5. Based on the poem, it can be inferred that Christine de Pizan (A) believed that Joan of Arc would be a more effective military leader than King Charles VII. (B) was afraid that King Charles's future military actions would lead to defeat. (C) had written a poem about Joan of Arc. (D) wrote a poem about Joan of Arc's battle at Orleans.

Pizan considers the "rebel" of the fourth stanza above?

6. In the poem, another reason for the Hundred Years' War is described. It was caused by (A) the longbow and crossbow enemies. (B) the movement of the papacy to Avignon. (C) the defeat and exile of Philip IV of France. (D) the defeat and exile of Pope Boniface.

Short-Answer Questions

QUESTION 1 REFERS TO THE FOLLOWING PAINTING.

1. Giotto's artwork represents a significant break from traditional European art up until this era.
   - Giotto's artwork represents a significant break from traditional European art up until this era.

   A. Briefly explain ONE feature of this painting that was not significantly different from paintings prior to this.
   B. Briefly explain ONE feature of Giotto's work that led to significant changes in European art.

   C. Briefly explain ANOTHER feature of Giotto's work that led to significant changes in European art.

   2. Answer all parts of the question that follows.
   - Giotto's artwork represents a significant break from traditional European art up until this era.

   A. Briefly explain ONE important similarity between the French Peasant Revolt of 1381 known as the Jacquerie and the English Peasant Revolt of 1381.
   B. Briefly explain ONE important difference between the French Peasant Revolt of 1381 known as the Jacquerie and the English Peasant Revolt of 1381.

   C. Briefly analyze ONE factor that accounts for the difference you identified in part B.

   AP THEMATIC QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU READ

   Why did Renaissance ideals first take hold in the city-states of northern Italy (INT-5, OS-6, OS-4, OS-6, OS-7, PP-3, SP-4, NI-1)?

   How did the development of Renaissance humanism encourage study of the classics, promote secularism, and lead to the ideals of virtue? (OS-1, OS-6, OS-7, IS-5)

   How did the classical emphasis on individualism and secularism affect the art, literature, and architecture of the period? (OS-1, OS-6, OS-7)

   WERE THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES A continuation of the Middle Ages or the beginning of a new era? Both positions can be defended. Although the disintegrative patterns of the fourteenth century continued into the fifteenth, at the same time there were elements of recovery that made the fifteenth century a period of significant political, economic, artistic, and intellectual change. The humanists and intellectuals of the age called their period (from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century) an age of rebirth, believing that they had restored arts and letters to new glory after they had been "neglected" or "dead" for centuries. The humanists also saw their age as one of accomplished individuals who dominated the landscape of their time. Michelangelo, the great Italian artist of the early sixteenth century, and Pope Julius II, the "warrior pope," were two such titans. The artist's temperament and the pope's temper led to many lengthy and often local quarrels between the two. The pope had hired Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, a difficult task for a man long accustomed to being a sculptor. Michelangelo undertook the project.
but refused for a long time to allow anyone, including the pope, to see his work. Julius grew anxious, pestering Michelangelo on a regular basis about when the ceiling would be finished. Exasperated by the pope's requests, Michelangelo once replied, according to Giorgio Vasari, his contemporary biographer, that the ceiling would be finished when it satisfied him 'as an artist.' The pope responded by threatening Michelangelo that if he did not finish the ceiling quickly, the pope would have him thrown down from the scaffolding. Fearing the pope's anger, Michelangelo began doing "all that was wanted" and quickly completed the ceiling, one of the great masterpieces in the history of Western art.

The humans' view of their age as a rebirth of the classical civilization of the Greeks and Romans ultimately led historians to use the French word Renaissance to identify this age. Although recent historians have emphasized the many elements of continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the latter age was also distinguished by its own unique characteristics.

**Meaning and Characteristics of the Italian Renaissance**

**FOCUS QUESTION:** What characteristics distinguish the Renaissance from the Middle Ages?

Renaissance means "rebirth." Many people who lived in Italy between 1350 and 1517 believed that they had witnessed a rebirth of antiquity or Greco-Roman civilization, marking a new age. To them, the thousand or so years between the end of the Roman Empire and their own era constituted a middle period (the "Middle Ages"), characterized by darkness because of its lack of classical culture. Historians of the nineteenth century later used similar terminology to describe this period in Italy. The Swiss historian and art critic Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) created the modern concept of the Renaissance in his celebrated book The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, published in 1860. He portrayed Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the birthplace of the modern world (the Italians were "the firstborn among the sons of modern Europe") and saw the revival of antiquity, the "perfection of the individual," and "secularism" (the "worldliness of the Italians") as its distinguishing features. Burckhardt exaggerated the individuality and secularism of the Renaissance and failed to recognize the depths of its religious sentiment; nevertheless, he established the framework for all modern interpretations of the period. Although contemporary scholars do not believe that the Renaissance represents a sudden or dramatic cultural break with the Middle Ages, as Burckhardt argued—there was, after all, much continuity in economic, political, and social life—the Renaissance can still be viewed as a distinct period of European history that manifested itself first in Italy and then spread to the rest of Europe.

As a result of its common precursors and political evolution, northern Italy by the mid-fourteenth century was mostly a land of independent cities that dominated the country districts around them. These city-states became the centers of Italian political, economic, social, and cultural life. Within this emerging society, a secular spirit emerged as increasing wealth created new possibilities for the enjoyment of worldly things (see the box on p. 330).

Above all, the Renaissance was an age of recovery from the calamitous fourteenth century, a time for the slow process of recuperating from the effects of the Black Death, political disorder, and economic recession. This recovery was accompanied by a rediscovery of the culture of classical antiquity, increasing awareness of their own historical past, Italian intellectuals became intensely interested in the Greek and Roman culture of the ancient Mediterranean world. This revival of classical antiquity (the Middle Ages had in fact preserved much of ancient Latin culture) affected activities as diverse as politics and art and led to new attempts to reconcile the pagan philosophy of the Greco-Roman world with Christian thought, as well as new ways of viewing human beings.

A revived emphasis on individual ability became a characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. As the fifteenth-century Florentine architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472, often called Saint Thomas Aquinas) expressed it, "Men can do all things if they will." A high regard for human dignity and worth and a realization of individual potentiality created a new social ideal of the well-rounded personality or universal person—"l'omo universale" ("the universal man")—who was capable of achievements in many areas of life.

These general features of the Italian Renaissance were not characteristic of all Italians but were primarily the preserve of the wealthy upper classes, who constituted a small percentage of the total population. The achievements of the Italian Renaissance were the product of an elite, rather than a mass, movement. Nevertheless, indirectly it did have some impact on ordinary people, especially in the cities, where so many of the intellectual and artistic accomplishments of the period were most visible.

The Making of a Renaissance Society

**FOCUS QUESTION:** What major social changes occurred during the Renaissance?

After the severe economic reversals and social upheavals of the fourteenth century, the European economy gradually recovered as the volume of manufacturing and trade increased.

**Economic Recovery**

By the fourteenth century, Italian merchants were carrying on a flourishing commerce throughout the Mediterranean and had also expanded their lines of trade north along the Atlantic seaboard. The great galleys of the Venetian Flanders Fleet maintained a direct sea route from Venice to England and the Hanseatic League, which came into contact with the increasingly powerful Hanseatic League of merchants. Hard hit by the plague, the Italians lost their commercial pre-eminence while the Hanseatic League continued to prosper.

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**A RENAISSANCE BANQUET**

In Greek and Roman society, a banquet during the Renaissance was an occasion for good food, interesting conversation, music, and dancing. In Renaissance society, it was also a symbol of status and an opportunity to impress people with the power and wealth of one's family. Banquets were held to celebrate public and religious festivals, official visits, marriages, and special occasions. The following menu lists the foods served at a grand banquet given by Pope Pius V in the sixteenth century.

**A Sixteenth-Century Banquet**

**First Course**

Cold Delicacies from the Sideboard

- Peaches of marzipan and marzipan balls
- Naples pike cakes
- Malaga wine and Plum bisquets
- Pheasants
- Prosciutto cooked in wine, served with capers and grape pulp
- Salted perch tongues cooked in wine, sliced
- Spiced roast squirrel, cold, with their tongues sliced over them
- Sweet mustard

**Second Course**

Cold Hot Foods from the Kitchen, Roasts

- Fried veal sweetbreads and liver
- Roasted Skylarks with lemon sauce
- Roasted quails with sliced eggplants
- Stuffed spit-roasted pigeons with capers sprinkled over them
- Spiced roast rabbit, with sauce and crushed pine nuts
- Partridges larded and spit-roasted, served with lemon
- Heavily seasoned pork with lemon slices
- Shells of veal, spit-roasted, with a sauce made from the juices

**Leg of goat, spit-roasted, with a sauce made from the juices**


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**EXPANSION OF TRADE**

As early as the thirteenth century, a number of North German coastal towns had formed a commercial and military association known as the Hanse, or Hanseatic League. The city of Lübeck took the lead and became a major trading center for northern Europe and the chief city of the Hanseatic League. By 1500, more than eighty cities belonged to the League, which created its own armies for mutual protection and established settlements and commercial bases in many cities in England and northern Europe, including the chief towns of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. For almost two hundred years, the Hanse had a monopoly on northern European trade in timber, fish, grain, metals, honey, and wine. In southern outlets in Flanders, the port city of Bruges, became the economic crossroads of Europe in the fourteenth century, serving as the meeting place between Hanseatic merchants and the Flanders Fleet of Venice. In the fifteenth century, however, sailing of the port caused Bruges to enter a slow decline. So did the Hanseatic League, which was increasingly unable to compete with the developing larger territorial states.

Overall, trade recovered dramatically from the economic contraction of the fourteenth century. The Italians and especially the Venetians, despite new restrictive pressures on their eastern Mediterranean trade from the Ottoman Turks (see

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**Soup of almond paste, with the flesh of three pigeons to each serving.**

**Third Course**

Hot Foods from the Kitchen, Boiled Meats and Stews

- Stuffed fat goose, boiled Lombard style and covered with sliced almonds
- Stuffed breast of veal, boiled, garnished with flowers
- Very young calf, boiled, garnished with parsley
- Almonds in garlic sauce
- Turkish-style rice with milk, sprinkled with cinnamon
- Stewed pigeons with mortadella sausage and white onions
- Cabbage soup with sausages
- Poultry pie, two slices to each pie
- Preserved breast of goat dressed with fried onions
- Pickled filled with mustard cream
- Boiled calves' feet with chest and egg

**Fourth Course**

Delicacies from the Sideboard

- Beans taro
- Quince pastries
- Pear tarts, the pears wrapped in marzipan
- Parmesan cheese and Rivera cheese
- Fresh almonds on wine lees
- Chestnuts roasted over the coals and served with salt and pepper
- Milk cards
- Ring-shaped cakes
- Waffles made from ground grain

**APP HISTORY REASONING SKILL:** Caution

What economic or political circumstances enabled the economic recovery?
"The Ottoman Turks and the Fall of the Byzantine Empire" late in this chapter), continued to maintain a healthy commer-
cial empire. Not until the sixteenth century, when transatlantic
discoveries gave new importance to the states along the ocean,
and the petty Italian city-states begin to suffer from the com-
petitive advantages of the emerging more powerful nation-
al territorial states.

Industries Old and New. The economic depression of the fourteenth century also affected patterns of manufactur-
ing. Fifteenth-century serfdom was declining in the north-
ern Italian cities had been particularly devastated. By the begin-
ing of the fifteenth century, however, the Florentine woolen
industry had begun to recover. At the same time, Italy's
cities began to develop and expand luxury industries, espe-
cially silk, glassware, and handworked items in metal and
precious stones.

Other new industries, especially printing, mining, and met-
allurgy, began to rival the textile industry in importance in the
fifteenth century. New machinery and techniques for dig-
ging deeper mines and for separating metals from ore and puri-
ifying them were devised, and entrepreneurs quickly developed
large mining operations to produce copper, iron, and silver.
Especially valuable were the rich mineral deposits in central
Europe. The demand for metal for the new military needs in
Europe, working in turn contributed to the development of firearms
that were more effective than the crude weapons of the four-
teenth century.

Banking and Merchants. The city of Florence regained its
preeminence in banking in the fifteenth century, due primarily
to the Medici (Med-i-chi) family. The Medici had expanded
from cloth production into commerce, real estate, and banking.
In its best days (in the fifteenth century), the House of Medici

and new, who constituted between 2 and 3 percent of the popu-
lation in most countries, managed to dominate society as they
had done in the Middle Ages, serving as military officers and
holding important political posts as well as advising the king.
In the fifteenth century, members of the aristocracy increas-
ingly pursued education as the means to maintain their role in
the government. By 1500, certain ideals came to be expected of the noble or aristocrat. These ideals were best expressed in "The Book of
the Courtier" by the Italian Baldassare Castiglione (ba-dah- 
dah-say-ray tsat-ah-del-yoh-ray) (1478-1529). First published in 1528, Casti-
glione's work soon became popular throughout Europe and
remained a fundamental handbook for European aristocrats for
centuries.

In his book, Castiglione described the three basic attributes
of the perfect courtier. First, nobles should possess funda-
mental native endowments, such as impecable character,
grace, talent, and noble birth. The perfect courtier must also
cultivate certain achievements. Primarily, he should partici-
pate in military and bodily exercises, because the principal
profession of a courtier was being arms. But unlike the
medieval knight, who had been required only to have military
skill, the Renaissance courtier was also expected to have a clas-
sical education and to adorn his life with the arts by playing
a musical instrument, drawing, and painting. In Castiglione's
balance, the Renaissance ideal of the well-developed personality
became a social ideal of the aristocracy. Finally, the aristocrat
was expected to follow a certain standard of conduct. Nobles
were expected to be good people; while remaining modest,
they should not hide their accomplishments but show them
with grace.

What was the purpose of these courtly standards? Casti-
glione wrote:

I think that the aim of the perfect Courtier, which we have
not spoken of up to now, is to win for himself, by means of
the accomplishments ascribed to him by these gentlemen,
the favor and mind of the prince whom he serves that he
may be able to live and always will tell him, the truth
about everything he needs to know, without fear or risk of
deceiving him; and that when he sees the mind of his prince
inclined to a wrong action, he may dare to oppose him... so
as to dissuade him of every evil intent and bring him to the
path of virtue.

The aim of the perfect noble, then, was to serve his prince in
an effective and honest way. Nobles would adhere to these prin-
ciples for hundreds of years while they continued to dominate
European life socially and politically.

Peasants and Townpeople. Peasants made up the over-
whelming mass of the Third Estate and continued to constitute
by far the largest percentage of the European population, except in
the highly urbanized areas of northern Italy and Flanders. The
most noticeable trend produced by the economic crisis of the
fifteenth century was the decline of the manorial system, the
and the continuing elimination of serfdom. This process had
already begun in the twelfth century when the introduction
of a money economy made possible the conversion of serv-
ile labor dues into rents paid in money, although they also
continued to be paid in kind or labor. The contraction of the
peasantry after the Black Death simply accelerated this process,
since lords found it convenient to deal with the peasants by
granting freedom and accepting rents. The lords' lands were
then filled by hired workers or rented out. By the end of the
fifteenth century, serfdom was declining in western Europe,
and more and more peasants were becoming legally free.

The remainder of the Third Estate centered around the
inhabitants of towns and cities, originally the merchants and
artisans who formed the bourgeoisie. The Renaissance town or
the city of the fifteenth century actually was home to a multitude
of townspeople widely separated socially and economically.
At the top of urban society were the patricians, whose wealth
from capitalist enterprises in trade, industry, and banking
enabled them to dominate their urban communities eco-
nomically, socially, and politically. Below them were the petty
burglers—the shopkeepers, artisans, goldsmiths, and guild
members, who were largely concerned with providing goods
and services for local consumption. Below these two groups
were the propertyless workers earning pitiful wages and the
unemployed, living squalid and miserable lives; these people
constituted 30 to 40 percent of the population living in cities.
In many places in Europe in the late fourteenth and fifteenth
centuries, urban poverty increased dramatically. One rich mer-
chant of Florence wrote:

Those that are lazy and indolent in a way that does harm
to the city, and who can offer no just reason for their
condition, should either be forced to work or expelled from
the Commune. The Commune would do this to the great
harmful part of the poorest class... If the lowest order of
society earn enough food to keep them going from day to
day, then they have enough."

But even this large group was not at the bottom of the social
scale. Beneath them were the slaves, especially in the Italian

Slavery in the Renaissance. Agricultural slavery existed in
the early Middle Ages but had declined for economic reasons
and been replaced by serfdom by the ninth century. Although
some domestic slaves remained, slavery in European society
had largely disappeared by the eleventh century. It reappeared
first in Spain, where both Christians and Muslims used cap-
tured prisoners as slaves during the lengthy Reconquista. In
the second half of the fourteenth century, the shortage of workers
after the Black Death led Italians to introduce slavery on a
fairly large scale.

In the Italian cities, slaves were used as skilled workers,
making handicrafts for their masters, or as household
workers. Girls served as nurserymaids and boys as playmates.
Fiammetta Adimari wrote to her husband in 1496: "I must
remind you that when Alfonso is weaned we ought to get a
little slave girl to keep her after bath and to keep her company." Most slaves, though, were females, many of them young girls. In Florence, wealthy merchants might own
two or three slaves. Often men of the household took slaves as concubines, which sometimes led to the birth of illegitimate children. In 1362, the wealthy merchant Francesco Datini fathered four illegitimate children by his concubine daughter by Lucia, his twenty-year-old slave. His wife, Margherita, who was unable to bear any children, reluctantly agreed to raise the girl as their own daughter. Many illegitimate children were not as fortunate.

Slaves for the Italian market were obtained primarily from the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea region and included Tartars, Russians, Albanians, and Dalmatians. There were also slaves from Africa, either Moors or Ethiopians, and Muslims from Spain. Because of the lucrative nature of the slave trade, Italian merchants became involved in the transportation of slaves. Between 1444 and 1445, ten thousand slaves were sold on the Venetian market.

By the end of the fifteenth century, slavery had declined dramatically in the Italian cities. Many slaves had been freed by their owners for humanitarian reasons, and the major source of slaves dried up as the Black Sea slave markets were closed to Italian traders after the Turks conquered the Byzantine Empire. Moreover, a general feeling had arisen that slaves—the "domestic enemy," as they were called—were dangerous and not worth the effort. By the sixteenth century, slaves were in evidence only at princely courts, where they were kept as curiosities; this was especially true of Mack slaves.

In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese had imported increasing numbers of African slaves for southern European markets. It has been estimated that between 1444 and 1505, some 140,000 slaves were shipped from Africa. The presence of blacks in European society was not entirely new. Saint Maurice, a Christian martyr of the fourth century, was portrayed by medieval artists as a black knight and became the center of a popular cult in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The number of blacks in Europe was small, however, until their importation as slaves.

The Family in Renaissance Italy

The family played an important role in Renaissance Italy (see "Images of Everyday Life" on p. 319). Family meant, first of all, the extended household of parents, children, and servants (if the family was wealthy) and could also include grandparents, widowed mothers, and even unmarriageable children. Families that were related and bore the same surname often lived near each other and might dominate an entire urban district. Old family names—Strozzi (STRAW-zee), Rucellai (rok-CHEL-e), Medici—confessed great status and prestige. The family bond was a source of great security in a dangerous and violent world, and its importance helps explain the vendetta in the Italian Renaissance. A crime committed by one family member fell on the entire family, ensuring that retaliation by the offended family would be a bloody affair involving large numbers of people.

Marriage

To maintain the family, parents gave careful attention to arranging marriages, often to strengthen business or family ties. Details were worked out well in advance, sometimes when children were only two or three years old, and reinforced by a legally binding marriage contract (see the box on p. 338). The important aspect of the contract was the amount of the dowry, money presented by the wife's family to the husband upon marriage. The dowry could involve large sums and was expected of all families. The size of the dowry was an indication of whether the bride was moving upward or downward in society. With a large dowry, a daughter could marry a man of higher social status, thereby enabling her family to move up the social ladder; if the daughter married a man of lower social status, however, her dowry would be smaller because the reputation of her family would raise the status of her husband's family.

The father husband was the center of the Italian family. He gave it his name, was responsible for it in all legal matters, managed all finances (his wife had no share in his wealth), and made the crucial decisions that determined his children's lives. A father's authority over his children was absolute until he died or formally freed his children. In Renaissance Italy, children did not become adults on reaching a certain age; adulthood came only when the father either died or before a judge and formally emancipated them. The age of emancipation varied from early teens to late twenties.

Children

The wife managed the household, a position that gave women a certain degree of autonomy in their daily lives. Women of the upper and middle classes, however, were expected to remain at home, under the supervision of their father or husband. Moreover, most wives knew that their primary function was to bear children. Upper-class wives were frequently pregnant; Alessandra Strozzi of Florence, for example, who had been married at the age of sixteen, bore eight children in ten years. Poor women did not conceive at the same rate because they nurtured their own babies. Wealthy women gave their infants out to wet nurses, which enabled them to become pregnant more quickly after the birth of a child.

For women in the Renaissance, childbirth was a fearful occasion. Not only was it painful, but it could be deadly; as many as 50 percent of mothers died in childbirth. In his memoirs, the Florentine merchant Gregorio Dati recalled that three of his four wives had died in childbirth. His third wife, after bearing eleven children in fifteen years, "died in childbirth after lengthy suffering, which she bore with remarkable strength and patience." Nor did the tragedies end with childbirth. Surviving mothers often faced the death of their children. In Florence in the fifteenth century, for example, almost 50 percent of the children born to merchant families died before the age of twenty. Given these mortality rates, many upper-class families sought to have as many children as possible to ensure that there would be a surviving male heir to the family fortune. This concern is evident in the Florentine humanist Leon Battista Alberti's treatise On the Family, where one of the characters remarks, "How many families do we see today in decadence and ruin... Of all these families not only the magnificence and greatness but the very men, not only the men but the very names are shrunk away and gone. Their memory... is wiped out and obliterated."
MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS

MARRIAGES WERE SO IMPORTANT in maintaining families in Renaissance Italy that much energy was put into arranging them. Parents made the choices for their children, most often for considerations that had little to do with the modern notion of love. This selection is taken from the letters of a Florentine matron of the illustrious Strozzi family to her son Filippo in Naples. The family’s considerations were complicated by the fact that the son was in exile.

Alessandra Strozzi to Her Son Filippo in Naples

[April 20, 1465] Concerning the matter of a wife [for you], it appears to me that if Francesco di Mezer Tanagli wishes to give his daughter, that it would be a fine marriage... Francesco Tanagli has a good reputation, and he has held office, not the highest, but still he has been in office. [July 6, 1465] Francesco is a good friend of Marco [Parenti, Alessandro’s son-in-law] and he trusts him. On St. John’s day, he spoke to him discreetly and persuasively, saying that for several months he had heard that we were interested in the girl and... that when we had made up our minds, she would come to us willingly... He said that you were a worthy man, and that his family had always made good marriages, but that he had only a small dowry to give her, and so he would prefer to send her out of Florence to someone of worth, rather than to give her to someone here, from among those who were available, with little money... We have information that she is able and competent. She is responsible for a large family (there are twelve children, six boys and six girls), and the mother is always pregnant and isn’t very competent...

[August 31, 1465] I have recently received some very favorable information [about the Tanagli girl] from two individuals... They are in agreement that whoever gets her will be content... Concerning her beauty, they told me what I had already seen, that she is attractive and well-proportioned. Her face is long, but I couldn’t look directly into her face, since she appeared to be aware of that I was examining her... and so she turned away from me like the wind... She reads quite well... and she can dance and sing.

So yesterday I sent for Marco and told him what I had learned. And we talked about the matter for a while, and decided that he should say something to the father to give him a little hope, but not so much that we couldn’t withdraw, and find out from him the amount of the dowry... May God help us to choose what will contribute to our tranquility and to the consolation of all...

[September 13, 1465] Marco came to me and said that he had met with Francesco Tanagli, who had spoken very coldly, so that I understand that he had changed his mind. Filippo Strozzi eventually married Fiorentina di Donato Adimari in 1466.


AP® HISTORY REASONING SKILLS: Contextualization; Comparison What was the role of marriage in a family’s political and economic status? How has that role changed in modern times?

The Italian States in the Renaissance

FOCUS QUESTION: How did Machiavelli’s works reflect the political realities of Renaissance Italy?

By the fifteenth century, five major powers dominated the Italian peninsula: Milan, Venice, Florence, the Papal States, and Naples (see Map 12.1).

The Five Major States

Northern Italy was divided between the duchy of Milan and the republic of Venice. After the death of the last Visconti ruler of Milan in 1447, Francesco Sforza (Frances-SFURZ-koh SPORT-sah), one of the leading contenders of the time (see Chapter 11), turned on his Milanesi employers, conquered the city, and became its new duke. Both the Visconti and the Sforza rulers worked to create a highly centralized territorial state. They were especially successful in devising systems of taxation that generated enormous revenues for the government. The maritime republic of Venice remained an extremely stable political entity governed by a small oligarchy of merchant-aristocrats. Its commercial empire brought in enormous revenues and gave it the status of an international power. At the end of the fourteenth century, Venice embarked on the conquest of a territorial state in northern Italy to protect its food supply and its overland trade routes. Although expansion along the mainland made sense to the Venetians, it frightened Milan and Florence, which worked to curb what they perceived as the expansionary designs of the Venetians.

The republic of Florence dominated the region of Tuscany. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, Florence was governed by a small merchant oligarchy that manipulated the apparently republican government. In 1448, Cosimo de’ Medici took control of this oligarchy. Although the wealthy Medici family maintained republican forms of government for appearances sake, it ran the government from behind the scenes. Through lavish patronage and careful courting of political allies, Cosimo (1444-1464) and later his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449-1492), were successful in dominating the city at a time when Florence was the center of the cultural Renaissance.

To some Florentines, Florence was the ideal city. One official at the beginning of the fifteenth century exclaimed:

What city not merely in Italy, but in all the world, is more securely walled in its walls, more proud in its palazzi, more bedazzled with churches, more beautiful in its architecture, more imposing in its gates, richer in piazzas, happier in its wide streets, greater in its people, more glorious in its citizenry, more inexhaustible in wealth, more fertile in its fields?

But as one historian has recently noted, official praise of the city failed to note the ugly side of Renaissance Florence: the gross inequality between rich and poor; poverty that was common to a majority of Florentines, begging that was widespread, and both crime and disease that were rampant.

The Papal States lay in central Italy. Although these lands were nominally under the political control of the popes, papal residence in Avignon and the Great Schism had enabled individual cities and territories, such as Urbino (v YUR-been-oh), Bologna (buh-LOH-nuh-uh), and Ferrara, to become independent of papal authority. The Renaissance popes of the fifteenth century directed much of their energy toward reestablishing their control over the Papal States (see “The Renaissance Papacy” later in this chapter).
The kingdom of Naples, which encompassed most of southern Italy and usually the island of Sicily, was fought over by the French and the Aragones until the latter established their domination in the mid-fifteenth century. Throughout the Renaissance, the kingdom of Naples remained a backward monarchy with a population consisting largely of poverty-stricken peasants dominated by unruly nobles. It shared little in the cultural glories of the Renaissance.

**Independent City-States**

Besides the five major states, there were a number of independent city-states under the control of powerful ruling families that became brilliant centers of Renaissance culture in the fifteenth century. These included Mantua (MAN-choo-uh), under the enlightened rule of the Gonzaga (gahn-ZAH-gah) Lords; Ferrara, governed by the Este (EEST-eh) family; and perhaps the most famous, Urbino, ruled by the Montefeltro dynasty.

**Urbino**

Federigo da Montefeltro (fy-dray-REE-goh dah mahn-TEF-eh-leh- Troh), who ruled Urbino from 1444 to 1482, received a classical education typical of the famous humanist school in Mantua run by Vittorino da Feltre (vee-taw-nee-oh dah FEL-treh) (1378–1446) (see "Education in the Renaissance" later in this chapter). He also learned the skills of fighting, since the Montefeltro family compensated for the poverty of Urbino by hiring themselves out as condottieri. Federigo was not only a good ruler but also a rather unusual condottiere by fifteenth-century standards. Although not a particularly brilliant soldier, he was reliable and honest. He did not break his promises, even when urged to do so by a papal legate. At the same time, Duke Federigo was one of the greatest patrons of Renaissance culture. Under his direction, Urbino became a well-known cultural and intellectual center. Though a despotic, Federigo was also benevolent. It was said of him that he could walk safely through the streets of Urbino accompanied by a bodyguard, a feat few Renaissance rulers dared to emulate.

**The Role of Women**

A noticeable feature of these smaller Renaissance courts was the important role played by women. Battista Sforza (bah-tee-uh fuhr-ZAH), the niece of the ruler of Milan, was the wife of Federigo da Montefeltro. The duke called his wife "the delight of both my public and my private hours." An intelligent woman, she was well versed in both Greek and Latin and did much to foster art and letters in Urbino. As a prominent condottiera, Federigo was frequently absent, and like the wives of medieval lords, Battista Sforza was respected for governing the state "with firmness and good sense.

Perhaps the most famous of the Renaissance ruling women was Isabella d'Este (1473–1539), daughter of the duke of Ferrara, who married Francesco Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua. Their court was another important center of art and learning in the Renaissance. Educated at the brilliant court of Ferrara, Isabella was known for her intelligence and political wisdom. Called the "first lady of the world," she attracted artists and intellectuals to the Mantua court and was responsible for amassing one of the finest libraries in all of Italy. Her numerous letters to friends, family, princes, and artists all over Europe reveal her political acumen as well as her good sense of humor (see the box on p. 141). Both before and after the death of her husband, she effectively ruled Mantua and won a reputation as a clever negotiator.

**Warfare in Italy**

The fragmented world of the Italian territorial states gave rise to a political practice that was later used on a larger scale by competing European states. This was the concept of a balance of power, designed to prevent the aggrandizement of any one state at the expense of the others. This system was especially evident after 1452, when the Italian states signed the Peace of Lodi (LOH-dee), which ended almost a half-century of war and inaugurated a relatively peaceful forty-year era in Italy. An alliance system (Milan, Florence, and Naples versus Venice and the papacy) was created that led to a workable balance of power within Italy. It failed, however, to establish lasting cooperation among the major powers.

The growth of powerful monarchal states (see "The European States in the Renaissance" later in this chapter) led to trouble for the Italians. Italy soon became a battlefield for the great power struggle between the French and Spanish monarchies. Italian wealth and splendor probably would have been inviting to its southern neighbors under any circumstances, but it was actually the breakdown of the Italian balance of power that encouraged the invasions and began the struggle for Italian power. I would rather lose our State, than deprive ourselves of our country. I am hoping that in time your own prudence and kindness will make you understand that I have acted more lovingly toward you than you have to yourself.

Have patience! You can be sure that I think continuously of your liberation and when the time comes I will not fail you, as I have not relaxed my efforts. As witness I cite the Pope, the Emperor, the King of France, and all the other reigning heads and potentates of Christendom. Yes, and the infidels as well [she had written to the Turkish sultan for help]. If it were really the only means of setting you free, I would not only send Federigo but all the other children as well. I will do everything imaginable. Some day I hope I can make you understand.

Passion me if this letter is badly written and worse composed, but I do not know if I am dead or alive.

Isabella, who desires the best for Your Excellency, written with her own hand.

(isabella's husband was not pleased with her response and exclaimed angrily, "That whore of my wife is the cause of it all. Send me into battle alone, do what you like with me. I have lost in one blow my state, my honor and my freedom. If she does not obey, I'll cut her vocal cords.")

**AP HISTORY REASONING SKILLS:** Contextualization; Comparison; What social constraints limited Isabella’s ability to achieve her desires? How were Isabella’s opportunities different from those of other women?


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**The Letters of Isabella d'Este**

Many Italian and European rulers at the beginning of the sixteenth century regarded Isabella d'Este as an important political figure. These excerpts from her letters reveal Isabella's political skills and her fierce determination.

**Letter of Isabella d'Este to the Imperial Envoy**

As to the demand for our dearest first-born son Federigo, besides being a cruel and almost inhuman thing for any one who knows the meaning of a mother's love, there are many reasons which render it difficult and impossible. Although we are quite sure that his person would be well cared for and protected by His Majesty [the Holy Roman Emperor], how we wish to him the run of this long and difficult journey, considering the child's tender and delicate age. And you must know what comfort and solace, in his father's present unhappy condition, we find in the presence of this dear son, the hope and joy of all our people and subjects. To deprive us of him would be to deprive us of life itself, and of all we count good and precious. If you take Federigo away you might as well take away our life and state.... Once [and] for all, we shall suffer any thing rather than part from our son, and this you may take to be our deliberate and unchanging resolution.

**Letter of Isabella d'Este to Her Husband, Who Had Ordered Her to Send the Boy to Venice**

If in this matter Your Excellency were to despise me and deprive me of your love and grace, I would rather endure such harsh treatment, I would rather lose our State, than deprive ourselves of our country. I am hoping that in time your own prudence and kindness will make you understand that I have acted more lovingly toward you than you have to yourself.

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**The Italian States in the Renaissance**

The Italian States in the Renaissance
The Birth of Modern Diplomacy

The modern diplomatic system was a product of the Italian Renaissance. There were ambassadors in the Middle Ages, but they were used only on a temporary basis. Moreover, an ambassador, regardless of whose subject he was, regarded himself as the servant of all Christendom, not just of his particular employer. As a treatise on diplomacy stated, "An ambassador is sacred because he acts for the general welfare." Since he was the servant of all Christendom, "the business of an ambassador is peace."

This concept of an ambassador changed during the Italian Renaissance because of the political situation in Italy. A large number of states existed, many so small that their neighbors easily threatened their security. To survive, the Italian states began to send resident diplomatic agents to each other to ferret out useful information. During the Italian wars, the practice of resident diplomacy spread to the rest of Europe, and in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans developed the diplomatic machinery still in use today, such as the rights of ambassadors in host countries and the proper procedures for conducting diplomatic business.

With the use of permanent resident agents or ambassadors, the conception of the purpose of an ambassador also changed. A Venetian diplomat attempted to define an ambassador’s function in a treatise written at the end of the fifteenth century. He wrote, "The first duty of an ambassador is exactly the same as that of any other servant of a government, that is, to do, say, advise, and think whatever may best serve the preservation andgrandeurization of his own state."

An ambassador was now an agent only of the territorial state that sent him, not the larger body of Christendom. He could use any methods that were beneficial to the political interests of his own state. We are at the beginning of modern politics when the interests of the state superseded all other considerations.

Machiavelli and the New Statecraft

No one gave better expression to the Renaissance preoccupation with political power than Niccolò Machiavelli (meh-koh- LII mahk-uh-uh-VEL-ee) (1469–1527). He entered the service of the Florentine republic in 1494, four years after the Medici family had been expelled from the city. As a secretary to the Florentine Council of Ten, he made numerous diplomatic missions, including trips to France and Germany, and saw the political and military activity that occurred during the period of tribulation and devastation for Italy that followed the French invasion in 1494. In 1512, French defeat and Spanish victory led to the reestablishment of Medici power in Florence. Staunch republicans, including Machiavelli, were sent into exile. Forced to give up politics, the great love of his life, Machiavelli now reflected on political power and wrote books, including The Prince (1513), one of the most famous treatises on political power in the Western world.

The Prince

Machiavelli's ideas on politics stemmed from two major sources, his knowledge of ancient Rome and his preoccupation with Italy's political problems. As a result of his experiences, Machiavelli fully realized that the small Italian states were no match for the larger monarchial states outside Italy's borders, and that Italy itself had become merely a battleground for the armies of foreign states. His major concerns in The Prince were the acquisition and expansion of political power as the means to preserve and maintain order in his time. In the Middle Ages, many political theorists estranged the ethical side of a prince's activity—have a ruler ought to behave based on Christian moral principles. Machiavelli, however, believed that a prince could rule exactly as he saw fit and that the end does in fact justify the means.

But since my intention is to say something that will prove of practical use to the inquirer, I have thought proper to represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined ... (For) the golf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done with what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than (self-) preservation.

Machiavelli considered his approach far more realistic than that of his medieval forebears. In his view, a prince's attitude toward power must be based on an understanding of human nature, which he perceived as basically self-centered: "One can make this generalization about men: they are ungrateful, fickle, liars, and deceivers, they shun danger and are greedy for profit." Political activity, therefore, could not be restricted by moral considerations. The prince acting for himself and for the sake of the state must be willing to let his conscience slip. As Machiavelli put it:

You must realize this: a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things which give men a reputation for virtue, because in order to maintain his state he is often forced to act in defence of good faith, or charity, or kindness, or of religion. And so he should have a flexible disposition, varying as fortune and circumstances dictate. As I said above, he should not deviate from what is good if that is possible, but he should know how to do what is necessary.

Machiavelli found a good example of the new Italian ruler in Cesare Borgia (CHAY-zairh BOR-jah), the son of Pope Alexander VI, who used ruthless measures to achieve his goal of carrying the workings of statecraft at first hand. Machiavelli's political activity therefore, could not be restricted by moral considerations. The prince acting for himself and for the sake of the state must be willing to let his conscience slip. As Machiavelli put it:

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Machiavelli found a good example of the new Italian ruler in Cesare Borgia (CHAY-zairh BOR-jah), the son of Pope Alexander VI, who used ruthless measures to achieve his goal of carrying the workings of statecraft at first hand. Machiavelli said: "So a new prince cannot find more recent examples than those set by the duke, if he thinks it necessary to secure himself against his enemies, win friends, conquer either by force or by stratagem, make himself both loved and feared by his subjects." Machiaelli was among the first to abandon morality as the basis for the analysis of political activity (see the box on p. 344).

The Intellectual Renaissance in Italy

FOCUS QUESTION: What was humanism, and what effect did it have on philosophy, education, attitudes toward politics, and the writing of history?

Humanism

Humanism in fifteenth-century Italy In Florence, the humanist movement took a new direction at the beginning of the fifteenth century. This movement more closely tied to Florentine civic spirit and pride, giving rise to what one modern scholar has labeled civic humanism. Fourteenth-century humanists such as Petrarch had described the intellectual life as one of solitude. They rejected family and a life of action in the community. In the busy civic world of Florence, however, intellectuals began to take a new view of their role as intellectuals. The new humanist movement, civic humanism, became the model. Leonardo Bruni (leh-ah-NAIR-doh-ROO-nee) (1370–1444), a humanist, Florentine patriarch, and chancellor of
OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS

The Renaissance Prince: The Views of Machiavelli and Erasmus

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, two writers produced very different views of political power and what a ruler should do to maintain his power. In 1513, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote a treatise on political power that, justly or unjustly, has given him a reputation as an political opportunist. In his selection from Chapter 12 of The Prince, Machiavelli analyzes whether it is better for a ruler to be loved than to be feared. Three years later the Dutch intellectual Erasmus, leader of the Christian humanists (see Chapter 13), also wrote a treatise, entitled Education of a Christian Prince. As is evident in this excerpt from his treatise, Erasmus followed in the footsteps of medieval theorists on power by insisting that a true prince should think only of his moral obligations to the people he rules.

Machiavelli, The Prince (1513)

This leads us to a question that is in dispute: Is it better to be loved than feared, or vice versa? My reply is one ought to be both loved and feared; but, since it is difficult to accomplish both at the same time, I maintain it is much safer to be feared than to be loved. If you have to do without one of the two. For one man can, in general, say this: They are ungrateful, fickle, deceptive and deceiving, avoiders of danger, eager to gain. As long as you are not in their graces, they are devoted to you. They promise you their blood, their possessions, their lives, and their children, as I said before, so long as you seem to have no need of them. But as soon as you need help, they turn against you. Any ruler who relies simply on their promises and makes no other preparations, will be destroyed. You will find that those whose support you buy, who do not really rely on you because they consider your strength of character and nobility of soul, these are people you pay for, but they are never yours, and in the end you cannot get the benefit of your investment. Men are less nervous of being disappointed by those who despise oneself, more lovable, than someone who makes himself frightening. For love attracts men by ties of obligation, which, since men are wicked, they break whenever their interests are at stake. But fear constrains men because they are afraid of punishment and this fear never leaves them. Still, a ruler should make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not inspire love, at least he does not inspire hope. For it is perfectly possible to be feared and not hated. You will only be hated if you seise the property or the women of your subjects and citizens. Whenever you have to kill someone, make sure that you have a suitable excuse and an obvious reason; but, above all else, keep your hands off other people’s property: for men are quicker to forget the death of their father than the loss of their inheritance. Moreover, there are always reasons why you might want to seize people’s property; and he who begins to live by plundering others will always find an excuse for seizing other people’s possessions; but there are fewer reasons for killing people, and one killing need not lead to another.

When a ruler is at the head of his army and has a vast number of soldiers under his command, then it is absolutely essential to be prepared to think cruelly; for it is impossible to keep an army united and ready for action without acquiring a reputation for cruelty.

Machiavelli, The Prince (1513)

This follows the right, do violence to one, plunder no one, sell no public office, be corrupted by no bribes… As you would rather stand for an injury than avert it to great loss to the state, pervert you will lose a little in the backing of your enemy. Bear that in mind, that you have gained a great deal because you have brought hurt to fewer than you would otherwise have done. If you cannot defend your realm without violating justice, without wanting loss of human life, without great loss to religion, give up and yield to the importunities of the age…

A good prince is a living likeness of God, who is at once good and powerful. His goodness makes him want to help all; his power makes him able to do so. On the other hand, an evil prince, who is like a plague to his country, is the incarnation of the devil; he has great power joined with his wickedness. All his resources to the very last, he uses for the undoing of the human race…

A good prince (in one) who holds the life of each individual dearer than his own; who works and strives night and day for just one end—to be the best he can for everyone; with whom rewards are ready for all good men… for so much does he want to be of real help to his people, without any thought of recompense, if that necessary he would not hesitate to look out for their welfare at great risk to himself, who considers his wealth to lie in the advantage of his country; who, even on the watch so that everyone else may sleep deeply; who grants no leisure to himself so that he may spend his life in the peace of his country; who worries himself with continual cares so that his subjects may have peace and quiet… He does everything and allows anything that will bring everlasting peace to his country, for he realizes that war is the source of all misfortunes to the state.

AP® HISTORY REASONING SKILL: Comparison How did each man reflect different Renaissance values and qualities?

Bruni was one of the first Italian humanists to gain a thorough knowledge of Greek. He became an enthusiastic pupil of the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (man-WEL kri-OH-luh) who taught in Florence from 1396 to 1400. Humanists eagerly pursued the works of Plato as well as those of Greek orators, such as Demosthenes, and poets, such as Sappho, Sophocles, and Thucydides, all of whom had been ignored by the scholastics of the High Middle Ages as irrelevant to the theological questions they were examining. By the fifteenth century, a consciousness of being humanists had emerged. This was especially evident in the career of Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457). Valla was brought up in Rome and educated in both Latin and Greek. Eventually, he achieved his chief ambition of becoming a papal secretary. Valla's major

Petrarch: Mountain Climbing and the Search for Spiritual Contentment

Petrarch has long been regarded as the father of Italian Renaissance humanism. One of his literary masterpieces was The Ascent of Mount Ventoux, a colorful description of his attempt to climb a mountain in Provence in southern France and survey it from the top. Petrarch's primary interest in presenting an allegory of his own soul's struggle to achieve a higher spiritual state. The work is addressed to a professor of theology in Paris who had initially encouraged Petrarch to read Augustine. The latter had expressed his dismay at the spiritual conditions of the Church and had written that St. Augustine was the first to take the word seriously. I...
regenerative experience or purification of the soul. Thus regenerated, they became true sages or magi, as the Renaissance called them, who were aware of God and our call to holiness. In regaining their original divinity, they reacquired an intense knowledge of nature and the ability to employ the powers of nature for beneficial purposes.

In Italy, the gentleman magi in the late fifteenth century were Ficino and his friend and pupil, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Pee-ah-kuh DEL-luh mee-RAN-doh-luh) (1463-1494). Pico produced one of the most famous pieces of writing of the Renaissance, the Oration on the Dignity of Man. Pico combed diligently through the works of many philosophers of different backgrounds for the common, universal "truth" that he believed was all part of God's revelation to humanity. In the Oration (see the box on p. 347), Pico offered a ringing statement of unlimited human potential: "To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he will." Like Ficino, Pico took an avid interest in Hermetic philosophy, accepting it as the "science of the Divine," which "embraces the deepest contemplation of the most secret things, and in last the knowledge of all nature."

The works of Ficino and Pico show that Italian Renaissance humanism was not just a secular movement but also had a strong spiritual component. In the treatises of Ficino and Pico, Renaissance humanists sought to illuminate the relationship between humans and God and to define humans not as physical beings but divinely inspired beings as well.

Education in the Renaissance

The humanist movement had a profound effect on education. Renaissance humanists believed that human beings could be dramatically changed through proper education and developed secondary schools based on their ideas. Most famous was the school founded in 1423 by Vittorino da Feltre at Mantua, where the ruler of that small Italian state, Gian Francesco I Gonzaga, wished to provide a humanistic education for his children. Vittorino based much of his educational system on the ideas of classical scholars, particularly Cicero and Quintilian.

At the core of humanist schools were the "liberal studies." A treatise on education called Concerning Character by Pietro Paolo Vergerio (PIE-troh PAH-oh ee-VUR-juh-oh) (1395-1444) especially influenced the Renaissance view of the value of the liberal arts. This work stressed the importance of liberal studies as the key to true freedom, enabling individuals to reach the moral perfection of their children from the lower classes through liberal education. "We call those liberal studies which are worthy of a free man; those studies by which we attain and practice virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains, and developing those highest gifts of our souls," writes Vergerio. "The liberal studies included history, moral philosophy, eloquence (rhetoric), letters (grammar and logic), poetry, mathematics, astronomy, and music. The purpose of a liberal education was thus to produce individuals who followed a path of virtue and wisdom and possessed the rhetorical skills with which to persuade others to do the same. Following the Greek precepts of a sound mind in a sound body, Vittorino's school at Mantua also stressed physical education. Pupils were taught the skills of javelin throwing, archery, and dancing encouraged to run, wrestle, hunt, and swim.

Humanist education was thought to be a practical preparation for life. Its aim was not to create great scholars but rather to produce men and women who could participate in the cultural and political life of their communities. As Vittorino said, "Not everyone is obliged to excel in philosophy, medicine, or the law, nor are all equally favored by nature; but all are destined to live in society and to practice virtue."

Humanist schools, combining the classics and Christianity, provided the model for the basic education of the European ruling classes until the twentieth century. As a result, the academic degrees received free educations, humanist schools such as Vittorino's were primarily geared for the education of an elite, the ruling classes; they were more open to academically inclined students from poor school districts received free educations, humanist schools such as Vittorino's were primarily geared for the education of an elite, the ruling classes. For a number of reasons, largely absent from such schools were females. Vittorino's only female pupils were the two daughters of the Gonzaga ruler of Mantua. Though these few few females students studied the classics and were encouraged to engage in intellectual debate. Even so, they were not treated as men, appreciated poetry, they were discouraged from learning math-ematics and rhetoric. In the educational traditions of the time, religion and morals were thought to hold the place in the education of a "Christian man."

work, The Elegances of the Latin Language, was an effort to purify medieval Latin and restore it to its proper position over the vernacular. Alvise had examined the proper use of classical Latin and created a new literary standard. Early humanists had tended to treat classics as models any author (including Christians) who had written before the seventh century. Valla in his treatise on the development of the Latin language and accepted only the Latin of the last century of the Roman Republic and the first century of the empire.

HUMANISM AND PHILOSOPHY In the second half of the fifteenth century, a dramatic upsurge of interest in the works of Plato occurred, especially evident among the members of an informal circle, known as the Florentine Academy. Cosimo de' Medici, the de facto ruler of Florence, encouraged this development by commissioning a translation of Plato's dialogues by Marsilio Ficino (fuh-MEE-soh) (1433-1499), one of the academy's leaders. Ficino dedicated his life to the translation of Plato and the exposition of the Platonic philosophy known as Neoplatonism.

In two major works, Ficino undertook the synthesis of Christianity and Platonism into a single system. His Neopla-
tonism was based on two primary ideas, the Neoplatonic hierarchy of substances and a theory of spiritual love. The former postulated the idea of a hierarchy of substances, or great chain of being, from the lowest form of physical matter (plants) to the purest spirit (God), in which humans occupied a central or middle position. They were the link between the material world (through the body) and the spiritual world (through the soul), and their highest duty was to use their union with God that was the true end of human existence. Ficino's theory of spiritual or Platonic love maintained that just as all people are bound together in their common humanity by love, so too are all parts of the universe held together by bonds of sympathetic love.

RENAISSANCE HUMANISM Hermeticism was a modern attainment of the Florentine intellectual environment of the late fifteenth century. At the request of Cosimo de' Medici, Ficino translated into Latin a Greek work titled Corpus Hermeticum (KOR-pus HER-uh-mih-kuhm). The Hermetic manuscripts contained two kinds of writings. One type occurred the occult sciences, with an emphasis on astrology, alchemy, and magic; the other focused on theological and philosophical beliefs and speculations. Some Hermetic writings espoused pantheism, seeing divinity embodied in all aspects of nature and in the heavenly bodies as well as in earthly objects. As Giordano Bruno (g3-DAHN-oh BROO-noh), one of the most prominent sixteenth-century Hermeticists, stated, "God is a whole in all things.""The idea of divinity as a person, the Renaissance intellectuals, the Hermetic revival offered a new view of mankind. They believed that human beings had been created as divinity endowed with divine creative power but had freely chosen to enter the material world (nature). Humans could recover their divinity, however, through

PI CO DELLA MIRANDOLA AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN

GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA was one of the four most influential of the Italian Renaissance. Pico boasted that he had studied all schools of philosophy, which he tried to demonstrate by drawing up nine hundred theses for public disputation at the age of twenty-four. As a preface to his theses, he wrote the Oration on the Dignity of Man, in which he proclaimed the unlimited potentiality of human beings.

Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man

As the best of artists (God) ordained that that creature to whom He had been given to give nothing proper to himself should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being. He therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature, and assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: "Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is yours alone nor any function peculiar to yourself have we given to Adam, to the end that according to your longing and according to your judgment you may have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions you yourself desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. You, constrained by no limits, in accordance with your own free will, in whose hand We have placed you, shall ordained for yourself the limits of your nature. We have set you at the world's center so that you may from there more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made you neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of yourself, you may fashion yourself in whatever shape you shall prefer. You shall have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. You shall have the power, out of your soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine."

O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvelous felicity of man! You have granted to whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills. Beasts as soon as they are born bring with them from their mother's womb all they will ever eat and be either the beginning or soon thereafter, become what they are to be for ever and ever. On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. If they be vegetative, he will be like a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish. If rational, he will become a man, if intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God."

AP® HIST ORY REASONING SKILL: Contextualization How did Pico combine reverence for God with the typically Renaissance celebration of man?"
A WOMAN'S DEFENSE OF LEARNING

AD A YOUNG WOMAN, LAURA CERETTA was proud of her learning but was condemned by a male world that found it unnecessary for women's education. One day, he said to her father, "She gives herself to things unhealthy of her—namely, the classics." Before being silenced, Laura Ceretta wrote a series of letters, including one to a male critic who had argued that her work was so good it could not have been written by a woman.

Laura Ceretta, Defense of the Liberal Instruction of Women

My ears are weary by your carping. You brashly and publicly not merely worry but indeed lament that I am said to possess as fine a mind as nature ever bestowed upon the most learned man. You seem to think that so learned a woman has scarcely been seen in the world. You are wrong on all accounts.

I would have been silent. . . . But I cannot tolerate your having attacked my entire sex. For this reason my thirty year sleeps seeking, my sleeping pen is aroused to literary struggle, raging anger stirs mental passion long chained by silence. With just cause I am moved to demonstrate how great a reputation for learning and virtuous women have won by their inborn excellence, manifested in every age as knowledge.

Only the question of the rarity of outstanding women remains to be addressed. The explanation is clear: women have been able by nature to be exceptional, but have chosen lesser goals. For some reason, men are concerned with parting their hair correctly, adorning themselves with lovely dresses, or decorating their fingers with pebbles and other gems. Others delight in moulding carefully composed phrases, indulging in dancing, or managing spoiled city girls. Still others wish to gaze at levels banquet tables, to rest in sleep, or standing at mirrors, to smear their lovely faces. But those in whom a deeper integrity yearns for virtue, restrain from the harm of youthf ul souls, reflect on higher things, harden the body with sobriety and trials, and curb their tongues, open their ears, compose their thoughts in wakeful hours, their minds in contemplation, to letters bonded to righteousness. For knowledge is not given as a gift, but [is gained] with diligence. The free mind, not shirking effort, always soars zealously toward the good, and the desire to know grows even more wide and deep. It is because of no special holiness, therefore, that we [women] are rewarded by God the Giver with the gift of exceptional talent. Nature has generously lavished in gifts upon all people, opening to all the doors of choice through which reason sends envys to the will, from which they learn and convey its desires. The will must choose to exercise the gift of reason.

I have been praised too much, showing your contempt for women, you pretend that I alone am admirable because of the good fortune of my intellect. . . . Do you suppose, O most contemptible man on earth, that I would not sprout sprouts (like Athens) from the head of Jove? I am a school gift, possessed of the sleeping embers of an ordinary mind. Indeed I am too hurt, and my mind, offended, too swayed by passions, sighs, tarnishing itself, conscious of the obligation to defend my sex. For absolutely everything—that which is within us and that which is without—is made weak by association with my sex.

ACtIVITY HISTORIC REASONING SKILL: Continuity and Change over Time What were the accusations against women? Who made them? How did the response?


Humanism and History

Humanism had a strong impact on the writing of history. Influenced by Roman and Greek historians, the humanists approached the writing of history differently from the chronicles of the Middle Ages. The humanists' belief that classical civilizations were followed by an age of barbarism (the Middle Ages), which had in turn succeeded by their own age, with its rebirth of the study of the classics, enabled them to think in terms of their own time, the past of past. Their division of the past into ancient world, dark ages, and their own age provided a new sense of chronology or periodization in history.

The humanists were also responsible for secularising the writing of history. Humanist historians reduced or eliminated the role of miracles in historical interpretation, not because they were anti-Christian but because they took a new approach to sources. They wanted to use documents and exercised their newly developed critical skills in examining them. Greater attention was paid to the political events and forces that affected their city-states or larger territorial units. Thus, Leonardo Bruni wrote the History of the Florentine People. The new emphasis on secularization was also evident in the humanists' conception of causation in history. Medieval historical literature often portrayed historical events as being caused by the action of God, the will of divine beings. Humanist historians emphasized human intervention in favor of human motives, stressing political forces or the role of individuals in history.

Quicciardini: The high point of Renaissance historiography was achieved at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the works of Francesco Guicciardini (fra'chev-CHES-loh gee-chee-DEE-nee) (1483-1540). To many historians, his History of Italy and History of Florence represent the beginning of "modern" analytical historiography." To Guicciardini, the purpose of writing history was not to teach lessons, but he was so impressed by the complexity of historical events that he felt those lessons were not always obvious. From his extensive background in government and diplomatic affairs, he developed the skills that enabled him to analyze political situations precisely and critically. Emphasizing political and military history, his works relied heavily on personal examples and documentary sources.

The Impact of Printing

The Renaissance witnessed the invention of printing, one of the most important technological innovations of Western civilization. The art of printing made an immediate impact on European intellectual life and thought. Printing from hand-crafted wooden blocks had been done in the West since the twelfth century and in China even before that. What was new to Europe in the fifteenth century was multiple printing with movable metal type. The development of printing from movable type was a gradual process that culminated between 1440 and 1470. Johannes Gutenberg (oh-HAH-nuhs GOO-en-sir-tohn), a Mainz printer, played an important role in bringing the process to completion. Gutenberg's Bible, completed in 1455, was the first true book in the West produced from movable type.

The new printing spread rapidly throughout Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century. Printing presses were established throughout the Holy Roman Empire in 1460 and within ten years had spread to both western and eastern Europe. Especially well known as a printing center was Venice, home by 1500 to almost one hundred printers who had produced almost 40,000 titles (between 8 million and 10 million copies). Probably 90 percent of these books were religious in text and appearance. Books of devotion, sermons, and sermons. Next in importance were the Latin and Greek classics, medieval grammars, legal handbooks, works on philosophy, and an ever-growing number of popular romances.

Printing became one of the largest industries in Europe, and its effects were soon felt in many areas of European life. The printing of books encouraged the development of scholarly research and the growth of the university. Moreover, printing facilitated cooperation among scholars and helped produce standardized and definitive texts. Printing also stimulated the development of an ever-expanding lay reading public, a development that had an enormous impact on European society. Indeed, without the printing press, the new religious ideas of the Reformation would have spread as rapidly as they did in the sixteenth century.

The Artistic Renaissance

FOCUS QUESTIONS: What were the chief characteristics of Renaissance art, and how did it differ in Italy and northern Europe?

Leonardo da Vinci (lah-DAN-oh VEE-cheh), one of the great Italian Renaissance artists, once explained: "The painter will produce pictures of small merit if he takes for his standard the pictures of others, but if he will study from natural objects he will bear good fruit. . . . Those who take for their standard any one but nature . . . weary themselves in vain." Renaissance artists considered the study of their primary goal. Their search for naturalism became an end in itself to persuade onlookers of the reality of the object or event they were portraying. At the same time, the new artistic standards reflected a new attitude of mind as well, one in which human beings became the focus of attention, the "center and measure of all things," as one artist proclaimed.

Art in the Early Renaissance

Leonardo and other Italians maintained that it was Giotto in the fourteenth century (see Chapter 11) who began the imitation of nature. But what Giotto had begun was not taken up again until the work of Masaccio (mah-SAHCK-o) (last 1428) in Florence. Masaccio's cycle of frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel has long been regarded as the first masterpiece of Early Renaissance art. With his use of monumental figures, a more realistic relationship between figures and landscape, and visual representation of the laws of perspective, a new realistic style of painting was born. Onlookers became aware of a world of reality that appears to be a continuation of their own world. Masaccio's massive, three-dimensional human figures provide a model for later generations of Florentine artists.

During the fifteenth century, other Florentine painters absorbed and modified this new Renaissance style. Especially important was the development of an experimental trend that took two directions. One emphasized the mathematical side of painting, the working out of the laws of perspective and the organization of outdoor space and light by geometry and perspective devices. Uccello (OH-chel-o) (1397-1475), for instance, became preeminent in a new field of art: inventing the laws of perspectiv e. The other aspect of the experimental trend involved the investigation of the human figure and anatomical structure. The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian by Antonio Pollaiuolo (puh-LEYE-oh-POLL-eye-o) (ca. 1428-1498) reveals in classical motifs and anatomical accuracy. A third type of human body under stress. Indeed, the realistic portrayal of the human nude became one of the foremost preoccupations of Italian Renaissance art. The fifteenth century, then, was a period of experimentation and technical mastery.

During the last decades of the fifteenth century, a new sense of invention emerged in Florence, especially in the circle of artists and scholars that controllers of the city of the city's leading citizens, Lorenzo the Magnificent. One of this group's prominent members was Sandro Botticelli (SAHD-roh BOH-tih-CHEL-ee) (1445-1510), whose interest in Greek and Roman mythology was so refined that he was famous for some of his most famous works, Primavera (Spring). The painting is set in the garden of Venus, a garden of eternal spring. Though Botticelli's figures are well defined, they also possess an otherworldly quality that is far removed from the realism that characterized the painting of the Early Renaissance.

The Artistic Renaissance

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Masaccio, Tribute Money. With the frescoes of Masaccio, regarded by many as the first great works of Early Renaissance art, a new realistic style of painting was born. Tribute Money was one of a series of frescoes that Masaccio painted in the Brancacci Chapel of the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence. In Tribute Money, Masaccio depicted the biblical story of Jesus’ confrontation by a tax collector at the entrance to the town of Capharnaum (verse 17 at the center). Jesus then turned to Peter to collect a coin from the mouth of a fish from Lake Galler (seen at the left). Peter then paid the tax collector (seen at the right). In illustrating this story from the Bible, Masaccio used a rational system of perspective to create a realistic relationship between the figures and their background. The frescoes themselves are realistic. As one Renaissance observer said, “The works made before Masaccio’s day can be said to be painted, while his are living, real, and natural.”

The revolutionary achievements of Florentine painters in the fifteenth century were matched by equally stunning advances in sculpture and architecture. Donatello di Donatello (doh-NAH-tahl dih-doh-NAH-tahl) (1386-1466) spent time in Rome studying and copying the statues of antiquity. His subsequent work in Florence reveals how well he had mastered the essence of what he saw. Among his numerous works was a statue of David, which is the first known life-size, freestanding bronze nude in European art since antiquity. With the severed head of the giant Goliath beneath David’s feet, Donatello’s statue may have celebrated Florentine heroism in the triumph of Florence over the Milanese in 1428. Like Donatello’s other statues, David also radiated a simplicity and strength that reflected the dignity of humanity. Filippo Brunelleschi (fee-LEE-poh BROO-nuhl-BREN-lee) (1377-1446), a friend of Donatello’s, accompanied the latter to Rome. Brunelleschi drew much inspiration from the architectural monuments of Roman antiquity, and when he returned to Florence, he poured his new insights into the creation of a new architecture. His first project involved the challenge of building a dome for the unfinished cathedral of Florence (the Duomo). The cathedral had been started in 1296, but it was Brunelleschi who devised new building techniques and machinery to create a dome, built between 1420 and 1466, that spanned a 146-foot opening.

Donatello, David. Donatello’s David first stood in the courtyard of the Medici Palace. On its base was an inscription praising Florentine heroism and virtue, leading art historians to believe that the statue was meant to commemorate the victory of Florence over Milan in 1428. David’s pose and appearance are reminiscent of the nude statues of antiquity.

An even better example of Brunelleschi’s new Renaissance architectural style is evident in the Church of San Lorenzo. When the Medici commissioned him to design the church, Brunelleschi, inspired by Roman models, created a church interior very different from that of the great medieval cathedrals. San Lorenzo’s classical columns, rounded arches, and coffered ceiling created an environment that did not overwhelm the worshipper materially and psychologically, as Gothic cathedrals did, but comforted as a space created to fit human, not divine, measurements. Like painters and sculptors, Renaissance architects sought to reflect a human-centered world.

The new assertion of human individuality, evident in Early Renaissance art, was also reflected in the new emphasis on portraiture. Painters appeared in the corners of sacred pictures, and monumental tombs and portrait statues honored many of Florence’s prominent citizens. By the mid-fifteenth century, artists were giving an accurate rendering of their subjects’ facial features while revealing the inner qualities of their

Botticelli, Primavera. This work reflects Botticelli’s strong interest in classical antiquity. At the center of the painting is Venus, the goddess of love. At the right stands Flora, a Roman goddess of flowers and fertility, while the Three Graces dance playfully at the left. Cupid, the son of Venus, aims his arrow at the Three Graces. As the far left of the picture is Mercury, the messenger of the gods. Later in life, Botticelli experienced a profound religious crisis, leading him to reject his earlier preoccupation with pagan gods and goddesses. He burned many of his early paintings and thereafter produced only religious works.

Brunelleschi, Interior of San Lorenzo. Cosimo de’ Medici contributed massive amounts of money to the rebuilding of the Church of San Lorenzo. As seen in this view of the nave and choir of the church, Brunelleschi’s architectural designs were based on the basilica plan borrowed by early Christians from pagan Rome. San Lorenzo’s simplicity, evident in its rows of dender Corinthian columns, created a human-centered space.
The Artistic Renaissance

By the end of the fifteenth century, Italian painters, sculptors, and architects had created a new artistic environment. Many artists had mastered the new techniques for scientific observation of the world around them and were now ready to move into individualistic forms of creative expression. This final stage of Renaissance art, which flourished between 1480 and 1520, is called the High Renaissance. The shift to the High Renaissance was marked by the increasing importance of Rome as a new cultural center of the Italian Renaissance.

The High Renaissance was dominated by the work of three artistic giants: Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Raphael (1483–1520), and Michelangelo (1475–1564). Leonardo represented a transitional figure in the shift to High Renaissance principles. He carried on the fifteenth-century experimental tradition by studying everything and even dissecting human bodies to see more clearly how nature worked. But Leonardo strove the need to advance beyond such realism and initiated the High Renaissance's preoccupation with the idealization of nature, or the attempt to generalize from realistic portrayals to an ideal form. Leonardo's Last Supper, painted in Milan, is a brilliant summary of fifteenth-century trends in its organization of space and use of perspective to depict subjects three-dimensionally in a two-dimensional medium. But it is also more. The figure of Philip is idealized, and the work embodies profound psychological dimensions. The words of Jesus that "one of you shall betray me" are experienced directly as each of the apostles reveals his personality and his relationship to Jesus. Through gestures and movement, Leonardo hoped to reveal a person's inner life.

Raphael (RAF-uhl) bloomed as a painter at an early age; at twenty-five, he was already regarded as one of Italy's best painters. Raphael was acclaimed for his numerous madonnas, in which he attempted to achieve an ideal of beauty far surpassing human standards. He is well known for his frescoes in the Vatican Palace; his School of Athens reveals a world of balance, harmony, and order—the underlying principles of the art of the classical world of Greece and Rome.

Michelangelo (my-KEHL-uhn-goh) was an accomplished painter, sculptor, and architect, another giant of the High Renaissance. Firedly driven by his desire to create, he worked with great passion and energy on a remarkable number of projects. Michelangelo was influenced by Neoplatonism, especially evident in his figures on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In 1508, Pope Julius II called Michelangelo to Rome and commissioned him to decorate the chapel ceiling. This colossal project was not completed until 1512. Michelangelo attempted to tell the story of the Fall of Man by depicting nine scenes from the biblical book of Genesis. In his Creation of Adam (reproduced at the beginning of this chapter), the well-proportioned figure of Adam awaits the divine spark. Adam, like the other muscular figures on the ceiling, reveals an ideal type of human being with perfect proportions. In good Neoplatonic fashion, the beauty of these figures is meant to be a reflection of divine beauty; the more beautiful the body, the more God-like the figure.

Another manifestation of Michelangelo's search for ideal beauty was his David, a colossal marble statue commissioned by Pope Julius II for the papal apartments at the Vatican. In School of Athens, painted in 1510 or 1511, Raphael created an imaginary gathering of ancient philosophers. In the center stand Plato and Aristotle. To the left is Pythagoras, showing his system of proportions on a slate. At the right is Ptolomy, holding a colossal globe.

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The Artist and Social Status

Early Renaissance artists began their careers as apprentices to masters in craft guilds. Apprentices with unusual talent might eventually become masters and run their own workshops. As in the Middle Ages, artists were still largely viewed as artisans. Since guilds depended on commissions for their projects, patrons played an important role in the art of the Early Renaissance. The wealthy upper classes determined both the content and the purpose of the paintings and pieces of sculpture they commissioned.

By the end of the fifteenth century, a transformation in the position of the artist had occurred. Especially talented individuals, such as Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo, were no longer regarded as artisans but as artistic geniuses with creative energies akin to the divine (see the box on p. 355). Artists were heroes, individuals who were praised more for their creativity than for their competence as craftpeople. Michelangelo, for example, was frequently addressed as "Il Divino"—the Divine One. As society exceeded its eccentricities and valued their creative genius, the artists of the High Renaissance became the first to embody the modern concept of the artist.
and wooden panel painting for altarpieces. The space available in these works was limited, and great care was required to depict each object, leading northern painters to become masters at rendering details.

The most influential northern school of art in the fifteenth century was centered in Flanders. Jan van Eyck (YAHN vahn YK or van AYK) (ca. 1390–1441) was among the first to use oil paint, a medium that enabled the artist to use a varied range of colors and create fine details. In the famous Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride, van Eyck’s attention to detail is staggering: precise portraits, a glittering chandelier, and a mirror reflecting the objects in the room. Although each detail was rendered as observed, it is evident that van Eyck’s comprehension of perspective was still uncertain. His work is truly indicative of northern Renaissance painters, who, in their effort to imitate nature, did so not by mastery of the laws of perspective and proportion but by empirical observation of visual reality and the accurate portrayal of details. Moreover, northern painters placed great emphasis on the emotional intensity of religious feeling and created great works of devotional art, especially in their altarpieces. Michelangelo

Michelangelo, David. This statue of David, cut from an 18-foot-high piece of marble, symbolizes the human spirit and is a fitting symbol of the Italian Renaissance’s affirmation of human power. Completed in 1504, David was moved by Florentine authorities to a special location in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, the seat of the Florentine government.

As respect for artists grew, so did their ability to profit economically from their work and to rise on the social scale. Now welcomed as equals into the circles of the upper classes, they mingled with the political and intellectual elite of their society and became more aware of new intellectual theories, which they then embodied in their art. The Platonic Academy and Renaissance Neoplatonism had an especially important impact on Florentine painters.

The Northern Artistic Renaissance

In trying to provide an exact portrayal of their world, the artists of the north (especially the Low Countries) and Italy took different approaches. In Italy, the human form became the primary vehicle of expression as Italian artists sought to master the technical skills that allowed them to portray humans in realistic settings. The large wall spaces of Italian churches had given rise to the art of fresco painting, but in the north, the prevalence of Gothic cathedrals with their stained-glass windows resulted in more emphasis on illuminated manuscripts.

summarized the difference between northern and Italian Renaissance painting in these words:

In Flanders, they paint, before all things, to render exactly and deceptively the outward appearance of things. The painters choose, by preference, subjects provoking transports of pity, like the figures of saints or of prophets. But most of the time they paint what are called landscapes with plenty of figures. Though the eye is agreeably impressed, these pictures have neither choice of values nor grandeur. In short, this art is without power and without distinction; it aims at rendering minutely many things at the same time, of which a single one would have sufficed to call forth a man’s whole application.

By the end of the fifteenth century, however, artists from the north began to study in Italy and were visually influenced by what artists were doing there.

One northern artist of this later period who was greatly affected by the Italians was Albrecht Dürer (ahl-breet DUR-er) (1471–1528) from Nuremberg. Dürer made two trips to Italy and absorbed most of what the Italians could teach, as is evident in his mastery of the laws of perspective and Renaissance theories of proportion. He wrote detailed treatises on both subjects. At the same time, as in his famous Adoration of the Magi, Dürer did not reject the use of minute details characteristic of northern artists. He did try, however, to integrate those details more harmoniously into his works and, like the Italian artists of the High Renaissance, to achieve a standard of ideal beauty by a careful examination of the human form. Dürer was also the first northern Renaissance artist to provide an account of his life through his letters, a diary, and his self-portraits.

Music in the Renaissance

For much of the fifteenth century, an extraordinary cultural environment was fostered in the domains of the dukes of Burgundy in northern Europe. The court of the dukes attracted some of the best artists and musicians of the time. Among them was Guillaume Dufay (gee-YOHM doh-FAY) (ca. 1400–1474), perhaps the most important of his era. Born in northern France, Dufay lived for a few years in Italy and was thus well suited to combine the late medieval style of France with the early Renaissance style of Italy. One of Dufay’s greatest contributions was a change in the composition of the Mass. He was the first to use secular tunes to replace Gregorian chants as the fixed melody that served as the basis for the Mass. Dufay also composed a number of secular songs, an important reminder that during the Renaissance, music ceased to be used chiefly in the service of God and moved into the secular world of courts and cities. In Italy and France, the chief form of secular music was the madrigal.
In the second half of the century, however, recovery set in, and attempts were made to reestablish the centralized power of monarchical governments. To characterize the results, some historians have used the label “Renaissance states”; others have spoken of the “new monarchies,” especially those of France, England, and Spain at the end of the fifteenth century (see Map 12.3). Although monarchs in western Europe succeeded to varying degrees at extending their political authority, rulers in central and eastern Europe were often weak and unable to impose their authority.

The Growth of the French Monarchy

The Hundred Years’ War had left France prostrate. Depopulation, desolate farmlands, ruined commerce, and independent and unruly nobles had made it difficult for the kings to assert their authority. But the war had also developed a strong degree of French national feeling toward a common enemy that the kings could use to reestablish monarchical power. The need to prosecute the war provided an excuse to strengthen the author-

ity of the king, already evident in the policies of Charles VII (1422–1461) after he was crowned king at Reims. With the consent of the Estates-General, Charles established a royal army composed of cavalry and archers. The Estates-General also granted him the right to levy the taille, an annual direct tax usually on land or property, without any need for further approval from the Estates-General. Losing control of the purse meant less power for this parliamentary body.

The process of developing a French territorial state was greatly advanced by King Louis XI (1461–1483), known as the Spider because of his sly and devious ways. By retaining the taille as a permanent tax imposed by royal authority, Louis secured a sound, regular source of income. Louis was not, however, completely successful in repressing the French nobility, whose independence posed a threat to his own state building. A major problem was his supposed vassal, Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1423–1477). Charles attempted to create a middle kingdom between France and Germany, stretching from the Low Countries to Switzerland. Louis opposed his efforts, and when Charles was killed in 1477 fighting the Swiss, Louis added part of Charles’s possessions, the duchy of Burgundy, to his own lands. Three years later, the provinces of Anjou, Maine, and Provence were brought under royal control. Many historians believe that Louis created a base for the later development of a strong French monarchy.

England: Civil War and a New Monarchy

The Hundred Years’ War had also strongly affected the other protagonist in that conflict. The cost of the war in its final years and the losses in manpower strained the English economy. Moreover, even greater domino effects came to England when a period of civil wars broke out in 1449. These wars pitted the ducal house of Lancaster against the ducal house of York. (The wars are popularly known as the “Wars of the Roses” because Shakespeare a hundred years later created the fiction that a white rose symbolized the Yorkists and a red rose, the Lancastrians.) Many aristocratic families of England were drawn into the conflict. Finally, in 1485, Henry Tudor, duke of Rich-

mond, defeated the last Yorkist king, Richard III (1457–1485), at Bosworth Field and established the new Tudor dynasty. As the first Tudor king, Henry VII (1489–1509) worked to reduce internal dissension and establish a strong monarchical government. Henry ended the private wars of the nobility by abolishing “livery and maintenance,” the practice by which wealthy aristocrats maintained private armies of followers dedicated to the service of their lord. Since England, unlike France and Spain, did not possess a standing army, the king relied on special commissions to trusted nobles to raise troops for a specific campaign, after which the troops were disbanded. Henry also controlled the irresponsible activity of the nobles by establishing the Court of Star Chamber, which did not use juries and allowed torture to be used to extract confessions.

Henry VII was particularly successful in extracting income from the traditional financial resources of the English monarch, such as the crown lands, judicial fees and fines, and customs duties. By using diplomacy to avoid wars, which are always expensive, the king avoided having to call Parliament on any regular basis to grant him funds. By not overburdening the landed gentry and middle class with taxes, Henry won their favor, and they provided much support for his monarchy. Henry’s policies enabled him to leave England with a stable and prosperous government and an enhanced status for the monar-

The Unification of Spain

During the Middle Ages, several independent Christian king-
doms had emerged in the course of the long reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Muslims. Aragon and Castile were the strongest Spanish kingdoms; in the west was the indepen-
dent monarchy of Portugal; in the north, the small king-
dom of Navarre, oriented toward France; and in the south, the Muslim kingdom of Granada (see Map 12.5). Few people at the beginning of the fifteenth century could have predicted the unification of the Iberian kingdoms.

The European State in the Renaissance
The marriage of Isabella of Castile to Ferdinand of Aragon laid the foundation for the unification of Spain and its rise as a major European power. The two monarchs instituted military and bureaucratic reforms and forced Jews and Muslims to flee the country.

What aspects of Portugal's geography help explain why it became a major seafaring nation, with little overland trade with Europe?

In some areas of Spain, Jews exercised much influence in economic and intellectual affairs. During the fourteenth century, however, increased persecution led the majority of Spanish Jews to convert to Christianity. Although many of these converted Jews came to play important roles in Spanish society, complaints that they were secretly reverting to Judaism prompted Ferdinand and Isabella to ask the pope to introduce the Inquisition into Spain in 1478. Under royal control, the Inquisition worked with church officials to ensure the orthodoxy of the converts but had no authority over practicing Jews. Consequently, in 1492, flush with the success of their conquest of Muslim Granada, Ferdinand and Isabella took the drastic step of expelling all professing Jews from Spain. It is estimated that 150,000 out of possibly 200,000 Jews fled.

Ferdinand and Isabella also pursued a policy of battling the Muslims by attacking the kingdom of Granada. The war against this remaining Muslim kingdom lasted eleven years until the final battle of the city of Granada fell in 1492. Muslims were now "encouraged" to convert to Christianity, and in 1492 Isabella issued a decree expelling all professing Muslims from her kingdom. To a very large degree, the "Most Catholic" monarchs had achieved their goal of absolute religious orthodoxy as a basic ingredient of the Spanish state. To be Spanish was to be Catholic, a policy of uniformity enforced by the Inquisition. It was no accident that Spain became a staunch pillar of the Catholic Church during the era of the Reformation in the sixteenth century (see Chapter 13).

The Holy Roman Empire: The Success of the Habsburgs

Unlike France, England, and Spain, the Holy Roman Empire failed to develop a strong monarchical authority. After 1429, the position of Holy Roman Emperor remained in the hands of the Habsburg dynasty. Having gradually acquired a number of possessions along the Danube, known collectively as Austria, the house of Habsburg had become one of the wealthiest landholders in the empire and by the mid-fifteenth century began to play an important role in European affairs.

Much of the Habsburg success in the fifteenth century was due not to military success but to a well-executed policy of dynastic marriages. As the old Habsburg motto said, "Leave the waging of wars to others! But you, happy Austria, marry, for the realms which Mars [god of war] awards to others, Venus [goddess of love] transfers to you." By marrying his son Maximilian I to Mary, the daughter of Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy, in 1477, Maximilian I (1444-1493) gained Franche-Comté in east-central France, Luxembourg, and a large part of the Low Countries. The addition of these territories made the Habsburg dynasty an international power and brought it the unifying opposition of the French monarchy because the rulers of France feared they would be surrounded by the Habsburgs. Much was expected of the flamboyant Maximilian I (1459-1519) when he became emperor. Through the Reichstag, the imperial diet or parliament, Maximilian attempted to centralize the administration by creating new institutions common to the entire empire. Opposition from the German princes doomed these efforts. However, Maximilian's only real success lay in his marriage alliances. Philip of Burgundy, the son of Maximilian's marriage to Mary, was married to Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Philip and Joanna produced a son, Charles, who, through a series of unexpected deaths, became heir to all three lines, the Habsburg, Burgundian, and Spanish, making him the leading monarch of his age (see Chapter 13).

The Struggle for Strong Monarchy in Eastern Europe

In eastern Europe, rulers struggled to achieve the centralization of their territorial states but faced serious obstacles. Although the population was mostly Slavic, there were islands of other ethnic groups that caused untold difficulties. Religious differences also troubled the area, as Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox Christians, and pagans confronted each other.

Much of Polish history revolved around a bitter struggle between the crown and the landed nobility until the end of the fifteenth century. When the preoccupation of Poland's rulers with problems in Bohemia and Hungary, as well as war with the Russians and Turks, enabled the aristocrats to reestablish their power. "Through their control of the Sejm (Saxony) or national diet, the magnates reduced the peasant's serfdom by 1511 and established the right to elect their kings. The Polish kings proved unable to establish a strong royal authority.

Robert the Wise, was part of the Holy Roman Emperors, but distrust of the Germans and close ethnic ties to the Poles and Slovaks encouraged the Czechs of Bohemia to associate with their northeastern Slavic neighbors. The Hussites (see "The Problems of Heresy and Reform" later in this chapter) led to further disension and civil war. Because of a weak monarchy, the Bohemian nobles increased their authority and increased at the expense of both crown and church. The history of Hungary had been closely tied to that of central and western Europe by its conversion to Roman Catholicism by German missionaries. The church became a large and prosperous institution. Wealthy bishops, along with the great territorial lords, became powerful, independent political figures. For a brief while, Hungary developed into an important European state, the dominant power in eastern Europe. King Matthias Corvinus (muh-THIE-us koh-VY-nus) (1443-1490) broke the power of the powerful landed gentry by well-organized bureaucracy. Like a typical Renaissance prince, he patronized the new humanist culture, brought Italian scholars and artists to his capital at Buda, and made his court one of the most brilliant outside Italy. After his death, however, Hungary returned to weak rule, and the work of Corvinus was largely undone.

Since the thirteenth century, Russia had been under the domination of the Mongols. Gradually the Mongols accepted the form of Moslem rule known as Golden Horde. The People of the Mongol khanate to increase their wealth and expand their possessions. In the reign of the grand khan Ivan III (1462-1505), a new Russian state—the principality of Moscow—was born. Ivan III annexed other Russian principalities and took advantage of disension among the Mongols to throw off their yoke by 1480.

The Ottoman Turks and the End of the Byzantine Empire

The steadily advancing Ottoman Turks increasingly threatened Eastern Europe (see Map 12). The Byzantine Empire had, of course, served as a buffer between the Muslim Middle East and the

The Holy Roman Empire: The Success of the Habsburgs

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The Church in the Renaissance

**Focus Question:** What were the policies of the Pope in the Renaissance, and what impact did those policies have on the Catholic Church?

As a result of the efforts of the Council of Constance, the Great Schism had finally been brought to an end in 1417 (see Chapter 11). The ending of the schism proved to be the council’s easiest task, it was much less successful in dealing with the problems of heresy and reform.

**The Problems of Heresy and Reform**

Heresy was not a new problem, and in the thirteenth century, the church had developed inquisitorial machinery to deal with it. But two widespread movements in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries—Lollardy and Husitism—posed new threats to the church.

**Wyclif and Lollardy**

English Lollardy was a product of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif (1328–1384), whose dispute with clerical corruption led him to form a fascinating attack on papal authority and medieval Christian beliefs and practices. Wyclif alleged that there was no basis in Scripture for papal claims of temporal authority and advocated that the pope be stripped of their authority and their property. Believing that the Bible should be a Christian’s sole authority, Wyclif urged that it be made available in the vernacular languages so that every Christian could read it. Rejecting all practices not mentioned in Scripture, Wyclif condemned pilgrimages, the veneration of saints, and a whole set of rituals and rites that had developed in the medieval church. Wyclif attracted a number of followers who came to be known as Lollards.

**Hus and the Hussites**

A marriage between the royal families of England and Bohemia enabled Lollard ideas to spread north and reinforced the ideas of a group of Czech reformers led by the chancellor of the university at Prague, John Huss (1373–1415). In his call for reform, Hus urged the elimination of the worldlyliness and corruption of the clergy and attacked the excessive power of the papacy within the Catholic Church. Hus’s objections fell on receptive ears, for the Catholic Church, as one of the largest landowners in Bohemia, was already widely criticized. Moreover, many clergymen were German, and the native Czechs’ strong resentment of the Germans who dominated Bohemia also contributed to Hus’s movement.

**The Council of Constance**

The council attempted to deal with the growing problem of heresy by summoning John Huss to the council. Granted safe conduct by Emperor Sigismund, Huss went in hope of a free hearing of his ideas. Instead he was arrested, condemned as a heretic (by a narrow vote), and burned at the stake in 1415. This action turned the unrest in Bohemia into revolting upheaval, and the resulting Hussite wars racked the Holy Roman Empire until a truce was arranged in 1436.

**Reform of the Church**

The efforts of the Council of Constance to reform the church were even less successful than its attempt to eradicate heresy. The council passed two reform decrees. Sacrosanctum (sæk-roh-SANK-toh) stated that a general council of the church received its authority from God, hence, every Christian, including the pope, was subject to its authority. The decree Proprium (PRIP-toh-flownt) provided for the regular holding of general councils to ensure that church reform would continue. Taken together, Sacrosanctum and Proprium provided for a legislative system within the church superior to the popes.

Decrees alone, however, proved insufficient to reform the church. Councils could issue decrees, but popes had to execute them, and popes would not cooperate with councils that diminished their authority. Beginning as early as Martin V in 1417, successive popes worked steadily for thirty years to defeat the council movement. The final blow came in 1466, when Pope Pius II issued the papal bull Exsurge (æk-soorj-KAB-ul), condemning appeals to a council over the head of a pope as heretical.

By the mid-fifteenth century, the popes had reasserted their supremacy over the Catholic Church. No longer, however, did they have any possibility of asserting supremacy over temporal governments as the medieval papacy had. Although the papal monarchy had been maintained, it had lost much moral prestige. In the fifteenth century, the Renaissance papacy contributed to an even further decline in the moral leadership of the popes.

**The Renaissance Papacy**

The Renaissance papacy encompasses the line of popes from the end of the Great Schism (1409) to the beginnings of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century. The primary concern of the papacy is governing the Catholic Church as its spiritual leader. But as heads of the church, popes had temporal preoccupations as well, and the story of the Renaissance papacy is really an account of how the later came to overshadow the popes’ spiritual functions.

The manner in which Renaissance popes pursued their interests in the Papal States and Italian politics, especially their use of intrigue and even bloodshed, seemed shocking. Of all the Renaissance popes, Julius II (1503–1513) was most involved in war and politics. The fiery “warlike pope” personally led armies against his enemies, much to the disgust of pious Christians, who viewed the pope as a spiritual leader. As one intellectual wrote, “With bishop standing in the room of the Aposles, dare you teach the people the things that pertain to war?”

To further their territorial aims in the Papal States, the popes needed loyal subjects. Because they were not hereditary monarchs, popes could not build dynasties over several generations and came to rely on the practice of nepotism to promote their families’ interests. Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484), for example, made five of his nephews cardinals and gave them the title of an abundance of church offices to build up their finances (the word nepotism is in fact derived from the Latin nepos, meaning “nephew”). Alexander VI (1492–1503), a member of the Borgia family who was known for his debauchery and sensuality, raised

**MAP 12.4 The Ottoman Empire and Southeastern Europe.** Long a buffer between Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East, the Byzantine Empire quickly waned in power and territory after crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204. The Ottoman Turks slowly gained Byzantine territory and ended the thousand-year empire with the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

**Q** Why would the Byzantine Empire have found it difficult to make alliances by 1403?

against only 7,000 defenders. Sultan Mehmet II (mah-MET) laid siege to Constantinople. In their attack on the city, the Turks made use of massive cannons with 20-foot barrels that could launch stone balls weighing up to 1,200 pounds each. Finally, the walls were breached; the Byzantine emperor died in the final battle. Mehmet II, standing before the palace of the emperor, passed to reflect on the passing nature of human glory.

After their conquest of Constantinople, the Ottoman Turks tried to complete their conquest of the Balkans, where they had been established since the fourteenth century. Although they were successful in taking in the Romanian territory of Walachia (wah-LACH-ee-uh) in 1456, the resistance of the Hungarians initially kept the Turks from advancing up the Danube valley. Until the end of the eighteenth century, internal problems and the need to consolidate their eastern frontiers kept the Turks from any further attacks on Europe. But at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans would renew their offensive against the West, challenging Hungary, Austria, Bohemia, and Poland and threatening to turn the Mediterranean into a Turkish lake.
A Renaissance Pope: Leo X. The Renaissance popes afforded secular concerns to overshadow their spiritual duties. Shown here is the Medici pope Leo X. Raphael portrays the pope as a collector of books, looking up after examining an illuminated manuscript with a magnifying glass. At left is the pope’s cousin Giulio, standing behind the pope is Luigi de’ Rossi, another relative who had also been made a cardinal.

one son, one nephew, and the brother of one mistress to the cardinalate. A Venetian envoy stated that Alexander, “joyous by nature, thought of nothing but the aggrandizement of his children.” Alexander scandalized the church by encouraging his

Beginning in Italy, the Renaissance was an era that rediscovered and was influenced by the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. It was also a time of recovery from the difficulties of the fourteenth century as well as a period of transition that witnessed a continuation of the economic, political, and social trends that had begun in the High Middle Ages.

The Renaissance was also a movement in which intellectuals and artists proclaimed a new vision of humankind and raised fundamental questions about the value and importance of the individual. The humanists or intellectuals of the age called their period from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century an age of rebirth, believing that they had restored arts and letters to new glory. Humanism was an intellectual movement based on the study of the classical literary works of Greece and Rome. The goal of a humanist education was to produce individuals of virtue and wisdom. Civic humanism posited that the ideal citizen was not only an intellectual but also an active participant in the life of the state.

The Renaissance is perhaps best known for its artistic brilliance. Renaissance artists in Italy sought not only to persuade outsiders of the reality of the object they were portraying, but also to focus attention on human beings as “the center

and measure of all things.” This new Renaissance style was developed, above all, in Florence, but at the end of the fifteenth century, Renaissance art moved into a new phase in which Rome became the new cultural center. In the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo, the High Renaissance ideal of beauty was convincingly portrayed.

The Renaissance in Europe was also an era of “new monarchies,” best seen in England, France, and Spain. Monarchs in these countries limited the private armies of the aristocracy, raised taxes, created professional armies, and in the process were able to reestablish the centralized power of monarchical governments. At the same time, the Renaissance popes became increasingly

ruined in political and temporal concerns that overshadowed their spiritual responsibilities.

Of course, the intellectuals and artists of the Renaissance wrote and painted for the upper classes, and the brilliant intellectual, cultural, and artistic accomplishments of the Renaissance were products of and for the elite. The ideas of the Renaissance did not have a broad base among the masses of the people. The Renaissance did, however, raise new questions about medieval traditions. In advocating a return to the early sources of Christianity and criticizing current religious practices, the humanists raised fundamental issues about the Catholic Church, which was still an important institution. In the sixteenth century, as we shall see in the next chapter, the intellectual renaissance of the fifteenth century gave way to a religious renaissance that touched the lives of people, including the masses, in new and profound ways.

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

Beginning in Italy, the Renaissance was an era that rediscovered and was influenced by the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. It was also a time of recovery from the difficulties of the fourteenth century as well as a period of transition that witnessed a continuation of the economic, political, and social trends that had begun in the High Middle Ages.

The Renaissance was also a movement in which intellectuals and artists proclaimed a new vision of humankind and raised fundamental questions about the value and importance of the individual. The humanists or intellectuals of the age called their period from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century an age of rebirth, believing that they had restored arts and letters to new glory. Humanism was an intellectual movement based on the study of the classical literary works of Greece and Rome. The goal of a humanist education was to produce individuals of virtue and wisdom. Civic humanism posited that the ideal citizen was not only an intellectual but also an active participant in the life of the state.

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### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### Upon Reflection

- Q What was the pattern of political development in Renaissance Italy? What new political practices (crafts) did the Italian contribute to Europe, and how were these new political practices reflected in the works of Machiavelli?

- Q What was the relationship between Italian Renaissance humanism and Italian Renaissance art?

- Q What impact did the policies of the Renaissance popes have on the Catholic Church?