

The Renaissance

- “rebirth”; transition from medieval to modern times
 - ◆ Medieval Europe (pre-12th c.)
 - ◆ fragmented, feudal society
 - ◆ agricultural economy
 - ◆ church-dominated thought, culture
 - ◆ Renaissance Europe (post-14th c.)
 - ◆ political centralization, national feelings
 - ◆ urban, commercial-capitalist economy
 - ◆ growing lay/secular control of thought & culture

The Italian Renaissance (1375–1527)

- beginning: deaths of Petrarch (“father of humanism”) & Boccaccio
- end: sack of Rome by Spanish imperial soldiers, 1527
- spread of “civic humanism” (humanism + civic reform) through northern Europe
- Italian city-states: Milan, Florence, Venice, Papal States, Naples—prosperous urban centers of trade & commerce

The Italian City-State

- left to develop by endemic warfare between popes & Holy Roman emperors
- characterized by intense social strife & competition for political power
- social classes: old rich, new rich, small business owners, poor
- Cosimo de' Medici—Florentine banker & statesman
- despots hired by many city states to keep order, usually with mercenary armies obtained through military brokers called *condottieri*
- art & culture flourished nonetheless, because of the profusion of wealth

Humanism

- the scholarly study of Greek & Latin classics and the ancient Church Fathers, in hopes of reviving worthy ancient values
- advocated *studia humanitatis*: liberal arts study (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, politics, philosophy)—to celebrate the dignity of humankind & prepare for life of virtuous action
- Italian humanists searched out manuscript collections, making volumes of Greek & Latin learning available to scholars

Revival of Greek Studies

- educational reforms guided by ideals of useful education & well-rounded person
- Florentine “Academy”—not a formal school, but gathering of influential Florentine humanists devoted to reviving Plato & the Neoplatonists
- Platonism: flattering view of human reason as part of the ideal (eternal) world, versus the real (perishable) world; human freedom
- humanist critical scholarship: Lorenzo Valla exposes *Donation of Constantine* as forgery

Renaissance Art

- embraced natural world & human emotion
- works characterized by rational order, symmetry, proportionality; addition of *linear perspective* (3-D look)
- Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519): lived Renaissance ideal of the universal person: painter, advisor to kings, engineer, physiologist, botanist, etc.; *Mona Lisa*
- Raphael (1483–1520): large Vatican fresco: *The School of Athens*
- Michelangelo (1475–1564): 18-foot sculpture of David; Sistine Chapel frescoes—10,000 sq. ft., 343 figures, 4 years to complete

The French Invasions (1494–1527)

- French king Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) storms through Italy when invited by ruler of Milan in hopes of weakening Naples; later driven back out
- Pope Alexander VI: corrupt member of Borgia family, children Cesare & Lucrezia
- Louis XII (r. 1498–1515): allies with Alexander and takes Milan & part of Naples
- Pope Julius II: “warrior pope” drives French out again
- Francis I (r. 1515–1547): third French invasion
- leads to Italian political decline & Habsburg-Valois (Spanish-French) wars of first half 16th c., all French losses

Niccolò Machiavelli

(1469–1527)

- convinced by chaos of foreign invasions that Italian political unity & independence were ends justifying any means; concluded only a strongman could impose order on a divided & selfish people (Italians)
- admirer of Roman rulers & citizens
- *virtù*: ability to act heroically & decisively for the good of one's country
- *The Prince* (1513): recommends temporary use of fraud & brutality to achieve Italian unity; hoped for strong ruler from the Medici family

Revival of Monarchy

- after 1450, divided feudal monarchies → unified national monarchies
- rise of towns, alliance of growing business classes with kings—broke bonds of feudal society
- the **sovereign** state: powers of taxation, war making, law enforcement no longer reside with semiautonomous vassals, but with monarch & royal agents; taxes, wars, laws become national rather than regional matters

Revival of Monarchy (cont.)

- France: two cornerstones of 15th-c. nation-building:
 - ◆ collapse of English Empire in France after Hundred Years' War, 1453
 - ◆ defeat of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, 1477—perhaps strongest political power in Europe at the time
 - ◆ Charles VII (r. 1422–1461), Louis XI (r. 1461–1483)—doubled territory
- Spain: 1469 marriage of Isabella of Castile & Ferdinand of Aragon
 - ◆ together secured borders, ventured abroad militarily, Christianized Spain
 - ◆ brought Spanish church under state control, ended toleration of Jews & Muslims
 - ◆ sponsored Christopher Columbus, leading to Spanish Empire in Mexico & Peru, helping make Spain the dominant European power in 16th c.

Revival of Monarchy (cont.)

- England
 - ◆ turmoil of **Wars of the Roses**, 1455–1485 (Lancaster vs. York)
 - ◆ 1485 Battle of Bosworth Field seats Henry VII, first Tudor monarch
 - ◆ Henry brings nobles to heel with special royal court, the Star Chamber
- Holy Roman Empire: Germany & Italy exceptions to 15th-c. centralizing trend
 - ◆ the many (princes) fought off the one (emperor)
 - ◆ divided into some 300 autonomous entities
 - ◆ 1356 Golden Bull between Emperor Charles IV & major territorial rulers: established seven-member electoral college; elected emperor & provided some transregional unity; imperial *Reichstag* created

The Northern Renaissance

- northern humanists: more interested than Italians in religious reform & educating laity
- **printing press** with movable type: Johann Gutenberg, Mainz, mid-15th c.
 - ◆ precursors: rise of schools & literacy (demand for books); invention of cheap paper
 - ◆ by 1500, printing presses running in more than 200 cities in Europe
 - ◆ rulers in church & state now had to deal with more educated, critical public; also powerful tool of religious/political propaganda

Humanism & Reform

- Catholic humanist reformers pave the way for Protestantism
- Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536): most famous northern humanist; Catholic educational & religious reformer
- Germany: Reuchlin controversy—humanists defend Christian scholar of Judaism on grounds of academic freedom
- England: Thomas More (1478–1535), best-known English humanist; *Utopia* (1516)
- France: Guillaume Budé, Jacques Lefèvre
- Spain: humanism in service of Catholic Church; Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros: Grand Inquisitor, founder of University of Alcalá, biblical scholar

Exploration & Empire, East & West

- Portuguese: exploration of African coast, leading to sea-route around Africa to Asian spice markets; African slave trade
 - ◆ Bartholomew Dias: rounded Cape of Good Hope
 - ◆ Vasco de Gama: reached India
- Columbus, 1492: thought Cuba was Japan & South America China
- Amerigo Vespucci, 1497: explored South American coastline
- Ferdinand Magellan (d. 1521), 1519–1522: first circumnavigation
- consequences: 300+ years of overseas Spanish empire; Europe's largest and longest-lived trading bloc; biological impact of exchanging plant & animal species, diseases; Native American devastation

Spanish Empire in the New World

- the **Aztecs** of Mexico – group of Native Americans who ruled all of central Mexico
 - ◆ believed in human sacrifice
 - ◆ **Hernan Cortes** – Spanish conqueror of the Aztecs – at first attempt to make peace with the Aztecs, then is defeated by the Aztecs and then eventually turns around and conquers the Aztecs
 - ◆ Aztec leader **Moctezuma** is killed
- the **Incas** of Peru – large Native American empire in Western South America conquered by **Francisco Pizarro** who executes their leader **Atahualpa** – later the Europeans spread horrible diseases to the Native Americans

The Church in Spanish America

- the conquerors wanted to convert the captured native people to Christianity and to accept European culture
- some religious leaders felt the natives were being treated poorly such as **Bartolome de Las Casas**
- despite the opposition the Roman Catholic Church becomes one of the most powerful conservative forces in Latin America

Latin America Exploitation

- mining – the Spanish **conquistadores** or conquerors mined gold and silver with forced labor
- agriculture – on **haciendas**, large land estates owned by the peninsulares (people born in Spain) and creoles (people of Spanish descent born in America) used forced labor for mining, farming and ranching
- plantations in the West Indies used slaves to get sugar
- economic activity in government offices, the legal profession, and shipping
- labor servitude in order of appearance
 - ◆ **encomienda** – a formal grant of the right to the labor of a specific number of Indians
 - ◆ **repartimiento** – required adult male Indians to devote a certain number of days of labor annually to Spanish economic enterprises
 - ◆ **debt peonage** – Indian laborers required to purchase goods from the landowner to whom they were forever indebted
 - ◆ black slavery

Impact in Europe

- at first condemned for the treatments of the native populations, **Columbus** and other explorers are hailed 300 years later for opening up the world to new civilizations
- influx of spices and precious metals increases inflation in Europe
- new wealth however increased the expansion of printing, shipping, mining, textile, and weapons industries