



The Evolution of the Italian Renaissance

- *How do we define “Renaissance”?*
 - Rebirth of the culture of classical antiquity in Italy during the 14th to 16th centuries.



Communes & Republics

- *What advantages did Northern Italian cities have going into the 14th century?*
- **Communes:** Associations of free men in Italian cities led by merchant guilds that sought political and economic independence from local nobles.
 - New social class: Urban nobility



Communes & Republics

- **Popolo**: Disenfranchised common people in Italian cities who resented their exclusion from power.
 - Majority of men did not qualify for citizenship in the communes
 - Movements for Republican governments failed
- In the 15th century, political power and elite culture centered on the princely courts:
 - **Signori**: one-man rulers
 - **Oligarchies**: the rule of merchant aristocracies

Balance of power: Italian City-States

- *Why did Renaissance Italians struggle to develop one unified state?*
- Renaissance Italians held loyalty for individual city-states.
 - Venice, Milan, Florence, the Papal States, and Naples
 - **French invasion (1494)**



MAP 12.1 The Italian City-States, ca. 1494
Chapter 12. *A History of Western Society*, Twelfth Edition
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Balance of power: Italian City-States

- **Patronage:** Financial support of writers and artists by cities, groups, and individuals, often to produce specific works or works in specific styles.
 - Interconnection of economics, politics, and culture
 - The Medici family & Florence (1434-1494)



Intellectual Hallmarks of the Renaissance

- **Humanism**: emphasis on the critical study of Latin and Greek literature with the goal of understanding human nature.
 - Focus on the individual → **glory**
- **Virtù**: The quality of being able to shape the world according to one's own will.



Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374)

Education

- Humanists believed that studying the classics would provide essential skills → politicians, businessmen, artists, etc.
 - Education for public good
- Humanist academics not open to **women**.
 - Baldassare Castiglione's The Courtier (1528) → education for how men and women should behave



Political Thought



- Medieval political theory → good government provides justice, law, and order.
- Renaissance → **Civic Humanism**
 - Intellectual's civic duty to be involved in politics and help the community.
- **Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513)**
 - Realistic view on life & politics.
 - *"It is much safer for the prince to be feared than loved, but he ought to avoid making himself hated"*



Niccolò Machiavelli
(1469-1527)

The Renaissance in the north

- **Christian Humanists:**
Northern humanists who interpreted Italian ideas about and attitudes toward classical antiquity and humanism in terms of their own religious traditions.
 - Thomas More (English)
 - Desiderius Erasmus (Dutch)



The Printed Word

- *How did the invention of the printing press contribute to spread of humanist ideas?*
- **Johann Gutenberg (Germany) → 1440s**
 - Moveable metal type
 - *Gutenberg Bible (1456)*
- 15th century saw increase in urban literacy
 - Larger market for reading material
 - Government & church censorship



Changing Artistic Styles

- The individual portrait emerged as a distinct genre (human ideals)
 - Giotto (1276–1337) → use of **realism** & the human body
 - Donatello (1386–1466) revived the classical figure → balance and **self-awareness**.
- Early sixteenth century, the center of the new art shifted from Florence to Rome.
 - Popes expended huge sums of money to beautify the city.



Michelangelo's, *Last Judgement*

The Artist

- The notion of artistic genius was gendered
 - Most famous and most prolific Renaissance artists were male
 - Women’s art seen as “minor” or decorative”
- Several women became well-known painters
 - Daughters of painters/noblemen
 - **Restricted** subjects
 - Artistic workshops were male-only



Sofonisba Anguissola, *The Chess Game*, 1555

Northern Renaissance

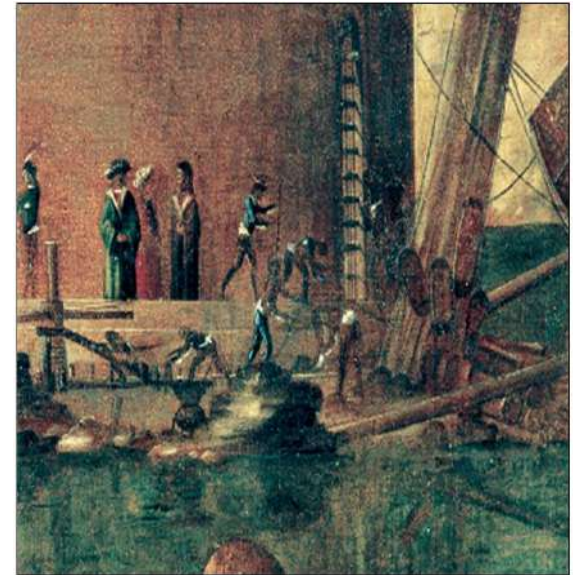
- The Northern Renaissance retained a more religious focus.
 - Resulted in more human centered **Naturalism**.
 - Realism & attention to the human personality
 - Everyday life & the natural world



Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434)

Social Hierarchies: Race

- Renaissance ideas “race” → blood”.
 - Little consideration of different ethnicities
- Europeans had little knowledge of Africans and their cultures.
 - Knowledge based on theology
→ white = God’s light & black = devil/sin



Social Hierarchies: Class

- During the Renaissance the inherited hierarchy of social orders was interwoven with a hierarchy based on wealth.
 - Social status → **honor**.
 - Cities had the most complex and dynamic social hierarchies.



Social Hierarchies: Gender

- The Renaissance witnessed a debate about the character and nature of women.
 - The “*debate about women*”
 - Female rulers (16th Century)
- Shaped the actions and options of Renaissance people.
 - Symbol for the maintenance of a well-functioning



Pre-Renaissance State Building

- The High Middle Ages saw the beginnings of the modern state
 - Juries
 - Representative assemblies
 - Sheriffs
- State building required a strong monarchy.
 - Absent during 100 Years' War
 - No effective leadership across Europe

France



- *What problems did France face going into the mid. 15th century?*
- **Charles VII (r. 1422-1461)**
 - Created the first permanent royal army in Europe.
 - **Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges:** Superiority of a general council over the papacy
- **King Francis I & Pope Leo X (1516)**
 - Concordat of Bologna: Pope gets \$\$\$ → King appoints church officials



England

- *What problems did England face going into the mid. 15th century?*
- **War of the Roses (1455-1471)**
 - The houses of Lancaster vs. the houses of York.
- **Henry VII** distrusted the nobility
 - The Tudors gained support of **upper-middle class** by promoting peace and social order
 - Promoted diplomacy and trade to build economic strength
 - **The Court of Star Chamber**: Judicial offshoot of the royal council.



Spain



- **Ferdinand of Aragon & Isabella of Castile** (r. 1474-1516)

- Dynastic union of two royal houses
- Restructured the royal council to curb aristocratic power.
- Still conglomerate of independent kingdoms.

- **Spanish Inquisition**

- Used by the crown as a politically unifying tool
- 1492: All practicing Jews expelled from Spain

