

8.3 Western Europe after the Roman Empire, c 500-1200

- 1) **Roman Empire falls in 476 CE** Dark Ages span from about 476-1000 CE but the term *Dark Ages* is not coined until much later by historians
- 2) Western Europe is an impoverished feudal society - famine, war, political power with warlords or Church Bishops
 - Christian abbeys and monasteries an important stabilizing force in Western Europe
 - Like self-sufficient cities
 - Monasteries produced what they consumed
 - Established libraries, transcribed documents, engaged in liturgical activities, and other religious activities
 - Attracted patronage from wealthy leaders
- 3) By the **Carolingian Revival** we see a cultural movement emerge based on precedence. This is a historical concept called **fundamentalism**. It means the cultural driver is that fundamental ideas of society and culture come from preceding fundamental ideas - ideas that are ancient, pure, and immutable. By contrast, the other historical concept of culture is called **progressivism**, which means that history is a persistent unfolding of a better state through providence or science.

With the Carolingian Revival, we see the first time, really, when a culture self-consciously looks backward to another set of **fundamentalist** ideas that are thought to be superior and essential.

- 4) Era of **Charlemagne** crowned **King of the Franks 768** and first **Holy Roman Emperor in 800**
 - **Charlemagne (742-814)**
 - **Carolingian Revival**
 - Charlemagne means **Charles the Great**: *Charle = Charles and magne = great*
 - *Latin for Charles is: Carolus, thus his era is called Carolingian*
 - **Carolingian** means: **of or related to the reign of Charlemagne**
 - Prestige of the emperor was based on the assumption that he embodied the supreme power of the ancient Roman emperors. Concept of *Holy Roman Empire* not used until 13th C.
 - Attempted a revival of the greatness of the Roman Empire with the concept of **Renovatio Romanae Imperii** — (re-no-VAT-zio-ro-man-NAY im-pear-EYE)
 - Sponsored the construction of sixteen cathedrals and 200 monasteries
 - His capital in Aachen was a key project in reviving Roman greatness; established a school there; gathered philosophers and craftsmen; rehabilitated the alphabet; reorganized a monetary system
 - Charlemagne's palace at Aix-la-Chapelle (modern day **Aachen** Germany) included **Palatine Chapel (791)** connected to his palace with a gallery.
 - The **Carolingian** architecture was a rebranding and use of Byzantine and Roman motifs and also an attempt to achieve the scale and grandeur of Roman architecture. It was not fully integrated into a system of building, though, until we reach the following phase called the **Romanesque**, where the stonework vaulting etc becomes an integral part of the system.
 - Inspiration was taken from **St. Vitale (San Vitale) in Ravenna** (Italy) from **547** by *Theodoric*.
 - **Palatine Chapel begun 791 based on San Vitale in Ravenna** - similar but less graceful
 - Palatine had a **proto-westworks** - two towers on the western side of the church later evolved into the westworks of later cathedrals.
 - Only surviving example of Carolingian age westworks is the **Abbey of Corvey (844)**
 - Charlemagne's efforts in church building led to the development of the **double-ender**, a church with apses at both the east and west ends.
 - **Gatehouse of Lorsch (760)** is an excellent extant example of Carolingian interpretation of ancient types, although the reinterpretations were not accurate or literal. Only part that remains of Lorsch.
 - **Gatehouse of Lorsch** based on *Arch of Constantine* in Rome
 - The **building type** is the monumental arch or civic entrance from ancient Rome.
 - Patterned multicolored sandstone facade suggestive of Byzantine mosaics.

- Corinthian half-engaged columns, ionic pilasters supporting non-classical flattened pediments, decorative and symbolic motifs. Two half-round stair towers either side.
- Mixture of these Roman and Barbarian motifs referred to as ***Romanesque***

5) Vocabulary

- ***abbey***
- ***monastery***
- ***cloister***
- ***refectory***
- ***westworks***