began to decline.

From the beginning of the empire until A.D. 180, Rome had sixteen rulers.

### Roman Emperors 27 B.C. - A.D.180

Emperor	Reign	
Augustus	27 B.C. -	A.D. 14
Tiberius	A.D. 14 -	37
Caligula	37 -	41
Claudius	41 -	54
Nero	54 -	68
Galba	68 -	69
Otho	69	
Vitellius	69	
Vespasian	69 -	79
Titus	79 -	81
Domitian	81 -	96
Nerva	96 -	98
Trajan	98 -	117
Hadrian	117 -	134
Antoninus Pius	138 -	161
Marcus Aurelius	168 -	180

After Augustus, Nero is perhaps the best known of the first five emperors. Nero's wickedness made him famous. Not only did he murder many people, including his wife and his mother, but Nero also is blamed for the fire that burned half of Rome in the year A.D. 64.

When Nero died, the rule of the empire was precarious. As the list shows, four men ruled Rome in the same year, A.D. 69, until Vespasian won the power struggle. The emperor Trajan concentrated his efforts on military gain and extended the empire. After Trajan's conquest the empire reached the largest area it would ever occupy. (See the map of Rome in 117.) Hadrian used his reign to strengthen the borders and frontier areas of the empire. He built several walls and **aqueducts**, among them the famous Hadrian's Wall in the north of England.

Marcus Aurelius was a strong ruler, respected by his people. He was a scholar and a writer whose philosophical writings are contained in a book called *Meditations*. Unfortunately he had to spend many

years as a soldier away from Rome defending the frontiers.

**The decline of the empire.** After Marcus Aurelius the rule of the empire was again precarious. His son, Commodus, was not a strong leader and was overthrown in A.D. 192. Members of the Praetorian Guard, the emperor's personal guard, and the military struggled for power. In some cases these men bought the title of emperor for themselves. From A.D. 193 until A.D. 285, **anarchy** ruled the empire. In fact, between the death of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180 and the beginning of the Diocletian's reign in A.D. 284, only four of the twenty-nine emperors died of natural causes.

This long span of disorder hurt the empire. The military became more powerful and less willing to protect and to defend the vast territories. They urged the emperors to hire more and more barbarian **mercenaries** to keep the armies staffed. The mercenaries grew in number. The once peaceful trade routes were disturbed by the lack of leadership and unity in the empire. The unrest, the break of trade, and the many provincial battles that forced the hiring of vast numbers of barbarians hurt the economy of the empire.

In A.D. 284, Diocletian became emperor and reigned until 305. Diocletian decided to appoint a co-emperor, Maximian, because he thought that the empire was too vast for one man's rule. For this reason he divided the empire into two regions, East and West. Diocletian ruled the Eastern Empire, Maximian the Western Empire. Diocletian re-established law and order in the empire and bolstered the troops on the frontiers. To accomplish these tasks he had to hire more barbarian soldiers. He tried to restore the economy with severe taxes and price controls. He achieved some success only by laws that prevented landowners from leaving their land to avoid taxes and punished anyone who disobeyed the price control or tax systems.

One of the most important Roman emperors, Constantine, was a successor of Diocletian. He had been appointed to work with Maximian in the West. In 305 Constantine began a long struggle for sole leadership of the empire. Finally, in 324, he achieved this role and reunited the empire. Constantine observed the changing political and economic conditions in the Western Empire and decided to move the capital of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium in the East. He renamed the city Constantinople, which means the city of Constantine.

Constantine continued the hard economic policies of Diocletian. The control of prices and the taxation