man commander Fabius, du Guesclin refused to offer battle. Instead he wore the English down by harassing them with petty raids, seizing and holding castles, and organizing local resistance. The war spluttered on into the fifteenth century, but the English, thoroughly exhausted by these tactics, lost both their initiative and almost all their newly acquired lands. With the English held at bay, the French enjoyed a period of respite and convalescence. Charles, now known as "the Wise," was even able to revive the prestige and authority of the monarchy both at home and abroad. His premature death in 1380 was a double calamity, however, because it deprived the country of his great services and left it to the mismanagement of Charles VI. This poor son of an able father soon gave evidence of insanity, offering the English an open invitation to launch a fresh invasion. Once again English arms were to be crowned with spectacular success.

The internal political development which took place in France during, and in part because of, the struggle with the English offers a highly significant contrast to what was happening across the channel. Following the defeat at Crécy, a meeting of the Estates-General refused to grant further war levies and demanded fiscal reforms. By this time, the Estates that Philip IV had summoned from the entire realm had taken to meeting in two separate sections: one north of the Loire River representing the area called
Langue d'Oil and the other in the south, or Langue d'Oc. These names derived from the regional accents with which the inhabitants spoke French, and southern France is still occasionally referred to as Langue-doc. In 1355, however, the Estates of both north and south joined in a rare display of coordinated action to force John to grant important concessions. He did commit himself to consulting the Estates before making any new financial levies; but almost immediately he began to organize an opposition which Charles was able to maintain when he became regent following his father's capture at Poitiers. When need of funds forced Charles to call the Estates in 1357, he was confronted with an extended set of demands, embodied in a Great Ordinance, obviously intended to give the Estates the sort of financial control that the Parliament was beginning to assume in England. Although he found it expedient to acquiesce at the time, the success of the Estates was short-lived. Not only did they relapse into their old division, but their most important leader, Etienne Marcel, made a fatal error. Because of the general chaos caused by the war and the consequent exactions and depredations of both the royal army and the free mercenary companies, the peasants had risen in a violent revolt called the Jacquerie. In an attempt to gain popular support for the Estates against the king, Marcel, who was the

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3 See Painter, Feudal Monarchies, pp. 40, 41.
richest merchant of Paris, began intriguing with the peasant leaders. This unprecedented step immediately and completely alienated the nobility, with the consequence that Marcel was murdered and Charles was able not only to return to Paris but also to re-establish the monarchy’s authority throughout the country.

There are many reasons why the history of the Estates is so strikingly different from that of Parliament. The fact that the Estates were normally called only in major crises made them appear more revolutionary than constitutional and thus alienated the large majority of their potential supporters. Furthermore, the French were more deeply divided than the English not only by class but also by local loyalties. Both the use of free farmers, or yeomen, in the army and the fact that the lesser nobles or knights sat as county representatives alongside the burgesses in the House of Commons are cited as examples of social integration in England that could not be matched in France. There the peasants were rigorously excluded from any but servile occupations and the townspeople were considered social inferiors and political rivals by the nobles. To this social prejudice must be added the fact that provincial loyalties were often stronger than those to the monarchy and that the interests of the northern and southern halves of the country were frequently quite disparate. As a result, the establishment of a unified constitutional opposition was ex-
tremely difficult; and the very failure of the Estates, at least by contrast, served to enhance the prestige of the crown.

This prestige, unequaled in Europe, was due to a number of factors. Typical of these was the elaborate coronation ceremony at Reims in which the king was anointed with a holy unction which, it was widely believed, had been brought down from heaven by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and which gave the king miraculous powers including the ability to cure the scrofula by a touch of his hand. Another very different but no less important factor was the work of the vigorous and resourceful propagandists who served the later Capetians and who in the reign of Philip the Fair not only called the French crown “the arbiter of the truth” but actually claimed its hegemony over Europe. These lofty pretensions were somewhat tarnished by Philip’s chicanery; and none of his immediate successors was sufficiently able or glamorous to reimpose the respect previously enjoyed by the monarchy. Not until Charles V did a French king restore the damage suffered by the crown. Thanks to the services of sagacious advisers and gifted craftsmen as well as to the display of wealth and power, he made his court an early model for taste, opulence, and authority of the sort Versailles was to become in later centuries. Moreover, unable to compete with his rival Edward III as a dashing military figure, Charles successfully propagated the notion that the
king need not lead his troops into battle. It was actually counted to his credit that he had reconquered "in the chamber" everything that his predecessors had lost "on the field." In sum, this new increase of prestige lent the French monarchy authority in European affairs and later helped tide it over difficult times when the head that wore the crown lacked competence.

Germany—the View toward the East

If life in Germany during the fourteenth century was no less chaotic than in England and France, that was the only important common experience the Empire shared with the western monarchies, and even in this there was the important difference that chaos was nothing new in Germany. While the royal powers were being consolidated in England and France, those of the emperors were being dissipated in the endless struggles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By the beginning of the fourteenth, the western boundaries of the Empire were being threatened by the French and the vestigial authority of the emperor was being challenged in Germany by the claims of the popes and the machinations of the princes. Thus England and France entered the crisis of the fourteenth century with vigorous monarchical institutions, but the Empire seemed on the verge of dissolution and its supporters had to cast about desperately for new expedients to keep it functioning at
all. In the confusion of the age it is not surprising that these efforts seemed to have little direction and less success, yet in the long run they established a new orientation that was to influence German development down to the end of World War II.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Albert of Hapsburg had made a valiant effort to curb the burgeoning power of the princes, but in 1308 he was murdered by his nephew. This treacherous act opened the gates to the full tide of reaction. Since the emperors had never been able to establish the principle of hereditary succession, the great princes had no difficulty, in this critical juncture, in skipping over Albert's Hapsburg heir and electing an obscure count from the western borderland, Henry of Luxembourg. His chief attraction was his utter insignificance; but he was intelligent enough to recognize that Albert's failure was the direct result of his opposition to the princes. A strange blend of realist and romantic, Henry VII, as he was called, made no effort to follow his predecessor's vigorous but futile policy. Rather than attempt to defend the hollow pretensions of the imperial title, he set out to build a solid base of power beyond the reach of the jealous princes by acquiring the crown of Bohemia for his family. But his realistic approach to German affairs gave way to tragic romanticism where Italy was concerned. The German emperors had always claimed dominion over Italy and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had come
close to making good their claim. In the early fourteenth century, however, Henry’s journey to Italy was hopelessly ill conceived. The very fact that he was welcomed at first as a savior by Dante and the remnants of the old imperial party should have warned him that he was engaged in an anachronistic misadventure. Henry, however, had himself crowned in Rome in 1311 at the cost of becoming inextricably mired in the morass of Italian politics. He floundered on until his army, exhausted by sieges and wasted by disease, disintegrated around him. In 1313 he himself was poisoned, it was said, by a priest who mixed a deadly brew in the chalice of the Eucharist. Such was the end of the last mediaeval German emperor who attempted to exercise dominion over Italy.

The election of his successor was contested in over thirty years of civil war. The strongest candidate, Louis of Bavaria, defeated his Hapsburg rival on the battlefield, but he was never able to overcome the opposition of the Pope either by military action or by abject submission. The contest spread into Germany in the form of a protracted armed struggle between Louis and the Pope’s German supporters which not only exhausted the country but squandered any remaining prestige of the imperial title. In the end, the electors abandoned Louis in favor of Charles of Bohemia, the grandson of Henry VII.

Having learned from Louis’ failure that no emperor could withstand the combined onslaught of
both the princes and the pope, Charles decided to seek a new base of power. In 1356, he sealed an alliance with the princes by issuing the Golden Bull, which eliminated the claims of the pope in Germany.

By giving full control over the imperial succession to the prince-electors, the Golden Bull not only denied the pope’s claim to rights in the election but effectively eliminated his influence in the Empire. It also granted the electoral princes full sovereignty in their own principalities, a precedent which once established for these magnates would inevitably be used by lesser princes to claim and establish similar powers. To eliminate papal influence from Germany, Charles had abandoned all hope of restoring an effective imperial authority and that of his successors. The solid position he had created for himself and his family in Bohemia did nothing for Germany as a whole. Indeed he was called “the father of Bohemia and the stepfather of Germany,” and his worthless son, the famous drunkard Wenceslas, was deposed by the electors in 1400.

This decline of imperial power tended, among other things, to turn German interests from west to east. Taking advantage of their neighbor’s weakness, the French probed the entire length of the German border for possible territorial acquisitions, while in the southwest the Swiss seized the same opportunity to constitute an autonomous confederation, making the fourteenth the most glorious century in their history.
Beginning with the fabled exploits of William Tell and the dramatic victory of Morgarten, they succeeded not only in winning their independence but in establishing their infantry as the most formidable troops on the continent. The more vigorous German dynasties sought compensation for these losses in the west by consolidating their power in the east. The Hapsburgs and the Luxembourgers, for example, had begun as petty western landholders, but both switched their attention to the east during the fourteenth century and successfully installed their dynasties in Austria and Bohemia respectively.

Equally significant was the conquest, and consolidation, of Prussia by the Teutonic Knights. A quasi-religious military order left unemployed by the end of the Crusades, the Knights had transferred their base to Prussia and from there attempted to extend their hegemony into Lithuania. Here their initial successes roused the Slavs to desperate resistance. The Poles, who had united with the Lithuanians by a royal marriage in 1386, were finally able in 1410 to overwhelm the Teutonic Knights in the now legendary battle of Tannenberg. But if this stunning defeat announced the decline and gradual disintegration of the famous military order, it did not presage any weakening of German control in Prussia, where the Hohenzollerns were to establish a family stronghold which they would eventually turn into the nucleus of a new German empire.
If the decline of imperial authority should be given credit for diverting German interest and energy from west to east, it must also be held responsible for the calamitous and progressive decentralization of German government. The great princely families had immediately attempted to seize the powers and prerogatives abandoned by the emperors, and several, notably the Hapsburgs, the Luxembourgers, and later the Hohenzollerns, were able to carve extensive independent dominions from the old imperial body. Others, however, fell victims, in their turn, to the same decentralizing tendencies. Lesser lords began to stake their claims to independent jurisdiction within their smaller political units. Frequently the process of fragmentation was continued to its logical conclusion in the minute holdings of independent knights, turning the map of Germany into a jigsaw puzzle. The local populations, with their attention concentrated in petty courts and miniature armies, lost all sense of German identity. The consequences of this dissipation of energies in petty place-seeking and miniscule wars were to paralyze the country for centuries.

In the midst of this general disintegration, and in part because of it, the fourteenth century became the golden age of German cities. Forced by circumstances to defend and govern themselves, they frequently gained their independence, and many even prospered economically while depression was ravaging the rest of Europe. Left thus to their own considerable re-
sources, they became great innovators in the art of
government. Not only did they develop administra-
tive techniques, they experimented with such revo-
lutionary community services as paved streets, fire
protection, and public health. Indeed, according to
one authority, “in Germany the mediaeval city was
the forerunner of the modern state.”

Given the all but total chaos of the period, these
were not trivial achievements; and if the old social-
political structure was severely damaged by the col-
lapse of the empire, the very shock of the disaster
provoked constructive reactions in some segments of
the community.

*The Papacy and Italy—the Church Loses Its
Leadership*

Shortly after his triumphant year of jubilee, as we
have seen, Boniface VIII challenged the kings of
England and France by the bold assertion that he was
Christ’s regent on earth and that consequently all
temporal authority emanated from him. If the cynical
brutality of Philip’s response rallied Italian sentiments
to the Pope’s defense, it also broke his spirit and con-
tributed to his death. With no one left to dispute
his authority, Philip was free to dominate the papacy
so completely and so openly that in 1308 an observer
noted that “the King of France is pope and emperor.”

To escape the vicissitudes of Italian politics and
seek the protective mantle of the king of France, the
next popes sought refuge in Avignon. Although located in a papal enclave and nominally independent of French suzerainty, this city-state was really in the heart of southeastern France and under French influence. Not the least of its advantages, in the eyes of its new residents, was its setting and its climate, both far pleasanter than those of mediaeval Rome; and the papal court rapidly acquired a disturbing reputation for worldly ease and comforts. In this soil, justly famous for its wine, the old prestige of the papacy failed to take new root. Instead, the popes became enmeshed in French politics, thus squandering the popularity and support they could have drawn from those repelled by the ruthless or incapable rulers of England and France and at the same time discrediting themselves by this association. The so-called Babylonian Captivity of the papacy had begun.

In addition to the new difficulties they had incurred by their move to Avignon, the popes had still to contend with the great dilemma of the mediaeval Church which they had brought with them from Rome: the necessity, on the one hand, of a clerical hierarchy to implement the spiritual mission of the church, and the inevitability, on the other, of this organization's involving them in bitter conflict with the secular bureaucracies. As this inescapable contest progressed, it so engrossed the attention of some popes that many observers came to fear that the papacy had lost sight of the primary goals of the
Church. When Boniface VIII embarked on his test of strength with the kings of England and France, he found that he could no longer count on popular support, as his predecessors often had, among the subjects of his opponents.

The obvious lesson of Boniface’s tragic failure, however, was wasted on his successors. Brilliant fiscal administrators, they collected fees, taxes, and fines with such efficiency, and managed their treasury so shrewdly, that they set the papacy on the road to solvency. They also resumed the papal policy of meddling in German affairs, with some limited success against Louis of Bavaria, but at the cost of becoming generally regarded as greedy and worldly puppets. The resulting loss of spiritual prestige which the popes suffered proved to have serious consequences for the Church. Even if the men of the fourteenth century were forced by the multiple disorders of their age to concern themselves largely with mundane and even sordid problems, they were by instinct and intent no less religious than their predecessors. Already frustrated by the corruption of the times, their faith was further outraged by the shocking spectacle of the worldly popes in Avignon. Sheer disgust turned many from the Church and drove some to seek consolation in mysticism and heresy. Even the popes of Avignon recognized the threat to their position implicit in such a trend and attempted to react. But their lack of concern with serious spirit-
ual reform was too fundamental to be successfully dissimulated and served in the end not only to defeat their efforts but to enhance the prestige of their critics.

The papacy paid dearly in public esteem, for example, for the attacks on those followers of Saint Francis known as the Spiritual Franciscans. In 1318, four extremists were burned at the stake for insisting, despite a papal ruling to the contrary, on the maintenance of absolute poverty within the Franciscan Order. Later, in 1322, the Pope drove even the moderate Franciscan general into rebellion by declaring heretical the opinion that Christ and His Apostles had held no property of their own. The fact that the Pope was also notoriously jealous of the financial position of the papacy did nothing to mitigate the public outrage. Pious Christians were left to ponder what had happened to the pristine motives of the apostolic church in the hands of such successors.

In Italy, during the absence of the popes, the customary internecine strife grew even worse. After the ignominious failure of Henry VII, all hope that stability might be imposed by German intervention had to be abandoned. Only the southern portion of the peninsula was united by a monarchy—the Kingdom of Naples—but this area was sinking into the poverty and lawlessness which has characterized it in modern times. Elsewhere, the cities of the north, blessed by greater wealth, were entering what is often called
“the Age of the Despots.” Having established their independence from the German Empire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, most of them had set up autonomous governments known as *communes* and regulated by republican principles. Increasing wealth, however, exacerbated the inevitable internal tensions. New classes that made their living from the growing trade and industry refused to accept the continued domination of the older landed classes, provoking bitter and inconclusive struggles which usually proved nothing except that neither class could permanently overcome the other. This standard impasse tended to produce a standard compromise—a strong man would be invited to impose arbitrary but impartial peace. And, once established, such strong men seldom relinquished power. Without too much trouble they were able to annul the republican constitutions and install their heirs as hereditary rulers.

This general pattern can be observed in the history of most of the cities of northern Italy. Most important was Milan. There the Visconti family established a hereditary despotism so strong that in the years around 1400 only the death of its greatest duke prevented it from conquering all of northern Italy. The major exception to the pattern was Venice. This commercial city, anchored on the Adriatic coast, had too little mainland territory to support a powerful landed class, a lack which obviated the social strife
that shook her Italian neighbors and left her great shipping magnates unchallenged in their control of the oligarchic republic. Florence too was something of an exception to the pattern of Milan, but to a lesser extent. When the characteristic struggle between classes erupted, the Florentines reacted vigorously and appeared to have saved their republic, but their success was more apparent than real. Operating behind the carefully preserved traditional constitution and wearing the thin disguise of conventional titles, the crafty family known as the Medici had, by the fifteenth century, seized and maintained the same powers as those enjoyed by the other despots of the age. In sum, the rise of despotism in northern Italy helped to pave the way for the growth of small territorial states that made up in wealth and culture what they lacked in size. Some Italian historians still look back with nostalgia to the apogee of this development in the fifteenth century; but it is worth remembering that the achievements of the period had been won by long and bloody struggles.

Between the decaying southern kingdom and the rising northern cities, the area around Rome lay in chaos. With the popes in Avignon, the once-great city was abandoned to the violence of its unruly citizens, rapacious barons, and foreign mercenaries. On these, none succeeded in imposing enduring stability. In a brief interlude, however, control of the anarchic Eternal City was temporarily seized by a
native upstart, a vain romantic dreamer named Cola di Rienzi. In contrast to the cynical foreign mercenaries, he loved Rome and sensed that, in the absence of the discredited papacy, Italy needed a new unifying symbol of authority. To fill the void, he tried to revive Italian pride in the ancient grandeur of the city and its classic republican constitution. His first efforts met with considerable success. His highly infectious enthusiasm captured the imagination and support of many, including the poet Petrarch, and swept him, in 1347, to power as “Tribune of the People.” Instead of leading him on to further triumphs, these successes incited him to such outrageously pompous pretensions that he was soon driven into exile. Undaunted, he returned in 1354, only to be slaughtered at the Capitol in the closest approximation to a revival of ancient Roman traditions that he had been able to evoke. Politically, his attempt was an anachronistic failure. The grandeur of his vision may have given important impetus to that Italian interest in the classical past which was to have such dazzling influence in the next century, but today his memory survives principally in the title of one of Wagner’s most immature operas.

Even after years in Avignon, the popes never fully divested themselves of all responsibility for Rome and finally they recognized that their return to Italy was imperative. In the meantime, many cities within the Papal States had been seized by despots who were
ready to defend their new holdings by force. As a result, the papacy felt it necessary, in 1353, to send the skillful diplomat and warrior Cardinal Albornoz to Italy to reimpose papal sovereignty by negotiation if possible or by the sword if necessary. After several years he achieved a partial and tenuous success. In 1367, Pope Urban V finally set out for Rome, but within three years he had beaten a retreat to Avignon, in complete despair of imposing his authority on the Italian factions. In 1376, his successor, Gregory XI, made another but futile attempt. He too would have returned to France if he had not died in 1378.

At this point, the papacy suffered its greatest disaster. While still in Rome, the cardinals hastily elevated to the chair of Peter an unusually highhanded Italian, Urban VI. Immediately ruining their choice, however, they declared his election uncanonical and elected a Frenchman, Clement VII, in his stead. Urban VI, totally rejecting his deposition, entrenched himself at Rome, and Clement VII retreated to Avignon to establish a rival papal court. The impasse was complete; and the shame of the Babylonian Captivity gave way to the scandal of the Great Schism.

Christendom had not experienced anything so degrading since the tenth century. The rival popes occupied themselves with mutual recriminations and abuse of a particularly sordid and vicious nature. By the time Urban died, his cardinals were so deeply implicated in the struggle that they sacrificed the op-
portunity for reconciliation to their selfish interests. Instead of seeking a compromise with Clement, they elected one of their number to succeed Urban and perpetuated the Schism. Their Avignonese opponents followed their example in turn, thus closing the door on any conceivable solution to the crisis. Both sides sought support among the rulers and population of Christendom, with the result that the split was extended far beyond the papal hierarchy, dividing all Europe into nearly equal camps. The English refused to pay allegiance to a French pope and were followed by the Flemish and a majority of the Germans and Italians. The French, however, were supported by the Spaniards, the Sicilians, and the Scots. Thus the balance was evenly weighted and neither side was forced or inclined to consider compromise.

With the ultimate source of Church authority hopelessly divided, clerical discipline was eroded by conflicting rulings and counter appeals. To many it seemed as if Christ's raiment had been permanently rent. In response the growing popular revulsion and despair, a council of cardinals, ostensibly drawn from all factions, was convened at Pisa. This body, in a bold attempt to break the impasse, deposed both popes in 1409 and attempted to replace them with a compromise candidate, who, being Greek, had not been implicated in the contest and was therefore possibly acceptable to all. Neither of the schismatic popes had the slightest intention of accepting the action of the
Council; and the new one died within a year. Undaunted by either the continued defiance of the impenitent rivals or the demise of their new candidate, the cardinals of the Council insisted on their canonical authority and made one more desperate attempt to resolve the crisis. This time, instead of seeking a neutral candidate, they selected the bellicose and notorious cardinal-legate of Bologna, who took office under the name of John XXIII.

Even though he was fully capable of protecting the interests of the Pisan cardinals on the field of battle, his record and reputation were hardly compatible with his new position. By 1415, the public reaction was such that he was finally brought to trial. “The most scandalous charges were suppressed,” the historian Gibbon later noted, “. . . the vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy and incest.” But what amused the sardonic Gibbon did not amuse the devout and horrified world of the later Middle Ages. Not only was he condemned and deposed, but the revelations of the trial were so shocking that in spite of the fact that his name was expunged from the list of popes, no subsequent pope took the name of John again until our own day.

*The Balance Sheet*

To end a survey of the political developments of the fourteenth century with an account of the apparent dissolution of the Church can only emphasize
the violent and chaotic character of the age. All the
great unifying concepts and institutions of Christen-
dom seemed to be dissolving. Not only was the pa-
pacy fragmented, but Italy was a congeries of war-
ing states and cities, the Empire was disintegrating
into endless petty units, and even the French mon-
archy, weakened by war, a contested inheritance, and
the misrule of a mad king, appeared to be breaking
up. Only in England was the government sufficiently
strong and stable to maintain the territorial integrity
of the realm, but not, it should be added, to prevent
the growth of bitter factional rivalries which occa-
sionally flared into open strife.

Given this general picture of incoherent parochial-
ism in so many aspects of European life, it is surpris-
ing to discover that some scholars have found signifi-
cant beginnings of nationalism in the fourteenth cen-
tury. This hypothesis, like the similar one that sees
origins of capitalism in the same period, must be con-
sidered with serious reservations. It is usually in con-
nection with the Hundred Years’ War that the claim
for incipient national consciousness is made. The rav-
ages of incessant warfare drove the French to increas-
ingly determined efforts at self-defense, at first local,
but eventually general. Inevitably these concerted at-
tempts to pacify the country called attention to the
foreign character of the intruders and developed a
widespread hate of the English and perhaps some
premonitory signs of that love of France which a
little later was to find such remarkable embodiment in Joan of Arc. And it is possible that the English, by an obverse reaction, came to think of themselves as sharing a common "national" purpose in a foreign land. Even so, it is important to remember that in the early phases of the Hundred Years' War most of the English commanders still spoke French, and some at least saw themselves as future and rightful lords of French fiefs. Elsewhere in Europe loyalties were still predominantly local. Inhabitants of Florence, for example, considered themselves to be Florentine first, Tuscan second, and Italian last if at all. They would never have thought of burying their local animosities for the sake of the national good; and their contempt for their Pisan neighbors found eloquent expression in their habit of referring to both deceit and treason as "the Pisan vice." With the exception of England and France, there were few segments of Europe that could be considered "nations" in anything like the modern sense; and even in the exceptions, incipient nationalism can be detected only in primitive and intermittent manifestations.

Yet if many aspects of European life in the fourteenth century present a picture of incoherence, the all but overwhelming challenge presented by the forces of disintegration were often met with heroic courage. The great military victories of the period were won against tremendous odds; the most admired heroes were, like William Tell and Robert Bruce, courageous underdogs. Indeed, the story of Bruce and
the spider, apocryphal though it may be, is an excellent symbolic summary of fourteenth-century history. Despite upheaval and turmoil, men did not give up hope for a better world. Reform and renovation were the basic preoccupations of the age. When it became clear, for example, that the Church had abdicated its leadership and that the future depended on the secular state, men responded by developing the patterns and foundations of stable modern government. Where viable constitutional patterns had been established, they were defended and maintained, and where new institutions were needed, they were improvised and elaborated. New bureaucracies, capable of carrying on the work of government in spite of disorder and disaster, burgeoned throughout Europe.

In spite of superficial indications to the contrary, the fourteenth century did not usher in a period as dark as that which followed either the collapse of Rome or of the Carolingian empire. Neither the deterioration of the once prosperous mediaeval economy nor the failure of the traditional political leadership destroyed the basic structure of European society. Severely tried, but far from defeated, the men of the period managed to preserve the most essential elements of their civilization and to reshape or replace what could not be maintained intact. That they did this in face of all but insurmountable adversity attests to both their resourcefulness and their determination.