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The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities
An Intellectual History, 1400-1800

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Celenza Frontmatter More Information © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information Contents List of Figures page viii Preface and Acknowledgments ix 1 Philology, the Italian Renaissance, and Authorship 1 2 Lorenzo Valla, Philology, Emotion 20 3 Losing Your Identity: Angelo Decembrio 65 4 Trust and Authenticity 78 5 Pursuing a Love of Knowledge 108 6 Shaping Knowledge 128 7 Forgetting Philology: René Descartes 158 8 Certainty. Skepticism 201 9 Echoes 246 Bibliography 273 Index 295 vii © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information Figures 1 Cicero, Familiar Letters, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 49.9, f. 1(r). page 99 2 Cicero, Familiar Letters, MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 49.7, f. 1(r). 100 3 Herodotus, Novem musae (Jehan Petit, 1510). “Nine muses” was a common way to refer to the nine books of Herodotus’ Histories. 137 4 Mabillon, De re diplomatica, table 11, p. 365. 213 5 Bible, Book of Genesis, MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1, f. 11(r). 214 6 Thomas Jefferson, The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth (“Jefferson Bible”), pp. 2–3. 265 viii © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information Preface and Acknowledgments Reading sits at the heart of how we engage with the world. Reading, that is, in a broad sense, encompasses how we take in information, how we sort it, and what we trust as authentic. And there is no set of fields more tied to reading than the humanities: the study of literature, history, philosophy, and the arts. The humanities have storytelling at their heart, stories that allow us to make sense of our world and to make meaning of our lives within that world. Touching our emotions, these stories shape our beliefs, our political actions, and the social communities we form. We are currently living through a crisis of “reading” in this enlarged sense. The barrage of media of all sorts has made it difficult for people to find sources of information that they trust, even as trust itself has become ever more bound up with unacknowledged, often unconscious biases. There is a deep history here, one linked with how the humanities developed in early modern Europe and how they are expressed today, especially in institutions of higher learning. This book tells part of that story, doing so in an episodic way. To be clear, in the book’s subtitle – “An Intellectual History, 1400–1800” – the word “an” appears by design. I am well aware that there are many other ways of looking at this period. Three narratives weave their way throughout the book. The first concerns intellectual habits and mentalities that emerged in fifteenth-century Italy and traces how these carried over into early modern European thinking. The second involves media. Changes in publishing conditions during those early modern centuries inflected the ways thinkers expressed themselves, conditioning their judgments on the value of evidence and the nature of truth. The third is a story of death and life: the death of a perspective linking philology (the intense study of language) and philosophy, a linking that saw its high point in the Italian fifteenth century, and the birth, after Descartes, of ix © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information x PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS a different view altogether, a separation of disciplines and a classificatory impulse that still lives today. The book moves from Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano in the fifteenth century, through the seventeenth century in France, and ends in the wake of the French Encyclopédie, in the late eighteenth century. While the book has a chronological order, the Italian Renaissance influences posited are less linear and more like stones dropped in a pond, whose ripples can be observed

even as the stones lie submerged and out of view. The book is inflected by two perspectives. First, a guiding rule is to connect the thinkers and episodes profiled to live issues in the humanities today. We find ourselves in a complex era for the humanities, one in which the nature of reading and the means by which we do so are undergoing major changes. Looking at the past on its own terms (and acknowledging its occasional strangeness) carries meaning for the humanities today. Second, note the term "philology" paired with the word "philosophy," above. Those two terms are protean. Their meanings have varied greatly over the centuries, as have the intellectual enterprises behind them. As this book demonstrates, under- standing the premodern past entails shedding our disciplinary assumptions when countervailing evidence is present. You'll read examples here that, I hope, will contribute to a deeper and more layered understanding of how the humanities have worked in the past and how their history can illuminate the present. Here are a few preliminary thoughts. Authorship is best seen as part of a conversation, rather than as a singular endeavor. Emotion always colors analytical thought. The media we use to read and write shape our perspectives more than we would like to admit. Means of ascertaining authenticity take shape over time: key moments are more recognizable in retrospect than they were at the time they occurred, and usually, practice comes first, theory second. The same – practice first, theory second – goes for major changes in media. But if there is one big question that I hope this book will impel you to ask, it is this: why do we study the humanities? To see how thinkers in the past answered that question – often only implicitly – can help us think more nimbly about the present. To observe them as they learn to read in different ways, reacting often unconsciously to the new and evolving media with which they were faced: this too can help us as we make sense of our own changing media landscape. Looking toward the past won't solve our prob- lems. Only we can do that, by actively engaging in the world as it is. But we will do better if we understand what has come before, for good and for ill, fulfilling our expectations and, sometimes, surprising us. © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi A portion of Chapter 2 appeared as "Philology Goes Everywhere: Lorenzo Valla and the New Testament," in Jeffrey Henderson and Richard F. Thomas, eds., The Loeb Classical Library and Its Progeny, Proceedings of the First James Loeb Biennial Conference, Munich and Murnau, 18–20 May 2017 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Department of the Classics, 2020; distributed by Harvard University Press), 123–54. I gratefully acknowledge the Harvard University Classics Department for permission to republish. I would also like to thank the people who improved this book, sometimes by reading all or part of it, other times by kindly answering my queries. In addition to anonymous press readers, they include W. Scott Blanchard, Anna Harwell Celenza, Brian Copenhaver, Kathleen Fearn, Kenneth Gouwens, Timothy Kircher, Sara Miglietti, Denis J.-J. Robichaud, Sarah Gwyneth Ross, Arielle Saiber, A. Mark Smith, Rowan Tomlinson, and Alan Van Den Arend. I thank all my former colleagues in the Dean's Office at Georgetown University for their collegial fellowship, none more so than Martha Warner, with whom I worked closely and daily during my time as Dean of Georgetown College. Her intelligence and gentle grace made our work far easier than it otherwise might have been. I bring this book to a close in the middle of a worldwide pandemic and at a time of turbulent politics. One image stands above it all as an example of magnificent humanity: that of my mentor, Ronald G. Witt, who passed away in 2017 and whose unparalleled generosity of spirit remains an aspirational exemplar for me and for the many who were fortunate to know him. It was through him that I got to know this book's two dedicatees, Kenneth Gouwens and Timothy Kircher, whose decades-long friendship and fine scholarship remain sources of sustenance. © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

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Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN HUMANITIES Christopher S. Celenza is one of the foremost contemporary scholars of the Renaissance. His ambitious new book focuses on the body of knowledge that we now call the humanities, charting its roots in the Italian Renaissance and exploring its development up to the Enlightenment. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the author shows how thinkers like Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano developed innovative ways to read texts closely, paying attention to historical context, developing methods to determine a text's authenticity, and taking the humanities seriously as a means of bettering human life. Alongside such novel reading practices, technology – the invention of printing with moveable type – fundamentally changed perceptions of truth. Celenza also reveals how luminaries like Descartes, Diderot, and D'Alembert – as well as many lesser-known scholars – challenged traditional ways of thinking. Celenza's authoritative account demonstrates above all how the work of the early modern humanist philosophers had a profound impact on the general quest for human wisdom. His magisterial volume will be essential reading for all those who value the humanities and their fascinating history. christopher s. celenza is the James B. Knapp Dean of the Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University, where he is also Professor of History and Classics. Former Director of the American Academy in Rome, he is the author of the prize-winning The Lost Italian Renaissance (2006), Machiavelli: A Portrait (2015), and The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance (Cambridge University Press, 2017). His work has been featured in Salon, in the Huffington Post, and on radio and television. Celenza has served as Dean of Georgetown College at Georgetown University and has held fellow- ships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Harvard University Center for the Study of the Italian Renaissance (Villa I Tatti), the American Academy in Rome, and the Fulbright Foundation. © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities An Intellectual History, 1400–1800 christopher s. celenza Johns Hopkins University © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information University Printing House, Cambridge c b 2 8bs, United Kingdom One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, n y 10006, USA 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, vi c 3207, Australia 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467 Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge. It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108833400 doi : 10.1017/9781108980623 © Christopher S. Celenza 2021 This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press. First published 2021 Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data n a m es: Celenza, Christopher S., 1967– author. t it l e: The Italian Renaissance and the origins of the modern humanities : an intellectual history, 1400–1800 / Christopher Celenza, the Johns Hopkins University. de scr i pti o n : First edition.

Renaissance

European cultural period of the 14th to 17th century

This article is about the European Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. For the earlier European Renaissance, see Renaissance of the 12th century. For other uses, see Renaissance (disambiguation).

The **Renaissance** (*rin-AY-sənss*, *REN-ə-sahnss*)[1][a] is a period in European history marking the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity and covering the 15th and 16th centuries, characterized by an effort to revive and surpass ideas and achievements of classical antiquity. It occurred after the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages and was associated with great social change. In addition to the standard periodization, proponents of a "long Renaissance" may put its beginning in the 14th century and its end in the 17th century.[3]

The traditional view focuses more on the early modern aspects of the Renaissance and argues that it was a break from the past, but many historians today focus more on its medieval aspects and argue that it was an extension of the Middle Ages.[4][5] However, the beginnings of the period – the early Renaissance of the 15th century and the Italian Proto-Renaissance from around 1250 or 1300 – overlap considerably with the Late Middle Ages, conventionally dated to c. 1250–1500, and the Middle Ages themselves were a long period filled with gradual changes, like the modern age; and as a transitional period between both, the Renaissance has close similarities to both, especially the late and early sub-periods of either.[b]

The intellectual basis of the Renaissance was its version of humanism, derived from the concept of Roman *humanitas* and the rediscovery of classical Greek philosophy, such as that of Protagoras, who said that "man is the measure of all things". This new thinking became manifest in art, architecture, politics, science and literature. Early examples were the development of perspective in oil painting and the revived knowledge of how to make concrete. Although the invention of metal movable type sped the dissemination of ideas from the later 15th century, the changes of the Renaissance were not uniform across Europe: the first traces appear in Italy as early as the late 13th century, in particular with the writings of Dante and the paintings of Giotto.

As a cultural movement, the Renaissance encompassed innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, beginning with the 14th-century resurgence of learning based on classical sources, which contemporaries credited to Petrarch; the development of linear perspective and other techniques of rendering a more natural reality in painting; and gradual but widespread educational reform. In politics, the Renaissance contributed to the development of the customs and conventions of diplomacy, and in science to an increased reliance on observation and inductive reasoning. Although the Renaissance saw revolutions in many intellectual and social scientific pursuits, as well as the introduction of modern banking and the field of accounting,[6] it is perhaps best known for its artistic developments and the contributions of such polymaths as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, who inspired the term "Renaissance man".[7][8]

The Renaissance began in the Republic of Florence, one of the many states of Italy.[9] Various theories have been proposed to account for its origins and characteristics, focusing on a variety of factors including the social and civic peculiarities of Florence at the time: its political structure, the patronage of its dominant family, the Medici,[10][11] and the migration of Greek scholars and their texts to Italy following the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks.[12][13][14] Other major centers were northern Italian city-states such as Venice, Genoa, Milan, Bologna, Rome during the Renaissance Papacy and Naples. From Italy, the Renaissance spread throughout Europe in Flanders, France, Britain, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Hungary (with Beatrice of Naples) and elsewhere.

The Renaissance has a long and complex historiography, and, in line with general scepticism of discrete periodizations, there has been much debate among historians reacting to the 19th-century glorification of the "Renaissance" and individual cultural heroes as "Renaissance men", questioning the usefulness of *Renaissance* as a term and as a historical delineation.[15] Some observers have called into question whether the Renaissance was a cultural "advance" from the Middle Ages, instead seeing it as a period of pessimism and nostalgia for classical antiquity,[16] while social and economic historians, especially of the *longue durée*, have instead focused on the continuity between the two eras,[17] which are linked, as Panofsky observed, "by a thousand ties".[18]

The term *rinascita* ('rebirth') first appeared in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (c. 1550), anglicized as the *Renaissance* in the 1830s.[19] The word has also been extended to other historical and cultural movements, such as the Carolingian Renaissance (8th and 9th centuries), Ottonian Renaissance (10th and 11th century), and the Renaissance of the 12th century.[20]

Overview

The Renaissance was a cultural movement that profoundly affected European intellectual life in the early modern period. Beginning in Italy, and spreading to the rest of Europe by the 16th century, its influence was felt in art, architecture, philosophy, literature, music, science, technology, politics, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. Renaissance scholars employed the humanist method in study, and searched for realism and human emotion in art.[21]

Renaissance humanists such as Poggio Bracciolini sought out in Europe's monastic libraries the Latin literary, historical, and oratorical texts of antiquity, while the Fall of Constantinople (1453) generated a wave of émigréGreek scholars bringing precious manuscripts in ancient Greek, many of which had fallen into obscurity in the West. It is in their new focus on literary and historical texts that Renaissance scholars differed so markedly from the medieval scholars of the Renaissance of the 12th century, who had focused on studying Greek and Arabic works of natural sciences,

philosophy, and mathematics, rather than on such cultural texts.

In the revival of neoplatonism Renaissance humanists did not reject Christianity; quite the contrary, many of the greatest works of the Renaissance were devoted to it, and the Church patronized many works of Renaissance art. However, a subtle shift took place in the way that intellectuals approached religion that was reflected in many other areas of cultural life.[22] In addition, many Greek Christian works, including the Greek New Testament, were brought back from Byzantium to Western Europe and engaged Western scholars for the first time since late antiquity. This new engagement with Greek Christian works, and particularly the return to the original Greek of the New Testament promoted by humanists Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus, would help pave the way for the Reformation.

Well after the first artistic return to classicism had been exemplified in the sculpture of Nicola Pisano, Florentine painters led by Masaccio strove to portray the human form realistically, developing techniques to render perspective and light more naturally. Political philosophers, most famously Niccolò Machiavelli, sought to describe political life as it really was, that is to understand it rationally. A critical contribution to Italian Renaissance humanism, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola wrote the famous text *De hominis dignitate* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 1486), which consists of a series of theses on philosophy, natural thought, faith, and magic defended against any opponent on the grounds of reason. In addition to studying classical Latin and Greek, Renaissance authors also began increasingly to use vernacular languages; combined with the introduction of the printing press, this would allow many more people access to books, especially the Bible.[23]

In all, the Renaissance could be viewed as an attempt by intellectuals to study and improve the secular and worldly, both through the revival of ideas from antiquity, and through novel approaches to thought. Some scholars, such as Rodney Stark,[24] play down the Renaissance in favor of the earlier innovations of the Italian city-states in the High Middle Ages, which married responsive government, Christianity and the birth of capitalism. This analysis argues that, whereas the great European states (France and Spain) were absolute monarchies, and others were under direct Church control, the independent city-republics of Italy took over the principles of capitalism invented on monastic estates and set off a vast unprecedented Commercial Revolution that preceded and financed the Renaissance.

Origins

Main article: Italian Renaissance



View of Florence, birthplace of the Renaissance

Many argue that the ideas characterizing the Renaissance had their origin in Florence at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, in particular with the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Petrarch (1304–1374), as well as the paintings of Giotto di Bondone (1267–1337). Some writers date the Renaissance quite precisely; one proposed starting point is 1401, when the rival geniuses Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi competed for the contract to build the bronze doors for the Baptistery of the Florence Cathedral (Ghiberti then won).[25] Others see more general competition between artists and polymaths such as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Masaccio for artistic commissions as sparking the creativity of the Renaissance. Yet it remains much debated why the Renaissance began in Italy, and why it began when it did. Accordingly, several theories have been put forward to explain its origins.

During the Renaissance, money and art went hand in hand. Artists depended entirely on patrons while the patrons needed money to foster artistic talent. Wealth was brought to Italy in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries by expanding trade into Asia and Europe. Silver mining in Tyrol increased the flow of money. Luxuries from the Muslim world, brought home during the Crusades, increased the prosperity of Genoa and Venice.[26]

Jules Michelet defined the 16th-century Renaissance in France as a period in Europe's cultural history that represented a break from the Middle Ages, creating a modern understanding of humanity and its place in the world.[27]

Latin and Greek phases of Renaissance humanism

See also: Greek scholars in the Renaissance and Transmission of the Greek Classics

In stark contrast to the High Middle Ages, when Latin scholars focused almost entirely on studying Greek and Arabic works of natural science, philosophy and mathematics,[28] Renaissance scholars were most interested in recovering and studying Latin and Greek literary, historical, and oratorical texts. Broadly speaking, this began in the 14th century with a Latin phase, when Renaissance scholars such as Petrarch, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Niccolò de' Niccoli (1364–1437), and Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) scoured the libraries of Europe in search of works by such Latin authors as Cicero, Lucretius, Livy, and Seneca.[29][*full citation needed*] By the early 15th century, the bulk of the surviving such Latin literature had been recovered; the Greek phase of Renaissance humanism was under way, as Western European scholars turned to recovering ancient Greek literary, historical, oratorical and theological texts.[30][*full citation needed*]

Unlike with Latin texts, which had been preserved and studied in Western Europe since late antiquity, the study of ancient Greek texts was very limited in medieval Western Europe. Ancient Greek works on science, mathematics, and philosophy had been studied since the High Middle Ages in Western Europe and in the Islamic Golden Age (normally in translation), but Greek literary, oratorical and historical works (such as Homer, the Greek dramatists, Demosthenes and Thucydides) were not studied in either the Latin or medieval Islamic worlds; in the Middle Ages these sorts of texts were only studied by Byzantine scholars. Some argue that the Timurid Renaissance in Samarkand and Herat, whose magnificence toned with Florence as the center of a cultural rebirth,[31][32] were linked to the Ottoman Empire, whose conquests led to the migration of Greek scholars to Italian cities.[33][*full citation needed*][34][*full citation needed*][12][35] One of the greatest achievements of Renaissance scholars was to bring this entire class of Greek cultural works back into Western Europe for the first time since late antiquity.

Muslim logicians, most notably Avicenna and Averroes, had inherited Greek ideas after they had invaded and conquered Egypt and the Levant. Their translations and commentaries on these ideas worked their way through the Arab West into Iberia and Sicily, which became important centers for this transmission of ideas. From the 11th to the 13th century, many schools dedicated to the translation of philosophical and scientific works from Classical Arabic to Medieval Latin were established in Iberia, most notably the Toledo School of Translators. This work of translation from Islamic culture, though largely unplanned and disorganized, constituted one of the greatest transmissions of ideas in history.[36]

The movement to reintegrate the regular study of Greek literary, historical, oratorical and theological texts back into the Western European curriculum is usually dated to the 1396 invitation from Coluccio Salutati to the Byzantine diplomat and scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1355–1415) to teach Greek in Florence.[37][*full citation needed*] This legacy was continued by a number of expatriate Greek scholars, from Basilios Bessarion to Leo Allatius.

Social and political structures in Italy

The unique political structures of Late Middle AgesItaly have led some to theorize that its unusual social climate allowed the emergence of a rare cultural efflorescence. Italy did not exist as a political entity in the early modern period. Instead, it was divided into smaller city-states and territories: the Kingdom of Naples controlled the south, the Republic of Florence and the Papal States at the center, the Milanese and the Genoese to the north and west respectively, and the Venetians to the east. Fifteenth-century Italy was one of the most urbanized areas in Europe.[38] Many of its cities stood among the ruins of ancient Roman buildings; it seems likely that the classical nature of the Renaissance was linked to its origin in the Roman Empire's heartland.[39]

Historian and political philosopher Quentin Skinner points out that Otto of Freising (c. 1114–1158), a German bishop visiting north Italy during the 12th century, noticed a widespread new form of political and social organization, observing that Italy appeared to have exited from feudalism so that its society was based on merchants and commerce. Linked to this was anti-monarchical thinking, represented in the famous early Renaissance fresco cycle *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (painted 1338–1340), whose strong message is about the virtues of fairness, justice, republicanism and good administration. Holding both Church and Empire at bay, these city republics were devoted to notions of liberty. Skinner reports that there were many defences of liberty such as the Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475) celebration of Florentine genius not only in art, sculpture and architecture, but "the remarkable efflorescence of moral, social and political philosophy that occurred in Florence at the same time".[40]

Even cities and states beyond central Italy, such as the Republic of Florence at this time, were also notable for their merchant republics, especially the Republic of Venice. Although in practice these were oligarchical, and bore little resemblance to a modern democracy, they did have democratic features and were responsive states, with forms of participation in governance and belief in

liberty.[40][41][42] The relative political freedom they afforded was conducive to academic and artistic advancement.[43] Likewise, the position of Italian cities such as Venice as great trading centres made them intellectual crossroads. Merchants brought with them ideas from far corners of the globe, particularly the Levant. Venice was Europe's gateway to trade with the East, and a producer of fine glass, while Florence was a capital of textiles. The wealth such business brought to Italy meant large public and private artistic projects could be commissioned and individuals had more leisure time for study.[43]

Black Death

Main article: Black Death

One theory that has been advanced is that the devastation in Florence caused by the Black Death, which hit Europe between 1348 and 1350, resulted in a shift in the world view of people in 14th century Italy. Italy was particularly badly hit by the plague, and it has been speculated that the resulting familiarity with death caused thinkers to dwell more on their lives on Earth, rather than on spirituality and the afterlife.[44] It has also been argued that the Black Death prompted a new wave of piety, manifested in the sponsorship of religious works of art.[45] However, this does not fully explain why the Renaissance occurred specifically in Italy in the 14th century. The Black Death was a pandemic that affected all of Europe in the ways described, not only Italy. The Renaissance's emergence in Italy was most likely the result of the complex interaction of the above factors.[15]

The plague was carried by fleas on sailing vessels returning from the ports of Asia, spreading quickly due to lack of proper sanitation: the population of England, then about 4.2 million, lost 1.4 million people to the bubonic plague. Florence's population was nearly halved in the year 1347. As a result of the decimation in the populace the value of the working class increased, and commoners came to enjoy more freedom. To answer the increased need for labor, workers traveled in search of the most favorable position economically.[46]

The demographic decline due to the plague had economic consequences: the prices of food dropped and land values declined by 30–40% in most parts of Europe between 1350 and 1400.[47] Landholders faced a great loss, but for ordinary men and women it was a windfall. The survivors of the plague found not only that the prices of food were cheaper but also that lands were more abundant, and many of them inherited property from their dead relatives.

The spread of disease was significantly more rampant in areas of poverty. Epidemics ravaged cities, particularly children. Plagues were easily spread by lice, unsanitary drinking water, armies, or by poor sanitation. Children were hit the hardest because many diseases, such as typhus and congenital syphilis, target the immune system, leaving young children without a fighting chance. Children in city dwellings were more affected by the spread of disease than the children of the wealthy.[48]

The Black Death caused greater upheaval to Florence's social and political structure than later epidemics. Despite a significant number of deaths among members of the ruling classes, the government of Florence continued to function during this period. Formal meetings of elected representatives were suspended during the height of the epidemic due to the chaotic conditions in the city, but a small group of officials was appointed to conduct the affairs of the city, which ensured continuity of government.[49]

Cultural conditions in Florence

It has long been a matter of debate why the Renaissance began in Florence, and not elsewhere in Italy. Scholars have noted several features unique to Florentine cultural life that may have caused such a cultural movement. Many have emphasized the role played by the Medici, a banking family and later ducal ruling house, in patronizing and stimulating the arts. Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492) was the catalyst for an enormous amount of arts patronage, encouraging his countrymen to commission works from the leading artists of Florence, including Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, and Michelangelo Buonarroti.[10] Works by Neri di Bicci, Botticelli, da Vinci, and Filippino Lippi had been commissioned additionally by the Convent of San Donato in Scopeto in Florence.[50]

The Renaissance was certainly underway before Lorenzo de' Medici came to power – indeed, before the Medici family itself achieved hegemony in Florentine society. Some historians have postulated that Florence was the birthplace of the Renaissance as a result of luck, i.e., because "Great Men" were born there by chance:[51] Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli and Michelangelo were all born in Tuscany. Arguing that such chance seems improbable, other historians have contended that these "Great Men" were only able to rise to prominence because of the prevailing cultural conditions at the time.[52]

Characteristics

Humanism

Main articles: Renaissance humanism, Renaissance humanism in Northern Europe, and List of Renaissance humanists

In some ways, Renaissance humanism was not a philosophy but a method of learning. In contrast to the medieval scholastic mode, which focused on resolving contradictions between authors, Renaissance humanists would study ancient texts in the original and appraise them through a combination of reasoning and empirical evidence. Humanist education was based on the programme of *Studia Humanitatis*, the study of five humanities: poetry, grammar, history, moral philosophy, and rhetoric. Although historians have sometimes struggled to define humanism precisely, most have settled on "a middle of the road definition... the movement to recover, interpret, and assimilate the language, literature, learning and values of ancient Greece and Rome".[53] Above all, humanists asserted "the genius of man ... the unique and extraordinary ability of the human mind".[54]

Humanist scholars shaped the intellectual landscape throughout the early modern period. Political philosophers such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas More revived the ideas of Greek and Roman thinkers and applied them in critiques of contemporary government, following the Islamic steps of Ibn Khaldun.[56][57]Pico della Mirandola wrote the "manifesto" of the Renaissance, the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, a vibrant defence of thinking. Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475), another humanist, is most known for his work *Della vita civile* ("On Civic Life"; printed 1528), which advocated civic humanism, and for his influence in refining the Tuscan vernacular to the same level as Latin. Palmieri drew on Roman philosophers and theorists, especially Cicero, who, like Palmieri, lived an active public life as a citizen and official, as well as a theorist and philosopher and also Quintilian. Perhaps the most succinct expression of his perspective on humanism is in a 1465 poetic work *La città di vita*, but an earlier work, *Della vita civile*, is more wide-ranging. Composed as a series of dialogues set in a country house in the Mugello countryside outside Florence during the plague of 1430, Palmieri expounds on the qualities of the ideal citizen. The dialogues include ideas about how children develop mentally and physically, how citizens can conduct themselves morally, how citizens and states can ensure probity in public life, and an important debate on the difference between that which is pragmatically useful and that which is honest.

The humanists believed that it is important to transcend to the afterlife with a perfect mind and body, which could be attained with education. The purpose of humanism was to create a universal man whose person combined intellectual and physical excellence and who was capable of functioning honorably in virtually any situation.[58] This ideology was referred to as the *uomo universale*, an ancient Greco-Roman ideal. Education during the Renaissance was mainly composed of ancient literature and history as it was thought that the classics provided moral instruction and an intensive understanding of human behavior.

Humanism and libraries

A unique characteristic of some Renaissance libraries is that they were open to the public. These libraries were places where ideas were exchanged and where scholarship and reading were considered both pleasurable and beneficial to the mind and soul. As freethinking was a hallmark of the age, many libraries contained a wide range of writers. Classical texts could be found alongside humanist writings. These informal associations of intellectuals profoundly influenced Renaissance culture. Some of the richest "bibliophiles" built libraries as temples to books and knowledge. A number of libraries appeared as manifestations of immense wealth joined with a love of books. In some cases, cultivated library builders were also committed to offering others the opportunity to use their collections. Prominent aristocrats and princes of the Church created great libraries for the use of their courts, called "court libraries", and were housed in lavishly designed monumental buildings decorated with ornate woodwork, and the walls adorned with frescoes (Murray, Stuart A.P.).

Art

Main articles: Renaissance art, Italian Renaissance painting, Themes in Italian Renaissance painting, Early Netherlandish painting, and Renaissance architecture

See also: Islamic influences on Western art

Renaissance art marks a cultural rebirth at the close of the Middle Ages and rise of the Modern world. One of the distinguishing features of Renaissance art was its development of highly realistic linear perspective. Giotto di Bondone (1267–1337) is credited with first treating a painting as a window into space, but it was not until the demonstrations of architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) and the subsequent writings of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) that perspective was formalized as an artistic technique.[59]

The development of perspective was part of a wider trend towards realism in the arts.[60] Painters developed other techniques, studying light, shadow, and, famously in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, human anatomy. Underlying these changes in artistic method was a renewed desire to depict the beauty of nature and to unravel the axioms of aesthetics, with the works of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael representing artistic pinnacles that were much imitated by other artists.[61] Other notable artists include Sandro Botticelli, working for the Medici in Florence, Donatello, another Florentine, and Titian in Venice, among others.

In the Netherlands, a particularly vibrant artistic culture developed. The work of Hugo van der Goes and Jan van Eyck was particularly influential on the development of painting in Italy, both technically with the introduction of oil paint and canvas, and stylistically in terms of naturalism in representation. Later, the work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder would inspire artists to depict themes of everyday life.[62]

In architecture, Filippo Brunelleschi was foremost in studying the remains of ancient classical buildings. With rediscovered knowledge from the 1st-century writer Vitruvius and the flourishing discipline of mathematics, Brunelleschi formulated the Renaissance style that emulated and improved on classical forms. His major feat of engineering was building the dome of the Florence Cathedral.[63] Another building demonstrating this style is the church of St. Andrew in Mantua, built by Alberti. The outstanding architectural work of the High Renaissance was the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica, combining the skills of Bramante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Sangallo and Maderno.

During the Renaissance, architects aimed to use columns, pilasters, and entablatures as an integrated system. The Roman orders types of columns are used: Tuscan and Composite. These can either be structural, supporting an arcade or architrave, or purely decorative, set against a wall in the form of pilasters. One of the first buildings to use pilasters as an integrated system was in the Old Sacristy (1421–1440) by Brunelleschi.[64] Arches, semi-circular or (in the Mannerist style) segmental, are often used in arcades, supported on piers or columns with capitals. There may be a section of entablature between the capital and the springing of the arch. Alberti was one of the first to use the arch on a monumental. Renaissance vaults do not have ribs; they are semi-circular or segmental and on a square plan, unlike the Gothic vault, which is frequently rectangular.

Renaissance artists were not pagans, although they admired antiquity and kept some ideas and symbols of the medieval past. Nicola Pisano (c. 1220 – c. 1278) imitated classical forms by portraying scenes from the Bible. His *Annunciation*, from the Baptistry at Pisa, demonstrates that classical models influenced Italian art before the Renaissance took root as a literary movement.[65]

Science

Main articles: History of science in the Renaissance and Renaissance technology

See also: Medical Renaissance

Applied innovation extended to commerce. At the end of the 15th century, Luca Pacioli published the first work on bookkeeping, making him the founder of accounting.[6]

The rediscovery of ancient texts and the invention of the printing press in about 1440 democratized learning and allowed a faster propagation of more widely distributed ideas. In the first period of the Italian Renaissance, humanists favored the study of humanities over natural philosophy or applied mathematics, and their reverence for classical sources further enshrined the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic views of the universe. Writing around 1450, Nicholas Cusanus anticipated the heliocentric worldview of Copernicus, but in a philosophical fashion.

Science and art were intermingled in the early Renaissance, with polymath artists such as Leonardo da Vinci making observational drawings of anatomy and nature. Da Vinci set up controlled experiments in water flow, medical dissection, and systematic study of movement and aerodynamics, and he devised principles of research method that led Fritjof Capra to classify him as the "father of modern science".[67] Other examples of Da Vinci's contribution during this period include machines designed to saw marbles and lift monoliths, and new discoveries in acoustics, botany, geology, anatomy, and mechanics.[68]

A suitable environment had developed to question classical scientific doctrine. The discovery in 1492 of the New World by Christopher Columbus challenged the classical worldview. The works of Ptolemy (in geography) and Galen (in medicine) were found to not always match everyday observations. As the Reformation and Counter-Reformation clashed, the Northern Renaissance showed a decisive shift in focus from Aristotelean natural philosophy to chemistry and the biological sciences (botany, anatomy, and medicine).[69] The willingness to question previously held truths and search for new answers resulted in a period of major scientific advancements.

Some view this as a "scientific revolution", heralding the beginning of the modern age,[70] others as an acceleration of a continuous process stretching from the ancient world to the present day.[71] Significant scientific advances were made during this time by Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler.[72] Copernicus, in *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*), posited that the Earth moved around the Sun. *De humani corporis fabrica* (*On the Workings of the Human Body*) by Andreas Vesalius, gave a new confidence to the role of dissection, observation, and the mechanistic view of anatomy.[73]

Another important development was in the *process* for discovery, the scientific method,[73] focusing on empirical evidence and the importance of mathematics, while discarding much of Aristotelian science. Early and influential proponents of these ideas included Copernicus, Galileo, and Francis Bacon.[74][75] The new scientific method led to great contributions in the fields of astronomy, physics, biology, and anatomy.[d][76]

Navigation and geography

Further information: Age of Discovery

During the Renaissance, extending from 1450 to 1650,[77] every continent was visited and mostly mapped by Europeans, except the south polar continent now known as Antarctica. This development is depicted in the large world map *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula* made by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu in 1648 to commemorate the Peace of Westphalia.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain seeking a direct route to India of the Delhi Sultanate. He accidentally stumbled upon the Americas, but believed he had reached the East Indies.

In 1606, the Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon sailed from the East Indies in the VOC ship Duyfken and landed in Australia. He charted about 300 km of the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. More than thirty Dutch expeditions followed, mapping sections of the north, west, and south coasts. In 1642–1643, Abel Tasman circumnavigated the continent, proving that it was not joined to the imagined south polar continent.

By 1650, Dutch cartographers had mapped most of the coastline of the continent, which they named New Holland, except the east coast which was charted in 1770 by James Cook.

The long-imagined south polar continent was eventually sighted in 1820. Throughout the Renaissance it had been known as Terra Australis, or 'Australia' for short. However, after that name was transferred to New Holland in the nineteenth century, the new name of 'Antarctica' was bestowed on the south polar continent.[78]

Music

Main article: Renaissance music

See also: Renaissance dance and List of Renaissance composers

From this changing society emerged a common, unifying musical language, in particular the polyphonic style of the Franco-Flemish school. The development of printing made distribution of music possible on a wide scale. Demand for music as entertainment and as an activity for educated amateurs increased with the emergence of a bourgeois class. Dissemination of chansons, motets, and masses throughout Europe coincided with the unification of polyphonic practice into the fluid style that culminated in the second half of the sixteenth century in the work of composers such as Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria, and William Byrd.

Religion

Further information: Renaissance Papacy, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation

The new ideals of humanism, although more secular in some aspects, developed against a Christian backdrop, especially in the Northern Renaissance. Much, if not most, of the new art was

commissioned by or in dedication to the Church.[22] However, the Renaissance had a profound effect on contemporary theology, particularly in the way people perceived the relationship between man and God.[22] Many of the period's foremost theologians were followers of the humanist method, including Erasmus, Zwingli, Thomas More, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

The Renaissance began in times of religious turmoil. The late Middle Ages was a period of political intrigue surrounding the Papacy, culminating in the Western Schism, in which three men simultaneously claimed to be true Bishop of Rome.[79] While the schism was resolved by the Council of Constance (1414), a resulting reform movement known as Conciliarism sought to limit the power of the pope. Although the papacy eventually emerged supreme in ecclesiastical matters by the Fifth Council of the Lateran (1511), it was dogged by continued accusations of corruption, most famously in the person of Pope Alexander VI, who was accused variously of simony, nepotism, and fathering children (most of whom were married off, presumably for the consolidation of power) while a cardinal.[80]

Churchmen such as Erasmus and Luther proposed reform to the Church, often based on humanist textual criticism of the New Testament.[22] In October 1517 Luther published the *Ninety-five Theses*, challenging papal authority and criticizing its perceived corruption, particularly with regard to instances of sold indulgences.[e] The 95 Theses led to the Reformation, a break with the Roman Catholic Church that previously claimed hegemony in Western Europe. Humanism and the Renaissance therefore played a direct role in sparking the Reformation, as well as in many other contemporaneous religious debates and conflicts.

Pope Paul III came to the papal throne (1534–1549) after the sack of Rome in 1527, with uncertainties prevalent in the Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation. Nicolaus Copernicus dedicated *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) to Paul III, who became the grandfather of Alessandro Farnese, who had paintings by Titian, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as well as an important collection of drawings, and who commissioned the masterpiece of Giulio Clovio, arguably the last major illuminated manuscript, the *Farnese Hours*.

Self-awareness

By the 15th century, writers, artists, and architects in Italy were well aware of the transformations that were taking place and were using phrases such as *modi antichi* (in the antique manner) or *alle romana et alla antica* (in the manner of the Romans and the ancients) to describe their work. In the 1330s Petrarch referred to pre-Christian times as *antiqua* (ancient) and to the Christian period as *nova* (new).[81] From Petrarch's Italian perspective, this new period (which included his own time) was an age of national eclipse.[81]Leonardo Bruni was the first to use tripartite periodization in his *History of the Florentine People* (1442).[82] Bruni's first two periods were based on those of Petrarch, but he added a third period because he believed that Italy was no longer in a state of decline. Flavio Biondo used a similar framework in *Decades of History from the Deterioration of the Roman Empire* (1439–1453).

Humanist historians argued that contemporary scholarship restored direct links to the classical period, thus bypassing the Medieval period, which they then named for the first time the "Middle Ages". The term first appears in Latin in 1469 as *media tempestas* (middle times).[83] The term *rinascita* (rebirth) first appeared, however, in its broad sense in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, 1550, revised 1568.[84][85] Vasari divides the age into three phases: the first phase contains Cimabue, Giotto, and Arnolfo di Cambio; the second phase contains Masaccio, Brunelleschi, and Donatello; the third centers on Leonardo da Vinci and culminates with Michelangelo. It was not just the growing awareness of classical antiquity that drove this development, according to Vasari, but also the growing desire to study and imitate nature.[86]

Spread

In the 15th century, the Renaissance spread rapidly from its birthplace in Florence to the rest of Italy and soon to the rest of Europe. The invention of the printing press by German printer Johannes Gutenberg allowed the rapid transmission of these new ideas. As it spread, its ideas diversified and changed, being adapted to local culture. In the 20th century, scholars began to break the Renaissance into regional and national movements.



"What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!" – from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

England

Main article: English Renaissance

In England, the 16th century marked the beginning of the English Renaissance with the work of writers William Shakespeare (1564 –1616), Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593), Edmund Spenser (1552/1553 – 1599), Sir Thomas More (1478 – 1535), Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586), architects (such as Inigo Jones (1573 – 1652), who introduced Italianate architecture to England), and composers such as Thomas Tallis (1505 – 1585), John Taverner (c. 1490 – 1545), and William Byrd (c.1539/40 or 1543 – 1623).

France

Main articles: French Renaissance and French Renaissance architecture

The word "Renaissance" is borrowed from the French language, where it means "re-birth". It was first used in the eighteenth century and was later popularized by French historianJules Michelet (1798–1874) in his 1855 work, *Histoire de France* (History of France).[87][88]

In 1495 the Italian Renaissance arrived in France, imported by King Charles VIII after his invasion of Italy. A factor that promoted the spread of secularism was the inability of the Church to offer assistance against the Black Death. Francis I imported Italian art and artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, and built ornate palaces at great expense. Writers such as François Rabelais, Pierre de Ronsard, Joachim du Bellay, and Michel de Montaigne, painters such as Jean Clouet, and musicians such as Jean Mouton also borrowed from the spirit of the Renaissance.

In 1533, a fourteen-year-old Caterina de' Medici (1519–1589), born in Florence to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, married Henry II of France, second son of King Francis I and Queen Claude. Though she became famous and infamous for her role in France's religious wars, she made a direct contribution in bringing arts, sciences, and music (including the origins of ballet) to the French court from her native Florence.

Germany

Main articles: German Renaissance and Weser Renaissance

In the second half of the 15th century, the Renaissance spirit spread to Germany and the Low Countries, where the development of the printing press (ca. 1450) and Renaissance artists such as Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) predated the influence from Italy. In the early Protestant areas of the country humanism became closely linked to the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation, and the art and writing of the German Renaissance frequently reflected this dispute.[89] However, the Gothic style and medieval scholastic philosophy remained exclusively until the turn of the 16th century. Emperor Maximilian I of Habsburg (ruling 1493–1519) was the first truly Renaissance monarch of the Holy Roman Empire.

Hungary

Further information: Renaissance architecture in Central and Eastern Europe

After Italy, Hungary was the first European country where the Renaissance appeared.[90] The Renaissance style came directly from Italy during the Quattrocento to Hungary first in the Central European region, thanks to the development of early Hungarian-Italian relationships—not only in dynastic connections, but also in cultural, humanistic and commercial relations—growing in strength from the 14th century. The relationship between Hungarian and Italian Gothic styles was a second reason—exaggerated breakthrough of walls is avoided, preferring clean and light structures. Large-scale building schemes provided ample and long term work for the artists, for example, the building of the Friss (New) Castle in Buda, the castles of Visegrád, Tata, and Várpalota. In Sigismund's court there were patrons such as Pipo Spano, a descendant of the Scolari family of Florence, who invited Manetto Ammanatini and Masolino da Pannicale to Hungary.[91]

The new Italian trend combined with existing national traditions to create a particular local Renaissance art. Acceptance of Renaissance art was furthered by the continuous arrival of humanist thought in the country. Many young Hungarians studying at Italian universities came closer to the Florentine humanist center, so a direct connection with Florence evolved. The growing number of Italian traders moving to Hungary, specially to Buda, helped this process. New thoughts were carried by the humanist prelates, among them Vitéz János, archbishop of Esztergom, one of the founders of Hungarian humanism.[92] During the long reign of emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg the Royal Castle of Buda became probably the largest Gothic palace of the late Middle Ages. King Matthias Corvinus (r. 1458–1490) rebuilt the palace in early Renaissance style and further expanded it.[93][94]

After the marriage in 1476 of King Matthias to Beatrice of Naples, Buda became one of the most important artistic centers of the Renaissance north of the Alps.[95] The most important humanists living in Matthias' court were Antonio Bonfini and the famous Hungarian poet Janus Pannonius.[95]András Hess set up a printing press in Buda in 1472. Matthias Corvinus's library, the Bibliotheca Corviniana, was Europe's greatest collections of secular books: historical chronicles, philosophic and scientific works in the 15th century. His library was second only in size to the Vatican Library. (However, the Vatican Library mainly contained Bibles and religious materials.)[96] In 1489, Bartolomeo della Fonte of Florence wrote that Lorenzo de' Medici founded his own Greek-Latin library encouraged by the example of the Hungarian king. Corvinus's library is part of UNESCO World Heritage.[97]

Matthias started at least two major building projects. The works in Buda and Visegrád began in about 1479. Two new wings and a hanging garden were built at the royal castle of Buda, and the palace at Visegrád was rebuilt in Renaissance style. Matthias appointed the Italian Chimenti Camicia and the Dalmatian Giovanni Dalmata to direct these projects. Matthias commissioned the leading Italian artists of his age to embellish his palaces: for instance, the sculptor Benedetto da Majano and the painters Filippino Lippi and Andrea Mantegna worked for him. A copy of Mantegna's portrait of Matthias survived. Matthias also hired the Italian military engineer Aristotele Fioravanti to direct the rebuilding of the forts along the southern frontier. He had new monasteries built in Late Gothic style for the Franciscans in Kolozsvár, Szeged and Hunyad, and for the Paulines in Fejéregyháza. In the spring of 1485, Leonardo da Vinci travelled to Hungary on behalf of Sforza to meet king Matthias Corvinus, and was commissioned by him to paint a Madonna.[106]

Matthias enjoyed the company of Humanists and had lively discussions on various topics with them. The fame of his magnanimity encouraged many scholars—mostly Italian—to settle in Buda. Antonio Bonfini, Pietro Ranzano, Bartolomeo Fonzio, and Francesco Bandini spent many years in Matthias's court. This circle of educated men introduced the ideas of Neoplatonism to Hungary. Like all intellectuals of his age, Matthias was convinced that the movements and combinations of the stars and planets exercised influence on individuals' life and on the history of nations. Galeotto Marzio described him as "king and astrologer", and Antonio Bonfini said Matthias "never did anything without consulting the stars". Upon his request, the famous astronomers of the age, Johannes Regiomontanus and Marcin Bylica, set up an observatory in Buda and installed it with astrolabes and celestial globes. Regiomontanus dedicated his book on navigation that was used by Christopher Columbus to Matthias.

Other important figures of Hungarian Renaissance include Bálint Balassi (poet), Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos (poet), Bálint Bakfark (composer and lutenist), and Master MS (fresco painter).

Renaissance in the Low Countries

Main articles: Renaissance in the Netherlands and Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting

Culture in the Netherlands at the end of the 15th century was influenced by the Italian Renaissance through trade via Bruges, which made Flanders wealthy. Its nobles commissioned artists who became known across Europe.[115] In science, the anatomistAndreas Vesalius led the way; in cartography, Gerardus Mercator's map assisted explorers and navigators. In art, Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting ranged from the strange work of Hieronymus Bosch[116] to the everyday life depictions of Pieter Brueghel the Elder.[115]

Northern Europe

Main article: Northern Renaissance

The Renaissance in Northern Europe has been termed the "Northern Renaissance". While Renaissance ideas were moving north from Italy, there was a simultaneous southward spread of some areas of innovation, particularly in music.[117] The music of the 15th-century Burgundian School defined the beginning of the Renaissance in music, and the polyphony of the Netherlanders, as it moved with the musicians themselves into Italy, formed the core of the first true international style in music since the standardization of Gregorian Chant in the 9th century.[117] The culmination of the Netherlandish school was in the music of the Italian composerPalestrina. At the end of the 16th century Italy again became a center of musical innovation, with the development of the polychoral style of the Venetian School, which spread northward into Germany around 1600.

The paintings of the Italian Renaissance differed from those of the Northern Renaissance. Italian Renaissance artists were among the first to paint secular scenes, breaking away from the purely religious art of medieval painters. Northern Renaissance artists initially remained focused on religious subjects, such as the contemporary religious upheaval portrayed by Albrecht Dürer. Later, the works of Pieter Bruegel influenced artists to paint scenes of daily life rather than religious or classical themes. It was also during the Northern Renaissance that Flemish brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck perfected the oil painting technique, which enabled artists to produce strong colors on a hard surface that could survive for centuries.[118]

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a story of death and life: the death of a perspective linking philology (the intense study of language) and philosophy, a linking that saw its high point in the Italian fifteenth century, and the birth, after Descartes, of ix © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information x PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS a different view altogether, a separation of disciplines and a classificatory impulse that still lives today. The book moves from Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano in the fifteenth century, through the seventeenth century in France, and ends in the wake of the French Encyclopédie, in the late eighteenth century. While the book has a chronological order, the Italian Renaissance influences posited are less linear and more like stones dropped in a pond, whose ripples can be observed even as the stones lie submerged and out of view. The book is inflected by two perspectives. First, a guiding rule is to connect the thinkers and episodes profiled to live issues in the humanities today. We find ourselves in a complex era for the humanities, one in which the nature of reading and the means by which we do so are undergoing major changes. Looking at the past on its own terms (and acknowledging its occasional strangeness) carries meaning for the humanities today. Second, note the term "philology" paired with the word "philosophy," above. Those two terms are protean. Their meanings have varied greatly over the centuries, as have the intellectual enterprises behind them. As this book demonstrates, under- standing the premodern past entails shedding our disciplinary assumptions when countervailing evidence is present. You'll read examples here that, I hope, will contribute to a deeper and more layered understanding of how the humanities have worked in the past and how their history can illuminate the present. Here are a few preliminary thoughts. Authorship is best seen as part of a conversation, rather than as a singular endeavor. Emotion always colors analytical thought. The media we use to read and write shape our perspectives more than we would like to admit. Means of ascertaining authenticity take shape over time: key moments are more recognizable in retrospect than they were at the time they occurred, and usually, practice comes first, theory second. The same – practice first, theory second – goes for major changes in media. But if there is one big question that I hope this book will impel you to ask, it is this: why do we study the humanities? To see how thinkers in the past answered that question – often only implicitly – can help us think more nimbly about the present. To observe them as they learn to read in different ways, reacting often unconsciously to the new and evolving media with which they were faced: this too can help us as we make sense of our own changing media landscape. Looking toward the past won't solve our prob- lems. Only we can do that, by actively engaging in the world as it is. But we will do better if we understand what has come before, for good and for ill, fulfilling our expectations and, sometimes, surprising us. © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi A portion of Chapter 2 appeared as "Philology Goes Everywhere: Lorenzo Valla and the New Testament," in Jeffrey Henderson and Richard F. Thomas, eds., The Loeb Classical Library and Its Progeny, Proceedings of the First James Loeb Biennial Conference, Munich and Murnau, 18–20 May 2017 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Department of the Classics, 2020; distributed by Harvard University Press), 123–54. I gratefully acknowledge the Harvard University Classics Department for permission to republish. I would also like to thank the people who improved this book, sometimes by reading all or part of it, other times by kindly answering my queries. In addition to anonymous press readers, they include W. Scott Blanchard, Anna Harwell Celenza, Brian Copenhaver, Kathleen Fearn, Kenneth Gouwens, Timothy Kircher, Sara Miglietti, Denis J.-J. Robichaud, Sarah Gwyneth Ross, Arielle Saiber, A. 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It was through him that I got to know this book's two dedicatees, Kenneth Gouwens and Timothy Kircher, whose decades-long friendship and fine scholarship remain sources of sustenance. © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-83340-0 — The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities Christopher S. Celenza Frontmatter More Information © in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

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The Italian Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern Humanities: An Intellectual History, 1400-1800 (Hardcover)

Christopher S. Celenza

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Book Description Hardcover. Condition: new. Hardcover. Christopher Celenza is one of the foremost contemporary scholars of the Renaissance. His ambitious new book focuses on the body of knowledge which we now call the humanities, charting its roots in the Italian Renaissance and exploring its development up to the Enlightenment. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the author shows how thinkers like Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano developed innovative ways to read texts closely, paying attention to historical context, developing methods to determine a text's authenticity, and taking the humanities seriously as a means of bettering human life. Alongside such novel reading practices, technology - the invention of printing with moveable type - fundamentally changed perceptions of truth. Celenza also reveals how luminaries like Descartes, Diderot, and D'Alembert - as well as many lesser-known scholars - challenged traditional ways of thinking. Celenza's authoritative narrative demonstrates above all how the work of the early modern humanist philosophers had a profound impact on the general quest for human wisdom. His magisterial volume will be essential reading for all those who value the humanities and their fascinating history. This book is of interest to all those who value and seek to understand the humanities. Beginning in the Italian Renaissance and ending in the European Enlightenment, this book touches on how people in the past changed their reading habits, and how technology changed their perception of truth. Shipping may be from multiple locations in the US or from the UK, depending on stock availability. Seller Inventory # 9781108833400

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Renaissance

European cultural period of the 14th to 17th century

This article is about the European Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. For the earlier European Renaissance, see Renaissance of the 12th century. For other uses, see Renaissance (disambiguation).

The **Renaissance** (*rin-AY-sənss*, *REN-ə-sahnss*)[1][a] is a period in European history marking the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity and covering the 15th and 16th centuries, characterized by an effort to revive and surpass ideas and achievements of classical antiquity. It occurred after the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages and was associated with great social change. In addition to the standard periodization, proponents of a "long Renaissance" may put its beginning in the 14th century and its end in the 17th century.[3]

The traditional view focuses more on the early modern aspects of the Renaissance and argues that it was a break from the past, but many historians today focus more on its medieval aspects and argue that it was an extension of the Middle Ages.[4][5] However, the beginnings of the period – the early Renaissance of the 15th century and the Italian Proto-Renaissance from around 1250 or 1300 – overlap considerably with the Late Middle Ages, conventionally dated to c. 1250–1500, and the Middle Ages themselves were a long period filled with gradual changes, like the modern age; and as a transitional period between both, the Renaissance has close similarities to both, especially the late and early sub-periods of either.[b]

The intellectual basis of the Renaissance was its version of humanism, derived from the concept of Roman *humanitas* and the rediscovery of classical Greek philosophy, such as that of Protagoras, who said that "man is the measure of all things". This new thinking became manifest in art, architecture, politics, science and literature. Early examples were the development of perspective in oil painting and the revived knowledge of how to make concrete. Although the invention of metal movable type sped the dissemination of ideas from the later 15th century, the changes of the Renaissance were not uniform across Europe: the first traces appear in Italy as early as the late 13th century, in particular with the writings of Dante and the paintings of Giotto.

As a cultural movement, the Renaissance encompassed innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, beginning with the 14th-century resurgence of learning based on classical sources, which contemporaries credited to Petrarch; the development of linear perspective and other techniques of rendering a more natural reality in painting; and gradual but widespread educational reform. In politics, the Renaissance contributed to the development of the customs and conventions of diplomacy, and in science to an increased reliance on observation and inductive reasoning. Although the Renaissance saw revolutions in many intellectual and social scientific pursuits, as well as the introduction of modern banking and the field of accounting,[6] it is perhaps best known for its artistic developments and the contributions of such polymaths as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, who inspired the term "Renaissance man".[7][8]

The Renaissance began in the Republic of Florence, one of the many states of Italy.[9] Various theories have been proposed to account for its origins and characteristics, focusing on a variety of factors including the social and civic peculiarities of Florence at the time: its political structure, the patronage of its dominant family, the Medici,[10][11] and the migration of Greek scholars and their texts to Italy following the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks.[12][13][14] Other major centers were northern Italian city-states such as Venice, Genoa, Milan, Bologna, Rome during the Renaissance Papacy and Naples. From Italy, the Renaissance spread throughout Europe in Flanders, France, Britain, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Hungary (with Beatrice of Naples) and elsewhere.

The Renaissance has a long and complex historiography, and, in line with general scepticism of discrete periodizations, there has been much debate among historians reacting to the 19th-century glorification of the "Renaissance" and individual cultural heroes as "Renaissance men", questioning the usefulness of *Renaissance* as a term and as a historical delineation.[15] Some observers have called into question whether the Renaissance was a cultural "advance" from the Middle Ages, instead seeing it as a period of pessimism and nostalgia for classical antiquity,[16] while social and economic historians, especially of the *longue durée*, have instead focused on the continuity between the two eras,[17] which are linked, as Panofsky observed, "by a thousand ties".[18]

The term *rinascita* ('rebirth') first appeared in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (c. 1550), anglicized as the *Renaissance* in the 1830s.[19] The word has also been extended to other historical and cultural movements, such as the Carolingian Renaissance (8th and 9th centuries), Ottonian Renaissance (10th and 11th century), and the Renaissance of the 12th century.[20]

Overview

The Renaissance was a cultural movement that profoundly affected European intellectual life in the early modern period. Beginning in Italy, and spreading to the rest of Europe by the 16th century, its influence was felt in art, architecture, philosophy, literature, music, science, technology, politics, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. Renaissance scholars employed the humanist method in study, and searched for realism and human emotion in art.[21]

Renaissance humanists such as Poggio Bracciolini sought out in Europe's monastic libraries the Latin literary, historical, and oratorical texts of antiquity, while the Fall of Constantinople (1453) generated a wave of émigréGreek scholars bringing precious manuscripts in ancient Greek, many of which had fallen into obscurity in the West. It is in their new focus on literary and historical texts that Renaissance scholars differed so markedly from the medieval scholars of the Renaissance of the 12th century, who had focused on studying Greek and Arabic works of natural sciences, philosophy, and mathematics, rather than on such cultural texts.

In the revival of neoplatonism Renaissance humanists did not reject Christianity; quite the contrary, many of the greatest works of the Renaissance were devoted to it, and the Church patronized many works of Renaissance art. However, a subtle shift took place in the way that intellectuals approached religion that was reflected in many other areas of cultural life.[22] In addition, many Greek Christian works, including the Greek New Testament, were brought back from Byzantium to Western Europe and engaged Western scholars for the first time since late antiquity. This new engagement with Greek Christian works, and particularly the return to the original Greek of the New Testament promoted by humanists Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus, would help pave the way for the Reformation.

Well after the first artistic return to classicism had been exemplified in the sculpture of Nicola Pisano, Florentine painters led by Masaccio strove to portray the human form realistically, developing techniques to render perspective and light more naturally. Political philosophers, most famously Niccolò Machiavelli, sought to describe political life as it really was, that is to understand it rationally. A critical contribution to Italian Renaissance humanism, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola wrote the famous text *De hominis dignitate* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 1486), which consists of a series of theses on philosophy, natural thought, faith, and magic defended against any opponent on the grounds of reason. In addition to studying classical Latin and Greek, Renaissance authors also began increasingly to use vernacular languages; combined with the introduction of the printing press, this would allow many more people access to books, especially the Bible.[23]

In all, the Renaissance could be viewed as an attempt by intellectuals to study and improve the secular and worldly, both through the revival of ideas from antiquity, and through novel approaches to thought. Some scholars, such as Rodney Stark,[24] play down the Renaissance in favor of the earlier innovations of the Italian city-states in the High Middle Ages, which married responsive government, Christianity and the birth of capitalism. This analysis argues that, whereas the great European states (France and Spain) were absolute monarchies, and others were under direct Church control, the independent city-republics of Italy took over the principles of capitalism invented on monastic estates and set off a vast unprecedented Commercial Revolution that preceded and financed the Renaissance.

Origins

Main article: Italian Renaissance



View of Florence, birthplace of the Renaissance

Many argue that the ideas characterizing the Renaissance had their origin in Florence at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, in particular with the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Petrarch (1304–1374), as well as the paintings of Giotto di Bondone (1267–1337). Some writers date the Renaissance quite precisely; one proposed starting point is 1401, when the rival geniuses Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi competed for the contract to build the bronze doors for the Baptistery of the Florence Cathedral (Ghiberti then won).[25] Others see more general competition between artists and polymaths such as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Masaccio for artistic commissions as sparking the creativity of the Renaissance. Yet it remains much debated why the Renaissance began in Italy, and why it began when it did. Accordingly, several theories have been put forward to explain its origins.

During the Renaissance, money and art went hand in hand. Artists depended entirely on patrons while the patrons needed money to foster artistic talent. Wealth was brought to Italy in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries by expanding trade into Asia and Europe. Silver mining in Tyrol increased the flow of money. Luxuries from the Muslim world, brought home during the Crusades, increased the prosperity of Genoa and Venice.[26]

Jules Michelet defined the 16th-century Renaissance in France as a period in Europe's cultural history that represented a break from the Middle Ages, creating a modern understanding of humanity and its place in the world.[27]

Latin and Greek phases of Renaissance humanism

See also: Greek scholars in the Renaissance and Transmission of the Greek Classics

In stark contrast to the High Middle Ages, when Latin scholars focused almost entirely on studying Greek and Arabic works of natural science, philosophy and mathematics,[28] Renaissance scholars were most interested in recovering and studying Latin and Greek literary, historical, and oratorical texts. Broadly speaking, this began in the 14th century with a Latin phase, when Renaissance scholars such as Petrarch, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Niccolò de' Niccoli (1364–1437), and Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) scoured the libraries of Europe in search of works by such Latin authors as Cicero, Lucretius, Livy, and Seneca.[29][*full citation needed*] By the early 15th century, the bulk of the surviving such Latin literature had been recovered; the Greek phase of Renaissance humanism was under way, as Western European scholars turned to recovering ancient Greek literary, historical, oratorical and theological texts.[30][*full citation needed*]

Unlike with Latin texts, which had been preserved and studied in Western Europe since late antiquity, the study of ancient Greek texts was very limited in medieval Western Europe. Ancient Greek works on science, mathematics, and philosophy had been studied since the High Middle Ages in Western Europe and in the Islamic Golden Age (normally in translation), but Greek literary, oratorical and historical works (such as Homer, the Greek dramatists, Demosthenes and Thucydides) were not studied in either the Latin or medieval Islamic worlds; in the Middle Ages these sorts of texts were only studied by Byzantine scholars. Some argue that the Timurid Renaissance in Samarkand and Herat, whose magnificence toned with Florence as the center of a cultural rebirth,[31][32] were linked to the Ottoman Empire, whose conquests led to the migration of Greek scholars to Italian cities.[33][*full citation needed*][34][*full citation needed*][12][35] One of the greatest achievements of Renaissance scholars was to bring this entire class of Greek cultural works back into Western Europe for the first time since late antiquity.

Muslim logicians, most notably Avicenna and Averroes, had inherited Greek ideas after they had invaded and conquered Egypt and the Levant. Their translations and commentaries on these ideas worked their way through the Arab West into Iberia and Sicily, which became important centers for this transmission of ideas. From the 11th to the 13th century, many schools dedicated to the translation of philosophical and scientific works from Classical Arabic to Medieval Latin were established in Iberia, most notably the Toledo School of Translators. This work of translation from Islamic culture, though largely unplanned and disorganized, constituted one of the greatest transmissions of ideas in history.[36]

The movement to reintegrate the regular study of Greek literary, historical, oratorical and theological texts back into the Western European curriculum is usually dated to the 1396 invitation from Coluccio Salutati to the Byzantine diplomat and scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1355–1415) to teach Greek in Florence.[37][*full citation needed*] This legacy was continued by a number of expatriate Greek scholars, from Basilios Bessarion to Leo Allatius.

Social and political structures in Italy

The unique political structures of Late Middle AgesItaly have led some to theorize that its unusual social climate allowed the emergence of a rare cultural efflorescence. Italy did not exist as a political entity in the early modern period. Instead, it was divided into smaller city-states and territories: the Kingdom of Naples controlled the south, the Republic of Florence and the Papal States at the center, the Milanese and the Genoese to the north and west respectively, and the Venetians to the east. Fifteenth-century Italy was one of the most urbanized areas in Europe.[38] Many of its cities stood among the ruins of ancient Roman buildings; it seems likely that the classical nature of the Renaissance was linked to its origin in the Roman Empire's heartland.[39]

Historian and political philosopher Quentin Skinner points out that Otto of Freising (c. 1114–1158), a German bishop visiting north Italy during the 12th century, noticed a widespread new form of political and social organization, observing that Italy appeared to have exited from feudalism so that its society was based on merchants and commerce. Linked to this was anti-monarchical thinking, represented in the famous early Renaissance fresco cycle *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (painted 1338–1340), whose strong message is about the virtues of fairness, justice, republicanism and good administration. Holding both Church and Empire at bay, these city republics were devoted to notions of liberty. Skinner reports that there were many defences of liberty such as the Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475) celebration of Florentine genius not only in art, sculpture and architecture, but "the remarkable efflorescence of moral, social and political philosophy that occurred in Florence at the same time".[40]

Even cities and states beyond central Italy, such as the Republic of Florence at this time, were also notable for their merchant republics, especially the Republic of Venice. Although in practice these were oligarchical, and bore little resemblance to a modern democracy, they did have democratic features and were responsive states, with forms of participation in governance and belief in liberty.[40][41][42] The relative political freedom they afforded was conducive to academic and artistic advancement.[43] Likewise, the position of Italian cities such as Venice as great trading centres made them intellectual crossroads. Merchants brought with them ideas from far corners of the globe, particularly the Levant. Venice was Europe's gateway to trade with the East, and a producer of fine glass, while Florence was a capital of textiles. The wealth such business brought to Italy meant large public and private artistic projects could be commissioned and individuals had more leisure time for study.[43]

Black Death

Main article: Black Death

One theory that has been advanced is that the devastation in Florence caused by the Black Death, which hit Europe between 1348 and 1350, resulted in a shift in the world view of people in 14th century Italy. Italy was particularly badly hit by the plague, and it has been speculated that the resulting familiarity with death caused thinkers to dwell more on their lives on Earth, rather than on spirituality and the afterlife.[44] It has also been argued that the Black Death prompted a new wave of piety, manifested in the sponsorship of religious works of art.[45] However, this does not fully explain why the Renaissance occurred specifically in Italy in the 14th century. The Black Death was a pandemic that affected all of Europe in the ways described, not only Italy. The Renaissance's emergence in Italy was most likely the result of the complex interaction of the above factors.[15]

The plague was carried by fleas on sailing vessels returning from the ports of Asia, spreading quickly due to lack of proper sanitation: the population of England, then about 4.2 million, lost 1.4 million people to the bubonic plague. Florence's population was nearly halved in the year 1347. As a result of the decimation in the populace the value of the working class increased, and commoners came to enjoy more freedom. To answer the increased need for labor, workers traveled in search of the most favorable position economically.[46]

The demographic decline due to the plague had economic consequences: the prices of food dropped and land values declined by 30–40% in most parts of Europe between 1350 and 1400.[47] Landholders faced a great loss, but for ordinary men and women it was a windfall. The survivors of the plague found not only that the prices of food were cheaper but also that lands were more abundant, and many of them inherited property from their dead relatives.

The spread of disease was significantly more rampant in areas of poverty. Epidemics ravaged cities, particularly children. Plagues were easily spread by lice, unsanitary drinking water, armies, or by poor sanitation. Children were hit the hardest because many diseases, such as typhus and congenital syphilis, target the immune system, leaving young children without a fighting chance. Children in city dwellings were more affected by the spread of disease than the children of the wealthy.[48]

The Black Death caused greater upheaval to Florence's social and political structure than later epidemics. Despite a significant number of deaths among members of the ruling classes, the government of Florence continued to function during this period. Formal meetings of elected representatives were suspended during the height of the epidemic due to the chaotic conditions in the city, but a small group of officials was appointed to conduct the affairs of the city, which ensured continuity of government.[49]

Cultural conditions in Florence

It has long been a matter of debate why the Renaissance began in Florence, and not elsewhere in Italy. Scholars have noted several features unique to Florentine cultural life that may have caused such a cultural movement. Many have emphasized the role played by the Medici, a banking family and later ducal ruling house, in patronizing and stimulating the arts. Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492) was the catalyst for an enormous amount of arts patronage, encouraging his countrymen to commission works from the leading artists of Florence, including Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, and Michelangelo Buonarroti.[10] Works by Neri di Bicci, Botticelli, da Vinci, and Filippino Lippi had been commissioned additionally by the Convent of San Donato in Scopeto in Florence.[50]

The Renaissance was certainly underway before Lorenzo de' Medici came to power – indeed, before the Medici family itself achieved hegemony in Florentine society. Some historians have postulated that Florence was the birthplace of the Renaissance as a result of luck, i.e., because "Great Men" were born there by chance:[51] Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli and Michelangelo were all born in Tuscany. Arguing that such chance seems improbable, other historians have contended that these "Great Men" were only able to rise to prominence because of the prevailing cultural conditions at the time.[52]

Characteristics

Humanism

Main articles: Renaissance humanism, Renaissance humanism in Northern Europe, and List of Renaissance humanists

In some ways, Renaissance humanism was not a philosophy but a method of learning. In contrast to the medieval scholastic mode, which focused on resolving contradictions between authors, Renaissance humanists would study ancient texts in the original and appraise them through a combination of reasoning and empirical evidence. Humanist education was based on the programme of *Studia Humanitatis*, the study of five humanities: poetry, grammar, history, moral philosophy, and rhetoric. Although historians have sometimes struggled to define humanism precisely, most have settled on "a middle of the road definition... the movement to recover, interpret, and assimilate the language, literature, learning and values of ancient Greece and Rome".[53] Above all, humanists asserted "the genius of man ... the unique and extraordinary ability of the human mind".[54]

Humanist scholars shaped the intellectual landscape throughout the early modern period. Political philosophers such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas More revived the ideas of Greek and Roman thinkers and applied them in critiques of contemporary government, following the Islamic steps of Ibn Khaldun.[56][57]Pico della Mirandola wrote the "manifesto" of the Renaissance, the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, a vibrant defence of thinking. Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475), another humanist, is most known for his work *Della vita civile* ("On Civic Life"; printed 1528), which advocated civic humanism, and for his influence in refining the Tuscan vernacular to the same level as Latin. Palmieri drew on Roman philosophers and theorists, especially Cicero, who, like Palmieri, lived an active public life as a citizen and official, as well as a theorist and philosopher and also Quintilian. Perhaps the most succinct expression of his perspective on humanism is in a 1465 poetic work *La città di vita*, but an earlier work, *Della vita civile*, is more wide-ranging. Composed as a series of dialogues set in a country house in the Mugello countryside outside Florence during the plague of 1430, Palmieri expounds on the qualities of the ideal citizen. The dialogues include ideas about how children develop mentally and physically, how citizens can conduct themselves morally, how citizens and states can ensure probity in public life, and an important debate on the difference between that which is pragmatically useful and that which is honest.

The humanists believed that it is important to transcend to the afterlife with a perfect mind and body, which could be attained with education. The purpose of humanism was to create a universal man whose person combined intellectual and physical excellence and who was capable of functioning honorably in virtually any situation.[58] This ideology was referred to as the *uomo universale*, an ancient Greco-Roman ideal. Education during the Renaissance was mainly composed of ancient literature and history as it was thought that the classics provided moral instruction and an intensive understanding of human behavior.

Humanism and libraries

A unique characteristic of some Renaissance libraries is that they were open to the public. These libraries were places where ideas were exchanged and where scholarship and reading were considered both pleasurable and beneficial to the mind and soul. As freethinking was a hallmark of the age, many libraries contained a wide range of writers. Classical texts could be found alongside humanist writings. These informal associations of intellectuals profoundly influenced Renaissance culture. Some of the richest "bibliophiles" built libraries as temples to books and knowledge. A number of libraries appeared as manifestations of immense wealth joined with a love of books. In some cases, cultivated library builders were also committed to offering others the opportunity to use their collections. Prominent aristocrats and princes of the Church created great libraries for the use of their courts, called "court libraries", and were housed in lavishly designed monumental buildings decorated with ornate woodwork, and the walls adorned with frescoes (Murray, Stuart A.P.).

Art

Main articles: Renaissance art, Italian Renaissance painting, Themes in Italian Renaissance painting, Early Netherlandish painting, and Renaissance architecture

See also: Islamic influences on Western art

Renaissance art marks a cultural rebirth at the close of the Middle Ages and rise of the Modern world. One of the distinguishing features of Renaissance art was its development of highly realistic linear perspective. Giotto di Bondone (1267–1337) is credited with first treating a painting as a window into space, but it was not until the demonstrations of architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) and the subsequent writings of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) that perspective was formalized as an artistic technique.[59]

The development of perspective was part of a wider trend towards realism in the arts.[60] Painters developed other techniques, studying light, shadow, and, famously in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, human anatomy. Underlying these changes in artistic method was a renewed desire to depict the beauty of nature and to unravel the axioms of aesthetics, with the works of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael representing artistic pinnacles that were much imitated by other artists.[61] Other notable artists include Sandro Botticelli, working for the Medici in Florence, Donatello, another Florentine, and Titian in Venice, among others.

In the Netherlands, a particularly vibrant artistic culture developed. The work of Hugo van der Goes and Jan van Eyck was particularly influential on the development of painting in Italy, both technically with the introduction of oil paint and canvas, and stylistically in terms of naturalism in representation. Later, the work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder would inspire artists to depict themes of everyday life.[62]

In architecture, Filippo Brunelleschi was foremost in studying the remains of ancient classical buildings. With rediscovered knowledge from the 1st-century writer Vitruvius and the flourishing discipline of mathematics, Brunelleschi formulated the Renaissance style that emulated and improved on classical forms. His major feat of engineering was building the dome of the Florence Cathedral.[63] Another building demonstrating this style is the church of St. Andrew in Mantua, built by Alberti. The outstanding architectural work of the High Renaissance was the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica, combining the skills of Bramante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Sangallo and Maderno.

During the Renaissance, architects aimed to use columns, pilasters, and entablatures as an integrated system. The Roman orders types of columns are used: Tuscan and Composite. These can either be structural, supporting an arcade or architrave, or purely decorative, set against a wall in the form of pilasters. One of the first buildings to use pilasters as an integrated system was in the Old Sacristy (1421–1440) by Brunelleschi.[64] Arches, semi-circular or (in the Mannerist style) segmental, are often used in arcades, supported on piers or columns with capitals. There may be a section of entablature between the capital and the springing of the arch. Alberti was one of the first to use the arch on a monumental. Renaissance vaults do not have ribs; they are semi-circular or segmental and on a square plan, unlike the Gothic vault, which is frequently rectangular.

Renaissance artists were not pagans, although they admired antiquity and kept some ideas and symbols of the medieval past. Nicola Pisano (c. 1220 – c. 1278) imitated classical forms by portraying scenes from the Bible. His *Annunciation*, from the Baptistry at Pisa, demonstrates that classical models influenced Italian art before the Renaissance took root as a literary movement.[65]

Science

Main articles: History of science in the Renaissance and Renaissance technology

See also: Medical Renaissance

Applied innovation extended to commerce. At the end of the 15th century, Luca Pacioli published the first work on bookkeeping, making him the founder of accounting.[6]

The rediscovery of ancient texts and the invention of the printing press in about 1440 democratized learning and allowed a faster propagation of more widely distributed ideas. In the first period of the Italian Renaissance, humanists favored the study of humanities over natural philosophy or applied mathematics, and their reverence for classical sources further enshrined the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic views of the universe. Writing around 1450, Nicholas Cusanus anticipated the heliocentric worldview of Copernicus, but in a philosophical fashion.

Science and art were intermingled in the early Renaissance, with polymath artists such as Leonardo da Vinci making observational drawings of anatomy and nature. Da Vinci set up controlled experiments in water flow, medical dissection, and systematic study of movement and aerodynamics, and he devised principles of research method that led Fritjof Capra to classify him as the "father of modern science".[67] Other examples of Da Vinci's contribution during this period include machines designed to saw marbles and lift monoliths, and new discoveries in acoustics, botany, geology, anatomy, and mechanics.[68]

A suitable environment had developed to question classical scientific doctrine. The discovery in 1492 of the New World by Christopher Columbus challenged the classical worldview. The works of Ptolemy (in geography) and Galen (in medicine) were found to not always match everyday observations. As the Reformation and Counter-Reformation clashed, the Northern Renaissance showed a decisive shift in focus from Aristotelean natural philosophy to chemistry and the biological sciences (botany, anatomy, and medicine).[69] The willingness to question previously held truths and search for new answers resulted in a period of major scientific advancements.

Some view this as a "scientific revolution", heralding the beginning of the modern age,[70] others as an acceleration of a continuous process stretching from the ancient world to the present day.[71] Significant scientific advances were made during this time by Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler.[72] Copernicus, in *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*), posited that the Earth moved around the Sun. *De humani corporis fabrica* (*On the Workings of the Human Body*) by Andreas Vesalius, gave a new confidence to the role of dissection, observation, and the mechanistic view of anatomy.[73]

Another important development was in the *process* for discovery, the scientific method,[73] focusing on empirical evidence and the importance of mathematics, while discarding much of Aristotelian science. Early and influential proponents of these ideas included Copernicus, Galileo, and Francis Bacon.[74][75] The new scientific method led to great contributions in the fields of astronomy, physics, biology, and anatomy.[d][76]

Navigation and geography

Further information: Age of Discovery

During the Renaissance, extending from 1450 to 1650,[77] every continent was visited and mostly mapped by Europeans, except the south polar continent now known as Antarctica. This development is depicted in the large world map *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula* made by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu in 1648 to commemorate the Peace of Westphalia.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain seeking a direct route to India of the Delhi Sultanate. He accidentally stumbled upon the Americas, but believed he had reached the East Indies.

In 1606, the Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon sailed from the East Indies in the VOC ship Duyfken and landed in Australia. He charted about 300 km of the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. More than thirty Dutch expeditions followed, mapping sections of the north, west, and south coasts. In 1642–1643, Abel Tasman circumnavigated the continent, proving that it was not joined to the imagined south polar continent.

By 1650, Dutch cartographers had mapped most of the coastline of the continent, which they named New Holland, except the east coast which was charted in 1770 by James Cook.

The long-imagined south polar continent was eventually sighted in 1820. Throughout the Renaissance it had been known as Terra Australis, or 'Australia' for short. However, after that name was transferred to New Holland in the nineteenth century, the new name of 'Antarctica' was bestowed on the south polar continent.[78]

Music

Main article: Renaissance music

See also: Renaissance dance and List of Renaissance composers

From this changing society emerged a common, unifying musical language, in particular the polyphonic style of the Franco-Flemish school. The development of printing made distribution of music possible on a wide scale. Demand for music as entertainment and as an activity for educated amateurs increased with the emergence of a bourgeois class. Dissemination of chansons, motets, and masses throughout Europe coincided with the unification of polyphonic practice into the fluid style that culminated in the second half of the sixteenth century in the work of composers such as Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria, and William Byrd.

Religion

Further information: Renaissance Papacy, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation

The new ideals of humanism, although more secular in some aspects, developed against a Christian backdrop, especially in the Northern Renaissance. Much, if not most, of the new art was commissioned by or in dedication to the Church.[22] However, the Renaissance had a profound effect on contemporary theology, particularly in the way people perceived the relationship between man and God.[22] Many of the period's foremost theologians were followers of the humanist method, including Erasmus, Zwingli, Thomas More, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

The Renaissance began in times of religious turmoil. The late Middle Ages was a period of political intrigue surrounding the Papacy, culminating in the Western Schism, in which three men simultaneously claimed to be true Bishop of Rome.[79] While the schism was resolved by the Council of Constance (1414), a resulting reform movement known as Conciliarism sought to limit the power of the pope. Although the papacy eventually emerged supreme in ecclesiastical matters by the Fifth Council of the Lateran (1511), it was dogged by continued accusations of corruption, most famously in the person of Pope Alexander VI, who was accused variously of simony, nepotism, and fathering children (most of whom were married off, presumably for the consolidation of power) while a cardinal.[80]

Churchmen such as Erasmus and Luther proposed reform to the Church, often based on humanist textual criticism of the New Testament.[22] In October 1517 Luther published the *Ninety-five Theses*, challenging papal authority and criticizing its perceived corruption, particularly with regard to instances of sold indulgences.[e] The 95 Theses led to the Reformation, a break with the Roman Catholic Church that previously claimed hegemony in Western Europe. Humanism and the Renaissance therefore played a direct role in sparking the Reformation, as well as in many other contemporaneous religious debates and conflicts.

Pope Paul III came to the papal throne (1534–1549) after the sack of Rome in 1527, with uncertainties prevalent in the Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation. Nicolaus Copernicus dedicated *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) to Paul III, who became the grandfather of Alessandro Farnese, who had paintings by Titian, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as well as an important collection of drawings, and who commissioned the masterpiece of Giulio Clovio, arguably the last major illuminated manuscript, the *Farnese Hours*.

Self-awareness

By the 15th century, writers, artists, and architects in Italy were well aware of the transformations that were taking place and were using phrases such as *modi antichi* (in the antique manner) or *alle romana et alla antica* (in the manner of the Romans and the ancients) to describe their work. In the 1330s Petrarch referred to pre-Christian times as *antiqua* (ancient) and to the Christian period as *nova* (new).[81] From Petrarch's Italian perspective, this new period (which included his own time) was an age of national eclipse.[81]Leonardo Bruni was the first to use tripartite periodization in his *History of the Florentine People* (1442).[82] Bruni's first two periods were based on those of Petrarch, but he added a third period because he believed that Italy was no longer in a state of decline. Flavio Biondo used a similar framework in *Decades of History from the Deterioration of the Roman Empire* (1439–1453).

Humanist historians argued that contemporary scholarship restored direct links to the classical period, thus bypassing the Medieval period, which they then named for the first time the "Middle Ages". The term first appears in Latin in 1469 as *media tempestas* (middle times).[83] The term *rinascita* (rebirth) first appeared, however, in its broad sense in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, 1550, revised 1568.[84][85] Vasari divides the age into three phases: the first phase contains Cimabue, Giotto, and Arnolfo di Cambio; the second phase contains Masaccio, Brunelleschi, and Donatello; the third centers on Leonardo da Vinci and culminates with Michelangelo. It was not just the growing awareness of classical antiquity that drove this development, according to Vasari, but also the growing desire to study and imitate nature.[86]

Spread

In the 15th century, the Renaissance spread rapidly from its birthplace in Florence to the rest of Italy and soon to the rest of Europe. The invention of the printing press by German printer Johannes Gutenberg allowed the rapid transmission of these new ideas. As it spread, its ideas diversified and changed, being adapted to local culture. In the 20th century, scholars began to break the Renaissance into regional and national movements.



"What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!" – from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

England

Main article: English Renaissance

In England, the 16th century marked the beginning of the English Renaissance with the work of writers William Shakespeare (1564 –1616), Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593), Edmund Spenser (1552/1553 – 1599), Sir Thomas More (1478 – 1535), Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586), architects (such as Inigo Jones (1573 – 1652), who introduced Italianate architecture to England), and composers such as Thomas Tallis (1505 – 1585), John Taverner (c. 1490 – 1545), and William Byrd (c.1539/40 or 1543 – 1623).

France

Main articles: French Renaissance and French Renaissance architecture

The word "Renaissance" is borrowed from the French language, where it means "re-birth". It was first used in the eighteenth century and was later popularized by French historianJules Michelet (1798–1874) in his 1855 work, *Histoire de France* (History of France).[87][88]

In 1495 the Italian Renaissance arrived in France, imported by King Charles VIII after his invasion of Italy. A factor that promoted the spread of secularism was the inability of the Church to offer assistance against the Black Death. Francis I imported Italian art and artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, and built ornate palaces at great expense. Writers such as François Rabelais, Pierre de Ronsard, Joachim du Bellay, and Michel de Montaigne, painters such as Jean Clouet, and musicians such as Jean Mouton also borrowed from the spirit of the Renaissance.

In 1533, a fourteen-year-old Caterina de' Medici (1519–1589), born in Florence to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, married Henry II of France, second

son of King Francis I and Queen Claude. Though she became famous and infamous for her role in France's religious wars, she made a direct contribution in bringing arts, sciences, and music (including the origins of ballet) to the French court from her native Florence.

Germany

Main articles: German Renaissance and Weser Renaissance

In the second half of the 15th century, the Renaissance spirit spread to Germany and the Low Countries, where the development of the printing press (ca. 1450) and Renaissance artists such as Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) predated the influence from Italy. In the early Protestant areas of the country humanism became closely linked to the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation, and the art and writing of the German Renaissance frequently reflected this dispute.[89] However, the Gothic style and medieval scholastic philosophy remained exclusively until the turn of the 16th century. Emperor Maximilian I of Habsburg (ruling 1493–1519) was the first truly Renaissance monarch of the Holy Roman Empire.

Hungary

Further information: Renaissance architecture in Central and Eastern Europe

After Italy, Hungary was the first European country where the Renaissance appeared.[90] The Renaissance style came directly from Italy during the Quattrocento to Hungary first in the Central European region, thanks to the development of early Hungarian-Italian relationships—not only in dynastic connections, but also in cultural, humanistic and commercial relations—growing in strength from the 14th century. The relationship between Hungarian and Italian Gothic styles was a second reason—exaggerated breakthrough of walls is avoided, preferring clean and light structures. Large-scale building schemes provided ample and long term work for the artists, for example, the building of the Friss (New) Castle in Buda, the castles of Visegrád, Tata, and Várpalota. In Sigismund's court there were patrons such as Pipo Spano, a descendant of the Scolari family of Florence, who invited Manetto Ammanatini and Masolino da Pannicale to Hungary.[91]

The new Italian trend combined with existing national traditions to create a particular local Renaissance art. Acceptance of Renaissance art was furthered by the continuous arrival of humanist thought in the country. Many young Hungarians studying at Italian universities came closer to the Florentine humanist center, so a direct connection with Florence evolved. The growing number of Italian traders moving to Hungary, specially to Buda, helped this process. New thoughts were carried by the humanist prelates, among them Vitéz János, archbishop of Esztergom, one of the founders of Hungarian humanism.[92] During the long reign of emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg the Royal Castle of Buda became probably the largest Gothic palace of the late Middle Ages. King Matthias Corvinus (r. 1458–1490) rebuilt the palace in early Renaissance style and further expanded it.[93][94]

After the marriage in 1476 of King Matthias to Beatrice of Naples, Buda became one of the most important artistic centers of the Renaissance north of the Alps.[95] The most important humanists living in Matthias' court were Antonio Bonfini and the famous Hungarian poet Janus Pannonius.[95]András Hess set up a printing press in Buda in 1472. Matthias Corvinus's library, the Bibliotheca Corviniana, was Europe's greatest collections of secular books: historical chronicles, philosophic and scientific works in the 15th century. His library was second only in size to the Vatican Library. (However, the Vatican Library mainly contained Bibles and religious materials.)[96] In 1489, Bartolomeo della Fonte of Florence wrote that Lorenzo de' Medici founded his own Greek-Latin library encouraged by the example of the Hungarian king. Corvinus's library is part of UNESCO World Heritage.[97]

Matthias started at least two major building projects. The works in Buda and Visegrád began in about 1479. Two new wings and a hanging garden were built at the royal castle of Buda, and the palace at Visegrád was rebuilt in Renaissance style. Matthias appointed the Italian Chimenti Camicia and the Dalmatian Giovanni Dalmata to direct these projects. Matthias commissioned the leading Italian artists of his age to embellish his palaces: for instance, the sculptor Benedetto da Majano and the painters Filippino Lippi and Andrea Mantegna worked for him. A copy of Mantegna's portrait of Matthias survived. Matthias also hired the Italian military engineer Aristotele Fioravanti to direct the rebuilding of the forts along the southern frontier. He had new monasteries built in Late Gothic style for the Franciscans in Kolozsvár, Szeged and Hunyad, and for the Paulines in Fejéregyháza. In the spring of 1485, Leonardo da Vinci travelled to Hungary on behalf of Sforza to meet king Matthias Corvinus, and was commissioned by him to paint a Madonna.[106]

Matthias enjoyed the company of Humanists and had lively discussions on various topics with them. The fame of his magnanimity encouraged many scholars—mostly Italian—to settle in Buda. Antonio Bonfini, Pietro Ranzano, Bartolomeo Fonzio, and Francesco Bandini spent many years in Matthias's court. This circle of educated men introduced the ideas of Neoplatonism to Hungary. Like all intellectuals of his age, Matthias was convinced that the movements and combinations of the stars and planets exercised influence on individuals' life and on the history of nations. Galeotto Marzio described him as "king and astrologer", and Antonio Bonfini said Matthias "never did anything without consulting the stars". Upon his request, the famous astronomers of the age, Johannes Regiomontanus and Marcin Bylica, set up an observatory in Buda and installed it with astrolabes and celestial globes. Regiomontanus dedicated his book on navigation that was used by Christopher Columbus to Matthias.

Other important figures of Hungarian Renaissance include Bálint Balassi (poet), Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos (poet), Bálint Bakfark (composer and lutenist), and Master MS (fresco painter).

Renaissance in the Low Countries

Main articles: Renaissance in the Netherlands and Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting

Culture in the Netherlands at the end of the 15th century was influenced by the Italian Renaissance through trade via Bruges, which made Flanders wealthy. Its nobles commissioned artists who became known across Europe.[115] In science, the anatomistAndreas Vesalius led the way; in cartography, Gerardus Mercator's map assisted explorers and navigators. In art, Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting ranged from the strange work of Hieronymus Bosch[116] to the everyday life depictions of Pieter Brueghel the Elder.[115]

Northern Europe

Main article: Northern Renaissance

The Renaissance in Northern Europe has been termed the "Northern Renaissance". While Renaissance ideas were moving north from Italy, there was a simultaneous southward spread of some areas of innovation, particularly in music.[117] The music of the 15th-century Burgundian School defined the beginning of the Renaissance in music, and the polyphony of the Netherlanders, as it moved with the musicians themselves into Italy, formed the core of the first true international style in music since the standardization of Gregorian Chant in the 9th century.[117] The culmination of the Netherlandish school was in the music of the Italian composerPalestrina. At the end of the 16th century Italy again became a center of musical innovation, with the development of the polychoral style of the Venetian School, which spread northward into Germany around 1600.

The paintings of the Italian Renaissance differed from those of the Northern Renaissance. Italian Renaissance artists were among the first to paint secular scenes, breaking away from the purely religious art of medieval painters. Northern Renaissance artists initially remained focused on religious subjects, such as the contemporary religious upheaval portrayed by Albrecht Dürer. Later, the works of Pieter Bruegel influenced artists to paint scenes of daily life rather than religious or classical themes. It was also during the Northern Renaissance that Flemish brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck perfected the oil painting technique, which enabled artists to produce strong colors on a hard surface that could survive for centuries.[118]

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