

## Chapter 14 Notes – The Latin West, 1200 – 1500

**Chapter Thesis:** The Franks, or “Latins,” as they called themselves, of Western Europe in 1200 – 1500 were closely tied culturally to the Roman Catholic Church, the Latin language, and a revival of learning and technology after the materialism and pessimism following the plague of Europe.

- I. *Rural Growth and Crisis:* With new farming practices and better technology, the Latin West leveraged agriculture throughout Europe, but social changes catalyzed by the revolt of the lower classes brought about many improvements to rural society.
  - A. Peasants, Population, and Plague: Around the 1200s of western Europe, much of the rural society was in poverty because of the social inequality between serfs and nobility and overpopulation. The plague of the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century caused population decline and social instability.
    - In 1200, most western Europeans lived as peasants working on large agricultural estates under a wealthy nobility
    - In peasant life, also, women were subordinate to men in decision-making
    - Poverty of the rural class was caused by a spike in population, inefficient farming practices, and social inequity
    - Development of three-field system resulted in more agricultural output and productive farming
    - Black Death of bubonic plague caused population decline and caused the social atmosphere to be one of sadness or recklessness
  - B. Social Rebellion: Violent demonstrations and social uprisings caused by the lower class caused the freedom of peasants and the disappearance of serfdom, which in turn resulted in per capita economic growth.
    - Black Death social effects included manual laborers demanding higher pay
    - As rebellion spread throughout Europe, lower class disappeared because of peasants gaining their own freedom
  - C. Mills and Mines: Metalworking and mining rose greatly in medieval Europe before 1500 and stimulated, widespread demand for mining resulted in large industrial growth and use of mechanical energy.
- II. *Urban Revival:* Major wealthy port cities resulted from an urban revival that rivaled even cities in the Byzantine Empire and Islamic region by the Middle Ages.
  - A. Trading Cities: Trade helped many cities rise to power and significance, such as in northern Italy and the Hanseatic League in the Baltic region of northern Europe, often because of the effect of machinery trade and the textile industry.
  - B. Civic Life: In civic development of Western Europe, guilds formed from groups of craftsmen and merchants and banking became central for individuals and governments looking for loans.

- C. Gothic Cathedrals: Architecture also thrived within the Latin era, and Gothic cathedrals constructed by the Catholic Church cropped up throughout the region as a result.
- III. *Learning, Literature and the Renaissance*: In the age of the Renaissance, there was a revived interest in scholastic learning beginning in northern Italy and spreading throughout Western Europe and the world through trade.
- A. The Renaissance: During the Renaissance, universities recognizing the importance of research were created and scholasticism arose from the synthesis of Christian ideals and the new influences of classic philosophy.
  - B. Humanists and Printers: Literature was also key in this time and helped to spread literacy among other things, which was largely in part because of the invention of the moveable type printing press.
  - C. Renaissance Artists: Artists during this period are renowned for their complexity and level of detail, portraying religious, philosophical, and cultural themes of the time with new oil paints.
- IV. *Political and Military Transformations*: During the development of Western Europe, political changes came about as a result of disputes between the church and state as well as between other countries and governments.
- A. The Hundred Years War: In the Hundred Years War during 1337 – 1453, conflict between England and France over right to the throne new technology was proliferated and changed the dynamic of warfare of that period. The result, however, was control by the French monarchy.
  - B. New Monarchies in France and England: The French monarchy led by Avignon in the 1300-1400s and the English monarchy led by King John were of some that had their rules affected by this time in Western Europe.
  - C. Iberian Unification: In the La Reconquista, a crusade took place in which Spain and Portugal were reconquered and united, unifying Christian society in Spain and raising zealotry for the religion.