

## The Renaissance

*il Rinascimento*, The Renaissance, the rebirth.

The video [*The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*] began with the Birth of Cosimo de Medici with the narrator stating that on 27 September 1389 “a baby was baptized into a medieval world” the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.

When Cosimo died on 1 August 1464, did he die in a new world? A world reborn, refocused, returning to the classical past. Does his life, in fact, coincide with the transition from medieval to the early modern world? Was Cosimo the father (or “Godfather”) of this Rebirth, this Renaissance?

His life began in 1389 and while the date signifies the period of history called “the late medieval period” transitions were already in place. The renaissance began in Italy and spread to the Northern part of Europe. The Renaissance was certainly not uniform in all of Europe; it did not happen at the same time, nor were the results of Renaissance ideas the same. The Italian renaissance was more focused on high art and humanism, while the Northern renaissance was more focused on religious change. Merchants and Popes sponsored Art of Italian Renaissance, while the Northern Renaissance art was often sponsored by Kings and some merchants.

In fact the transition from the medieval to modern worldview impacted, the social, political, economic, religious, artistic, and scientific world of Western Europe, but it did not happen all at once, not in a uniform manner, but rather gradually emerged and took centuries to be fully realized and part of all levels of society.

The easy textbook definition is “a rebirth of classical (i.e Greek and Roman) culture.

But there are myths about the Renaissance that should be discussed in order to have a more clear understanding of this transitional period in history.

“A rebirth of classical culture”

- There was a renewed interest in the classical past, but Rome was not reborn.
- The rebirth of a mindset; the rebirth of the idea of progress.
- Began by emulating the classical cultures but then sought to surpass them.

Renaissance individuals could not disassociate themselves from the medieval ideas anymore that we can separate ourselves from the enlightenment or the American Revolution, or the 1960’s. Feudalism, Christianity, the Fall of Rome, the reign of Charlemagne, Black death,—these are all things that helped develop the worldview of the European in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and so, no discovery of sources, can erase that past. Therefore, one should not try to understand the Renaissance by finding copies of Greek or Roman art, architecture, or literature, but rather find the influence of Greek and Roman ideas in the unique art, architecture and literature of the Renaissance. (Michelangelo’s paintings—Nude, as classical art, but of Christian themes).

### “An Artistic Movement”

Often the Renaissance is referred to when speaking of the artistic movement in Italy (specifically Florence) began to emerge. This was around the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century but Donatello and several others like Botticelli completed their masterpieces in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Sometimes it is distinguished as the High Renaissance.

Historians may only understand the Renaissance if they study the intellectual world and how that world differed from the medieval world-view. Factors such as economic conditions or political change are more reflective through the study of intellectual development (the changing mind or worldview of Europeans) than the study of these ideas alone. (Wilcox, pp)

- The terms “Renaissance” and “Art” do go hand-in-hand.
- However, to limit the Renaissance or rebirth to an artistic movement is to put blinders on.
- The art reflected the societal changes.
  - Political expression and advancement
  - Spirit of individuality
  - Economic developments
  - Religious tensionsAll were reflected in the production of and depictions in the art of the Italian Renaissance.
- The art of the Renaissance reflected the the changing culture, the changing mindset or worldview, it was part of a much larger societal development.
- There was an intellectual movement that influenced political, social, and economic, change.

(One can debate whether or not economic changes or political structure came first, but the change from the medieval worldview laid below the surface in all these ideas)

### “It began in 1500”

Of course with all history one “problem of the renaissance” is in defining the beginning or the end of this period. The vague periodization on which history seems to be built is always wrought with controversy. The period of Renaissance may begin as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century though some put it as late the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The year 1500 is a nice round number that easily fits as a starting point. However, there are many individual events that could qualify as a starting point for the Renaissance.

- Vasari—who coined the term (rinascita) his book The Lives of the Artists dated the renaissance or rebirth beginning with the artist Cimabue (c. 1240- c. 1302)
- The French word “renaissance” was used by the French historian Jules Michelet in his 1855 History of France, but he saw the rebirth as a much more scientific movement (and French) and essentially dated it with Columbus to Galileo, in other words from the last part of the 1400’s through the middle of the 1600’s.
- The Swiss historian Burkhardt in his 1860 The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy, defined it with the art of Giotto (c.1266-c.1337) through Michelangelo. Burkhardt

saw in the renaissance the birth of a modern spirit of individualism, that he asserted was mostly unseen in the Medieval period.

- The fall of Constantinople could be considered, since Greek scholars fled there to Italy as the Islamic expansion made its way to Constantinople.
- Gutenberg's Printing Press

“An inevitable period of progress”

Because of the inherent value judgment built into the term “rebirth” as a positive and more progressive period compared to a barbaric and stifled “Dark Age” the term Early Modern Era is often used to describe the period.

But this unit is much more than a study of art, rather it is an examination of the change from the Medieval worldview to the Modern worldview.

To really try and understand the Renaissance one must understand that learning in the late medieval period (specifically the university) was based on the ideas of Thomas Aquinas and scholasticism. The attempt was to bring together the writings of Aristotle and the Greek philosophers with the biblical teachings.

So, classical ideas were not being introduced to the West for the first time during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but rather the sources were becoming more available and they were being used in a different manner.

The Renaissance is therefore not just a study of the classics and a placing of them on a pedestal but rather, using the classical achievements as a guide to be emulated and built upon. The renaissance became a questioning of both the medieval view of the world and eventually of the classics themselves.

The Renaissance and the Early Modern Era:

The Early modern era includes the scientific advancements of the Scientific Revolution, the political changes that emerged through several civil wars, the religious movements such as the reformation and the counter-reformation, and these events, one could argue, are products of the Renaissance.

“It was anti-Christian or anti-religious”

This idea will be discussed more in the section on the development of Humanism, but because there was an interest in the classical/pagan art, history and culture, and because there was a movement in the 17<sup>th</sup> century toward deism (the idea that God set the universe on a course like a watchmaker and does not intervene in earthly matters), and the more recently toward atheism (the idea that God does not exist), there is a desire to attribute these ideas to renaissance individuals, and to argue that they were breaking free from the handcuffs medieval Christianity and therefore shunned the religious or the Christian.

This was a deeply Christian society.

The artists and philosophers were Christian, *or at the least could not help but be influenced by it*; art was sponsored by the Church, and many of it was Christian themed.

“It was a uniform movement.”

The renaissance not uniform at all.

The art of the Northern Renaissance was more religious in nature, was sponsored by Kings and the ideas helped develop national monarchies and religious independence from Rome and a reforming of society through Christian ideas.

The art of the Italian Renaissance was both religious and secular in nature, was sponsored by merchants and Popes, and a reforming of society through the emulation of classical cultures and a renewed spirit of progress.

The renaissance is in some manner a contradiction of ideas. It is the inspiration of the classics while at the same time looking toward something new. Da Vinci, *the* “renaissance man” paid little attention to the so-called wisdom of the classics but rather looked toward what was new. It was perhaps for this reason that Leonardo left Florence and headed toward Milan; Florence had become a place looking back—with large libraries and a new academy resembling Plato’s, while Milan, a city of self-made men, reflected the forward looking attitude that Leonardo sought. He sought an atmosphere to blossom, a strict contradiction from the monastic life of the learned and educated men of the Middle Ages. (This idea was a renaissance idea, it was expressed by Erasmus, Calvin, Luthor, and several other Northern Renaissance thinkers).

But what sparked this Renaissance, or rebirth?

The Renaissance was a product of events that took place in the Late Medieval Period, which in turn can trace its roots to the High Middle Ages.

The Renaissance of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. (Intellectual changes in the High Middle Ages)

During the High Middle Ages (1000-1300) a number of intellectual changes were occurring.

- Spain was a unique place in Europe. It was separated geographically from Western Europe.
- After the Battle of Tours when Muslim forces were stopped by Charles Martel, and the later driving out of the Muslims by Charlemagne, Spain became a mixture of Muslim cultures (*who were different from the Muslims in the Middle East, in fact there was a clash between the North African Muslims and the leadership in the Middle East, but that is a history less in itself*), Christian cultures, and Jewish cultures.
- The groups were distinct but had interactions. So, much of the ancient science which had been lost in the west was preserved by the Arabic scholars.
- In fact, some Christian scholars, such as Gerard of Cremona, went to Toledo in 1185, and found that the library was so much more extensive than anything that was in Latin he decided to learn Arabic, and translated many of the works into Latin.

- Even Earlier than Gerard of Cremona, Gerbert d’ Aurillac—better known as Pope Sylvester II (The first French Pope), (became Pope in 999). He was a scholar
  - He reintroduced the Abacus to the West
  - Built it on Arabic numerals rather than Roman numerals
  - (The Abacus and the Cross)
- But the bottom line is that there was a movement in the High and Late Middle Ages that that changed the medieval world. This 12<sup>th</sup> century rediscovery of Ancient texts by Sylvester II, and Gerard of Cremona, and many others led to
- The rediscovery of Aristotle and others scholars which promoted Scholasticism.
  - Not a philosophy but a method of learning.
  - Find points of disagreement between sources and develop, though logical analysis, a more “complete” understanding where sources were not contradictory.
  - Combining disagreeing ideas in Christian circles (papal letters, church councils, etc...)
  - Combining Christian theology with Classical sources, especially Aristotle.
- In this case both the Bible and Aristotle were placed on a pedestal (the Bible being completely infallible), but both sources built or reinforced the other, and both were revered.
- The learning that took place in the Universities that came about in the High Medieval Period was built on Scholasticism.
  - A combining of the Greek scholarship with the Medieval interpretations of the Bible, both building on the other and both being revered.
  - Universities were not the same as the colleges that we think of today. There were halls where students lived but “90% boarded elsewhere. They were governed by peculiar rules, athletics were forbidden and since 1350” problem-makers were punished by flogging. “In theory classes began at 6am, and continued to 5pm.” However, most students spent their time other places like the local tavern. The tension between the towns and the University or the “town and the gown” grew and in at least one instance at Oxford bubbled over to what was later called “the Great Slaughter” in which several undergraduates and townspeople died.<sup>1</sup>
  - Theology, law, and medicine were the three subjects that were studied at the university.
  - The “arts” –grammar, logic, rhetoric,--were taught in some instances but were considered inferior and were designed mostly for those going into the lower positions in the clergy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester 103.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester 103.

- When these subjects were studied, Monks were the teachers of these classes in the arts.
- They talked briefly about the works of Roman or Greeks but often had little knowledge of the classical writings. They were often limited to Latin translations as few could read Greek. And the Latin of the medieval scholars was corrupted by misinterpretations, both in language and in context. (often corrupted by the way medieval scholars viewed the world)<sup>3</sup>
- For example, the *Ars amatoria*, or Art Of Love by the Roman Ovid, was translated and taught as a description of Divine love rather than a text on human seduction.<sup>4</sup>
- In the renaissance it was texts like these were what was rediscovered and studied on their own merit rather than interpretations or excerpts that were studied in medieval universities.
- But these subjects were not considered as important as the study of theology, law and medicine.
- And, again, the rediscovery of sources by Pope Sylvester II and others that sparked the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance, was mostly mathematical in nature.

It is for this reason that there is a distinction between the 12<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance and the Renaissance that took place in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century renaissance was a movement in which people began to study ancient texts that had been considered unnecessary at best, and dangerous and heretical at worst.

Texts that dealt with history, philosophy, religion, culture, were being explored. In this Christian society the studying of pagan culture seemed counterintuitive. That's why then the Medici video started by describing Cosimo and his friends being involved in an "illicit" trade.

But Renaissance individuals began to admire the accomplishments of the Ancients, then emulate them, and then eventually attempt to supersede the accomplishments of the ancients in regard to art, architecture, math science, poetry, etc....

*Who did the Renaissance affect?*

*Was it a revival that was felt only in the upper classes, or was it an idea that permeated all classes of people. If all were affected was it thought a top down structure or did renaissance ideas begin with the masses and move to the upper levels? Did it move at*

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<sup>3</sup> Manchester 103.

<sup>4</sup> Manchester 104.

*all? Was it in fact, an upper class movement in art and literature that did not have an impact on the lower classes?*

*Was it relatively confined to a few city states in Italy and northern Europe or did it spread throughout the continent?*

*We will not be able to cover all of these questions in this unit, but these questions are the type that can be studied for further research.*

#### *Significant Events/Timelines that occur during this period 1400-1650*

- *Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519, and other Renaissance Artists, (Donatello - Earlier)*
- *Great Schism of the Catholic Church 1378-1415*
- *Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottomans in 1453.*
- *Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther 1517-95 theses*
- *Reconquista of Spain, return to Catholicism and expulsion of Muslims and Jews*
- *Age of Exploration (1450's—1700's)*
  - *Columbus- 1492,*
  - *Vasco da Gama (1497 –voyage around Africa)*
  - *Cortez—1504.*
  - *Magellan –1519-1521 circumnavigation.*
  - *Jamestown 1607*
  - *Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, 1620.*
- *English Civil War (1642-1651)*
- *Tomas Hobbes (1588-1679)*
- *William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

*The High Renaissance is known for the cultural/artistic achievements. But there were Political, Socio-economic, religious, and intellectual developments as well. Many will place religious developments into the category of Intellectual development, and rightly so, as it was not a change in religion itself, or a change of religions, it was a change in the way in which men approached the study of application of religious ideas. The Renaissance was by no means an anti-religious, nor was it an anti-Christian movement. In fact, many of the Renaissance thinkers were devoted Christians, their art was often Christian in nature and the works were often patroned by Catholic Church officials.*

## From Scholasticism to Humanism (The Intellectual Movement)

Intellectual:

- Humanism began to become the way of thinking and studying in the renaissance period. It was distinguished from scholasticism (of Thomas Aquinas).

When Constantinople fell in 1453 to the Ottomans, Greek Scholars, were sent to the West, some to negotiate for help in defeating the overwhelmingly powerful Ottomans others because they simply wanted to get away from Turkish non-Christian rulers. They brought with them the works of ancient Greek authors. Original and sometimes complete manuscripts that Western scholars (the few who did speak Greek) thought had been lost forever suddenly reappeared and could be studied. Groups of Scholars traveled to places like Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Constantinople with gold in hand to trade<sup>5</sup> for these valuable bits of ancient wisdom.

William Manchester in his book A World Lit Only by Fire said it like this:

“The implications reached far beyond scholarship, leading to a change in knowledge itself. ...the Best Minds in the West began a scrupulous reappraisal of Scholasticism...” The Humanist teachers began to declare that the humanities were superior to Law, medicine and even theology. Thomas More, the English Humanist and political theorist, wrote that “exploring the subtleties of Scholastic philosophy was ‘as profitable as milking a he-goat...’” In other words, there was little point studying in the scholastic method.<sup>6</sup>

But there was still some contention from the old order especially in the University, and became more apparent when scientific discoveries of the 16<sup>th</sup> century began to emerge (but that discussion will be left for next unit)

- But the point here is that they began to study the humanities—Poetry, grammar, history, philosophy (moral), and rhetoric.
- late Medieval scholars studied the Greek and Arabic sources in regard to natural philosophy (science), philosophy, and mathematics. But the Renaissance scholars wanted to study the culture of Antiquity. They sought to study the literature, and cultural history of the Greeks and Romans. It was a re-introduction of such things as the works of Homer.
- The late medieval Scholastics (usually at the Universities) studied and tried to unite or synthesize, the works of authors. (Aquinas putting Aristotle with the Bible), they focused on resolving any contradictions that occurred between multiple authors.
- Humanists studied the texts themselves (in the original when possible) and evaluated them on their own merit.
- It was a return to the classical sources instead of a study of secondary sources about the classics.
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<sup>5</sup> Manchester 104.

<sup>6</sup> Manchester 106-109.



- There was a desire to study the ability and accomplishments of man. A reverence for humanity and humanity's accomplishments emerged.
- While a definition of Humanism is difficult, there are a few things to remember,
  - 1) it is not the secular humanism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - 2) the Humanists, while refocusing on the classical culture including many pagan themes which appeared in and were a characteristic of Renaissance Art, the Humanists of were not anti-Christian or anti-religion.
    - Michelangelo's *David* or Donatello's was done in the Nude, a classical element, but was of a Biblical character.
    - Or Michelangelo's Expulsion from Paradise.
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  - Definition—"the movement to recover, interpret, and assimilate the language, literature, learning and values of ancient Greece and Rome" (Burke, 1990)
  - However, Like Secular humanists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Renaissance Humanists celebrated, the genius of man, the intellect of man, ability of man to achieve greatness.
  - Modern Humanists reject the supernatural, the miraculous, and the superstitious, while Renaissance Humanist began to question the natural world, explain ideas previously unexplained, but they did not reject the supernatural, they did not reject, deity.
    - Some Renaissance individuals did see a freedom in the classical worldview, especially in the idea of respecting man with his natural impulses uninhibited by the idea of born sinners. Leonardo Bruni, the Italian scholar stated, "I have the feeling that the days of Cicero...are much closer to me than the sixty years just past."<sup>7</sup>
    - Similar ideas might be seen in Sandro Botticelli's *La Primavera* (the Springtime,) or the Birth of Venus.
    - But while these ideas may have been intriguing, the renaissance humanists would not be able to separate the Christian worldview of the Middle Ages, (not because of some pressure from the Church or other authority, but rather because it would be impossible to ignore the past).
  - So, Renaissance Humanism is a celebration of Man but often with a focus on the relation of Man to God. They did not debate what they considered futile questions of logic, but rather they assumed that man's existence was the purpose of creation, and therefore, their focus was on how the Human related to the divine,
    - They did seek to create a synthesis between Plato's teachings to Christian religious thought;
    - Many renaissance Humanists were also "Neo-Platonists"
    - *They tried to point out any similarities of non-Christian thought to Christian thought.*

- And Plato fit right into this spirit of synthesis. Plato described the “Forms” of things, or the ideal. It was easy to transfer Plato’s idea of “forms” into a Christian worldview of a separate spiritual world coexisting with the physical world.

There was a strong desire to create this synthesis between pagan cultures and Christian cultures. Scholastics synthesized Aristotle’s ideas with Christian ideas, and humanists sought to continue this synthesis with Plato and other philosophies.

- Pico della de Mirandola
  - Was a brilliant person with an incredible memory; his writings were what has been called the manifesto of the humanist renaissance.
  - Pico was ambitious; Pico attempted to reconcile every human philosophy and every human religion with Christianity.
  - He is famed for the events of 1486, when at the age of 23, he proposed to defend 900 theses on religion, philosophy, natural philosophy and magic against all comers, for which he wrote the famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man* which has been called the "Manifesto of the Renaissance"
  - <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/oration.html> oration on the dignity of man
    - The place of man within creation is one of dignity and only one step below the architect of the universe, according to Pico Della. Pico argues that the reasoning of thinkers such as Abdula the Muslim or Hermes Trismegistus is flawed, and man, under the previous thinkers’ rationale would not be as highly praised as the angelic beings. The reason for man’s place in the universe comes from the gift that God granted man. God granted man the ability to choose his form. In Pico’s argument man, alone in the created beings, has the ability to choose his place to live, his occupation, his function. Man has power of other creation and “joint possession of whatever nature had been given to any other creature.” Contemplation and reason are the gifts given to man. Pico is perhaps influenced by Plato’s arguments concerning the relation of man to his surroundings. The universe is not this form that we see but an idea that we must detect, so too is God’s most prized creation.
  - Man is able to rise up not through God, but through his own human endeavor to become like the Angels. To Pico, God gave man the greatest gift, the gift of Freedom. But this freedom flies in the face of Catholic teachings, and also the teachings of Luthor;
  - Luthor focused on Salvation by the grace of God, “For by grace are ye saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8).

Petrarch (July 20, 1304—July 19, 1374)

- The earliest Humanist thought that was recorded was the work of Petrarch, the philosopher who termed the middle ages a “dark age”
- Petrarch illustrates many of the traits that we previously discussed.
  - He studied Law at the University of Montpellier and Bologna because his father who was a lawyer decided that his sons should also. But Petrarch considered these seven years wasted as he wanted to study Latin Literature.
  - While working as a clerk he wrote an epic poem called Africa about the Roman General Scipio Africanus (defeated Hannibal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War)
  - He found letter written by Cicero, that had previously been unknown, he felt that he lived in a time of darkness to the ancient wisdom, a period of “dense gloom” for nearly a thousand years.
  - He knew of Homer but could not read Greek, and therefore said that he was deaf to Homer. He encouraged a translation of Homer when a manuscript had been found and purchased by a long time friend.
- The Writing of Petrarch
  - Letter to homer  
<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/petrarch/pet12.html>
  -
- Petrarch’s writings indicate a new way in which one studied the classics. To Petrarch, Aristotle was a man, just as he was. In order to understand Aristotle, the man, one must delve into the writings of Aristotle himself and not a secondary source about Aristotle. The new view of the giants of classical culture allowed men such a Petrarch to question previous traditions. Petrarch’s soul searching writings use classical literature in a new way. He realized the historical change over time and thus could study human behavior and society in a new way. The humanists saw the transfer of knowledge through communication, and thus, society played an more important role in the development of the individual than in medieval worldviews.
- The concern for communication was therefore the focus of study for the humanists. Rhetoric was important, whereas analytical thought such as logic was not necessary. Poetry and moral philosophy were considered more important than natural philosophy or metaphysics. Education was geared toward the “whole man” (p. 90) as opposed to instruction in a particular profession. ~~The humanism of Petrarch in the 1400s gave way to the more active humanism of Leonardo Bruni, and then to a civic humanism. Tension among intellectuals in Florence helped develop certain ideas that became part of the humanists. The humanists, in turn, affected the political landscape of Florence, the artistic movement in F1~~
- ~~the humanists study of classical literature differed from medieval scholars by searching the actual texts for meanings previously left unstudied.~~

## The Artistic Renaissance

The study of the Humanities led to an interest in classical cultures which some of artists of the Italian Renaissance portrayed. Sandro Botticelli and his Birth of Venus is a prime example. The Economic revival in Italy allowed the wealthy individuals to be the patron of artists creating an art world that was unseen ever before. Artists flourished on the patronage of people like Cosimo de Medici or Lorenzo the Magnificent, or other families like the Sforza, Albizzi, eventually the Church began to sponsor artists. As renaissance Ideas traveled North by merchants and traders, Kings began to sponsor art.

## Political Renaissance:

The key element of the political changes that occurred during the early modern era was the decline in feudalism. Feudalism declined due to several factors, that were discussed in the medieval unit such as the plague, and the crusades. Both altered the established economic part of feudalism and since the economic and political aspects of feudalism cannot be separated economic developments such as the increased trade through Italian city-states, the rise of middle class traders, and the rise of banking families also But also the economic changes altered the political world.

*Political changes in the Italian peninsula began during the late medieval period. Trading ships, brought fleas on the back or rats that spread the bubonic plague creating decrease the supply of peasant workers. Therefore, feudalism began to decline and Italy began a period of political and socio-economic transition.*

End of Feudalism in Western Europe and the rising middle class—first in Italy then spread throughout Western Europe.

Rise of Nationalism, although Italy the birth place of the Renaissance does not unify until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to the struggle for power between the popes and the Holy Roman Emperors to the North emperors, Italian towns to expand their power and independence. These city-states continued increasing their power and influence and by the 14th century, five states controlled all of Italy. These five states had a lot of differences in their political and military powers. The kingdom of Naples and Sicily (in the South) continued to keep their political and military relationships among the nobility. This type of relationship is known as feudalism. The center of Italy was the Papal States and the pope's interest was in recapturing the power, control and influence they had lost during the papal exile and the Great Schism.

The Northern region was dominated by Florence in the Toscana region. The constant class conflict of this region during the 14th century eventually led to an “unofficial” dictatorship by the Medici banking family.

The Visconti family led Milan and the empire that extended over large areas in Northern and central Italy. Venice expanded inland to protect their trade routes and maintained their republican form of government.

Of the five territories, there was not one that was strong enough to take control of the others. When the Visconti family of Milan attempted to expand to the South, the other territories actually united against such a move.

These five territories existed under a tentative peace until 1454 when the Peace of Lodi agreement was signed. This agreement is the basis for the international relationships we see today. It used alliances to achieve the balance of power and allowed the territories to act as independent and sovereign nations. They even developed the office of resident ambassador.<sup>8</sup>

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  - ~~Religious attitudes and intellectual thought diverged from traditional medieval thought during the fourteenth century. A major cause of this change was Black Death. Black death spurred social and economic change but also it helped motivate intellectual change. The death of nearly one-third of the population naturally caused many to think about death and religious ideas. Black Death overshadowed two other crises that fell upon Europe during the fourteenth century. The first crisis was an economic depression due to several external forces that disrupted trade. A crisis of political identity and religious ideals coincided with new intellectual ideas to further diverge from the medieval worldview. Man's morality was not only his own concern but also now the concern of the state. Patriotism was a profound trait. To Wilcox, the fourteenth century "deprived man of his confidence in his own powers." (p. 41) Ultimately the concern for morality remained the center in Italian life, though ideas concerning it changed.~~

In the North, especially in England, France, and Spain, powerful monarchies formed and began to implement policies that benefitted their own middle class tradesmen.

Because taxes were limited to a population's wealth, and because the fall of Constantinople closed the land trade routes for Western Europeans, Monarchs of the North began to push for exploration to increase trade and wealth, thus sparking the Age of Exploration.

*Group discussion on writings of Machiavelli, More, and Shakespeare*

- Powerful families in Italy, emerge through commerce. —the Medici
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- Machiavelli wrote (the prince—1505) about a political sphere that was separate from an ethical moral sphere.
  - Powerful forces of France and HRE to unify.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.all-about-renaissance-faires.com/renaissance\\_info/economic\\_social\\_and\\_religious\\_change\\_in\\_the\\_renaissance.htm](http://www.all-about-renaissance-faires.com/renaissance_info/economic_social_and_religious_change_in_the_renaissance.htm)

- He regarded the Church as a social institution (thereby neglecting its spiritual position) and wrote about a State that was devoid of theological implications, thus an idea of Christendom was obsolete in Machiavelli's worldview.
- For Machiavelli, it was the prince, or the great men of history, that moved and motivated historical events, or governments, not God.
- He regarded man as both good and evil but for the purposes of political discourse, he said man was essentially evil and selfish.
- He believed that the state was something that men created, like a work of art,
- To Machiavelli, the essence of the state is power, and therefore power must be maintained at all times.
- <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince17.htm>
- It is safer to be feared than to be loved. (feared not hated).
- He believed that not only could a government deceive its people, but that it should. The prince must master propaganda, in order to keep the people, who are easily fooled on his side.
- He should avoid unnecessary cruelty, as this may lead to conspiracy, but necessary cruelty was permissible.
- The Political Ideas of Thomas More (1478-1535)
  - More was more religious than Machiavelli, and thus he helps illustrate the difference between the Northern Renaissance and the Italian Renaissance.
  - Moore was educated at Oxford in law, was wealthy but his sympathies lied with the common man. Thus, he contradicted Machiavelli, in that he believed the state existed for the good of the common man not the prince.
  - His most famous work was *Utopia*, inspired by Christ's sermon on the mount. In *Utopia*, he described a society without the problems that More believed were a problem within his own society.
  - ~~More did not believe that evil began with man, nor with the idea of an original sin (that all men are sinners and evil will be done) — For More, evil began with the institutions of society.~~
  - More began with a look at England at the time describing many things that More saw as problems in society, he then wrote about a fictional society called Utopia in which the problems were addressed and dealt with.
    - There was no money, all goods were held in common. More held the Biblical statement “the love of money is the root of all evil” as true fact and therefore fixed his problem by eliminating all gold and money in his utopian society.
  - More was concerned with the changing socio-economic world that he saw around him, the personal relationship of the medieval lord-vassal-peasant was being replaced by an impersonal commercial capitalism, that was built on government bureaucracy,
    - *Is not this an unjust and unkind public weal which giveth great fees and rewards to gentlemen, as they call them, and to goldsmiths, and to such other, which be either idle persons, or else only*

*flatterers, and devisers of vain pleasures; and of the poor ploughmen, colliers, labourers, carters, ironsmiths, and carpenters: without whom no commonwealth can continue? But after it hath abused the labours of their lusty and flowering age, at the last when they be oppressed with old age and sickness, being needy, poor, and indigent of all things, then forgetting their so many painful watchings, not remembering their so many and so great benefits, recompenseth and acquitteth them most unkindly with miserable death. And yet besides this the rich men not only by private fraud, but also by common laws, do every day pluck and snatch away from the poor some part of their daily living. So whereas it seemed before unjust to recompense with unkindness their pains that have been beneficial to the public weal, now they have added to this their wrong and unjust dealing given the name of justice, yea, and that by force of law. Therefore when I consider and weigh in my mind all these commonwealths, which nowadays anywhere do flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of the commonwealth.*

More saw Power as corruption, but Machiavelli praises the accumulation of power. Machiavelli saw the growth of the power of a monarch as a natural and necessary step in the new world.

More saw a need for religious institutions as a means for helping because there are several principles that More sees. First the Utopians are religiously tolerant (something that More probably was not & it is important to note that *Utopia* was written in 1515 just before the Reformation was exploding. As Chancellor General, More, issued several laws that persecuted the Protestants in England.), But while in Utopians tolerated other religious ideas, they do not regard atheism as a viable option. One who is not focused on an afterlife becomes selfish and seeks immediate pleasure and not the greater good. All Utopians believe in same basic principles:

- The soul of a person is immortal
- God has designed the soul to be happy
- God has appointed rewards for good and virtuous acts and punishments for vice. These rewards and punishments are distributed after this life

These principles shape the attitudes and behavior of Utopian citizens, who seek happiness in good and honest pleasures. To be virtuous is to live according to nature and the dictates of reason.

Utopians believe that reason:

- Kindles in us a love for the Divine Majesty
- Keeps our minds cheerful, free from passion, and committed to the happiness of others as well as to our own pleasure

- Inclines us to enter into society and seek the public good<sup>9</sup>

More and Machiavelli see the nature of man in a completely different light.

Ultimately More was arrested when he refused to submit to new laws that declared Henry VIII as the head of the Church of England. More was imprisoned and later beheaded.

Shakespeare (*Henry V*) written c. 1599

Henry V rules England from 1413-1422.

The play is set in England in the early fifteenth century. The political situation in England is tense: King Henry IV has died, and his son, the young King Henry V, has just assumed the throne. Several bitter civil wars have left the people of England restless and dissatisfied. Furthermore, in order to gain the respect of the English people and the court, Henry must live down his wild adolescent past, when he used to consort with thieves and drunkards at the Boar's Head Tavern on the seedy side of London.

Henry lays claim to certain parts of France, based on his distant roots in the French royal family and on a very technical interpretation of ancient land laws. When the young prince, or Dauphin, of France sends Henry an insulting message in response to these claims, Henry decides to invade France. Supported by the English noblemen and clergy, Henry gathers his troops for war.

Henry's decision to invade France trickles down to affect the common people he rules. In the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, some of the king's former friends—whom he rejected when he rose to the throne—prepare to leave their homes and families. Bardolph, Pistol, and Nim are common lowlifes and part-time criminals, on the opposite end of the social spectrum from their royal former companion. As they prepare for the war, they remark on the death of Falstaff, an elderly knight who was once King Henry's closest friend.

Just before his fleet sets sail, King Henry learns of a conspiracy against his life. The three traitors working for the French beg for mercy, but Henry denies their request. He orders that the trio, which includes a former friend named Scrope, be executed. The English sail for France, where they fight their way across the country. Against incredible odds, they continue to win after conquering the town of Harfleur, where Henry gives an impassioned speech to motivate his soldiers to victory. Among the officers in King Henry's army are men from all parts of Britain, such as Fluellen, a Welsh captain. As the English advance, Nim and Bardolph are caught looting and are hanged at King Henry's command.

The climax of the war comes at the famous Battle of Agincourt, at which the English are outnumbered by the French five to one. The night before the battle, King Henry disguises himself as a common soldier and talks to many of the soldiers in his camp, learning who they are and what they think of the great battle in

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/utopia/more1/moral1/moral.html>



which they have been swept up. When he is by himself, he laments his ever-present responsibilities as king. In the morning, he prays to God and gives a powerful, inspiring speech to his soldiers. Miraculously, the English win the battle, and the proud French must surrender at last. Some time later, peace negotiations are finally worked out: Henry will marry Catherine, the daughter of the French king. Henry's son will be the king of France, and the marriage will unite the two kingdoms.

## Was Henry V a real life Machavellian Ruler?

It has been described as one of the greatest battles of all time -- the fight between Henry V of England and the French army on October 25, 1415, at Agincourt in northern France. Henry, whose goal was to reclaim English territory seized by France in earlier centuries, had approximately 6,000 men. The French army, depending on which historical report you read, had anywhere from 30,000 to 60,000 soldiers, many of them knights in armor prepared to fight on foot and on horseback. The English army had neither armor nor horses, and they were exhausted by their two-month trek across France trying to reach what was then the English port of Calais.

But they did have what turned out to be a decisive advantage -- Henry V's leadership skills and his ability to innovate in ways that would turn significant disadvantages into game-winning advantages. In addition, before the battle started, he delivered one of the most famous motivational speeches in history -- at least as it is written in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. The speech has been played on Allied ships crossing the English Channel to Normandy during World War II; in locker rooms by football coaches losing at half time, and on the Internet for U.S. soldiers about to leave for duty in Iraq.

Here is how Henry won: He stopped his army on a field that was flanked on either side by woodlands, thus forcing the French army to move forward through a narrow funnel and neutralizing their superior numbers. He took full advantage of a rainfall that had muddied the battlefield and that would prove disastrous for the armored French soldiers -- when they slipped backwards wearing their 60-pound armor, they couldn't hoist themselves back up; when they fell forward, they drowned in the mud.

In addition, rather than rely on the more traditional, easy-to-use crossbow, Henry chose the long bow, which could fire arrows more quickly and at greater range. The resulting hail of arrows killed French soldiers behind the front line, taking away urgently needed reinforcements. Henry armed his men with pikes a foot longer than those used by the French, allowing English soldiers in hand-to-hand combat to deliver the first, and usually lethal, blow. And, in what has been described as a last minute innovation, Henry planted sharp stakes in the ground just at the point of the battle's engagement. The French army's horses, rushing forward, were impaled on the stakes and fell to the ground, crushing soldiers around them and blocking the path forward for others.

When the fighting stopped after several hours, the French had lost about 6,000 men, and the English about 450.

## Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

### The Ruthlessness of the Good King

In presenting the figure of its heroic yet ruthless protagonist, *Henry V*'s predominant concern is the nature of leadership and its relationship to morality. The play proposes that the qualities that define a good ruler are not necessarily the same qualities that define a good person. Henry is an extraordinarily good leader: he is intelligent, focused, and inspiring to his men. He uses any and all resources at his disposal to ensure that

he achieves his goals. Shakespeare presents Henry's charismatic ability to connect with his subjects and motivate them to embrace and achieve his goals as the fundamental criterion of good leadership, making Henry seem the epitome of a good leader. By inspiring his men to win the Battle of Agincourt despite overwhelming odds, Henry achieves heroic status.

But in becoming a great king, Henry is forced to act in a way that, were he a common man, might seem immoral and even unforgivable. In order to strengthen the stability of his throne, Henry betrays friends such as Falstaff, and he puts other friends to death in order to uphold the law. While it is difficult to fault Henry for having Scrope killed, since Scrope was plotting to assassinate him, Henry's cruel punishment of Bardolph is less understandable, as is his willingness to threaten the gruesome murder of the children of Harfleur in order to persuade the governor to surrender. Henry talks of favoring peace, but once his mind is settled on a course of action, he is willing to condone and even create massive and unprovoked violence in order to achieve his goal.

Shakespeare's portrayal of the king shows that power complicates the traditional distinctions between heroism and villainy, so that to call Henry one or the other constitutes an oversimplification of the issue. As Henry himself comments, the massive responsibilities laid on the shoulders of a king render him distinct from all other people, and the standards that can be brought to bear in judging a king must take that distinction into account. A king, in Shakespeare's portrayal, is responsible for the well-being and stability of his entire nation; he must subordinate his personal feelings, desires, dislikes, and even conscience wholly to this responsibility. Perhaps, then, the very nature of power is morally ambiguous, which would account for the implicit critique of Henry's actions that many contemporary readers find in the play. But within the framework of judgment suggested by the play, there is no doubt that Henry is both a great king and a hero.

### **The Diversity of the English**

The play opens with the Chorus reminding the audience that the few actors who will appear onstage represent thousands of their countrymen, and, indeed, the characters who appear in *Henry V* encompass the range of social classes and nationalities united under the English crown during Henry's reign. The play explores this breadth of humanity and the fluid, functional way in which the characters react to cultural differences, which melt or rupture depending on the situation.

The catalog of characters from different countries both emphasizes the diversity of medieval England and intensifies the audience's sense of Henry's tremendous responsibility to his nation. For a play that explores the nature of absolute political power, there is something remarkably democratic in this enlivening portrayal of rich and poor, English and Welsh, Scottish and Irish, as their roles intertwine in the war effort and as the king attempts to give them direction and momentum.

Interestingly, this disparate group of character types is not unanimous in supporting Henry. Many of them do admire the king, but other intelligent and courageous men, such as Michael Williams, distrust his motives. It is often seen as a measure of Henry's integrity that he is able to tolerate Williams's type of dissent with magnanimity, but the range of characters in the play would seem to imply that his tolerance is also expedient. With so many groups of individuals to take into account, it would be unrealistic of Henry to expect universal support—another measure of pressure added to his shoulders. In this way, the play's exploration of the people of Britain becomes an important facet of the play's larger exploration of power. As the play explores the ruler, it also examines the ruled.

### **Motifs**

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

### **Male Interaction**

There are almost no women in *Henry V*. Catherine is the only female character to be given many lines or presented in the domestic sphere, and most of her lines are in French. With this absence of women and the play's focus on the all-male activity of medieval warfare, the play presents many types of male relationships. The relationships between various groups of men—Fluellen and Gower; Bardolph, Pistol, and Nim; and the French lords—mirror and echo one another in various ways. The cowardice of the Eastcheap group is echoed in the cowardice of the French lords, for instance. Perhaps more important, these male friendships all draw attention to another aspect of Henry's character: his isolation from other people. Unlike most of the play's other male characters, Henry seems to have no close friends, another characteristic that makes the life of a king fundamentally different from the life of a common citizen.

What's he that wishes so?

My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin;  
If we are mark'd to die, we are enow  
To do our country loss; and if to live,  
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.  
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.  
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,  
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;  
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;  
Such outward things dwell not in my desires.  
But if it be a sin to covet honour,  
I am the most offending soul alive.  
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England.  
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour  
As one man more methinks would share from me  
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!  
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,  
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,  
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,  
And crowns for convoy put into his purse;  
We would not die in that man's company  
That fears his fellowship to die with us.  
This day is call'd the feast of Crispian.  
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,  
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,  
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.  
He that shall live this day, and see old age,  
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,  
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian.'  
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,  
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispian's day.'  
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,

But he'll remember, with advantages,  
 What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,  
 Familiar in his mouth as household words-  
 Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,  
 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester-  
 Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb'ed.  
 This story shall the good man teach his son;  
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,  
 From this day to the ending of the world,  
 But we in it shall be remembered-  
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
 For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
 Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
 This day shall gentle his condition;  
 And gentlemen in England now-a-bed  
 Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,  
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks  
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

To summarize the political renaissance this period between 1480 and 1550 marked a high point in art, yet there was a “political upheaval” that laid beneath the surface. Dominant Italian families such as the Medici, ~~the Angevin, and Aragonese house~~ were struggling for power within their part of the Italian peninsula. The cities of Naples, Milan, and Florence were inculcated with political change that, “added to the ~~dynamic~~ instabilities of the late fifteenth century.” (Wilcox, 149)

The European world was on a path, politically, that diverged, and distinguished it from the medieval political framework. The difference in the medieval view and renaissance (or one could argue the modern) view was about personal property, liberty, law, political power, taxation, and the state. Arguably ~~Wilcox's general conclusion in regards to all of these changing attitudes may be summarized,~~ “Society had been developing in ways that diminished the role of personal relationships and personal status.” (Wilcox, 219) The “unrest” that Machiavelli, More, and other Europeans felt was a result of “resistance to new political systems.” (Wilcox, 219)

The medieval view of political structures, ~~to Wilcox,~~ is a personal relationship between man and governor (lord). The relationship that developed in the renaissance, was an impersonal system or bureaucracy. What gradually formed is the idea of the state, an idea in competition to the feudal system. ~~To Locke the supreme authority of man is, and always has been, man's service to nature, in Lockean terms — natural law. Man is subject to only the law of nature and therefore this law is the driving force behind the formations of states. Men may only consent to be governed and not governed by force.~~ Ultimately a new impersonal relationship developed between the governing and the governed. *With*

*these modern ideas came Thomas Hobbes' and John Locke's treaties on government which delved into the nature of government and the responsibilities therein.*

Socio-Economic changes,

- Feudalism again.
- Rise of early Capitalism, Modern banking
- Rise of Middle Class in Italy, and then in the rest of Europe.
- Rise of “self-made” men.
  - Da Vinci, for example was an illegitimate son of a middle class notary and a peasant girl. He did not hide this but rather was proud of his being born out of wedlock, in that he was proud to make his own way into the world rather than be born into nobility.
  - Da Vinci's patron, The Medici family also illustrates this as Cosimo's father Giovanni de Medici rode on a donkey in town as a way of connecting to his humble roots.

## The Reformation

Luther focused on Salvation by the grace of God, “For by grace are ye saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8).

### The Religious Renaissance.

Martin Luther is a product of Renaissance thought but he is not the Humanist Pico

Luther was a German Monk that sought to reform the Catholic Church.

Luther saw the Church as corrupted. He saw the Selling of Indulgences by Pope Leo X as an abuse of papal power.

The Northern renaissance did not focus as heavily on the art and culture of the Italian Renaissance but rather on the change or betterment of society.

The Reformation was a religious movement during the Renaissance but it was only possible with the decrease in support for the Catholic Church amongst commoner and King alike, Commoners were motivated by the Crisis of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and in the movement toward nationalism and strong central authority that centered around the King, eliminated the need of political alliances between Christendom and Kingship.

## Background on the Catholic Church

The 16th century in Europe was a great century of change on many fronts. The humanists and artists of the Renaissance would help characterize the age as one of individualism and self-creativity. Humanists such as Petrarch helped restore the dignity of mankind while men like Machiavelli injected humanism into politics. When all is said and done, the Renaissance helped to secularize European society. Man was now the creator of his own destiny -- in a word, the Renaissance unleashed the very powerful notion that man makes his own history.<sup>10</sup>

All of the renaissance ideas discussed were transitional events and were part of the changing worldview. Because such a shift in worldview was occurring it can be studied from afar by historians but those involved did not have the ability to discern which ideas were truly renaissance and which were medieval. In other words there was no choice between being renaissance and being medieval. But the Protestant reformation “forced people to make a choice—to be Catholic or Protestant. This was an important choice, and a choice had to be made. There was no real alternative. In the context of the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, one could live or die based on such a choice.”<sup>11</sup>

## Leading to Luther and Reformation.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.historyguide.org/earlymod/lecture3c.html>

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

The renaissance idea of individualism played a significant role in the process leading to reformation. Europeans were becoming dissatisfied with the ritualistic nature of the church and the sacraments had less meaning in their minds. Ideas could be spread not only through Gutenberg's printing press but also because of the new trading and economic revival, people congregated into towns and cities where ideas were discussed and concerns could be shared. The individualistic ideas of the Renaissance led to one German Monk, Martin Luther, to stress the individual nature of salvation and Biblical interpretation, as compared to the institutional salvation through the church or the institutional interpretation of the Bible through councils. (Thus the transition from using secondary interpretations by church fathers to a revival of seeking the classical source (in this case the Bible) for itself.)

This was nothing new, the church had dealt with heretics who interpreted the Bible in their own way since the beginning of the church.

Two 12<sup>th</sup> century movements led to the church formalizing certain positions in regard to the use of sacraments, the position of priests in administering sacraments and the place or purgatory. (Waldensians and the Albigenses).

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the church dealt with the Waldensian movement begun by a man named Waldo of Lyons (other names such as Valdes, Valdesius, Valdo). The Waldensians movement is very vague because neither Waldo nor his followers wrote about their lives. However, inquisition records have survived. But the Waldensians, translated the Bible into the vernacular of their day, and allowed lay people to read it and preach it. They formed house churches all over Europe in spite of bitter persecution. The Albigenses movement was a group that was more of a non-Christian movement than a heretical movement. (meaning that they were more outside the church than inside). They believed in a coexistence of two opposing forces of good and evil, where the good was the creator of the spiritual and the evil the creator of the material world. Man was a walking contradiction in that he was a spiritual being created by the good, and was imprisoned in the human body by the evil. Sin sprang from matter not the spirit. By the logic of this doctrine the Albigenses surmised that Jesus Christ was like the Holy Spirit but could not have been man made of matter because he would have then been under control by the evil. To be saved by Christ was a matter of being a member of the Albigenses through their ceremony known as consolation (*consolamentum*) and therefore not through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Because liberation of the soul from the body was the true end of man's being some would commit suicide often through what was called *endura* or starvation. They also had laws that made sex illegal, including sex in marriage. In fact they believed concubinage or prostitution to be preferable to marital relations since it was less permanent. Abandonment of a husband or wife was considered desirable, especially without conceiving children.

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 called by Pope Innocent III established several Catholic doctrines in response to the Waldensians and the Albigenses and other issues, including among other things the importance of the sacraments and the position of the priest in administering them.

During the Great Schism came John Wycliff (1330-1384) who translated the Bible into English for the uneducated priests of the day to study, and he denied certain church doctrines (transubstantiation), directly putting him at odds with the church. Later Jan Huss (1360-1415) defended Wycliff's positions and condemned the sell of indulgences by antipope John XXIII (Beldassare Casso). At the Council of Constance where they decided how to deal with the Great Schism situation of three popes Huss was called to defend himself was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.

People sought a more personal religious experience and wanted to know that they were doing the right thing.

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries the Church was faced with numerous direct challenges.

- Heretics had been assaulting the Church since the 12th century. The heretics were Christians who deviated from Christian dogma. Many did not believe in Christian baptism -- the majority felt left out of the Church.
- There were also numerous mystics who desired a direct and emotional divine illumination. They claimed they had been illuminated by an inner light that assured them of salvation.
- There was an influential philosophical movement called [nominalism](#) that stressed the reality of anything concrete and real, thus doubting faith.
- Renaissance humanism ~~rejected the Christian matrix almost completely and instead~~ turned to the Classical World, the true source of virtue and wisdom.
- The breakdown of feudalism and the discovery and exploitation of the New World gave way to commerce and trade, as well as an increasing tendency to view life in the here and now as something good.
- The Church was also challenged by an increasing awareness of ethnicity and nationalism, e.g. Joan of Arc and the 100 Years' War.
- Merchants and skilled workers living in cities were growing wealthy and influential as they began to supply Europe with more and more "stuff."
- European kings consolidated their power over their nobility.
- There was an awareness, thanks to the age of discovery, that there was a pagan world outside the world of Europe that needed to be tamed.<sup>12</sup>

The secularization of the Clergy.

Popes and bishops were acting more like kings and princes than they were the spiritual guides of European men and women. And again, because so many people were now crowding into cities, the lavish homes and palaces of the Church were noticed by more and more people from all walks of life. The poor resented the wealth of the papacy and the very rich were jealous of that wealth. At the same time, the popes bought and sold high offices, and also sold indulgences. All of this led to the increasing wealth of the Church -- and this created new paths for abuses of every sort. Finally, at the local level of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



the town and village, the abuses continued. Some Church officials held several offices at once and lived off their income.<sup>13</sup>

This abuse made its way all the way up to the Papacy itself.

Rodrigo Borgia was born January 1, 1431. He was born in the town of Xativa in Modern day Spain, and was of a wealthy family whose power was growing. He adopted the name Borgia from his mother's side after his uncle became Pope Calixtus III in 1455. He received his Doctorate of Law from the University of Bologna, a situation in which no doubt money exchanged hands. As nepotism, or favoring one's family in appointment to prestigious appointments, grew rampant in the church during the Renaissance Rodrigo was quickly made a Cardinal in 1456 on year after his uncle became Pope. He was 25 years old. (He was not actually ordained a Priest until 1468. He served in the Roman Curia (the departments that serve the Papacy) for five popes (Pius II, Paul II, Sixtus IV, and Innocent VIII).

As a cardinal Rodrigo Borgia was known for his elaborate parties and his lust for women. At one party thrown by Cardinal Borgia, chroniclers mused as to whether or not all the babies conceived at the party would be born with the clerical robes of their fathers. Pope Pius II sent a letter to Cardinal Borgia that stated

“Dear Son, We have learned that your worthiness, forgetful of the high office with which you are invested, was present...where several women of Siena, women wholly given over to worldly vanities, your companion was one of your colleagues whom his years, if not the dignity of his office, ought to have reminded him of his duty. We have heard the dance was indulged in all wantonness, none of the allurements of love were lacking, and you concluded yourself in a wholly worldly manner. Shame forbids mention of all that took place, for not only the things themselves, but their very names are unworthy of your rank. In order that lust be all the more unrestrained, the husbands, fathers, brothers, and kinsmen of the young women and girls, were not invited to be present. You and a few servants were the leaders and instigators of the orgy. It is said that nothing is now talked of in Siena but your vanity, which is the subject of universal ridicule. ...your conduct has brought the Holy State and office into disgrace; the people will say that they make us rich and great not that we may live a blameless life but that we may have means to gratify our passions....”

Rodrigo Borgia heeded the words of Pope Pius II and no longer threw these wild parties in the gardens of the wealthy of Siena; he moved them into his own palaces.

The next three popes after Pius II were increasingly concerned with secular things.

On 25 July 1492 Pope Innocent III died and there were three likely candidates to take the office of the Holy See. Ascanio Sforza, Guillano della Rovere, and Rodrigo Borgia. The college of cardinals got together for conclave to elect the new Pope. John Burchard the master of ceremony's for the conclave wrote that, the 1492 conclave was a particularly expensive campaign. Bribes were offered and accepted. It is said that Sforza was given 4 mule loads of silver, and would make much more money through the offices that he would hold under the Borgia Pope. The King of France Charles VIII supplied della

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Rovere with 200,000 ducats and another 100,000 was contributed by the Republic of Genoa. But Rodrigo's finances were enough.

On 11 August 1492 Rodrigo Borgia was crowned Pope Alexander VI. Giovanni de Medici (later Pope Leo X) remarked, "We are now in the power of a wolf, the most rapacious perhaps that the world has ever seen. And if we do not flee he will inevitably devour us all."

Papal parties soon became out of control. The Ballet of Chestnuts, in 1501 is a prime example. The party was actually thrown by Alexander's illegitimate son, Cesare Borgia. With Alexander and son front and center when the entertainment really got started. 50 of the most beautiful prostitutes were brought on stage and danced in a ballet, around some candles on the ground and picking up chestnuts that had been thrown on the stage. They were clothed at first. Many of the church officials in attendance joined in the "ballet." This is the PG-13 rated version of what happened.

Alexander VI spent extortionate amounts of money. He made Cesare, while a 17 year old student at Pisa the Archbishop of Valencia. He divided the papal states and the Kingdom of Naples and made fiefs for two of his other illegitimate sons.

This policy brought him into conflict with the the Orsini, a powerful family in Naples, and the King of Naples Ferdinand I who had already backed della Rovere in his attempt to gain the papacy against the Borgia Pope. Ferdinand aligned himself with Florence Milan, and Venice. Spain was approached but the Spain was gaining too much from Alexander in their conquest of the new world.

Alliances were made and broken. Alexander used his illegitimate daughter Lucrizia often as a pawn in political matters. She was married to Giovanni Sforza in 1493. However, when a connection to the Sforza was not as needed the marriage was annulled by Alexander.

The Rumors began to fly. Alexander said that the marriage was annulled because Sforza was unable to father children, to which Sforza said, that if the pope wanted he would father a child right in front of him.

Then Sforza gathering support said what many in Rome dared not whisper, that the Pope wanted Lucriza for himself.

Lucrizia was married to Alfonso d'Este Duke of Ferrara in 1498, but he was killed, perhaps by Cesare.

The brother of Lucrizia was perhaps murdered by Cesare (their other brother) because Cesare was in love with Lucrizia and wanted her for himself.

Most of this is speculation but none the less the speculation created rumors that defined the downward spiral seen by some as the problem with renaissance papacy.

Those such as Savonarola began a vicious campaign against the Borgia Pope Savaonarola's death by burying as a heretic.

After 1450 (Joan of Arc died in 1431) Strong Rulers of Europe did not base their power on feudalism, but rather, these kings had three new important sources of power:

- Control of Taxes
  - Professional Armies
  - Professional officials
1. Broad taxing Power—Feudal kings received most of their income from their estates and vassals; the new monarchy taxed every member in society—Nobles, clergy, townspeople and peasants. This again centered attention around the King and the State rather than on feudal loyalties.
  2. Professional Armies—Fedral Kings used armies of vassals who gave military support in exchange for land. The new monarchs hired soldiers from all classes. No longer was fighting the specialization of the nobility.
  3. Professional Officials—The New monarchs hired educated officials from te middle class as their advisors. They became the allies of the King against ambitious nobles.

The New French State

- Charles VII (1429-1461)
  - Set up Royal Council using men from the middle class. He also organized the first permanent royal army. He increased the holdings of the royal treasury by collecting taxes on land, the **Taille**, and on salt—the **gabelle**.
- Louis XI (1461-1483)
  - The “Spider King” due to his skills at trickery intimidation, bribery and espionage.
  - He added Burgundy to France and only had to call together the Estates General once during his reign. The French crown had almost unlimited power after Louis XI.

#### The New English State

- The War of the Roses (1455-1485)
  - After the Hundred Years war, the reign of three English kings- Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III were disrupted by a civil war known as the War of the Roses. This was a power struggle between two branches of the royal family—those led by the Dukes of York (Symbol – white rose) and the Dukes of Lancaster (symbol – Red rose) Referenced in Alice in Wonderland –“painting the roses red.”
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