

Chapter 13
European Society in the
Age of the Renaissance,
1350-1550

Economic
 &
Political
Developments

States of Italy



- Beginning of the 14th century, Italian peninsula was not a centralized government
 - German control of North Italy
 - French control of Naples (southern Italy)
 - Spanish control of Sicily
 - Papal control of central Italy

States of Italy

- End of the 14th century – large, regional states that conquered smaller states
 - National identity with city-state; governed by their own laws
- Geography made Italy a major center of trade
 - crossroads between East & West
 - Genoa & Venice – port cities – imported spices & minerals from Byzantine Empire & North Africa

States of Italy

- By the 15th century, there were 5 major powers:
 1. Naples – Ruled by Spain
 2. Papal States – Rome & surrounding area
 3. Florence – a Republic ruled by the city's 7 major guilds (represented the wealthy)
 4. Milan – Visconti family (then Sforza) used condottieri, hired mercenary soldiers, to conquer smaller neighbors
 5. Venice – oligarchy ruled by Great Council – 2,500 wealthy members; 10% elected to the Senate for 1 year; doge (duke) was elected head

Renaissance Society

- “Rebirth” – emphasis on humanity & renewed fascination with the classical world
- 3 Phases:
 - 1350 – 1400 – declining population; uncovering of classical texts (benefit of the Crusades); experiments with art forms (Giotto)
 - 1400 – 1500 – Creation of a set of cultural values & artistic achievements; Italian city-states developed stable governments & warfare ended
 - 1500 – 1550 – Invasions by French & Spanish transformed Italian political life

Renaissance Society: The City

- 1 in 4 Italians lived in a city
- By 1500, 7 of the 10 largest European cities were in Italy
 - Naples, Venice & Milan each had 100,000+ pop.
 - Cities grew by migration, not natural increase
- Jobs in cities corresponded to social position & wealth
 - Half the population were wage-earners
- As trades & crafts expanded, cities offered protection for consumers & producers
 - Guilds

Renaissance Society: Economy

- Disparity between rich & poor
 - Small group of wealthy families
 - In Florence, 10% of the families controlled 90% of the wealth
- 70-90% of Europe's population was involved in subsistence farming
- Manufacturing of clothing was the other significant economic activity
- Defining characteristic of Renaissance economy is population change
 - Recurring waves of the plague

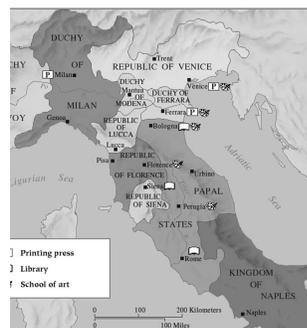
Renaissance Society: Economy

- Mid-14th century – Florence lost 50% its population
- 1400 – Another 25%
- By 1450, only ¼ of original population remained
- Over-production of food
- Decline in population = higher wages
- People were making more money; consumption of luxury goods increased
 - Florence = silks & jewelry
 - Venice = glass industry

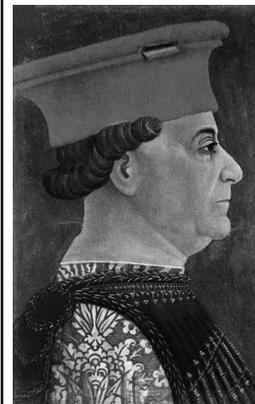
Economy

- Thriving economy made the Renaissance possible
- City-states became independent & prosperous because of commerce
 - Florence's textile industry employed 30,000 workers
- Mediterranean trade routes bolstered international trade & small-scale manufacturing brought prosperity to ambitious Italian merchants
- Banking helped finance international trade & manufacturing
 - Venice & Genoa were major trading & banking cities

Italian City-States: Politics



- By the 15th century, there were 5 major powers:
 - Milan
 - Venice
 - Florence
 - Papal States
 - Naples



Milan

- Visconti family used condottieri, hired mercenary soldiers, to conquer smaller neighbors
- 1447 – Francesco Sforza, a condottieri, overthrew the Visconti & became duke
- Taxation created enormous revenues

Renaissance Milan



Venice

- Located on Adriatic Sea; imported raw materials from east & west
 - Privileged position with the Byzantine Empire
 - Great wealth from trade
- Oligarchy ruled by Great Council – 2,500 wealthy members
- 10% elected to the Senate for 1 year
- Doge (duke) was elected head
- Warfare to unite the north of Italy



*The Doge,
Leonardo
Loredon
Berli, 1501*

Florence

- Cradle of the Italian Renaissance
 - “Queen City of the Renaissance”
- Located on the Arno River, Florence conquered Pisa, opening a port to the Mediterranean
 - Aided Florence in becoming a maritime power & commercial center



Florentine Politics

- Republic ruled by the city’s 7 major guilds (represented the wealthy)
 - Only members of the guilds could participate
 - Albizi, Pazzi & Medici families competed for power
- 1434 - Cosimo de Medici – richest man in Christendom (banking) - took control of Florence
 - Great patron of the arts
 - Ended war with Milan
- Lorenzo the Magnificent, Cosimo’s grandson, secured patronage
 - Family fortune dwindled & banks closed
 - His son was Pope Leo X

*Lorenzo
the Magnificent*



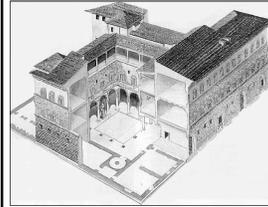
1478 - 1521

Cosimo de' Medici



1517 - 1574

Florence Under the Medici



Medici Palace (left) and
Chapel (below)

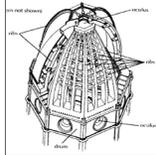


Filippo Brunelleschi

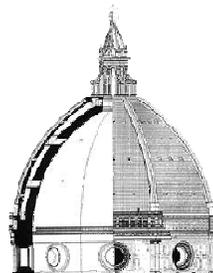
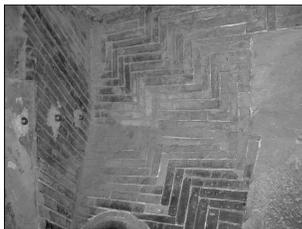
- Commissioned to build the cathedral dome.

– Used unique architectural concepts.

- He studied the ancient Pantheon in Rome.
- Used ribs for support.



Brunelleschi's "Secret"



Papal States

- The pope was a religious position, but popes were the political rulers of the region
- Rome & surrounding area
- Because of the Great Schism, Rome had been abandoned and left in disarray
- The popes took on massive rebuilding projects in order to lure pilgrims (and their money!) to the city

R. H. Bainton
The Reformation of the 16c

Thus, the papacy emerged as something between an Italian city-state and European power, without forgetting at the same time the claim to be the vice-regent of Christ. The Pope often could not make up his mind whether he was the successor of Peter or of Caesar. Such vacillation had much to do with the rise and success of the Protestant Reformation.



Dome Comparisons



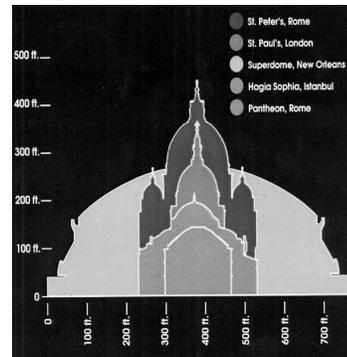
**Il Duomo
(Florence)**

**St. Peter's
(Rome)**

**St. Paul's
(London)**

**US capital
(Washington)**

Comparing Domes



*Intellectual
 Change*

Society Structure: The Nobles

- The elites – “*popolo grasso*” (fat people) made up of nobles, wealthy merchants & manufacturers
 - Roughly 5% of the population
- Commercial wealth made mobility possible
- Urban patriarchs ruled their cities through power & patronage

Society Structure: Nobles

- Baldassare Castiglione wrote a book, *The Book of the Courtier*, to express the perfect noble
 - Possess impeccable character, grace, talents & noble birth
 - Primary profession was bearing arms; he should participate in military service
 - Have a classical education (unlike medieval knight) & adorn his life with the arts



Renaissance Thought

- Knowledge – scholars & philosophers searched the works of the ancients to find principles on which to build a better life
 - Homer, Plato, Aristotle
- Humanism – Study of the liberal arts
 - Grammar, logic, geometry, music, astronomy & rhetoric
 - Civilize mankind – “the art of living”
- Petrarch – father of humanism
 - Popularized the idea that Italy was entering a new age of learning and individualism – distinct from the “ignorance” of the Middle Ages
 - Humanists preserved ancient texts by translating their work into Latin



Humanism

- Fascination with humans and their potential
- Expressed in literature, philosophy, education, politics & art
 - Secularism – more focus on humans and less on religion
 - Classics – emphasis on Greece & Rome
 - Individualism – Focus on learning and human affairs should concern the individual
 - Power – provide the educational tools to enable the mastery of everything!

The Renaissance Man

- Growing sense of what it meant to be “civilized”
- Highlighted place of individual in society
- Broad knowledge about many things in different fields.
- Able to link information from different areas/disciplines and create new knowledge
- The Greek ideal of the “well-rounded man” was at the heart of Renaissance education
 - Deep knowledge/skill in many areas

The Renaissance Woman

- Unfortunately, not much changed for women
- Legally, women were still subordinate to their husbands/fathers
- Poor families viewed girls as liability because of dowry
 - Infant girls were more likely to be “exposed”
- Some families sent their daughters to convents
 - Leadership in the world of women
- Some nobles educated their daughters in the humanities

Machiavelli



- Secretary to the Florentine Council of Ten
- Sent into exile after the Spanish victory brought the Medici family back into Florentine power
- Wrote *The Prince* – a ruler was justified in exercising political power only if it contributed to the common good of the people
 - Better to be feared than loved
 - Based on Cesare Borgia; dedicated to Lorenzo II (father of Catherine de’ Medici)

Social Hierarchies

Renaissance Society: Family

- Patriarchal society
- Sons were apprenticed between the ages of 10-13, usually in the trade of their father
- Eldest son was favored; younger daughters were at a disadvantage
- To achieve legal autonomy, the boy had to be “emancipated”
 - Generally late 20s or early 30s

Renaissance Society: Marriage

- Expectations for daughter centered on marriage
 - Dowry was important
 - Daughters of poor often entered domestic service in order to have master provide dowry
- Women married around 20, although mid-teens were common
 - Marriage for family alliance & business, NOT love
 - Economic concerns were the first priority; compatibility was the second

Renaissance Life: Marriage

- Because of the gap in marriage ages, prostitution was rampant!
 - Legal and regulated by government
- Cases of rape & sexual violence were high, as well

Renaissance Life: Slavery

- Although nuclear families (mom, dad & kids) were norm, Renaissance Italy depended on African slaves
 - Labor shortage because of Black Death
 - Lived with family & did domestic work
- About 10% of the population in 1400s
 - Declined in the 15th century

Renaissance Society: Quality of Life

- Less people = over-production of food = better diet
- Health improved & life expectancy increased
- Main food – bread but added meats & dairy
- Church remained center of life
 - Most prominent buildings in town/city were the church
 - Art helped visualize the history of the church

European States

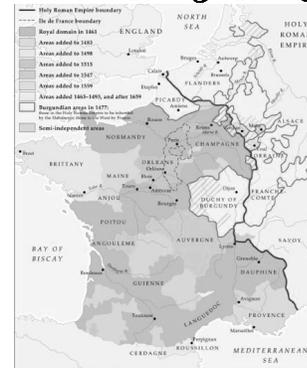
New Monarchies

- The European countries we know today did not exist
- The 1500s were a time of laying the foundations for the modern nation through:
 1. Taxation – steady source of revenue
 2. Lessening the power of the aristocracy
 3. Codifying laws & creating courts
 4. Trained and maintained professional armies
 5. Employed officials in the government and created agencies, councils, committees
 6. Increased authority over the clergy & religion within their realms

France

- France – reign of King Louis XI – recovered from Hundred Years' War & regained position as leading power of Europe
- Louis made laws & levied taxes by decree
- Established royal control over the judicial system
- Created an effective army, which he used to suppress revolts of the nobility
- Preferred diplomacy for foreign affairs; nick-named the Spider for his “webs of political & diplomatic intrigue”

France in the 15th & 16th Centuries

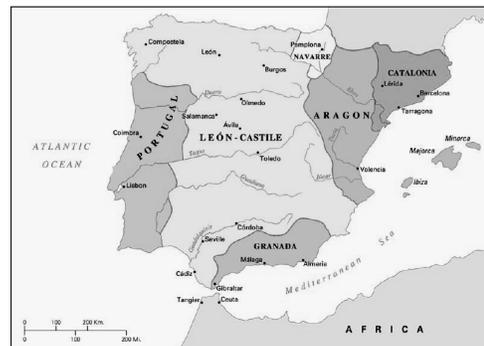


Unification of Spain

- Marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon
- Reorganized the military
- Ability to appoint high-power members to the Catholic Church
- Strict religious uniformity
 - Inquisition
 - Expelled the Jews from Spain
 - Defeated the last of the Moors (Muslims) and drove them from Granada
- Remaining Muslims encouraged to convert



Kingdoms of Spain, 1492



The Rise of Spain

- The Spanish throne passed to the Habsburg dynasty in 1469
 - Ferdinand & Isabella's daughter, Princess Joanna, married Philip the Fair, Habsburg duke of Burgundy (son of Maximilian, HRE)
 - Their son became King Charles I of Spain and in 1519, he became Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire



Spanish Empire under Charles



Spain

- Charles demanded enormous taxes to pay for wars abroad, including against France in the 1520s
- He arranged the marriage of his son, Philip, to England's Mary Tudor (second cousins)
- Charles abdicated the HRE in 1558, dividing Habsburg domains in 2:
 - King Philip II inherited Spain, Netherlands, Naples, & Sicily
 - Charles' brother, Ferdinand, became HRE

King Philip II

HRE Ferdinand II



1558 Divisions



England

- England – As the Hundred Years' War dragged on, the King came to rely on the aristocracy for money
- Families began amassing their own armies & a civil war broke out for control
- 1455-85 – House of York (white rose) versus the House of Lancaster (red rose) – War of the Roses
- Henry Tudor of the Lancasters finally defeated Richard III
 - Proclaimed King Henry VII

The Tudor Kings



- King Henry VII (1485-1509)
 - Restored authority of the King
 - Ended private armies by the nobles
 - Used diplomacy to avoid wars
 - Traditional taxes such as crown lands, judicial fees & fines, and customs duties were enough to not overburden the nobles or middle class; balanced the budget
 - Power of Parliament declined as his need to call on them for taxes declined

End of the Italian Renaissance: Economics

- Economic decline was accentuated when Italian city-states lost Asian trade routes
 - Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453
- Florentine silks & woolen industries faced competition from the French & Dutch
- And the world economy was changing
 - Portugal, Spain & Britain were gaining new products & profit from the New World (chap. 15)

End of the Italian Renaissance: Warfare

- Italian peninsula became a battleground for the rivalries of foreign monarchs
- 1494 - Charles VIII of France soon invaded
 - The Medici tried to negotiate to avoid Florence's capture
 - The Medici were seen as traitors and exiled
- Anti-French coalition, including the Spanish & HRE rallied to defeat the French



Florence

- During the Medici's exile, a religious zealot, Girolamo Savonarola, who opposed the Medici & the pope welcomed Charles VIII
- He took virtual control of the republic
- The next year, French King Louis XII invaded the Italian peninsula



Warfare

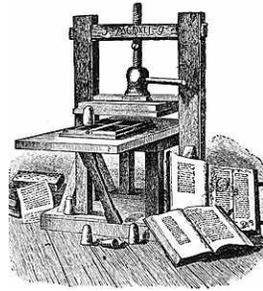
- The Spanish army defeated the French army & the Hapsburgs took the kingdom of Naples
- The French maintained Milan until 1512
- 15 years of fighting in Italy
- No thought to creating an Italian alliance
 - Remained loyal to their city-state

Northern Renaissance

Printing Press

- Printing Press – Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400-1468) is credited with having set up the first practical printing press with movable type
 - Most important developments of the Renaissance outside of Italy
- Spread quickly
 - 1480 – 380 printing presses
 - 1500 – 1,000
- Impact – spread of literacy, knowledge & ideas

Johannes Gutenberg



The Northern Renaissance



- Humanism – Referred to as Christian humanism because of its efforts to unite classical learning with the Christian faith
- Erasmus – *Praise of Folly* – ridiculed many attitudes of his time, including ignorance, superstition, and greed
- Erasmian humanism – belief that the Christian religion offered humanity sound guidelines for its moral conduct and that religion and learning were bound together

The Northern Renaissance

- Thomas More (1478-1535) – England's greatest humanist.
- Studied law & became member of King Henry VIII's court
- Wrote *Utopia* (1516)
 - Imaginary island where an ideal cooperative society flourished
 - Society based on reason and tolerance
 - Citizens practiced Christianity that was free of ignorance & superstition
 - No private property & no desire for profit
 - No war, except in self-defense
 - Contrasted this society with the evils of his own

Thomas More, Utopia



Northern Renaissance Art

- Jan van Eyck (c. 1390-1441) – Ghent, Flanders
- Used oils
- Minute detail and their mastery of perspective
- *The Adoration of the Lamb*, 1432
- *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride*, 1434

Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride, 1434



Detail of the mirror – shows their backsides!

The Adoration of the Lamb



Northern Renaissance Art

- Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450-1516) – Flemish - created a fantasy world inhabited by nightmarish men & monsters
 - *Garden of Earthly Delight*,
- Pieter Bruegel (c. 1525-1569) – Flemish – best known for paintings of ordinary people, especially peasants
 - *Peasant Wedding*, 1565

Garden of Earthly Delight



Peasant Wedding



Northern Renaissance Art

- Albrecht Durer (1471-1528) – German – known for woodcuts & engravings
 - Portray religious & classical subjects
 - Numerous portraits
- Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543) – German – Portrait painter



Durer, A. Apocalypse: Riders of the 4 Horses

Durer's Apocalypse of the 4 Horsemen

Hans Holbein's The Ambassadors



Essential Questions

- What were the characteristics of the Italian Renaissance? How did it differ from the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century?
- In what ways did the European world experience an economic recovery in the fifteenth century? Did the revived economy differ greatly from what it had been?
- Discuss the major social changes of the Renaissance era. Were these changes actually a rejection of medieval trends? Why or why not?
- Discuss the political development of Italy during the Renaissance. What new political practices (statecraft) did the Italians contribute to Europe? How are these new political practices reflected in the work of Machiavelli?
- Discuss Italian Renaissance humanism. What does the word humanism mean? Who were the humanists? What were their goals? Did they achieve them?
- What were the distinctive characteristics of the Renaissance artists? How does their art reflect the political and social events of the period?
- "The major characteristic in the development of the 'new monarchies' was the expansion of central government authority in the areas of economic, political, judicial, military, and religious policy." Is this a valid statement in regard to England, Spain, and France? Was the pattern of political development the same in Eastern Europe?

Recommended Reading

