

Chapter 12 – Recovery and Rebirth: The Renaissance

Meaning and Characteristics of the Renaissance

The Making of Renaissance Society

Economic Recovery

By 14th C., Italians were trading throughout the Mediterranean and up the Atlantic seaboard

Expansion of Trade

By 1500, over 80 North German towns had established the Hanseatic League (commercial and military)

Had a monopoly on trade in timber, fish, grain, metals, honey, and wine

Traded with the Venetian fleet at Bruges (Flanders/Belgium)

Industries Old and New

In the beginning of the 15th C., Florentine wool made a comeback

Italians began to produce luxury goods (silk, glassware, items using metals and gemstones)

New industries: printing, mining, and metallurgy (copper, iron, and silver)

Banking and the Medici

Medici family expanded from wool to commerce, real estate, and banking

Bank branches all over Europe; bankrolled the papacy

Operations collapsed at the end of the 1400s

Social Changes in the Renaissance

Social classes “inherited” from the Middle Ages

1st Estate: clergy

2nd Estate: nobility

3rd Estate: peasants and inhabitants of towns

The Nobility

Landowning nobles, both old and new, constituted 2-3% of the population

Served as military officers, government advisers

Their education prepared them for these roles

Handbook for noble behavior: Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*

Should exhibit character, grace, and talents

Should cultivate noble achievements (e.g., military and physical exercises)

Should have classical education, musical or artistic abilities

Peasants and Townspeople

Constituted 85-90% of the population (except in highly urbanized areas like Northern Italy and Flanders)

Was changing from serfdom to paid labor

In towns and cities, largely the *bourgeoisie* of merchants and artisans

Still had a class system

At the top were wealthy capitalists (in trade, industry, or banking)

Below them were shopkeepers, artisans, and guildmasters and members

At the bottom were the propertyless workers earning poor wages (30-40% of city dwellers)

But at the *very* bottom were slaves

Slavery in the Renaissance

In the cities, slaves were used as skilled workers for their masters

Most slaves were girls, often used as concubines (resulting in illegitimate children)

In the beginning, most were from E. Mediterranean or Black Sea region

That dried up when Ottomans took over Byzantine Empire

Portuguese exploration in the later 1400s brought African slaves to Europe

The Family in Renaissance Italy

Was extended (3 generations) and – for the rich – included servants

Provided security in a dangerous world

Marriage

Generally arranged to strengthen family or economic ties

Dowry was the price bride's family paid to marry off a daughter
Father-husband controlled the family, including wife and children
Maintained authority over children – sometimes into adulthood

Children

Wives in upper and middle class expected to stay at home with the children
Wealthier wives “continually” pregnant (could hire wet nurses)
Almost 50% of children died before adulthood

Sexual Norms

Arranged marriages frequently led to infidelity
Men had far more “sexual license” than women
Average age differential approached 13 years (she: 16-18; he: 30-40)
Large pool of unmarried young men led to extramarital sex and prostitution

Italian States

The Five Major States

Republic of Florence

Dominated the region of Tuscany
Governed by merchant oligarchy (usually a Medici)
Center of the cultural renaissance

Papal States

Renaissance popes (of the 15th C.) worked to regain control of the region

Kingdom of Naples

Fought over by France and Spain
Remained a backward monarchy throughout the renaissance

Independent City-States

Urbino

Ruled by Montefeltro family – who hired out as *condottiere* (mercenary soldiers)
Benevolent despot, great Renaissance patron

The Role of Women

Often, wives of rulers who were *condottiere* ruled in their (frequent) absences
Isabella d'Este (of Mantua) was educated, highly intelligent
Amassed a fine library, corresponded with princes, artists all over Europe

Warfare in Italy

Peace of Lodi (1454) created a “balance of power” that lasted 40 years
Milan-Florence-Naples vs. Venice-Papacy
Soon “major powers” (French and Spanish) intervened: Habsburg-Valois Wars
Sack of Rome in 1527 gave Spain control of much of Italy

The Birth of Modern Diplomacy

Fragile nature of Italian politics led to creation of relatively permanent ambassadors
ambassadors no longer represented “Christendom” but rather their own territory
practice spread to most of Europe

Machiavelli and the New Statecraft

Served Florence after expulsion of the Medici and during French intervention in Italian affairs
was exiled after Medici return

The Prince (1513)

Looked at politics as a way to restore and maintain order in Italian city-states
Rejected Medieval value of Christian morality for more “realistic” ethics
Understand human nature (“better to be feared than loved”)

The Intellectual Renaissance in Italy

Individualism and secularism best seen through Renaissance intellectual and artistic behavior

Italian Renaissance Humanism

Based on reading of ancient Greek and Roman authors
Studied their grammar, rhetoric, poetry, moral philosophy or ethics, and history (the “humanities”)

They were not clergy, but rather teachers/professors, government secretaries, or courtiers

The Emergence of Humanism

Petrarch (1304-1374) promoted Classical antiquity over Medieval scholasticism

Encouraged a return to Classical Latin

Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Italy

Florence developed “civic humanism”: civic spirit and pride over reflective solitude

Leonardo Bruni encouraged intellectual and moral participation in the life of the state

Lorenzo Valla worked to improve literary standards by returning to Classical Latin

Humanism and Philosophy

In later 1400s, Greeks, *especially Plato*, were in vogue

Marsilio Ficino dedicated his life to **Neoplatonism**

Hierarchy of substances (“great chain of being”)

Theory of spiritual love

Renaissance Hermeticism

Emphasis on occult sciences: astrology, alchemy, and magic

Pantheism: divinity embodied in all aspects of nature (Giordano Bruno: “God is in everything”)

Humans had escaped their divinity by entering the natural world

They could recapture their divinity through purification of the soul, often through sages or *magi*

Pico della Mirandola was a prominent magi

His *Oration on the Dignity of Man* suggested that human potential was unlimited

Education in the Renaissance

Humanism led to writings on education, establishment of secondary schools

“Liberal studies”

quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

history, moral philosophy, and the *trivium*: eloquence (rhetoric), letters (grammar and logic), poetry

teach virtue and wisdom and the rhetorical skills to persuade others to do the same

produce complete citizens for civic humanism

was open primarily to the elites

girls were taught history, riding, dancing, music, and appreciating poetry – but *not* mathematics and rhetoric

Was There a Renaissance for Women?

If so, only for upper-class women

Isotta Nogarola, Cassandra Fedele learned Latin and Greek, were active intellectually

Laura Cereta, educated by her father, defended woman’s rights to pursue scholarship

Humanism and History

The difference between the Classical Age and the Middle Ages led to a deeper analysis of history

(the Renaissance was a *new period* of time)

humanism moved away from God as the cause of history and toward humans

Guicciardini

His background was in government and diplomatic affairs

His books centered around military and political history

The Impact of Printing

Printing from wood blocks had been around since the twelfth century

Around 1450, **Johannes Gutenberg** added the idea of movable type, which cut down production time and cost

By 1500, there were more than 100 printers and 40,000 titles

Half were religious; other 50% was Latin & Greek classics, grammars, legal handbooks – even romances

Altered the nature of education, encouraged research

Artistic Renaissance

Art in the Early Renaissance

Giotto had begun the search to imitate the look of nature in painting in the 14th century

Masaccio used perspective in the first Renaissance “masterpiece”: frescoes for the Brancacci Chapel in Florence

Developed in two directions:

Mathematical side of perspective (example: Paolo Uccello)

Investigation of naturalistic movement and anatomical structure (example: Antonio Pollaiuolo)

Late 15th century under the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici

Sandro Botticelli, Donatello, Filippo Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti

Some reflected Roman mythology: *Primavera* by Botticelli, *David* by both Donatello and Michelangelo

Brunelleschi's architecture: Dome of Florence's cathedral, Church of San Lorenzo

Portraiture – in the corners of religious pictures, monumental tombs, by themselves, as statues

The Artistic High Renaissance

Centered in Rome, supported by the popes

Highlighted by da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo

Da Vinci, through his anatomical studies, worked to portray psychological aspects of his subjects

Raphael known for his idealized madonnas, and his sense of order (e.g., *School of Athens*)

Michelangelo (painter, sculptor, architect) was influenced by Neoplatonism (idealized, muscular bodies reflected divine, "God-like" figures)

In architecture, Bramante's *Tempietto* reflected glory and values of ancient Rome

The Artist and Social Status

Started as apprentices to masters in crafts guilds

Artists were viewed as artisans (skilled craftspeople)

By end of the 15th C., artists like Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael became known as artistic geniuses

Artists were measured more by creativity than craft

Eccentricities were tolerated

Began to be granted higher social status

The Northern Artistic Renaissance

More emphasis on technical skills

Less space in churches (think: Gothic stained-glass windows) led to smaller wood-panel altarpieces, more detail (large wall spaces in Italian churches spawned frescoes)

Center was in Flanders (now Belgium)

Jan van Eyck was the first to use oil paint

Did not use perspective but rather careful observation

Paintings often showed more emotional intensity of religious feeling

Some Northern painters visited Italy and brought back styles, techniques

Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg (Germany)

Music in the Renaissance

Music ceased to be just for church service

It moved into the secular world; madrigals were often set to 12-line secular poems

The European State in the Renaissance

During the early 1400s, states continued to "deteriorate"

During the later 1400s, attempts were made to centralize the power of the monarchy

Sometimes called **new monarchies**

The Growth of the French Monarchy

Hundred Years' War had devastated France – BUT it had increased a sense of French nationalism

Charles VII's moves

Established a royal army

Got the Estates-General to grant hi the right to impose a *taille* (tax on land or property) in perpetuity

Increased the power of the monarchy, lessened the power of the legislature

Louis XI (The "Spider") added territory after the death of a rival

England: Civil War and a New Monarchy

Hundred Years' War strained the English economy, brought civil strife

Popularly known as the Wars of the Roses, it was a civil war between the Houses of Lancaster and York

Henry Tudor (a Lancaster) finally defeated Richard III (a Yorkist) and established the Tudor dynasty

Henry VII's moves

Abolished "livery and maintenance" (private armies)

Established Court of Star Chamber, used appointed judge (with no jury) and allowed torture

Good at raising revenue: judicial fees and fines, customs duties
By avoiding costly war (though diplomacy) he needed Parliament less

The Unification of Spain

Iberian peninsula made up of several independent monarchies
Aragon (of Ferdinand), Castile (of Isabella), Portugal
In the north: Navarre (leaned toward France)
In the south: Muslim kingdom of Granada
In 1469, Catherine and Ferdinand married
Retained their own kingdoms with courts, laws, coinage, speech, customs, and politics
Each looked to centralize government functions
Built one of the strongest armies in Europe by the 16th century
Worked with the rich and powerful Catholic Church to increase their own power
Able to select Spanish church officials (creating, in effect, a Spanish Catholic Church)
Imposed “religious unity” – reversing traditional tolerance of Jews and Muslims
Pressured Jews to convert, and then mistrusted them when they did
In 1478, asked the pope for a Spanish Inquisition
In 1492, the **reconquista** took Muslim Granada and expelled the Jews from Spain

The Holy Roman Empire: The Success of the Habsburgs

HRE never developed a strong monarchy
The Habsburg family controlled the largest area (known collectively as Austria) within the HRE
By dynastic marriage, they gained control of Franch-Comté, Luxembourg, and most of the low Countries
Maximilian I (r. 1493-519) tried to centralize government
German princes successfully fought it
His son (Philip) married the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella
His son, Charles, ended up inheriting both Spain and the Habsburg lands
Now surrounded by Habsburg territory, France became a sworn enemy

The Struggle for a Strong Monarchy in Eastern Europe

Great difficulties centralizing power in Eastern Europe
Religious differences: Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and pagan populations
Polish nobles established the right to elect the king
Hungary saw a “Golden Era” in the late 1400s
Power of an individual – Matthias Corvinus – established a “renaissance” kingdom
Patronized humanistic culture, brought Italians into his court
After his death, it was mostly gone
In Russia, Ivan III created the principality of Moscow

The Ottoman Turks and the End of the Byzantine Empire

Byzantine Empire (capital: Constantinople) had been a buffer between Europe and the Ottoman Turks
Beginning in the 13th century, the Ottoman Turks began capturing territory
1345: they moved past Constantinople into the Balkans
1389: they defeated the Serbs at the Battle of Kosovo
1453: conquered Constantinople
1476: took the Romanian territory of Wallachia

The Church in the Renaissance

1417: the Great Schism (separation of the Church into factions supporting 2 – or 3 – different popes at once) ended

The Problems of Heresy and Reform

Though the inquisitions tried to stop them, two heretical movements threaten the Church’s powers

Wyclif and Lollardy

Englishman **John Wyclif** (1328-1384) was disgusted with the corruption of the clergy
Said there was no Biblical support for papal authority – so strip them church of their property
Because the Bible should be sole authority, he translated it into the vernacular (English) to be read
Condemned all sorts of church tradition: e.g., pilgrimages, veneration of saints
His followers were called Lollards

Hus and Hussites

Lollard ideas spread to Bohemia (now Czech Republic) through royal marriage

Reached the chancellor of the university in Prague, **Jan** (John) **Hus**

Hus attacked the corruption of the clergy and the excessive power of the pope

Struck a chord with Bohemians, who already felt this way because of the church's enormous land holdings
(also, many of the clergy were from hated Germany)

1415: Hus was summoned to a church council, where he was arrested, condemned, and burned at the stake

Hussites turned revolutionary until a truce was arranged in 1436

Reform of the Church

Efforts to reform were even less successful than efforts to get rid of heresy

Conciliar movement: Council of Constance passed two decrees

Sacrosancta: the council received its authority from God; therefore *every* Christian was to obey

Frequens: councils would convene at regular intervals

Popes didn't enforce the decrees (obviously, as they limited their power)

1460: Pope Pius II issued *Execrabilis*, which condemned the councils

Catholic Church prestige was severely damaged and secular governments no longer felt obligated to obey

The Renaissance Papacy

Papal response to the Renaissance was uneven, sometimes shocking

Julius II (1503-1513) was deeply involved in war and politics

As "warrior-pope" he led armies against his opponents

For support (the papacy is not dynastic) they relied on nepotism, granting authority to relatives

Sixtus IV made five nephews cardinals and built up their wealth

Alexander VI (known for sin and sensuality) made a son, a nephew, and the brother of a mistress cardinals

Even encouraged his son Cesare to take some of the Papal lands for himself

They were, however, also great patrons of the arts

Julius II wanted to build a new Basilica of St. Peter in Rome

Leo X (son of Lorenzo de' Medici) supported Raphael