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The Renaissance and Reformation

(1350-1600)

Chapter Outline

- 1 Spirit of the Renaissance
- 2 Art and Literature of the Renaissance
- 3 Changing Patterns of Life
- 4 Beginnings of the Protestant Reformation
- 5 Further Challenges to the Catholic Church



A procession of the Medici, the leading family of Renaissance Florence, with their servants and followers.

In Florence, Italy, the Guasconti family was sitting down to dinner when a young man burst into the room. He drew a knife and threw himself at one of the startled diners, crying: "Traitors, this is the day on which I mean to murder you all!" When none of the terror-stricken family dared offer battle, the man changed his mind. He ran down the stairs, only to find a dozen other members of the Guasconti household, armed with shovels, iron pipes, and clubs.

Later, the young man recalled, "When I got among them, raging like a mad bull, I flung four or five to the earth, and fell down with them myself, continually aiming my dagger now at one and now at another." Incredibly, when the dust settled, no one was hurt, and the man ran off down the street.

The young fighter was Benvenuto Cellini (chehl LEE nee), a talented goldsmith and sculptor who lived from 1500 to 1571. Cellini led an amazingly turbulent and full life, which he described in his *Autobiography*. He explained in the book that he had fought with the Guasconti because they questioned his skill as a goldsmith.

Cellini was proud of his many talents. He played the flute, wrote elegant poetry, and was a clever diplomat. His drive and determination knew no bounds. When Rome was besieged by a neighboring city-state, Cellini stood at a crucial castle post, firing artillery at the advancing enemy. In his *Autobiography*, he boasted, "It was I who saved the castle."

Cellini was just one of many gifted personalities whose bold achievements proclaimed a new age. These individuals left a lasting mark on the European scene during the period from 1350 to 1600, known as the Renaissance.

Renaissance is a French word meaning rebirth. During the Renaissance, scholars reacted against what they saw as the "dark ages" of medieval Europe and revived the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. They thought they were bringing about the rebirth of civilization.

The Renaissance was both a worldly and a religious age. Great achievements in the arts and sciences were combined with deep religious concerns. In fact, during the Renaissance, fierce debates over questions of faith and salvation sparked the Reformation, a movement that divided Christians in Europe into many different groups. By 1600, Europeans had left behind the world of the Middle Ages and had established the foundations for modern Europe.

1 Spirit of the Renaissance

During the 1300s, economic distress, war, and the Black Death had swept across Western Europe. As Western Europe recovered from these disasters, a new creative spirit emerged. This spirit was at the heart of the Renaissance. The Renaissance began first in the city-states of northern Italy. Later, it spread to northern Europe.

The Italian City-States

The political and economic situation in northern Italy provided fertile ground for the Renaissance. During the Middle Ages, many Italian towns had expanded into city-states. Each city-state governed itself and the surrounding countryside. Such independence left the rulers of the city-states free to experiment in government as well as in the larger world of ideas.

By the late Middle Ages, Italian city-states had grown wealthy from trade and industry. Merchants from Venice, Genoa, and Pisa controlled the most profitable trade routes to the eastern Mediterranean. Other cities, such as Florence, thrived on the sale of manufactured goods, especially wool cloth. In addition, Italian bankers made large profits by financing commercial ventures and making loans to princes and popes. The wealth of the city-states supported the Renaissance.

Merchants and bankers made up a powerful middle class in the Italian city-states.

■ The Renaissance spirit flourished in the northern Italian city-states. The major city-states are shown on this map, but there were dozens of smaller city-states, all in competition with one another. Ambitious rulers frequently went to war against their neighbors, making northern Italy the center of endless intrigues.



Political and economic leadership fell to this class rather than to landowning nobles because feudalism had never fully developed in northern Italy.

The concerns of the wealthy middle class helped shape the Renaissance in Italy. For example, the Renaissance reflected their concern for education and individual achievement. Furthermore, they had the time and money to become patrons, or supporters, of the arts.

Florence was typical of the Italian city-states in some ways. During the 1400s, a single powerful family, the Medici (MEHD ih chee), ruled Florence. Giovanni de' Medici had organized a bank in Florence in 1397. Over the next 30 years, the bank flourished, and the family opened offices as far away as London. Giovanni's son, Cosimo, and then his great-grandson, Lorenzo, controlled the government of Florence. The Medici and their supporters frequently clashed with other leading families in an atmosphere of intrigue and treachery. Yet under the Medici, Florence came to symbolize the creative spirit of the Renaissance.

Like many Renaissance rulers, the Medici were well-educated and had many interests. For example, Lorenzo, known as "the

Magnificent," was a skilled architect. The Medici were proud of Florence and wanted all citizens to share their pride. They used part of the Medici fortune to hire local painters, sculptors, architects, and silversmiths to create works of art to beautify Florence. Many artists felt that as true artists they should be actively involved in the life of their city, not withdrawn from the everyday world.

Study of the Humanities

People in the Italian city-states developed a renewed interest in education, especially in the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. At the universities, theology, law, and medicine were traditionally the most highly respected subjects. However, during the Renaissance, scholars also stressed the *studia humanitatis*, the study of the humanities. The humanities included the subjects taught in ancient Greek and Roman schools—grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and history. Renaissance scholars who studied those subjects were called humanists.

Renaissance humanists were practical people. They wanted to learn more about the world. By reading ancient texts, they rediscovered knowledge that had been lost or for-

In the Italian city-states, rulers lived in great luxury. At the courts of these Renaissance rulers, good manners, loyalty, wit, and piety were considered essential. This painting shows a wedding procession in Florence. Notice the rich clothes of the people attending the wedding.



gotten during the Middle Ages. Many were closely involved in the political and economic life of their age. Many Renaissance humanists were also devout Christians. They felt that the study of the humanities enriched their lives as Christians because it went beyond the dry, abstract works of medieval scholars.

Renaissance scholars thought education was the way to become a well-rounded individual. Only with a proper education, they argued, could a person enjoy a full, rewarding life. One scholar advised a student:

I beg you, take care. Add a little every day and gather things in. Remember that these studies promise you enormous prizes both in the conduct of your life and the fame and glory of your name acquaint yourself with what pertains to life and manners—those things that are called humane studies because they perfect and adorn man.

This philosophy reflected the Renaissance confidence in individual abilities.

Recovering the Classics

Francesco Petrarch (PEE trahrk) was an early Renaissance humanist from Florence who lived from 1304 to 1374. Petrarch traveled about Europe in search of old manuscripts. He especially prized the works of the Roman statesman Cicero and the early Christian writer St. Augustine. Medieval scholars had studied the writings of both men, but Petrarch uncovered new evidence about the times when Cicero and St. Augustine had lived. During his research, Petrarch began to realize how much of the classical heritage had been lost.

Petrarch's work encouraged others to try to recover writings of the classical world. They searched for ancient manuscripts in monastery libraries. Often, the conditions they found shocked them. A visitor to one monastery library discovered that only the walls remained standing. There was no door or roof. A thick layer of dust covered everything, and grass grew on the window sills. The manuscripts lay in disorganized piles.

While searching for classical texts, Renaissance humanists rescued many hidden

treasures. They wanted to restore the classics they found to their original form. Therefore, they compared copies of the same work to discover where mistakes had been made when it was recopied.

Scholars also tried to learn when ancient manuscripts were written. To do so, they developed sophisticated techniques for analyzing historical documents. One scholar, Lorenzo Valla, examined the Donation of Constantine, a document in which the emperor Constantine supposedly gave the pope control over Rome and the Western Roman Empire. By careful analysis, Valla exposed the document as a forgery. For example, he pointed out that it contained the term "fief," which was unknown in Constantine's time. This search for knowledge carried Renaissance thinkers such as Valla into dangerous areas because their work questioned long-held assumptions about the accuracy of ancient writings.

Handbooks for Proper Behavior

Renaissance writers often prepared manuals that told individuals how to behave. One well-known manual was *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli (MAHK ee uh VEHL ee). Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a handbook for rulers of the Italian city-states, who often faced unstable political conditions. Within a city, different factions, or groups, constantly struggled for power. In addition, city-states were frequently at war with one another.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli recommended that a ruler adopt a realistic course of action in order to stay in power. If a ruler could afford to be benevolent, that was fine. But Machiavelli cautioned, "It is much safer to be feared than to be loved, if one must choose." He taught that "the end justifies the means"—that is, a ruler should employ any methods to achieve his goal. He advised rulers to use a mixture of cunning, diplomacy, and ruthlessness.

Another influential manual was *The Book of the Courtier* by Baldassare Castiglione (KAHS tee LYOH neh). Castiglione described the qualities that a courtier, or refined, educated aristocrat, should possess.



Niccolò Machiavelli, a diplomat and government official in Florence, dedicated *The Prince* to Lorenzo de' Medici. The advice Machiavelli gave on how a ruler can stay in power is often considered ruthless and cynical. A typical piece of advice was: "If all men were good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them."

He praised the study of the humanities and urged courtiers to cultivate their talents. They should learn to appreciate music and play a variety of instruments. They should also be able to speak gracefully and provide rulers with witty, pleasant company. In short, Castiglione drew a picture of what he considered an ideal Renaissance person, someone who had a broad education in many different areas.

The Renaissance in Northern Europe

The Renaissance blossomed first in the Italian city-states, where commerce and a wealthy middle class supported learning and

the arts. Renaissance ideas spread slowly northward.

In northern Europe and Spain, the Renaissance took a different form. For one thing, feudalism, with its traditions of knighthood and chivalry, was stronger in northern Europe than in Italy. Therefore, kings, queens, and nobles, rather than merchants and bankers, were the chief patrons of the arts.

Furthermore, Renaissance scholars in northern Europe and Spain took a more traditional approach to religion than some Italian humanists. They studied classical works, but they were more likely to study the writings of early Christians than of Greeks and Romans. Northern European humanists devoted their time to uncovering what they believed was the simpler, purer faith of the early Christians.

Despite differences between the Renaissance in Italy and the Renaissance in the rest of Europe, Renaissance artists, writers, and scholars pursued similar goals. They stressed individual achievement and classical learning. Furthermore, they stimulated a vigorous creative spirit that revolutionized thinking in Western Europe. Compared to people in the Middle Ages, people during the Renaissance were more concerned with achieving worldly success. Yet they maintained a strong faith in Christianity.

SECTION REVIEW

1. Identify: Lorenzo de' Medici, Francesco Petrarch, Niccolò Machiavelli, Baldassare Castiglione.
 2. How did the wealth of the Italian city-states encourage the Renaissance spirit?
 3. (a) What subjects made up the humanities?
(b) According to Renaissance scholars, what was the purpose of education?
 4. How did scholars try to find errors in ancient manuscripts?
 5. What advice did Machiavelli give to rulers?
 6. According to Castiglione, what was the ideal Renaissance person?
 7. Describe one way in which the Renaissance in northern Europe differed from the Renaissance in Italy.
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2 Art and Literature of the Renaissance

The Renaissance spirit came vividly to life in literature and the arts. Writers produced a huge outpouring of literature, which both shaped and reflected Renaissance ideas. Artists, especially painters and sculptors, found an important place in the Renaissance world.

During the Middle Ages, painters and sculptors decorated many churches and cathedrals, but they received little individual recognition for their work. As a result, the names of only a few medieval artists are known today. In contrast, dozens of Renaissance artists are well known today. Popes, rulers, merchants, and bankers competed for their services. Renaissance artists proudly accepted the fame that their creative genius brought.

Classical Influence

During the Renaissance, artists returned to the classical principles of Greek and Roman art. The Greeks, you will recall, stressed harmony and balance in nature, and the Romans emphasized realism.

Renaissance artists in Italy found inspiration in ancient Roman buildings scattered across the land. In the early 1400s, the sculptor Donatello (DAHN uh TEHL oh) and the architect Filippo Brunelleschi (BROO nehl LEHS kee) traveled from Florence to Rome. There, they sketched the ruins of ancient buildings as well as ancient marble and bronze statues.

The visit to Rome produced dramatic results. When Donatello returned to Florence, he created a statue of David, a king of the ancient Hebrews. The statue was unlike medieval sculptures, in which individual figures appeared as part of a larger work on tombs or cathedral walls. Like ancient Greek and Roman statues, Donatello's David stood alone, free to be admired from all sides. Furthermore, it portrayed David with realism and grace.

Brunelleschi and other Renaissance architects rejected medieval Gothic architecture and revived classical styles. They designed elegant buildings, using columns and domes. Brunelleschi created a sensation when he proposed to top the unfinished cathedral of Florence with a vast dome. Many people thought the building would collapse. But Brunelleschi had studied ancient Roman buildings, and he overcame the technical problems involved in raising the dome.

Years later, when the artist and architect Michelangelo Buonarroti (mī k'l AHN juh LOH BWOH nahr ROH tee) designed Saint Peter's Cathedral in Rome, he designed the dome using the engineering principles developed by Brunelleschi.

New Techniques in Art

Many Renaissance artists tried to show the world realistically, as it actually existed. Early in the Renaissance, the Florentine artist Giotto (JAHT oh) used shadings of dark and light to add a feeling of space to his paintings. Later, the painter Tommaso Masaccio (mah SAHT choh) and Brunelleschi developed rules of perspective to give paintings an even more realistic look. The rules of perspective enabled artists to paint scenes so that they appeared to be three dimensional. For example, to give a sense of depth or distance in a scene, figures closer to the viewer were drawn larger. Those further off were drawn smaller.

Artists in Flanders* made significant contributions to Renaissance art by improving paints. Medieval artists had worked with tempera paints. In tempera paints, the pigments, or colors, were mixed with watered-down egg yolk. Tempera paints dried quickly, so artists could not make changes

* Flanders included parts of what is today Belgium and the Netherlands. People from Flanders were called Flemish.

once they had applied the color. Furthermore, tempera paints did not blend easily.

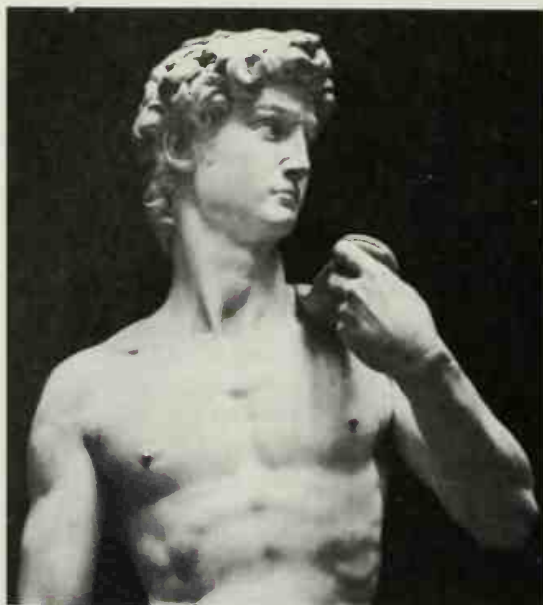
Flemish artists experimented with paints that had an oil base. The new oil paints dried more slowly and were easier to blend. Therefore, artists could create subtle new shades.

Great Italian Artists

During the opening decades of the 1500s, three artists dominated the world of Italian art: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael Santi. Together with many other Renaissance artists, these artists have influenced painting and sculpture until the present.

Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo da Vinci achieved the Renaissance goal of doing many things and excelling in all. He was

Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa is one of the most famous works of art in the world. Most people remember the haunting smile of the woman in this painting. The portrait is of Lisa della Gioconda, wife of a Florentine merchant.



Michelangelo's David symbolizes the spirit of the Renaissance, proud, fierce, and confident. The statue still stands in the heart of Florence. To the people of Florence, the Biblical hero David represented independence and liberty.

curious about everything. He continually observed the world around him and recorded his findings in dozens of notebooks. Because he was fascinated by flight, he observed birds on the wing. In his notebooks, he showed how he thought humans might use wings to fly. In order to understand the anatomy of the human body, he dissected corpses. He then used his knowledge to paint more realistic figures.

Sadly, much of Leonardo's work has been lost. Only 15 of his paintings survive, including such masterpieces as the *Last Supper* and the *Mona Lisa*.

Michelangelo. Like Leonardo, Michelangelo had many talents. He considered himself first and foremost a sculptor, but he was also an accomplished musician, poet, painter, and architect. Like other Renaissance sculptors, Michelangelo carefully studied the human figure. Yet Michelangelo's figures do not exhibit the relaxed poses of other sculptures, such as Donatello's David. Instead, Michelangelo's statues of David and Moses convey a sense of tension.

In 1508, Pope Julius II asked Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

in the Vatican, the pope's palace in Rome. Michelangelo devoted four years to the task. For hours each day, he lay on his back atop a high scaffold and painted scenes from the Bible, such as God creating the world, Noah and the flood, and Christ's crucifixion.

Raphael. Raphael Santi was a skillful painter whose work was influenced by both Leonardo and Michelangelo. Born in Umbria, Raphael favored the bright colors traditionally used by painters from that region of Italy. He often painted the Madonna, or mother of Jesus, and the infant Jesus. Unfortunately, Raphael's promising career was cut short by his death at age 37.

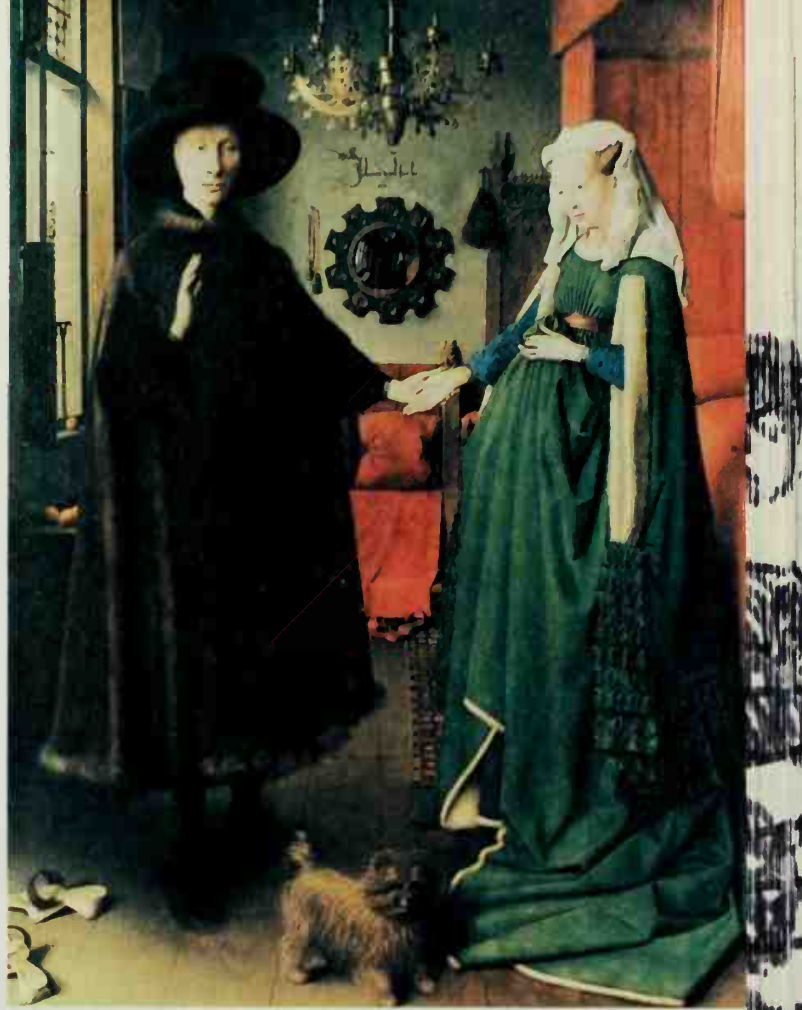
Artists of Northern Europe

In the 1400s and 1500s, northern European painters also created splendid masterpieces. Because ancient Roman ruins lay beyond the Alps, northern artists were less influenced by classical styles than their contemporaries in Italy. However, rules of perspective and the new oil-based paints did affect their work and marked a break with medieval painting.

Flanders was the artistic center of northern Europe. Flemish artists such as Jan van Eyck (van ĪK) were interested in painting the world realistically. To do this, van Eyck gave careful attention to detail. When he painted a satin robe, every fold was drawn exactly. Similarly, every jewel in a royal crown sparkled. Van Eyck's paintings often had a religious message. Each object had a symbolic meaning that reinforced the message of the painting.

Another Flemish painter, Pieter Bruegel (BROI guhl), found inspiration in everyday scenes of peasants working and in country landscapes. Although Bruegel showed the lives of common people in his paintings, he sometimes used symbolic figures, as van Eyck had, to express deeper meanings. Bruegel influenced later Flemish and Dutch painters, who painted scenes of daily life rather than religious or classical themes.

Many German artists painted realistic portraits. For example, Hans Holbein the Younger painted portraits of nobles and rulers, as well as of philosophers and com-



Northern Renaissance artists often painted realistic scenes of everyday life. This painting by Jan van Eyck shows the artist's friend Giovanni Arnolfini with his wife Jeanne Cenami. Many details of home life can be seen in the painting. Certain details have a symbolic meaning. The little dog is a symbol of faithfulness. The single lighted candle in the chandelier represents the presence of Christ. The writing above the mirror reads: "Jan van Eyck was here."

moners. Another German artist, Albrecht Dürer (DYOO ruhr), traveled to Italy to study the techniques of the Italian masters. Dürer helped spread their ideas across northern Europe.

Renaissance Writers

Like painting and sculpture, literature expressed the attitudes of the Renaissance. In towns and cities, the middle class formed a

demanding new audience, especially for popular literature such as dramatic tales and comedies.

Popular literature was often written in the vernacular although many Renaissance writers continued to use Latin. (See page 191.) The Italian writer Petrarch, for example, felt comfortable writing in either Latin or Italian. His works included poetry and polished essays written in the form of letters. Petrarch perfected the sonnet, a 14-line poem that expresses a complete thought.

Another Italian writer, Giovanni Boccaccio (boh KAH chee OH), also contributed to Renaissance literature. Boccaccio's best known work is the *Decameron*, 100 stories told by seven men and three women who had fled from a plague in Florence. The *Decameron* was the first prose work written in Italian. Its clear narrative style served as a model for later writers.

The French writer François Rabelais (RAB uh LAY) fit the ideal of a Renaissance person. He began his career as a monk. Later, he studied the classics and trained in medicine. Rabelais exhibited immense curiosity, which he summed up in these words: "Abandon yourself to Nature's truths, and let nothing in this world be unknown to you."

Rabelais expressed his view of the world through two famous characters he created: the giant Gargantua (gahr GAN choo wuh) and his son Pantagruel (pan TAG roo WEHL). Gargantua wanted his son to study everything in the arts and sciences. He also advised Pantagruel to learn Arabic, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Rabelais' writing contained witty discussions of philosophy and politics.

Miguel de Cervantes (suhr VAN teeZ) was a leading Renaissance writer in Spain. An adventurer, Cervantes served in the Spanish army. He was captured by pirates and held as a slave in North Africa for five years. Later, he turned to writing.

In his novel *Don Quixote* (DAHN kee HOHT ee), Cervantes gently mocked the medieval ideals of chivalry. The hero, a knight named Don Quixote, believed so strongly in chivalry that he kept imagining

himself in the middle of dangerous adventures. Sancho Panza, Don Quixote's servant, tried without success to convince the knight that the "castles" he saw were only lowly inns and the "jousting knights" were simply windmills.

Poet and playwright William Shakespeare is one of the finest writers in the English language. He wrote tragedies, comedies, and historical dramas, which were performed at the Globe Theater in London. In London, as in other European cities, both well-to-do and poorer people attended the theater. At the theater, they found entertainment, but they also learned about the ideas of their times.

A Call for Reform

Renaissance writers emphasized religious as well as worldly themes. In the early 1500s, some Christian scholars who had made a

"If anyone has not seen Erasmus, this portrait, drawn skillfully from life, gives his image." So wrote Hans Holbein the Younger, the German artist who painted this portrait of Erasmus. An influential Renaissance figure, Erasmus was called "the Scholar of Europe."



study of the Bible and early Christian writings urged reform of the Church. They wanted the Church to return to its early traditions based on the teachings of Jesus. These reformers were called Christian humanists.

In northern Europe, the Dutch scholar and priest Desiderius Erasmus (see RAZ muhs) led the Christian humanists. Erasmus knew Greek so he could study early copies of the New Testament, which were written in Greek. In *Praise of Folly* and other works, Erasmus used witty dialogues to point out the ignorance of some clergy. He also criticized the Church for emphasizing pomp and ritual rather than the teachings of Jesus.

Despite his criticism of Church practices, Erasmus accepted its teachings. He remained in the Church even when other reformers rejected its authority and established their own churches.

A friend of Erasmus who shared his concerns was the English scholar and statesman Sir Thomas More. More thought that literature should serve Christian goals. In his

book *Utopia*, More described an ideal society in which people lived at peace with one another.* He created an imaginary kingdom to show how such a society should be organized. Later writers used More's method to express their own ideas about society.

* Today, the word *utopia* is used to mean a perfect place or situation.

SECTION REVIEW

1. Identify: Donatello, Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Jan van Eyck, Pieter Bruegel, Albrecht Dürer, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Erasmus, Sir Thomas More.
 2. How was Donatello's David different from medieval sculpture?
 3. Describe two new techniques that affected Renaissance art.
 4. How did artists of northern Europe differ from Italian artists?
 5. (a) Why did Erasmus criticize the Church? (b) What did he think the Church should emphasize?
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3 Changing Patterns of Life

During the Renaissance, only a relatively few people were directly affected by the outpouring of creative genius in literature and the arts. The wealthy filled their palaces with artistic masterpieces. They also had the leisure time to read widely and expand their knowledge of the world. However, in later years, advances in technology gradually helped spread the new learning to a wider audience. As a result, Renaissance learning slowly filtered into the lives of ordinary people.

The Introduction of Printing

The invention of printing in the 1400s dramatically affected the production of books. Before this time, few books were reproduced because each one had to be copied by hand. A good copier could complete only about

two books a year. Furthermore, books were costly because they were written on parchment made from the skin of a sheep or goat.

Both problems were gradually overcome. In the 1300s, Europeans learned from the Arabs how to make paper from rag and wood pulp. The Arabs had learned about papermaking from the Chinese.

The technique of printing also grew out of earlier developments. In the 1300s, engravers experimented with printing books from wood blocks. They carved a page on the block, which was then inked and pressed on paper. By the 1440s, German engravers had developed movable type. Movable type consisted of tiny pieces of metal engraved with a letter. The pieces of metal could be combined to form words and then sentences. Also, the pieces of metal could be used again and again.

The final step in the development of printing was probably taken by Johann Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany. Gutenberg invented a metal alloy that could be used to make movable type. He developed a printing press that used this alloy. In 1455, he used his invention to print a complete edition of the Bible. With the Gutenberg Bible, as it was called, the era of printed books began.

Printing spread rapidly. By 1500, there were over 250 presses in Europe turning out books. As printing methods improved, the cost of producing books fell. Because prices were reasonable, people who could never have afforded hand-copied books now bought printed books.

The use of paper and the development of printing had a revolutionary impact on the world of learning. Books could be produced more quickly and less expensively than before. Ideas spread rapidly through the printed word. Many of the newly printed books were religious works such as the Bible

and biographies of saints. Others dealt with subjects ranging from mining and medicine to philosophy and politics. The availability of books on the sciences and technology would greatly affect the Scientific Revolution, which you will read about in Chapter 19.

Everyday Life

For people in Renaissance Europe, life was much as it had been for their parents and grandparents. However, social and economic changes were slowly taking place.

In medieval Europe, most people lived in an extended family. On the manor, for example, the extended family was an important economic unit because many people were needed to work the land. During the Renaissance, the nuclear family gradually began to emerge, especially in the towns and cities. In a nuclear family, only parents and their children live in a household.

The impact of printing was enormous because books, especially the Bible, became more readily available. This picture shows different phases of early printing. In the background, typesetters select pieces of movable type from the trays. In the foreground, a printer prepares to take a printed page off the press. The first printing presses were fairly simple machines adapted from wine presses.





The Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel was nicknamed "peasant Bruegel" because of paintings such as this *Peasant Wedding*. This painting offers a realistic view of everyday life. The young peasant bride is seated against the dark background. How is this wedding scene different from the one on page 282?

Another change affected the way businesses were run. Most businesses in the Middle Ages were small and were managed by a single family. During the Renaissance, some people formed business partnerships with people outside the family. Two or more families might pool their resources in order to expand business activities.

Some changes in agriculture and industry were the result of the continuing effects of the Black Death. (See page 213.) The Black Death had greatly reduced the population of Europe. Thus, the demand for wheat and other grains fell. Farmers began producing new types of food, which they hoped would be more profitable. The new foods included meat, fruit, and dairy prod-

ucts such as cheese and butter. As these products gradually became more plentiful, people's diets changed.

As a result of the Black Death, the demand for manufactured goods such as wool cloth also fell. In Florence, for example, half the population had died of the plague, and wool production dropped drastically. The demand for wool cloth increased when the population throughout Europe began to grow again. Wool workers then found their skills in much demand, and they asked for higher wages. When employers tried to keep wages low, the workers revolted. Although worker revolts were brutally suppressed, the wages of city workers did rise during the Renaissance.

Isabella d'Este: A Renaissance Person

At the height of the Renaissance, Isabella d'Este ruled over Mantua, one of the most brilliant courts in Italy. She so impressed her contemporaries with her knowledge, lively wit, and political skill that they called her "la prima donna del mondo"—"first lady of the world."

Isabella d'Este began life with many advantages. Her family, the Este, ruled Ferrara, a wealthy city-state in the Po River valley. At the time of Isabella's birth in 1474, the Este court sparkled as a center of Renaissance culture.

During the Renaissance, noble families like the Este often gave their daughters as well as their sons a thorough education. As a child, Isabella studied the humanities, including Latin and Greek. A fast learner, she astonished visitors when she quoted the verses of Virgil

from memory or translated the letters of Cicero.

Isabella also learned to sing, play the lute, dance, and embroider. With her lively intelligence and fine education, she was able to talk easily with the scholars and artists who visited her father's court. By the time she was married, at age 16, Isabella fit the Renaissance ideal of a cultivated individual with many skills and talents.

Isabella married Francesco Gonzaga, heir to the ruler of Mantua, a small but wealthy Italian city-state. In addition to being a wife and mother of nine children, Isabella devoted herself to Mantua.

The Italian city-states were nests of intrigue. Rivalries among the cities and the ambitions of French and Spanish kings caused frequent fighting. A skillful diplomat, Isabella helped her husband preserve the safety of Mantua. When the Venetians captured Francesco, Isabella ruled in his absence. Despite threats of invasion, she kept the people of Mantua calm and eventually secured her husband's release.

In Mantua, Isabella set the artistic fashions and standards of her day. Writers, artists, and poets gathered around her. She was a generous but demanding patron of the arts. She collected the finest paintings as well as marble and bronze statues, crystal, jewels, and clocks. Poets wrote songs in her honor, and books printed in Venice were sent to Mantua for her approval.

During her lifetime, Isabella wrote more than 2,000 letters, which show the wide range of her interests. In them, she commented on everything from art and politics to war and family matters. She knew the leading figures of the Renaissance, from Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, who sketched this portrait of her, to the pope and the most powerful kings of Europe.



Women in the Renaissance

Women's occupations changed little during the Renaissance. Their main responsibilities remained in the home, where they raised the children and took care of the family. At sowing and harvesting time, farm women and children worked in the fields alongside the men.

However, women also worked outside the home. Some women were employed as servants in households of wealthy farmers, merchants, or nobles. Many women also earned money as spinners and weavers, although most workers in the cloth industry were men. Women in the merchant class helped manage family businesses. In addi-

tion, many farm and city women ran their own small businesses, selling handwork or garden produce at local markets.

A few women played central roles in governing city-states or nations. Queen Isabella of Spain, for example, was a forceful and effective ruler. (See page 211.) At different times during the Renaissance, queens ruled Naples, Scotland, and England. In France, Catherine de Medici, the widow of King Henry II, acted as regent* for her young sons until they were old enough to rule.

Some Renaissance scholars argued that women as well as men would benefit from

* A regent governs in place of a monarch who is too young or is otherwise unable to rule.

studying the classics. As the number of schools increased, more women learned to read and write. For example, Isabella d'Este received an excellent education that enabled her to translate Greek and Latin writings and take part in the learned discussions of her day.

SECTION REVIEW

1. Identify: Johann Gutenberg.
 2. How did the introduction of printing affect the spread of ideas?
 3. Describe one way in which the Black Death affected farming during the Renaissance.
 4. Give three examples of work some women did outside the home.
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4 Beginnings of the Protestant Reformation

During the Middle Ages, various reform movements had restored the vigor of the Roman Catholic Church. However, during the Renaissance, many pious Christians again clamored for reform. Unlike earlier reform efforts, which had strengthened the Church, these efforts shattered forever the medieval ideal of the unity of Christendom.

Need for Reform

In the 1300s and 1400s, many Christians lost confidence in the Church's ability to provide religious leadership. The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism had seriously hurt the power and prestige of the Church. (See page 215.) To many, the Church seemed overly concerned with worldly affairs. The pope and clergy tried to preserve Church privileges as powerful monarchs chipped away at its power. Rulers of France, Spain, and Germany often interfered in Italian affairs. As a result, the pope became involved in long, costly wars to protect the Papal States from outside control.

The worldliness of the Church was evident in the pomp and splendor surrounding

the papal court. For example, in 1506, Pope Julius II decided to rebuild St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. He hired architects and artists such as Michelangelo to design and decorate the new church.

To finance such projects and pay for their wars, Renaissance popes devised new ways to raise money. They increased the fees that Christians paid for baptism, marriage, and funerals. They also permitted the sale of indulgences. An *indulgence* was the reduction of the punishment a sinner would suffer in purgatory after death.

Indulgences were first granted during the Crusades, when the pope agreed to cancel penalties for any sins that a crusader committed. Eventually, popes granted indulgences not only for a specific service, such as going on a crusade, but also for money contributions to the Church. By the 1500s, people could buy indulgences to cancel the punishments dead relatives might be suffering in purgatory.

Many faithful Christians protested such practices. They also objected to the worldliness of the Church. As you read in Chapter 12, reformers such as Wycliffe and Huss had gained many followers for their teachings,