

III. European History 1.0

A. The Simple Answer

1. Why is modern Europe a culture of *supranationalism*?
2. The simple answer is: *the World Wars*.
3. The *World Wars* were two terrible wars between Europe's nations.
4. When the exaggerated *nationalism* of these nations led to terrible wars, Europeans decided to try *supranationalism*.

B. The Question That Follows

1. Why was the Europe the only culture that chose *supranationalism* after the *World Wars*? The explanation is found deeper in European history.
2. To answer, we must look past the *World Wars* to the chapter before them. We can show what we are trying to do with a diagram. We are trying to answer the question: "What came before the *World Wars*" that is important?

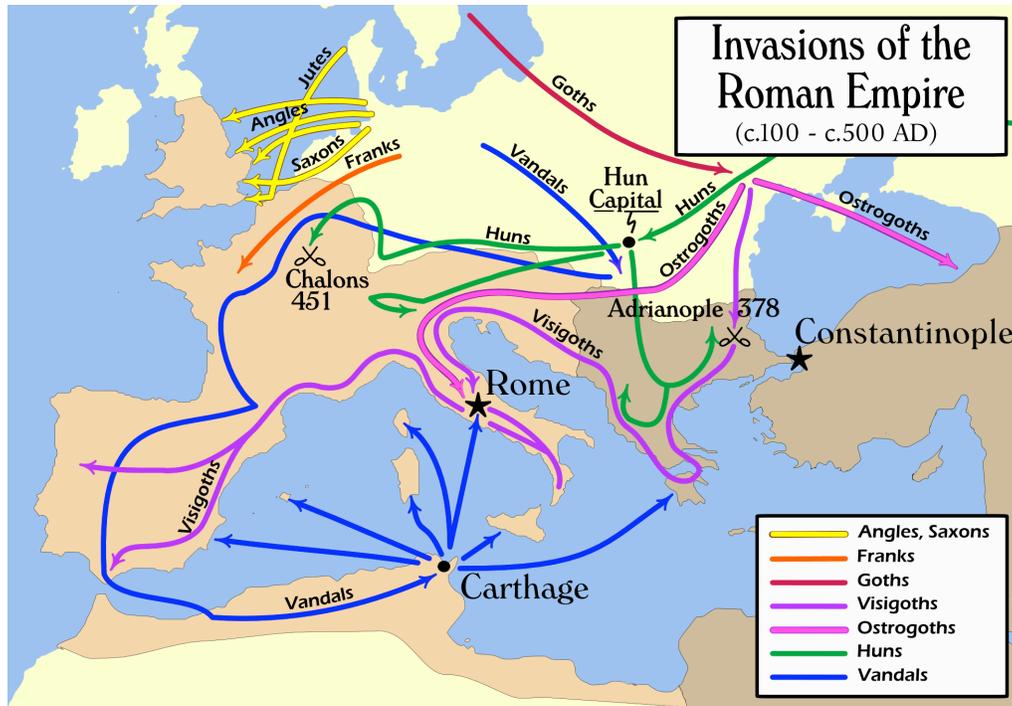


C. The Origin of European Civilization

1. To understand how Europe ended up the way it did, we have to go back to the beginning.
2. The beginning of Europe is the *Fall of Rome*.
3. Before Europe, there was the huge Roman Empire, that covered much but not all of Europe. The Roman Empire began in ancient times, and lasted until it was destroyed by "Germanic" barbarians.
4. In the year **476 AD**, the last Roman leader to call himself an "emperor" in Rome (his name was Romulus Augustus) was deposed (kicked off the throne) by a barbarian leader named Odovacar. There would never be a Roman emperor again.

C. The Era of Musical Kingdoms

1. I like to call the period after the **Fall of Rome** "The Era of Musical Kingdoms," because it resembles a giant game of musical chairs.



During the “Dark Ages,” barbarian tribes migrated continually and fought one another for control over the carcass of the Roman Empire.

2. When the game came to an end, one tribe—the Franks—was in charge, and one leader—Charlemagne—was the leader of a newly united Europe (sitting on the only chair left: his throne!)
3. Having united what are France and Germany, and everything in between, Charlemagne entered Italy and helped the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope, against another barbarian tribe. Here was rewarded with the title “Emperor of the Romans” in **800 AD**.
4. Charlemagne’s empire did not last. After he died, his own son passed on the empire to *three grandsons*. It was a Frankish tradition that the king passed on his land to *all* his male heirs, not just the oldest. The result in **843 AD** was the breakup of a united Europe into two separate kingdoms: France and Germany.

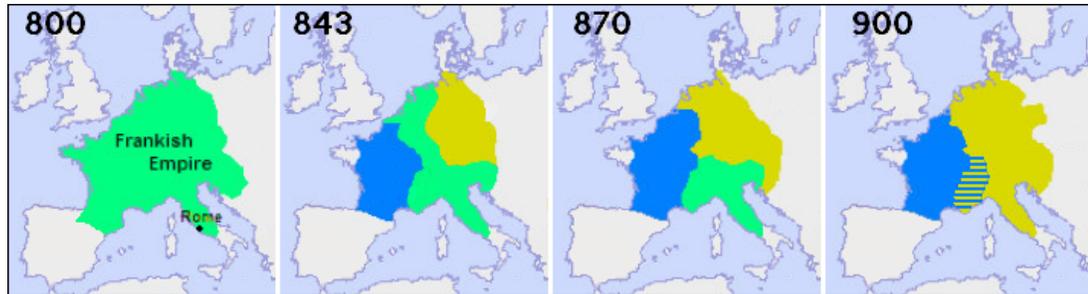


Charlemagne - the first emperor of a European union, c.800 AD.

D. A Story of Nations

1. In the time of Charlemagne, there were no nations yet. It would take centuries for them to form, as the borders between various countries became permanent.
2. The story of each of the separate nations is complicated, and we will learn it carefully through the

year. For now, the most important thing to understand is that the separate nations of France and Germany begin with the **Failed Frankish Union (800-43 AD)**.



The Frankish Union eventually became the separate countries of France and Germany.

3. France and Germany are the countries are the most important countries in the story of the *Europe of Nations*. They were the main European countries fighting in *World Wars*. And they are the two most important countries in the **European Union** today.
4. This is why the **Failed Frankish Union of 800-43 AD** is such an important event. It goes on our diagram like this:



E. Putting It All Together

1. The final step in learning this simple version of European history is to learn to read it *as a single sentence*.
2. To read it, you start at the end, go back to the beginning, and then read it “forward” to the end again. Here’s an example:

“The Europe of today is the European Union, which emerged only after the long history of the Europe of Nations ended in the World Wars, which led to supranationalism.”