

### France

Following the difficulties successive to the rule of Charlemagne, France began to regather itself in the twelfth century and will become the dominant force in politics in the 14th. France is ruled by hereditary kings and it is hard to sustain the quality of rule in this fashion, but a few gifted leaders emerge and give added impetus to a kingdom of the Franks...no matter what the rest of Europe was feeling.

### Spain

The kingdoms of the Castiles are busy trying to free the Iberian peninsula from the Islamic influence and, in some places, control. It is not easy. Jews are very prominent in this territory and while there is a good bit of social progress, the Spanish kingdoms are not yet in the ascendancy.

### Italian States

There is, of course, no "Italy". just the individual states, dukedoms, etc. that comprised the Italian peninsula. These particular territories are developing as given opportunity, each with its own special characteristic and interest. They often conduct very aggressive wars among themselves. Genoa and Venice are the great merchandising centers while Naples serves as an agrarian stronghold and Florence capitalizes on art and societal improvements. Culture is large in all of Italy. The strongest of all the Italian states is, of course, the block known as the Papal States.

### Germany

The Teutonic states are still highly individualized and have not developed a national character beyond what is true of the individual territorial monarchies, etc.

### The Holy Roman Empire

While this is not a national matter, it may be considered at this point. England, Spain, France, the Germanic and Italian states, etc., are all members in theory but the