

like that of Columbus, was undertaken in the hope of discovering a new route to India.

#### 4. *Italy*

Italy and Germany were the exceptions to the general rule that by the end of the Middle Ages nations had been formed and strong national governments set up in the countries of Western Europe.

EARLY  
HISTORY

Italy had no political unity in mediæval times. The Ostrogoths indeed conquered it for the time (489-554), and when they were driven out the whole country passed nominally under the rule of the Eastern Emperor. But almost immediately the Lombard invasion took place (568) and the greater part of the peninsula passed under Lombard rule, although some parts, especially in the south, preserved their dependence on Constantinople. The unification of Italy was still further hindered by the Frankish conquest of the Lombard kingdom (774), and its subsequent connection with Germany, by the settlements of the Saracens in the south (850) and by the later conquests of the Normans from 1050 onwards.

During a considerable part of the Middle Ages the history of Italy falls into three parts, the story of the rise of the cities in the north, of the growth of the Papal States in the middle, and of the Norman kingdom of Naples in the south.

THE  
CITIES

We have seen how the cities had acquired a practically independent position by the time of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and how, by the victory of Legnano, they secured their independence. Both before and after this time there were constant wars