

## The Renaissance

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

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### I. Background

A. The Renaissance is considered the beginning of modern European History

- *For a contrast between the Renaissance and Later Middle Ages see the study guide at the end of this section*

B. Renaissance (c. 1300-1600)

1. Occurred first in Italy around 1300 and lasted until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century
2. Renaissance spread to Northern Europe around 1450
3. In England, the Renaissance did not begin until the 16<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Shakespeare)

C. Origins of Renaissance: 19<sup>th</sup> century historian **Jacob Burckhardt** claimed the Renaissance period was in distinct contrast to the Middle Ages

D. Renaissance culture applied almost exclusively to the upper classes.

1. Upper classes had the luxury of time to spend learning the classics.
2. Peasantry was largely illiterate and Renaissance ideas had little impact on common people.
3. Working classes and small merchants were far too preoccupied with the concerns of daily life.

### II. Rise of the Italian City-States

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

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

B. Politics among the Italian City-States

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

C. Major city-states and figures

1. **Republic of Florence** (included Republic of Genoa)
  - a. Center of the Renaissance during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - b. Dominated by the **Medici family**
  - c. **Cosimo de' Medici** (1389-1464): allied with other powerful families of Florence and became unofficial ruler of the republic
  - d. **Lorenzo de' Medici (the "Magnificent")** (1449-1492): significant patron of the arts (son of Cosimo)
2. **Duchy of Milan** – ruled by **Sforza** family after 1450
  - Milan was a principal adversary of Venice and Florence until the Peace of Lodi (1454) created a relative 40-year period of peace among the Italian city-states
3. **Rome, the Papal States**: popes served both as religious and political leaders; controlled much of central Italy
4. **Venice, Venetian Republic**
  - a. Longest lasting of the Italian states (did not succumb to foreign powers until Napoleon conquered it in the early 1800s)
  - b. Greatest maritime power in Italy and one of the world's great naval and trading powers during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.
5. **Naples, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies**
  - a. Included south Italian region of Naples and the island of Sicily
  - b. Only Italian city-state to officially have a "king"
  - c. Controlled by France between 1266-1435
  - d. Controlled by Spain after 1435

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D. Decline of the Italian city-states

1. French invasions began in 1494 ("First Italian War")
  - a. Milan's despot, Ludovico "the Moor," encouraged French King **Charles VIII** to invade Naples, the traditional enemy of Milan.
  - b. This was the beginning of foreign invasions throughout the Italian peninsula.
2. Florence
  - a. When Florence attempted to appease France during its invasion in 1494, it led to the overthrow of the Medici family.
    - Although the Medici family returned to power several years later, Florence by then was severely weakened.
  - b. **Girolamo Savonarola** became the unofficial leader of Florence between 1494 and 1498.
    - Pledged to rid Florence of its decadence and corruption
    - In effect, oversaw a theocracy in Florence
    - He had earlier predicted the French invasions due to paganism and moral decay in the Italian city-states); became a puppet of the French
    - When France was removed from Italy in 1498, Savonarola was imprisoned and then burned at the stake.
3. Italy became a battleground in a series of power struggles between Spain and France
  - Spanish fears of a French-Italian alliance resulted in Spain's alliance with Venice, the Papal States, and the Holy Roman Empire
4. **Niccolò Machiavelli** (1469-1527) ***The Prince*** (1513)
  - a. The quintessential political treatise of the 16<sup>th</sup> century
  - b. Observed the political leadership of **Cesare Borgia** (son of Pope Alexander VI) who had ambitions of uniting Italy under his control
  - c. Stated that politically, "the ends justifies the means"
  - d. Stated that for rulers, "it was better to be feared than to be loved"
  - e. Rulers had to be practical and cunning, in addition to being aggressive and ruthless
    - At times rulers should behave like a lion (aggressive and powerful) and at other times like a fox (cunning and practical)
  - f. *The Prince* continued to influence European rulers for centuries.

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5. **Sack of Rome in 1527** by armies of Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V** (who was also king of Spain) symbolized the end of the Renaissance in Italy

### III. Humanism:

#### A. Characteristics

1. Revival of antiquity (Greece and Rome) in philosophy, literature and art
  - Sought to reconcile pagan writings with Christian thought
2. Strong belief in individualism and the great potential of human beings (in contrast to the Middle Ages where humans were seen as small, wicked and inconsequential and should focus solely on earning salvation)
  - a. **Virtú**: “the quality of being a man”; idea of excelling in all of one’s pursuits
  - b. Believed the key to a good life was Reason and Nature
3. Focused first on studying ancient languages:
  - a. Initially, **Latin** of ancient Rome was the main focus.
  - b. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, **Greek** came to be studied rigorously as well
  - c. By 1500, virtually all of the significant ancient Roman and Greek texts that have been rediscovered, were translated and printed
4. Largely rejected Aristotelian views and medieval scholasticism in favor of:
  - Roman authors such as Cicero, Livy, Virgil, and Quintilian
  - Greek writings, especially those of Plato
  - early Christian writers, especially the New Testament
    - This occurred predominantly in northern Europe and became a cornerstone of the Northern Renaissance
5. Believed in a liberal arts educational program that included grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, politics and moral philosophy
6. **Civic Humanism**: idea that education should prepare leaders who would be active in civic affairs
  - Some of the most important humanists also were important political leaders.
7. Often, humanism was more secular and lay dominated; however, most humanists remained deeply Christian, both in Italy and in Northern Europe

- B. **Petrarch** (1304-1374)—the “father of humanism”
1. Considered the first modern writer
    - In his writings, literature was no longer subordinate to religion
  2. Claimed that the Middle Ages (the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of the Renaissance) were the “**Dark Ages**”
  3. He was perhaps the first to use critical textual analysis to ancient texts.
    - Especially influenced by Cicero
  4. Wrote his famous poetry in the Italian vernacular (as did Dante earlier in his *Divine Comedy*).
- C. **Boccaccio** (1313-1375)
1. Compiled an encyclopedia of Greek and Roman mythology
  2. **Decameron** is his most famous work
    - a. Consisted of 100 earthy tales that comprise a social commentary of 14<sup>th</sup> century Italy
    - b. Aimed to impart wisdom of human character and behavior (especially sexual and economic misbehavior).
- D. **Leonardo Bruni** (1370-1444)
1. First to use the term “humanism”
  2. Among the most important of the civic humanists
  3. Served as a chancellor in Florence
  4. Wrote a history of Florence, perhaps the first modern history, and wrote a narrative using primary source documents and the division of historical periods
- E. **Lorenzo Valla** (1407-1457)
1. Foremost expert on the Latin language: ***Elegances of the Latin Language*** (1444)
  2. ***On the False Donation of Constantine*** (1444)
    - a. Exposed the Donation of Constantine as an 8<sup>th</sup> century fraud, using textual criticism
    - b. The Church had claimed it was granted vast territories by the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Roman emperor Constantine.
  3. Valla also pointed out errors in the **Latin Vulgate** (the authorized version of the Bible for the Catholic Church)
  4. Ironically, Valla’s work gave challengers of Church authority ammunition, even though he remained a devoted Catholic and even served as a secretary under Pope Nicholas V.

F. **Marsilio Ficino** (1433-1499)

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

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

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

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

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

- I. **Printing press: Johann Gutenberg** (c. 1400-1468)
  1. One of most important inventions in human history.
  2. Gutenberg's development of **movable type** made possible the spread of humanistic literature to rest of Europe with astonishing speed.
  3. No longer would copies of works need to be done by hand, individually.
  4. 1457-58, published the first printed Bible in the city of Mainz, Germany
  5. Facilitated the phenomenal spread of the Reformation.

#### IV. Italian Renaissance Art

##### A. Patronage

1. Florence was the leader in Renaissance art especially in the **quattrocento** (1400s)
  - a. **Giorgio Vasari** (1511-74): *The Lives of the Artists*
    - Contemporary Renaissance art historian who left much valuable information about Renaissance artists and their works.
  - b. Massive patronage for the arts came from wealthy merchant-families (such as the Medicis) who commissioned countless works from the great artists.
    - In essence, the wealth of Florence was mirrored by the superb artistic output of the Renaissance
      - A good example is Donatello's *David* which stood in the Medici courtyard during the wedding of Lorenzo de Medici.
    - In Milan, the Sforza's commissioned such works as Leonardo's *The Last Supper*
  - c. Patronage also came from local churches who increasingly saw Renaissance art as a means of glorifying God. Some notable examples include
    - Brunelleschi's *Il Duomo* built for the Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral
    - Ghiberti's two sets of doors for the baptistry opposite *Il Duomo*
    - Michelangelo's *David* was originally commissioned for the cathedral (but was too heavy and thus placed elsewhere).
2. Rome became the center of Renaissance art in the 1500s (**cinquecento**)
  - a. With the decline of Florence in the late-15<sup>th</sup> century, Renaissance dominance shifted to Rome.
  - b. **Pope Alexander VI** (r. 1492-1503): most notorious of the Renaissance popes; spent huge sums on art patronage (e.g. Bramante's *Tempietto*)

- c. A few of the notable works commissioned by the Church in this period include
  - Michelangelo's dome atop St. Peter's Cathedral, his paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the sculpture *Pieta* that is located within the cathedral
  - Raphael's *The School of Athens* (a fresco painting inside the papal apartments)
  - Bramante's *Tempietto*, a small church that is a masterpiece in classical architecture; and his floor plan for a newly rebuilt St. Peter's cathedral. (Much of his plans were altered after his death)
- B. New artistic techniques
  1. Painting
    - a. **perspective**: 3-D effects on a 2-dimensional surface
      - Medieval works, in contrast, looked flat and two-dimensional
    - b. **chiaroscuro**: use of dark and light colors to create the illusion of depth
    - c. Faces of subjects expressed unique individual characteristics (embodied Renaissance ideal of "individualism")
      - Also, more emotion was shown on human faces
      - In contrast, medieval paintings tended to be more **stylized** in their portrayal of human faces (i.e. more generic)
    - d. **sfumato** developed by Leonardo; a technique of blurring or softening sharp outlines
  2. Sculpture
    - a. Renaissance sculpture was often free-standing, designed to be seen in the round
      - Heavily influenced by ancient Greek and Roman sculpture
      - Contrast with medieval sculpture that largely was done in relief
    - b. Many sculptures glorified the human body and many portrayed nude figures (like works in ancient Greece and Rome)
    - c. Like Renaissance painting, many Renaissance sculptures glorified the individual



St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City

3. Architecture
  - a. Utilized ancient Greek and Roman forms such as **Greek temple architecture** (with triangular pediments), Greek columns, Roman arches and domes (e.g. the Pantheon in Rome)
  - b. Simplicity, symmetry and balance.
  - c. Contrasted sharply with the highly-ornamented gothic style of the middle ages of pointed arches (as evidenced in numerous medieval cathedrals)



An example of Greek temple architecture: note the triangular pediment on top and the Greek columns below

C. Florentine Renaissance Artists

1. **Giotto** (1266-1336) – considered perhaps the first Renaissance painter; use of chiaroscuro
2. **Filippo Brunelleschi** (1377-1446)
  - a. **Il Duomo** (1420-34) atop Santa Maria del Fiore is his masterpiece; it was the largest dome in Europe at the time of its construction (See right)
  - b. Considered the “father” of perspective (although Alberti wrote the first treatise on the subject)
3. Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), architect of several famous cathedrals.
4. **Lorenzo Ghiberti** (1378-1455) – sculptor
  - a. Won a contest in 1403 against Brunelleschi that earned him the commission to sculpt the bronze doors for Florentine baptistery
  - b. His two sets of bronze doors (1424 and 1452) are a masterpiece of sculpture
    - Michelangelo called his 2<sup>nd</sup> set of bronze doors the **“gates of paradise”** (See right)
5. **Donatello** (1386-1466) – sculptor
  - a. His bronze statue of *David* (1408-09) was the first since antiquity (See right)
  - b. First Renaissance artist to utilize a nude figure in sculpture
6. **Masaccio** (1401-1428) painter
  - a. Perhaps first Renaissance painter to portray real, nude human figures in 3-D
  - b. *Expulsion of Adam and Eve* (1427): fresco shows tremendous emotion; both figures are nude
7. **Sandro Botticelli** (1444-1510) – painter: *Birth of Venus* (c. 1485-86) (See next page)
  - a. The painting is a good example of humanism as the subject is Venus, the Roman goddess of love.
  - b. Venus’ stands in **contrapposto**, with more weight on one leg than the other. This is also humanistic as *contrapposto* was used frequently by ancient Greek and Roman sculptors



Brunelleschi’s dome atop Santa Maria del Fiore



Ghiberti’s “gates of paradise”



Donatello’s *David*. Note that the subject is standing *contrapposto*

- D. **"High Renaissance"**: centered in Rome (16<sup>th</sup> century)
1. The worldly "Renaissance Popes"—Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X—provided tremendous patronage to the arts
  2. Characteristics: classical balance, harmony, restraint
  3. **Bramante** (14) – architect
    - a. His *Tempietto (San Pietro in Montorio)* marked the beginning of the High Renaissance in Rome (1502) when Alexander VI appointed him to build a sanctuary that allegedly marked the spot where Peter was crucified
    - b. Principal architect of the rebuilt St. Peter's cathedral, although some of his plans were altered after his death (e.g. by Michelangelo)
  4. **Leonardo da Vinci** (1452-1519)
    - a. The quintessential "Renaissance Man"
      - Painter, sculptor, architect, engineer, writer, scientist
    - b. ***Mona Lisa*** (1503-1507)
      - Considered one of the great masterpieces in all of art history
      - Leonardo developed the technique of **sfumato**, a haze that softens the edges of objects in the painting.
    - c. *Last Supper* (1498) – fresco (paint on wet plaster)
  4. **Raphael Santi** (1483-1520) – painter
    - a. Created numerous "Madonna and Child" paintings
    - b. ***School of Athens*** (1510-11) is a quintessential example of humanism
      - Greco-Roman architecture is prominent
      - Plato & Aristotle are in the center of the painting
      - Sculptures are painted in *contrapposto* stance
  5. **Michelangelo** Buonarroti (1475-1564)
    - a. Painting: ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
    - b. Sculpture:
      - ***David*** (1501-04): Humanistic marble sculpture—glorifies the human body; *contrapposto* stance; facial features are individualistic and emotional (See right)
      - ***Pieta*** (1499): Mary holding limp body of Christ considered perhaps the most perfect marble sculpture ever made (See next page)
    - c. Architecture: Designed the enormous dome atop **St. Peter's Cathedral** in the Vatican (still the largest dome in present-day Europe)



Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*,  
Uffizi, Florence



Bramante's *Tempietto*



Raphael, *School of Athens*  
Palace of the Vatican, Rome



Michelangelo's *David*

E. Venice: **Titian** (c. 1485-1576)

1. Greatest painter of the Venetian school
2. Use of vivid color and movement, in contrast to more subtle colors and static figures of the Florentine style

F. **Mannerism**

1. Characteristics:
  - a. Reaction against the Renaissance ideals of balance, symmetry, simplicity and realistic use of color
    - High Renaissance had taken art to perfection; there was little that could be done to improve it; thus, mannerists rebelled against it
  - b. Works often used unnatural colors while shapes were elongated or otherwise exaggerated
2. Tintoretto (1518-94)
  - a. Venetian painter
  - b. Used elongated figure proportions, twisted poses, and compression of space
3. **El Greco** (1541-1614)
  - a. Greek artist who did most of his greatest work in Spain
  - b. Perhaps the greatest of the Mannerists with his use of elongated figures and unnatural pigments
  - c. *Burial of Count Orgaz* (1586-88) and *Toledo* (1597) are two important examples of his work

V. The **Northern Renaissance**

A. **Christian Humanism:**

1. Emphasis on early Church writings that provided answers on how to improve society and reform the Church
  - a. Less emphasis on pagan works from ancient Greece and Rome (although these works were widely read and enjoyed by Christian Humanists)
  - b. Many historians today see more continuity between the Northern and Italian Renaissance than contrasts.
2. Drew on Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers.
3. Emphasized education and power of human intellect to bring about institutional change and moral improvement.
4. Writings led to criticism of the church thus leading to the Reformation



Michelangelo's *Pieta*



El Greco, *Burial of Count Orgaz*,  
Santo Tome, Toledo, Spain

B. **Erasmus** (1466-1536)

1. Most famous and celebrated of all northern humanists
2. Master of the Greek language; one of Europe's foremost authorities
3. Made new translations of the Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament to create 'purer' editions.
4. He was the first humanist to earn a living by writing—an extremely impressive achievement.
5. ***In Praise of Folly*** (1513)
  - a. Best-seller (only the Bible sold more by 1550)
    - Written in Latin; thus it was not intended for mass consumption
  - b. Erasmus was a devout Catholic who sought to reform the Church, not destroy it.
  - c. Satirized people's worldly ambitions, including the clergy.
  - d. Criticized immorality and hypocrisy of Church leaders and the clergy
  - e. The book inspired renewed calls for reform, and influenced Martin Luther.
    - Thus, some contemporaries claimed that "Erasmus lay the egg that Luther hatched" regarding the reformation

C. **Thomas More** (1478-1536)

1. Prime example of a civic humanist; he rose to the highest government position of any humanist
  - Lord Chancellor to King Henry VIII in England
2. ***Utopia*** (1516): More's humanistic masterpiece
  - a. Mixes civic humanism with religious ideals to describe a perfect (utopian) society located on an imaginary island
  - b. More sees the accumulation of property as a root cause for society's ills; a few have it—most don't
  - c. In order to achieve harmony and order people have to be willing to sacrifice their individual rights for the common good.
  - d. War, poverty, religious intolerance, and other problems of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century do not exist.

D. **Jacques Lefevre d'Étapes** (1454-1536)

1. Leading French humanist and good example of how Northern Christian humanists focused on early Church writings.
2. Produced 5 versions of the Psalms that challenged a single authoritative version of the Bible.
  - A devout Catholic, he was later seen as an enemy of the Church and was condemned for heresy

- E. **Francesco Ximenes de Cisneros** (1436-1517):
1. Spanish humanist who reformed the Spanish clergy and church so that many of the Church abuses that were highlighted during the Reformation did not necessarily apply to Spain
    - Grand Inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition (serves as an example of how not all humanists were necessarily tolerant of heretical views).
  2. Complutensian Polyglot Bible: Placed Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions of the Bible in parallel columns.
    - Yet another example of how Northern humanists focused on early Church writings and the accuracy of Biblical translations.
- F. **François Rabelais** (1494-1553)
1. His secular writings portrayed his confidence in human nature and reflected Renaissance tastes
  2. **Gargantua** and **Pantagruel** (1532-1542)
    - a. A folk epic and comic masterpiece that satirized French society
    - b. Attacked clerical education and monastic orders; championed secular learning
- G. **Michel de Montaigne** (1533-1592)
1. Developed the **essay** form
    - The essay became a vehicle for testing new ideas
  2. **Skepticism**
    - a. Doubt that true knowledge could be obtained
    - b. Believed that the skeptic must be cautious, critical and suspend judgment.
    - c. Thus, one must be tolerant of others' views
- H. **William Shakespeare** (1564-1616) – Elizabethan era
1. Greatest of the English Renaissance authors
  2. His works reflected the Renaissance ideas of classical Greek and Roman culture, individualism and humanism
  3. Wrote comedies, tragedies, histories and sonnets
- I. **Miguel de Cervantes** (1547-1616): **Don Quixote** (1605-15)
1. Among the greatest pieces of Spanish literature
  2. Critical of excessive religious idealism chivalric romance

## VI. Northern Renaissance Art

A. **Flemish style:** Low Countries produced especially important artists

1. Characteristics

- Heavily influenced by the Italian Renaissance
- More detail throughout paintings (especially the background) than the Italian Renaissance
- Use of oil paints (in contrast to Italian Renaissance that used tempera)
- More emotional than the Italian style
- Works often preoccupied with death

2. **Jan Van Eyck** – (c. 1339- c. 1441) Flemish painter

- Most famous and innovative Flemish painter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century
- Perfected oil painting
- Naturalistic wood panel paintings used much religious symbolism.
- Employed incredible detail in his works
- Masterpiece: *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432)
- Arnolfini and his Wife* (1434) is perhaps his most famous work.

3. **Bosch** (c. 1450-1516) -- Netherlands

- Master of symbolism and fantasy
- His art often looks surrealistic (like Dali of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and focused often on death and the torments of Hell.
- Works reflect confusion and anguish that people felt in the Later Middle Ages (e.g. Black Death)
- Death and the Miser* (c. 1490) (*See right*): Depicts the dance of death theme (danse macabre) of the Black Plague era.

4. **Peter Brueghel the Elder** (1520-1569)

- Not influenced much by the Italian Renaissance
- Focused on lives of ordinary people (e.g. *Peasant Dance* (1568) (*See right*), *Peasant Wedding* (c. 1568), and *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent* (1559))

B. Germany

1. **Albrecht Dürer** (1471-1528)

- Foremost northern Renaissance artist.
- Master of the woodcut (*See "Knight, Death, and Devil" on the next page*)
- First northerner artist to master Italian Renaissance techniques of proportion, perspective, & modeling
- Some notable works include *St. Jerome*; *Knight Death, and Devil*; *Four Apostles*
- Painted numerous self-portraits



Van Eyck, *Arnolfini and his Wife*  
National Gallery, London



Bosch, *Death and the Miser*  
National Gallery, Washington, D.C.



Brueghel the Elder, *Peasant Dance*  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna

2. **Hans Holbein the Younger** (1497-1543):
  - a. Premier portrait artist of his era: painted Erasmus, More, numerous portraits of King Henry VIII and also his family members
  - b. *The Ambassadors* (1533) encompasses some of the major themes of the era: exploration, religious discord, preoccupation with death (the skull in the foreground) and the rising tide of international relations in an age of expansion
3. **Fugger family** in Germany, especially **Jacob Fugger** (1459-1525) was significant in patronizing art of the Northern Renaissance
  - Fortune was the result of international banking (much like the Medici family in Florence)

C. Spain: **El Greco** (1541-1614): painter: **mannerism**  
(see "Mannerism" above under the Italian Renaissance section)

## VII. Women during the Renaissance era

### A. Wealthy women

1. *Querelles des Femmes* ("The Problem of Women"): A new debate emerged over the proper role of women in society (starting with **Christine de Pisan** in the 14<sup>th</sup> century); the debate continued for six hundred years.
2. Women enjoyed increased access to education
3. However, lost some status compared to women in the Middle Ages; women functioned now as "ornaments" to their middle-class or upper-class husbands
4. Women were to make themselves pleasing to the man (Castiglione)-- only applied to the upper classes
5. Sexual double-standard: women were to remain chaste until marriage; men were permitted to "sow their wild oats."
6. Important Renaissance noblewomen at court in education and culture
  - a. **Christine de Pisan** (1363?-1434?): *The City of Ladies* (1405); *The Book of Three Virtues*
    - Chronicle of accomplishments of great women of history.
    - Renaissance woman's survival manual.
    - Perhaps Europe's first feminist
    - Extremely well-educated in France.



Dürer, *Knight, Death and Devil*,  
woodcut engraving



Holbein, *The Ambassadors*  
National Gallery, London

- b. **Isabella d'Este** (1474-1539): "First Lady" of the Renaissance
    - Set an example for women to break away from their traditional roles as mere ornaments to their husbands
    - Ruled Mantua after her husband died
    - She and her siblings were well educated
    - Big patron of the arts
    - Founded a school for young women
    - Wrote over 2000 letters that provide a window into politics and courtly life at that time.
  - c. **Artemesia Gentileschi** (1593-1652) (considered a Baroque painter)
    - Perhaps the first female artist to gain recognition in the post-Renaissance era.
    - First woman to paint historical and religious scenes: e.g. her series of "Judith" paintings
    - Female artists at this time were largely consigned to portrait painting & imitative poses
- B. Peasant and lower-class women
1. Status did not change much compared to Middle Ages
  2. Marriage
    - a. European Family Pattern
      - **Nuclear family** (poor people tended to be unable to support extended families)
      - Wealthier people (and some landowning peasants) tended to have extended families
    - b. Based on economic considerations; not love
      - Parents played a large role when property was involved
      - **Dowries** were extremely important in wealthy families; also important in common families
      - Women tended to play a more significant role in the economy in Northern Europe.
    - c. Average age for women: less than 20 (for men it was mid-late 20s)
      - Class issues: rich tend to marry earlier than middle classes, and poor tend to marry earlier too, or not to marry at all.
      - In Italy, the age gap between husbands and wives was much larger than in Northern Europe
    - d. Increased infanticide and abandonment (among the poor)
      - Increase of foundling hospitals (2/3 of abandoned babies were girls)
      - Low rate of illegitimate births
    - e. Dramatic population growth until 1650

3. Divorce available in certain areas (still very limited) compared to Middle Ages where divorce was non-existent
    - This was largely due to a modest increase in divorce in Reformation countries
  4. Rape not considered a serious crime
  5. More prostitution than in Middle Ages
- C. Important Female Rulers
1. Caterina Sforza in Milan
  2. Isabella I: Unified Spain along with her husband Ferdinand.
  3. Mary Tudor: Ruled England (1553-1558) (see Reformation chapter)
  4. Elizabeth I: Ruled England (1558-1603) (see Reformation chapter)
  5. Catherine de Mèdicis: Ruled France as regent from 1559 to 1589 (see Reformation chapter)
- D. Persecution of alleged witches (see next chapter)
- E. Joan Kelly (historian): *Did Women have a Renaissance?* (1977)
1. Kelly asserts that middle class (bourgeois) women especially suffered a marked decline in their status along with that of noble women during the Italian Renaissance
  2. Middle class women were exclusively relegated to the private sphere while men monopolized political and economic issues in the public sphere.
  3. Sexual chastity was essential for both women of the nobility and the bourgeoisie; a double-standard existed as chastity was not expected of men
  4. Medieval feudalism permitted homage to female vassals but in Renaissance Italy feudalism came to be replaced by powerful city-states. Thus, the political power of women in many cases vanished.
    - Noble women thus experienced a state of almost universal dependence on her family and husband
  5. Non-military education by tutors for young noblemen (and women) had often been done by females in the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance female tutors were replaced with male humanistic tutors or boarding schools (that emphasized patriarchal and misogynous bias), thus reducing the educational influence of women.

## Contrasting the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance

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

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

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

## Important Terms

Italian Renaissance	stylized faces
Jacob Burckhart	sfumato
city-states	contrapposto
<i>Signori</i>	Greek temple architecture
<i>Oligarchies</i>	Giotto
commenda system	Brunelleschi, <i>Il Duomo</i>
<i>condottieri</i>	Lorenzo Ghiberti, "gates of paradise"
Republic of Florence	Donatello, <i>David</i>
Medici family	Masaccio, <i>Expulsion of Adam &amp; Eve</i>
Cosimo de' Medici	Sandro Botticelli, <i>Birth of Venus</i>
Lorenzo de' Medici (the Magnificent)	"High Renaissance"
Duchy of Milan	Bramante
Sforza family	Leonardo da Vinci, <i>Mona Lisa</i>
Republic of Venice	Raphael, <i>School of Athens</i>
Papal States	Michelangelo, <i>David</i> ; ceiling of Sistine Chapel; dome on St. Peter's basilica, <i>Pieta</i>
Naples, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies	Titian
Charles VIII	Mannerism
Girolamo Savonarola	El Greco
Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Northern Renaissance
Cesare Borgia	Christian humanism
Sack of Rome, 1527	Erasmus, <i>In Praise of Folly</i>
Charles V	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>
Humanism	Jacques Lefevre d'Étapes
Civil humanism	Francesco Ximenes de Cisneros
Petrarch	Francois Rabelais, <i>Gargantua and Pantagruel</i>
Boccaccio, <i>Decameron</i>	Michel de Montaigne, skepticism, essay
Leonardo Bruni	William Shakespeare
Lorenzo Valla, <i>Elegances of the Latin Language; On the False Donation of Constantine</i>	Miguel de Cervantes, <i>Don Quixote</i>
<i>Latin Vulgate</i>	Flemish style
Marsilio Ficino	Jan van Eyck
Pico Della Mirandola, <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>	Bosch
Baldassare Castiglione, <i>Book of the Courtier</i>	Peter Brueghel, the Elder
<i>virtú</i>	Albrecht Dürer
Johann Gutenberg, printing press, moveable type	Hans Holbein the Younger
quattrocento, 1400s	Fugger family
Giorgio Vasari, <i>The Lives of the Artists</i>	Christine de Pisan
cinquecento, 1500s	Isabella d'Este
Pope Alexander VI	Artemesia Gentilleschi
perspective	
chiaroscuro	

## **Essay Questions:**

*Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 8 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are practice questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.*

1. Compare and contrast the Renaissance with the Later Middle Ages
2. To what extent is the Renaissance truly a departure from the past?
3. To what extent did Renaissance humanism affect the view of the individual?
4. Analyze the influence of humanism on Renaissance art. Select at least three artists and analyze at least one work for each artist.
5. Analyze the impact of patronage on Renaissance art.
6. To what extent were women impacted by the Renaissance?

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