

In summary of the eastern empire we may note that it continued mostly through military skill and Islamic weakness of purpose. It did not, however, get stronger. And the eastern church followed it in the general growth pattern. The Turks would crush both in 1453.

Perhaps the most striking feature in the east was the manner in which divisiveness, splits, sects, etc., had robbed the church of its vital strength. The east would not do much in the way of creative theology but would fall into a pattern of an established sort with a holding policy. This is a partial appraisal and from the western point of view. I will probably elaborate on it in class...it is one of those things hard not to talk about.

V.1.b Western  
Politics

The Western Situation

Rome Survives

The western empire collapsed in 476 although it had been working on it for some time. The city of Rome, however, survived and its church also survived. This mere fact of survival is one of the large pieces in the puzzle of Roman dominance in later centuries. Of all the churches and Christian centers in the early ages, only Rome has survived with anything more than a wraith-like appearance...in the western world, that is.

Following the fall of Rome to the Gothic army of Odovakar, Rome and central Italy passed under the control of the Ostrogoths and Theodoric. These were Arian Christians...products of the ministry of Ulfilus...and they made no attempt to end or ruin the state of life in Rome or the Roman church. Actually they rather admired the church historically and aided it by allowing it to continue as a functioning governing unit. But the control of the Ostrogoths was tenuous--they were not building a new empire--and there were more threats of a barbarian sort from the Vandals and Normans. So in 555 the Roman part of Italy was annexed to the Eastern Empire by Justinian and given something of a protectorate status. This gave Rome, the city and the church, some political help in a time which otherwise might have proved disastrous.