AIM: 1) What replaced the Roman order in Western Europe?

Do Now: Class set/Geography, Examine the physical and political maps. Explain why European geography made political unity difficult. (write a short paragraph in your notebook) (Remember, that writing notes in class is part of class work.) Video: Dark Ages

Outline: I. Western Christendom: Constructing a Hybrid Civilization

A. Western Europe was on the margins of world history for most of the postclassical millennium.

1. it was far removed from the growing world trade routes

2. European geography made political unity difficult Why?

3. coastlines and river systems facilitated internal exchange

4. moderate climate enabled population growth

B. In the Wake of Roman Collapse: Political Life in Western Europe, 500–1000

1. traditional date for fall of western Roman Empire is 476 c.e.

2. with Roman collapse:

a. large-scale centralized rule vanished

b. Europe’s population fell by 25 percent because of war and disease

c. great diminution of urban life

d. great decline in literacy

e. Germanic peoples emerged as the dominant peoples in West

f. shift in center of gravity from Mediterranean to north and west

3. survival of much of classical and Roman heritage

a. Germanic peoples who established new kingdoms had been substantially Romanized already

i. had established distinct ethnic identities and had militarized thanks to contact with Rome

ii. had picked up Roman culture while serving in Roman army

b. high prestige of things Roman Why?
c. Germanic rulers adopted Roman-style written law

4. several Germanic kingdoms tried to recreate Roman-style unity
   a. Charlemagne (r. 768–814) acted “imperial”
   b. revival of Roman Empire on Christmas Day 800 (coronation of Charlemagne); soon fragmented
   c. another revival of Roman Empire with imperial coronation of Otto I of Saxony (r. 936–973)
      i. his realm was later known as the Holy Roman Empire
      ii. largely limited to Germany

C. In the Wake of Roman Collapse: Society and the Church, 500–1000

1. within these new kingdoms:
   a. highly fragmented, decentralized society
   b. great local variation
   c. landowning warrior elite exercised power

2. social hierarchies
   a. lesser lords and knights became vassals of kings or great lords
   b. serfdom displaced slavery
      i. serfs owed services and goods to lords
      ii. lived on their own small farms

3. Catholic Church was a major element of stability
   a. hierarchy modeled on that of the Roman Empire
   b. became very rich
   c. conversion of Europe’s non-Christians
      i. top-down conversion was the norm
ii. similar process to spread of

iii. occasional coercion (e.g., Charlemagne and the Saxons)

iv. considerable cultural accommodation

a) Pope Gregory’s instructions to missionaries in England

b) amulets, sacred wells, and festivals were preempted by Christianity

d. most of Europe was Christian (with pagan elements) by 1100

4. Church and ruling class usually reinforced each other

a. also an element of competition as rival centers of power

b. right to appoint bishops and the pope was controversial (the Investiture conflict)

Map below:
Objectives: students learn about Western Europe after Rome’s collapse