

EUROPEAN HISTORY

CITY-STATES & DYNASTIES 1450–1550

1450–1550

Europe sees greater centralized **monarchical control** over taxes, law, armies; increased sense of belonging to a **nation**

Italian city-states: Hundreds of cities (e.g., Florence, Venice, Milan, Genoa, Naples, Papal States) are ruled independently along with surrounding countryside, resulting in political and social instability

- Cities slowly consolidate into larger city-states ruled by powerful, ruthless families, such as the **Medici** of Florence
- Many city-states become **constitutional oligarchies** ruled by small numbers of people; others ruled by despots
- Papal States are ruled by the pope, like other city-states
- France invades Italian states three times (1494, 1499, 1515)
- **1527:** Spanish soldiers sack Rome

Spain: Reaches height of power during 1500s via marriage, inheritance, luck, exploration

- **1469:** Marriage of **Ferdinand** and **Isabella** leads to united Spain
- **1492:** Spain expels Jews; exiles Muslims in 1502
- **Charles V** (r. 1519–1556) rules **Habsburg Empire** (Spain, Netherlands, areas of Italy, central Europe), Holy Roman Empire, and empire in New World
- After Charles, Habsburg Empire splits between Spanish and Austrian branches

Holy Roman Empire: Continues divide into small independent states ruled by princes, archbishops; population mostly German

- Empire as a whole ruled by an elected **emperor** (usually an Austrian Habsburg) who negotiates powers with princes

France: Centralizes under powerful **Valois** dynasty but faces constant warfare, religious conflict

- **1453:** France defeats England, ending **Hundred Years' War**
- **1477:** Burgundy divided between France, Holy Roman Empire
- **1500s:** Series of wars against Spanish Habsburgs end in defeat
- **1515–1547:** **Francis I** rules with cooperation of nobles

England: New **Tudor** dynasty ends decades of civil war

- **1455–1485:** **War of the Roses** between House of Lancaster and House of York over crown
- **1485:** Lancastrian Henry Tudor defeats ill-reputed **Richard III** at Bosworth Field; as **Henry VII**, he strengthens royal authority

Byzantine Empire: **Constantinople** falls to Ottoman **Turks** in 1453; Islamic, religiously tolerant **Ottoman Empire** spreads into Balkans

Russia: Princes, united under Ivan III of Moscow, end **Mongol** rule of Russian cities in 1480

RENAISSANCE THOUGHT & CULTURE

Italian Renaissance: Exploration of the secular world (nature, humanity) through painting, poetry, sculpture, philosophy

- **Humanism:** Poets **Dante Alighieri** (1265–1321) and **Petrarch** (1304–1374) and other thinkers pursue scholarship in the humanities, inspired by ancient Greeks and Romans
- Wealthy nobles and merchants support the arts
- Techniques of symmetry, proportionality, **chiaroscuro** (light-dark contrast), **perspective** make art more realistic
- **1440:** **Donatello** finishes sculpture *David*, first Western free-standing nude since antiquity
- **1507:** **Leonardo da Vinci** (1452–1519), artist, engineer, scientist, inventor, ultimate "Renaissance Man" finishes *Mona Lisa*
- **1508:** **Michelangelo** begins work on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome; beautiful frescoes depict biblical passages
- **1513:** **Niccolò Machiavelli's** *The Prince*. Leaders should inspire fear to end political instability, cause moral regeneration
- **Mannerism:** New expressive style rejects symmetry of earlier Renaissance art (c. 1520–1600)

Northern Renaissance: Begins c. 1460s; humanists pursue intellectual activity, making religious reform possible

- Spurred by invention of movable-type **printing press** (Johann Gutenberg, c. 1450) and rising number of schools, universities
- Literacy leads to challenges to rule, religion; greater individual knowledge; propaganda; censorship; new trades; copyright law
- **Desiderius Erasmus** (Dutch, c. 1469–1536) promotes intellectual inquiry, piety, use of Latin as common scholarly language
- **Albrecht Dürer** (German, 1471–1528) paints, engraves realistically
- **Thomas More** critiques society in *Utopia* (England, 1516)



THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

Spanish and Portuguese explore coast of Africa and the Atlantic in the late 1400s and 1500s

1492: Spanish monarchs fund **Christopher Columbus's** voyage; aims to find spices and gold in Asia, but actually lands in Caribbean

1498: Portuguese explorer **Vasco da Gama** reaches India by going around Africa; spice trade to the east by sea begins

Spain claims most of Central, South America; **Portugal** claims Brazil, African coast; conquer via small armies, advanced weapons

- **1493:** Pope divides New World between Spain, Portugal
- **1521:** **Hernán Cortés** (Spain) conquers **Aztec** in Mexico
- **1531–1534:** **Francisco Pizarro** (Spain) conquers **Inca** in Peru

1519–1522: **Ferdinand Magellan** (Portugal) circumnavigates world

Indigenous people face disease, enslavement; loss of land, culture

Africans sent to New World as **slaves** in mines, on plantations

Catholic priests, notably **Bartolomé de Las Casas** (1474–1566), protest against Spanish treatment of Native Americans

THE REFORMATIONS 1500–1600

Calls for Church reform to end abuses and give lay authorities more power set the stage for Reformations

- Sale of **indulgences** (in which anxious individuals pay Church money in hopes of spending less time in purgatory after death) comes under attack
- Corrupt, immoral popes, bishops, priests tarnish Church image

Great Schism (1378–1417): Period of several rival popes; undermines papal authority

- Calls for reform by **John Wycliffe** (English, c. 1328–1384) and **Jan Hus** (Czech, c. 1369–1415)
- German cities, desiring more wealth and power, try to end Church's financial privileges and abuses

Protestant Reformation: German priest **Martin Luther** challenges Church doctrine, rejects pope as head of Christian church

- Argues against monastic life; believes that faith alone leads to salvation (not good works, not indulgences)
- Acknowledges two holy sacraments rather than seven
- Promotes personal religion, individual Bible study, Bible and Mass in vernacular (not Latin)
- **1517:** Luther posts his **ninety-five theses** (complaints about Church's sale of indulgences) on door of church at Wittenberg
- **1521:** Pope excommunicates Luther; H.R.E. **Charles V** signs **Edict of Worms** condemning Luther's ideas; Church reform becomes political issue that divides German princes
- **1530:** **Augsburg Confession** makes Luther's break with Church permanent, founds Lutheran Church

Protestant movement spreads piecemeal through **Holy Roman Empire's** individual states and cities

- Urban reformers, pamphlets, preachers spread Luther's ideas
- Crowds attack churches; wars distract Charles V from resisting Reformation actively
- Radical reformers in the Holy Roman Empire splinter into Anabaptists, Mennonites, Anti-Trinitarians

1522: **Ulrich Zwingli** leads Reformation in Switzerland based on literal reading of scripture

John Calvin (French, 1509–1564) believes salvation comes only through **predestination** but also that living a strictly godly life is a sign of being chosen to be saved

- **1540s:** Calvin leads moral reform in **Geneva**, Switzerland, haven for persecuted Protestants
- Calvinism spreads to Netherlands, France

1555: **Peace of Augsburg** lets German princes decide on religion of their states; Holy Roman Empire thus divides between Lutherans, Catholics; Calvinists, Anabaptists not recognized

1530s: England's **Henry VIII** (r. 1509–1547) founds **Anglican Church** in order to divorce his wife, breaks from Catholicism; daughter Mary returns to Catholicism

- Other daughter, **Elizabeth I** (r. 1558–1603), enforces Protestantism through Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy (1559) but tolerates Catholicism; seeks pragmatic solution to end violence
- **Puritans** press for further reform of Anglican Church; advocate simplified, fervent Protestantism

Catholic Reformation (Counter-Reformation): Defends against Protestantism, makes reforms within Catholicism

- **1540:** **Ignatius of Loyola** founds **Society of Jesus** (Jesuits), who preach and teach worldwide to promote Catholicism
- **1545–1563:** **Council of Trent** reforms bishop and priest conduct; reaffirms Catholic doctrine: papal authority, seven sacraments, Christ's presence in Eucharist (communion), power of indulgences (but not sale), power of good works, celibacy of clergy
- **1555:** Pope Paul IV orders Jews to live in ghettos
- **1559:** Pope Paul IV establishes **Index** (list of forbidden books)

1600: **Pattern of Christianity in Europe** set, but minorities exist

- **Catholic majority:** Ireland, Spain, France, Italian states, Austria, Poland, southern German states
- **Protestant majority:** England, Switzerland, Netherlands, Scandinavia, northern German states
- **Orthodox majority:** Russia, Balkans, parts of Poland-Lithuania

FAMILIES & CHILDREN 1450–1600

European population in 1400s still recovering from **Black Death** (bubonic plague) of 1300s

- Life expectancy short; 40 considered old age
- Couples marry late
- **High infant mortality;** poor have few surviving children
- Wives legally subservient to husbands but contribute to household economy

Changes in marriage and families in the 1500s:

- Marriages occur at later ages; women considered partners in marriage; **divorce** still difficult but more acceptable under Protestantism
- Some use of **birth control;** high infant mortality continues; many children placed in foundling homes; spreading practice of **wet-nursing**

Until late 17th century, **plague** sweeps through Europe every 10–15 years, spread by armies

ECONOMIES 1450–1600

1300s–1400s: Europe more united economically than ever before

- **Italian cities** Genoa and Venice trade European wool and metal for silk, cotton, and spices from China, India, and Persia
- **Textile** production and **surplus agriculture** provide goods for urban centers, fueling the Italian Renaissance
- **Banking,** borrowing, raising **capital** through mining monopolies fuels expanding economies
- Italian city Florence's **gold florin** becomes the standard currency for many European traders

1500s: Population and wealth of Europe increase, benefiting wealthy landowners but leading to inflation, less food, fewer jobs, higher taxes, wider gap between rich and poor

Age of Exploration leads to new maritime spice, silk, slave trade; **sea powers** Spain and Portugal grow rich importing silver and gold from the New World; Italian states decline from competition

- New wealth allows western Europe to buy grain from eastern Europe; land values in Poland rise, rents increase, leading small holders to reenter **serfdom** (losing freedom, gaining security)
- **1524–1525:** **Peasants' War** in Holy Roman Empire calls for end to serfdom, unfair taxation; based partly on Luther's Reformation teachings but condemned by Luther; revolt is suppressed

Townspople in western Europe gain freedoms from lords; generally could not be serfs

- **Largest European cities in 1500:** Constantinople, Naples, Milan, Paris, Venice
- Only about 15% of population lives in towns
- Small number of merchants, nobles, manufacturers dominate urban society; next are artisans; most in cities are laborers
- **Guilds** regulate artisan training, production, goods distribution

WARS OF RELIGION 1560–1650

France: Dynastic conflict intensifies wars of religion between **Huguenots** (French Protestants) and Catholics (1562–1598)

- Three successive weak kings and their mother, **Catherine de Medici**, try to maintain their independence between Catholic and Protestant competing factions
- **1572:** In **St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre**, thousands of Huguenots killed in Paris and throughout France; Protestants increase resistance to Catholic rule
- **1598:** Bourbon king **Henry IV** declares **Edict of Nantes**, a religious truce; official religion is Catholicism, but Protestants are granted freedoms

Netherlands: **Dutch** Protestants begin revolt against Catholic Spanish Habsburgs (1572)

- **1581:** Calvinist United Provinces (northern Netherlands) declare independence; southern Netherlands remain Catholic, loyal to Spain (Belgium and Luxembourg today)
- **1609:** Truce declared

Thirty Years' War (1618–1648): Most destructive war of religion

- Despite Peace of Augsburg, tensions rise in Holy Roman Empire between Catholics and Protestants, Calvinists and Lutherans
- **1618:** War begins in Bohemia (Czech region in Holy Roman Empire); dynastic conflicts draw in nearly all European countries (Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain, Netherlands)
- Armies grow large, cruel, undisciplined, live off the land; destructive war becomes the norm

1648: **Treaty of Westphalia** brings lasting peace, ends wars of religion, establishes many of today's European borders

- Calvinists gain legal recognition; German rulers still allowed to determine religion of their own territories
- Independence of **Swiss Confederation** and **United Provinces** (Netherlands) recognized
- Holy Roman Empire weakened; German states greatly damaged by war but maintain relative independence within Empire; German states **Austria** and **Brandenburg-Prussia** gain power
- France and Spain continue at war until 1659
- In 1650, 20% of Europeans are Protestant (decline from 1600)