Power After Rome

Land, leadership, and movement in the medieval Latin West

AWH.C.9.5 "Analyze the Latin West following the fall of the Roman Empire. Explain the structure of feudal society and its economic, political, and social effects, including the differing orders of medieval society..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways land or labor shaped power, circle three responses to invasion or raiding, and number two examples of Scandinavians settling or building states. Use your marks to track how people gained or defended control.

Who Held Power After Rome?

1. After Roman rule faded in western provinces, local rulers faced raids and fought over land. In much of the Latin West, kings granted estates to lords for loyalty and military service; lords could make similar agreements with knights. These bonds varied by place and did not form a rigid pyramid. Most people were peasants, not knights. Some were serfs bound to a lord's land; they farmed fields and owed labor or rents for access to land and some protection. Clergy prayed, taught, and held land. This society linked political power to landholding and made local economies depend on farming.

2. The Franks built a powerful kingdom in former Roman Gaul. In 732, Charles Martel, a Frankish leader, defeated an invading Muslim force near Tours, strengthening his family's position. His grandson Charlemagne expanded Frankish rule across much of western and central Europe. In 800, the pope crowned Charlemagne emperor, connecting royal power with the western Church. His empire later split among his heirs, but the imperial title endured as an ideal. In 962, Pope John XII crowned Otto I, ruler of East Francia, emperor. Historians often date the Holy Roman Empire from Otto's reign, though it was not simply Charlemagne's empire restored.

3. In Britain, Anglo-Saxon kingdoms rose after Roman rule ended. From the late eighth century, Scandinavian raiders struck coasts across Europe; some Vikings settled and ruled territory. Danish armies conquered much of England, but Alfred of Wessex resisted them, fortified towns, and promoted learning. His successors expanded English rule into areas once controlled by Danes. Other Scandinavians sailed to Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland in North America. Viking settlers in northern France became Normans; their descendants conquered England in 1066 and later took Naples. Scandinavian traders and warriors also helped establish early Rus' centers along eastern European rivers, shaping states that developed there.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did exchanges involving land and labor give lords power while shaping peasants' lives?

2. How did military success and the Church each help rulers gain authority? Use two rulers from the passage.

3. How did Alfred and the descendants of Viking settlers change control of England in different ways?

4. Why is it misleading to describe Scandinavian activity only as raiding? Give one example of exploration and one of state-building.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a ruler of a coastal kingdom facing raids. In four or five sentences, propose one policy drawn from the passage, predict its effects on two different groups in society, and explain one possible cost or limitation.

ANSWER KEY

Power After Rome

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.9.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways land or labor shaped power, circle three responses to invasion or raiding, and number two examples of Scandinavians settling or building states. Use your marks to track how people gained or defended control. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did exchanges involving land and labor give lords power while shaping peasants' lives?	**Lords gained land through agreements tied to loyalty and military service. Serfs farmed a lord's land and owed labor or rents in return for access to land and some protection.**
2	How did military success and the Church each help rulers gain authority? Use two rulers from the passage.	**Charles Martel's victory near Tours strengthened his family's position. The pope's coronation of Charlemagne connected his rule to the western Church. Otto I's coronation is another valid Church example.**
3	How did Alfred and the descendants of Viking settlers change control of England in different ways?	**Alfred resisted Danish armies and fortified towns; his successors extended English rule into former Danish territory. Descendants of Viking settlers in France conquered England in 1066.**
4	Why is it misleading to describe Scandinavian activity only as raiding? Give one example of exploration and one of state-building.	**Scandinavians sailed to Iceland, Greenland, or Vinland. Viking descendants conquered England or Naples, and Scandinavian traders and warriors helped establish early Rus' centers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would build fortified towns where people could shelter during raids, as Alfred did in Wessex. Peasant families could escape attacks more often and continue farming nearby fields. Lords would need to organize workers and guards, strengthening their authority over local defense. Building walls would take labor away from fields, so the kingdom might harvest less food while construction lasted.

Accept other passage-based policies if the response explains effects on two distinct groups and a plausible cost. For the marking job, accept any two supported land or labor examples, three responses to threats, and two Scandinavian settlement or state-building examples.