

Renaissance and discovery

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Renaissance and Discovery I The Renaissance in Italy A. The renaissance was the period when people began to adopt a rational and statistical approach to reality and rediscovered the worth and creativity of the individual. Most scholars agree that the Renaissance (which means " rebirth" in French) was a transition from medieval to modern times. Before the change, Europe was a fragmented feudal society with an agricultural economy with a church who dominated their thoughts and culture. Once the change happened, Europe was a growing nation, an urban economy, and people had new opinions on thought, culture, and religion.

The Italian Renaissance began with the deaths of Petrarch (the " father" of humanism) and Boccaccio (author of the Decameron). With that, the Florentine humanist culture spread through Italy and into northern Europe. Scholars considered 'civic humanism' describe the coalescence of humanism and civic reform. 1 . The Renaissance first shaped up within the merchant cities of late medieval Italy. Italy had a cultural advantage over the rest of Europe because it had a natural gateway between East and West.

Once commerce revived on a large scale, their merchants quickly mastered the business skills in organization, book keeping, cutting new markets, and securing monopolies. The trade-rich cities became powerful city-states and dominated the political and economic life around the area. The endemic warfare spawned assisted the growth of Italian cities and urban culture. The factions might have subdued the cities as they permitted each other to concentrate on. Instead, they decided to weaken each other which strengthened the merchant oligarchies of the cities.

Unlike cities which were dominated by kings and princes, the Italian cities remained free to expand their own. Five major, competitive states evolved: the duchy of Milan, the republics of Florence and Venice, the Papal States, and the kingdom of Naples. Social strife and competition for political power intensified that most evolved into despotisms in order to survive. Florence was the best example of social division and anarchy. Four social groups existed within the city; the old rich, or grand, the nobles, and merchants who ruled the city.

In the late 13th and early 14th centuries they began to challenge the old rich for political power. In 1457 about 30, 000 people were officially considered paupers, which meant having no wealth at all. These divisions caused conflict to every level of society which added to fear of foreign intrigue. True stability did not return until the ascent to power of the Florentine banker and statesman in 1434. Medici was the wealthiest Florentine and natural statesman who controlled the city internally behind the scenes, manipulating the constitution and influencing elections.

A council which was known as the Signoria governed the city, these men were chosen from the most powerful guilds representing the major clothing industries, or other groups like bankers, judges, and doctors. Medici was able to keep councilors loyal to him in the Signoria. His grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent ruled Florence in almost totalitarian fashion during the last chaotic quarter of the 15th century. To prevent internal social conflict and foreign intrigue from stopping their cities, the dominant groups installed their strongmen or despots. Their purpose was to maintain law and order.

Since despots couldn't count on the loyalty of the populace, they worked through mercenary armies through military brokers known as condottieri. Not only was a despot subject to dismissal by oligarchies which hired him, but he was also a popular object of assassination attempts. Most city-states' ambassadors not only represented them in ceremonies and negotiations, but became their watchful eyes and ears at rival courts. Such widespread support occurred because of the main requirement for patronage of the arts and letters was what Italian cities had in abundance: great wealth. . Some scholars believe humanists were the champions of Catholic Christianity, opposed to the pagan teachings of Aristotle and the Scholasticism his writings nurtured. To others, it was a neutral form of historical scholarship adopted to promote above all sense of responsibility and political liberty. Humanism was the study of the Latin and Greek classics and the ancient Church Fathers for its own sake and in hope of reviving respect for ancient norms and values. The Florentine Leonardo Bruni gave the name humanists to the learning that resulted from scholarly pursuits.

Bruni was a star student of Manuel Chrysoloras, the Byzantine scholar who opened the world of Greek scholarship to humanists when he taught in Florence. The first humanists were orators and poets who wrote original literature in classical and vernacular languages inspired by and modeled on the newly discovered works of the ancients. The study of classical and Christian antiquity existed before the Italian Renaissance. These precedents only partially compared with the achievements of the Italian Renaissance of the 14th/15th centuries.

Unlike their Scholastic rivals, humanists were less bound to recent tradition; nor did they focus their attention on summarizing and comparing the views of recognized authorities. Italian humanists made the full riches of Greek and Latin antiquity available to contemporary scholars. Petrarch was the "father of humanism." He was involved in a popular revolt in Rome and served the Visconti family in Milan. His most famous contemporary work was a collection of highly introspective love sonnets to a certain Laura, who was a married woman he romantically admired from a distance.

His critical textual studies, elitism, and contempt for the learning of the Scholastics were later shared by humanists. He was far more secular in orientation than his near-contemporary Dante Alighieri. He had also been an avid collector of manuscripts and also assembled an encyclopedia of Greek and Roman mythology. The goal of humanist studies was wisdom eloquently spoken, both knowledge of the good and the ability to move others to sire it. Poggio Bracciolini left a summary of the humanist concept of a liberal education. The ideal of a useful education and well rounded people inspired far-reaching reforms in traditional education.

Vittorino da Feltre exemplified the ideals of humanist teaching. He had his students read the difficult works of various writers and subjected his students to vigorous physical exercise and games. Baldassarre Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* illustrates, the rediscovered knowledge of the past was a model and a challenge to the present. The successful courtier is to be one who knows how to integrate knowledge of ancient languages and history

with athletic, military, and musical skills, while at the same time practicing good manners and exhibiting a high moral character.

After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, many Greek scholars fled to Florence for refuge. This became the background against which the Florentine Platonic Academy evolved under the patronage of Cosmic De' Medici and the vision of Amarillo Fiction and Pico Della Miranda. Renaissance thinkers were attracted to the Platonic tradition and to those Church Fathers who tried to synthesize Platonic philosophy with Christian teaching. The appeal of Platonism lay in its flattering view of human nature.

It's distinguished between an eternal sphere of being and the perishable world in which humans lived. Strong Platonic influence is evident in Picot's Oration on the Dignity of Man. Pico wrote the Oration as an introduction to his pretentious collection of nine hundred theses. Palpation's teaching depicted humans as the only creatures in the world who possessed the freedom to be whatever they chose and be at will to rise to the heights of angels. The humanists could become critics of tradition even when that was not their intention.

Dispassionate critical scholarship shook long standing foundations, not at the least of which were those of the medieval church. Lorenz Villa revealed the explosive character of the new learning. Although a Catholic, he became a hero to Protestant reformers. Humanists believed education should promote individual virtue and public service, hence civic humanism. Toward the end of the Renaissance, many humanists became cliquish and snobbish, and intellectual elite more concerned with narrow scholarly interests and writing

pure, classical Latin than with revitalization civic and social life. . In Renaissance Italy, the values and interests of the laity were no longer subordinated to those of the clergy. This development was due in part to the church's loss of international power during the great crises of the late Middle Ages. This new perspective on life is prominent in the painting and sculpture of the high Renaissance when art and sculpture reached their full maturity. Renaissance artists were helped by the development of new technical skills during the 15th century in addition to the availability of new materials.

Leonardo da Vinci was a true master of many skills and one of the greatest painters of all time. His inventive mind foresaw modern machines as airplanes and submarines. Raphael was a man of kindness and a painter of great sensitivity, he is famous for his tender Madonna's and the great fresco in the Vatican which was a perfect example of Renaissance technique. Michelangelo excelled in a variety of arts and crafts. His David showed a great example of Renaissance devotion to harmony, symmetry, and proportion, all serving the glorification of the human form.

His works were later more complex and suggested deep personal changes which marked artistically and philosophically, the passing of High Renaissance painting and the advent of a new style. 4. Throughout the Renaissance, slavery flourished just as extravagantly as art and culture did. Contemporaries looked on such slavery as a merciful act since their captors would otherwise have killed the captives. After the Black Death reduced the supply of laborers, the demand for slaves became higher. Slaves were

imported from Africa, the Balkans, Constantinople, Cyprus, Crete, and the lands surrounding the Black Sea.

Owners had complete dominion over their slaves which meant the power to " have, hold, sell, alienate, exchange, enjoy, rent or UN-rent, dispose of in their wills, edge soul and body, and do with in perpetuity whatsoever may please them and their heirs and no man may gainsay them. " Tartars and Africans appeared to have been the worst treated but in ancient Greece and Rome, slaves were generally accepted as family members and integrated into households. Not few women slaves became mothers of their masters' children.

Fathers often adopted children of such unions and raised them as their legitimate heirs. Slaves remained a foreign and suspected presence in Italian society as uprooted and resentful people. B. Italy's Political Decline: The French Invasions (1494-1527) . Italy had always relied on internal cooperation for its peace and safety from foreign invasion (by the Turks). This was maintained during the second half of the fifteenth century thanks to an alliance known as the Treaty of Load. Around 1490 hostilities between Milan and Naples resumed.

The peace that the Treaty of Load made possible ended in 1494 when Naples threatened Milan. Ludicrous made made a fatal response to these political alignments by appealing to the French for aid. Breaking an Italian rule, he invited the French to re-enter Italy and revive their dynastic claim to Naples. He hadn't noticed that France also had dynastic claims to Milan or how there would be more French territory once they encamped in Italy. 2. The French

king Louis XII resisted the temptation to invade Italy while keeping French dynastic claims in Italy alive.

Such appeasement only brought about Piero's exile by a citizenry that was revolutionized by a radical Dominican preacher (Savonarola). Savonarola convinced the fearful Florentine that the French king's arrival was a long-delayed and fully justified divine vengeance on their immorality. This allowed Charles to enter Florence without resistance. In the end, the Florentine proved not to be the stuff theocracies are made of. After the Italian cities reunited and ousted the French invader, Savonarola's days were numbered. Eventually he was imprisoned and executed. Ludicrously, the Moor desired a French invasion only so long as it weakened his enemies, he saw events created by himself which threatened Milan. In reaction, he joined the League of Venice which was strong enough to send Charles into retreat and end the menace he posed to Italy. 3. The French returned to Italy under Charles's successor, Louis XII. Probably the most corrupt pope who ever sat on the papal throne, he openly promoted the political careers of Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia.

In Rome the pope's ally within the League of Venice continued to contest the Papal States for their loyalty. Seeing that French alliance would allow him to reestablish control, Alexander secured French favor. He annulled Louis XI's marriage to Charles VIII's sister so he could marry Charles's widow (Anne of Brittany). Most important Alexander agreed to abandon the League of Venice. In exchange, Cesare Borgia received the sister of the king of France.

Cesar also received land grants from Louis XII and the promise of French military aid in Roman.

All was a scandalous trade-off that made it possible for the French king and the pope to realize their ambitions within Italy. In 1500 Louis and Ferdinand of Aragon divided Naples between them and the pope and Cesar Boring conquered the cities of Roman without opposition. Alexander victorious son was given the title " duke of Roman. " 4. Cardinal Giuliani Della Rover succeeded Alexander VI as Pope Julius II. Julius raised the Renaissance papacy to its peak of military prowess and diplomatic intrigue, gaining him the title of " warrior pope. This humorous account purported to describe the pope's unsuccessful efforts to convince Saint Peter that he was worthy of admission to Heaven. Pop Julius drove the Venetians out of Roman and fully secured the Papal States. Realizing this long sought papal goal, he turned to the second major undertaking of his pontificate: ridding Italy of his former ally, the French invader. The French were nothing besides persistent. They invaded Italy a third time under Louse's successor, Francis I. The victory won the Concordat of Bologna from the pope in August 1516.

This concordat helped keep France Catholic after the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation, but the new French entry into Italy set the stage for the first of four major wars with Spain in the first half of the sixteenth century. 5. The foreign invasions made shambles out of Italy. Machiavelli was more convinced through the more he saw. He became the Italian political unity and independence were ends which justified any means. Machiavelli was impressed by the way Roman rulers and citizens defended their

homeland. They possessed the ability to act decisively and heroically for the good of their country.

Such romanticizes of the Roman past exaggerated both ancient virtue and contemporary failings. He also held republican ideals which he didn't want to vanish from Italy. He believed a strong and determined people could struggle successfully with fortune. He scolded the Italian people for the self-destruction their own internal feuding was causing. He wanted an end to that behavior so a reunited Italy could drive all foreign armies out. It's been argued that he wrote *The Prince* as a cynical satire on the way rulers behave and not as a serious recommendation of unprincipled despotic rule.

But Machiavelli seems to have been in earnest when he advised rulers to discover the advantages of fraud and brutality. He apparently hoped to see a strong ruler emerge from the Medici family which had captured the papacy with the pontificate. At the same time, they retained control over the powerful territorial state in Florence. *The Prince* was pointedly dedicated to Lorenz De' Medici, duke of Robin, and grandson of Lorenz the Magnificent. The second Medici pope watched helplessly as the army of Emperor Charles V sacked Rome was also the year of Machiavellian death.