

VIII. THE LATER MEDIEVAL PERIOD: Pre-reformation age
 Pre-Ref
 Period Historical Background

VIII.1
 Background

This section of notes, like the days of September, dwindle down into a lone precious few as the semester rushes to a close. This short period wraps up most of what has been begun earlier. The church has survived the Avignon papacy and has surrendered nothing of its power over the political establishments although the degree of effectiveness has varied with the individual popes and the national rulers. The church as a body politic is far more involved with the Renaissance and humanism and has suffered less spiritual stress than even in the Dark Ages. Yet it is a declining institution, public confidence is waning, the recognition of the kings is arbitrary, and the goals of its leaders are lacking in spirituality and direction.

VIII.1.a
 Politics

Political Setting

The eastern empire fell in 1453. The Turks overcame the last vestiges of the Roman empire and converted it into Muslim territory. The Turks did not seek to eliminate the eastern church although they did make it subservient to the new government and at times in decades to come they would persecute it bitterly. The church had, however, learned to accept this subservience and the political manipulation involved in the Patriarch/Emperor conflicts. The only immediate change was to make the arrangement one of Caliph/Patriarch. At times the Islamic groups would hold out persecution but the Greek church will cling to surprising vitality through the next centuries.

Europe has survived a Mongol invasion in the 14th century but the memory and continuing threats of the Mongolian hordes lived on. Russia was particularly apprehensive about this and the countries of eastern Europe lived in a fear of the east. Magyars and Slavs had occupied most of Central Europe and settled heavily in the Danube valley. From this point they served as a buffer against the Turks..a group never far off on the political horizon.

England and France were just settling a vicious dispute, the hundred years war (1380-1438), a war in which both nations had tried to deepen holds on