

Medieval Europe II

Europe 1000 to 1450 CE

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Introduction

This Premium TimeMaps unit is a sequence of maps which follows the history of Medieval Europe from 1000 CE, through to 1450 CE, when Medieval Europe was transitioning into early modern Europe.

The unit's aim is to quickly and clearly show the main episodes in Medieval European history during these centuries. It shows the gradual refinement of the map of Europe along lines already laid down by 1000. These were centuries of great changes within European civilization, which often do not show up in map form; these are dealt with in the Additional notes (see below).

Teachers of AP World History, who have a huge amount of ground to cover, may not wish to spend too much time on this period. You can use this TimeMap to skate through Europe's medieval history, picking out points you wish to draw your students' attention to. The bullet points in the Presentation notes below will help you do this.

For those who have the opportunity to go into more depth, the Additional teaching notes provide comprehensive coverage of all the thinking skills, themes and key concepts relevant to this Period 3 topic.

How to use this unit

The unit can be used in two ways:

(1) Whole-class presentation

or

(2) Student-based enquiry work

Teachers may wish to use both approaches, perhaps using (1) as a quick introduction, and then (2) for students to carry out a more in-depth enquiry using the student-based questions; or (if you feel your students can manage this) starting them off with (2), to allow them to find out for themselves what happened at this period, before using (1) as a reinforcement exercise.

How does this unit fit in with other Premium TimeMaps units?

This unit follows on from the Premium Unit **Medieval Europe I**, and is followed by the Premium Unit on the **Early Modern Europe**, which covers European history between 1450 CE to 1750 CE.

Section 1: Whole-class presentation

Using a big screen, show the map sequence to your class, talking through each map. To help you do this, we have prepared accompanying Presentation Notes, which are set out below. You can use these either as a script or *aide-memoire*.

This activity can be used as a wrap up / reinforcement exercise, or as a stand-alone unit.

For each map, these notes mostly follow the same formula:

1. Date and introduction

The date to which the map refers, followed by a small introductory paragraph which seeks to encapsulate in a sentence or two what's going on in the map. These are in **bold**.

2. Bullet points

One or more bullet points cover different points of interest in the map, or in the period it covers.

If you are not wanting to spend much time on the topic, these bullet points will be all you need to give your students a clear overview.

3. Additional Notes

The premium map sequence offers a superb framework on which to hang a large amount of information. This more in-depth information is offered in additional notes. If the aim is to give a brief overview of the topic, then skip them.

If you wish to use these Additional Notes, we suggest that, prior to showing the Presentation to your class, you read them through and highlight sections you want to draw on.

These notes cover the vast majority of, if not all, the points referred to in the AP World History course document (these are covered in even more depth in the TimeMaps articles listed at the end of this guidance.)

Some key words or phrases are in **bold**; they are also there to help you see at a glance the key points in a paragraph.

Why not ask questions?

To keep the students engaged, you might like to pepper the presentation with questions. One that could be asked when a new map appears is, how has this map changed from the last one? (This will of course involve skipping between the two maps, which is easy to do).

Before moving on to the next map, you could ask the question, what's the most important thing happening in Europe at this date, do you think?

Presentation Notes

If using these in class it might be helpful to print these notes out.

1000 CE

Since the fall of the Roman empire in the west, five hundred years before, Europe has become a hotchpotch of empires, kingdoms, and principalities.

- By this date, the rulers of most of these realms are **Christians**, as are the majority of their subjects (note 1).
- Throughout western and some of central Europe, the political/military system known as **feudalism** is emerging (note 2).
- Yet **Europe** remains a hotchpotch of different realms (note 3).

Additional notes:

1. Christendom

Most of the realms which cover Europe are ruled by **Christians**, and collectively they think of themselves as belonging to **Christendom**, the realm of the Christians.

Christendom is divided into two major parts, one centered on Rome, the other on Constantinople.

There has been no schism between the two by this date (that will soon come), and they follow almost identical teachings; yet they are different in culture, language and ceremonial, and there are growing misunderstandings between them.

The Orthodox Church

In the east - in the **Byzantine empire**, **Russia** and neighboring lands - Christians look to the **bishop of Constantinople**, the patriarch, for leadership. They are members of what is today known as the **Orthodox Church**.

Constantinople is also the capital of the Byzantine emperor, who has ultimate control over the Patriarch. This has created a tradition whereby rulers also fulfill a strong religious role, with the church being subservient to them.

The Catholic Church

In the west, Christians look to the **bishop of Rome**, the **pope**, as their spiritual father. He is not under the thumb of any secular prince. At this date the **Holy Roman emperors** are trying to bring him under their control, but this attempt, whilst successful for a time, will soon spell disaster for them.

The pope is a secular prince in his own right - he rules a principality in central Italy. In future centuries this will get him mixed up in all kinds of political goings-on, to the great detriment of his spiritual role.

2. Feudalism

The countries of western and central Europe, especially **France** and the **Holy Roman Empire**, are not centralized states; rather, it is better to see them as collections of principalities whose rulers owe their sovereign king little more than nominal obedience.

The kings and emperor have direct control only of small parts of their realms; the other parts are under various princes, counts and dukes.

A fragmentation of authority

This situation is the result of a period of great disorder in western Europe, coupled with destructive invasions from outside Europe's borders – from Magyars, Vikings and Arabs. These difficulties have led to a serious fragmentation of power, so that, at the local level, local **counts** and **dukes** now control most of France, Germany and Italy.

At an even more local level, these magnates increasingly find their own power constrained by local **barons**, who are building **castles** for their own security. These fortified structures provide them with bases from which to challenge higher authority.

A pyramid of power

A structure of power resembling a pyramid is now evolving. At each level, superior lords have to treat with inferior lords (**vassals**) to gain their support.

At the top, **kings** and **emperors** have great prestige, but only limited power to exert their will throughout their realms.

Below them are the counts, dukes, and other **magnates**, who have power and prestige within their local areas, but have to deal with many local **barons**. These control the localities from their castles (initially wooden in construction but increasingly of stone), and with the aid of their armed followers, the **knights**.

Even at this local level, the barons are granting out power over small parcels of land - **manors** - to some of their knights, in exchange for their support.

This pyramid forms the outlines of “**feudalism**”, one of the characteristic elements within medieval European society. It is a system of political, judicial, administrative and social power which is spreading throughout western and central Europe, and is becoming ever more complex as time goes by.

3. Around Europe

The Holy Roman Empire and France

The **Holy Roman Empire** is a large, rambling realm which covers most of present-day **Germany**, plus northern and central **Italy**, and the Low Countries (today's Holland and Belgium). Its borders will expand and shrink somewhat throughout the Middle Ages.

The kingdom of **France** covers a large part of modern-day France, except a huge chunk in the southwest, where the kingdom of **Burgundy** is located.

France has emerged as a separate kingdom from a larger state which had embraced most of western Europe and had been ruled by the emperor Charlemagne.

In the north of France, a group of Vikings have been granted their own territory. This territory will in due course come to be known as **Normandy**, the “land of the Northmen”. Its ruler has the title of duke.

The Iberian peninsula

Most of the area of what are now **Spain** and **Portugal** is divided between a powerful Muslim state in the south, the Caliphate of **Cordoba**, and a Christian state in the north, the kingdom of **Leon**. The small kingdom of Navarre is a breakaway from Leon, and a gaggle of small counties cover northeastern Spain.

The Caliphate is home to a sophisticated **Arab** civilization, with large and beautiful cities, educated inhabitants, learned scholars, and productive, irrigation-fed agriculture.

Leon, Navarre and the other Christian states, on the other hand, are home to a rough, militaristic society, far below the level of sophistication of their Muslim neighbors.

The British Isles and Scandinavia

The two large kingdoms in these islands are **England** and **Scotland**. **Ireland** and **Wales** are both divided between many Celtic chiefs.

In northern Europe, the lands of the Vikings have now given rise to three kingdoms, **Denmark**, **Norway**, and **Sweden**. The first two are Christian, and in Sweden that religion is making great headway. Many Swedes, however, cling tenaciously to their pagan way of life.

Much of the territory bordering the Baltic Sea to the east and south is still inhabited by pagan tribes, including **Finns**, **Balts**, **Lithuanians** and **Slavs**.

The Vikings have settled **Iceland** (after 985), and even briefly colonize Newfoundland.

Central Europe

On its eastern border of the Holy Roman Empire, the **Bohemians** form a principality which, while ruled by a native dynasty, has become a dependency of the Holy Roman Empire.

The kings of **Poland** and **Hungary** have recently adopted Christianity and their kingdoms have joined the family of Christian nations (Christendom).

Russia

To the east, the rulers (Grand Princes) of **Rus** have converted to Christianity. They have done so through the influence of missionaries from the Byzantine empire, and so follow the Orthodox tradition of Christianity.

With Christianity, as elsewhere, has come literacy, but here it is based on the **Cyrillic** alphabet (based on the Greek), not the Latin one; and **Byzantine** styles of art and architecture can still be seen as influences in the great Russian cathedrals of Moscow and elsewhere.

The Byzantine empire and neighbors

The Byzantine empire is a continuation of the old Roman Empire (indeed the Byzantines still call themselves “**Romans**”). It is a large and stable state by the standards of the time, but a mere shadow of its former self.

It is ruled by an autocratic **emperor**, served by an elaborate, centralized **bureaucracy** staffed by well-educated and sophisticated officials. The ruling class is **Greek-speaking**, and the scholars of this militantly Christian society cherish the pagan learning of ancient Greece.

To its north, the **Bulgar** khanate has followed the Byzantine model in its religion, culture and government. So too have the **Serbs**, in the northwest Balkans; but their neighbors the **Croats** adhere to the western “Catholic” church.

Italy

Northern and central Italy come under the somewhat distant rule of the Holy Roman emperor, but local rulers count for much more. One of these is the pope: the emperors have recognized his authority over the domains surrounding Rome. These form the core of what will be known as the **Papal States**, a feature of European political geography for eight centuries to come. For the time being, though, popes are very much under the thumb of the emperors.

In southern Italy, two Lombard duchies are the progenitors of many more small states here, and the Byzantine empire also holds some territory.

The city-state of **Venice**, at the top of the Adriatic Sea, is an independent and increasingly prosperous trading city, and a growing naval power.

1070 CE

The popes are challenging the power of the secular rulers of Europe, especially the Holy Roman emperor.

- At this time the **popes** are insisting that their spiritual role as the leaders of western Christendom gives them authority over secular rulers (note 1).
- The age of Vikings (c. 800 to 1000 CE) has left a wide-ranging legacy, the most notable of which is the duchy of **Normandy** and the warlike activities of its inhabitants (note 2).
- The peoples of Europe know a higher degree of stability, and even peace, than for centuries; and with this is coming an **upswing** in population and trade (note 3).
- However some parts of **Europe** see change (note 4).

Additional notes

1. The Papacy

By the beginning of the second millennium, the **popes** are the undisputed leaders of western Christianity.

A succession of popes have been leading a thorough, and much-needed, **reform** of church structures and practices. At the same time they have been claiming that their spiritual authority is **superior** to the secular authority of the princes.

The **Holy Roman emperor**, who has become accustomed to choosing and dominating popes, is bitterly offended by these claims, and a clash between pope and emperor looms.

The Great Schism

Another group who have been offended by papal claims are the **Byzantine** clergy.

The Byzantine **Orthodox** and Roman **Catholic** churches have been drifting apart for many centuries. Issues of belief divide them to some extent, but these are small. However, the **Greek** language and culture of the one and the **Latin** language and culture of the other have given both sides a deep sense of their own identity, and bred an uncompromising spirit between them.

Papal claims to superiority are the last straw. In 1054 the **Great Schism**, long brewing, occurs: the Greek patriarch **excommunicates** the pope, and the pope in response excommunicates the patriarch. The two churches have severed any bonds there had been between them.

Monastic orders

A more positive aspect of the Christian church in this period is the rise of **monastic orders** in Europe.

The oldest of these, the **Benedictines**, had been around since the 6th century; it was they who pioneered the monastic way of life in western Europe. Around now, however, other monastic orders join them.

Some, such as the **Cluniacs** and the **Cistercians**, are based in monasteries, and live lives isolated from the rest of the world. Others, such as the **Dominicans** and later the **Franciscans**, adopt a wandering life of begging, or living in small monastic houses in towns and cities.

Whether in countryside or town, **monks** and **nuns** perform valuable services for the wider community. In an illiterate and impoverished society they **teach**, preserve **learning** (it would be around religious houses that medieval universities would develop), **heal** the sick and provide **charity** to the poor.

2. The Normans

The duchy of **Normandy** was formed when a group of Vikings (or *Northmen*, hence Normans) were settled in northern France on condition that they defended the French from attacks by other Vikings. This they did, and soon took to French ways and the French language.

The Normans are now changing the map of Europe. A group of Norman mercenaries have travelled to **southern Italy** to fight in the wars there, and have ended up taking control of some territory for themselves. Taking advantage of the rivalries between the several small counties and duchies of the area, they are expanding their rule.

More famously, **William**, the duke of Normandy, has conquered the kingdom of **England** (in 1066), and is establishing a Norman ruling class there to rule over the English people.

3. An upsurge in population and trade

With the ending of the age of Viking raiders and of instability and anarchy within the kingdoms, the **population** of western Europe is now growing again, probably for the first time in many centuries. Comparative peace and stability is allowing **trade** to revive, and **towns** to start expanding again.

Towns and cities

Towns throughout western Europe are now becoming larger and more prosperous (from a very low base: at this time London has about 10,000 inhabitants). The trading cities of **Italy**, which control what trade there is coming into Europe from the Middle East, are the outstanding examples.

The city of **Pisa**, for example, uses its growing wealth, not only to build its famous **Leaning Tower** (it started to lean shortly after it had been completed), but also to capture the island of Sardinia from the Arabs (it will soon add Corsica as well).

4. Elsewhere in Europe

The Holy Roman Empire and neighbors

The **Holy Roman Empire** has added to its territory by taking over the kingdom of Burgundy.

A strip along the Baltic coast has been absorbed into Christendom as the duchy of Pomerania.

Spain

A series of wars between the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain reshuffle the map somewhat, and the new kingdom of **Aragon** has appeared

To the south the Muslim Caliphate of **Cordoba** has broken up into several rival emirates.

The Balkans

The **Bulgarian empire** has been completely conquered by a resurgent Byzantine empire.

1138

The Byzantine Empire has lost a lot of territory to the Muslim Seljuq Turks, which has gravely weakened its power.

- The serious Byzantine defeat at the **Battle of Manzikert** in 1071 has had wider repercussions Europe - including the launching of the **Crusades** (note 1).
- As a result of the Crusades, and of other contacts with the Muslim world, **cultural influences** from the East are again flowing into Europe (note 2).
- Another result has been the boost to European - specifically, Italian - trade in the **Mediterranean** (note 3).
- The **popes** have continued to assert their authority over secular rulers, with very different results in different countries (note 4).
- Northern **Europe** sees fragmentation and expanding trade (note 5).

Additional notes

1. The Battle of Manzikert and its consequences

The **Seljuq** Turks were a nomadic **Muslim** group from central Asia who took over most of the Middle East in the mid-11th century. Their conquests soon brought them to Asia Minor, where they destroyed a Byzantine army at the **Battle of Manzikert** (1071)..

In the wake of this victory, the Seljuqs occupied much of Asia Minor and set up a powerful sultanate there (called the sultanate of **Rum** - i.e. "Rome", as it was located on former Roman, or Byzantine, territory).

For the Byzantines, the loss of this territory also meant the loss of its most valuable recruiting grounds for their army, so it is a major blow to its military strength.

The First Crusade

In desperation, the Byzantines appealed to their Christian co-religionists for help against the Muslim Seljuqs. The **pope** responded with a call to arms, and in 1096 several of the kings and princes of **Christendom** led a huge, rambling expedition - a mixture of military campaign and religious pilgrimage - to capture the city of **Jerusalem** from the Muslims.

This campaign is known to European history as the **First Crusade**.

It succeeded in conquering a sliver of territory in Syria and Palestine, including Jerusalem, which has been divided into several principalities organized along European, feudal lines.

2. Increasing contacts with the Muslim world

The First Crusade has brought the Christian world much more closely into touch with the **Muslim world**, with its far more sophisticated civilization.

A second area of contact is in **southern Italy** and **Sicily**, where the Normans have expanded their power to rule a major kingdom. Here, Muslims, Christians and Jews mingle on terms of equality and security, creating a fertile environment for the transferring of ideas from one culture to another.

A third area of close Christian-Muslim interaction is in **Spain**. Here, both the Christian kingdoms and the Muslim emirates have been fighting as much amongst themselves as with their religious enemies; generally, however, the Christians have been getting the upper hand; and the kingdom of **Aragon** has grown into a leading state on the Christian side.

Despite the hostilities between Christian and Muslim, there is also a good deal of trade and intellectual transaction between the two sides. Through these contacts Islamic learning is reaching Europe. **Muslim science**, **Indian mathematics** (and with it “Arabic” numbers, the decimal system, the concept of zero, and algebra), and **Greek philosophy** (most of it lost to the west after the fall of the western Roman empire) are spreading through the new universities being founded in European cities.

Of more immediate effect, navigation technologies such as the much-improved **astrolabe** and the **magnetic compass** also arrive in Europe via these contacts, as do the **spinning wheel** and a taste for **sugar**.

3. The expansion of Italian commerce

The merchants of the cities of northern Italy, especially the maritime trading cities of **Venice** and **Genoa**, have greatly benefitted from the establishment of Christian states in Syria and Palestine.

The supplies and personnel heading for the Crusader states are carried in Venetian and Genoese ships. Also, the opening of Christian ports along the coast of Syria and Palestine has plugged Christian commerce more firmly into the trade routes of the Middle East. Within the Middle East itself trade is in the hands of Muslim merchants; in the Mediterranean, however, much of it is now in the hands of Venetian and Genoese merchants.

The trading cities of northern Italy

The growth in trade for Venice and Genoa has had a knock-on effect on other north Italian cities such as **Milan** and **Florence**.

Apart from Venice, these cities are all within the **Holy Roman Empire**. However, the emperor is a distant figure, most of the time across the Alps in Germany. These cities therefore have a large measure of **autonomy**; but they want more. Their growing wealth will help them to get it.

4. Papal ambitions and the Investiture Controversy

The popes have continued to assert their authority over secular rulers. This has sparked what is known in European history as the **Investiture Controversy** (as it centers on the appointment - “investiture” - of bishops).

The **Holy Roman emperors** have been the ones most affected by this. Bitterly opposed to the papal claims, they have seen their authority undermined by the popes’ interference in their wide realms, stirring up the **magnates** and **cities** of Germany and northern Italy against them. The result has been a succession of **civil wars**.

The kings of **France**, on the other hand, have posed as defenders of Church authority within their realm. They have thus had the support of the popes in their struggles to bring their magnates more under their power, in which they have had some success.

5. Around Europe

Russia, the Baltic and the North Sea

To the east, the **Grand Principality of Kiev**, which has ruled **Rus** for more than a century, has fragmented into competing states.

The wealthiest and most powerful of these states is the **Republic of Novgorod**. This controls a vast forested hinterland, full of valuable trade resources such as furs, wax and honey.

These products are traded westward to Europe through the Baltic and North Seas, and the trade routes in these regions are expanding strongly. Sea-borne trade is boosted by the development of a stout, capacious, seagoing trading ship called the Cog, which is able to transport goods cheaply and in comparative safety.

1215

Further crusades have failed in their attempts to capture land from the Muslims.

- They have failed to stem the Muslim advance and recently the **Fourth Crusade** has turned against the **Byzantine empire** itself (note 1).
- The crusading movement has given a boost to the rise of **chivalry** (note 2).
- The lands of the **Holy Roman Empire** have experienced prolonged periods of civil war and anarchy (note 3).
- In **France**, one of the magnates, the **count of Anjou**, acquired more territory in France than the king of France had and then inherited the kingdom of **England** (note 4) ...
- ...and there are other struggles **around Europe** (note 5)

Additional notes

1. The Crusades

Not long after the First Crusade, Muslim forces began taking back territory in Syria and the Holy Land. The **Second Crusade** (1147-9) completely failed to reverse the Muslim advance. **Jerusalem**, the central objective of the crusading movement, fell to Muslim forces in 1187, and the **Third Crusade** (1189-92), though successful in recovering some territory from the Muslims, failed to take Jerusalem back.

A **Fourth Crusade** (1202-4) ended up, through misunderstandings and in-fighting, with the crusaders sacking the great **Byzantine** (and of course Christian!) city of **Constantinople** and installing their own emperor there.

By this date (1215) the crusaders hold only a tiny coastal strip in Syria and Palestine.

The Latin Empire

The "**Latin Empire**", as the crusader-ruled partitioning of the Byzantine empire is called, is a really collection of principalities under different crusader lords. Byzantine-in-exile regimes are also emerging, and will eventually drive out the Westerners. Byzantine power, however, has been fatally weakened, with grave consequences for Christian Europe for the future.

In the short term, the eclipse of the Byzantine empire has led to the reemergence of **Bulgaria** as an independent state.

2. The rise of Chivalry

The crusades have seen the rise of **orders of knights**, such as the **Knights Templar** and the **Knights of St John**. Their members are part-soldier, part-pilgrim; they run hostels and hospitals for the crusaders and garrison holy sites in Syria and Palestine.

This development is part and parcel of a broader trend, which has seen the rise of the knightly code of **Chivalry**. This emphasizes the role of the Christian knight, whose duty is to be a servant of God, to be faithful to his feudal lord and to defend the weak.

The feudal aristocracy

He is to behave, in short, as a “gentle man”; and linked to this is the rise in the knight’s social status to that of a **gentleman**.

A key element in this is the rise of **Heraldry**. This started out with a practical purpose. With knights’ **armor** becoming ever heavier and all-encasing, it was becoming difficult to tell friend from foe. So they took to wearing **insignia** on their armor by which their identities could be known. This insignia came to represent their families, and their **ancestry**.

By this period, one’s place in the feudal network of relationships is **hereditary**: this goes for kings, dukes, counts, local barons and now knights. These high ranking individuals and their families make up the **aristocracy** of medieval European society.

3. The Holy Roman Empire: Germany and Italy

The lands of the **Holy Roman Empire** have experienced prolonged periods of **civil war** and anarchy. In this situation, power has increasingly drifted away from the **emperors** and into the hands of **magnates** - dukes, counts, princes, bishops and city councils. This process is at work in both the German and Italian lands of the empire.

The king of **Sicily** (which includes southern Italy), **Frederick II**, has now inherited the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, and is setting about trying to re-assert imperial authority.

Italy

Since the **Treaty of Constance** in 1183, the cities of **northern Italy** - Milan, Genoa, Florence and others - have been independent of the Holy Roman Empire in all but name. They have thus effectively become independent **city-state** republics.

Venice has long been an independent city-state, never a part of the Holy Roman Empire. It is now a major Mediterranean power, as is its great rival, **Genoa**.

These two cities are setting up trading bases along the coasts of the eastern **Mediterranean** and **Black Sea**, and Venice has even assumed control of former Byzantine islands, including the large island of Crete.

The **popes** have been able to exploit the weakness of the Holy Roman emperors to expand their territories in central Italy.

4. France and England

In **France**, one of the magnates, the **count of Anjou**, acquired a huge amount of territory by a mix of inheritance, marriage and force; although he was a vassal of the king of France, he actually controlled more territory in France than his overlord did.

He then inherited the English throne. As king **Henry II of England** (reigned 1158-89) he asserted his overlordship of **Ireland**, and his forces gained control of a portion of that island.

It was during Henry's reign that the **Investiture Controversy** reached England. A quarrel between Henry, who was trying to assert royal authority over the clergy, and the archbishop of Canterbury, **Thomas á Becket**, results in the murder of Becket at the altar of Canterbury cathedral.

Magna Carta

Henry's son king **John** (reigned 1199-1216), has now lost most of the territories in France that his father and grandfather gained. However, he retains the throne of England.

He has been determined to regain his family's inheritance in France, but his efforts to extort the necessary funds from the English nobility have led to a backlash from them.

They force him to sign an agreement to respect their rights. This agreement is known as the **Magna Carta** ("Great Charter"), and will in future become the foundation for citizens' rights in England and all countries whose legal systems derive from English law.

More powerful kings of France

In **France**, meanwhile, king **Philip Augustus** is strengthening royal authority in the wake of bringing the Angevin lands (i.e those which have been ruled by the descendants of the counts of Anjou) back under his control.

He is also organizing crusades against an heretical group, the **Albigensians**, who dominate a large part of **southern France**. This will result in bringing this region, hitherto used to running its own affairs independently of the king, under much tighter royal control.

5. Around Europe

Central Europe

In central Europe, **Hungary** has become a powerful kingdom, though troubled by periods of instability. It is currently ruled by one of its most famous kings, **Bella III**. It has conquered its smaller neighbors, **Croatia** and **Serbia**, and dominates the eastern Adriatic coast. More recently, Hungary has expanded its power eastwards into central Europe, to fend off nomadic invaders from the steppes.

Spain

In northern **Spain**, the struggles between and within the Christian kingdoms has led to two new kingdoms emerging, both from **Leon's** territories: **Castile** and **Portugal**. The kingdom of **Aragon** has expanded further into previously Muslim territory.

Northern Europe

Despite its failures in the eastern **Mediterranean**, the crusading movement is alive and well in **northern Europe**. An order of German and Danish warrior-monks, the **Knights of**

the Sword, have been active in fighting the pagans of **Livonia** and forcing their conversion to Christianity. They have acquired a sizable territory there.

In **Scandinavia**, the **Swedes** are now expanding into southern **Finland**, but **Denmark** is currently the leading power in northern Europe; it has expanded its territory into northern **Germany** and along the Baltic.

1282

The Mongols, a people from central Asia, have made their presence felt in Europe.

- They have conquered all the **Russian** principalities except **Novgorod**, and launched a devastating raid into central Europe (note 1).
- To the south, the **Byzantines** have retaken the city of **Constantinople** and reconstituted their empire (note 2).
- In the **Holy Roman Empire**, Frederick II's efforts to re-assert imperial power have come to nothing (note 3).
- In **England**, the earliest **parliaments** are being held, the ancestors of all today's representative democracies (note 4).
- Territorial changes are happening **around Europe** (note 5).

Additional notes

1. The Mongols

A new people has appeared in Europe - the **Mongols**.

In the 1240s, a series of destructive campaigns brought all the **Russian** principalities except **Novgorod** under their control, and a devastating raid into central Europe left **Hungary** with half its population dead.

In the 1260s the vast Mongol empire came to be divided amongst different branches of its royal family. The western portion, which rules the Russian principalities, is called the **Golden Horde**.

Aside from demanding harsh **tribute** from the Russian principalities, the khans of the Golden Horde are content to exercise only a loose sovereignty over them. In fact, the khans appoint one of the princes, at this time the **Grand Prince of Vladimir**, as intermediary between themselves and the other princes. He is responsible for ensuring that the tribute is collected and delivered in full.

2. The Byzantine empire

The **Latin empire** established by the leaders of the **Fourth Crusade** was a weak and ineffective affair, and one of the Byzantine-in-exile regimes was eventually able to retake **Constantinople** and re-establish the **Byzantine empire**.

Meanwhile, the Crusaders have lost all their territories in Syria and the Holy Land, except for one small outpost at Acre, on the coast of Palestine. This will soon be lost as well.

3. Popes against emperors

The **Holy Roman Empire** again experienced bouts of **civil war**. This round was been sparked off by **Frederick II** becoming emperor (reigned 1220-1250), and by his attempts to centralize power within the empire in his own hands.

Germany

The fact that Frederick was also king of **Sicily** (and southern Italy) meant that the **Papal States** were sandwiched between Frederick's territories. A series of **popes**, therefore, felt their domains to be at grave risk, and were Frederick's implacable enemies. They excommunicated him on several occasions, and supported the German **magnates** in resisting Frederick's attempts to assert his authority over them.

Frederick's centralizing efforts ultimately came to nothing. With the Italian states already effectively independent, it is the German magnates who have benefit most from this outcome. Since Frederick's time, rival contenders for the imperial throne have courted support from the German magnates by confirming and strengthening their local powers. The magnates are turning themselves into **independent princes**, owing only the weakest allegiance to the imperial crown.

Northern Italy

The northern Italian cities have been torn by **factional strife** between pro-Papal and pro-Imperial factions, but continue to grow in prosperity.

Italian **merchants** have picked up various techniques from their dealings with Arab and Jewish merchants in the Middle East, such as **double-entry book-keeping**. These have helped the rise of **banking** firms, above all those based in Florence. Florentine banking families like the **Bardi** and **Peruzzi** are establishing branches in major cities throughout Europe, and have becoming proficient in the use of such financial instruments as **bills of exchange** to transfer funds across long distances. They also offer **insurance** policies to underwrite shipping and international trade.

Central and Southern Italy

In central Italy, the popes have exploited the emperors' troubles by further expanding their territories, the Papal States.

In southern Italy and Sicily, the struggle between between Papacy and Empire have had a huge impact. After Frederick's death the popes sought to drive Frederick's descendants from their throne, and replace them with a more compliant royal family. They chose a French prince, **Charles of Anjou**, as their instrument; he succeeded in defeating and killing the last of Frederick's line and taking the throne of **Sicily**.

The Sicilians have not taken kindly to Charles' alien rule, and have risen in revolt against him. This revolt is known as the **Sicilian Vespers**.

4. The birth of the English parliament

Under its vigorous king **Edward I**, **England** has conquered the Welsh, and is now attempting to subdue the **Scots**.

By this date, **parliaments**, in which representatives are periodically called from the towns and shires of England to join the nobility in advising the king, are becoming a part of the way English government works.

The first parliament was originally called into being by the rebel leader, **Simon de Montfort**, to increase support for his movement; king Edward, however, finds parliaments useful to gain widespread support for his policies and for the taxes that these require.

5. Around Europe

Spain

In the Iberian peninsula the kingdom of **Leon** has been absorbed into its offspring, **Castile**, which, along with **Portugal** and **Aragon**, has expanded at the expense of the **Muslim emirates**. The Christian "**Reconquista**" of the peninsula has by now won back most of the territory lost to the Muslims five centuries before, with Muslim power now confined to the single emirate of **Granada**, in the far south.

The Baltic

In the Baltic region, **Denmark** has declined in power and territory. The **crusading order** of the **Knights of the Sword** have now merged with another German crusading order, the **Teutonic Knights**, after suffering setbacks at the hands of the **Lithuanian** tribes. The Teutonic Knights had originally been granted a base in **Prussia**, with a brief to subdue and convert the pagan tribes in that area.

In the southern and eastern Baltic region, the knights of the Teutonic Order have aggressively expanded their lands. Their aggression has forced the Lithuanian tribes to consolidate themselves into an organized state - the only pagan one in Europe.

The **Swedes** meanwhile are expanding their settlement in **Finland**, and the **Norwegians** have taken control of Iceland, invited by the Icelanders themselves to avoid civil war there.

Low Countries

At this time the cities of the **Low Countries** are growing stronger, both economically and politically, largely on the back of the cloth industry.

1347

The Black Death is ravaging Europe at this time - but the horrific scale of this tragedy does not stop the various conflicts from continuing.

- The population had grown strongly since the 11th century, but as the **Black Death** sweeps over Europe it is now being reduced by between a third and a half (note 1).
- A long series of wars, known to history as the **Hundred Years' War**, is taking place (note 2).
- **Medieval warfare** is changing - with political consequences (note 3).
- **Around Europe** disorder continues (note 4).
- The **Byzantine empire** continues its long decline (note 5)

Additional notes

1. Population and disease

After a measure of order returned to western and central Europe in the 11th century, the **population** increased. More and more **land** was brought under cultivation, new **towns** and **villages** were established, old towns and villages grew, and local and long-distance **trade** expanded. **Merchants** and **craftsmen** prospered, and increased in influence. They organized themselves into **guilds**, which were soon running the political affairs of towns, controlling their economies and patronizing urban culture.

These centuries were a time of **prosperity** for Europeans, reflected most clearly in the magnificent **Gothic cathedrals** being constructed around Europe.

Population pressures

There is considerable evidence that by the late 13th century the population is beginning to outgrow the available resources. Farmland has to be divided up into smaller and smaller plots to provide for more people; less fertile **land** was now brought under the plough; an increasing number of folk went hungry, and **famines** began to visit the region on a regular basis.

The population has more than reached its limit - but not for long.

The Black Death

The **Black Death** has arrived in Europe. It came from central Asia in 1346, first appearing in the Italian trading posts on the Black Sea. From there it is carried to Constantinople, and thence to the trading cities of northern Italy.

It is soon spreading along the trade routes of Europe, to towns in Italy, France, Spain, England, Scotland, the Low Countries, Germany, Scandinavia and central Europe. It will finally peter out in Russia. From urban centres it rapidly spreads to rural villages, carried by townsmen fleeing their homes in panic.

Wherever the plague goes it kills between a third and a half of the population.

2. The 100 Years War: France, England and the Low Countries

The **Hundred Years' War** between **England** and **France** is now raging (1337-1453). This began when the king of England, **Edward III**, claimed the throne of France (he was in fact the nearest relative to the childless French king).

Important English victories, above all at **Crécy** (1346) have given it territory around the city of Calais, on the northeast coast of France.

The Low Countries

The **Low Countries** have been caught up in the warfare between the French and the English. A French attempt to conquer the area was defeated at the **Battle of the Golden Spurs** in 1302, and the county of Flanders was confirmed as an effectively independent state within the **Holy Roman Empire**.

Small though it is, the county of **Flanders** is one of the wealthiest states in Europe due to its prosperous towns (which the count has great difficulty controlling). These are linked to the cities of **northern Italian** by a regular cycle of markets in eastern France called the **Fairs of Champagne**.

3. Warfare and politics

Both the Battle of the Golden Spurs and the Battle of Crécy are famous as victories of the common man over the aristocratic **knight**. At the Golden Spurs, ordinary Flemish soldiers armed with long **pikes** stopped the cavalry charge of the French knights in its tracks; at Crécy ordinary Englishmen armed with **long bows** brought a hail of death down on the French nobility.

Both the pike and (less so, because of the skill needed to use it) the long bow would play an important part in medieval warfare from now on.

Gunpowder weapons

One interesting item in the Crécy campaign was also that it saw the first clear-cut use of **gunpowder weapons** in Europe.

It is likely that a very few **cannons** had been around in Europe since the 13th century, probably brought from China by the Mongols; they probably came to Europe via the Middle East and the Muslim-Christian battlefields of Spain.

In any case, cannons at this time were small, of short-range, and weak; and they were not much less dangerous to their users than to the enemy.

There is also some evidence of hand cannons in battle, though like cannons these were rare and exotic weapons at this time.

These developments, however, together with the pike, will eventually undermine the dominance of the heavy-armored knight in battle.

The rise of professional armies

By this period European armies have ceased to be raised by rulers calling upon their **vassals** to join the royal standard. This has proved to be too cumbersome as campaigns

have become longer and more distant. Instead, they raised armies of full-time **professional** troops, often supplemented by **mercenaries**, paid for out of **taxation**.

The English parliament grows in power

For England, undertaking campaigns in France is very costly. Kings of England have taken to calling regular **parliaments**, consisting of nobles, higher clergy and representatives from shires and towns, to raise taxes on the nation.

This is a very effective way of raising the required taxes as it gains the co-operation of the people at large in actually collecting the money. Parliament's agreement is not automatic, however; the **king** and his **ministers** find themselves having to justify why they need the funds.

4. Around Europe

The Holy Roman Empire

This has continued to be a time of great disorder within **Germany**. One magnate, Rudolf of Hapsburg, has taken advantage of this to gain control of a large chunk of territory on the south-eastern frontier of Germany, in modern-day **Austria**. He has literally put the **Hapsburg** family on the map of Europe - where they will appear for nearly 500 years.

The Papacy

A small French territory now alienated from French control is the papal enclave at **Avignon**.

This has been the residence of the **popes** since 1309, when the **Papal States** fell into such anarchy that the popes were forced to leave, and make Avignon their headquarters. This will be the situation between 1309 and 1377. They purchase the city and its surrounding territory in 1348.

Located as it is in French territory, the papacy falls more and more under the influence of the kings of France.

The Hanseatic League

The **Hanseatic League** forming at this period - a commercial confederation of mainly German towns involved in the **Baltic** and **North Sea** trade. It is not a political federation, but at times it is prepared to field military forces to support its commercial goals. For example it wages a war against Denmark between 1361 and 70.

Russia

The Mongols of the **Golden Horde** rule the Russian principalities (except **Novgorod**, which remains independent) through an intermediary. For the past decade or so this has been the Grand Prince of **Muscovy**, which previously was a comparatively small and unimportant state. Its princes will use their new position to vastly increase their power and territory at the expense of the other Russian princes.

The **Lithuanians** have expanded into Russian territory, aided by the weaknesses of the Russian states in the wake of the Mongol invasions.

Italy and Spain

The Italian city of **Pisa** has lost not only Sardinia to **Aragon**, but also Corsica to its great rival, **Genoa**.

In **Sicily**, the leaders of the popular uprising known as the **Sicilian Vespers**, confronted by the well-organized forces of **Charles of Anjou**, offered the throne to the royal house of the Spanish kingdom of Aragon. Having also taken the island of Sardinia, Aragon has become a **Mediterranean** power.

The French royal house of Anjou remains in control of southern Italy (or the kingdom of **Naples**, as it is called).

5. The Byzantine Empire

Byzantine territory has shrunk drastically, gobbled up by powerful neighbors to east and west. In the Balkans, **Serbia** is going through a golden age, and has expanded its borders at the expense of the Byzantines.

In Asia Minor, meanwhile, the **Seljuq** sultanate collapsed into several small emirates. One of these, ruled by the descendants of a warrior-leader called Othman (hence it is called the **Ottoman** sultanate), has gained pre-eminence. It also has taken territory from the Byzantines in western Asia Minor.

The final end of the Crusades

In another set-back to the Christian cause in the eastern Mediterranean, the fall of their last stronghold of Acre in 1299 means that the **crusaders** have finally been ejected from Syria and the Holy Land.

1397

In the aftermath of the Black Death, European society is being transformed.

- The **Black Death** swept through Europe between 1346 and 1351, killing between a third and a half of its population, and leaving a legacy of psychological trauma and social unrest (note 1).
- The incessant struggles within the **Holy Roman Empire** were finally ended with the **Golden Bull** of 1356, which confirmed the magnates in their local privileges (note 2).
- **Italy** experiences economic growth and the beginnings of the **Italian Renaissance** (note 3).
- **France** is getting the better of England in the **100 years war** but faces a new threat from **Burgundy** (note 4).
- Elsewhere in **Europe** the Ottoman Empire, Hungary, Poland and Aragon (among others) are growing in power (note 5).

Additional notes

1. The Impact of Black Death on Europe

Religious disquiet

The **Black Death** was an enormously traumatic event for Europeans. In the immediate aftermath, hysterical behaviour became widespread, with **massacres of Jews** and other groups outside mainstream society, and in the rise of **flagellants**, groups of people who went around whipping themselves to demonstrate their piety.

Many people looked to the **Church** for comfort and guidance. By this time, however, the Church had become wealthy and worldly, with the **popes** behaving more like secular princes than spiritual leaders. The feeling grows that the lives of leading Churchmen had very little to do with the kind of life advocated in the Bible.

This development is strengthened by the fact that, although the popes have returned to their traditional home in **Rome** (1377), bitter factionalism at the top of the Catholic church now means that there are two, sometimes three, rival popes, each excommunicating the other(s). This episode was known as the **Papal Schism**; it would last until 1417.

Unsurprisingly, religious disquiet is spreading around Europe, and criticism of the clergy has become common. Eminent clergymen such as **John Wycliffe** in England lead the way.

Social dislocation

The immediate aftermath of the Black Death saw widespread economic dislocation. As things settled down, however, landowners and merchants had to compete for the fewer peasants and laborers that now lived. The surviving rural and urban workers therefore found themselves in a position to demand **higher wages** and **better conditions**.

The ruling classes tried unsuccessfully to resist these demands, and the tensions this provoked resulted in violent unrest. The most famous examples were the **Jaquerie** in France (1358) and the **Peasants' Revolt** in England (1381).

In due course the sheer power of economic forces compelled landowners and other employers to gradually yield. Members of the poorer classes (that is, the big majority of the population) now became a lot **better off** than before.

The recurrence of the disease keeps population levels low in Europe into the 15th century. As the demand for labour remained high, workers were able to continue to demand better conditions. Most importantly, this hastened the **end of serfdom** in western Europe; peasants became free.

2. The Holy Roman Empire

In **Germany**, the incessant struggles for the imperial throne within the **Holy Roman Empire** were finally ended by the publication of the Golden Bull of 1356. This confirmed the **magnates** in their local privileges, and effected turning the more powerful magnates into territorial princes. The emperor was henceforth to be elected by a small group of leading princes, styled the “**electors**”. The natural consequence of this arrangement was for the electors to choose emperors who were going to interfere as little as possible in their privileges.

The Hapsburgs

The **Hapsburgs** have added to their lands in modern-day Austria. However, they have been driven out of their possessions in the Alpine regions by Swiss insurgents, who are fighting tenaciously and successfully to keep their independence. From these struggles emerges the Swiss Federation, ancestor of modern Switzerland.

3. Italy

The **city-states** of northern Italy have recovered from the disruptions caused by the Black Death, and are again experiencing strong economic growth. They are now giving birth to that pivotal cultural movement, the **Italian Renaissance**.

The Italian Renaissance

The Renaissance will be one of the major driving forces behind the emergence of early modern Europe. The northern Italian cities are ideal nurseries for this revolutionary cultural movement. They are independent states in their own right, situated in the most dynamic economic region of Europe, and are in continuous competition with one another.

This competition expresses itself not only in political maneuvering, but in the adornment of these cities by magnificent buildings, statues and paintings (one could say that here art and architecture are extensions of power politics).

Their leading families are the international merchants and bankers of Europe. One of the most prominent members of this elite group are the **Medici**, who will make their city, **Florence**, into the cultural power-house of the early Renaissance.

Milan and Venice

For now, though, it is the city-state of **Milan** which has emerged as the major political power in northern Italy, under its warlord-rulers of the **Visconti** family.

Milan's main rival is **Venice**, which has taken its first steps in building up territory on the mainland of northern Italy.

4. The 100 Years' War: France, England and Burgundy

The **Hundred Years War** between **England** and **France** continues, with the French now generally getting the better of it. English territory in France has shrunk.

Burgundy

On France's eastern borders, however, a new threat is arising, in the form of the duchy of **Burgundy**.

This originated as the domain of a prince of the French royal family, but through marriage and force the dukes have built up lands on the French-German border.

What makes this particularly dangerous to France is that the dukes of Burgundy now control most of **Flanders** and the **Low Countries**, some of the wealthiest lands in Europe.

In the southeast, France had expanded its borders by purchasing the principality called the **Dauphine** from a local count of the Holy Roman Empire.

5. Around Europe

Byzantines, Ottomans and the Balkans

The **Ottoman** sultanate has now jumped the Dardanelles and is penetrating deep into the Balkans. The **Byzantine empire** has shrunk to a tiny remnant of its former self.

The states of **Serbia** and **Bulgaria**, fearful of the growing power of the Ottomans, acknowledge the overlordship of the kingdom of **Hungary**. This has experienced a period of stability and prosperity. The principalities of **Wallachia** and **Moldavia** are also now firmly under Hungary's suzerainty.

Central Europe

The royal families of **Poland** and **Lithuania** have become united, creating the dual kingdom of **Poland-Lithuania**.

The two portions are governed separately, but the merger has resulted in a great increase of military strength. Poland-Lithuania has expanded dramatically into Russian territory (with the khans of the **Golden Horde** doing little to stop it).

The Lithuanians have converted to Christianity. The royal family and many of the nobles are **Catholics**, but many of the common people are **Orthodox**, especially in the newly conquered Russian lands in the east.

Russia

Within **Russia** itself the Grand Principality of **Muscovy**, centered on the city of Moscow, is emerging as the leading state. This is largely thanks to its close relationship with the khans of Golden Horde, and their role as intermediaries between the khan and the other Russian princes.

This has given them plenty of scope to increase their own power, an opportunity they use shrewdly and ruthlessly.

Scandinavia

The three **Scandinavian** countries form the **Union of Kalmar** this year (1397). They do this to block the rising influence of the Germans in the Baltic region, represented by the Teutonic Knights and the Hanseatic League.

By this Union, the three countries remain independent sovereign kingdoms, but under a single monarch. He is invested with special responsibility for the united foreign policy (including wars) of all the three kingdoms.

Aragon

The Spanish kingdom of **Aragon** has extended its maritime empire by conquering the Balearic islands. It has also gained control of the duchy of Athens in central **Greece**; this has been captured for them by a famous group of mercenaries called the **Catalan Company**.

1450

Developments are taking place in Europe which will move from the medieval period into the early modern age.

- The **Ottoman** sultanate continues its expansion; the days of the **Byzantine empire** are numbered (note 1).
- The **Hundred Years War** is ending in defeat for England (note 2).
- In **Italy**, the great cultural movement known to history as the **Renaissance** is getting under way (note 3).
- **Portugal** is beginning to send expeditions out into the Atlantic and down the west coast of Africa (4).
- **Around Europe** further expansions are taking place (note 5).

Additional notes

1. The expansion of the Ottoman empire

The **Ottoman** sultanate suffered a major defeat at hands of the central Asian conqueror, **Timur the Lame**, in 1402. This severely checked its expansion for many years.

In the aftermath, however, the Ottomans reorganized their institutions - for example, it was at this time that they formed the famous **Janissary** corps - and this has enabled them to become an even more formidable power than before. They also consolidated their position in Asia Minor by absorbing all the other Turkish emirates.

The Balkans and Hungary

The Ottomans have resumed their expansion in the Balkans. **Serbia** is now only a fraction of its former size. The **Croatians** have reappeared as a separate state - but not for long.

The Ottoman sultanate now shares a frontier with the kingdom of **Hungary**. This country is now ruled by foreign kings who, through marriage and elections, also became kings of **Bohemia** and **Holy Roman emperors**.

These are more concerned with putting down the **Hussite** revolt in Bohemia, a religious insurrection which called for a more faithful obedience to Biblical teaching than the Catholic church of the period practices. The war lasted from 1420 to 1434, when a compromise was reached.

The Hungarians have been left to face the oncoming Ottoman power alone. The country has thus come under the effective rule of a great military commander, **John Hunyadi**. He is leading the resistance against the Ottoman forces with great skill and resilience.

The Byzantine empire

The **Byzantine empire** now consists of hardly more than the city of Constantinople itself, plus a small territory in southern Greece. It pleads for aid against the Muslim Ottomans from their Christian co-religionists in Europe - but these are all preoccupied with their own problems.

2. The Hundred Years War: France, England and Burgundy

The **Hundred Years War** between **England** and **France** has been continuing, but is only now drawing to a close.

English forces, under their charismatic king, **Henry V**, won a great battle at **Agincourt** in 1415 and went on to occupy a huge swathe of territory in northern France. The French then regained all these territories except for a tiny enclave around **Calais**, on the north-east coast. A young peasant woman called **Jean d'Arc** played a significant role on the defeat of the English forces until her capture by the Burgundians and execution by the English.

Burgundy

In their successes in France, the English were aided by their alliance with the dukedom of **Burgundy**, which saw the weakness of France as an opportunity to bolster its own independence.

Burgundy has changed sides as the fortunes of war have turned against the English, but remains a threat on France's eastern flank. The duchy has expanded its territories further. Although these recent gains have largely been at the expense of principalities within the **Holy Roman Empire**, it is France which feels most threatened by Burgundy's rise.

France and England at the end of the long Wars

Within France, victory against the English has greatly strengthened the authority of the French king, and the groundwork for the **absolutism** of later centuries is now being laid.

For England, defeat in France and the arrival back home of thousands of demoralized soldiers, deprived of the lands and plunder gained in their French adventures, is causing trouble at home. Disorder is spreading and low-level but generalized violence is on the rise; the government of king **Henry VI** is losing its authority and **civil war** is brewing.

Changes in warfare

The Hundred Years War has been a forcing ground for the improvement of **gunpowder weapons** in Europe. All sides - English, French and Burgundians - have deployed them.

The use of **cannons** has spread around Europe: the Ottoman-Byzantine wars have been particularly noteworthy for this.

By this time cannons are more mobile (having been placed on wheels), more powerful, and more reliable. From being able to barely knock down house roofs they can now demolish down castle walls. It is this ability which will have a transformative effect on government and politics in the coming decades.

By this time, too, **firearms** (gunpowder weapons used by individual soldiers) are coming into use in European armies. They are credited with the decline of the long bow in English armies, as they require much less training. The **pike**, however, remains a widely used weapon, and in the coming period will be increasingly used in conjunction with guns.

All these developments mean that **knights** have lost their edge in late medieval warfare. The **aristocracy**, with its martial ethos, will still have a part to play on the battlefields of Europe, but as officers in charge of troop formations rather than as individual warriors riding into battle.

3. The Italian Renaissance

Northern Italy has been torn by a series of wars between the big powers of the region, **Venice** and **Milan**. These have been more or less indecisive, partly because the other powerful city state, **Florence**, swings from an alliance with one side to the other as it sees one of them becoming too powerful for its own comfort.

Florence has used the wider struggles in the region to build up its dominance of **Tuscany**. Most notably, it annexed the famous city of **Pisa** in 1406.

Venice too has been expanding its holdings in northern Italy, and **Genoa** remains a wealthy commercial city.

By this time the **Italian Renaissance** is in full swing. At this period it is centred on Florence, with its pre-eminent family, the **Medici**, as the leading patrons of art and culture in the city.

4. The dawn of the Age of European Exploration

Portugal conquered the small territory of **Ceuta**, in North Africa, in order to try and control the activities of the **pirates** based there.

One of the Portuguese leaders involved was a young member of the royal family called Prince Henry. He was possessed with a desire to learn what lay south of the huge **Sahara** desert. Caravans of gold, ivory and black slaves arrive in North Africa, suggesting it is a region of great wealth. He has set about organizing **voyages of exploration** down the west coast of Africa to find out.

By this date (1450), Henry's expeditions have sailed along the African coast to south of the Sahara desert. They have reached peoples with whom they can trade, and are bringing back **gold**, **ivory** and **slaves**, at great profit. This spurs on Henry's explorers to greater efforts, and they are sailing further and further down the African coast.

Although Henry himself never ventured on any of these expeditions, he will go down in history as "**Henry the Navigator**" in recognition of his role in organizing them. He is the key figure in the dawning of the European **Age of Discovery**.

5. Around Europe

Poland-Lithuania

The dual monarchy of **Poland-Lithuania** has been expanding strongly, and in 1410 inflicted a crushing defeat on the Teutonic Knights at the **Battle of Tannenburg**. They become vassals of the Polish king.

Poland-Lithuania has expanded most strongly to the east and south-east, into **Russian** lands. Its frontier now borders that of the principality of **Muscovy**.

Russia

Muscovy has been getting steadily stronger. It has been increasing its control over the other Russian principalities; its **Grand Prince** is by now their undisputed leader. The rulers of Muscovy increasingly see the growing power of Poland-Lithuania as a major threat.

The **Golden Horde**, meanwhile, has been getting steadily weaker. The **Crimea** has broken away under its own khanate and become established as an important state in southern Ukraine.

The Holy Roman Empire

Within the **Holy Roman Empire** the **Hapsburgs** have continued their rise to a position of pre-eminence. In 1437 duke Albert V of Austria was elected **emperor** as Albert II. Since then the Hapsburgs have continued to hold the office of emperor, and would do so but for one short break right down the the empire's disbandment in 1806.

Savoy

On the borders of Italy and France, the duchy of **Savoy** has spent centuries gradually accumulation lands in its neighborhood, mostly through marriage and inheritance but sometimes through political machinations. It has now become an independent duchy within the Holy Roman Empire.

Switzerland

To the northeast of Savoy, the **Swiss** have pushed out their borders as more communities have joined them.

After the Presentation

Here is a quick **Quiz** you might like to use to make sure your students haven't gone to sleep.

The answers are given (*in Italics*).

Quiz

1. What was the political/military system which was emerging in western Europe in 1000 CE? (*Feudalism*)
2. What label did the Christian population of Europe apply to that part of the world in which they lived? (*Christendom*)
3. The Church in Europe was divided into two main branches - name one of these? (*Catholic or Orthodox*)
4. Who was the head of the Christian church in western Europe (*The pope, or bishop of Rome*)
5. What large state covers Germany and Italy in 1000 CE? (*The Holy Roman Empire*)
6. What is the name given to an area of northern France originally granted to a Viking leader and his followers? (*Normandy*)
7. Name a modern country in which the Muslim state known as the Caliphate of Cordoba was located in 1000 CE? (*Spain or Portugal*)
8. What state in Europe in 1000 CE is a continuation of the Roman empire? (*The Byzantine empire*)
9. Which country do the Normans, under their duke William, invade in 1066? (*England*)
10. Name one of the wealthy trading cities of northern Italy (*Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, or Milan*)
11. What is the label given to the long power-struggle between the popes and secular rulers in the 11th through 13th centuries? (*The Investiture Controversy*)
12. By what name are a series of religiously inspired campaigns known, whose aim was to capture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims? (*The Crusades*)

13. What was the agreement made between king John of England and his nobles in 1215?
(*Magna Carta*)
14. What people from central Asia conquered Russia and devastated central Europe in the mid-13th century? (*The Mongols - but allow Golden Horde*)
15. What government institution makes its appearance in England in the late 13th century? (*Parliament*)
16. By what name is the long series of wars in Spain between Christians and Muslims known? (*The Reconquista*)
17. What is the name given to the pandemic which swept Europe in the mid-14th century?
(*The Black Death*)
18. By what name is the long struggle between England and France in the 14th and 15th centuries known? (*The Hundred Years' War*)
19. What was the Muslim sultanate which started conquering Byzantine territory and grew powerful in the Balkans in the 14th and 15th centuries? (*The Ottoman sultanate*)
20. What was the cultural movement which emerged in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries? (*The Renaissance, or Italian Renaissance*)

Section 2: Student-based enquiry work

The students can tackle these tasks either as individuals or in small groups. They will obviously need to have access to this Premium TimeMap unit.

They can present their answers in essay form or as presentations.

The questions are designed to stimulate enquiry, thought and discussion. We have offered suggested points that students might cover in their answers. These are given in *italics* just below the questions.

Task 1.

List the 15 to 20 main events and episodes in Medieval Europe between 1000 CE and 1450 CE.

Say why they were important. If you can't find a reason in the text, make an intelligent guess!

Highlight the three most important (but don't include any from 1450, as these more properly belong to the next period of European history).

Have a class discussion to come up with the class's choice for the three most important episodes.

My list would be something like this:

The Great Schism - as it definitively split the Byzantine world from the world of western Christendom.

The Reconquesta in Spain - the future history of Spain and Portugal would have been very different if this had not taken place.

The Norman Conquest of England - this helped to shape modern England, and therefore Britain and world history.

The Investiture Controversy - *which greatly influenced the medieval (and therefore of course modern) histories of Germany, Italy, France and England, and started the Western tradition of a division between spiritual and political authority.*

Battle of Manzikert - *a huge blow to the Byzantines which resulted in the Crusades and ultimately to the further decline of the Byzantine empire.*

The Crusades - although ultimately unsuccessful, they led to a rise in European trade with the east, and to the transfer of knowledge from Asia to Europe.

The Peace of Constance - this confirmed the de facto independence of the cities of northern Italy, and so made the Italian Renaissance possible.

The 4th Crusade - a body blow to the Byzantine empire which ultimately enabled the Ottoman sultanate to grow powerful.

The Mongol conquest of Russia - which shaped the whole future course of the history of that giant country.

Magna Carta - which enshrined some basic human rights and was the foundation for all future human rights documents.

The rise of Parliament in England - without which the development of democracy in Western civilization could not have taken place.

The 100 Years' War - from had a profound impact on the development of centralized monarchy in France and of parliamentary power in England.

The Black Death - a traumatic event which had political, cultural and social ramifications for European peoples.

The Papal Schism - which gravely weakened the moral and spiritual authority of the popes, especially coming as it did after the long stay in France.

The Italian Renaissance - which would revolutionize thought and culture in western civilization.

Rise of the Ottomans - which would lead to the decline - and ultimately fell - of the Byzantine empire, and pose a major threat to Christian Europe.

European exploration - which would lead to the modern, global, system of nations we know today.

Task 2.

Answer the question, What were the most important trends and developments in this period of European history?

(Ignore those which make their first appearance in 1450, as these belong more properly to the next period.)

You could divide this question up, so that one group took developments within the Church, another looked at society and economics, another learning and culture, another government, and another warfare.

- *within Christian Church (the schism between Catholic and Orthodox Europe, papal claims, reform and monasticism, the Investiture Controversy and its effects on Germany,*

Italy and France, the Crusades and their impact, the Black Death, religious disquiet, papal exile on Avignon and the Papal Schism; Lollards and Hussites.

- *within society and economics - population and economic growth, urbanization, Black Death and later plagues, decline of serfdom, renewed economic growth and urbanization, Fairs of Champagne, Hanseatic League.*
- *within learning and culture - starting from low point of ignorance and backwardness in 1000 CE, the Christian church (monastic orders, civilizing impact of Chivalry), the impact of the Crusades and other contacts with Arabic civilization, universities, northern Italy and the Renaissance.*
- *within government, politics and warfare - the investiture Controversy - political fragmentation in Germany, centralization in France; self-governing city republics in northern Italy; decline of feudalism; Magna Carta and parliament in England.*
- *warfare - feudal armies - knights; decline of knights - long bows, pikes, gunpowder weapons.*

If there is time, identify developments and trends which cut across the different strands.

In class, discuss what were the key influences on European history at this time. Come up with a list of two or three.

My answers might be:

- *the Christian Church and the papacy;*
- *demographic growth and decline, including the Black Death*
- *contacts with Asian civilization.*

In class, discuss what were the two or three key developments during this period which would do most to shape the future of Europe and the world?

My answers might be:

- *The spread of learning from the Arab world, including Arabic numerals and the decimal system - without these it is hard to see how Western science could have taken off*
- *Magna Carta and the rise of parliament in England - ancestral to the rise of Western democracy*
- *The rise and refinement of gunpowder weapons - a vital prerequisite for the rise of the West.*

Task 3.

In groups, students identify the main episodes and long-term trends which can be discerned in the histories of the following regions:

The Byzantine empire

- *The Battle of Manzikert ;*
- *The Fourth Crusade;*
- *The Rise of the Ottoman sultanate.*

The Holy Roman Empire

- *Decentralization of power away from the emperors: papal interference, civil war;*

- *Peace of Constance (North Italian cities effectively independent);*
- *The Golden Bull;*
- *The rise of the Hapsburgs.*

France

- *Centralization;*
- *The rise and fall of house of Anjou;*
- *The 100 Years' War.*

Spain

- *The Reconquista;*
- *Fragmentation of both Muslim and Christian kingdoms;*
- *The emergence of Castile and Aragon as the two leading kingdoms;*

Italy

- *Southern Italy: Byzantines, Lombards, Normans, Anjou, Vespers, Aragon*
- *Central Italy: the Papal states*
- *Northern Italy: economic growth, independence from the Holy Roman Empire, the Renaissance.*

England

- *The Norman conquest*
- *The Angevins - Thomas á Becket*
- *Magna Carta and Parliament*
- *The 100 Years War*
- *The Black Death - decline of serfdom*
- *The decline of feudalism*

Russia

- *Grand Principality of Kiev - conversion to Christianity; fragmentation;*
- *the Mongols - Golden Horde;*
- *the rise of Muscovy.*

Scandinavia and the Baltic

- *Conversion to Christianity*
- *The Orders of Knights in Baltic*
- *The rise of Poland-Lithuania*

In each case, students should describe situation at beginning of period, and trace how things changed.

The groups present their findings to the whole class.

A whole-class discussion can then focus on which of the episodes and trends mentioned are of significance to the whole of Europe - and perhaps the world.

Students may struggle with this without knowing what came next in European and World history - for example, what seem like developments of fairly local significance in this period in fact helped to shape nations such as England, France, Germany, Spain and Russia which, in the modern period, were to have a huge impact on the entire world.

On the evidence of this unit, however, coupled with some intelligent thinking, students might like to consider that the emergence of prosperous and independent cities in northern Italy, which paved the way for the Renaissance, and political developments in England, which saw the early enshrinement of human rights (Magna Carta) and the emergence of parliament, would have profound long-term consequences.

Additional questions:

1. Trace the developments by which the primitive and backward region of 1000 CE became one of the more dynamic regions in the world in 1450 CE
 - *pop growth....trade expansion...crusades and their impact....Arab learning...english parliament...black death and its impact.....gunpowder weapons....renaissance*
2. What key developments in the early Middle Ages continued into the late Middle Ages, or had an important impact on the history of the later Middle Ages?

Answers could include:

- *The survival of Christianity as a centerpiece of European civilization, and its spread to central, eastern and northern Europe*
 - *The survival of the Byzantine empire - Orthodox church, influence on Russia*
 - *The rise of Papacy in western Europe*
 - *The emergence of Feudalism in west (castles, knights)*
3. What were the key events and trends in central, northern and eastern Europe
 - *Christianization, The Northern Crusade movement, the Mongol conquests, the rise of Poland-Lithuania, the rise of Muscovy*

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: TimeMaps articles for further reading

A list of all TimeMaps articles for Period 3 can be found on the Encyclopedia home page. Here is a selected list of the key articles which students should find most helpful:

[The Byzantine Empire](#)

[Medieval Europe - Overview](#)

[Medieval Europe - The Church](#)

[Medieval Europe - Economy](#)

[Medieval Europe - Feudalism](#)

[Medieval Europe - Government and warfare](#)

[The Islamic Caliphate](#)

[The Ottoman empire](#)

[The Mongol empire](#)

[Imperial Russia](#)

[Early Modern Europe](#)

Appendix 2: Using the Medieval Europe II unit with AP World History

Period 3:

Regional and Transregional Interactions, c. 600 C.E. to c. 1450

Key Concept 3.1. Expansion and Intensification of Communication and Exchange Networks

I. Transportation and expanding trade

A. Trade routes:

- The Mediterranean Sea
- The Baltic
- The Indian Ocean basins
- Novgorod
- Venice
- Genoa

C. Innovations in transportation and commercial technologies

- compass, astrolabe,
- larger ship designs in sea travel
- developments in accounting and banking

D. State practices, trading organizations

- Hanseatic League]

E. The expansion of empires:

- The Mongols

II. The movement of peoples

A. Expansion of trade routes often depended on environmental knowledge and technological adaptations

- The development of the northern Cog

III. Cross-cultural exchanges

E. The diffusion of scientific and technological traditions.

- The influence of Greek and Indian mathematics on Muslim, and then European, scholars
- The return of Greek science and philosophy to Western Europe via Muslim al-Andalus in Iberia
- The spread of gunpowder technologies from East Asia into the Islamic empires and Western Europe

IV. The diffusion of crops and pathogens throughout the Eastern Hemisphere along the trade routes.

A. New foods and agricultural techniques:

- The spread of cotton, sugar, and citrus throughout Dar al-Islam and the Mediterranean basin

B. The spread of the Black Death

Key Concept 3.2. State Forms and Their Interactions

I. New state forms

B. City-states in the Italian peninsula

II. Interregional contacts and conflicts encouraged significant technological and cultural transfers.

- During the Crusades

Key Concept 3.3. Increased Economic Productive Capacity and Its Consequences

II. Increased urbanization buoyed by expanding trade networks.

B. Urban revival

- The rise of commerce
- Rising population
- Higher agricultural and urban wages

III. Social structures, labor management, gender relations and family life.

A. Labor organization.

- Craft production and guild organization
- Serfdom and its decline

B. Social structures

- Feudalism
- Chivalry

C. Serfdom in Europe and free peasants

- Peasants revolt and Jaquerie