

Medieval Timeline | Medieval Times History

500 CE: Medieval Europe - Clovis, founder of the Frankish state, conquers most of France and Belgium, converting his territories to Western Catholic Christianity. He founds the Merovingian dynasty and passes his kingdom on to his sons, who begin fighting one another for additional territory.

590 CE: Medieval Europe - Pope Gregory, originally a Benedictine, creates a religious policy for western Europe by fusing the Roman papacy with Benedictine monasticism. He creates the Latin church, which serves to counteract the subordination of the Roman popes to Eastern emperors. As the fourth great "church father," St. Gregory the Great draws his theology from Ambrose of Milan, Jerome and AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO. His concepts of purgatory and penance widen the gulf between the Eastern and Western Churches. He reigns until his death in 604 CE.

600 CE: Medieval Europe - The early Middle Ages begin in 600 CE and last until 1050 CE.

610 CE: Medieval Europe - Heraclius becomes Emperor in Constantinople as the Persian Empire is attempting the takeover of Byzantine civilization. For the sake of convenience, the rule of Heraclius generally marks the beginning of Byzantine history, though it can be argued that Byzantine civilization begins with Diocletian, Constantine or Justinian.

627 CE: Medieval Europe - Persia is conquered by Byzantine forces. The Jerusalem cross is retrieved from the Persians, who stole the relic in 614 CE. Heraclius reigns until his death in 641 CE.

650 CE: Medieval Europe - Arab forces conquer most of the Byzantine territories, formerly occupied by the Persians.

677 CE: Medieval Europe - The Arabs attempt to conquer Constantinople but fail.

687 CE: Medieval Europe - Pepin of Heristal, a Merovingian ruler, unites the Frankish territories and builds the center of his kingdom in Belgium and other Rhine regions. He is succeeded by his son, Charles Martel, who forms an alliance with the Church which helps the Merovingian Dynasty (and Christianity) to expand into Germany. Pepin the Short succeeds his father, Charles Martel, and strengthens the alliance between Benedictine missionaries and Frankish expansion.

700 CE: Medieval Europe - Benedictine missionaries complete the conversion of England begun by St. Gregory the Great.

717 CE: Medieval Europe - The Arabs attempt to conquer Constantinople for the second time. Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian, who reigns until 741 CE, counters the Arab attempt with "Greek Fire" (a liquid mixture of sulfur, naphtha and quicklime which is released from bronze tubes, situated on ships and on the walls of Constantinople) and great military strength. Leo defeats the Arab forces and reconquers most of Asia Minor. The territory of Asia Minor, together with Greece, becomes the seat of Byzantine civilization for several centuries.

735 CE: Medieval Europe - Venerable Bede, an Anglo-Saxon Benedictine scholar, writes the History of the English Church and People in Latin, perhaps the best historical writing of medieval history.

740 CE: Medieval Europe - The Iconoclastic movement is initiated by Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian, but the movement flourishes under the reign of his son Constantine V who rules until 775 CE. The Iconoclasts advocate doing away with paganistic icon worship (images of Christ or saints). For them, Christ cannot be manifested or conceived of through human art. The Iconoclast controversy ends in the ninth century when a new Byzantine spirituality recognizes that the contemplation of icons may help someone ascend from the material to the immaterial.

750 CE: Medieval Europe - The first great English epic poem, Beowulf, is written in Old English. The work is anonymous and untitled until 1805. It is a Christian poem that exemplifies early medieval society in England and shows roots in Old Testament Law.

750 CE: Medieval Europe - Irish monks establish early-medieval art. The greatest surviving product of these monks is the Book of Kells, a Gospel book of decorative art.

751 CE: Medieval Europe - St. Boniface anoints Pepin a divinely sanctioned king, and the Frankish monarchy is fused into the papal order. The western European empire, based on the alliance between the Frankish monarchy and the Latin Church, provides the image of Western cultural unity for Europeans, though it does not last long.

768 CE: Medieval Europe - Pepin's son, Carolus Magnus (Charlemagne), succeeds his father and is one of the most important rulers of medieval history. In time, his empire, known as the Carolingian dynasty, includes the greater section of central Europe, northern Italy and central Italy in addition to realms already conquered by Frankish rule.

Charlemagne's system of government divides the vast realm into different regions, ruled by local "counts" who are

overseen by representatives of Charlemagne's own court. In addition, to aid expansion and administration of the kingdom, Charlemagne promotes, what is called later, the "Carolingian Renaissance." Prior to this revival of learning, practically the entire realm (with the exception of Benedictine England) is illiterate due to the decay of the Roman Empire. The director of the "renaissance" is Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Alcuin, who receives his learning from a student of Bede. Alcuin sets up schools, sees to the copying of classical Latin texts and develops a new handwriting.

800 CE: Medieval Europe - On Christmas Day, Charlemagne is crowned emperor by the pope in Rome. This event indicates an autonomous Western culture based on Western Christianity and Latin linguistics. Charlemagne establishes schools in all bishoprics and monasteries under his control.

814 CE: Medieval Europe - Charlemagne dies without leaving competent successors to continue the glory of the Carolingian dynasty. His sole surviving son, Louis the Pious, divides his inheritance between his own three sons, who engage in civil war. Charlemagne's united realm is invaded by Scandinavian Vikings, Hungarians and Muslims during these civil wars. The Carolingian Empire falls apart.

871 CE: Medieval Europe - King Alfred the Great of England constructs a system of government and education which allows for the unification of smaller Anglo-Saxon states in the ninth and tenth centuries. Alfred is responsible for the codification of English law, public interest in local government and the reorganization of the army. He founds schools and promotes Anglo-Saxon literacy and the establishment of a national culture. Alfred dies in 899 CE. His innovations are continued by his successors.

910 CE: Medieval Europe - The Benedictine monastery of Cluny in Burgundy becomes a place of monastic reform. The two major innovations here are the direct subjection of monasteries to the pope -- avoiding secular, local and ecclesiastical powers -- and the building of "daughter monasteries" subordinate to the Cluniac "family," which grows to sixty-seven monasteries by 1049 CE.

936 CE: Medieval Europe - Otto the Great is crowned king in Germany and is responsible for Germany's strength through the latter part of the eleventh century. Otto establishes a pattern of resistance to political fragmentation and a close alliance with the Church.

955 CE: Medieval Europe - John XII becomes pope at the age of eighteen and rules for nine years. His title as pope exemplifies the decline in value of the Church in the early-medieval period. Local lords establish control over churches and monasteries, and Church officials are often unqualified. The majority of priests are illiterate and live with concubines. The majority of popes, mostly sons of powerful Roman families, are corrupt or incompetent.

962 CE: Medieval Europe - Otto the Great is named emperor in Rome after defeating the Hungarians. This provides Germany with the power to resist invasion. Following Otto are several competent and enthusiastic successors, who continue to shape a stable German government.

987 CE: Medieval Europe - Hugh Capet replaces the last of the Carolingian monarchs in France. The Capetian dynasty rules until 1328. The Capetian dynasty is too weak in the beginning to have any influence on the unification of France.

1025 CE: Medieval Europe - The Byzantine aristocracy gains control over the government and begins to limit the freedom of the peasantry, thereby beginning the destruction of the economic base of Byzantine civilization.

1046 CE: Medieval Europe - German Emperor Henry III arrives in Italy and names a German monastic reformer as pope. The series of reforming popes that follow enacts decrees against simony and clerical marriage.

1049 CE: Medieval Europe - The Cluniac monastic reform sparks interest in the reform of the clerical hierarchy.

1050 CE: Medieval Europe - The period from 1050 to 1300 is generally considered the High Middle Ages. Western Europe rises as a great power with only China equaling it in political, economic and cultural flourishing. It also witnesses profound religious and intellectual change, including the organization of the papal monarchy.

1050-1200 CE: Medieval Europe - The first agricultural revolution of Medieval Europe begins in 1050 CE with a shift to the northern lands for cultivation, a period of improved climate from 700 CE to 1200 CE in western Europe, and the widespread use and perfection of new farming devices, some previously discovered by the Carolingians and the Romans. Technological innovations include the use of the heavy plow, the three-field system of crop rotation, the use of mills for processing cloth, brewing beer, crushing pulp for paper manufacture and many other advantages that before were not available, and the widespread use of iron and horses. With an increase in agricultural advancements, Western towns and trade grow exponentially and Western Europe returns to a money economy.

1059 CE: Medieval Europe - The reforming popes, following from the acts of Henry III, issue a decree on papal elections which gives the cardinals sole right of appointing new popes. This decree allows papal elections to escape the whims of political leaders.

1066 CE: Medieval Europe - William the Conqueror invades England and asserts his right to the English throne at the Battle of Hastings. The Norman Conquest fuses French and English cultures because William is both the King of England and the Duke of Normandy. The language of England evolves into Middle English with an English syntax and grammar and a heavily French vocabulary. French art and literature prevail over previous English art and literature, and the French language eventually becomes the language of the political realm. William achieves political stability in England with the introduction of the feudal system. The system progresses over the next two centuries into a national monarchy.

1071 CE: Medieval Europe - The Seljuk Turks of Islam defeat the Byzantines at Manzikert in Asia Minor and reconquer most of the eastern Byzantine provinces.

1073 CE: Medieval Europe - Gregory VII initiates a new conception of Church. According to Gregory, the Church is obligated to create "right order in the world," rather than withdraw from it. Gregory seeks to create a papal monarchy with power over the secular state and to establish ecclesiastical authority. Henry IV, the German king, resists this authority thereby inaugurating the "investiture controversy." Gregory excommunicates Henry IV in 1077 CE. The Gregorian reform encourages the practice of Christian warfare in the pursuit of providing "right order in the world" and establishes religious enthusiasm in all of Christendom.

1079 CE: Medieval Europe - Scholasticism emerges as an attempt to reconcile classical philosophy (primarily Aristotelean) with Christianity. Peter Abelard contributes to this movement with his great theological work, *Sic et Non*. He dies in 1142.

1095 CE: Medieval Europe - The First Crusade is initiated when Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus requests help in reconquering the lost territory of Asia Minor. Western Europe sends enormous support to rescue Jerusalem from the control of Islam. Pope Urban II calls the crusade to strengthen the Gregorian papacy by bringing the Greek Orthodox Church under papal authority and by humiliating the German emperor Henry IV who had forced Urban to flee Italy.

1098 CE: Medieval Europe - The crusaders of the First Crusade capture Antioch and most of Syria, killing the Turkish inhabitants. The oldest epic poem in French, *The Song of Roland*, is written by an unknown author. The poem is set in northern Spain during the reign of Charlemagne and is based on the Roncesvalles massacre of Charlemagne's rearguard. It serves to establish the differing characteristics between Christianity and paganism. The death scene of Roland, devoted patriot of Charlemagne, is commonly considered one of the greatest scenes in all of world literature.

1099 CE: Medieval Europe - The crusaders of the First Crusade capture Jerusalem, killing its Muslim inhabitants. The Crusaders divide their new territories into four principalities.

1100 CE: Medieval Europe - Henry I, the son of William the Conqueror, institutes a system of representatives dedicated to travelling the country and administering justice. He dies in 1135 CE. Around the same time, a new asceticism is sought for monks who wish to engage in contemplation and self-examination. Two new orders are created: the Carthusian and the Cistercian. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, leader of the Cistercians, establishes 343 monasteries by the time of his death. Accompanying the fervent worship of Christ Jesus during this period is the pronouncement of the Virgin Mary as a saint. This is the first time a woman is given central significance in the Christian religion.

1108 CE: Medieval Europe - Louis VI, the first important Capetian king of France, banishes the "robber barons" from the Ile-de-France, which allows agriculture, trade and intellectual activity to flourish.

1122 CE: Medieval Europe - A compromise is drawn between pope and emperor over the issue of investiture. At the Concordat of Worms (a German city), religious symbols, originally invested for prelates, are replaced with symbols of temporal rule. Prelates accept the emperor as their temporal overlord and are invested with the symbol that recognizes their right to rule. Following the issue of investiture, the successors of Gregory VII develop the canon law of the Church which provides the papacy with jurisdiction over the clergy, the rights of inheritance and the rights of widows and orphans. Because the papacy begins acting as a court of appeals, it is necessary that popes are trained as legal experts, rather than as monks.

1125 CE: Medieval Europe - German princes abolish the hereditary claim to the throne and establish the right to elect new rulers.

1144 CE: Medieval Europe - The Romanesque abbey church of St. Denis, a burial shrine for French saints and kings, is torn down and replaced with Gothic architecture. Gothic architecture is highlighted by pointed arches, rather than Roman arches, ribbed vaulting, flying buttresses and intricately wrought stained-glass depictions of stories from the Bible and everyday life.

1152 CE: Medieval Europe - Frederick I of Germany entitles his realm the "Holy Roman Empire," in an attempt to bring prestige back to the German throne.

1155 CE: Medieval Europe - A student of Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard, writes the Book of Sentences which answers fundamental questions of theology with passages from the Bible and various Christian thinkers. His book becomes a standard text in all universities by the thirteenth century.

1164 CE: Medieval Europe - Henry II constructs the Constitutions of Clarendon in an attempt to regain power for the civil courts, which have been losing authority to ecclesiastical ones. The archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, strongly resists the decision of Henry and a quarrel breaks out. Becket is murdered in Canterbury Cathedral. He is quickly made a martyr by the English public and is revered as the greatest saint of English history. The political result is the abandonment of Henry's court program. Aside from this event, Henry II is considered one of England's greatest kings due to his judicial reforms and legal innovations. His reforms establish a stable government which requires little, if any, attention of the king.

1165 CE: Medieval Europe - Frenchman Chretien de Troyes is the first writer to condense the legendary Arthurian history, based on the Celtic hero King Arthur and his knights of chivalry, into what is known as the Arthurian Romances. Chretien is the first writer to put forth the idea of romantic love within marriage. The innovation of longer narrative poems is the earliest ancestor to the modern novel. The idea of chivalry, the literal meaning being "horsemanship," emerges about the time of the romances. Chivalry includes the defense of honor, combat in tournaments, and the virtues of generosity and reverence. The noble code of chivalry is accompanied with the improvement of noble life and the status of noblewomen.

1168 CE: Medieval Europe - English scientist Robert Grosseteste translates Aristotle's Ethics and makes technological advances in optics, mathematics and astronomy. He dies in 1253 CE.

1170 CE: Medieval Europe - The first European windmill is developed.

1176 CE: Medieval Europe - The German troops of Frederick I are defeated by the Italian Lombard League at Legnano.

1180 CE: Medieval Europe - Philip Augustus, Louis VI's grandson, assumes the title of monarch in France. He recaptures most of the western French territory, previously taken by William the Conqueror, from the English king, John. Philip installs royal officials in the conquered regions in order to win allegiance to the king. Philip is one of the strongest founders of the modern French state.

1187 CE: Medieval Europe - Muslims recapture Jerusalem, and the Third Crusade is ordered. It is led by German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, French King Philip Augustus and English King Richard the Lionhearted. It is not successful.

1189 CE: Medieval Europe - Richard the Lionhearted, son of Henry II, assumes the English crown. He rules for ten years and is only present in the country a total of six months. His rule exemplifies the strength of the governmental foundations set up by Henry II. During Richard's absence, ministers take care of administration and help to raise taxes for the support of the crusades.

1198 CE: Medieval Europe - Innocent III, the founder of the Papal State, is thirty-seven when he is elected pope. He is trained in canon law and theology. His primary concern of administration is the unification of all Christendom under the papal monarchy, including the right to interfere with the rule of kings. He is the organizer of the Fourth Crusade, ordered to recapture Jerusalem from Islam.

1200 CE: Medieval Europe - The growth of lay education and the intellectual renaissance begin. Students start entering schools with no intention of becoming priests, and education is offered in European languages other than Latin. The rise in lay education causes a loss in Church control over education, the growth of literacy in the West and the transformation of cathedral schools into advanced liberal arts universities. Bologna and Paris are the distinguishing schools of the High Middle Ages.

1204 CE: Medieval Europe - The crusaders of the Fourth Crusade capture Constantinople. The sack of Constantinople causes a firm Byzantine hatred of the West.

1204 CE: Medieval Europe - King John of England loses Normandy and the surrounding area to the French king, Philip Augustus.

1206 CE: Medieval Europe - St. Francis of Assisi, at the age of twenty-five begins his twenty year allegiance to Christ Jesus until his death in 1226 CE. He is the founder of the Franciscan order which seeks to imitate the life of Jesus by embracing poverty. St. Francis wins the support of Pope Innocent III.

1208 CE: Medieval Europe - Innocent III calls for the Albigensian Crusade in order to destroy the heretical threat of the Albigensians.

1212 CE: Medieval Europe - Spain reconquers the Iberian peninsula from the Muslims in the name of Christianity.

1214 CE: Medieval Europe - A student of Grosseteste, Roger Bacon predicts the technological advancement of automobiles and airplanes and extends Grosseteste's observations in optics. Both thinkers advocate concrete sensory observation for the advancement of scientific thought, rather than abstract reasoning.

1215 CE: Medieval Europe - Innocent III organizes the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome in order to discuss and define central dogmas of Christianity. It recognizes the necessity of the Eucharist and penance as sacraments for salvation. The Council exemplifies the power of the papacy over kings and Church. The Council also calls for the Fifth Crusade to be warred under papal guidance by sea. It is a failure. English barons write "The Magna Carta" (Great Charter) in order to cease John's demands of money from the English without the consent of the barons and to require that all men be judged by a jury of peers in public courts, rather than privately by the crown. The Magna Carta serves as a symbol of a limited government and a crown that is bound by the same laws as the public.

1216 CE: Medieval Europe - The Dominican order is founded by St. Dominic of Spain and is authorized by Innocent III. Its purpose is to convert Muslims and Jews and to put an end to heresy. The Dominicans eventually become the main administrators of inquisitorial trials.

1223 CE: Medieval Europe - Louis VIII, Philip Augustus' son, rules for three years and conquers most of southern France.

1225 CE: Medieval Europe - Thomas Aquinas, the most influential Scholastic theologian, is teaching at the University of Paris. Aquinas believes in the contemplation of God through the natural order, though ultimate truths are revealed only by studying the revelations of the Bible. His two greatest works are the Summa contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologica, both of which attempt to found the Christian faith on rational principles. His philosophy emphasizes human reasoning, life in the material order and the individual's participation in personal salvation.

1226 CE: Medieval Europe - Louis IX (St. Louis), son of Louis VIII, is one of the most loved monarchs of French history. He is canonized by the Church for his piety and reigns over a period of internal peace in France.

1228 CE: Medieval Europe - Frederick II, leader of the Sixth Crusade, begins a diplomatic negotiation with Islam for control of Jerusalem. It is a success. However, because Frederick was excommunicated by the pope, he crowns himself king of Jerusalem.

1237 CE: Medieval Europe - The Mongols, under the leadership of Batu, cross the Urals from Asia into Russia. Prior to the thirteenth century, Russia is ruled by westerners who found the Kievan state. During the thirteenth century Russia retreats from the West, partly due to the distance between Moscow and the rest of Europe.

1240 CE: Medieval Europe - Mongols enter the state of Kiev and create a new state on the Volga River, from where they rule Russia for two centuries. Over these two centuries, the Grand Duchy of Moscow emerges and eventually defeats the Mongol Khans.

1242 CE: Medieval Europe - St. Bonaventura enters the Franciscan order. He becomes the seventh general of that order within fifteen years. He is a professor of theology at the University of Paris, Bishop of Albano, made cardinal by Gregory X and is canonized by Sixtus IV. St. Bonaventura's major works are the Reductio Artium in Theologiam, the Biblia Pauperum and the Breviloquium. His thought is heavily influenced by an ancient Greek philosopher, Plotinus.

1244 CE: Medieval Europe - Jerusalem is lost by the West and is not recaptured again until 1917 CE.

1250 CE: Medieval Europe - The successors of Innocent III are involved in a political struggle with Frederick II, who attempts to take control in central Italy. They order a crusade against him, the first time a crusade is called for political reasons. The outcome is the death of Frederick.

1252 CE: Medieval Europe - The papacy approves the use of torture for religious disobedience, following Innocent III's brutal "inquisitions" against heresy (namely the Waldensian and Albigensian heretics).

1260 CE: Medieval Europe - Several texts are translated from their original languages into Latin, including the texts of Aristotle.

1261 CE: Medieval Europe - The Byzantine Empire returns to Constantinople.

1265 CE: Medieval Europe - Dante Alighieri is born. Later, he will write the Divine Comedy -- perhaps the greatest literary expression of the Middle Ages -- in Italian verse. Born in Florence, Dante is extensively educated in literature, philosophy and Scholastic theology. His "Comedy" is saturated with the belief of earthly immortality through worthy deeds and the preparation of life everlasting.

1267 CE: Medieval Europe - Florentine Giotto, the most important painter of the later Middle Ages, begins the modern tradition in painting. He is a naturalist whose paintings include depictions of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem and the death of St. Francis.

1268 CE: Medieval Europe - The military champion of the papacy's crusade against the heirs of Frederick II is Charles of Anjou, who is from the French royal house. Charles defeats the last of Frederick's heirs and wins Sicily.

1272 CE: Medieval Europe - Edward I of England, Henry III's son, establishes Parliament, originally a feudal court for the king and not yet a system of representative government.

1280 CE: Medieval Europe - Eyeglasses are invented and later improved in the late medieval period.

1282 CE: Medieval Europe - Charles of Anjou's efforts to tax Sicily provokes the "Sicilian Vespers" revolt. The rebels install the king of Aragon as their own king, thereby reinstating rule to the house of Frederick II.

1285 CE: Medieval Europe - France becomes the strongest power in Europe due to the administration of St. Louis' grandson, Philip IV. He attempts to gain full control over the French Church from Rome and begins the process of governmental centralization.

1294 CE: Medieval Europe - Boniface VIII disputes with the kings of England and France over the taxation of the clergy for support of war. Later, Boniface will run into political problems with Philip IV of France.

1300 CE: Medieval Europe - The Late Middle Ages begins here and ends around 1500 CE. The beginning of the Late Middle Ages witnesses the invention of the magnetic compass, greatly aiding overseas expansion and enhancing trade between places such as Italy and the North. Boniface VIII calls the first papal "jubilee," thereby recognizing pilgrimages to Rome instead of Jerusalem, which is no longer accessible to the West.

1303 CE: Medieval Europe - Boniface VIII is captured in Anagni by local citizens and is abused beyond his capabilities to sustain the mistreatment. He dies in his seventies a month after his release. After his death, the Church witnesses many institutional crises.

1305 CE: Medieval Europe - The papacy is moved from Rome to Avignon, beginning the Church's "Babylonian Captivity." For most of the fourteenth century, the papacy is subordinate to French authority with the majority of cardinals and popes being French.

1315 CE: Medieval Europe - Bad weather and crop failure result in famine across northwestern Europe. Unsanitary conditions and malnutrition increase the death rate. Even after the revival of agricultural conditions, weather disasters reappear. A mixture of war, famine and plague in the Late Middle Ages reduces the population by one-half.

1327 CE: Medieval Europe - Born in 1260, German Dominican Master Eckhart defines the individual soul as a "spark" of the divine at its most basic element. By renouncing all knowledge of the self, one is able to retreat into that "spark" and reach God. Most of his teachings are condemned by the papacy. Two bands of mysticism arise from Eckhart's theories: heterodox, the belief in the unification of God and man on earth without the aid of priests as intermediaries, and orthodox, the belief in the possibility of joining the soul with God and the awareness of divine presence in everyday life.

1328 CE: Medieval Europe - The last heir of the Capetian dynasty dies and is replaced by the first ruler of the Valois dynasty. Because the English kings are also descended from the Capetian line, England attempts to claim the French crown.

1330 CE: Medieval Europe - Oxford theologian John Wyclif is born. He later becomes the leader of a heretical movement: finding the Church extravagant, he condemns most Church officials and begins a reform movement. He receives aristocratic support by advocating the replacement of officials with men willing to lead apostolic lives modeled on the New Testament. He dies in 1384, before the death penalty for heresy emerges in England. The use of heavy cannons in warfare begins.

1337 CE: Medieval Europe - The French retaliate against the English and initiate the Hundred Years' War, a series of battles lasting until 1453 CE. The three greatest battles of the war are fought at Crecy (1346), Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415). Due to the military superiority of the English, the French are defeated in most of the battles.

1340 CE: Medieval Europe - Geoffrey Chaucer is born. He later begins the literary tradition with his Canterbury Tales.

1342 CE: Medieval Europe - The reign of Avignonese Pope Clement VI exemplifies the French takeover of the Church. Clement offers spiritual benefits for money, appoints Church leaders for economic gains and commits sexual acts on "doctors' orders." The French Church based in Avignon rises in power, centralizes the Church government and

establishes a system of papal finance.

1347 CE: Medieval Europe - The Black Death appears during a time of economic depression in Western Europe and reoccurs frequently until the fifteenth century. The Black Death is a combination of bubonic and pneumonic plagues and has a major impact on social and economic conditions. Religious flagellation appears among lay groups in order to appease the divine wrath. English Franciscan William of Ockham dies. He teaches that God is free to do good and bad on earth as He wishes and develops the philosophical position known as "nominalism." His quest for certainty in human knowledge is one of the foundations of the scientific method.

1348 CE: Medieval Europe - Italian Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375 CE) begins writing the Decameron, a collection of stories about love, sex, adventure and trickery told by seven ladies and three men on a journey into the country to escape the Black Death. Boccaccio's work is the first literature written in narrative prose. His prose is realistic of the men and women in the stories, rather than blatantly moral or immoral as in the earlier romances.

1356 CE: Medieval Europe - A war begins between the English and the French directly following an occurrence of the Black Death in France. French peasants suffer the most economically, as is usual in medieval times during war, and physically -- their homes are pillaged and burned. The English defeat the French king, John II, at the Battle of Poitiers, and the peasants again are asked to bear the weight of the upper class.

1358 CE: Medieval Europe - Economic hardship in France results in an uprising of the lower-class, called the "Jacquerie" (taken from the French peasant "Jacques Bonhomme"). The peasants burn castles, murder and rape their lords and lords' wives and take advantage of the political confusion in France by attempting to reform the governmental system. The revolt occurs during the king's captivity in England. Also, during this time, an aristocratic group plans the takeover of power. A brief revolt is put to an end when this group restores order by the massacre of the rebels.

1360 CE: Medieval Europe - With the introduction of oil painting into western Europe, the earliest naturalistic painting is created. Its subject is the French king, John the Good. After this, naturalistic portraits become prominent in European art.

1367 CE: Medieval Europe - Urban V is successful in returning the pope to Rome. However, Pope Gregory XI dies in 1368. Because the papacy is now in Rome, an Italian pope, Urban VI, is elected and begins quarreling with the French cardinals. The French cardinals cancel the previous election and elect a French pope, Clement VII.

1378 CE: Medieval Europe - The second phase of the Church's institutional crisis is the Great Schism. The French papacy leaves Rome due to the uprising of Urban VI and his group of newly founded cardinals. The split of the two groups causes confusion in Europe. French territories recognize Clement VII as pope, and the rest of Europe recognizes Urban VI as pope. The schism survives the death of both popes. The Florentine Ciompi, wool-combers, witnessing a depressed industry, rise against the governmental system and gain power for six weeks, in which time they institute tax relief, provide a proletarian representation in government and expand employment. All reforms are revoked with the new oligarchic power.

1381 CE: Medieval Europe - The presence of the Black Death in England works to the advantage of English peasants, causing a shortage of labor, a freeing of serfs, a rise in salary and a decrease in rent. The aristocratic class, however, passes legislation that lowers wages to the amount before the plague and that requires lower wages for laborers without land. The peasants rise against this oppression in what is called the English Peasants' Revolt when a national tax is levied for every individual in England. The peasants march into London, murder the lord chancellor and treasurer and are met by Richard II. Richard promises the abolition of serfdom and a lower of rent. After the peasants leave, Richard has the peasant groups followed and murdered.

1385 CE: Medieval Europe - The first German university is opened in Heidelberg.

1386 CE: Medieval Europe - The queen of Poland, Jadwiga, marries grand duke of Lithuania, Jagiello. The marriage creates a state double the size of Poland's previous size.

1399 CE: Medieval Europe - In England, the death penalty becomes the punishment for heresy, and many Lollards, Wyclif's lay followers, convert.

1400 CE: Medieval Europe - Czech students of John Wyclif bring Wyclifism to the Bohemian capital of Prague. Preacher John Hus (1373-1415 CE) adopts Wyclif's theories to support his own claims against ecclesiastical extravagance. The Northern provinces of Italy devise their own systems of government. The government of Venice becomes a merchant oligarchy; Milan is ruled by dynastic despotism; and Florence becomes a republic, ruled by the rich. The three cities expand and conquer most of Northern Italy.

1409 CE: Medieval Europe - A council of prelates from both sides of the Great Schism meet at Pisa and decide to rename a new pope in place of the two. However, both popes enjoy great political power and refuse the deposition,

causing three rivals to the papacy instead of two.

1410 CE: Medieval Europe - Polish-Lithuanian forces defeat the German Teutonic Knights and extend rule eastward, almost into Russia. Eastern Orthodox Moscow begins a campaign of resistance to Roman Catholic Poland-Lithuania.

1414 CE: Medieval Europe - A Lollard uprising in England fails. Some Lollards retreat underground and aid the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

1415 CE: Medieval Europe - John Hus travels to the Council of Constance to propose his reforms for the Church. Upon his arrival at the Council, Hus is tried for heresy and burned. His death encourages further revolt by his followers.

1417 CE: Medieval Europe - The Council of Constance, the largest Church meeting in medieval history, ends the Great Schism. The council gains secular support and elects Martin V as pope. It replaces papal monarchy with a conciliar government, which recognizes a council of prelates as the pope's authority, and mandates the frequent meeting of the council. This new period is known as the Italian territorial papacy, which lasts until 1517 CE.

1419 CE: Medieval Europe - The province of Burgundy breaks from France and allies with the English during the Hundred Years' War.

1420 CE: Medieval Europe - Hus' supporters defeat German "crusaders." The lower-class Hussites are led by general John Zizka.

1427 CE: Medieval Europe - Thomas a Kempis writes *The Imitation of Christ*, a manual directing the individual through Orthodox mysticism. Originally in Latin, it is translated into European languages for the lay audience. Its major themes concern the path of Christian piety for those active in everyday life, communion with Christ, biblical meditation and a moral life. The only sacrament suggested to its reader is the Eucharist.

1429 CE: Medieval Europe - Joan of Arc, a peasant girl in France, seeks out the French leader and relates her divinely-inspired mission to drive the English out of France. She takes control of the French troops and liberates most of central France.

1430 CE: Medieval Europe - Joan of Arc is captured and taken to England. The English accuse her of being a witch and condemn her for heresy. Joan is publicly burned in the city of Rouen.

1434 CE: Medieval Europe - Aristocratic Hussites end the revolt of Hus' supporters and their attempts of social and religious reform. Bohemia does not return to Catholic Orthodoxy until the Catholic Reformation of the seventeenth century.

1434 CE: Medieval Europe - The Medici banking family dominates the government of Florence.

1453 CE: Medieval Europe - Ottoman Turks take Constantinople and end Byzantine civilization. The French king Charles VII captures Bordeaux in the southwest and ends the Hundred Years' War, during the reign of English King Henry VI and after the withdrawal of Burgundy from English alliance. The French monarchy reestablishes rule and returns to collecting national taxes and maintaining a standing army in times of peace. The monarchy becomes even stronger during the reigns of Louis XI (1461-1483) and Louis XII (1498-1515).

1454 CE: Medieval Europe - Italy is divided into five major regions: Venice, Milan, Florence, the Papal States and the southern kingdom of Naples.

1455 CE: Medieval Europe - Henry VI of England (1422-1461) wages the Wars of the Roses. The two sides of the war are the red rose (Henry's family at Lancaster) and the white rose (the house of York). Yorkist Richard III gains the kingship for a short time.

1462 CE: Medieval Europe - Ivan III of Moscow annexes all Russian principalities between Moscow and Poland-Lithuania over a period of twenty-three years.

1469 CE: Medieval Europe - Ferdinand of Aragon marries Isabella of Castile, and the two Spanish kingdoms end their conflicts but remain separate powers.

1477 CE: Medieval Europe - Charles the Bold of Burgundy is captured by the Swiss, and Louis XI recaptures the lost territory.

1482 CE: Medieval Europe - Ivan III of Moscow (1462-1505 CE) renounces the Mongol Khanate rule over Russia. The Mongols do not resist in the light of the rise of the Moscow state.

1485 CE: Medieval Europe - With the end of the Wars of the Roses in England, the Tudor dynasty replaces Richard III. Henry VII, the first Tudor king, rules for twenty-four years and revives the English throne. He reestablishes royal power over the aristocracy, ends funding of foreign wars and reforms finances. Parliament also becomes a stable part of the governmental system.

1492 CE: Medieval Europe - Ferdinand and Isabella annex Granada, expel all Jews from Spain and seek overseas expansion (for example, as patrons of Christopher Columbus). The flow of American gold and silver through Spain, the conquest of Mexico and Peru and superiority on the battlefield make Spain the most powerful state in Europe.

1505 CE: Medieval Europe - Ivan the Great of Moscow extends the Russian border into the Byelorussian and the Ukrainian territories, before his death. Muscovian Russia is recognized as a major Eastern-oriented power in Europe.

1509 CE: Medieval Europe - Henry VIII succeeds his father, Henry VII, for the English crown.