

## Chapter 13: European Society in the Age of the Renaissance

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### 1. The evolution of the Italian Renaissance

#### a. Beginnings

- i. The Renaissance was a period of commercial, financial, political, and cultural achievement in two phases, from 1050 to 1300 and from 1300 to about 1600.
- ii. The northern Italian cities led the commercial revival, especially Venice, Genoa, and Milan.
  1. Venice had a huge merchant marine; improvements in shipbuilding enhanced trade.
  2. These cities became the crossroads between northern Europe and the East.
- iii. The first artistic and literary flowerings of the Renaissance appeared in Florence.
  1. Florentine mercantile families dominated European banking, allowing Florence, despite its geographical constraints, to prosper
    - a. Example of strength: survived Black Death, King Edward III of England refusing (repudiating) to pay back his debts, and survived the ciompi revolts
  2. The wool industry was the major factor in the city's financial expansion and population increase
    - a. trade from England to North Africa

#### b. Communes and republics

- i. Northern Italian cities were communes--associations of free men seeking independence from the local lords.
  1. The nobles, attracted by the opportunities in the cities, often settled there and married members of the mercantile class, forming an urban nobility.
  2. The **popolo**, or middle class, was excluded from power by the urban nobility, because they lacked property qualification, years of residence within the city, and social connections
  3. *Popolo* led republican governments failed, which led to the rule of despots (**signori**) or oligarchies, because they were also socially exclusive
  4. These despots and oligarchs pretended to follow laws and have constitutions, although they just manipulated it to their favor
  5. In the fifteenth century, the princely courts of the rulers were centers of wealth and art; they were a place for the rulers to demonstrate their wealth and power through gifts to writers, philosophers and artists

#### c. The balance of power among the Italian citystates

- i. Italy had no political unity; it was divided into citystates such as
  1. Milan (**Sforza family**)
  2. Venice
  3. Florence (**Medici family; Cosimo and Lorenzo**)
  4. Papal States (**Pope Alexander VI and son Cesare Borgia**, the subject of Machiavelli's *The Prince*)
  5. Kingdom of Naples in the south.
- ii. The political and economic competition among the city-states prevented centralization of power.
- iii. Shifting alliances among the citystates led to the creation of permanent ambassadors.
- iv. **Friar Girolamo Savonarola** predicted the French invasion of Italy, was supported

and then later executed

1. demonstrates the instability of Italian cities and how the common people did not share the worldly outlook of the elite; foreshadowing of how the Renaissance was a movement of the elite
- v. After 1494, a divided Italy became a European battleground, the **Habsburg-Valois Wars**.

## 2. Intellectual hallmarks of the Renaissance

- a. Many, like the poet and humanist **Petrarch** (coined the term “the dark ages,”) saw the fourteenth century as a new golden age and a revival of ancient Roman culture.
- b. Individualism
  - i. Literature specifically concerned with the nature of individuality emerged.
  - ii. Renaissance people believed in individual will and genius.
- c. Humanism
  - i. “**Humanism**” coined by **Leonardo Bruni**, a Florentine rhetorician
  - ii. Italians collected ancient manuscripts and monuments, and copied the ancient Roman lifestyle.
  - iii. The study of the classics led to humanism, an emphasis on human beings.
    1. Renaissance humanists sought to understand human nature through a study of pagan and classical authors *and* Christian thought, unlike the medieval writers, who looked to the classics to reveal God
    2. The humanist writer **Pico della Mirandola** (*On the Dignity of Man*) believed that there were no limits to what human beings could accomplish, because of the humanization of the divine.
  - iv. Ancient Latin style was considered superior to medieval Latin, again showing how the people of the Renaissance wanted to distance themselves from the Middle Ages
- d. Secular spirit
  - i. *Secularism* means a concern with materialism rather than religion.
    1. Example: usury (charging interest on loans) became widespread and acceptable)
  - ii. Unlike medieval people, Renaissance people were concerned with money and pleasure.
    1. In *On Pleasure*, **Lorenzo Valla** defended the pleasure of the senses as the highest good. He also wrote *On the False Donation of Constantine*, proving that the Church lied about being gifted vast territories, undermining the Church and supporting secularism.
    2. In the *Decameron* (deca= 10, ameron= days), **Boccaccio** portrayed an acquisitive and worldly society in a good light, unlike in medieval literature
  - iii. The church did little to combat secularism; in fact, many popes were Renaissance patrons and participants--and the church even gave up its opposition to usury.
  - iv. Despite the emergence of secularism, the Renaissance was still deeply religious, proven in the many works of religious Renaissance art

## 3. Art and the artist

- a. The *quattrocento* (1400s) and the *cinquecento* (1500s) saw dazzling artistic achievements, led by Florence and Rome.
- b. Art and power
  - i. In the early Renaissance, powerful urban groups commissioned works of art, which remained overwhelmingly religious, in order to demonstrate their power
  - ii. In the later fifteenth century, individuals and oligarchs began to sponsor works of art as a means of self-glorification.

- iii. Wealthy people began to spend less on warfare and more on art and architecture, having only food expenses second to household goods
  - 1. At first the bed chamber room was the most important, but later many other rooms were even more decorated.
  - 2. The home's private chapel was the most elaborate and expensive.
- iv. As the century advanced, art became more and more secular, and classical subjects became popular.
  - 1. The individual portrait emerged as a distinct genre.
  - 2. Painting and sculpture became more naturalistic and realistic, and the human body was glorified, as in the work of the sculptors **Donatello and Michelangelo**.
  - 3. A new "international style" emphasized color, decorative detail, and curvilinear rhythms.
  - 4. In painting, the use of perspective was pioneered by **Brunelleschi** and **della Francesca**.
- v. Artistic techniques like *contrapposto*, *chiaroscuro*, and *sfumato* were used.
- vi. Important artists:
  - 1. **Brunelleschi**- beaten by Ghiberti in competition to design Florence Baptistry doors, designed the nearby Il Duomo
  - 2. **Ghiberti**- beats Brunelleschi and designs the Florence Baptistry doors
  - 3. **Bramante**- designed the *Tempietto*, a church
  - 4. **Michelangelo**- created the *David* (1504), type of propaganda for the people; Sistine Chapel ceiling paintings; *Pieta*, image of Virgin Mary mourning Jesus's dead body; designed St. Peter's Cathedral
  - 5. **Donatello**- sculptor who revived the classical nude body, created the *David* (1440), first freestanding bronze model
  - 6. **Raphael**- *The School of Athens*, an overlay of Renaissance and Classical philosophy, showing the Renaissance flash back to the past
  - 7. **Masaccio**- first Renaissance painter to portray real, nude human figures in 3-D, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve* (1427): fresco shows tremendous emotion; both figures are nude
  - 8. **Giotto**- led the way in realism, which became an international (in other words, European) style
  - 9. **Botticelli**- *Birth of Venus*
  - 10. **Titian**- Venetian artist, used vivid color and movement
  - 11. **Leonardo de Vinci**- quintessential Renaissance man, *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*
- c. The status of the artist
  - i. The status of the artist improved during the Renaissance; most work was done by commission from a prince. Unsolicited work could mean loss of status.
  - ii. The creative genius of the artist was recognized and rewarded, both by themselves and others.
    - 1. Example 1: Pietro Arentino (letter writer, humanist and satirizer of princes) paid homage to Michelangelo
    - 2. Example 2: Holy Roman Emperor Charles V stooped to pick up Titian's paint brush
    - 3. Example 3: Renaissance artists almost always signed their works and often incorporated self-portraits within
  - iii. The Renaissance was largely an elitist movement; Renaissance culture did not

directly affect the middle classes or the urban working class.

#### 4. Social change during the Renaissance

##### a. Education and political thought

- i. Humanists were interested in education, particularly the training of rulers, and moral behavior.
  1. Vergerio wrote a treatise on education that stressed the teaching of history, ethics, and rhetoric (public speaking).
  2. **Castiglione's *The Courtier***, which was widely read, described the model Renaissance gentleman as a man of many talents, including intellectual and artistic skills.
    - a. furthered individualistic spirit (you can do anything!)
  3. Women received a similar education as the men did, though for purposes of adornment not leadership and power. Case study: **Laura Cereta**
  4. **Machiavelli's *The Prince*** described how to acquire, maintain, and increase political power.
  5. Machiavelli believed that the politician should manipulate people and use any means to gain power.
  6. Machiavelli did not advocate amoral behavior but believed that political action cannot be governed by moral considerations.

##### b. The printed word

- i. The invention in 1455 of movable type by **Gutenberg, Fust, and Schöffer** made possible the printing of a wide variety of texts.
- ii. Printing transformed the lives of Europeans by making propaganda possible, encouraging a wider common identity, and improving literacy.
- iii. Example: **Pietro Aretino's *Sonnetti Lussoriosi and Ragionamenti*** accompanied sixteen engravings of 16 sexual positions, attacked princely court life, humanist education and false clerical piety

##### c. Clocks

- i. By about 1320 some Europeans had learned how to quantify time by use of the mechanical "clock"--meaning "bells."
- ii. Clocks were important for understanding and controlling urban-economic life.
- iii. Gave Europeans a technological advantage over other peoples

##### d. Women and work in Renaissance society

- i. Most women married, were responsible for domestic affairs, and frequently worked outside the home.
- ii. Women worked in ship building, textiles, agriculture, as well as midwives and servants.
- iii. Compared to women in the previous age, the status of upperclass women declined during the Renaissance.
- iv. The Renaissance did not include women in the general improvement of educational opportunities. Women were expected to use their education solely to run a household.

##### e. Culture and sexuality

- i. With respect to sex and love, a double standard was applied as sex for women was restricted to marriage, while men could pursue sex outside of marriage.
- ii. The rape of women by upperclass men was frequent and not considered a serious offense. Evidence: Theft and robbery were punishable by mutilation, while rape was only a fine or about six months' imprisonment.
- iii. Sex crimes occurred and were punished, but women appear to be victims in fewer

- cases than earlier.
- iv. Homosexual practice appears to have been common, particularly based on relationship between men and boys.
- v. Some of this sexual activity seems to have evolved out of social-community needs of men.
- vi. The frequency of anti-sodomy laws in the fifteenth century suggests that homosexuality was widespread, difficult to outlaw, and important in shaping masculine gender identity.
- f. Blacks and ethnicity in Renaissance society
  - i. Enslavement of Slavic peoples in eastern Europe was common--as Germans and others enslaved and/or sold Polish and Bohemian people.
  - ii. Italians brought many white slaves to Europe by way of the Mediterranean.
  - iii. Beginning in the fifteenth century, black slaves were brought into Europe in large numbers.
  - iv. Black slavery in Europe appears to have been less harsh than that in America.
  - v. Some black rulers in Africa adopted a European lifestyle and participated in selling their black people into European slavery.
  - vi. Africans, in fact, were of different ethnic groups and thus biracial.
  - vii. Blacks as slaves and freemen filled a variety of positions, from laborers to dancers and actors and musicians.
  - viii. The European attitude toward blacks was ambivalent--blackness symbolized both evil and humility.
  - ix. In the Renaissance, blacks were displayed as signs of wealth, similar to how women were displayed.
- 5. The Renaissance in the north began in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.
  - a. It was more Christian than the Renaissance in Italy, and it stressed social reform based on Christian ideals.
  - b. Christian humanists sought to create a more perfect world by combining the best elements of classical and Christian cultures.
    - i. Humanists like Lefèvre believed in the use of the Bible by common people.
    - ii. **Thomas More**, the author of *Utopia*, believed that society, not people, needed improving.
      - 1. More was a Christian lawyer and minister of King Henry VIII.
      - 2. His *Utopia* was a socialistic society based on common ownership and social equality.
      - 3. *Utopia*: the key to improvement and reform of the individual was reform of the social institutions that molded the individual
    - iii. The Dutch monk **Erasmus** best represents Christian humanism in his 1) emphasis on education through study of the Bible and the classics as the key to a moral and intellectual improvement and 2) inner Christianity.
      - 1. wrote *The Education of a Christian Prince* and *The Praise of Folly*
  - c. The stories of the French humanist **Rabelais** were distinctly secular but still had a serious purpose.
    - i. Like More, Rabelais believed that institutions molded individuals and that education was the key to moral life.
    - ii. His books on the adventures of Gargantua and Pantagruel were spoofs on French social life.
  - d. Northern art and architecture were more religious than in Italy and less influenced by classical themes and motifs.

- i. **Van Eyck** painted realistic works with attention to human personality.
    - 1. painted the *Ghent Altarpiece* and *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride*
  - ii. **Bosch** used religion and folk legends as themes, reflecting the confusion and anguish associated with the end of the Middle Ages
  - iii. The city halls of northern Europe were grand architectural monuments.
6. Politics and the state in the Renaissance (ca. 1450-1521)
- a. Fifteenth century rulers began the process of order through centralization of power.
    - i. The result was the rise of many powerful and ruthless rulers interested in the centralization of power and the elimination of disorder and violence.
    - ii. Many of them, such as **Louis XI of France, Henry VII of England, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain**, seemed to be acting according to Machiavelli's principles.
    - iii. These monarchs invested kingship with a strong sense of royal authority and national purpose, citing medieval **Justinian Code** ("what pleases the prince has the force of law")
    - iv. The ideas of the new monarchs were not entirely original--some of them had their roots in the Middle Ages.
      - 1. Justinian Code (see above)
      - 2. depended on middle class civil servants
      - 3. used tax revenue to create armies to reduce violence and anarchy
  - b. France after the Hundred Years' War
    - i. **Charles VII** ushered in an age of recovery and ended civil war.
      - 1. He expelled the English, reorganized the royal council, strengthened royal finances through the **gabelle** (salt) and **taille** (land) taxes, reformed the justice system and created first permanent army.
      - 2. He made the church subject to the state by publishing the **Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges**, giving the French crown major control over the appointment of bishops and depriving the pope of French ecclesiastical revenues.
    - ii. **Louis XI**, Charles VII's son, expanded the French state and laid the foundations of later French absolutism.
      - 1. promoted economic growth and heavy taxes in order to improve the army, which in turn stopped aristocratic brigandage
      - 2. invaded Burgandy and gained territories
  - c. England also suffered from disorder.
    - i. Names/Vocab: **Wars of the Roses, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII, royal council, court of Star Chamber, justices of the peace**
    - ii. Feudal lords controlled the royal council and Parliament in the fifteenth century.
    - iii. Between 1455 and 1471, the houses of York and Lancaster fought a civil war called the Wars of the Roses that hurt trade, agriculture, and domestic industry.
    - iv. Yorkist Edward IV and his followers began to restore royal power, avoided expensive war through diplomacy, and reduced their reliance on Parliament for funds.
    - v. The English Parliament had become a power center for the aristocracy but was manipulated by Tudor Henry VII into becoming a tool of the king.
    - vi. Henry VII used the royal council and the court of Star Chamber to check aristocratic power.
      - 1. **royal council**- a group of regular "middle-class" representatives who dealt with any business the king put before it
      - 2. **court of Star Chamber**- a judiciary offshoot of the royal council that dealt with real or potential aristocratic threats with principles of Roman law (scary

- stuff, torture, accused unallowed to see evidence, no juries) which ran contrary to English common-law, but did keep the aristocrats in check
- vii. England had no army, depending on the **justices of the peace**, who were influential landowners who were basically the “executive branch” of local governments
  - viii. Henry VII and his successors won the support of the upper middle class promoting their interest in money, trade, and stability.
- d. Spain turned against its own cultural diversity
- i. Names/Vocab: **reconquista, cortes, hermandades, conversos/Marranos/New Christians**
  - ii. The **reconquista** was the centuries long attempt to unite Spain and expel Muslims and Jews.
  - iii. The marriage of Ferdinand from Aragon and Isabella from Castile was the last major step in the unification and Christianization of Spain.
    - 1. Under their reign, however, Spain remained a loose confederation of separate states, a dynastic union which is when two countries with different laws, policies and *cortes* (courts) are ruled by the same family
    - 2. They used the **hermandades**, or local police forces, to administer royal justice.
  - iv. Ferdinand and Isabella restructured the royal council to curb aristocratic power
    - 1. excluded aristocrats and great territorial magnates; instead appointed only middle-class people trained in Roman law
    - 2. wanted council to have full executive, judicial, and legislative powers under the monarchy and responsible for the supervision of local authorities
  - v. The church was also used to strengthen royal authority
    - 1. through a diplomatic relationship with Alexander VI, F and I became able to appoint bishops in Spain and the Hispanic territories in America, allowing them to establish a national church
  - vi. Ferdinand and Isabella completed the *reconquista* in 1492, but many Jews remained from the original reconquista because they aided royal power.
    - 1. Jews were often financiers and professionals; many (called *conversos*) had converted but were still disliked and distrusted.
    - 2. Needing a scapegoat during the Black Death, Spanish mobs killed many Jews.
    - 3. Ferdinand and Isabella revived the Inquisition and used its cruel methods to unify Spain and expel the Jews. The Inquisition was revived under guise of the papacy, so the public disapproved, the papacy would lose support, not the government. The Inquisition was an official investigation, especially one of a political or religious nature, characterized by lack of regard for individual rights, prejudice on the part of the examiners, and recklessly cruel punishments.
  - vii. Spanish Christians rejected *conversos* (Marranos or New Christians) on the basis of race--out of fear of *conversos* taking over public offices. Most Jews fled from Spain.
    - 1. *Conversos* sincerely believed that by accepting Christianity they became real Jews, and through following Jesus, real Christians.
    - 2. Also rejected Marranos because they thought there were Jewish conspiracies to kill of Christian populations and take over all public offices in Spain
  - viii. Isabella and Ferdinand married their daughter Joanna heiress to Castile to the archduke Philip heir to the Burgundian Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire. Isabella and Ferdinand’s grandson Charles V thus inherited vast territory. Charles

V's son Phillip II joined Portugal to the Spanish crown, finally uniting the Iberian Peninsula

T\_\_T AND I'M FINALLY DONE. WOW I HATE EURO. okay jk it's just really confusing