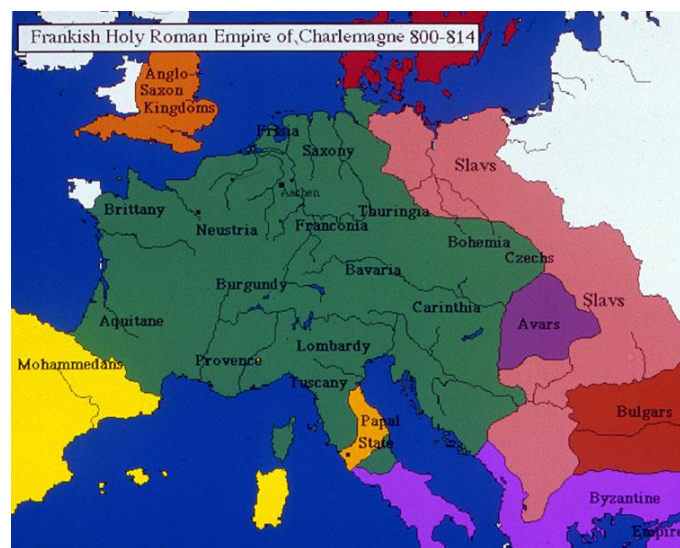


King Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire

Since Rome was missing from the Western part of Europe, the people abandoned in the eastern territory scrambled to establish order. Small Germanic tribes established kingdoms to replace the Roman Empire.

In Gaul (modern day France), the Franks put forward Clovis as their leader and he adopted the religion of Christianity for the peoples. Because the Franks were now Catholic members, more power was given to the Pope, Pope Gregory I. Eventually, a King by the name of Charles the Great (Charlemagne) would ascend to the throne in 771 AD. Once in power, Charlemagne sought to unite all the Germanic peoples into a single kingdom, and convert his subjects to Christianity. In order to carry out this mission, he spent the majority of his reign engaged in military campaigns. Soon after becoming king, he conquered the Lombards (in present-day northern Italy), the Avars (in modern-day Austria and Hungary) and Bavaria, among others.

Charlemagne waged a bloody, three-decades-long series of battles against the Saxons, a Germanic tribe of pagan worshippers, and earned a reputation for ruthlessness. In 782 AD, at the Massacre of Verden, Charlemagne reportedly ordered the slaughter of some 4,500 Saxons. He eventually forced the Saxons to convert to Christianity, and declared that anyone who didn't get baptized or follow other Christian traditions be put to death.



In 800 AD, Pope Leo III called Charlemagne to Rome and crowned him as joint-ruler of the new Holy Roman Empire. This established the merging of the political state and the Church together in unity but also established the Pope as head of the Kings of Europe. This new Empire unified all the kingdoms of modern day Italy and France.



Tightened the grip on Nobles and limited their power and influence. Charlemagne spread Christianity throughout the Western part of Europe and brought everyone under the power and influence of Christianity and the Pope. He encouraged learning and ordered monasteries to open schools for monks and priests. Eventually, this united kingdom would fall apart as his three sons fought for control and soon Europe was plunged back into chaos.

