

put this period together due to a disconnection of the events and facts that make it up. We will try to summarize and hold it to its basic concepts but that is not easy, as you may already suspect.

VI.1 Historical Background

Historical Background to the Period

Simply stated, the situation is that governments and national units are multiplying. They are increasing in power and national aspirations. When the western empire fell most of western Europe was the territory of scattered barbarian hordes struggling with one another for supremacy. Then the Frankish kingdom arose and the essential unity of the Teutonic states followed. But in this age there are several states growing to power at once, offering challenges to the papal office in the matters of investiture and fighting with one another in a way that could neither promote the peace of the nations nor the well-being of the church. This is not a course in European history and our treatment of these matters is painfully brief.

VI.1.a Nationalism

Nationalism

Our treatment will superficially survey several (or maybe just a couple..who knows by now?) of the rising nations of Europe.

England

The British isles are not really a dominant power at this time but following the conquest of William the Conqueror (1066), England will represent itself as a nation with land claims on the continent and will be the source of a lot of continental fighting and grief. The union of the Norman and Saxon territories would trouble France for many years as the Norman territories in France were considerable. England would hold these in a sort of colonial atmosphere, and it would be one of the first countries to break with the feudal system with the coming of the Magna Carta (1215) in the days of Prince John. The church in England was headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and this is the age of Stephen Langton, famous for chapter divisions in the Bible. Under his agreement the church joined the rebels of the peasants in opposing the continued feudal state. The great power of England is beginning to develop towards the end of our period but through most of this time it is not dominant. However there is no country in Europe more loyal to the papacy.