

# The Renaissance

## AP World History Unit 1.2

*Note: While many AP courses cover the entire Renaissance from 1300-1600, the AP exam will only cover information after 1450.*

## Renaissance (c. 1300-1600)

1. Occurred first in Italy around 1300 and lasted until the mid-16th century
2. Renaissance spread to Northern Europe around 1450  
How did it spread?
  - humanist universities
  - travel and tourism
  - trade
3. In England, the Renaissance did not begin until the 16th century and lasted until the early 17th century (Shakespeare)

### C. Origins of Renaissance:

- 19th century historian **Jacob Burckhardt** claimed the Renaissance period was in distinct contrast to the Middle Ages





*Europe in the Renaissance*

# II. Rise of the Italian City-States

A. Northern Italian cities developed international trade: Genoa, Venice, Milan

1. **Signori** (despots) or **oligarchies** (rule of merchant aristocracies) controlled much of Italy by 1300
2. **Commenda**: Contract between merchant and “merchant-adventurer” who agreed to take goods to distant locations and return with the proceeds (for 1/3 of profits)
3. As a result, Italy became more urban: more towns and cities with significant populations than anywhere else in Europe at this time

B. Politics among the Italian City-States

1. Competition among city-states meant that Italy did not unify politically
  - a. In effect, an early balance-of-power pattern emerged where weaker states would ally with other states to prevent a single state from dominating the peninsula
  - b. The political disunity of the Italian city-states led to their downfall in the late-15th and early 16th centuries when French and Spanish armies invaded Italy.
2. **Condottieri**: Mercenary generals of private armies hired by cities for military purposes

C. Major city-states and figures

1. **Republic of Florence** (Included Republic of Genoa)
  - a. Dominated by the **Medici family**
  - b. **Cosimo de' Medici** (1389-1464): allied with other powerful families of Florence and became unofficial ruler of the republic (WATCH documentary – link on website)
  - c. **Lorenzo de' Medici (the “Magnificent”)** (1449-1492): significant patron of the arts (son of Cosimo)



Marquisate of Saluzzo

Marquisate of Montferrat

Bishopric of Trent

Marquisate of Mantua

Republic of Lucca

Duchies of Modena & Ferrara





*Cosimo de' Medici*





*Lorenzo de' Medici*

## 2. **Duchy of Milan** – ruled by **Sforza** family after 1450

– Milan was a principal adversary of Venice and Florence until the Peace of Lodi (1454) created a relative 40-year period of peace among the Italian city-states

## 3. **Rome, the Papal States**

– Popes served both as religious and political leaders; controlled much of central Italy

## 4. **Venice, Venetian Republic**

a. Longest lasting of the Italian states (did not succumb to foreign powers until Napoleon conquered it in the early 1800s)

b. One of the world's great naval and trading powers during the 14th and 15th centuries.

## 5. **Naples, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies**

a. Included south Italian region of Naples and the island of Sicily

b. Only Italian city-state to officially have a “king”

c. Controlled by France between 1266-1435

d. Controlled by Spain after 1435



## D. Decline of the Italian city-states

### 1. French invasions began in 1494 (“First Italian War”)

a. Milan’s despot, Ludovico “the Moor,” encouraged French King **Charles VIII** to invade Naples, the traditional enemy of Milan

b. This was the beginning of foreign invasions throughout the Italian peninsula

### 2. Florence

a. When Florence attempted to appease France during its invasion in 1494, it led to the overthrow of the Medici family

– Although the Medici family returned to power several years later, Florence by then was severely weakened



*Charles VIII of France*





*Rome during the Renaissance*

b. **Girolamo Savonarola** became the unofficial leader of Florence between 1494-1498

- Pledged to rid Florence of its decadence and corruption
- In effect, oversaw a theocracy in Florence
- He had earlier predicted the French invasions due to paganism and moral decay in the Italian city-states became a puppet of the French
- When France was removed from Italy in 1498, Savonarola was imprisoned and then burned at the stake

3. Italy became a battleground in a series of power struggles between Spain and France

- Spanish fears of a French-Italian alliance resulted in Spain's alliance with Venice, the Papal States, and the Holy Roman Empire



4. **Niccolo Machiavelli** (1469-1527) – *The Prince* (1513)

- a. The quintessential political treatise of the 16th century
  - b. Observed the political leadership of **Cesare Borgia** (son of Pope Alexander VI) who had ambitions of uniting Italy under his control
  - c. Stated that politically, “the ends justifies the means.”
  - d. Stated that for rulers, “it was better to be feared than to be loved”
  - e. Rulers had to be practical and cunning, in addition to being aggressive and ruthless
    - At times rulers should behave like a lion (aggressive and powerful) and at other times like a fox (cunning and practical)
  - f. *The Prince* continued to influence European rulers for centuries.
5. **Sack of Rome** in 1527 by armies of Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V** (who was also king of Spain) symbolized the end of the Renaissance in Italy





*Niccolo Machiavelli*





*Cesare Borgia*





*Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor*





*The Sack of Rome*





*The Sack of Rome*



# III. Humanism

## A. Characteristics

1. Revival of antiquity (Greece and Rome) in philosophy, literature, and art
  - Sought to reconcile pagan writings with Christian thought
2. Strong belief in individualism and the great potential of human beings (in contrast to the Middle Ages where humans were seen as small, wicked, and inconsequential and should focus solely on earning salvation)
  - a. **Virtú**: “the quality of being a man”; idea of excelling in all of one’s pursuits
  - b. Believed the key to a good life was Reason and Nature
3. Focused first on studying ancient languages
  - a. Initially, **Latin** of ancient Rome was the main focus.
  - b. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, **Greek** came to be studied rigorously as well
  - c. By 1500, virtually all of the significant ancient Roman and Greek texts that have been rediscovered, were translated and printed

4. Largely rejected Aristotelian views and medieval scholasticism in favor of:
  - a. Roman authors such as Cicero, Livy, Virgil, and Quintilian
  - b. Greek writings, especially those of Plato
  - c. Early Christian writers, especially the New Testament
    - This occurred predominantly in northern Europe and became a cornerstone of the Northern Renaissance
5. Believed in a liberal arts educational program that included grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, politics and moral philosophy
6. Civic Humanism: idea that education should prepare leaders who would be active in civic affairs
  - Some of the most important humanists also were important political leaders.
7. Often, humanism was more secular and lay dominated; however, most humanists remained deeply Christian, both in Italy and in Northern Europe



## B. Petrarch (1304-1374) – the “father of humanism”

1. Considered the first modern writer
  - In his writings, literature was no longer subordinate to religion
2. Claimed that the Middle Ages (the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of the Renaissance) were the “**Dark Ages**”
3. He was perhaps the first to use critical textual analysis to ancient texts.
  - Especially influenced by Cicero
4. Wrote his famous poetry in the Italian vernacular (as did Dante earlier in his *Divine Comedy*).

## C. Boccaccio (1313-1375)

1. Compiled an encyclopedia of Greek and Roman mythology
2. *Decameron* is his most famous work
  - a. Consisted of 100 earthy tales that comprise a social commentary of 14th century Italy
  - b. Aimed to impart wisdom of human character and behavior (especially sexual and economic misbehavior).

## D. Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444)

1. First to use the term “humanism”
2. Among the most important of the civic humanists
3. Served as a chancellor in Florence
4. Wrote a history of Florence, perhaps the first modern history, and wrote a narrative using primary source documents and the division of historical periods



*Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)*





*Giovanni Boccaccio*



*Leonardo Bruni*



## E. Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457)

1. Foremost expert on the Latin language: *Elegances of the Latin Language* (1444)
2. *On the False Donation of Constantine* (1444)
  - a. Exposed the Donation of Constantine as an 8th century fraud, using textual criticism
  - b. The Church had claimed it was granted vast territories by the 4th-century Roman emperor Constantine.
3. Valla also pointed out errors in the **Latin Vulgate** (the authorized version of the Bible for the Catholic Church)
4. Ironically, Valla's work gave challengers of Church authority ammunition, even though he remained a devoted Catholic and even served as a secretary under Pope Nicholas V.

## F. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499)

1. One of the most influential humanist philosophers of the 15th century
2. Founded the Platonic Academy at the behest of Cosimo de' Medici in the 1460s
  - This served to spread the works and philosophy of Plato throughout much of Europe
3. Translated Plato's works into Latin, giving modern Europeans access to these works for the first time.

## G. Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494)

1. Member of the Platonic Academy
2. *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486)
  - a. Perhaps the most famous Renaissance work on the nature of humankind.
  - b. Humans were created by God and therefore given tremendous potential for greatness, and even union with God if they desired it.
  - c. However, humans could, through neglect, also choose a negative course. Thus, humans had free will to be great or fail

## H. Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) – *The Book of the Courtier* (1528)

1. Perhaps most important work on Renaissance education
2. Specified qualities necessary to be a true gentleman including physical and intellectual abilities and leading an active life
  - Rejected crude contemporary social habits (e.g. spitting on the floor, eating without utensils, wiping one's nose with one's sleeve, etc.)
3. Described the ideal of a “Renaissance man” who was well-versed in the Greek and Roman classics, an accomplished warrior, could play music, dance, and had a modest but confident personal demeanor.
  - a. This contrasted with the medieval view of being a master in only one area
  - b. **Virtú**: the quality of being a great man in whatever noble pursuit

## I. Printing press: Johann Gutenberg

1. One of most important inventions in human history.
2. Gutenberg's development of **movable type** made possible the spread of humanistic literature to rest of Europe with astonishing speed.
3. No longer would copies of works need to be done by hand, individually.
4. 1457-58, published the first printed Bible in the city of Mainz, Germany





*Baldassare Castiglione*



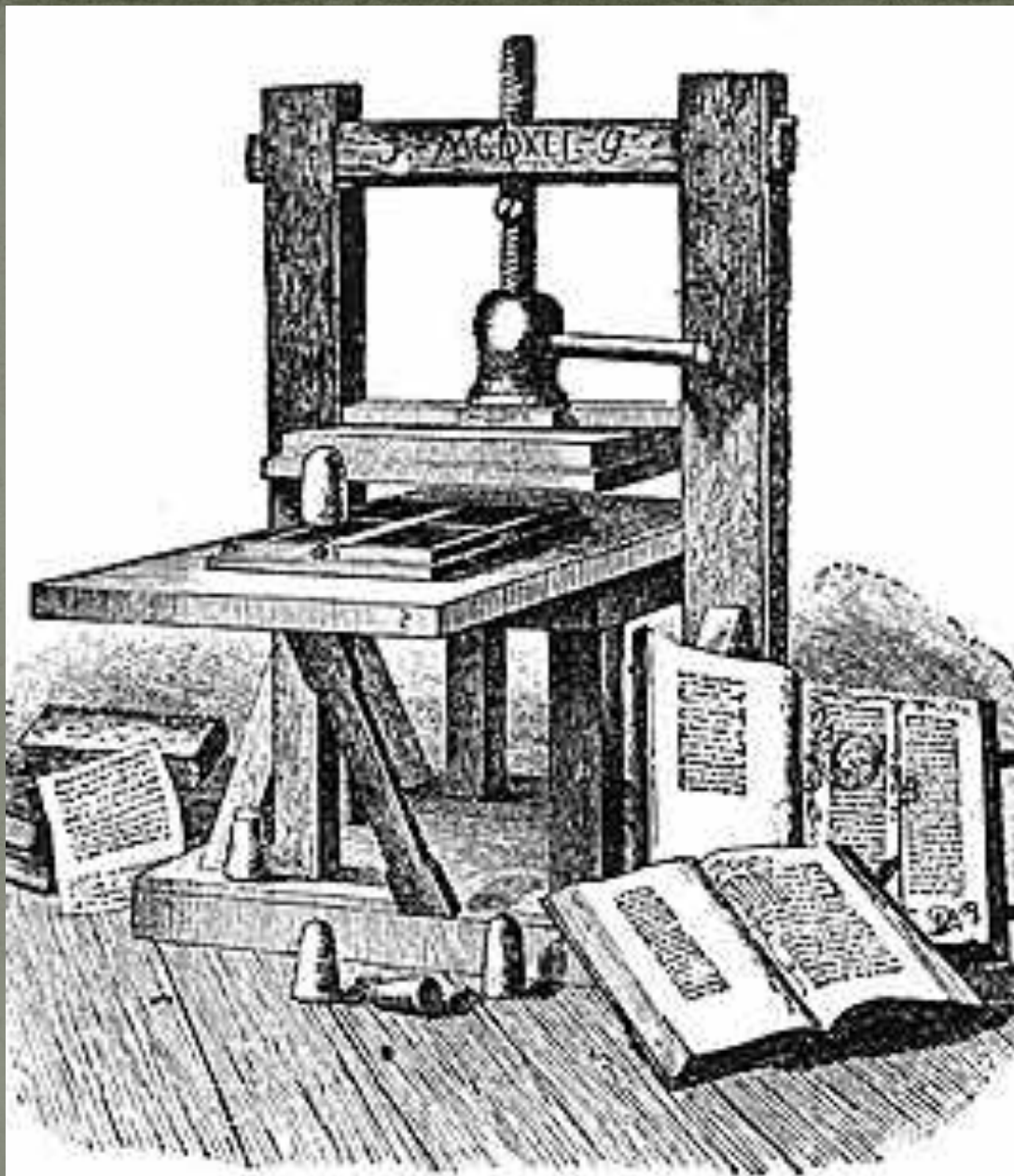
*Johann Gutenberg*





*The Printing Press*





*The Printing Press*



## A. Wealthy women

1. *Querelles des Femmes* (“The Problem of Women”): A new debate emerged over the proper role of women in society (starting with **Christine de Pisan** in the 14<sup>th</sup> century); the debate continued for six hundred years.
2. Women Enjoyed increased access to education
3. However, lost some status compared to women in the Middle Ages; women functioned now as “ornaments” to their middle-class or upper-class husbands
4. Women were to make themselves pleasing to the man (Castiglione) – only applied to the upper classes
5. Sexual double-standard: women were to remain chaste until marriage; men were permitted to “sow their wild oats”.
6. Important Renaissance noblewomen at court in education and culture:
  - a. **Christine de Pisan** (1363?-1434?): *The City of Ladies; The Book of Three Virtues*
    - Chronicle of accomplishments of great women of history.
    - Renaissance woman’s survival manual
    - Perhaps Europe’s first feminist
    - Extremely well-educated in France
  - b. **Isabella d’Este** (1474-1539): “First Lady” of the Renaissance
    - Set an example for women to break away from their traditional roles as mere ornaments to their husbands
    - Ruled Mantua after her husband died
    - She and her siblings were extremely well educated
    - Big patron of the arts
    - Founded a school for young women
    - Wrote over 2000 letters that provide a window into politics and courtly life at that time.



*Artemesia Gentileschi*





*Isabella d'Este*

c. **Artemesia Gentileschi** (1593-1652) (considered a Baroque painter)

- Perhaps the first female artist to gain recognition in the post-Renaissance era.
- First woman to paint historical and religious scenes: e.g. her series of "Judith" paintings
- Female artists at this time were largely consigned to portrait painting and imitative poses

## B. Peasant and lower-class women

### 1. Status did not change much compared to Middle Ages

#### 2. Marriage

##### a. European Family Pattern

- **Nuclear family** (poor people tended to be unable to support extended families)
- Wealthier people (and some landowning peasants) tended to have extended families

##### b. Based on economic considerations; not love

- **Dowries** were extremely important in wealthy families.
- Women tended to play a more significant role in the economy in Northern Europe.

##### c. Average age for women: less than 20 (for men it was mid-late 20s)

- Class issues: rich tend to marry earlier than middle classes, poor tend to marry earlier too, or not to marry at all.
- In Italy, the age gap between husbands and wives was much larger than in Northern Europe

##### d. Increased infanticide and abandonment (among the poor)

- Increase of foundling hospitals (2/3 of abandoned babies were girls)
- Low rate of illegitimate births

##### e. Dramatic population growth until 1650

### 3. Divorce available in certain areas (still very limited) compared to Middle Ages where divorce was non-existent

- This was largely due to a modest increase in divorce in Reformation countries

### 4. Rape not considered a serious crime

### 5. More prostitution than in Middle Ages



## C. Important Female Rulers

1. Caterina Sforza in Milan
2. Isabella I: Unified Spain along with her husband Ferdinand.
3. Mary Tudor: Ruled England (1553-1558) (see Reformation chapter)
4. Elizabeth I: Ruled England (1558-1603) (see Reformation chapter)
5. Catherine de Médicis: Ruled France as regent from 1559 to 1589 (see Reformation chapter)

## D. Persecution of alleged witches (see next chapter)

## E. Joan Kelly (historian): *Did Women Have a Renaissance?* (1977)

1. Kelly asserts that middle class (bourgeois) women especially suffered a marked decline in their status along with that of noble women during the Italian Renaissance
2. Middle class women were exclusively relegated to the private sphere while men monopolized political and economic issues in the public sphere.
3. Sexual chastity was essential for both women of the nobility and the bourgeoisie; a double-standard existed as chastity was not expected in men
4. Medieval feudalism permitted homage to female vassals but in Renaissance Italy feudalism came to be replaced by powerful city-states. Thus, the political power of women in many cases vanished.
  - Noble women thus experienced a state of almost universal dependence on her family and husband
5. Non-military education by tutors for young noblemen (and women) had often been done by females in the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, female tutors were replaced with male humanistic tutors or boarding schools (that emphasized patriarchal and misogynous bias), thus reducing the educational influence of women.





*Witch burning*



# Contrasting the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance

Later Middle Ages-1	Renaissance -1
<p>Religion dominates Medieval thought.</p> <p><b>Scholasticism:</b> Thomas Aquinas – reconciles Christianity with Aristotelian science.</p>	<p><b>Philosophy: Humanism</b> – Emphasis on secular concerns due to rediscovery and study of ancient Greco-Roman culture.</p>
<p><b>Ideal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man is well-versed in one subject and it is how to get to heaven</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ideal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtù – Renaissance Man should be well-rounded (Castiglione)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Literature:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based almost solely on religion.</li> <li>• Written in Latin</li> <li>• Church was greatest patron of arts and literature.</li> <li>• Little political criticism.</li> <li>• Hand-written</li> </ul>	<p><b>Literature:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Renaissance focuses also on writings of early church fathers</li> <li>• Vernacular (e.g. Petrarch, Boccaccio)</li> <li>• Covered wider variety of subjects (politics, art, short stories)</li> <li>• Focused on the individual</li> <li>• Increased use of printing press; propaganda</li> </ul>
<p><b>Religion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominated politics; sought unified Christian Europe.</li> <li>• Church is supreme to the state.</li> <li>• Inquisition started in 1223; dissenters dealt with harshly</li> </ul>	<p><b>Religion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state is supreme to the church.</li> <li>• “New Monarchs” assert power over national churches.</li> <li>• Rise of skepticism</li> <li>• Renaissance popes worldly and corrupt</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sculpture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More gothic; extremely detailed.</li> <li>• Relief</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sculpture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greek and Roman classical influences.</li> <li>• Free-standing (e.g. Michelangelo’s <i>David</i>)</li> <li>• Use of bronze (e.g. Donatello’s <i>David</i>)</li> </ul>

Later Middle Ages-2	Renaissance-2
<p><b>Painting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gothic style</li> <li>• Byzantine style dominates; nearly totally religious.</li> <li>• Stiff, 1-dimensional figures.</li> <li>• Less emotion</li> <li>• Stylized faces (faces look generic)</li> <li>• Use of gold to illuminate figures.</li> <li>• Lack of perspective.</li> <li>• Lack of chiaroscuro</li> <li>• Patronized mostly by the church</li> </ul>	<p><b>Painting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased emphasis on secular themes.</li> <li>• Classic Greek and Roman ideals.</li> <li>• Use of perspective.</li> <li>• chiaroscuro</li> <li>• Increased use of oil paints.</li> <li>• Brighter colors</li> <li>• More emotion</li> <li>• Real people and settings depicted.</li> <li>• Patronized largely by merchant princes</li> <li>• Renaissance popes patronized renaissance art</li> </ul>
<p><b>Architecture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gothic style</li> <li>• Pointed arches; barrel vaults, spires</li> <li>• Flying buttresses</li> <li>• Elaborate detail</li> </ul>	<p><b>Architecture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rounded arches, clear lines; Greco-Roman columns</li> <li>• Domes (e.g. <i>Il Duomo</i> by Brunelleschi)</li> <li>• Less detailed</li> <li>• Focus on balance and form</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depended on scribes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technology:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of printing press</li> <li>• New inventions for exploration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Marriage and Family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce nonexistent</li> <li>• Marriages arranged for economic reasons.</li> <li>• Prostitution in urban areas</li> <li>• Ave. age for men: mid-late twenties</li> <li>• Avg. age for women: less than 20 years old.</li> <li>• Church encouraged cult of paternal care.</li> <li>• Many couples did not observe church regulations on marriage.</li> <li>• Manners shaped men to please women.</li> <li>• Relative sexual equality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Marriage and Family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce available in certain cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More prostitution</li> <li>• Marriages based more on romance.</li> <li>• Woman was to make herself pleasing to the man (Castiglione)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sexual double standard</li> <li>• Increased infanticide</li> </ul>



<b>Later Middle Ages-3</b>	<b>Renaissance-3</b>
<b>Status of Women:</b>	<b>Status of Women:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal status better than in Renaissance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal status of noble and middle-class women declined.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common women not affected by Renaissance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated women allowed involvement but subservient to men.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rape not considered serious crime.</li> </ul>
<b>Politics:</b>	<b>Politics:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church tends toward supremacy over the state.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State tends toward supremacy over the state.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Monarchs assert control over national churches.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machiavelli</li> </ul>
Few blacks lived in Europe.	African slavery introduced.